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In Opposition and in Power: the African National Congress and the Theory and Practice of Participatory Democracy

(with particular reference to 1980s 'people's power' and policy formulation)

By

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Studies

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Abstract

The period of 'people's power' in South Africa from 1985-7 represented for many participants a form of participatory, and often prefigurative, democracy. In the post-1994 period South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC) has committed to participatory democracy alongside representative democratic government. There has, however, been no clearly articulated theory of participatory democracy within the ANC. Through a combination of interviews and analysis of primary documents (including policy frameworks, legislation, discussion documents, guidance and other commentary), this thesis analyses the ANC's understanding of participatory democracy as both a liberation movement in opposition and a government in power. While making a contribution to normative democratic debate, the thesis also challenges arguments which suggest that the democracy established in post-1994 South Africa is unrelated to people's power or that people's power in its entirety represented a superior form of democracy. Instead, it is argued that people's power constituted a variety of overlapping themes and discourses. Elements were rooted in radical democratic theory, community activism, and ideas of popular empowerment. However it was also markedly influenced by Marxist-Leninist thought and a dominant notion of *vanguardism*. Overall, people's power embraced a largely unitary form of democracy in which participation could only be exercised within the framework of the liberation movement.

Into the democratic era, many of the ideas informing people's power were woven into policy on participatory democracy. What also emerged, however, were new ideas and influences from development theory, governance discourse and international best practice. While these strands have themselves created conceptual tension - between the dual demands of performance and efficiency and citizen participation - public policy nonetheless provides politically pluralistic mechanisms for citizen influence. This thesis argues that alongside public policy discourse is a separate and distinct discourse of participation from the ANC as a movement. Here, *vanguardism* remains the dominant conceptual thread in which participation is seen as a means of fulfilling the NDR and extending ANC hegemony. As such, the teleological nature of participation as conceived by the ANC risks undermining the public policy objective of increasing citizen influence.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Signature……

Date: 16 March 2015

Heidi Brooks

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ACRONYMS

AAC (Alexandra Action Committee)

ANC (African National Congress)

AYCO (Alexandra Youth Congress)

BLA (Black Local Authorities)

CAJ (Civic Association of Johannesburg)

CC (ANC Constitution Committee)

CDS (Centre for Development Studies)

COD (Congress of Democrats)

CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa)

CoGTA (Department of Cooperation Governance and Traditional Affairs)*

COP (Congress of the People)

COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions)

CPF (Community Policing Forum)

CPSA (Communist Party of South Africa)**

DP (Democratic Party)

DLCA (ANC Department of Legal and Constitutional Affairs)

DLG (Developmental Local Government)

DPE (ANC Department of Political Education)

DPLG (Department of Provincial and Local Government)

EISA (Electoral Institute of Southern Africa)

GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme)

GPL (Gauteng Provincial Legislature)

GTZ (German Agency for Technical Cooperation)

IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation)

IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party)

IDP (Integrated Development Planning)

LGTA (Local Government Transition Act)

LGSETA (Local Government Sector Education Training Authority)

MEC (Municipal Electoral Councillor)

MDM (Mass Democratic Movement)

MK (Umkhonto we Sizwe)

MPNP (Multi-Party Negotiating Process)

NDR (National Democratic Revolution)

NEC (ANC National Executive Council)

NECC (National Education Crisis Committee)

NEDLAC (National Economic Development and Labour Council)

NGO (non-governmental organisation)

NLGNF (National-level Local Government Negotiating Forum)

NP (National Party)

NPM (New Public Management)

NWC (National Working Committee)

PAR (participatory action research)

PPPU (Public Participation and Petitions Unit)

PWV (Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging)

RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme)

RSA (Republic of South Africa)

RSC (Regional Service Council)

SACP (South African Communist Party)

SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions)

SALGA (South African Local Government Association)

SANCO (South African National Civic Organisation)

SANNC (South African Native National Congress) ***

SAPS (South African Police Service)

SCA (Soweto Civic Association)

SGB (School Governing Body)

TPA (Transvaal Provincial Authority)

UDF (United Democratic Front)

* Formerly the DPLG (Department of Provincial and Local Government)

** The CPSA became the SACP in 1953.

*** The SANNC became the ANC in 1925

Timeline

1912 - Formation of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC).

1921 - Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) is formed.

1925 - SANNC renames itself the African National Congress (ANC).

1943 - Publication of *Africans' Claims in South Africa* (1943).

1944 - Formation of the ANC Youth League.

1949 - ANC Youth League published its *Programme of Action.*

1952 - Defiance Campaign.

1953 - CPSA re-launches underground as the South Africa Communist Party (SACP).

1955 - Congress of the People.

1955 - Launch of the *Freedom Charter* (1955).

1960 - ANC and other liberation movements are banned.

1960 - ANC and SACP begin to establish themselves in exile.

1961 - Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the armed wing of the ANC is founded.

1969 - Publication of the ANC's *Strategy and Tactics*.

1976 - Soweto Uprising (many young black South Africans join the ANC in exile).

1978/9 - Following a visit to Vietnam the ANC's Politico-Military Strategy Commission publishes it report 'The Green Book'.

1983 - United Democratic Front (UDF) is formed

1985-7 - Period of 'people's power'.

1985 - Launch of the UDF journal *Isizwe* in November of that 1985

1985 - Mikhail Gorbachev assumes the Presidency of the Soviet Union.

1986 - The ANC in Lusaka establishes a Constitution Committee.

1987 - Secret talks begin in exile between senior ANC leaders and representatives of Afrikaner academic and business communities.

1988 - ANC publishes its *Draft Constitutional Guidelines*.

1990 - ANC, SACP and other liberation movements are unbanned.

1990 - ANC publishes its working document, *A Bill of Rights for a New South Africa*.

1990 - CODESA commences.

1991 - Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber is established.

1991 - National Local Government Negotiating Forum (LGNF) established.

1991 - UDF disbands.

1991 - ANC holds its first National Conference inside South Africa since its unbanning.

1992 - Second CODESA collapses.

1992 - South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) forms.

1993 - Multi-Party Negotiating Process (MPNP) commences.

1993 - Local Government Transition ACT (LGTA) - interim measures for restructuring LG.

1993 - *Interim Constitution* for South Africa.

1994 - First democratic elections (27 April 1994).

1994 - Constitutional Assembly begins to draft the final Constitution.

1995/6 - First local government elections.

1996 - Adoption of the *Final Constitution* of South Africa.

1997 - 50th National Policy Conference of the ANC.

1997 - *Local Government Green Paper.*

1998 - *Local Government White Paper.*

1998 - *Municipal Structures Act (1998).*

1999 - Second democratic elections.

2000 - *Municipal Systems Act (2000).*

2000 - Second local government elections.

2001 - The first ward committees are established.

2002 - *Gauteng Petitions Act (2002).*

2004 - Ward committees begin to be established in KZN and the Western Cape.

2004 - Third democratic elections.

2005 - Publication of guidance by the DPLG to support the establishment and operation of municipal ward committees.

2006 - Modules on ward committees are produced as part of a skills programme.

2007 - *National Policy Framework for Public Participation* is published by DPLG.

2007 - 52nd National Policy Conference of the ANC

2009 - Fourth national democratic elections.

2012 - 53rd National Policy Conference of the ANC.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. Aim

This aim of this thesis is to reconstruct the African National Congress' (ANC) theory of participatory democracy through an interrogation of its discourse and practice. The thesis covers an analysis of the ANC as a liberation movement in opposition (during the 1980s and early 1990s) to its role as a dominant party in power from 1994. Within each of these contexts, the ANC's commentary on and practice of participatory democracy are examined in order to uncover the underlying ideas. In essence it traces the development of democratic thought in the ANC to reconstruct an understanding of its theory of participatory democracy.

The focus of the research is the 1985-86 'people's power' movement and the formulation of post-1994 policy on participatory democracy. While there is no specific cut-off date for the period of analysis, the thesis is concerned with the period of policy formulation, from the constitutional discussions within the ANC from 1986 and commencement of local government negotiations in 1990 to the production of the most recent legislation and guidance on participatory democratic mechanisms in the early 2000s.

The period of 'people's power' during the 1980s involved the mobilisation and organisation of communities into locally constituted structures from the street level upwards. People's power was understood by some ANC activists at the time as a form of direct or participatory democracy (Adler & Steinberg 2000). The thesis thus interrogates the conceptions of people's power that existed amongst activists, participants and leadership in the ANC camp. The way in which both the role and future of people's power was understood helps us to uncover the formation of ideas about the role of popular participation.

The thesis then turns to the ideas that have informed post-1994 policy on participatory democracy. Through green and white paper processes, and finally in the passing and implementation of legislation, participatory democracy has been given form and content alongside a commitment to parliamentary, representative democracy. It has largely, though not exclusively, been given focus in the arena of local government. In the democratic era the ANC has linked the Freedom Charter's principle that "the people shall govern" to the structures of local government (ANC 1995a) and, more recently, ward committees (ANC 2000a). Analysis of the emergent ideas in this process thus enables an understanding of participatory democracy to be reconstructed.

Discussion of the post-1994 period, however, also demands examination of the codification of the ANC's ideas about popular participation, and about democracy more generally. The period following the height of the people's power movement, in and around 1985-7, and preceding the 1994 formation of the Government of National Unity therefore forms part of

the analysis. It is argued that the second half of the 1980s up until 1994 constitutes a significant period in the development of ANC democratic thought.

This thesis is primarily a study of ideas. It explores the way in which popular participation and the role for 'the people' has been understood by the ANC, first in the context of struggle and then in the context of democracy. In so doing, it assesses how the ANC understood the role and future of people's power; examines its ideas about popular participation from the late 1980s through the transition period; and attempts to draw out the way in which various ideas and themes have been woven into policy.

1.1.1. Context and Clarifications

It is acknowledged that within the ANC there is no well-developed theory of participatory democracy, nor a singular identifiable understanding of this model. The absence of such clarity in a context of participatory democratic commitments makes this study all the more relevant. The banning of the ANC from 1960 and its primary focus on overthrowing apartheid precluded a detailed discussion about the form of a future democratic state. Any analysis that precedes the formation of a formal position on participatory democracy therefore takes place in somewhat of a vacuum. This thesis therefore considers both whether practices during the 1980s were in fact theoretically driven and whether a dominant theory of participatory democracy can be identified.

The absence of a singular understanding of participatory democracy is also a reflection of the ideological breadth of the Congress movement. Its multiple, and often competing, political ideologies are reflected in the ambiguity of some of the ANC's key documents. Any analysis of the ANC's understanding of democracy necessitates familiarity with its ideological roots and traditions. The thesis therefore draws on this intellectual heritage to make possible the identification of continuities and discontinuities.

Particularly relevant to the thesis are the overlapping identities, ideological roots and personnel within the congress camp including the South African Communist Party (SACP) from the 1950s, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) from 1985, and the United Democratic Front (UDF) from 1983 to 1991. While the focus of this work is specifically on the ANC, the thesis seeks to highlight the ways in which inter-organisational linkages and cross-cutting membership have shaped, promoted or constrained certain ideas. It also examines divergences in democratic thought within the ANC itself.

A related issue here is how we define 'the ANC'. This is particularly pertinent to its period of illegality and the concurrent existence of the aligned, but officially autonomous, United Democratic Front (UDF). While we can isolate the UDF as a legal 'front' organisation in the internal struggle, it was, by its own admission, operating in the absence of the banned ANC. Some members of its leadership were involved in ANC underground structures. For the purposes of this thesis the analysis of the 1980s looks at the ideas about popular

participation within both the exiled leadership of the ANC and amongst internal activists of the UDF and its affiliates.

With regards to the post-1994 era, a useful set of literature is already available on the systemic and structural failures in local participatory governance (Buccus et al 2008; Benit-Gbaffou 2008; Piper & Deacon 2009; Malabela & Ally 2011). These accounts are particularly valuable in their analysis of specific mechanisms and localities. This thesis, however, is concerned with exploration of the *ideas informing such policy* and does not seek to retrace existing terrain. Moreover, given the focus on policy, it does not purport to provide a study of *non-institutional* participatory spaces instigated by civil society groups themselves. A wealth of literature is already available on the rise of social movement and civil society activism and is thus not focused on here.[1] What the thesis does do, however, is take note of the emergence of such 'invented' forms of participation[2], considering the way in which they are understood by the ANC as a participatory democratic space.

Finally, it should be noted that this analysis takes place in a context of formal commitment by the ANC to both representative *and* participatory democracy. The ANC itself continues to assert the complementary nature of these models. It has formally set out its adherence to principles of a liberal constitutionalism: the separation of powers, provision and protection of individual civil and political rights, political pluralism and open contestation. Therefore while this thesis is concerned with participatory democracy in particular, it also incorporates analysis of the ANC's understanding of democracy generally.

1.1.2. Background

From the end of the 1970s, with the resurgence of internal struggle and advent of a broad civic movement largely aligned to the ANC, a language of mass participation and control became visible in its discourse. The period 1985-86 saw the emergence of township organs of 'people's power' as well as a revival of the Freedom Charter's demand for "democratic organs of self government". The ANC's earlier calls for ungovernability shifted toward a discourse of 'people's power' in which the centre of control was transferred from Black Local Authorities (BLAs) to local popular organs informally structured outside of the state. While these structures were widely understood by ANC activists and cadres as contributing to one of the four 'pillars' of struggle, that of mass mobilisation, for some they were also understood in as pre-figuring a democracy of the future (Mzala 1986: 13).

As the longevity of apartheid grew increasingly doubtful, the ANC began to state more clearly its vision of a post-apartheid state. The latter part of the 1980s and early 1990s thus begot more detailed discussion about its position on a democratic future and the values it

[1] See, for example, Ballard et al (2006), Sinwell (2009), Dwyer (2004).

[2] *Institutional* forms refer to formal, state-invited forums for citizen and community engagement with government (i.e. mechanisms for participatory governance). *Non-institutional* forms refer to the 'bottom-up' spaces for participation, created and instigated by civil society activists and organisations.

would endorse. The years from 1994 are a period of policy formulation and implementation. While it has taken time for the legislative meat to be put on the bones of policy frameworks, the ANC's legislative commitment to public participation has consistently been linked to its democratic traditions and relationship with the people (Piper & Deacon 2009: 419). The reform of local government is the centrepiece of this commitment.

On the surface, therefore, both political and legislative commitments are in place. Reports from political commentators, academics and participating communities themselves, however, suggest that these mechanisms are not substantively working. This thesis is therefore an attempt to unravel the theory and ideas within the ANC that underpin its policy commitments, partly in order to explore whether these might help to explain failures in practice. Not only do ideas play a critical role in influencing practice but examination of *practice* itself, in turn, reveals the *ideas* underpinning it.

The thesis is also intended as a contribution to normative democratic debate in South Africa. It therefore also discusses participatory democracy by drawing on a range of normative democratic theory. It is the use of a normative framework that informs the questions asked of the ANC's conception of participation. Importantly, it seeks to reveal how the normative understanding of participatory democracy maintained by the dominant political forces within the ANC influences the extent to which resulting practices can truly be considered 'democratic'.

1.2. Rationale

During both the transition to democracy and since 1994 the ANC has advocated a role for participatory democracy alongside South Africa's representative institutions.[3] The ideas that inform these commitments, however, are inadequately understood. Although the dominant currents of ANC ideology are found in African nationalism and Marxism-Leninism, our understanding of its discourse of participatory democracy remains limited. With regard to people's power, a range of research has been produced on the 1980s experience of organisational and grassroots struggle, from providing a history of the UDF itself, to case-study-based accounts of popular power in various localities. What is missing from existing accounts, however, is ***an analysis of the ideas about democracy that this movement implied, not only as isolated cases but as part of a broader trajectory of democratic thought.***

Since the passing of legislation providing for participatory democracy in local government, a range of research has been published detailing its functional and democratic weaknesses. Findings have highlighted issues such as deficits in representivity, the challenge of educating communities, weak accountability of participatory structures, and problems of party-

[3] See, for example, the 1993 Alliance Discussion Document: 'Strategic Objectives of the National Liberation Struggle' (Alliance 1993: 6).

political loyalty. ***What is absent from the research to date is any attempt to connect this failure to the underlying theory***. As a result, despite a discourse whose trajectory has made reference to popular involvement, we still don't fully understand how the ANC conceives of 'participation'.

The participatory democratic traditions for which the ANC has sought institutional form are linked by policy-makers to 1980s traditions of civic activism and community participation. Some parts of the ANC have gone so far as to refer to participatory governance structures as contemporary 'organs of people's power'. Since 1994, through a number of institutional and legislative commitments, the ANC has placed clear expectations upon local municipalities in respect of the engagement of communities in decision-making. As indicated above, however, reports from across the board indicate that these state-invited spaces have been of limited success in providing for participation, local control, accountability and feedback[4].

Existing findings thus call for a more thorough analysis of the theory behind legislation. It is suggested here that an interrogation of these ideas can help us better understand the limitations of existing practices in giving marginalised citizens a voice. The case study of 'people's power' and concurrent ideas within the ANC informing short-term objectives and longer term goals are significant in explaining the limitations and prospects for participatory democracy.

Importantly, this thesis does not simply question the ANC's commitments on the one hand and its failure in practice on the other. Rather, it seeks to understand the South African condition as one in which participatory democracy is not merely a rhetorical commitment but has in fact seen enactment in practice. ***The key is that the failure of participatory democracy to accomplish in reality the purpose set out for itself cannot be de-linked from the theory underpinning it.***

Although the period of analysis begins with the 1980s, the research question is framed by the historic development of democratic thought in the ANC. The Freedom Charter and the concept of National Democratic Revolution (NDR) are key frameworks. Alongside African nationalism, Soviet and Marxist-Leninist currents were influential within the ANC during its time in exile and, although members of the movement differed in the extent to which they engaged in theorisation about the state, the NDR appears to have been a guiding framework. The national democratic state would be neither capitalist nor socialist but would in some form pave the way for the latter. The Freedom Charter has proven a more ambiguous document for those seeking to better understand ANC democratic thought. On the one hand the demand that 'The People Shall Govern' refers to the right to universal

[4] Buccus et al (2008) and Benit-Gbaffou (2008) both provide enlightening accounts of the limitations of participatory governance at the local level. See also Friedman and McKaiser (2010) on the difficulties faced by community organisations formally engaging with government; and Piper and Deacon (2009) on problems befalling the ward committee system in Msunduzi municipality.

suffrage. However, it also demands the replacement of existing state institutions with "democratic organs of self-government" (1955). The distinction, or indeed *overlap,* between representative institutions and those of direct democracy is left unclear.

During people's power, this clause of the Freedom Charter was frequently invoked as a suggestion of direct democracy. For some in the UDF, the development of organs of people's power was the enactment of this very clause (UDF, 1986a: 10). Organisational and communication difficulties triggered by the banning of the ANC saw the development of divergent strategies and tactics between the exiled movement, on the one hand, and internal activists on the other. Importantly, different ideas existed across the congress camp about the *role* and *future* of people's power.

Today, South Africa's civic organisations have not come to play the influential role in community representation they had envisaged. Rather, the ANC has sought to co-opt civics within its broad project of national transformation;[5] and has branded as 'anti-transformation' those organisations embarking on protest against government delivery.[6]

This thesis essentially challenges two prevalent views. Firstly, some voices on the Left in South Africa, such as Neocosmos (1998), Legassick (2007) and, to an extent, Sinwell (2011), view the current system of parliamentary, representative democracy as an inferior form of democracy to that prefigured by people's power. From their perspective, people's power constituted a deeper, more 'real' form of democracy. An interrogation of what precisely its proponents envisaged is therefore highly relevant.

Secondly, it challenges the notion that the ANC has shifted from being a deeply democratic and popularly-driven movement to one displaying new authoritarian tendencies and practices. Instead, this thesis argues that top-down processes of development, centralised policy direction and an instrumental understanding of participation can be traced to the ANC's ideological roots and traditions. Rather than constituting a post-1994 shift associated with the advent of liberal democracy, these traits were visible before the 1990s. The subsequent chapters examine this ideological lineage, showing that the failure and limitation of participatory democratic policy can be explained by the ideas underpinning it.

1.3. Research Question

How has the ANC understood and practiced participatory democracy since the 1980s? (With special reference to 'people's power' and policy formulation)

[5] See, for example, the 1998 Alliance Summit Document *Unity in Action*, which questions the "strategic motivation" for the continued existence of SANCO branches in areas where an ANC branch is also present (Umrabulo 1999).

[6] Some cases have seen the ANC use security forces and police to quell resistance, protest and unrest. See, for example, articles by Patel & Pithouse (2005) and the South Africa Independent Media Centre (2005).

1.3.1. Research sub-questions:

- In what ways does the ANC's intellectual heritage inform its understanding of popular participation?
- What ideologies, models or bodies of theory influenced 'people's power'?
- Did 'people's power' embody a singular understanding of participation?
- What understanding of democracy generally is implied in ANC discourse; and how has that impacted on its conception of popular participation?
- In what ways did the experience and ideas of 'people's power' influence the codification of the ANC's ideas about participatory democracy? Which ideas have been lost, changed or survived?
- What intellectual and theoretical influences fed into the development of post-1994 policy on participatory democracy?
- Is the ANC's own discourse of participation (in its documents and commentary as a movement) influenced by the same ideas that have informed public policy?
- What is the end result sought by the ANC in implementing participatory mechanisms?
- Has a singular or dominant understanding of participation emerged within the ANC?

1.4. Theoretical Framework: Situating the Research

The theoretical framework of this research rests within democratic theory and debates concerning the value of participation as a supplement to representative institutions. It emphasises the need to acknowledge competing conceptions of 'participation' but also proceeds from a *normative* view of participatory democracy based on existing theoretical literature. This normative position informs the questions being asked, considering both the ideas underlying the role of participation in ANC discourse and the intellectual heritage of its model of participatory democracy.

Interest in the construction of radical alternatives to 'contemporary' or 'elitist' theories of democracy[7] emerged in the 1960s, leading to a wider trajectory of democratic debate about the value of citizen participation in political life. By the early 1980s, these ideas had formed part of a broader global discourse and practice on the New Left. This emanated from a revived interest in democratic alternatives to orthodox Marxism and a desire to address the limitations of classic liberalism in facilitating public participation. Various experiments in local participatory governance were undertaken, often interwoven with ideas of 'deliberative democracy' as a new approach to participation.

[7] Pateman's critique (1970) refers to the 'contemporary' theory of democracy. Walker's critique (1966) of classic Schumpeterian ideas refers to the 'elitist' theory of democracy.

During the early 1990s, a not unrelated wave of thinking re-emerged amongst development specialists, whose ideas influenced international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and governments via a broader theory of 'participatory development'. Debates on the role and impact of participation have come to incorporate a range of concerns, including its educative effect; the fallacy of political equality; goals of popular empowerment; the benefits of decentralised democracy; realisation of substantive as well as procedural democracy; and the protection of liberal rights and freedoms.

Discussion of the intellectual lineage of participatory democracy generally begins with Rousseau. In *The Social Contract* (1762), Rousseau's denunciation of representative democracy as a narrow and limiting form of popular control, restored the debate amongst subsequent theorists about the value of 'classic' (or participatory) democracy (Pateman 1970; Barber 1984; Keane 1988; Walker 1966; Bobbio 1987, Dahl 1985). While Rousseau's was a form of direct democracy that drew its inspiration from the city states of Ancient Greece, the ideas and values that he placed upon *participation* regarding its 'educative' and 'self-sustaining' qualities (Pateman, 1970: 24-25) influenced radical democratic thought.

Although the formation of the modern nation state rendered Rousseauian ideals of republican and direct democracy increasingly untenable, its ideas have caused modern democracy to undergo normative reconsideration.[8] Drawing on the ideas of Pateman (1970), Barber (1984), Keane (1988), Beetham, (1993; 2005) and more recently Cornwall (2008), Hickey and Mohan (2004) and Theron and Ceasar (2008), participatory democracy has largely come to be understood as ***the participation of individual citizens in the decision-making processes about issues that affect their lives.*** To use Beetham's phraseology, if "the core meaning of democracy is the popular control of collective decision-making by equal citizens [then] the point of participation ... is to have some say in, and influence upon, collective decisions" (1993: 61).

Situated within a context of normative democratic debate, any analysis must allow for competing 'conceptions' or 'theories' of participation. Reflecting on Beetham, participatory democracy's success must be judged by the extent to which popular influence is realised. On this note, Sartori's observation about the distinction between participation and mobilisation is pertinent. He argues that "Participation is self-motion and thus the exact reverse of being put into motion (by another will), i.e. the opposite of mobilisation" (1987: 113). There is thus an important distinction between bottom-up processes of participation and the mobilisation of popular groups from above.

Although Beetham's formulation can help us to reach a normative conception of participatory democracy – one which can be used as a benchmark to assess ANC theory and practice – space must also be made for the recognition of differing or competing versions. A

[8] Pateman (1970) and Wolfe (1985), for example, encourage the revisiting of works by Jean Jacques Rousseau, J.S. Mill and G.D.H. Cole.

key component of this thesis lies in identifying these multiple conceptions to ascertain the extent to which they can be considered 'democratic'.

1.4.1. Participatory versus Elitist Democracy

To what, then, is participatory democracy an alternative? If participation is understood as the involvement of citizens in decision-making processes beyond those of electing representatives, its correct counterpart is the exclusion of citizens from this very activity. Here, participation is the preserve of professional, elected politicians or 'elites'. Elitist democracy is linked to authors such as Seymour Martin Lipset (1960) and Joseph Schumpeter (1943). For these theorists, citizen participation involves merely "participation in the choice of decision makers" (Pateman 1970: 14).

Elitist democracy is associated with the view that those interested in preserving the stability and efficiency of democracy should in fact *fear* popular participation. This presumption emanates from a belief in the autocratic and irresponsible tendencies of the average citizen (Pateman 1970; Walker 1966: 287, 289). From the view of proponents of participatory democracy, the elitist theory goes against the view of the popular mass as 'citizens' - as responsible and reasoned subjects with an interest in their own potentialities and in human progress more generally. It undermines the notion of citizens as "participants in public life" (Held 1993: 323,324).

Bachrach and Botwinick therefore argue that "... the most disturbing counter-argument against the theory of participatory democracy is that mass political quiescence is essential to the stability and health of democracy" (1992: 32). A narrow conception of citizenship also restricts the circle of political activity considered legitimate in the eyes of power-holders. Walker highlights the tendency of elitist democrats to view social movements as playing an 'antagonistic' role rather than viewing them as initiators of "reviews and innovations in policy" (1966: 294).[9] Young also maintains that "civic organising that raises issues and promotes policy objectives in the public sphere is an important supplement to the electoral process" (2000: 177).

1.4.2. Participatory and Representative Democracy

If we accept the distinction between elite and participatory democracy, what of representation? A common tendency is to conflate participatory with direct democracy *and* to accordingly counterpoise participation and representation.[10] This very confusion is a corollary to the not infrequent failure to identify participatory democracy's rightful counterpart in elitist democracy.

[9] See also Young (2000: 46-51) and Cornwall (2008: 282) on dangers of viewing forms of 'non-institutional' participation as 'disruptive'.

[10] Thanks to Daryl Glaser for helpful discussion on these distinctions and contrasts.

Participatory democracy, in and of itself, is *not* direct. It does not necessarily imply the *direct* decision-making of citizens in political matters, and thereby the removal of all representatives in the execution of those decisions (although participatory democracy may involve both of those features, thus constituting a form of direct *and* participatory democracy). Rather, it is the participation of citizens in the decision-making process itself, whether or not this also involves representatives. Dahl, for example, advocates the extension of participatory democracy to the economic order through worker participation in decision-making which may involve the use of worker representatives (1985: 91). Most forms of participatory democracy involve some form of representation, either within participatory structures themselves or through the external complement of representative institutions (e.g. an elected council or national parliament). Simultaneously, representative systems themselves often involve features of participatory decision-making (e.g. neighbourhood forums or assemblies).

Beetham's definition suggests that ***participatory democracy involves citizens participating in decision-making processes***, ***and that this takes place in such a way that their input influences the decisions reached*** (1993:61). Such participation may apply not only to the decision-making processes of individual citizens but to the internal structures of democratic movements and organisations. Either way, ***participation must involve some form of discussion and exchange of ideas, not merely the casting of a vote***.

Many advocates of participatory democracy, however, see the representative model as inadequate. For them, the very act of representation limits the extent to which it can be considered 'democracy'. Participatory democrats have thus sometimes come under fire for devaluing some of the basic democratic principles, such as political pluralism and individual rights, which characterise representative democracy (Glaser 2007). Participatory democracy should also be subject to the uncertainty of outcome that we expect of democracy generally. Glaser argues that in some cases, participatory democracy has been used to mask decision-making taking place elsewhere (2007: 134), such as within the structures of the party, executive or in smaller caucuses.

Other theorists taking up the mantle of participation did not seek the complete replacement of representative democratic institutions (Held 2006: 209; see also Sartori 1987: 112). This is partly guided by issues of scale and the sheer impracticality of direct democracy. However it has also placed value in representative democracy. Pateman and Barber, for example, argue not for the abolition of national representative institutions but for their increased democratisation through participation (Pateman 1970: 42, 105-106; Barber 1984: 264; 308). Pateman highlights that representative and participatory democracy can be mutually reinforcing (1970: 20; 109-110), contending that the presence of "competing leaders at national level" requires also the existence of a participatory society (1970: 42-43). In Barber's case, he maintains the need to "reorient liberal democracy toward civic engagement and political community, not to raze it" (1984: 308).

However their work does not focus on the liberal democratic values as such, rather promoting the need for a deeper form of democracy through participation. Other views, however, have been influenced by an acceptance that liberal democracy, a feature of which is representation, also embodies certain values that underpin the very meaning of democracy itself. Debates about the pairing of radical democracy with some of the values of political liberalism are picked up again below. It is worth stating here, however, that this thesis proceeds from that basis that participatory democracy can and should *supplement* representative democracy as a way of increasing political equality, democratic control and accountability, and providing a much-needed voice in decision-making to more marginalized citizens.

1.4.3. Marxism-Leninism and Mass Participation

An early inspiration for ideas of popular participation in Marx's writings was the 1871 Paris Commune. For Marx, the Commune was not necessarily a final outcome but rather a stage in a longer struggle (Levin 1989: 118; see also Lenin 1932: 32). Levin describes it as "an instrument of decentralised popular participatory expression" (Levin 1989: 117), characterised by elections (ibid: 122-123) and constituted largely of the middle class rather than workers (ibid: 115). The significance of the commune for Marx lay in its role as a vehicle toward a higher purpose. This was of course the Dictatorship of the Proletariat: "the state form which follows the proletarian revolution and precedes the final disappearance of all class distinctions" (Ibid: 12).[11]

For Lenin, too, the Commune suggested potential for the popular seizure of state power and erection of a working body that combined both legislative and executive powers (1932: 40-41). The focus of Lenin's ideas about the masses, however, also related to the need for an organisation of revolutionaries in the form of the 'vanguard party'. His key contributions to democratic thought included both the rejection of parliamentary institutions and the belief that class political consciousness needed to be brought to the workers from without (Liebman 1975: 30-31). Accordingly, the proletarian revolution implied both the seizure of state power and the primary role of the vanguard party. The 'renegade' Kautsky thus famously incurred Lenin's criticism for his defence of institutions of liberal democracy and his insistence that socialism could be realised through parliamentary institutions (Pierson 1986; Sirianni 1983: 85).

Although this thesis defends the value of participatory democracy, it also remains vigilant to the use of popular participation for purposes other than increased popular control. A frequent criticism of those suspicious of participatory democracy is its tendency to provide a cover for authoritarian practice. The establishment of a variety of Party-connected mass organisations that characterised the experience of the Soviet Union and other Marxist-

[11] See Levin (1989: 120-122) for a comprehensive analysis of the distinct features of the Paris Commune and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Leninist and Marxist-inspired regimes, provides evidence of popular participation as a cloak for centralised control by the Party (Femia 1993: 75-78, 133; Glaser 2007).

Although Lenin came to understand the Soviets (workers' councils) as 'embryos' of a revolutionary government (Liebman 1975: 88-90), Schecter highlights that the Marxist notion of local, decentralised 'communes' or councils stood in tension with the simultaneous defence of a centrally planned economy (1994: 9-10). Under Lenin, this contradiction "was solved at the expense of the organs of grassroots democracy, or Soviets" as they were eventually shed of their autonomy and subsumed in the Communist Party (ibid.).

The experience of state socialism has justifiably led participatory democracy's critics to highlight its propensity to undermine both political pluralism and the protection of individual autonomy. In the African Marxist regimes of the mid-1970s,[12] Glaser highlights how participatory organs were often established to make up for "the absence of representative-democratic institutions" (2007: 133). Participatory bodies were generally used for co-optation of civic groupings or to quell unwanted dissent. These regimes conceived of participation as the "mobilisation of the population to realise collective ends defined by the ruling party" (ibid.: 113-4).

Although this brand of Marxist regime is distinct from the earlier generation of African socialism, found during the 1950s and 60s in Nyerere's Tanzania, Senghor's Senegal and Toure's Guinea, these regimes too were averse to 'bourgeois' representative democracy. In creating their own forms of participatory or direct democracy, these states soon fitted Beetham's portrayal of "individual rights attacked in the name of the popular will, collective good or a higher form of freedom" (1993: 57-58).

Linked to the superficial or teleological application of citizen participation is what Femia refers to as Marxism-Leninism's "schizophrenic attitude towards the popular will" (1993: 93). On the one hand he notes that communist discourse emphasised popular power and control. Yet at the same time it implied "an agreed socialist culture to which the people needed to be enlightened" (ibid.). The Party either 'interpreted' the authentic popular will or acted as "an enlightened vanguard of the proletariat" (ibid.).

Yet what appeared as an elaborate facade was, within communist ideology, merely an alternative conception of participation. The Vanguard Party's historic role was to interpret the popular will; a will that was predestined, scientific and in the popular interest – whether or not the people themselves were yet conscious of it. The role for the masses is therefore critical for without them the vanguard cannot exist. As Femia argues, "The typical communist regime was not merely an authoritarian government, a small elite group ... Instead it was a dynamic totalitarian system, which set as its idea the active involvement of

[12] African Marxist regimes existed in post-independence Angola, Mozambique and in Ethiopia.

all citizens" (1993: 133). The ideas underpinning this conception of participation necessarily informed its practice.

1.4.4. Alternative Socialist Projects and Experiments with Workplace Democracy

Participatory democratic models which emerged as socialist alternatives to orthodox Marxism are of particular interest as experiments in popular control. The challenge that these models posed to Lenin's focus on the state and Party highlight the divisions within Marxism itself. Despite Marxism's very foundation in the struggle against working class oppression, Femia notes that Marx had actually said very little about the 'mechanisms' for worker participation and self-management (1993: 79). Through erection of community or workplace councils, the models of participation discussed here took up this very issue. Revolutionary- or anarcho-syndicalism, council communism and guild socialism came to represent Left experiments of alternatives to the centralized authoritarianism of state socialism and the elitist, centralised power structures of liberal democracy (Schecter 1994).

These traditions all built forms of participatory workplace democracy, while the guild socialists sought to extend this beyond the industrial sphere. Both councils and workers guilds incorporated a belief that participation carried an educative function through 'learning' self-government (see Schecter 1994: 75; and Pateman 1970: 38). The council communists held frequent informal elections and the 'right to recall' candidates, priding themselves on being rooted in 'real' or 'functional' communities as opposed to geographic ones (Glaser 1994: 146). Anarcho or revolutionary syndicalism, for its part, took on a broad role in educational services, labour support and information dissemination to members. Given Lenin's understanding of the (temporary) role of the state in securing the revolution, he was reproachful of syndicalists' view of both the party and state as inadequate mechanisms for the attainment of workers' power (Schecter 1994: 45).[13]

In slight contrast, collective anarchism rejected state authority but was not based exclusively within the industrial sphere (Heywood 1992: 205). Given its rejection of permanent authority structures and unofficial nature of localised organisation, we could challenge collectivist anarchism's definition as a form of democracy. Yet its import on direct and participatory democratic ideas lies in its belief in local, communal rule and what Heywood terms "the human capacity for social solidarity" (ibid). Collectivist anarchism entailed both a reliance on the 'spontaneity' of the masses and a rejection of the need to be "regulated or controlled by government" (ibid).

Although the Soviets were undoubtedly victims on the altar of state socialism, council or soviet democracy as a model has been criticised for its democratic deficits. These include a

[13] Anarchism's rejection of the state was also challenged by Marx and Engels who, although concurring with the "abolition of the state as an aim", did maintain that temporary use should be made of it to secure the Dictatorship of the Proletariat (Lenin 1932: 52).

unitary class-reductionism and failure to allow for political pluralism (Glaser 1994). While creating their own internal representative structures, Schecter notes that both council communism and revolutionary syndicalism branded universal suffrage as beneficial only to the ruling elite bureaucracy (1994: 28). Sirianni's analysis of the experience of 'dual power', where councils or committees existed in parallel to a national parliament, also notes the risk to democracy of the proliferation of council structures which lack institutional arrangements for mediation and democratic discussion (1983: 107). Given the comparisons drawn by the ANC between the concept of 'dual power' and the establishment of 'people's power', then the council model is of some significance to the South African case.

In light of the Leninist variant of Marxism within the ANC, and the SACP's historic admiration for the model of the Soviet Union, it is not clear to what extent the ANC was influenced by the experiments that established themselves as alternatives to state socialism. In fact ideas associated with forms of 'workerism' and 'ultra-leftism' were shunned in favour of broader alliance politics. With the rise of South Africa's independent trade union movement from the 1970s, however, some of the features and practices of these workplace experiments can be identified. Although often seen by workerists as part of an opposing tradition of 'populism' or 'Charterism', the emergence of people's power in the 1980s brought with it elements of community education, self-empowerment and service provision reflective of these workplace experiments.

1.4.5. Themes in Normative Democratic Debate since the 1960s: liberalism, participation and consensus

With the establishment of authoritarian communist regimes following the two world wars and the subsequent resurgence of liberal democratic doctrine, the late 1960s to 1990s brought about a revival of democratic debate on the issue of citizen participation. One of the earliest proponents of this movement was American academic, Arnold Kaufman (1968). His work in *The Radical Liberal* (1968) signified rising dissatisfaction on the democratic Left with the paradoxical rhetoric and reality of American democracy. Related ideas are also found in the 'Port Huron Statement' (1962) of America's 'Students for a Democratic Society' (SDS), who sought "the establishment of a democracy of individual participation".

Kaufman's fundamental argument is that the very need to "deepen and enrich the quality of the democratic process, to make it both more deliberative and more participatory, flows directly from the central doctrines of liberalism" (1968: 7). As such, by denying liberalism the possibility of cultivating human potential and thus producing good citizens, he argued that liberalism itself had become 'self-defeating' (ibid: 45). His solution to the ailments of American democracy was essentially the radicalisation of liberalism: "an attempt to build a society which is free because its citizens are thoughtful and informed" (Mattson 2000).

Representative institutions and individual rights would remain the bedrock of Kaufman's "reconstructed liberalism". Participatory democracy, however, would be "a necessary

component" (ibid.). Kaufman is thus one of a number of radical democrats who have emphasised their desire to reinforce, not remove, the values underpinning liberal democracy. By his account, participation is not just a means for freely-associating individuals to influence policy decisions for collective benefit but also a self-fulfilling process in which participation produces better citizens. This case has also been convincingly argued by Pateman (1970) and Barber (1984).

Through participation, it is therefore possible to rid democracy of the threat envisaged by elitist democrats of the 'irresponsible demagogue' or authoritarian mass (Walker 1966). At the same time it is possible to challenge 'mass political quiescence' (Bachrach & Botwinick 1992: 32) and the disempowered 'client', whose citizenship in the 'legal' sense is not translated into agency, and whose voice is not heard through occasional contact via the ballot box.

With the resurgence of this debate, several authors in the 1970s and 80s began to raise serious questions about the merits and possibilities of participatory democracy. According to Held, their project emanated from both 'dissatisfaction' with orthodox Marxism's rejection of pluralism (1996: 264-5) and, like Kaufman, with the political inequality left unchallenged by liberalism (ibid.; See also Beetham 1993: 59-60). Many such authors have not sought to replace representative institutions entirely but have highlighted the absolute necessity to democracy of appropriate institutions which secure individual rights and enable popular choice (Beetham 1993; Beetham 2005; Cohen & Goulbourne 1991; Glaser 1991). Glaser underscores that "collective subjects are composed of freely associating individuals" (1991: 100) and so accordingly individual freedom is both "a premise and a goal of democratic collective action" (ibid).

These debates link to the critique of Leninist strategy by Kautsky and later Poulantzas and Hodgson (Sirianni 1893: 85) that parliamentary institutions and universal suffrage should not be displaced but supplemented and 'enriched' by "grassroots democratic organisation" (Hodgson in Sirianni 1983: 85-86). Bobbio's liberal socialist approach addresses both the need to extend principles of representative democratic control to other areas of society (1987: 54-55) and to not limit the content of political equality and participation to voting alone (1987: 56). He further pushes for the protection of pluralism (1987: 62) and the rights of citizens, both of which are guaranteed by liberalism (1987: 25-26).

A particular author who seeks to reverse the problems of apathy and popular powerlessness induced by the citizens' distance from decision-making is Benjamen Barber. Elucidating the need for something between liberal and unitary democracy, he refers to 'strong democracy' which focuses on civic engagement and deliberation but aspires to "a form of community that is not collectivist" (1984: 150-151). Barber sees the need for institutional reforms that combine liberal democratic institutions with local participation, proposing participatory spaces such as "neighbourhood assemblies" to create the "conditions" for participation and the capacity and "civil competence" for the local exercise of power (1984: 268-9).

Jane Mansbridge (1983), however, raises concerns about the democratic limitations of participation in a context where consensus amongst participants is not guaranteed. Assessing forms of participation that sprung up in 1960s America she argues that what many participatory democrats sought was not "equality or liberty" but rather "solidarity" and "community" (1983: viii). Hers is not an elitist democrat's account, nor a defence of participatory democracy (1983: xi) but rather a word of warning that what participatory democrats seek in some cases is an essentially 'unitary' form of democracy.

What Mansbridge seeks to convey is that unitary democracy may be appropriate and beneficial in cases where there is common agreement amongst participants. But in contexts in which this is not the case, unitary democracy may fail to recognise diverse interests, serving only to hide or suppress differences between groups in the name of a false unity (1983: 4, 34-45). However, what she refers to as 'adversary' democracy, a mechanism that assumes conflict between individuals, also runs the risk of failing to build social unity or citizen solidarity (1983: 4). Not only can such a sense of community help to foster the 'participatory society' and the informed, publicly minded 'good citizen', it is also, as Mansbridge argues, a human need (1983: 4). The main thrust of her argument is that both forms of democracy are necessary: we need "a single institutional network that can allow us both to advance our common interests and to resolve our conflicting ones" (1983: 7)

In a move to specify a *method* or *process* for more democratic decision-making, some have advocated 'deliberative democracy'. While not synonymous with participatory democracy, deliberation is a method by which participation could be practiced. Gutmann and Thompson describe deliberative democracy as:

> "a form of government in which free and equal citizens (and their representatives), justify decisions in a process in which they give one another reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, with the aim of reaching conclusions that are binding in the present on all citizens but open to challenge in the future" (2004: 7)

In contrast to aggregative democracy (in which decisions are reached by a purely numerical aggregation of votes), deliberation involves a process of discussion, argument and exchange of views. As such, there is an emphasis on accountability and the need to justify decisions taken. Young therefore argues that "through dialogue, proposals and arguments are tested and challenged ... participants arrive at a decision not by determining what preferences have greatest numerical support but by determining which proposals the collective agrees are supported by the best reasons" (2000: 22-23).

Not unlike participatory democracy, deliberative democracy's critics have equated its emphasis on consensus with attempts to eradicate pluralism and the conflict inherent to democracy (Mouffe 2000). In Mouffe's concept of 'agonistic democracy', through which she critiques both Rawls and Habermas, the pursuit of consensus is neither possible nor

desirable (ibid.). Others argue, however, that deliberative democracy need not necessarily seek to erase difference. In what Gutmann and Thompson refer to as 'deliberative pluralism', value is placed on achieving "as much agreement as possible" but also seeking "ways of living well with those disagreements that cannot or should not be eliminated" (2004: 28). While deliberation may still be undertaken by representatives, its democratic value is broadened and deepened through "an expansive definition of who is included in the process of deliberation" (ibid.: 9).

1.4.6. Participation and Municipal Governance

Crucially, participation has not been the preserve of theorists alone. Stoker points toward an international shift in thinking about local government. States have come to extend their focus beyond local government's role as a service-provider towards its concern with "community leadership" and local democratic input that goes beyond electoral and representative democracy (2002: 31). In the 1960s and 1970s various attempts at practising participation in local government took place in Britain and America, and were picked up again the 1980s and 1990s as part of a broader governance agenda to increase citizen participation. This latter period has also seen a number of participatory governance initiatives in municipalities of lower and middle income countries such as Brazil, South Africa and India.

In Britain, Burns (et al) highlight the experience in 1986 of introducing neighbourhood committees in the London Borough of Islington. Although this successfully widened public involvement in local government decision-making (Burns et al 1994: 200-1), they argue that on the whole it failed to challenge existing power relations and the imposition of structures, processes and expertise (ibid. 269). In the USA, mechanisms for participatory governance were implemented in the 1960s around projects for urban renewal and housing, especially amongst low-income groups. However, Arnstein (1969) argues that the creation of structures such as neighbourhood 'councils', 'advisory groups' and other citizen forums tended to be characterised by a 'one-way flow of information' in which citizens were on the receiving end.

More recent experiments, however, hold greater promise. The post-1997 Labour Government in Britain set out a vision for local government that focused on the idea of harnessing community contributions as a way of improving leadership and strengthening local democratic politics (Stoker 2002: 36). Wainwright (2003) covers efforts among local communities in northern England and Los Angeles to engage and challenge local government and improve standards of living. She contends that the potential for new forms and possibilities of participatory democracy are being generated at a local level (ibid.).

In analysing experiments in participatory governance, some authors have drawn on ideas of deliberative democracy (Abers 1998; Baiocchi 2003; Fung and Wright 2001). Examining the experience of introducing 'participatory governance' in Porto Alegre in Brazil and Kerala in

India, Fung and Wright refer to the strategy of 'empowered deliberative democracy' which aspires to "deepen the ways in which ordinary people can effectively participate in and influence policies that directly affect their lives" (2001: 7).

In Porto Alegre, local government reforms sought a "general restructuring of democratic decision-making" by introducing a participatory budgeting system involving local residents and associations (2001: 7-8). Local neighbourhood assemblies take place on a city-wide basis and every citizen has the right to elect a representative to their assembly (Wainwright 2003) - a system not dissimilar to the 'Panchayats' or self-governing assemblies in Kerala. Moreover, the Porto Alegre municipality itself has invested in the up-skilling of citizens to be involved in such processes (Abers, 1998; Wainwright 2003). Both examples appear to have enhanced citizen incentive to engage in issues of local government (Heller, 2001; Abers 1998; Fung and Wright 2001). Heller's account of Kerala, for example, suggests a 'downward' shift in the 'locus' of decision-making and an increase in the range of grassroots groups participating in policy formulation (2001: 142).

Experiments in participatory governance, however, have also been subject to criticism. Although community participation in decision-making processes should facilitate both the empowerment of participants and greater project efficiency (Cleaver 2001: 37), it is argued that the concept in itself does not address issues of unequal power relations and social inequalities, nor does it account for local political contexts (Baiocchi 2003; Cornwall 2008; see also Theron & Ceasar 2008). Much can rest on the strength of local democratic political institutions, for example. Where such institutions are weak, "it is possible for decentralisation to result in decentralized authoritarianism or elite control" (Beard et al 2008: 6), warranting the caution that decentralisation does not necessarily produce more democracy (ibid.).[14]

A useful analytical tool in this respect is Arnstein's 'ladder of participation' (1969), which alerts us to the existence of different degrees (or conceptions) of participation. Her categorisations, illustrated through empirical cases, range on a spectrum from 'manipulation' to 'citizen control'. This shows the ways in which 'consultation', 'informing' and 'placation' can be construed as forms of participation yet differ significantly in their empowering potential to methods such as 'partnership', 'delegated power' and 'citizen control' (ibid.). Not dissimilarly, the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has produced a *Spectrum of Public Participation*. This depicts an increasing scale of public impact, including: inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower (IAP2, 2007a). The public participation strategies used by the South African government in the application of local government Integrated Development Planning (IDP) have been based on IAP2's 'core values' (Theron & Ceasar 2008: 112-113).

[14] See also Miraftab (2008) in the same book who argues that strong central and regional governments are also necessary for local authorities to enable "inclusive development".

1.4.7. Participatory Development Discourse

Not dissimilarly to attempts at participatory governance, development theorists have also sought to pursue and evaluate a number of experiments in participatory development, community participation and participatory planning. Further to the failed development experiments in participation during the 1960s, ideas about the positive potential of 'participation' were renewed in the 1980s-90s amongst development organisations, NGOs, international organisations and major donors. The World Bank has defined participation as "the process through which stakeholders influence and share control over priority setting, policy-making, resource allocations and access to public goods and services" (World Bank, undated). Many such projects have focussed on rural development through techniques such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA).

While participatory development is premised upon the need to empower participants, as well as achieve sustainable and effective outcomes, Cooke and Kothari have critiqued its failure to fundamentally challenge deeper issues of power and power relations (2001: 6, 14). Others have highlighted how the notion of 'participation', which has been co-opted by mainstream international development organisations, has become a new 'buzzword' in development, thus losing its "radical transformative edge" (Cleaver 2001: 37). As such, it has become more concerned with efficiency (ibid; Mosse 2001: 17) and meeting donor requirements (Bond and Hulme in Harley 2001: 98-99; Mosse 2001: 25).

These concerns warrant a range of questions regarding whose voice is heard in deliberative processes: for example, is participation dominated by those who are more educated, more confident, or whose work and family circumstances give them greater flexibility to attend participatory meetings?[15] "Who is excluded and who excludes themselves?" (Cornwall 2008: 275). Are those who act as 'community representatives' indeed representative of those they claim to speak for? Do participants shape the agenda, as "social actors" and not "passive subjects" (Theron & Ceaser 2008: 105)? And have priorities already been agreed by local leaders, external experts or government officials?[16] These concerns have accordingly led to warnings of the "tyranny of participation" (Cooke & Kothari 2001). Linking these thoughts to Mansbridge's thesis (1983), we should also ask whether participatory forums leave room for adversary (not just unitary) mechanisms to recognise when participants cannot be characterised by a collective social interest.

Although here I have separated out experiments in participatory governance from those of participatory development, many of the lessons and concepts are cross-cutting. Arnstein's formulation (1969) applies to politicians, bureaucrats, project leaders and managers. Similarly the IAP2 spectrum of participation is produced for use by governments and other

[15] Disparities in participation are reported by Mansbridge (1983) in her observations and interviews with participants of the Selby Town Meeting.

[16] See, for example, comments by Botes and van Rensburg on "the paternalistic role of development experts" and the "inhibiting and prescriptive role of the state" (2000: 42-43).

organisations. They define 'public participation' as "any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and that uses public input to make better decisions" (IAP2 Code of Ethics).

Using this broad theoretical landscape of democratic theory, participatory development, participatory planning and municipal governance, an understanding of the influences of these concepts in the South African context becomes possible.

1.5. Literature Review

A range of existing literature captures the active role of civil society in the struggle against apartheid, most notably the organisation of township civic associations and the independent labour movement. Thorough accounts of the UDF and township struggles of the 1980s have been produced by Seekings (2000a), Van Kessel (2000), Mufson (1990) and Adler and Steinberg (2000). Equally, some of the most well-known case study analyses of popular and civic organisation in the mid-1980s covers townships in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) region (Seekings 1988, 1992; Marks 2001), and more specifically the West Rand (Seekings 1992a; van Kessel 2000); Alexandra (Bozzolli 2004, Mayekiso 1991, Carter 1991), Atteridgeville/Sausville (Steinberg 2000); Diepkloof (Marks 2001); and Mamelodi (Boraine 1987). Research has also covered areas including Sekhukhneland (van Kessel 2000), Port Elizabeth (Cherry 2000a & 2000b) and, to a much lesser extent, Cape Town (van Kessel 2000; Scharf and Ngcokoto 1990).

This existing literature shows the ways in which largely ANC-aligned activists and organisations began working in communities during the early 1980s, seeking to mobilise people around local grievances that were eventually linked to broader issues of national political oppression (Seekings 1992b; Sisulu 1986: 101-102; van Kessel 2000: 28). Research has also analysed the spontaneous mass uprisings and revolts that were a feature from 1984, with a view to understanding the way in which they linked to more organised forms of struggle. As a result, the material that we are able to draw upon today is extensive.

In addition to literature on internal activism, accounts of the ANC's period in exile also provide important insight, particularly the development of thinking around the armed and political struggles (Ellis & Sechaba 1992; Ellis 2012; Barrell 1992 and 1993; Shubin 1999). Interestingly, Barrell (1992) addresses the concurrent relevance of the ANC's 'strategic review' of revolutionary strategy in 1978-79 to the direction that the internal liberation struggle took from 1980 onwards. This acknowledged the severe limitations of the 'militarist vanguardism' pursued by the movement thus far (Barrell 1992: 85) and instead "identified a political base as a prerequisite for a decisive and forcible ANC contention for state power" (ibid.: 64). Grassroots political organisation in South Africa consequently came to take on increasing importance in ANC revolutionary strategy.

However, although supporting people's power through the call to "make South Africa ungovernable",[17] the ANC's strategic and ideological vision remained that, under its own leadership, these forces would culminate in popular armed insurrection (Barrell 1992: 65). What emerged in South Africa's townships, however, was a groundswell of locally-driven popular power, albeit aligned to the liberation movement. Seekings therefore observes that, by mid-1985, "township struggles were the key element in internal opposition politics" (1992: 20).

Some explorations of the historic role of the civics have drawn on the extent to which they viewed themselves as embryonic forms of a future democracy (Seekings 2000a; Cherry 2000a; Glaser 1991: 110). Adler and Steinberg, for example, draw upon the "quasi-governmental institutions" founded by the civics, who often viewed themselves as "the sole and legitimate representative of the people" (2000: 6-7). Civics established street and area committees where township affairs and issues would be discussed by residents, and extended their role to cover functions such as education, justice and policing in the place of the BLAs.

These models of people's power, for some activists, were understood as a form of direct of participatory democracy that extended beyond the restricted democracy represented by the ballot box (Adler & Steinberg 2000: 8). As Adler and Steinberg explain, "In this participatory vision, the gap between governors and governed would be closed by virtue of a political form that inducts everybody into the realms of political and administrative decision-making" (ibid.). Interestingly, Mufson likens people's power to the Paris Commune or the soviets of pre-Bolshevik Russia in their replication of "the enthusiasm of ordinary citizens for a parallel government under their control" (1990: 105). There was certainly a clear influence of socialist and Marxist thought amongst the UDF and its affiliates, with the phrase 'dual power' itself being borrowed from Lenin (Mufson 1990: 132). However theorisation was also partly the preserve of particular intellectuals. The extent to which its ideological lineage and ideas guided the thinking of local activists is picked up in Chapter Three.

In some cases, organs of popular power were compared to the shop floor structures of the trade unions in terms of social solidarity, self-organisation and service provision but also in their democratic ideals. Certainly by the mid-1980s both the civics and independent trade unions were linking local issues to the broader nationalist struggle. Glaser argues that the overlapping ideological persuasions and personnel in ANC camp were sowing seeds of direct and participatory democracy not only amongst the labour movement but in the 'populist' politics of the UDF and civics (1991: 109-110). He therefore suggests that the "intellectual lineages" of the independent trade unions, in particular those of syndicalism and council communism (Glaser 1991: 109) began to penetrate township struggles.

[17] See, for example, the ANC article in *Mayibuye* (1984): "Let us make our county ungovernable".

It is also important to note, however, that the civics were not necessarily uniformly oriented toward revolution. Many civics and related programmes sought rather to provide services which gave communities some respite against the daily grind of apartheid life. Civic associations largely dealt with bread and butter issues, and in some cases sought not to challenge local authority structures but to gain concessions for residents (van Kessel 2000: 29; 150). Others, Mufson describes as more moderate or 'conservative', seeing themselves as re-imposing 'law and order' and reigning in militant youth (1990: 126-7; see also Bozzoli 2004). According to Seekings, even the infamous 'people's courts' sometimes started out life as 'advice offices' (1990: 125).

An important debate for this research is thus the extent to which civics had a revolutionary or ideological vision versus a (relatively) short-term, reformative agenda. It's interesting that where negotiations between civics and local authorities did take place, it was not always warmly received by the ANC (ibid; Lodge 1990: 52). The ultimate ends sought by civics thus had bearing on the methods used to get there.

Organs of people's power have also generated critique of their democratic credentials. On the one hand they emerged in the context of a lack of alternatives: of an illegitimate, oppressive state and the declining provision of services. They were nonetheless often underpinned by a rejection of political pluralism. In eradicating 'the gap' between governors and governed there emerged not only an absence of mechanisms to ensure accountability but also a participatory vision that removed the need for debate or deliberation. In the case of localised justice through 'people's courts', punishment could be arbitrary and their function and remit not the result of consultation or democratic agreement (see Bozzoli 2004: 141, 149-156). Steinberg highlights that these popular organs also assumed the logic of "a single political voice" (2000: 185). The direct control of many civic organisations was consequently wielded only by those aligned with the majority view.[18]

Van Kessel argues that, by 1986, the UDF was displaying increasing intolerance and labelling alternative groups as enemy forces (2000: 38). Additionally, despite the Front's official stance against violence, the leadership's sometimes insufficient condemnation of violence against perceived opponents did not go un-noticed (Jeffery 2000), nor did it prevent individuals from sanctioning particular incidents or encouraging retaliation (Mufson 1990: 97).

This said, it is largely accepted that the UDF lost a lot of control over popular protest (Mufson 1990: 97) and over the actions of individuals who saw themselves as members of the ANC or UDF but did not officially belong to any organisation (Seekings 2000a: 315). Through its calls to action, the ANC itself was also somewhat responsible for the violence

[18] Cherry, for example, draws upon the majority decision-making and "territorial hegemony" built by the civics, positioning against one another those who were aligned and non-aligned with the congress movement (2000a: 107).

that accompanied protest, even though, as Mufson highlights, it continued to maintain a policy of 'controlled violence' (1990: 100).

How different then was the understanding of people's power amongst civic activists to that of the ANC in exile? This question is not easily answered. Familiar to both 'inzile' and 'exile' discourses was the debate of 'dual power' and 'liberated zones': the extent to which popular organisations in South Africa were establishing truly alternative structures in areas where the state had lost almost complete control. The assumption of Charterist hegemony and a unified popular will were also not peculiar to the civics. The 1980s discourse of the ANC echoed these same ideas but did so in a context of exile that called not only for popular unity but clandestinity and tight central control.

What is of significance for this research is the surfacing within the broad ANC camp of multiple understandings of the role and future of people's power. Steinberg (2000) argues that there were three ways in which people's power was conceived by the civics. Firstly he highlights the "political instrumental conception" which viewed township organs as "a vehicle by which local apartheid structures are to be destroyed". In this understanding, the existence of people's power is entirely dependent "on the continued existence of the apartheid regime". Secondly, is a conception of temporary power - i.e. organs of township resistance "doubling up as organs of government" but only while apartheid continues to exist and in the absence of democracy. Thirdly is a conception of people's power as developing organs of a future democracy - built to destroy apartheid structures but also to "outlive and replace" them (Steinberg 2000: 186-187).

To this we could add a fourth conception: that the organs of resistance would outlive apartheid as institutions of local democracy but would remain *a civil realm* (Daryl Glaser, personal communication). Civics would retain their earned right to represent their communities but in combination with the formal democratic government. Debates taking place within the civic movement by 1990 also show that the possibilities of either the ANC taking over civic work, or of civics, themselves, becoming formations of that ANC were also being considered (UDF National Civics Office 1990).

In Steinberg's study of the Atteridgeville/Saulsville Resident's Association (ASRO), he finds the third conception - of people's power as a form of future democracy - to be absent amongst the civic leadership (2000: 190). He argues, however, that this does not mean civics conceived of their role as merely a "tactical initiative" but rather as a process of residents' empowerment, of encouraging participation and broadening people's understanding of what democracy could mean (ibid). In essence, it created the "rudimentary principles" of the future and, importantly, "a deepening of the political": "the notion that an array of social relations previously designated to lie either in the incontestable sphere of unilateral administrative action, were to be redefined and reshaped by the demand for participation" (ibid).

Janet Cherry's research in the townships of Port Elizabeth is also useful. She argues that the "strategic intentions" of activists involved in establishing organs of people's power can be divided into three views (2000a: 88). Firstly she sets out an "organic" or "spontaneous" perspective in which people's power was understood as an "expression … by ordinary people trying to take control of their own lives (ibid.). This view was held by many who saw it as a bottom-up process, rather than one directed or controlled by the ANC. Cherry cites Mark Swilling and Jeremy Seekings as being among those who held this view (ibid.: 88-9).

The second view that Cherry sets out is "the 'classic revolutionary' perspective" which she describes as being held by "the exiled liberation movements, the South African Communist Party (SACP), the 'old guard' of activists from the 1950s and 1960s, and many of the younger generation of activists loyal to the ANC" (ibid.: 89). In this version the street and area committees were primarily organs of struggle in a "protracted people's war" (ibid.: 89-90). It assumed a strong connection between the exiled and internal mass movements, primarily via the work of underground cells, and focussed on people's power's utility and insurrectionary potential as an "an offensive" against the state (ANC 1986a).

The third view identified by Cherry is "the 'hegemonic revolutionary' perspective" (ibid.: 91). This is in some ways a combination of the preceding two perspectives: it was neither an entirely local initiative, nor one controlled from without. Rather, "the building of democratic organisation and the mobilisation against the state were not seen as contradictory, since the capturing of state power was the common objective of both projects" (ibid.: 92). Van Kessel also suggests that the UDF's conception of democracy as "both a means and an end" contrasted with that implied in ANC and SACP publications in which people's power was instead "a means to an end" (2000: 70). By the time of the ANC's unbanning in 1990, this friction would resurface as one of "Charterist hegemony versus autonomous civil society" (van Kessel 2000: 46).

It could be reasoned that the political intolerance and pluralistic deficit in the 1980s form of popular participation did not fully materialise until the struggle had been won. Yet, the existence of factions *within* townships in the 1980s was not uncommon, neither were reports of the use of coercion by comrades to deal with non-compliance (Mufson 1990: 119; Bozzoli 2004: 134-135; van Kessel 2000: 188-191). In Alexandra, Bozzoli speaks of an overarching generational divide in which the millenarian view of the struggle held by 'utopian' youth clashed with more adult-based residents and leaders seeking to create a local 'popular democracy' (2004: 125).[19] The heterogeneity and disagreement within the internal movement itself must therefore not be underestimated.

That being said, whatever their view of the future of people's power, its practice instilled in many people the idea of participatory and mass driven democracy as the only 'natural

[19] In some cases, structures of popular power were set up as a direct counter to local uncontrolled youth (Bozzoli 2004).

development' from their active role in the mass politics of the struggle (Cronin 2005). The ANC's formal shift toward *liberal* democracy from 1990 (albeit supplemented by principles of popular empowerment and participation) may well have conflicted with expectations on the ground. Nonetheless, after 1990 the ANC continued to indicate aspirations toward popular participation. In the context of a globally discredited socialist movement, the ANC's alliance partners in the SACP were also searching for ways to translate citizen participation into the realisation of socialist democracy.

In spite of this focus on participation, a concurrent post-1994 ANC discourse has also been present which is not only critical of political opposition but of voices within civil society who have utilised participatory spaces to challenge government policy. Egan and Wafer suggest that many within the ANC see civic-based organisations who dispute party policies as "challengers to the ANC Alliance's 'historic right' to represent the masses, particularly the working class" (2006: 55). To what extent, then, have ANC conceptions of participatory democracy been shaped by a vision of itself as representing the masses? Does its character as a 'broad mass movement' preclude the need for independent input from citizens and their civil representatives?

Some of the debates about a future democracy that took place within the ANC during the late 1980s-early 1990s are still not entirely understood. It is the codification and consolidation of its ideas during this period that the thesis hopes to uncover. What is clear is that by 1987 the ANC had stated its willingness to enter into negotiations (Lodge 1990: 48) and began to draw up certain principles or guidelines for a constitutional future. Included in this process was not only a "growing perception" that the transition to socialism would be "a gradual one" (Lodge 1990:50) but also a commitment to multi-party democracy and a bill of rights.[20]

Moreover, while the ANC might not wish to label itself as such, its language from the late 1980s was increasingly flavoured with ideas of 'liberal' or 'constitutional' democracy, albeit with an important emphasis on socio-economic rights. Lodge therefore described the 1988 constitutional guidelines - a product of this very process of internal discussion - as "a balance between the ANC's conservative and radical traditions" (1990: 53). On the issue of participation, while the specific form of 1980s people's power may not have survived the transition to democracy, the ANC continued to infer the need to 'concretise' Charterist principles in the post-1990 era (Alliance 1993: 8). Williams also makes the case that the SACP shifted toward a more people-led (as opposed to state-led) conception of democracy from the early-mid 1990s (2008: 26-27).

The local government legislation in the form of the Municipal Structures Act 1998 and Municipal Systems Act 2000 allowed for the formation of institutional structures for public participation to facilitate the involvement of communities in local government matters.

[20] See the ANC's 1988 Draft Constitutional Guidelines.

Friedman & McKaiser therefore quite rightly assert that "the plethora of formal mechanisms which enable citizens to participate in government should make South Africa a model of participatory governance" (2010: 3). Despite the presence of legislative provision, however, it is argued that "on the whole... public participation is limited to forms of consultation, usually around needs, rather than any real empowerment in political decision-making or implementation" (Hemson 2007 cited in Buccus et al 2008: 299).

A number of authors have undertaken valuable analyses of the pitfalls of this present system. Benit-Gbaffou (2008; 2007), Buccus et al (2008), Piper and Deacon (2009) and Malabela and Ally (2011) each provide accounts of problems that have dogged local government ward committees, including issues of dependency, accountability, community education and party political loyalty. Benit-Gbaffou contends that Ward Councillors lack sufficient power within council structures to ensure residents' views are taken on board (2008: 11-16). Concurrently, there is a lack of accountability to their constituents – a feature impacted by the 'party driven' selection of ward councillors, where party loyalty tends to take precedence over "the candidates' local credentials" (ibid.: 2008: 16-17). This would certainly explain the restricted mandate of ward committees and lack of any "real power" delegated to the local level (Benit-Gbaffou, 2007: 31).

Within the framework of NDR and the historic role of the movement, there is perhaps a subtext to ANC discourse which suggests a reluctance to listen to views that do not endorse ANC policy. Some ANC commentary very closely links the 'strengthening' of participatory democracy with the 'mobilisation' of the masses (ANC, 2000b: para 2.2) and, as Pretorius argues, accordingly links 'mobilisation' with 'hegemony' (2006: 755). Ironically, however, the practice of mobilisation is essentially an elite-driven initiative rather than one that is driven or 'activated' from below (Pretorius 2006: 754; Sartori 1987: 113).

Similarly, while Pretorius argues that the ANC does not see the people as homogenous but rather "refers quite clearly to different categories of people" (2006: 762), he also suggest that:

> " - this recognition does not amount to recognition of such divisions as a condition to which the party and the state should adapt, or that should, at the very least, be accommodated. Instead the ANC arrogates for itself the task of defining the people's interests and of leading those who profess 'narrow interests' to the proper understanding of the 'interests of all the people'" (2006: 762).

In his argument, although the ANC acknowledges differentiation within the people and even in some instances expressly sets out the needs of particular groups, such as women or workers, their interests are defined *unitarily* by the party. Those who challenge the interests as allocated to them are portrayed as anti-transformation. If citizen participation is confused

with citizen mobilisation, it risks undermining the values on which participatory structures have been founded.

Another relevant issue concerns what the ANC's response to *non-institutional,* locally-instigated forms of participation can tell us about its theory of participatory democracy. While some analysts continue to lament the weakness of civil society in South Africa, it has also been emphasised that non-institutional or informal channels for challenging government have increasingly drawn public attention to issues which might otherwise remain unaddressed.[21]. In Johannesburg, Benit-Gbaffou asserts that "the ward system, for instance, has proved inefficient, compared to marches, riots and lawsuits, for residents to have their voice heard by the Johannesburg Council" (2007: 27).

It is not within the scope of this research to assess the democratic credentials of civic-based organisations or new social movements save to say that it would be entirely wrong to portray a polarised view of *undemocratic* institutional mechanisms versus *democratic* non-institutional mechanisms. On the contrary, civics themselves have been criticised during the 1990s and beyond for their assumption of an earned right to represent communities (Steinberg 2000: 194). What is of interest, however, is how the ANC understands the role of civics and that of civil society more broadly. Zuern highlights somewhat mixed messages from the ANC during the early 1990s - on the one hand promoting the protection of civics' independence, and on the other promoting a "community of interests" in which civics must join hands with the ANC and pursue the same goals (2001: 16).

With the formation of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) in 1992, this conundrum has had consequences. The loss of many civic leaders to ANC government posts from 1994 has impacted SANCO and other established civic organisations significantly. Simultaneously, observers have cited the limitations of SANCO as an effective civic representative given its ties to the ANC (Seekings 1998; Zuern 2006; Heller 2003; Piper unpublished). In the local government arena Zuern provides a fairly recent account of the challenges involved in holding SANCO representatives to account in communities where the local SANCO representative is also an ANC ward councillor or holds a position in local government (2006: 182-183).

Incorporation of civic leadership into ANC party structures after 1990 extended ANC hegemony but also enabled the utilisation of grassroots links for consolidating party support. Zuern in fact contends that "the ANC, realizing that its own local structures were weak, sought to maintain its linkages to the grass roots through popular associations" (2002: 84). Since the birth of SANCO, there has been greater consolidation of the ANC's own branch structures. Interestingly, Benif-Gbaffou suggests that where "local government

[21] See for example Patel and Pithouse (2005) on informal settlement protests in Kennedy Road, Durban; and Friedman & Mottiar's research (2006) on the Treatment Action Campaign's use of both institutional and non–institutional means for engaging government.

participatory structures do not fulfil their promises", then party structures become "more prominent as means for the poor to access the state" (2011: 462; 2012). With the process of decentralisation, the political party is then likely to become increasingly important in civil society (Benit-Gbaffou 2011: 462).

Greenstein links participation more directly to *state* power:

> "Popular participation is always seen ...as a way of bolstering the role of the state under ANC leadership ... From this perspective, the focus on participation does not reflect recognition that civil society forces may play a role independently of, let alone in opposition to, the ruling party" (2003 cited in Ballard 2008: 182).

If this is indeed the case - that the ANC's practice of popular participation is underpinned by a teleological or self-sustaining understanding of its purpose - then this defies the normative role of participatory democracy as a sharing of power between citizens and state. It is here that the discord in South Africa's participatory democracy lies. The normative aims of popular participation in decision-making are not only limited but potentially stifled by a teleological understanding of participatory democracy. The repercussions for its full realisation alongside institutions of representative democracy must be explored, taking into account both ANC party dominance and the prevalence of a restricted conception of the role for civil society.

1.6. Methodology

The methodological approach to this thesis lies in the role of ideas in formulating policies and programmes. The ANC has always asserted the prominence of 'the battle of ideas' in influencing its own direction: the role of revolutionary theory, broader ideology and theories of the South African condition. Yet the ANC is also not ideologically homogenous, nor has it always drawn from the same tradition historically. It is therefore more appropriate to talk about 'theory' and 'ideas' as opposed to 'ideology' *per se*. Its ideas have certainly been influenced by ideological traditions but not exclusively so. Practices have also been influenced by other organisations, writers and intellectuals, revolutionary experiences and bodies of theory that are not reflective of one particular worldview. The notion of 'ideas' therefore allows for the influence of theories, doctrine, ideologies and world views.

Given the fragmented nature of the evidence about the ANC's understanding of democracy, the methodology used is that of a reconstruction exercise, and key to this approach is analysis of the movement's discourse during particular periods. The methodology engages an element of 'decoding' historic writings and interrogating the layers of meaning and ideas implied in texts. In a sense, it applies a form of thematic or content analysis by examining the ideas, meanings and inspirations contained in documents and commentary.

A blend of chronological examination and thematic analysis enables the identification of conceptual continuities, shifts and distinctions, without reproducing a simple policy history. The analysis of 'people's power' forms a pre-1994 study of the ANC as an 'opposition movement'. Although 'people's power' took place inside South Africa, the thesis interrogates how it was conceptualised by the internal *and* external movement. Examination incorporates not only the 'people's power' discourse itself but also the debates taking place amongst the leadership of the ANC about the desired form of a future state. A focal point here is the constitutional discussions and publications of the ANC from the late 1980s.

The transitional period from 1990 to 1994 is examined as a period in which a clearer articulation of the future democracy took shape. In terms of methodology and sources, attention is given to transitional discussion and policy documents and the ANC's articulation of its policy direction between 1990 and 1994. Through an assessment of discourse during this period, the relative influence of different intellectual traditions can be better understood.

The post-1994 section of the thesis, covering the ANC in government, separates out the ideas informing public policy, on the one hand, and those informing the ANC's own 'movement' discourse of participation on the other. It thematically analyses discussion and policy documents, legislation, speeches and other publications. It identifies whether the democratic and ideological traditions of the 1980s have influenced post-1994 policy, as well as the extent to which new ideas have emerged.

1.6.1. Document Analysis

The thesis draws on both secondary literature (existing theoretical and empirical analysis) and primary source documents of the ANC, SACP, UDF and civic movement. Examination of primary documents and the ideas implied in commentary and practice are a leading component of the methodology. Documents available online via digital collections, as well as those published on the ANC website, have been invaluable in compiling this research. Considerable use has been made of archival sources from the Liberation Archives at the University of Fort Hare (NAHECS), the Mayibuye Centre at the University of the Western Cape, the University of the Witwatersrand's Historical Papers, and the UDF Collection at the South African History Archives in Johannesburg. This material was especially useful in reconstructing ideas during the 1980s and early 1990s, both inside and outside South Africa. Key sources include guiding programmatic documents such as the Freedom Charter; discussions and publications of the ANC and UDF; ANC Strategy and Tactics; ANC and Alliance Discussion Documents; and articles drawn from ANC publications.

Of the post-1994 period, the research draws on the ANC's own policy and discussion documents, commentary, speeches and government legislation. The most fundamental sources are legislative and policy documents providing for a combination of representative

and participatory democracy at local government level. This includes the 1994 Reconstruction and Development Plan, the 1998 White Paper on Local Government; the Municipal Structures Act (1998) and Municipal Systems Act (2000); as well as guidance documents and handbooks produced by the Department for Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

1.6.2. Interviews

Although the thesis draws principally on primary documentation, considerable use is also made of interviews with former activists, policy makers, ANC members and leadership. One of the challenges of historical study is that the passing of time can colour interviewees' responses, and so accounts are likely to be influenced by the benefit of hindsight. For this reason, interviews have been used to supplement the main focus of the research methodology which interrogates primary documentation. That being said, the interviews have provided rich source material through personal recollections and experiences not captured in historic texts.

Interviews undertaken focused on two areas of enquiry. The first of these was analysis of ideas amongst members of the ANC-aligned camp during the 1980s about the role and future of 'people's power'. Although research has previously been undertaken with activists in certain townships as a way of constructing a picture of the dynamics in those localities,[22] the interviews undertaken as part of this research asked a more focused set of questions about the *role* and *future* of people's power and the development of democratic thought.

The second batch of interviews sought to understand how democratic thought developed within the ANC from the late 1980s into the post-1994 era. Interviews were therefore undertaken with individuals and ANC members involved in codifying the ANC's ideas around this, and in developing the policy on participatory democracy since 1994. The intention of these interviews was to understand the ideas informing legislative commitments and resulting practice.

1.7. The ANC's Theory of Participatory Democracy: Tracing a History of Ideas

The framing theoretical principle of this research is that *the power of ideas lies in their capacity to affect practice*. As such, in order for us to understand the ANC's actions, we must interrogate the theories that drive them. The ANC's commitment to participatory democracy is not merely rhetorical. Contrary to Zuern's contention, that the ANC government is "following a liberal model of elite Schumpeterian democracy" (2002: 80), it has in fact enacted legislation to bring the ideas of participatory governance to fruition. What appears to be missing from Zuern's assessment is an interrogation as to ***why the step***

[22] See, for example, research and interviews by Bozzoli (2004) in Alexandra.

beyond rhetoric – i.e. the establishment of institutional vehicles for participation – is not substantively working.

It is the premise of this research that deficiencies in the substantive realisation of participatory democracy lie not in a lack of translation from paper into practice but in *the way the ANC understands participatory democracy.*[23] Part of the process of unravelling this relationship involves the question of means and ends: what is the end result sought by the ANC in implementing mechanisms for popular participation?

In seeking to understand the ANC's conception of participatory democracy, it is necessary to trace its ideological. This entails alertness to the multitude of influences on ANC cadres, not least in terms of the range of ideological currents penetrating the movement over time. Thus, while this thesis interrogates a particular form of democracy, it is also history of ideas. Its structure is therefore a reflection of the ANC as a movement in transition, from the status of illegal opposition to a ruling party in government. A reconstruction of its theory of participatory democracy requires analysis of past *and* present discourse. Moreover, an understanding of the broader theoretical literature and debates about participation are essential in situating and critiquing ANC democratic thought.

1.7.1. Outline of Argument

This thesis argues that the understanding of participatory democracy in the ANC has been influenced by a multitude of intellectual and theoretical traditions. As such, it is not possible to identify a singular 'conception' or 'theory'. What has emerged instead is a tension in participatory democratic discourse between that contained in public policy and that espoused by the ANC as a movement. While policy on participatory democracy draws on ideas about citizen influence and empowerment, there is a risk that this is undermined by a parallel discourse of the ANC as a movement in which popular participation is teleological.

The presence of this tension can be traced to the ideological and intellectual influences on the ANC's democratic thought. While a number of ideological traditions have influenced the movement historically, a few are particularly prominent: liberalism, African nationalism, Marxism-Leninism, the socialist democratic Left, trade unionism and, since the 1990s, global development discourse and governance. During the ANC's earliest decades up to the 1930s it was influenced predominantly by a liberal conservatism which conceived of representation in terms of *trusteeship*. As African nationalist and Marxist Leninist traditions grew in influence from the mid-1940s, this top-down leadership style manifested itself in *vanguardism* - a concept which I argue has continued to influence the ANC's democratic theory and practice into the present day. During the 1980s this *vanguardist* thread was

[23] My thanks go to Daryl Glaser for his help in the discussion of this formulation and his own writings on both the democratic deficits of councillist democracy (Glaser 1994) and of democratic discourse on the South African Left historically (Glaser 1991).

particularly visible but also formed one of a number of conceptual currents shaping people's power. Alongside vanguardism a variety of other themes can be traced, centred on ideas about community activism, grassroots governance, alternative currents of Marxism and radical democratic thought.

The notion of vanguardism adopted in the ANC, however, was not without internal tension. Although both the exiled movement and ANC-aligned activists at home identified the ANC as a 'vanguard', for the latter contingent this did not preclude the simultaneous existence of local popular power in which democratic control rested with communities themselves. Such decentralised popular power, influenced by community activism and the participatory experiences of the labour movement, stood in tension with a more Leninist-inspired notion of vanguard leadership entailing political control from above.

What can also be argued, however, is that the notion of participation espoused by both UDF and ANC was largely teleological and embraced a form of democracy bounded by allegiance to the movement. Even those traditions placing value on local democratic process shunned political pluralism and sought ultimately to establish a democracy under the leadership of the ANC.

With the transition to democracy from 1990 new influences came to shape ideas about popular participation. The formulation of local government policy drew on ideas from democratic and development theory, progressive planning and international best practice. However it also drew on historic traditions in the ANC camp of popular organisation and grassroots control. The ANC's radical democratic discourse remained but was considerably moderated - a repercussion of constitutional and human rights influences, as well as the global ascendency of liberal democracy and discrediting of socialism internationally. Importantly, however, formal acceptance by the ANC of a liberal democratic framework introduced principles of political pluralism and individual rights formerly absent in its participatory discourse.

The post-1994 policy discourse on participatory democracy thus draws on an amalgamation of intellectual traditions which seek to empower citizens to participate in decision-making and draw on its educative and developmental benefits. The realisation of this objective, however, is constrained by a parallel policy trend focusing on the creation of a more efficient state. Here, a focus on technocracy, performance and centralised direction limits the extent to which citizens at the local level can influence the policy agenda.

Nonetheless, the content of public policy is consistent with ideas in democratic theory about enabling popular influence over the decisions that affect people's lives. Parallel to this, however, is a discourse of the ANC as a 'movement'. In the latter, vanguardism remains a dominant theme in the conception of popular participation. Despite formal commitments to a system of participatory governance, in its own commentary and publications the ANC continues to link participatory structures to the realisation of the NDR. This discourse

retains imprints of the ANC's Marxist-Leninist heritage in which the objective of participatory democracy is not increased citizen influencebut the strengthening of vanguard leadership and the extension of movement hegemony.

1.8. Chapter Outline

Chapter Two begins by providing an overview of the ANC's ideological lineage prior to 1980, focusing on the origins of its ideas about popular participation. It examines, in particular, the historic influences of liberalism, trusteeship, African Nationalism and Marxism-Leninism on ideas about mass participation. It also introduces the notion of 'vanguardism' as a concept which came to characterise ANC political culture from the 1960s onwards.

Chapter Three provides extensive analyses of the conceptual influences on people's power, tracing the themes and discourses within the ANC camp about both its role *and* future. This constitutes a critical chapter in the broader thesis. It identifies the intellectual currents that shaped notions of participation in the 1980s and examines the normative ideas this generated about the form of a future democracy. In doing so, the chapter draws out not only conceptual influences but also tensions and parallels.

Chapter Four looks at the codification of the ANC's ideas about democracy. It covers the period from the 1980s to the early 1990s during which the movement began to set out more formally what it envisaged in a democratic state. It pays particular attention to the ANC's appointment of a Constitution Committee in Lusaka in 1986 which set the direction for policy discussions that would continue within the ANC. It examines the ideas about citizen participation that emerged during this process including the linking of participatory democracy to the local government sphere specifically.

Chapter Five then examines the development of public policy on participatory democracy since 1994. It looks at the ideas that have informed the notion of participation as it appears in policy and legislation, and shows how certain historic traditions have been carried forward, while new influences have also emerged. The coexistence of these multiple traditions and influential schools of thought make for some well-developed legislation and guidance. However they have also generated competing policy imperatives of public sector efficiency and citizen empowerment.

Chapter Six looks at the discourse of participatory democracy in the ANC's own documents and commentary. This is essentially an examination of its ideas as a 'movement'. It traces the parallels and differences between participatory democracy, as advanced by ANC, and that contained in public policy. The chapter shows that, despite some conceptual overlap, the influences behind the ANC's discourse of participation remain quite distinct from those informing the objectives of official legislation.

CHAPTER 2

Participation in the History of ANC Democratic Thought

Any examination of the ideas and influences that have shaped ANC policy must incorporate a reflection on organisation's intellectual and ideological lineage. The years from 1940, in particular, were formative in the development of its ideological framework, a key shift being the ANC's decision to transform itself into a mass organisation. From the mid-1940s, the ANC moved away from its previous approach of seeking concessions via constitutional means toward the use of mass participation through passive resistance.

Woven into this organisational shift was a self-perception of the ANC as having built the credentials and experience to occupy the position of the people's representative. The ANC's account of the bulk of its history is thus characterised by the direct involvement of the oppressed in their own liberation. This narrative remains an influential one in the ANC today. The struggle-era maxim, 'the people are their own liberators', continues to be reiterated in its post-1994 discourse, while the 1955 Freedom Charter is consistently invoked as the cornerstone of the ANC's programme.

This chapter therefore provides a 'prelude' to those that follow, tracing the existence of popular participation as a feature of ANC discourse prior to 1980. Cognisant of the power of ideas in shaping practice, it examines the ANC's intellectual and ideological roots as a basis for understanding the development of its democratic thought. The chapter is divided thematically into conceptual stages in the movement's history. It argues that up until 1960 the ANC retained an understanding of democracy as primarily representative in character, while ideas of popular participation emerged with its transition to mass movement politics after 1949. The participation envisaged during this period is largely characterised by mobilisation.

It is also identified that the conception of democracy historically held by the ANC, most notably in its early decades, was defined largely by the principle of 'trusteeship'. In the years from 1950, currents of radical African nationalism and Marxism-Leninism emerged as dominant, with the latter becoming most influential during the movement's years in exile. Nationalist discourse sustained the notion of representation as trusteeship and the movement continued to view itself as the sole trustee of African interests. It is also argued, however, that the framework of African nationalism provided a vehicle for trusteeship to break loose from its democratic bounds. With the co-existence of a Marxist-Leninist doctrine after 1960, trusteeship became more clearly visible as vanguardism.

Reference to participatory democracy in ANC lexicon only appeared from around 1986 onwards. Among civic and labour organisations at home, however, participatory democratic traditions can be identified from the 1970s in the organisational practices of the

independent trade unions and, from 1985, in the theory and practice of people's power. Traditions and practices of democratic thought during the 1980s must be thus understood in the context of the intellectual and ideological heritage of the broader liberation movement.

2.1. From Conservative Liberalism to African Nationalism

Prior to the formation of the Congress Youth League in 1944, the dominant understanding of democracy in what was then the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) - changing its name to the African National Congress (ANC) only in 1925 - was characterised by an essentially reformist conservatism regarding political change. The plans to form Congress in 1912 were addressed to "Chiefs of royal blood and gentlemen of our races" (Seme cited in ANC 1953). Aspirations were toward the ideal of a non-racial but qualified Cape franchise rather than the unrestricted extension of democratic rights;[24] and appeals to the government took the form of deputations and delegations of educated, middle class men appealing to the goodwill and Christian morals of public opinion, government and Crown (Walshe 1987: 3-4, 24; Jordan & Radebe 2010: 47-48; McKinley 1997: 6-8; see also Gerhart 1978: 77).[25] Congress' early ideological heritage was thus influenced by Christian liberalism, parliamentary liberalism, paternalism and trusteeship, which drew on dominant European views of the time.

These ideas remained visible in the movement's programmes of the 1940s and 50s and were perhaps most visibly embodied in the leadership of Dr A.B. Xuma and, later, Chief Albert Luthuli. Throughout his life, Nelson Mandela would also continue to hold in high regard the institutions of western democracy and representative government.[26] By the mid-1930s, however, growing African disillusionment with persistent government repression and the removal of Cape Africans from the common voters roll (Gerhart 1978: 34) surfaced debates within Congress over the value of challenging state authority via extra-constitutional means versus continuing participation in the existing constitutional framework (Walshe 1987).

Influences of competing global discourses also took root within Congress at this time, including the racial independence and assertion of American Garveyism (Walshe 1987: 158; 165), which played some role in shaping the emergence of Africanist and nationalist

[24] The Cape qualified franchise was based on the Liberal Party's slogan "equal rights for all civilised men" (Gerhart 1978: 7). The definition of 'civilised men' originated from the Cape Colony's Constitution of 1853: "people who owned property, who earned an income of a certain value, who had a certain level of education" (Jordan & Radebe 2010: 41).

[25] For an account of the early leaders' deputations and appeals to England, see for, example, ANC (1918) and Makgatho (1919).

[26] See, for example, the excerpt from Mandela's Courtroom Statement, 'I am Prepared to Die', at the Rivonia Trial in April 1964.

discourses, and the working class solidarity of international communism (ibid.: 170-171, 176). After 1944, these conflicting strands would eventually find voice in the radicals of the Congress Youth League. During the 1930s, the (then) Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) played a fairly marginal role as an organisation in African circles. Nonetheless, individuals within Congress came to be influenced by Marxist thought as a result of contact with a small number of white radicals (Gerhart 1978: 9). By the 1940s both the new blood infusing Congress and the growing disillusionment with gradual reformism culminated in the birth of a new radicalism. The Youth Leaguers essentially 'redefined' the ANC as an African nationalist movement (O'Malley 2008: 62), marking a step away from the 'qualified' franchise (Walshe 1987: 266) and a recognition of the need to create a mass membership (ibid: 264).

At this stage, however, the ANC's democratic ideals did not substantially change from its previous vision of representative institutions for Africans. The ANC's view of itself as a mass movement also continued to reflect its self-identification as trustee of the people. The cultivation of a mass membership would serve to consolidate and validate its position as spokesperson. What became increasingly contested, however, were the "means of confronting the white power structure" (Walshe 1987: 278). Both of these debates were rooted simultaneously in the development of African nationalism and emergence of Marxist currents.

2.1.1. Representation as Trusteeship: its significance for Participatory Democracy

The idea of trusteeship in the ANC emerged from the mission-educated, middle class African leadership of the 1910s and 1920s. Trusteeship, in the South African context, originated from the early Cape Liberal provision of the franchise to educated and propertied Africans, resting on the ideal of assimilation and the purportedly temporary system of European guardianship. Basing their own political view on this paternalistic ideal, the early Congress leaders aspired to the role of direct representative or 'trustee' of African interests.[27] Speaking of the African elite, Gerhart has argued that "a belief in the superiority of European culture was basic to its world view, and its goals were unabashedly assimilationist" (1978: 34). As such, this stratum viewed itself as able to represent and articulate the interests of Africans who lacked both the education and political consciousness to challenge the system themselves.

The Constitution of the SANNC in 1919 set out among its objectives, "to be the medium of expression of representative opinion" and "to educate bantu people on their rights, duties and obligations to the state and to themselves collectively" (SANNC 1919). This small African middle class, a number of whom constituted the early Congress leadership, were free of

[27] From 1910 until 1936, trusteeship was exercised by the Union administration in which the white state governed the affairs of Africans to the exclusion of 'native' representative opinion.

some of the challenges and educational disadvantage that faced the mass of their urban black compatriots (Gerhart 1978: 33-34). As such, they were "a natural leading sector in African society" (ibid: 34).

While this conception of democracy could be read as rooted in an elitist tradition, appeals to the public, government, and white liberal opposition were not seen as the preserve the educated alone. Rather, they required articulation by an organised body of trustees able to challenge white preconceptions where their fellow countrymen lacked capacity to do so. Cape liberalism and the qualified franchise were in line with this perspective (van den Berghe cited in Gerhart 1978: 8). The notion of trusteeship embraced by Congress, in fact largely correlates with that originally theorised by Edmund Burke, whereby "trustees … use their best judgment on behalf of those they represent" (Castiglione & Warren 2006: 8).

Those who advance a notion of representatives as 'delegates' who "simply mirror their constituents' preferences" (ibid.), may be wary of the limited agency that trusteeship accords to those who are represented. Burkean trusteeship nonetheless remains within the bounds of a democratic system. Using the theoretical framework of representation presented by Weale (2007), the Cape liberal model and that advanced by Congress embodied a notion of representative as *trustee,* not *delegate*. In other words, the representative judges and acts upon what he considers best for his constituents.

Applying Hannah Pitkin's classification of the different 'senses' of representation (1967), the Congress leadership sought to bring to the Cape liberal model both *descriptive* representation on the basis of race and *symbolic* representation through the SANNC itself. In Pitkin's formulation, *descriptive representation* is "to be like those for whom you are standing", while *symbolic representation* is "to instantiate some property that enables you to symbolize a group, a nation or a set of ideals" (Weale 2007: 133). More recent ideas of "assumed representation" (Houtzager & Lavalle) could also be applied here - in which "constituencies do not authorize their claim to representation nor ensure accountability through any accepted institutional mechanism" (2010: 3).

The emulation of a form of trusteeship is not to say that Congress did not aim to increase the status of those it spoke for. ANC President, Dr A.B. Xuma, emphasised in 1941 that "All its efforts are and must be concentrated upon raising the status of the African people from their semi-serfdom to citizenship" (Xuma 1941). It was Congress, however, that would appropriate and remain the 'voice of' these citizens. Xuma thus claimed in the same document that "the [ANC] is the mouthpiece of the African people of South Africa" (ANC 1941).

Although after 1940 trusteeship no longer constituted a dominant intellectual strand in the ANC, it nevertheless remained visible in Congress discourse. ***Its significance lies in the manner in which new ideological doctrines that infiltrated Congress after 1940 in fact***

served to buttress the premise of trusteeship. The ANC's perception of itself as a spokesperson and embodiment of the people can be traced to these theoretical foundations, forming the basis on which the ANC's early ideas of representative democracy lay.

Several points are worth noting about the way in which the ANC-as-trustee was reinforced after 1940. Firstly, despite Xuma's pronouncements that a future democracy could not merely be government by proclamation but must be accompanied by the participation of Africans (ANC 1941), there is nothing to suggest that this was understood as anything other than democratic decision-making by elected (African) representatives. The documents of the time generally suggest adherence to a liberal and representative form of democracy: there is no evidence that participatory features were also envisaged.

The 1943 'Africans' Claims in South Africa' is indicative of this tradition and reflects Congress' earlier commitment to constitutionalism and human rights. Drawn up in response to the Atlantic Charter, 'Africans' Claims' included a 'Bill of Rights' which signalled not only adherence to representative democracy but to a culture of rights that demanded "the extension to all adults, regardless of race, of the right to vote and be elected to parliament, provincial councils and other representative institutions" (ANC 1943). Although this demand retained the basis of a separate voters roll and the racial allocation of seats (Leatt et al 1986: 93), Dubow has noted that this thinking was part of an emerging global discourse on "democratic rights and freedoms" and "a developing anti-colonial sentiment" (2012: 16). Gerhart thus refers to the ANC's position at this stage as one of 'liberal' or 'non-racial' nationalism (1978: 13).

Even amongst the ANC's more radical elements, there is no suggestion that democracy was understood as anything beyond representative in form. The 1948 *Basic Policy of the Congress Youth League* reiterated the goal of political action as the achievement of "a true democracy" in which "all nationalities and minorities would have their fundamental human rights guaranteed in a democratic Constitution, encompassing direct representation in parliament on a democratic basis" (ANCYL 1948). The democracy envisaged was, arguably, utilitarian in nature, with participation taking the form of voting as James Mill intended. Representative government remained the lynchpin of Congress' democratic demands with no evidence, at this stage, that it would involve 'participatory' elements.

Although, by 1949, the election of a number of youth leaguers to the ANC's National Executive Council (NEC) symbolised the rise of a new leadership generation, their radicalism was not so much a replacement of paternalist liberal values as it was a challenge to the methods by which its objectives would be achieved (see Gerhart 1978: 93-94). Gerhart notes a significant shift away from the earlier "realist tradition" of attainment of freedom via constitutional means, toward a focus on mass organisation and membership (ibid).

Secondly, although 'Africans' Claims' contained rights to freedom of assembly and of the press (ANC 1943), a corresponding demand for multi-party competition is absent. The lack of any assurance of a role for a plurality of representative vehicles served to reinforce the ANC's self-proclaimed role as trustee, albeit in a broader framework of representative democracy. Indeed, Dubow (2012) highlights that, after the 1940s, there is a significant gap in the ANC's rights discourse, despite its claims to the contrary. The ANC's formal commitment to rights only emerged again in 1988 with the publication of its 'Draft Constitutional Guidelines' (Brooks 2006). The significance of its absence in the interim four decades is traced in the forthcoming chapters.

While the ANC's paternalism may have remained, its liberal democratic rights discourse (reflected in 'Africans Claims') was being challenged by both Africanist and Communist strands (Dubow 2012: 20). Dubow argues that radical Africanists within the Youth League 'rejected' non-racialism, while communists were 'disdainful' of the 'bourgeois' character of human rights that "neglected the primacy of class-based oppression" (ibid.). I would also contend, however, that African nationalism itself posed a challenge to political pluralism. In 1948 the Youth League described its understanding of African nationalism as follows:

> "The historic task of African Nationalism ... is the building of a self-confident and strong African Nation in South Africa. Therefore African Nationalism transcends the narrow limits imposed by any particular sectional organisation ... The germ of its growth was first sown within the bosom of the African National Congress, and it found its clear crystallisation in the Congress Youth League. It should now find concrete expression in the creation of a single national front". (ANCYL 1948)

The 'self-confidence' referred to here, reflects the Youth League's push for increased mass action in challenging the state. Its notion of African nationalism as 'crystallising' in the Youth League and requiring the creation of a 'single national front' also reinforced a view of the ANC as the leading vehicle in that process. Congress' concern after 1940 to root itself amongst a mass following, served the purpose of consolidating its position as *the* African opposition to government. The ANC's earlier claim to be "the mouthpiece of the African people" (1941) was borne out in the Youth League's manifesto:

> "... the League will be a coordinating agency for all youthful forces employed in rousing popular political consciousness and fighting oppression and reaction. It will educate the people politically by concentrating its energies on the African homefront to make all sections of our people Congress-minded and nation-conscious". (ANCYL 1944)

Notably this shift in the ANC's approach toward becoming a 'mass movement' did not beget a concurrent shift toward consultation with its new mass base, either on the form that mass

structures might take or the content and aims of the struggle. Critics of Burkean trusteeship argue that where representatives are "pure trustees, no democratic element remains, and … [they] are little more than paternalistic aristocrats" (Castiglione and Warren 2006: 8). If we apply theoretical frameworks, such as Arnstein's ladder (1967) or IAP2's spectrum (2000), then the form of representation that the League espoused does not yet correspond with any degree of 'participation' *per se*. Political influence was to be achieved not by introducing participatory or consultative structures but by "rousing popular consciousness" and by making all people "Congress-minded" (ANCYL 1944).

The idea of trusteeship was reinforced by emerging conceptions of the popular will as being not only collectivebut easily discernible by the trustee. This bolstered the portrayal of 'true' African nationals as being collectively in agreement. At the meeting of the committee to produce *Africans' Claims* in 1943, Xuma, despite his predominantly Christian liberal outlook, affirmed the importance of unity and the smoothing over of differences: "In a mass liberation movement there is no room for divisions or for personal ambitions. The goal is one, namely, freedom for all. It should be the central and only aim for [sic] objective of all true African nationals" (ANC 1943).

The advent of the Youth League did not, however, augur any greater ideological clarity. There remained a diversity of viewpoints within the movement, something that Gerhart argues contributed to the ambiguity of many of its policies (1978: 71). By the close of the Second World War, the ANC housed a variety of influences: Christianity, liberalism, African nationalism and Marxism. The spread of Marxist ideas, underpinned by a belief in the inevitability of socialism and homogeneity of the working class, were penetrating some members of Congress. Gerhart in fact argues that "Christian morality" was the ideological assumption that remained "most firmly rooted" and uncontested within Congress (1978: 99).

I would add, however, that the idea that continued to underpin ANC democratic theory and practice was trusteeship. Indirectly, both the traditions of African Nationalism and Marxism – which grew in influence as the 1940s progressed – in fact sustained its values and ideas. Moreover, it is possible to see that the form of trusteeship embraced by the ANC during its earlier years began gradually to break loose from the framework of a democratic system, merging instead into a notion of trusteeship that located the ANC 'above politics'.

Emerging discourses of African nationalism and, more gradually, Marxism-Leninism facilitated this shift, such that the ANC's self-identification became that of a trustee whose role and legitimacy transcended democratic contestation. Over the coming years these intellectual influences shifted the principle of trusteeship from a form of representative (albeit thin) democracy to the fulfilment of an historic role. With the movement's transition to exile after 1960, trusteeship would more visibly take the form of vanguardism.

2.1.2. Origins of 'Participation'

The emergence of nationalist thinking not only existed alongside liberalism and Marxism but overlapped with them as well. A confusing amalgam of ideas emerged amongst the Youth Leaguers. Jordan Ngubane (who would later become a member of the Liberal Party) represented, according to Walshe, a more liberal element, wary of "state domination" and retaining concern for the protection of individual rights (1987: 354). Anton Lembede and A.P. Mda, however, clung to earlier iterations of liberal thought while combining it with revolutionary socialist language and asserting the need for African strength as an autonomous force for self-determination (Lembede 1946; Mda 1948).

It was from Lembede, as the Youth League's first President in 1944, that a brand of nationalism emerged which would influence the next generation of leaders (Gerhart 1978: 78). Lembede's ideas built on Africanist traditions rooted in the independence and unity of the African nation and the assertion of African identity and self-confidence (ibid.: 54-64). The theoretical understanding of mass organisation encompassed in African nationalism invoked mass support as the bedrock of Congress organisation. This involved an acknowledgement that, as trustee of the African majority, Congress needed to be rooted in their numerical strength.

Karis and Carter argue that the relationship between African nationalists and others on the Left were often "extraordinarily complex" (1973: 107). In the 1946 'Policy of the Congress Youth League', Lembede, for example, referred specifically to "African socialism" emerging after national freedom (Lembede 1946). The line between Marxist and nationalist influences thus became somewhat blurred, and while the 'foreign' imposition of a class analysis was rejected, the specific content of 'African socialism' was left undefined in Youth League discourse (ANCYL 1948). Although Lembede was clear that the "immediate task" was national liberation (1946), looking at the features of Africanism as an ideological framework Leatt (et al) argue that its "economic basis" was socialism (1986: 94).

During the late 1940s, Marxist thought began to have a more discernible impact in ANC circles, and from 1948 the policy of apartheid and state repression of anti-government forces increasingly united many nationalists and Communists (Walshe 1987: 358-9). Marxist influence was by no means uncontested during this period: division over Marxism by 1959 would in fact result in the breakaway of the ANC's Africanist faction and formation of the Pan-African Congress (PAC). What can be claimed, however, is that by 1949 conservative 'realism' in the ANC was being replaced by a more militant radicalism.

The Youth League's 1949 *Programme of Action* called for passive resistance via boycotts, strikes, civil disobedience and other forms of non-cooperation (ANCYL 1949). However, as Gerhart argues, it also re-stated the aims of the ANC without clarifying the detail or content of goals such as 'national freedom', 'political independence' and 'self-determination' (1978:

82). The significance of the 'Programme of Action' for emergent ideas about democracy is its implied characterization of 'participation' as 'mobilisation', and the supposition that "mass protest, boycotts and passive resistance would in fact *create* the basis of mass support" [emphasis added] (Walshe 1987: 351).

Underpinning Congress' aspirations to create a mass membership was the instilling of popular political consciousness - a characteristic that fits with the suggestion that nationalist ideologies are themselves conscientising in aspiration (Leatt et al 1986: 153). However the strategic shift within the ANC toward of a view of mass mobilisation as instrumental in achieving liberation was a product of both an African nationalist framework *and* currents of Marxism-Leninism. Increased focus in the ANC on the role of mobilisation coincided with the softening of anti-communist sentiment (Walshe 1987: 358-9) and an emerging overlap in thought and personnel between the movement and the (then) CPSA.

Both ideologies found affinity in conscientisation and collectivity: African nationalism espoused a self-confident but collective understanding of the African people, underpinned by a belief in a united will – albeit one that needing rousing by movement. Marxism-Leninism, not dissimilarly, was underpinned by socialism's historic inevitability and the role of a political vanguard in leading the working class to these ends. Just as Marxist-Leninists believed that the masses would come to see the desirability of socialism, so, too, did Lembede's African nationalism assume a "natural" striving amongst the masses toward "unity and national self-assertion" (Gerhart 1978: 78-9). For Lembede, whose ideas inspired the Youth Leaguers that followed, it was the "true instincts" of the people toward nationalism that "would be the binding force linking leaders in an invincible alliance with the masses" (ibid.: 79). Both traditions contributed to an emerging conception of democracy, based on an 'idea' of popular involvement, neither of which was fundamentally democratic.

The ANC's founding notions of trusteeship during the earlier decades did not peter out with the rise of new ideologies. Rather, trusteeship came to form the foundation on which its ideas of representative democracy lay. Indirectly, African nationalism and Marxism sustained its values. As the ANC adapted to exile - aligning itself increasingly with the SACP - the notion of trusteeship became more clearly visible as vanguardism. What was challenged by the Youth Leaguers, however, was the notion that trusteeship be accompanied by mass passivity. With the mobilisation and moulding of a "Congress-minded" following (ANCYL 1944), they rather envisaged that ***the masses be engaged as active participants***.

2.2. Participation through Mass Movement Politics

By the 1950s the ANC had emerged as "the major extra-parliamentary organisation in the struggle against apartheid" (Everatt 2009: 72), and with the banning of the CPSA in 1950, many more radical Africans found a home in the ANC (Gerhart 1978: 87; Karis & Carter,

1973: 407). Although a variety of intellectual influences were gaining ground in the movement, there was, as yet, no indication of a clearly articulated democratic discourse.

The ANC's articulation of a general principle of 'direct representation' does not appear to have referred to anything more radical than democracy in a representative, parliamentary form. However, in the absence of a corresponding commitment to political pluralism and individual rights, neither did this imply representative democracy in a liberal democratic sense. A medley of ideologies thus continued to characterise the ANC throughout the 1950s, with radical African nationalism and Marxism-Leninism emerging as dominant.

2.2.1. New Theoretical Influences: Colonialism of a Special Type

The reconstitution of the CPSA as the SACP in 1953[28] was surrounded by debate amongst leading Party theorists over the extent to which the class basis of communist ideology could be reconciled with the growth of both African nationalism and the ANC's popularity. The solution was found in the theory of 'Colonialism of a Special Type (CST). The starting point of the CST thesis was the unique conditions of South Africa: "the characteristics of both an imperialist state and colony within a single, indivisible, geographical, political and economic entity ..." (SACP 1950 cited in Everatt 2009: 90). As such, the SACP argued, non-white South Africa was a colony of white South Africa (SACP 1962).

The CST thesis adapted Marxist theory to South African conditions, arguing that the deliberate suppression of the growth of an African bourgeoisie had resulted in relatively little class differentiation within the African population itself. Correspondingly, the emergence of a united working class of both blacks *and* whites was stunted by apartheid's labour legislation. Consequently, the struggle against oppression in South Africa had a naturally national as opposed to class character. The concept of CST was first developed by the Comintern in the 1920s, encompassing an early articulation of the two-stage theory of revolution. Despite the national liberation movements' often 'bourgeois' leadership, it was through this theory that Moscow foresaw a role for them in the struggle for socialism. The 'special type' of colonialism that existed in South Africa, it was argued, "called for an independent native South African republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' republic with full, equal rights for all races" (Executive Committee of the Communist International 1928).[29]

Although it was not until 1962 that the SACP endorsed CST formally, during the 1950s some leading SACP theorists were arguing that there was a role for the small African bourgeoisie

[28] Although the SACP formed in the early 1950s, its existence was not made public until 1960 (Bernstein 1999: 134)

[29] For an account of the theoretical influence of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and origins of the emergence of the concept of internal colonialism (or 'the native republic thesis'), see Drew (2000).

(SACP 1962; Drew 1997: 25-26; Everatt 2009: 93; Lazerson 1994: 126-129). They came to view the ANC as a movement essentially in a 'transitional' phase, in which the influence of the working class was becoming increasingly visible (Everatt 2009: 93-94).[30] Through the SACP's two-stage theory, national liberation would form a *first* and *necessary* stage in the transition to socialism. Only under the conditions of what was referred to as 'national democracy' – a stage that is both 'non-capitalist' and 'socialist-oriented' (Hudson 1987: 54) – could the way be paved for a socialist future and an eventual state of communism.

The ANC therefore saw itself as engaged in a 'National Democratic Revolution' (NDR) for political freedom. Within the movement, there remained some division over the two stage theory, between those who foresaw national democracy *as an end point in itself* or as part of an advancing process in the broader socialist struggle (Sithole & Ndlovu 2004: 193). What concerns us here is the extent to which adherence to NDR and the two-stage theory had an influence on its understanding of democracy.

The subsequent chapters include analysis of the democratic implications of the NDR. It is worth stating here, however, that the concepts of a two-stage theory and national democracy are underpinned by a theory of historical direction. While there is nothing inherently undemocratic in this, under conditions of democracy - for which the ANC was fighting - such a programme must be subject to popular contestation. Should a 'correct' or pre-ordained path be assumed, then claims to the exercise of a democratic will - whether representative or participatory - are undermined by the presence of a 'truth' (See Hudson 1986). Here, the danger posed is that discussion and the involvement of citizens in decision-making about the future become surplus to requirements.

Either way, the 1950s represented an emergence of Marxist thinking in the ANC that became more prominent after 1960. Even the liberal-inclined ANC President, Chief Albert Luthuli, in 1953, claimed that the ANC "can well regard itself as being the *vanguard* of the movement in the Union" [emphasis added] (1953). It was in this context of dual ideology that the inter-organisational alliance of ANC and SACP grew. In addition to this relationship, however, the various mass actions that took place during the 1950s also provide some indication of how democratic thought was evolving in practice.

2.2.2. Participation qua Mobilisation

Designed as a programme of resistance against apartheid laws and institutions, culminating in mass action, the Defiance Campaign invoked the extra-legal tactics and mass action proposed in the Youth League's 'Programme of Action'. It drew on the numerical strength of the African majority as a method of wearing down the state (Gerhart 1978: 89), as well as

[30] Interestingly, ANC MP, Ben Turok, wrote in 2010 that "Historically there has been little friction between the Marxist conception of the ANC as an alliance of a variety of class forces and the movement's self-perception as the principal vehicle of national liberation" (2010: 10).

on Gandhi's principles of non-violent passive resistance through mass protest (O'Malley 2008: 61-62). On the one hand, the Defiance Campaign was successful in a number of ways, increasing ANC membership from just 7 000 to over 100 000 (Kathrada 2004: 107), and not only "[politicising] thousands of Africans" but instilling in them a "self-confidence and discipline" (Karis and Carter 1973: 403) that underpinned the nationalist discourse of self-reliance.

What the Defiance Campaign is able to tell us about democratic thought, specifically, however, suggests two things. Firstly, people were not mobilised around a coherent ideology. Rather, this remained vague amongst the senior Congress leadership (Gerhart 1978: 91, 93) and reflected the ANC's concern to mobilise a wide range of interests. Secondly, the issues on which the campaign was based were not derived from an understanding of the practical issues affecting the targeted communities. Gerhart notes that "action had to be centred around issues capable of inspiring mass enthusiasm" yet "the choice of such issues ... lay predominantly with the African leadership, not with the masses themselves" (1978: 90).

The assumption that Africans would naturally come to recognise the need for the ANC's leadership, is reflected in the Joint Planning Council's programme for the Defiance Campaign (ANC 1951). This document, which notably already carries suggestions of vanguardism, remarked that 'mass action' would "gradually embrace larger groups of people, permeate both the rural and urban areas and make possible for us to organise, discipline and lead the people in a planned manner" (ibid.). The ANC's positioning of itself during this period led Lodge to argue that the movement viewed the struggles of the 1950s as "a manifestation of the general will" (1983: 92).

In a fascinating study of localised struggles in the early 1950s, Lodge observed that during resistance against the Sophiatown force removals, the ANC's organised resistance against the removals lacked communication between organisers and residents, and assumed a level of unanimity amongst local residents (1983: 107-8). A similar failure to account for local heterogeneity and stratification is evidenced in the 1957 Alexandra bus boycott, where there were divisions in the Alexandra People's Transport Committee between the ANC's liberal and more militant Africanist strands (Lodge 1983: 160). Lodge also notes that the movement did not place any apparent value on "the process of popular decision-making" which he argues had come to play an important part in the boycott (1983: 171). He suggests that the ANC leaders "did not attempt in any real sense to 'institutionalise' the popular power, the popular political participation, that had developed out of the boycott" (1983: 171). These Transvaal struggles suggest a practice within the ANC of mobilising around particular issues without establishing longer-term democratic structures to outlast the campaigns themselves.

Two points are worth making as regards the roots and impact of localised resistance. Firstly, although the Youth Leaguers were indeed pushing new ideas about mass action and mobilisation, the forerunner to this was undertaken independently of the ANC by black labour, who organised around a new form of resistance politics not previously seen in the strategy of the liberation movement. The 1946 mineworkers' strike, for example, showed the power of militant strike action over the minimum wage and working conditions, pushing the ANC to assert that the masses were ready for such action.

In 1948, violence was used by a local community in rural Ciskei against headmen, local Chiefs and government officials over terms of land ownership (NEUM 1951 cited in Matoti and Ntsebeza 2004: 177). The affected community formed "Location Committees ... in order to assert their right to decide how they should own their land" (ibid.). Not dissimilarly, during the rural revolts in Mpondoland in 1960, people took action into their own hands by forming Committees and Sub-Committees in antithesis to the state's tribal authorities as a result of the lack of popular consultation (Matoti and Ntsebeza 2004: 185; Meli 1988: 136). While the procedures and practices which would make this activity 'democratic' are not detailed, it nonetheless reflected locally-driven organisation in which people were asserting their right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

The second point to note is that the democratic dividend that could be derived from the process of mass action does not yet appear to have been recognised by the ANC. In an extract from his Presidential address to the Transvaal ANC in 1953, Mandela stated that "the general political level of the people has been considerably raised ... [and] ... The ties between the working people and the Congress have been greatly strengthened" (1953). However these ties were a short-term result of mobilisation rather than sustained participation. Natal Indian Congress (NIC) President, Monty Naicker, later commented that, although "during the previous chapters in our struggle we were able to rouse people by mass propaganda … [A]t the cessation of our activities we lost support and general interest in the struggle waned" (1985 cited in Everatt 2009: 173).

It was this disconnect from the people, and the movement's confessed lack of direction (Luthuli 1953 cited in Everatt 2009:173), that led to proposals by Congress leadership for the development of a 'people's charter' and a plan to co-ordinate and organise the ANC into a stronger, more tightly structured organisation.

2.3. Participation and the Freedom Charter

> *This time we would not be campaigning for our own ready-made programme but searching for a national consensus. In today's jargon, we would be setting out to 'empower people'.* (Lionel 'Rusty' Bernstein 1999: 149).

The aftermath of the Defiance Campaign saw the formal establishment in 1953 of the Congress Alliance – a multi-racial grouping under the leadership of the ANC of the South

African Indian Congress (SAIC), South Africa Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO), the South Africa Congress of Democrats (SACOD)[31] and South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). The content of a people's charter was to be formulated through a Congress of the People (COP). The COP campaign was hailed by many leading ANC figures as marking a change or 'shift' in Congress thought and practice toward a new era of mass participation. Rusty Bernstein, a member of SACOD and a figure heavily involved in drawing up the Charter, hailed it as a significant moment for the ANC and Congress Alliance in changing its view of democratic practice: "It meant campaigning in a radically new way - no longer telling people: 'This is what we stand for! Support us!' But instead asking them: 'What do you want? What should we be fighting for?' It required that they listen to and learn from the people rather than exhort or instruct them". (1999: 148)

Similarly, Alfred Nzo asserted that " ... the Congress of the People came as the culmination of the most widespread and thorough canvassing of opinion, of the most truly democratic process South Africa had ever witnessed" (Nzo 1980). Did the COP represent a change in ANC democratic thought: a shift toward a participatory form of democracy that set out to 'empower' people? And can the Freedom Charter tell us anything about the ANC's vision of a future democratic state? The section that follows considers these questions by looking at both the *process* of the COP campaign and the *content* of the Freedom Charter.

2.3.1. The Campaign: Consultation as Mobilisation

In order to regenerate popular mobilisation following the Defiance campaign, then Cape ANC President, ZK Matthews proposed the idea of "a National Convention, a CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE, representing all the people of this country irrespective of race or colour to draw up a FREEDOM CHARTER for the DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA OF THE FUTURE" [capitals in original] (Matthews 1953). The campaign was intended to gather ideas as part of a consultative process. Popular demands were collected by teams of organisers from across the Congress Alliance and collated by a committee headed by Rusty Bernstein (Everatt 2009: 189).

Accounts of the demands collated reflect the ordinary realities of those consulted, addressing issues such as "homes, jobs, living standards, civil liberties" (Bernstein 1999: 150). Only a few, according to Bernstein, were "carefully formulated opinions about such general issues as the economy, civil rights, democracy and racism" (ibid.). The diversity of attendees at the COP (Karis & Carter 1977: 61) suggests that attendance was more broadly representative of South African society than any preceding event. There are suggestions,

[31] SACOD was a white organisation on the democratic left formed in 1953 to provide a vehicle for whites to support the liberation struggle. As many members of the banned CPSA joined SACOD, it was often accused by liberals and Africanists of being dominated and controlled by communists. For an account that challenges this perception, see Everatt (2009: 98-122).

however, that its content took second place to the popular mood and mobilisation which the broader campaign sought to ignite. Z.K. Matthews himself described the underlying aim of the COP as "the instilling of political consciousness into the people and the encouraging of political activity" (undated, Karis & Carter 1977: 57).[32] In his autobiography, Rusty Bernstein took this further and spoke of the demands collated during the campaign as follows:

> "We stuffed them away in an old cabin trunk, just as we received them, to be pondered over later – not for lack of seriousness but because at that stage, the Charter seemed far off. We were concentrating on the COP itself ... the Charter seemed to be the incidental spin-off from the new political culture of listening to and learning from the people. Tacitly we deferred collating the demands into a draft Charter in order to focus on what seemed like the core issue". (1999: 150)

Yet if the Charter itself was to reflect the will and input of all South Africans, marking a new culture of 'listening to' and 'learning from' people, then its content would surely be the focus. It would not be merely a 'spin off', as Bernstein states elsewhere (1988 in Everatt 2009: 175). Yet the central aim of the campaign appears, rather, to have been mobilisation coined as 'consultation'. A quote from Joe Slovo at a meeting of the COP National Action Committee (NAC) in 1954, refers to the campaign's "main aims as being mobilisation, organisation and instilling in the people a 'Freedom Consciousness'" (Everatt 2009: 170). While we might liken the approach to 'informing' or 'consulting' citizens - helping them to understand problems and inviting their opinions (Arnstein 1969) - its objectives were mobilisation and conscientisation. A 1954 report of the ANC NEC which hailed the most powerful 'form' of struggle as that of "the power and will of the people" (ANC NEC 1954), also suggested that 'the people's will' be ascertained via mobilisation: "We must ... organise the people properly, politicise and activise them and lead them against the forces of fascism and reaction" (ibid.). Everatt's conclusion thus seems particularly apt: that "the COP campaign was the culmination of a particular strategy ... [of] ... using popular participation in the production of documented statements of principle as tools of mobilisation and organisation. (2009: 170).

This is by no means to overlook the broader political context in which the ANC operated: popular movement was restricted and activists faced banning orders and threats of arrest for public participation. In such a context, the Congresses could do little other than mobilise around popular concerns. The use of the 'public meeting' is reflective of intentions to 'consult' (IAP2 2000). The COP also sought to ignite awareness amongst a population lacking

[32] Although this extract is undated, it is taken from a memorandum by Z.K. Matthews prepared for the defense in the Treason Trial. We can thus surmise that it was written circa 1956/7.

in *capacity* to organise through linking the daily symptoms of inequality to their roots in the broader political system. As such, it could also be compared to participation as 'informing' through helping people to understand problems and possible solutions (Arnstein 1969; IAP2 2000). The claim that the movement realised a shift in its democratic thought at that stage, however, does seems rather spurious.

2.3.2. The Charter: Mobilising and Unifying

> *"...the clarity and correctness of the ideas of the Freedom Charter testify to the revolutionary maturity of those responsible for drawing up the Charter – the people of South Africa"*. (Alfred Nzo 1980)

What, then, of the *content* of the Charter? Can the demands collated tell us anything about the ANC's ideas for a future democratic state? Since its launch in 1955, the Freedom Charter has instigated debate about the detail behind its demands. The clause demanding 'The People Shall Govern' is of the most immediate relevance here. Sketching an ambiguous picture of democratic institutions, the Charter asserts that "All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government" (1955). Do these organs then refer to institutions of direct democracy? Could they be likened to the 'soviets' (workers' councils), admired by the SACP? Or do we place too much emphasis on the *content* of the Charter to explain ANC democratic thought?

Karis and Carter have argued that the Charter was merely a restatement of Congress' previous aims (1977: 63) - remaining largely liberal in content and continuing to emphasise freedom within the realm of representative institutions. The demand that "Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws" (1955) suggests features of representative democracy. Yet there is no qualification that this is representative in a liberal democratic sense. It is even less clear whether the model implied in 'democratic organs of self-government' is that of representative or direct democracy.

One of the most detailed re-collections of the drafting of the Charter belongs to Rusty Bernstein. As the day of the COP neared, Bernstein gave the following account: "It was urgent that we turn our thousands of bits of paper into a draft freedom charter. We had delayed to the last moment largely because no one had any idea about how it was to be done. We had neither precedent nor plan. The Working Committee decided it was 'just a writing job' and handed it to me" (1999: 153).

His account of compiling the Charter alone is at odds with his earlier accounts: in an interview in 1987, Bernstein claimed that "the content of the Charter was a matter of concern to the leadership of the national liberation movement as a whole, and that it was pondered over for some time" (Vadi 1995: 151). Vadi also refers to the statement of an anonymous activist that: "There was substantial collective input by the leadership from all

organisations … a great deal of discussion had taken place beforehand" (cited in Vadi 1995: 151). In his autobiography, however, Bernstein asserts that he just got "a general flavour" of the demands and then stuffed them back into the box (1999: 154), "using those demands which seemed to fit, and discarding those which did not" (Ibid.)

The demands also seemed to carry unequal weight. Bernstein himself commented: "This was not a straw poll where every demand counted equally with every other" (ibid.). He also confessed that "the most difficult part of the exercise was to keep ... [his] ... own opinions from determining the final draft" (1999: 154). A member of the underground SACP, Bernstein expressed his bias towards a socialist economy. But he mentions nothing of his views of democratic structures other than to say that "On many of the topics covered by the 'demands' I had strong views of my own" (ibid: 154-155). He did admit, however, that the writing of the charter "required that a compromise or a consensus be read from – or read into – what was on the paper" (ibid: 155).

At the COP itself, a discussion of the meaning of 'democratic organs of self-government' does not seem to have taken place. Speakers referred to participation in parliament (COP 1955) but provided no other description of the envisioned 'forms' that self-government might take. There was certainly no reference to direct democratic institutions. However, in a fascinating discussion by Lazerson about the role of the white Congress of Democrats (COD), he refers to a series of lectures and discussion notes produced by the COD in the run-up to the COP campaign. One of these dealt directly with the institution of Parliament as an instrument of the ruling class (Lazerson 1994: 122). In its place the lecture advocated the construction of "a People's Democracy" (ibid). Saul Dubow highlights the theoretical significance of this rejection of parliamentary institutions given the prominent role played by Bernstein, a COD member, in drafting the Freedom Charter (2012: 21, 46).

Perhaps even more intriguing is evidence presented by Lazerson (2004: 176-77) of an undated 'preliminary draft Charter' that contains a more detailed statement of the clause, 'The People Shall Govern', than that which appeared in the final version. Although Lazerson claims that "nothing was done to alter the meaning or intent of the original" (2004: 177) the reference to 'parliament' appears to have been removed (undated, cited in Lazerson 2004: 176-77). With regards to a *participatory* form of democracy, the preliminary draft did not refer to "democratic organs of self-government" as the final version would but instead asserted that "the bonds between the people, the organs of public opinion and their elected representatives should be close, and consultation between the people and their representatives should prevail at all levels and at all times" (ibid). It is not clear which actors made the amendments to this draft, or when precisely this took place. However it appears that the earlier inclusions of popular consultation, and of a form of *participatory* as well as *representative* democracy, were toned down and replaced with a more ambiguous description of future institutions.

Given Bernstein's description of the writing process, it seems unlikely that the Charter was an accurate amalgamation of the demands received. His account suggests that it was written by him, not by 'the people' or even by a body of the ANC: "it was – temporarily – a creature of the Working Committee and no one else" (1999: 156). It is also probable that Bernstein's own views crept into the formulation of the demands but doubtful that the intended meaning of the clauses were interpreted uniformly across the ANC. Mandela, for example, seems to have envisaged democracy in a representative sense. In an article in 1959, he reiterated his definition of democracy as representative: "The organs of government must be representative; that is to say, they must be freely chosen leaders and representatives of the people, whose mandate must be renewed at periodic democratic elections" (1959).

In his court statement during the treason trial in 1962, Mandela referred to the democratic form of the traditional African 'imbizo', 'pitso' or 'kgotla', about which he claimed "the council was so completely democratic that all members of the tribe could participate in its deliberations" (1962). Yet there are no other statements expanding on the features of such a participatory model, nor its desirable application in the contemporary context. Rather, in the very same statement, Mandela confirmed that "it certainly could never measure up to the demands of the present epoch" (ibid.). Elsewhere he affirmed his own admiration for representative self-government (1959; 1964).

The Charter is, by no means, however, a transparent resemblance of aspirations for a liberal democratic future. Although there was nothing by 1955 to suggest that the ANC had jettisoned a commitment to representative institutions, the Charter makes no mention of mechanisms to cater for political competition and alternatives, nor is it explicit about the place of *individual* rights beyond those of groups or races. Dubow rather argues that the rights espoused in the Freedom Charter are 'substantive' rather than 'procedural' (2012: 22).

Given the debate and division over the Charter's layers of meaning, it is perhaps safer to assume that it has continued to mean whatever individuals choose it to. The contention that its ambiguity can be explained by one of its main objectives – to unite the disparate strands of the movement through a "unifying ideological statement" (Everatt 2009: 175) – carries considerable weight. ***The lack of indication of the ANC's vision for a future state reflects both the underdevelopment of its democratic thought at that stage, and a deliberate strategy to broaden the alliance of forces under its hegemony.*** The ANC of the mid-1950s could thus be described as a hybrid of multiple political persuasions. The endorsement of the Freedom Charter was an attempt to contain differences in the interest of unity while mobilising and politicising the African population.

2.4. Revolutionary Theory and the Popular Role

> *"The people have to be drawn into the manifold tasks of the revolution. Our theory of revolution must becom*e *the possession of all our people".* (Joe Matthews 1969)

The period following the banning of the ANC in 1960 was characterised by a number of shifts. Perhaps most visible was the effective formalisation of its alliance with the SACP, consolidated in 1961 through the founding of the armed unit, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and the decision to embark on armed struggle. Closely linked to this was the re-birth of the ANC as a revolutionary movement. The ANC's dominance within the Congress Alliance accompanied its move into exile. With the decision that the exiled structures of the ANC would act as the "sole spokespeople" of the liberation movement, Ndebele and Nieftagodien suggest that the alliance became virtually defunct as a consultative body (2004: 578). The ANC's assertion by 1963 that it remained "the one and only vanguard of the oppressed people in this county" (ANC NEC 1963) also led to a decline in internal democracy - a culture that was buttressed by the requirements of secrecy and discipline. The establishment of the ANC-in-exile as the ANC 'proper' also produced growing distance between the leadership and its support base at home.

From the outset, the formation of an armed organisation was located in the context of broader *political* struggle and the announcement of MK's formation situated it firmly "under the overall political guidance" of the national liberation movement (ANC 1961). The formation of an armed unit had its roots in both the anti-colonial revolutionary experience of Africa at the time and in Marxist revolutionary thought (Barrell 1993). The Leninist variant of Marxism, prominent in the SACP, often embraced violent methods as a means to seize power. With the commitment to armed struggle, a theoretical leadership position for the SACP thus undoubtedly emerged. The closeness of its alliance with the ANC is reflected in the militarisation of the latter's language and the increasing visibility of Marxist theory. By 1960, with the exception of Oliver Tambo, all of the ANC's top leadership in exile were members of the SACP.[33]

Despite the ANC's pronouncements to the contrary, Barrell suggests that in reality the movement side-lined political organisation in favour of military struggle (1993). He attributes the ANC's eventual military failure, in part, to the "overestimation of what armed activity was capable of achieving" but also to the ANC's 'appropriation' of a "Marxist-Leninist strategic discourse" which 'devalued' political activity (ibid). *Operation Mayibuye* (ANC 1963), which set out a strategy and plan for armed activity, placed little value on mass political participation. Overall, the ANC's revolutionary approach reflected Marxism's

[33] Alfred Nzo (ANC Secretary General), JB Marks (Chairman of the ANC National Executive), and Moses Kotane (ANC Treasurer General) were all members of the SACP.

simultaneous desire to ensure top-down control while cultivating bottom-up initiative (Femia 1993: 136). This contradiction found resonance in existing nationalist currents in which political participation was itself devalued to the role of mobiliser.

2.4.1. From Trusteeship to Vanguardism

> *"The people ... are led by the most trusted and tried organisation, the ANC. It remains the one and only vanguard of the oppressed people in this country ... Our primary objective is the conquest of political power, in doing so African unity is indispensable"*. (ANC NEC 1963)

Conditions in which the struggle took place shaped and in many ways constrained the development of democratic ways of organising. The embrace of revolutionary theory itself, however, also had implications for popular democratic involvement. As the ANC's dominance with the Alliance was established, forms of political organisation became subject to military imperatives. Lodge's claim that by 1961 many members of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu) were drawn into MK activity (1983: 197), points not only to the ANC's military focus but to its disregard for the local participatory organising taking place within black labour. Jeremy Cronin asserts that "the ANC-SACP treated the trade union movement as a simple adjunct to the political struggle in the early 1960s and, when the arms [sic] struggle was launched, the trade union movement was seen simply as a recruitment terrain for guerrillas" (Interview with Helena Sheehan: 17 April 2001).

The transfer of revolutionary authority to the ANC in exile erased any remaining semblance of participation by the wider Congresses, whose members were often co-opted into ANC structures abroad. Perhaps most tellingly, a report on 'Problems in the Congress Movement', produced by a 1966 Subcommittee formed at the behest of the ANC leadership, contended that "many problems could be easily resolved if the leadership of the ANC was fully accepted by members of the alliance" (cited in Ndebele & Nieftagodien 2004: 583). As reflected in the quote at the opening of this section, the ANC's conception of its vanguard role was also strongly asserted.

The ANC's theoretical position on the role of armed activity, in particular, is revealing of the centrality of revolutionary theory. The announcement of MK's formation emphasised the ANC's longstanding policy of non-violence but remarked "we are striking out along a new road ... the choice is not ours; it has been made by the Nationalist government which has rejected every peaceable demand by the people for rights and freedom (ANC 1961). The sentiment that the ANC had been left with no choice was asserted by Mandela in his courtroom statement during the Rivonia Trial (1964) and is verified elsewhere (Turok 2003: 137; Slovo 1995: 152). *Operation Mayibuye* also referred to the white state as offering the people "only one choice" (ANC 1963).

In contrast, the position taken by the ANC in its 1969 *Strategy and Tactics* portrays the decision as a response to the requirements of revolutionary theory. The movement denies that it was only in 1961 that armed struggle became an alternative, instead espousing a Marxist-Leninist inspired understanding of a pre-destined path to victory via revolutionary violence. What it terms as the "so-called reformist" activities of the ANC's earlier years are presented as necessary for "advancement into the new phase" of armed struggle (ANC 1969). In *Strategy and Tactics* it seems to be envisaged that "the moulding of mass political consciousness" would lead naturally to popular recognition of both the need for armed action and the necessity of a leading vanguard.

The ANC's adoption of a revolutionary discourse also induced shifts in the conception of its relationship with the masses. **It was during the movement's period in exile that the earlier exercise of *trusteeship* began to manifest as *vanguardism*.** The idea of a political 'vanguard' originates with Marxist-Leninist theory, and is particularly characteristic of revolutionary (often Marxist-Leninist) parties. The ANC's conceptual shift of the mid-1940s (in which the notion of trusteeship-as-representative democracy merged into an understanding of trusteeship as *external* to democratic politics) laid the conceptual foundations for its further transition into vanguardism.

Concurrent with the ANC's vanguard discourse was not a jettisoning of democracy as representation but ***the advancement of a form of representation in which the 'representative' was understood as not only indisputable but also chosen by history*.** This engendered not only a conception of democracy as pre-determined but of popular participation as requiring the vanguard's direction. The 'correctness' of the ANC's ideas – claimed first of the Freedom Charter (Nzo 1980) and then of its revolutionary theory (ANC 1969) - required the mobilisation of the masses behind it.

The following chapters of this thesis trace the significance and implications of vanguardism for the ANC's understanding of participatory democracy. Chapter Three, in particular, explores vanguardism in detail as a dominant conceptual thread in the idea of 'people's power', while Chapter Six discusses the survival of this discourse after 1994. It is the 1960s, however, to which we can trace its emergence in ANC discourse. It is worth setting out here the programmatic framework in which vanguardism emerged.

2.4.2. Meshing Ideological Traditions: Marxism-Leninism and African Nationalism

From 1969 the ANC's revolutionary theory was situated in a dominant framework of Marxism-Leninism with the retention of African nationalist elements. The ANC's 1969 *Strategy and Tactics* document situated the South African struggle "within an international context of transition to the socialist system" while making clear that "national liberation is the chief content of the struggle" (ANC 1969). The document also set out the ANC's adherence to the basic tenets of CST and the two-stage theory of revolution. However the

struggle was simultaneously contextualised within a framework of African nationalism, the achievement of independence in some parts of the African continent and the continuing struggle against colonialism and racism in others.

While I argue that these dual nationalist and communist discourses in many respects reinforced one another, there was also some degree of tension. There is evidence that an earlier draft of *Strategy and Tactics,* produced by Joe Slovo (1969),[34] was "corrected" by fellow party members Joe Matthews and Duma Nokwe prior to its adoption at Morogoro (Matthews 2008: 30). This is perhaps a reflection of the differences of opinion within the Party itself, possibly between African and non-African members. The contextualising of the South African struggle amongst broader African struggles for independence is left out of Slovo's draft. In contrast, the final report placed significance not only on the alliance with the SACP but with the Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) and the strategic role of pan-African unity amongst the region's national liberation movements (ANC 1969). It also omitted the danger, inferred in Slovo's version, that South Africa might follow the fate of other independent African states where little had been done to advance their societies toward socialism (Slovo, 1969: 22). Slovo had alluded to the risk of the white bourgeoisie being merely replaced by a black bourgeoisie should revolution not proceed through both 'stages'. The final document, however, reiterated the ANC's observance of both Marxist-Leninist *and* African nationalist thought.

Despite these nuances, *Strategy and Tactics* made clear a number of points about the synergy of military and political activity; the importance of revolutionary theory in guiding strategy; and the conquest of power as the end goal of struggle. Within this framework, two themes emerged: the need to 'mould' political consciousness to the necessity and correctness of armed struggle; and a conception of the popular role as being an enabler for the seizure of power. The ANC was guided not merely by pragmatic considerations in the face of state repression but by *theoretical* considerations as to the best framework for the conquest of power.

However, despite the need to retain contact with home, the ANC's conception of mass activity still did not draw on local experiences, views or conditions. Instead, organisational practice implied a top-down transmission of ideas from vanguard to people, requiring communication of the Morogoro conference's "perspectives and decisions" in order to mobilise the masses (Matthews 1969: 5). It also, to a degree, foreclosed democratic space, making reference to the falling by the wayside of those leaders not willing to move with the hidden powers of history - those who the ANC refers to as "unable to adjust to the new revolutionary mood" (ANC 1969). As such, the movement claimed, "a departure in this

[34] The document is an annotated copy by Joe Slovo written in March 1969 before the ANC's First Consultative Conference in April 1969.

direction [of armed struggle] is correct, necessary and, in the true sense, revolutionary" (ibid). By 1970 the influence of Marxism-Leninism was unmistakable.

It is worth adding, however, that the ANC was aware of differences of opinion within its own ranks. It sought to contain this, however, through the construction of an 'authoritative organ' to prosecute the revolution under ANC leadership (Matthews 1969). Such a structure seems to have been envisaged as directing mass action and opinion toward that which was theoretically correct. The extent to which the ANC's external mission became dominated or controlled by the SACP or individual communists is not a debate for which there is space here. Views about the nature of this relationship can be found elsewhere.[35] Several points are worth making, however, about the extent to which Marxism-Leninism was internalised by the ANC and thus influenced its theory and practice.

Analysis of the ANC's language at this time certainly suggests a growing influence of these ideas. The movement's hierarchical and centralising tendencies, which became most apparent in exile, can be attributed, in part, to the closeness of its working relationship with the SACP and the latter's own *modus operandi*. This was reinforced by the cross-fertilisation of personnel between the two organisations. Their lineage can also, however, be traced to the ANC's roots in African nationalism. The nationalist tradition itself promoted a conception of participation as mobilisation. It also continued to employ longstanding ideas of trusteeship in which the ANC represents people and nation.

Broader pan-African influences, which drew on anti-colonial sentiment and the ideology of African socialism were also gaining ground in other parts of the continent. It is not clear from the ANC's commentary to what extent African Socialism in Tanzania, for example – where the ANC based itself from 1963 – left imprints on its ideology. It was, however, a primarily *nationalist* ideology which claimed to correspond to the traditions and roots of African society (Leatt et al 1986: 153). Leatt (et al) argue that it is an ideology of "conscientisation" - "a socialism planned by an elite for the people", in which Parliamentary democracy is generally seen as unable to provide sufficient leadership (ibid). Once the ANC was in exile, these formative ideas, of the people as a cohesive whole whose natural instincts would lead them to nationalism, were combined with the SACP's ideas of 'democratic centralism' and the necessity of a leading vanguard. With the growing influence of Leninist thought, therefore, trusteeship eventually emerged as vanguardism.

It is undoubtable that the Party's access to military resources bolstered its influence in formulating strategy. The reports and resolutions of the Morogoro Conference themselves testify to that. However, notions of an SACP take-over seem somewhat simplistic. Such control implies an act of imposition and a movement vulnerable to domination. I would argue that the formulation of ideas and their translation into practice required something

[35] See, for example, Shubin (1999), Ellis & Sechaba (1992), Macmillan (2009b).

more than this: it required that the ANC adopt many of the tendencies of Marxist-Leninist thought *in its own right.*

Reflecting on the more recent past, the SACP's marginalisation after 1990 can be seen as not only a result of global ideological shifts and the discrediting of the former Soviet bloc but also of the ANC's transposition of itself (and *not* the Party) as the political 'vanguard' of the people. Fundamentally, this entailed the ANC's own adoption of the Marxist-Leninist view, which complemented existing nationalist ideas, that the people's role can only be realised through the leadership of a vanguard movement.

This is of course not to say that the SACP leadership did not seek to win-over non-Party comrades or increase its own influence. The SACP's emphasis, however, on the leading role of the working class in the struggle for socialism (SACP 1962) must be understood *within the framework of its two-stage theory*. An internal memo of the SACP Central Committee in 1967 stated: "the task of building such a society cannot even begin until the people are free from national oppression ... the paramount duty of the South African Communist Party today is to participate in and support the struggle for freedom in our country whose main content is freedom of the African people (SACP CC 1967)

There were also conflicting allegiances of dual ANC-SACP membership. Barrell points to Joe Slovo and Yusuf Dadoo's concern "to counter a tendency which they had detected among Africa-based SACP cadres to submerge the party almost totally within the ANC" (1993). The result of the dual loyalties of many SACP members was that democratic centralism in the vanguard Party competed with the requirements of loyalty to the vanguard ANC. Shubin argues that Tambo, who by 1965 was acting president, saw no need for the creation in exile of organised Party units. Rather, his view was that attempts to return to South Africa should be undertaken "as the ANC" (1999: 113-114).

The conceptual framework of National Democratic Revolution (NDR), in which the focus of the struggle remained on the *first* stage, allowed the development and later retention of the ANC's vanguard position. The Party was effectively dependent on the ANC for the realisation of a 'second stage'. OR Tambo's suggestion in a discussion between a delegation of the Party's CC and the ANC NEC,[36] summarised by Ndlovu, that the "sensible move for the SACP, as an ally, [would be] to accept the ANC's vanguard role", on the grounds that the African masses were "not yet mobilised into a socialist way of thinking" (Ndlovu, 2004: 453) reflects a view of the ANC, and not the Party, as vanguard.

[36] Although the date of this discussion is not available, the meeting took place c.1969 following the ANC's First Consultative Conference at Morogoro in April of that year.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter has identified several key points that provide context and conceptual framing for analysis of the subsequent decades. By the 1970s, the process of mass struggle (both political and military) was viewed by the movement as instrumental to achieving liberation. The ANC's shift toward mobilisation and mass movement politics in the 1950s was thus consolidated over subsequent decades through the development of a revolutionary theory focused on the conquest of state power. While this theorisation was characterised by the growing influence of Marxism-Leninism, it was also supported by the ANC's nationalist heritage which itself contained characteristics of a top-down theory of organisation. Although African nationalism elevated a role for the masses, this was viewed as needing to take place through a *process of conscientisation* which could only be brought to the people from without by a dedicated leadership.

Exile conditions of course imposed on the ANC a *modus operandi* which severely limited its contact with home. Under these circumstances, factors beyond the ANC's control imposed constraints on its relationship with the people. However, *irrespective of such conditions*, the correctness of the revolutionary theory adopted by the ANC appears to have been seen as irrefutable. Although the movement's liberal origins were barely visible by the time it re-grouped in exile, we are able to see how early ideas of trusteeship and paternalism provided favourable conditions for the subsequent emergence of a new view of leadership in the form of revolutionary vanguardism. The subsequent chapters take up this theme further displaying how vanguardism has proven to be powerful in shaping ANC democratic thought.

CHAPTER 3

Participation and 'People's Power'

3.1. Introduction

The conceptual complexity of 'people's power' is generally overlooked in what is perceived to be either a spontaneous uprising from below or an ANC-orchestrated phenomenon. Closer analysis of its theory and practice, however, reflects a series of interlinking conceptions of the role of popular participation. More often than not, these ideas overlapped, drawing upon one another's sources of inspiration or displaying a similar ideological lineage. Particular actors and strands of the movement also had bearing on the shape of the democratic project. Given their integrated nature, it is erroneous to separate the various conceptions into mutually exclusive categories. They certainly weren't experienced as such at the time. What is attempted here is instead the identification of 'themes' or 'discourses' in the theory and practice of people's power.

The geographical division and ideological disparity of the movement with which people's power was associated renders its analysis especially complex. In some instances the chapter refers to the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) - a term which refers to the broad group of civil society forces aligned with the ANC, including the UDF, civics, sectoral organisations and trade unions. In many cases activists and participants belonged to more than one of these groupings and so considerable cross-pollination of ideas took place. Consequently, there is often a lack of linearity in the sequencing of both events and political thought.

Although this thesis deals with the subject of *participatory democracy*, I refer throughout the chapter to '*participation*' or '*popular participation*', each used interchangeably. Having said this, I also take note of the fact that the term 'participatory democracy' was not generally used by participants in struggle at the time. The introduction of this term into ANC lexicon from the late 1980s is, in itself, significant and is dealt with in Chapter Four.

It is also worth stating that the purpose of the chapter is not to highlight democratic deficits in popular power, or to suggest that any one conception was superior. The liberation struggle was conducted under conditions of illegality, severe state repression, and an absence of the civil and political freedoms that enable organisations under 'normal' circumstances to operate openly. What we demand and expect of popular structures should therefore be mindful of this context. This does not, however, preclude a critique of such forms of organisation and this is in part what this analysis seeks to do.

Importantly, it takes a different view to some existing approaches which view the democracy established after 1994 as somewhat inferior or unrelated to that pre-figured by

people's power (c.f. Neocosmos 1998; Legassick 2007; Sinwell 2011).[37] Instead, I argue that ***the discourse and practice of popular power during times of struggle can tell us something about the ideas and objectives of popular power that later take shape under democracy***. Subsequent chapters trace the trajectory of these ideas after 1990, showing that while new influences emerged existing ones also remained.

It also diverges from more recent research by Sinwell (2011) who suggests that people's power held, in its entirety, the promise of a transformative and democratic form of popular participation - a politics of participation which, he argues, has been lost since 1994. His analysis, I suggest, ignores ***the presence of other important influences and traditions that also constituted people's power, some of which continue to inform the theory and practice of participatory democracy today.***

The chapter opens by providing a short overview of the emergence of people's power and goes on to explore the themes discernible in it. Each of these can be identified, albeit to varying degrees, in the range of conceptions and experiments in popular participation. Section 3.3 then discusses the ideologues and influences that shaped these discourses and endeavours to link them to an intellectual or ideological heritage. Section 3.4 then constitutes a reflective analysis, providing an assessment of the conceptions and key conclusions we can draw about the way people's power was understood.

3.1.1. 'People's Power': the Emergence of a Movement

The period of popular unrest in South Africa during the 1980s was presaged by a number of domestic and international pressures. The state's economic crises in 1983-4 marked the onset of a period in which "resistance took hold nationally" (Marks 2001: 40). Deepening recession, rising labour militancy and mounting state debt led to measures that incorporated both repression and reform. The Black Local Authorities Act of 1982 and the proposals for a Tricameral Parliament in 1983 to house Whites, Indians and Coloureds only, also triggered a new set of challenges. Resistance to these structures generated popular, largely urban, protest leading to the breakdown of relations between communities and local government.

The ANC itself by this stage had successfully re-grouped in exile and consolidated some of its senior leadership on Robben Island. The Soweto uprising in 1976 led to an exodus of young black South Africans joining the movement abroad, while many people formerly in the Black Consciousness Movement gravitated to the Congress camp. Reviewing its own strategy in light of these shifts, the ANC reoriented its vision toward a strategy of a 'people's war' in which popular organisation at home would provide the basis for military challenge to the

[37] See, for example, Legassick's critique of bourgeois democracy (versus workers' democracy) (2007: 562 - 573).

state. 'People's power' as a concept and practice emerged against the backdrop of these shifts. While it may not be strictly a product of them, the way in which it evolved can be explained by both changing domestic socio-economic conditions and the context of a broadening ANC hegemony.

Amidst growing politicisation and the daily grind of life under apartheid a number of civic, community and issue-based organisations were formed. The United Democratic Front (UDF), originally established to protest the elections for the tricameral parliament, had by the end of 1984 turned its attention to broader political organisation. As a 'Front', comprised of a multitude of sectoral and civic affiliates, the UDF saw its role as linking 'local struggles' to 'national interests' (UDF c.1987) and became largely associated with the ANC. It was from emergent local organisation around bread and butter concerns that 'organs of people's power' transpired.

In its more general sense, 'people's power' as a phenomenon referred to the general era between 1985 and 1987 of popular organisation and challenge to state authority. In its more specific sense, it referred to structures and organisational activity instigated within communities to exert a measure of popular control. Largely established by activists and civic organisers, 'organs of people's power' took the form of structures such as People's Committees (yard committees, block committees, street committees and area committees) and forums for popular justice (often referred to as People's Courts). The purpose of these structures ranged from providing advice and services to local residents, to challenging the very legitimacy of the local state and acting as *de facto* organs of self-governance.

3.2. Themes and Discourses in the Conception of 'People's Power'.

3.2.1. The 'People' and the Transfer of Power

A popularly used idiom during the 1980s was the usage of '*people'* as a prefix and descriptor for liberation activity, institutions, programmes and goals. The ANC, UDF and civic organisations referred in varying degrees to people's power, people's war, the people's army, people's courts, people's education, people's sanctions, people's democracy and a people's parliament. Influences on its usage appear to have been two-way: both the ANC and UDF popularised the term in their own literature, while more localised references to things such as 'people's parks'[38] are likely to have been coined on the ground.

Reference to 'the people' in Congress discourse reflects its longstanding preoccupation with unity and equality. It also, however, implied ownership. Attachment of the term to institutions and actions became particularly prevalent from the late 1970s. On the one

[38] 'People's parks' were areas of green space, often in a township, which were cleaned up by members of the local community during the 1980s for communal use. In some cases the park was renamed with a struggle reference.

hand, ‘the people’ referred generally to the oppressed non-White population. As the programme of the liberation movement extended, however, ‘the people’ became increasingly associated with all those who opposed apartheid: the progressive forces as opposed to the reactionary, and those who disassociated with the state and enemy (i.e. ‘the other’). In a sense, ‘the people’s camp’ was only relevant as a result of the presence of this ‘other’. Thus while the definition of ‘the people’ was not always articulated, by implication it embodied both all that was being rejected and all that was being fought for.

The composition of the ‘people’ also relates to issues of racial versus class identity - a debate resolved by the ANC through its adoption of the NDR framework, which maintained that while there was a leading role of the working class, the most oppressed group remained the African population more broadly. In this sense, the ‘people’s’ identity incorporated this conceptual approach. Through developing a concept of the people, defined by the existence of an enemy versus an identifiable oppressed majority, the ANC adopted an understanding of ‘the people’ as largely homogeneous. The waging of a struggle that was *national* in character was, understandably, premised upon what people had in common. It also tended, however, to paper over differences amongst ‘the people’ - of class, generation, culture, religion and gender. The structures and practices which emerged took little account of contrary views. Feminist scholars, for example, have highlighted struggles of women in the ANC whose concern to increase organisational attention toward issues of women’s emancipation was often overlooked in the interests of broader national liberation (Hassim 2004).

The application of the term ‘the people’ also warrants clarification about the role of national democracy itself. Although a ‘people’s democracy’ could refer simply in its popular usage to an inclusive democratic state, for some in the ANC it referred to the models of socialist transition in Eastern Europe, excluding the Soviet Union (Netshitenzhe Interview: 14 May 2013). Here, ‘people’s democracy’ took the form of a multi-class front of forces, led by a Communist Party, as a stage in the construction of communism (ibid.; see also Femia 1981: 59). In line with the SACP’s 1984 constitution, Party leader Joe Slovo emphasised ‘democracy’ and 'People's Power' as “an essential prerequisite for the longer-term advance towards a socialist transformation” (1988b).

Recognising that the character of the national liberation struggles in the ‘third world’ differed somewhat to their European counterparts, the term ‘national democracy’ was applied. Led by a liberation movement, the struggle was for national liberation and independence but it would lay the basis for a socialist transition.[39] The interchangeability of the terms ‘national democracy’, ‘people’s democracy’ and ‘people’s state’ in ANC and UDF

[39] See Golan (1987: 600-601) on debates taking place about vanguard parties and the prospect of a ‘people’s democracy’ in third world contexts

literature reflect their similarity and the broad influence of the Communist movement internationally.[40]

The application of revolutionary terminology also denotes the idea of a transfer of power. A common thread in the discourse of people's power is the general belief that the activity being carried out was part of a broader commitment to non-racial democracy. In some cases participants saw themselves as working towards that very objective: people's power was understood as both a rejection of the state's legitimacy and an embodiment of a democratic alternative (Skweyiya 1991: 130). Some popular actions thus challenged the legitimacy of the state from the outset. Those whose focus was more on reducing the burden of daily life than on broader political questions were still, if unintentionally, bringing into question the very nature and basis of the state.

The ANC as an organisation made a much more direct link between people's power and the attainment of democracy. This discourse implied that 'People's Power' was precisely what was being fought for, and referred to a future dispensation that could only be reached under the ANC's leadership (ANC NEC 1985b). It thus claimed in 1985 that "the people … are openly demonstrating over and over again that the ANC is their legitimate and overall leader on the road to people's power" (ibid.). Beyond vague references to direct representation, self-government and majority rule, however, it does not appear that the ANC, at this stage, had a clear idea of what 'people's power' in practice would entail.

3.2.2. Active Participation and the Inadequacy of Representative Democracy

Underpinning people's power was a belief in the inadequacy of representative democracy. This was by no means a wholesale rejection of representation. Both the civic and UDF as well as organs of people's power themselves involved elections and tiers of representatives. Representative democracy alone, however, was seen as insufficient (Morobe 1987; Boraine 1987; Seedat Interview: 13 May 2013). In setting out its own view of democracy in a speech by Murphy Morobe (notably titled *Towards a People's Democracy),* the UDF asserted "not only are we opposed to the present parliament because we are excluded, but because parliamentary-type representation in itself represents a very limited and narrow idea of democracy" (1987: 82).

The statement did not reject the value of the right to vote but portrayed 'real' democracy as something richer and more meaningful than voting in elections. It would involve not only

[40] While the ANC has maintained its commitment to NDR, its 1985 Strategy and Tactics Document - 'Broad Guidelines for Discussion' - refers to "the creation of a people's democracy based on the ideals embodied in the Freedom Charter" (ANC 1985a). Murphy Morobe's speech to IDASA in 1987 refers to both engagement in the 'national democratic struggle' and a movement toward a 'people's democracy' (Morobe 1987). A Transvaal UDF lecture series in 1986, referring to the national democratic revolution in Nicaragua and Mozambique, also conflates the state of national democracy with a 'people's state' (UDF 1986c).

indirect democracy but a deeper form of control by ordinary people: “When we say that the people shall govern, we mean at all levels and in all spheres, and we demand that there be real, effective control on a daily basis” (ibid.).

Member of the UDF National and Western Cape Executive, Andrew Boraine’s critique in 1987 of the insufficiency of “constitutions, voting procedures and competing political parties”, which referred also to broader social, economic and cultural power relations that impact on the potential for a democratic future (1987: 11), highlighted the ANC’s and UDF’s concerns with issues beyond procedural democratic rights and political pluralism. Neil Coleman, an MDM activist and editor of the UDF journal, *Phambile* commented: “it was inconceivable to us at the time that you would have a narrow form of formal, parliamentary democracy in which all those forms of democratic popular participation would simply disappear.” (Interview: 20 February 2013).

The UDF’s stance was juxtaposed to those liberal or bourgeois versions of democracy which advocated political pluralism: “- liberal approaches look at abstract models, and, in particular, they lay great stress on multi-party systems as opposed to supposedly 'undemocratic' one-party states. A future, liberated SA may have a one-party or a multi-party system. That, for us, is not at all the most important question” (UDF 1987a: 21). The nub of the UDF position was that the essence of their version of democracy lay not in pluralism or contestation but in mass organisation (Ibid.: 22).

While Morobe’s speech defended the principle of differences of opinion within a context of organisational unity (1987: 85), it also maintained that this was not the essence of democracy (ibid.: 83). What the UDF discourse appeared to advocate was a form of participatory democracy also concerned with democratic economic control, particularly by the working class: “Democracy means, in the first instance, the ability of the broad working classes to participate in and to control all dimensions of their lives. This, for us, is the essence of democracy, not some liberal, pluralistic debating society notion of a ‘thousand schools contending’” (New Era 1986 cited in Lodge 1991:131).

This emphasis on mass participation as a condition for ‘real’ democracy to flourish represented a rejection of more elitist forms, while in a Rousseauian sense representative structures were understood as needing to be supplemented by direct and participatory mechanisms. Several interviewees involved in the UDF or civic organisation during the 1980s expressed that, in the future they envisaged some measure of popular democratic control would be exercised at a local or grassroots level (Mufamadi Interview: 26 November 2012; Masondo Interview: 13 March 2013; Mayekiso Interview: 8 April 2013; Cronin Interview: 27 November 2012; Tsenoli Interview: 11 March 2013).

Amos Masondo, an activist in the Soweto Civic Association, explained:

> "The understanding really was that we were not struggling just to have people in parliament or in the legislatures. Ours was not a mere representative democracy but a democracy that, yes you would have to have elected people but an element of that would be [a] participatory kind of democracy. We would encourage, in between the various elections, deep participatory processes that will ensure that, apart from the elected public representatives, people at a local level would still be engaged in activities. They won't put everything aside and just wait for an election every five years but people would be involved at a local level to change their own lives". (Interview: 13 March 2013).

Andrew Boraine, drawing on both Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Norberto Bobbio on the limitations of the vote, similarly referred to 'a people's democracy' as one that "broadens the concept of democracy beyond that of representation to include notions of direct and participatory democracy" (1987: 8).

Beyond references to something greater and more participatory than representative democracy, however, it was not always clear on a practical level what precisely this would be replaced with. For many activists, the 1980s was a period of war and struggle in which the priority was not theorisation as to what would replace the current state but rather making the existing system unworkable (Coovadia Interview: 28 May 2013). A leader of the Atteridgeville-Sausville Residents Organisation observed that "What the community would look like after democracy was an academic question. The situation did not allow us to address it" (cited in Steinberg: 2000: 187). Nonetheless, while concerns may have centred on the immediate struggle, organisational practice came to bear the marks of normative conceptual influence. What were often produced were 'rudimentary principles' of popular power, if not clear institutional forms (Steinberg 2000: 190).

3.2.3. Discipline and Hegemonic Unity[41]

An important feature of people's power was that it was predominantly Charterist in character. The ANC by the 1980s referred to itself as "a genuine people's organisation" and "the genuine representative of all the people" (ANC 1985b). Despite weaknesses in its contact with popular struggles, the movement nonetheless remained sure of its domestic support base (ANC NPC 1985: 4-5; see also ANC 1985c: 1). The breadth and consolidation of ANC hegemony during the 1980s supports Suttner's concept of a 'hegemonic unity' which he defines as seeking "overall leadership and representation of all forces in all sectors struggling for liberation under specific banners" (2011: 15). The ANC's consultative conference in 1985 affirmed:

[41] The term 'hegemonic unity' is used by Suttner (2011) to characterise the unity of the liberation movement.

> "Without the ANC, in contact with and as part of the masses of the people, enjoying their support and confidence and leading them into many-sided action, our victory is impossible. The ANC is a genuine people's organisation as the product of their sacrifices, the inheritor and the continuation of the revolutionary experience of the oppressed people as a whole, their organiser and leader" (ANC 1985b).

The hegemonic position of the ANC was reinforced by the UDF who affirmed its view of the movement as the vanguard of the struggle (MDM c.1988; UDF 1990a; Molefe 1990b). Considering itself "under ANC discipline and carrying out its strategies", Suttner has argued that the UDF carried a "B Team mentality"; its self-conception being that of "a 'curtain raiser' before the main team arrived on the field" (2004: 699). Several others also indicated that there was a deference to the ANC (Seedat Interview: 13 May 2013; Mayekiso Interview: 8 April 2013; Ramaphosa in Butler 2008: 227). The unity that Suttner describes was thus not only aspired to but realised. The nature of being a hegemonic movement implies that the leadership position sought is accepted by those who are led.

The establishment of a hegemonic unity was also underpinned by a sense of discipline and revolutionary principle. 'Discipline', or 'revolutionary discipline', was a means of maintaining unity and preventing factionalism. For the structure of the UDF as a 'front' this was particularly important (UDF 1985a: 25-26). Interestingly, personal *in*discipline and lack of revolutionary maturity were sometimes used to explain or excuse instances of violence and coercion. Unity in action and thought were crucial for a umbrella body like the UDF whose affiliates were comprised of a range of local organisations. A 1985 article in the UDF's theoretical journal, *Isizwe* was devoted to the very issue: "Unless indiscipline is eliminated, our organisations are threatened with disunity, division and suspicion. All forms of factionalism, regionalism, individualism and cliquism must be stopped. We are working not in our individual capacities but as activists of a people's front" (ibid.: 24).

In this sense, the maintenance of hegemonic unity required not only *personal* but *political* discipline as well as the acceptance of and commitment to a collective identity and undertaking. The same *Isizwe* article emphasised: "Our concept of discipline arises from a political understanding … The discipline we speak of is a discipline that involves the conscious and willing decision to subordinate one's own will and immediate personal inclinations to that of the collective, or more precisely to the organisation to which one is responsible" (UDF 1985a: 23). The notion of securing this political discipline corresponded with the UDF's democratic discourse: just as it rejected a liberal understanding of democracy as adversarial and pluralistic, it's concept of organisational discipline necessitated unity and popular control exercised as a collective.

Despite this discourse of hegemony, the full extent of ANC influence was in some respects disguised by the secrecy of affiliation. The structures of people's power are claimed to have

been open to people of all political affiliations. In reality, however, Charterist influence predominated. Referring to structures such as the street and area committees, Neil Coleman explained that "the understanding at the time in the movement was that we've got to make these organisations as non-sectarian as possible while at the same time being vehicles of the mainstream movement which was the Congress movement" (Interview: 20 February 2013). Cas Coovadia, an activist in the Civic Association of Johannesburg (CAJ), noted that while tensions existed with other political tendencies, they were still recognised as part of the broader 'progressive' movement (Interview: 28 May 2013). However alternative affiliations also appear to have been tolerated by virtue of them presenting little threat to Charterist dominance:

> "We interacted with comrades in other political tendencies … we clashed philosophically, we clashed intellectually … [but] … it wasn't the sort of friction that said we now need to totally delegitimise this tendency or delegitimise these people … But, to be quite honest, compared to the organising ability of those informed by the Charter and the Charterist movement, I think their ability to organise and their structures were pretty weak … If I have to be really crass about it, we tolerated those tendencies and carried on doing our work" (Ibid.).

UDF-ANC suspicion and intolerance of alternative organisations have been noted by several authors (Marks 2001: 109; Jeffery 2009; Seekings 2000: 146-53) and in some instances resulted in intimidation and violence (Jeffery 2009; Carter 1991a). Neil Coleman noted the prevalence of a view that saw organisations such as the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) "as the aggressors, as people who couldn't tolerate the emergence of this very powerful movement" (Interview: 20 February 2013). In Mamelodi, there is evidence that Azapo was compared to a vigilante grouping and "not given chance to operate as an organisation" (ANC London Collection, undated f: 2). Recognition of the ANC's extended influence reinforced its homogeneous conception of 'the people'. Both the ANC and UDF were somewhat guilty of assuming that the masses fell under the movement's rubric. Its belief after 1991 that the ANC and its structures could fulfil the role formerly played by the UDF became an indication of this assumption.

3.2.4. Participation as a Means: Struggle and Insurrection

> *"The importance of mass mobilisation for the seizure of power … the one who wins the masses wins the war."* (ANC 1985h: 1)

A key influence shaping the discourse of people's power concerned the extent to which it was understood as a means or an end of struggle: a method of challenging the state or an end goal in itself. For some, people's power prefigured the very state being fought for. For

others it represented primarily a method of struggle - an effective mass weapon to both dislodge the regime and further revolutionary goals.

What is clear from the ANC's discourse is that mass participation in the revolution was fundamental for its success. The strategy of 'people's war', adopted by the ANC in 1979, continued to give emphasis to this principle, affirming that "It remains one of the fundamental truths of our struggle that victory cannot be won without the active and conscious participation of the masses of the oppressed people themselves" (ANC 1979). Informed by the revolutionary experience in Vietnam, the ANC undertook a strategic review in 1978-9 which marked a shift in thinking toward an appreciation of, not only the military but the political aspects of struggle.

People's war was defined as: "a war in which a liberation army becomes rooted amongst the people who progressively participate actively in the armed struggle both political and militarily (sic) with the final aim of seizing power" (ANC 1985f: 1). It thus placed increased priority on domestic political organisation with a view to drawing the masses into a people's army of which MK itself would be just a nucleus (Kasrils 1988). Pallo Jordan - then a member of the ANC's Department of Information and Publicity and the Head of Radio Freedom - attributed to the review a clearer perspective for the ANC "that you can only conduct and talk about people's war in the context of a politically highly motivated and active, mobilised community" (Interview with Howard Barrell: 1989). As a result the ANC's underground began consciously "to participate and encourage" the creation and revival of popular structures (ibid.).

Seekings suggests, however, that it was only in 1985 with the onset of the state of emergency that people's power was given its insurrectionary 'thrust' (2000a: 71, 173). While people's war encompassed both military and political activity, for the ANC it was the insurrectionary role of popular structures that seems to have been foremost. Contained within the papers of the ANC's Zambia mission is an interesting discussion paper on 'Ungovernability and People's Power'. Here, organs of people's power, specifically, are understood as essentially "organs of insurrection":

> "- *organs of popular power* emerge and thrive in a situation of revolt, as a manifestation of the emergence and maturing of a revolutionary situations [sic], as part of the overall process towards armed insurrection. The tasks of these organs have come to concur with this strategic perspective. *They are essentially organs of insurrection, or - in the period of the build-up - organs of people's war*" [emphasis added] (ANC, Undated a: 4)

Available ANC archival documentation on people's war draws largely on the struggle in Vietnam. South Africa was in some ways comparable with Vietnam, understood also as needing to go through a stage of a 'national people's democratic revolution' in order to

reach socialism (ANC London Collection, undated a). In Vietnam, 'liberated zones' were established which, in addition to representing guerrilla bases, seemed to carry a pre-figurative element as "models of a new life of a new regime" (ibid.).

Several UDF activists referred to the influence of the Vietnamese revolution and its establishment of liberated zones (Tsenoli, Inteview: 11 March 2013; Coleman Interview: 20 February 2013; Cronin Interview: 27 November 2012). Some referred to South Africa's structures of people's power being compared to elements of liberated zones (Moosa Interview: 30 April 2013; Coleman Interview: 20 February 2013), although not everyone agreed they could be strictly classified as such (Seedat Interview: 13 May 2013).

The experiences and models of Marxist-inspired struggle in locations such as Vietnam, Cuba, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Angola and Algeria were widespread amongst activists, their influence cutting across both the ANC and SACP. It is therefore interesting that Ben Turok, a member of the SACP stationed in London,[42] dismissed the notion that organs of people's power were understood as structures of democracy - a view perhaps reflective of those within the Party, and maybe the ANC, for whom the aim of the struggle was not liberated zones but taking state power. Turok argued that a concept of people's power as self-government - relevant to struggles such as Vietnam, China or Guinea Bissau where liberated zones were established - did not enter into the discussion in South Africa: "In South Africa there was no prospect of liberated zones. So … the issues of empowerment or participation didn't arise. Our conception was we would take over Pretoria" (Interview: 19 February 2013).

In contrast, Neil Coleman, a member of the Transvaal UDF who helped to produce UDF propaganda in the second half of the 1980s, portrayed the inspiration for people's power as standing in direct contrast to the authoritarianism of a more Stalinist approach: "actually the inspiration is the opposite. It's about people's movements that have really been rooted in popular struggles in a very deep way so it was your Vietnams and those types of movements, guerrilla movements and some of the African experiences, your Mozambiques, etc, you know; it wasn't your classic sort of insurrectionary, militaristic type of ideology" (Interview: 20 February 2013).

It is not clear how widespread the more instrumental and militarised view of popular power was, although the SACP's veneration of Lenin's insurrectionary path to power would certainly indicate its presence. What can be argued is that the discourse of popular participation in relation to *people's war* - a discourse belonging to the ANC external mission predominantly - was not one in which a language of democracy featured. Organs of people's

[42] Turok was later expelled from the SACP in 1976 during a period of disagreement over whether the Party's London contingent should focus solely on propaganda and solidarity (as it had been) or begin interactions with underground networks in South Africa (SAHO, www.sahistory.org.za).

power were conceived as primarily organs of struggle. Janet Cherry, a member of the ANC underground from 1982, noted that ANC strategy at the time was very much a Leninist one which drew heavily on the Soviet model (Interview: 3 October 2012). People's participation was linked to the goal of armed struggle; and armed struggle itself was understood to be a fundamentally political undertaking. Underlying this discourse is therefore a sense of the strategic utility of participation. The ANC's notes on the Vietnamese experience draw on how recruitment into armed units relied on the masses to provide an "inexhaustible source of supply" (ANC London Collection, undated c).

The conception of participation as a means of struggle was not exclusive to the armed pillar. As a legal organisation, the UDF could not align itself with the armed struggle even if it wished to do so, and so its lack of involvement in armed activity naturally led it toward advocating a more political role for mass activity. Nonetheless, although popular organisation was emphasised in its own right - and not merely (or not primarily) as a conduit of a people's war - it was still understood as part of a broader project for a liberation. Several interviewees involved in the UDF and its affiliates referred to organs of people's power as being structures intended to mobilise and build capacity to fight the regime (Mashatile Interview: 21 February 2013; Coovadia Interview: 28 May 2013; Boraine Interview: 21 May 2013), or, as Moosa described, as "features of a low-level insurrection" (Interview: 30 April 2013).

It was also the case that, for some activists, the future form that people's power would take had not been consciously thought through. Former UDF General Secretary, Paul Mashatile, while conceding that influences from that period can indeed be seen in present-day structures, commented: "I think in the main at the time it was more the capacity we needed to mobilise to fight against unjust laws, the apartheid regime, as opposed to building models for the future … I think we didn't build consciously a lot of those structures as models" (Interview: 21 February 2013). Andrew Boraine similarly said of people's power:

> It was definitely part of the struggle … [T]he new state seemed to be twenty years off! You know the fact is that it was around the corner, you know, ten years later, but we didn't know that ... So organs of people's power were definitely part of making the system unworkable and ungovernable, sort of trying to carve out space in which one can operate ... I would say they were expressions of popular opinion but they were not necessarily consciously being designed as organs of democracy for the future state. (Interview: 21 May 2013).

Cas Coovadia, a civic leader involved in establishing street and flat committees in inner-city Johannesburg, emphasised that "the organising was always to overthrow this government" (Interview: 28 May 2013). Although he also stated that the aim was "to replace it with a

democratic non-racial government under the leadership of the ANC", he did not indicate that the committees themselves were organs of democracy (ibid.). Janet Cherry, also, did not recall much discussion about "the nature of democracy", noting that the idea of organs of people's power was linked to a "revolutionary and insurrectionary objective" (Interview: 3 October 2012). Therefore despite the existence of a UDF discourse on building a democratic alternative, a 1986 *Isizwe* article on 'Building People's Power' emphasised that every issue must be approached "from a political standpoint. We must always ask what possibilities it has for advancing the struggle" (1986a: 13).

Given that the role apportioned to people's power appears to be that of struggle, it is significant that a discourse can also be identified which understood people's power as an end goal. Quite critically, for some in the movement, the view of popular structures as fulfilling a function of struggle did not preclude the simultaneous belief that they were also organs of democracy.

3.2.5. Participation as an End: Prefiguring a Future State

In this case, people's power was not only a means of struggle but a prototype of what was being fought for and either prompted or deepened a process of normative theorising about democracy. In a reflection on the year of 1985, the UDF asserted: "it is possible to build mass bases, democratic organisation, which in the course of confronting and challenging the existing state, begin also to lay the seeds of a future society" (UDF 1985-6: 2; see also ANC London Collection, undated e). Some of the UDF's ideas about the form of democracy it envisaged have been discussed already: its discourse drew on the inadequacy of representative democracy in which it foresaw a democratic future informed by ideals of direct democracy, popular control and active citizen participation. The UDF and its affiliates concentrated on the 'democratic' in the NDR, unveiling a two-fold conception of democracy as both the aim and the means of struggle (Morobe 1987: 82). The UDF's theoretical journal, *Isizwe*, in March 1986 introduced the notion of pre-figurative democracy:

> - the building of people's power is something that <u>is already beginning to happen in the course of our struggle</u>. It is not for us to sit back and merely dream of the day that the people shall govern. It is our task to start to realise that goal now. We must start the process of liberating South Africa. We must begin to place power in the hands of the people, in all spheres … Even in the present we must start to build the beginnings of our future society … Building people's power is a training ground, a school for the future. [Underlining in original] (UDF 1986a: 2-3).

The linking of popular structures and localised struggles to ideas about democracy appears to have taken place within the ANC from about 1986, although organs such as street and area committees began to form much earlier. Mufson suggests that it was in 1983 in the

Eastern Cape township of Lingelihle, near Cradock, that street committees were first formed (1990: 110; see also Seekings 2000b: 73).[43] Following Cradock and Port Alfred, the Transvaal townships of Mamelodi and Alexandra were among the first to establish such structures (See ANC, undated a: 9-10; see also ANC London Collection 1986: 9).[44]

Although the theorisation of people's power can be traced to around 1986, it is interesting that ANC reference to it is first made in its January 8 Statement of 1981 which commented on Angola's "involvement in the battle for the total liberation of Africa and in the struggle for the consolidation of people`s power" (ANC NEC 1981). It is not until its statement of 1986, however, that the ANC began to develop what it means by "people's power". This timing aligns with its emergence in the lexicon of the UDF, whose first publication on people's power appeared in its theoretical journal *Isizwe* in March of that year.

In January 1984 the ANC made a direct connection between the slogan "power to the people" and the acquisition of state power (ANC NEC 1984). The form of state envisaged, was given little more detail than in the Freedom Charter, although it did allude to the potential for going beyond challenging state legitimacy to establishing an alternative power. Beyond historic references to the 1960 rural uprisings in Pondoland and the 1976 collapse of Urban Bantu Councils (ibid.), however, the idea is not developed further. It is also not clear that people's power was at that stage understood in terms of *democracy*. The idea that it symbolized the replacement of existing structures is introduced but it is not yet linked to normative democratic ideas. Again, in its statement of 8th January 1985, the ANC's focus is on forging the conditions for the establishment of "mass revolutionary bases" (ANC NEC 1985a).

The ANC's 'Call to the Nation' in April of 1985, however, is more specific. Here is called for the replacement of "collapsing government stooge councils with people's committees in every block which could become the embryos of people's power" (ANC NEC 1985b). It also depicts people's power as a dispensation to which people could only be led by the ANC (ibid.). The movement's subsequent statement on 8th January 1986 took this further by linking people's power conceptually to the power of the ANC (ANC NEC 1986). It is only in its 'Call to the People' in May of 1986, however, that the ANC makes reference to specific structures of people's power as a replacement of existing state administration (ANC 1986a). The document refers to the popular establishment of "people`s committees", "street committees", "comrades` committees", "people`s courts", "people`s defence militia" and other "popular organs of justice" (ANC 1986a).

[43] Seekings suggests that "street committees existed in Cradock from early 1985, if not earlier" (2000b: 73).

[44] Moses Mayekiso, leader of the Alexandra Civic Organisation, commented that it was Queenstown in the Eastern Cape from which they in Alex had got the idea of forming street committees (1988: 2895-6).

Whether a response to ANC policy or to grassroots needs, the establishment of people's power said something about the society envisaged - both during the phase of struggle and into the future. The UDF made quite clear that the radical democracy it envisaged was emulated in the organs of people's power: "The rudimentary organs of people's power that have begun to emerge in South Africa (street committees, defence committees, shop-steward structures, student representative councils, parent/ teacher /student associations) represent in many ways the beginnings of the kind of democracy we are striving for" (Morobe 1987: 83). What can be identified is a common ANC discourse that 'people's power' was being fought for. What was not consistently clear is what this people's power would look like.

3.2.6. Alternative Order and Local Self-Governance

Alongside national-level discourses a series of more localised meanings were imparted to popular organisation. In some senses these narratives are distinct to those outlined already in that they can be attributed to more localised experiences of UDF affiliates. Suttner argues that the activities of grassroots affiliates did not always 'fit' with dominant theoretical formulations (2004: 692). As a result, more localised discourses are often less identifiable in the 'official' literature of the ANC and UDF.

That being said, the meanings given to popular participation at a more local level were not impervious to the liberation context. Activists and participants absorbed the ANC's narrative in their conceptual and strategic approach, and the language and imagery of liberation permeated the structures that emerged. Engagement in local struggle was the civics' primary weapon against the state and many activists made clear that what they sought was the replacement of current institutions with non-racial, democratic ones (see Mayeksio 1988: 3062 and Mdakane 1988: 2315). However by focusing merely on the national political role of popular activity, we risk overlooking the specific meanings that participants imparted to these activities.

There are, of course, limitations to the analysis here. The scope of the research question does not allow for analysis of particular localities or for examination of understandings amongst ordinary community members. Nonetheless, existing case studies, archival documentation and interviews with local activists, point to the existence of other interpretations, not necessarily visible in the discourse of the ANC.

3.2.6.1. Grassroots Governance: Education and Empowerment

> *[P]eople's power referred to the actions taken by ordinary people, in and through democratically controlled structures, to exert control over their lives either by taking direct action to change conditions or by influencing others to do so. The element of accountability to the community and of changing the balance of forces in favour of the people by concrete intervention are key elements in the concept.* (UDF c.1987: 8).

For some activists and participants, the formation of organs of people's power was related to the establishment of grassroots democracy and in some cases, though not always explicit, this was also a pre-figurative exercise. While there is evidence that this was often part of the broader Charterist hegemony, a discourse is discernible which is unconnected to the national democratic project. As such, the *ideological* and *strategic* direction of popular structures was not always their most important feature.

Lechesa Tsenoli, an activist in Durban during the 1980s, described the building of people's power as something pre-figurative but also drew on notions of democracy that involved a change in power relations and a greater role for ordinary people in decision-making:

> "We were working to alter the power relations in the manner in which, for example, decisions were made, in that if those relations were not altered then and in the future what you'd have would be representatives and, officials taking decisions on behalf of people. We conceived of a future South Africa as informed by the Freedom Charter that 'the people shall govern'" (Tsenoli Interview: 11 March 2013).

Tsenoli's reference to the Freedom Charter reflects a direct and participatory democratic interpretation of "the people shall govern". It also highlights conceptual differences within the ANC itself. Tsenoli, who worked in youth and civic activism as well as being part of the ANC's underground, held a view of the future that involved changing power relations, not merely taking power. His reference also of course demonstrates the connection made by many activists between the attainment of democracy and a Charterist future. However, even notions of people's power tied to an ANC-led future often a carried with them an additional conceptual dimension. Here, participatory democracy - if only at the most local level - was valuable in its own right.

A key element of this concept was the building of accountable and empowered structures, and pride was taken in the adherence to democratic practices and procedures. Cas Coovadia of the CAJ remarked:

> "we were absolutely clear ... that these were democratically elected structures that formed the bedrock of the strategic direction given to the organisations that represented them and I think under very difficult conditions we worked very hard to maintain their democratic content and to ensure that they were reported to, they informed, and they did participate in a very real way in developing strategy for the work we needed to do" (Interview: 28 May 2013).

Similarly, in a guest column in the Sowetan in August of 1986, Murphy Morobe explained the value of self-governance not just theoretically but at a very practical level: "In setting up

street committees and democratic village councils, we are beginning to understand practically the meaning of people's power. Our people are effectively showing through such committees their supressed desire to govern their own lives" (Morobe 1986). Uitenhage Civic leader, Weza Made also emphasised how people were both learning democracy and making decisions about their lives:

> "They must learn to participate over their problems. And the struggle and the way to govern and street committees is where all the people are participating. It's where they are producing the people's power. It is where they will learn to govern themselves and making decisions about what they need or what they desire for the future of this country. So they will learn in the local level, we hope that this will spread to other townships on other parts of the country. What we aim is to improve the government from the local level" (Interview: undated).

In this sense the educative characteristics of people's power were important. In a similar vein to the ideas proposed by G.D.H. Cole and J.S. Mill, it was at the local level (or, for Cole, in the workplace) that individuals could most effectively 'learn democracy'. Through participation in those issues most directly affecting their everyday lives, real education could occur (Pateman 1970: 30-31; 37-38).

Although it is not clear to what extent people's committees influenced overall strategic direction, they do seem to have instilled in people a greater sense of self-confidence and empowerment. There was a feeling that people's power provided for open discussion and a free expression of views (UDF 1876c). Weza Made, in particular, commented on the value of the street committee in enabling people who were not confident to "express their ideas" at a mass meeting; to feel comfortable doing so (Interview: undated).

This strand of people's power thus exhibited a degree of agency, empowerment and education, not present in the narrative from Lusaka. There was a sense that people were not being merely mobilised behind change but were also a part of shaping it.[45] This was very much linked to a process of conscientisation. What it sought to produce was not just 'active' and 'mobilised' masses but educated and empowered ones. Cas Coovadia remarked on the culture of self-help it engendered; of enabling people to both identify problems and come up with solutions: "I swear I can't remember a single flat committee or street committee where someone stood up and said, 'Comrade Cas, what are you going to do for us?' It was always 'We have identified the problem here. How are you going to work with us to actually deal with this problem?'" (Interview: 28 May 2013).

[45] See, for example, the document of the ANC London Collection (1986).

The theory and practice of bringing decision-making closer to the people engendered a sense of real 'self-governance'. The beneficial impact of this was not only understood in relation to revolution - which in the discourse of the ANC was the objective at all times - but in terms of more direct benefits of social order, cohesion and upliftment. Janet Cherry, who was working on an adult education project during 1985-6, did not recall people saying that the formation of street and area committees was going to be about democracy, *per se.* However she did note that those structures were used to facilitate education: "to empower people further through offering them literacy skills, numeracy, life skills, political education, access to information, and so on" (Interview: 3 October 2012).

The Alexandra Action Committee's (AAC) establishment of popular structures was not only part of the national liberation struggle; its stated aims also included elimination of illiteracy, adult education, assisting the unemployed to earn money, after-school care and family housing (Mayekiso 1988).[46] In Alex it was also noted that the formation of yard committees was welcomed as a way to bring people together ,to reduce community and ethnic conflict (Tshabalala 1988: 3730-1) and resolve differences as well as find solutions to shared problems (see Bozzoli 2004: 194-5). The AAC's Moses Mayekiso described his wife's response to the construction of street committees in Queenstown:

> "- there is no longer fighting of the people, there is no longer killing of the people, as she knew Queenstown before. There was now harmony in that area. She was putting it that there were street committees and they were building up a civic in Queenstown. She also explained that they were working democratically and people were discussing and representing their problems …" (1988: 2896).

As noted earlier, ***part of the conscientisation process was making people aware that organisation and democratic practice could themselves ameliorate shared problems***. Richard Mdakane, one of the accused in the state trial against Moses Mayekiso, described Mayekiso's speech at a meeting in Alexandra to encourage the formation of yard, block and street committees: "The yard committees would help the Alexandra community in order to improve their stay in the yard, in order to help one another as a community, as a community that was struggling. There was also a lot of crime, but if the people meet in the yards, they would be able to solve some of these problems …" (1988: 2093-4).

It is not clear to what extent problems and their possible solutions were talked through and debated by residents before agreement was reached. However, the very idea that organisation and conscientisation involved a process of increasing 'collective' capacity to identify solutions to common problems (Cohen & Sabel 1997 in Stoker 2002: 32-3), speaks to the concept of a deliberative process. While this may not explicitly relate to a process of

[46] M Trial File 9 / Exhibit HH8.

'reasoning', as Gutmann and Thompson describe (2004: 7), the inclusive nature of discussions and the finding of accepted solutions is suggestive of a consensus-based if not a pluralistic, deliberative democracy.[47]

Some actions were thus not always, or not primarily, about revolutionary activity or alternative governing structures but about enabling people to address local needs themselves. Suttner commented that in Port Alfred people kicked out the local authority and established a crèche in the Bantu Administration Department (Interview: 25 October 2012). Their actions were not actions of the UDF, nor were they necessarily reflective of a national democratic agenda but simply targeted basic community needs such as cleanliness, services and crime. Making small gains, whether through taking joint responsibility for shared problems or organising to make demands of the local authorities, gave people a sense of empowerment and control over local concerns. There is of course little doubt that, in turn, the establishment and flourishing of people's power structures also made many participants more optimistic about the prospects of national liberation (see Morobe 1986).

3.2.6.2. Self-Service Provision and Negotiating Concessions

Another theme in the local discourse of people's power concerned service provision and self-help. Although related to the discourse of grassroots governance, its inspiration stemmed not so much from normative democratic thought as from the need to address the neglect of the state and find local solutions to local problems. The activities of civics and other structures were thus often oriented toward social welfare. Swilling argues however, that in the discourse of the liberation struggle, issues of urban citizenship - around which civic struggles were centred - became, effectively, the "poor cousin" of political citizenship (Interview: February 2013). Consequently, concerns about urban space and services were obscured by the national liberation agenda.

The discourse of service provision manifested in two strands: the one was a culture of self-help or 'doing things for oneself'; and the other involved using popular structures to negotiate with local authorities to improve the provision of state services. The first of these reflected a culture of initiative and organisation in which communities filled the gap left by the state. Even the people's courts who took a function of alternative justice, dealt with a range of community-based disputes, sometimes addressing social problems originating with the political struggle itself.[48] There is a long history of informal local courts or street

[47] Gutmann and Thompson explain that "Although pluralists agree that deliberation should strive to justify as much agreement as possible , they also seek ways of living well with those disagreements that cannot or should not be eliminated at any given time …. "(2004: 28).

[48] Seekings, for example, refers to courts being established to address the disorder brought about by the political situation and also as a response to growing indiscipline with civics themselves (Seekings 1990: 124). In many cases the climate of unrest added to or exacerbated social problems, generational division and people's experience of crime. See also Bozzoli (2004).

committees which preceded the 1980s, often established by more senior and respected residents to deal with local problems (Seekings 1990: 131-2; Scharf and Ngcokoto 1990: 344). These courts, born of community initiatives, were formed to deal with crime and other disputes, and were not yet pre-figurative of a post-apartheid order (Scharf and Ngcokoto 1990: 345).[49]

Despite the self-conferred jurisdiction of the people's courts of the 1980s, they were often popularly supported. Accounts of residents suggest that the courts helped to restore moral as well as legal order.[50] There is also an important distinction between those courts in which the conflict resolution was linked to building an alternative state; and those whose purpose was to deal practically and effectively with social disputes where the state would not. Raymond Suttner commented on the "various levels of theoretical sophistication" regarding the role of people's power, observing that "people who participated in some of these things would just think the police are not going to solve problems for us. The comrades are more likely to and so it would be just a practical thing: … I want safety" (Interview: 25 October 2012).

The second of these facets - securing concessions from the local state - relates directly to the first. Swilling asserts that once the civics had won mass support they needed to sustain that support by showing that people's efforts could reap benefits (1989 cited in Botha 1992: 65). Thus while the slogan 'forward to people's power' was connected conceptually to wresting control from the state (Morobe 1987: 84), the objective of some civic initiatives was to force the state to do its job.

The tradition of negotiating concessions preceded the UDF discourse of pre-figurative democracy. Thozamile Botha of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO) noted that "[a]s far back as 1979 PEBCO sent a number of delegations to meet with the East Cape Administration Board" (1992: 69). In Alexandra, the AAC set itself up as a democratic organisation that wanted recognition from local state administrators (Mayekiso 1988: 3017-8) and to represent the community and their problems to the authorities (Bapela 1988: 3966; Mdakane 1988: 2135). What the civics refused, was to recognise the authority of the BLAs or to work within them (Bapela 1988: 2972-3). Negotiating with local authorities was still seen as a form of democracy: communities themselves were involved in decision-making about how to approach the state and sent delegates to meet the authorities and negotiate on their behalf. In this sense, the civics saw themselves as structures of civil society whose role was not only to represent communities but to hold government to account.

[49] Scharf and Ncgokoto (1990: 344) suggest that people's court in Gugulethu, Cape Town, came into existence as early as the mid-1950s.

[50] See Seekings (1990: 127-8) on the types of cases and disputes taken by local residents to people's courts in Kagiso, Munsieville, Orlando East, Atteridgeville and Alexandra.

This perception of the role of popular structures was not without internal debate: tensions existed over the extent to which civics should engage in service provision and/or negotiate with local authorities. The NWC of the UDF itself raised the question "'when is people's power reformist'? (UDF NWC 1986), perhaps reflecting unease at the risk of either civic co-option or of dual power becoming a permanent affair in place of the seizure of power. The line emerging from Lusaka discouraged civics more firmly from acting as service providers. This was partly on the basis of their lack of capacity to fulfil municipal government functions (ANC 1985j: 12). However there is also a suggestion that the civic strategy of negotiating with local authorities was viewed by Lusaka as reformist. The ANC's January 8 Statement of 1986 affirmed: "We are not fighting and are not dying in order to have a better system of waste disposal. We are engaged in struggle for the inalienable right to govern our country in all its parts" (ANC NEC 1986).

Civics, however, did not see their actions as at odds with the policy of Lusaka but as carrying out its programme. Mark Swilling provided a curious example of local leaders in Port Elizabeth interpreting the commencement of talks in exile between Thabo Mbeki and white leaders as an indication that they should also begin negotiations with local authorities (Interview: 20 February 2013).

3.2.6.3. Collective Social Order: The Overthrow of Authority and Popular Democracy[51]

In some cases people's power was a response to the unrest itself. Many structures were formed to deal with crime, while some were more specifically about addressing social disorder and seeking to establish, in the case of Alexandra, what Bozzoli refers to as a "collective moral and social order" (2004). In her analysis of collective action and social movements in Alex, Bozzoli draws on two broad motivations for the establishment of people's power: the erection of a popular democracy and the overthrow of existing authority (2004: 92). That youth came to play a prominent role in people's courts in Alex is, according to Seekings, somewhat a-typical (1990: 133) - although Scharf and Ncgokoto's account of the courts in Gugulethu, Cape Town, where unaffiliated youth were central actors in policing and adjudication, is also not dissimilar (1990: 346-7). Either way, Bozzoli's research is useful for understanding the motivations of participants and how they related to ANC discourse.

Bozzoli highlights a particular facet of people's power in which the community was divided along generational lines, between a militant youth on the one hand, and more moderate adults on the other (2004: 80-81, 92). In both cases, protagonists saw themselves as establishing social control for the benefit of the wider community or, as Carter describes, as "constructing an "alternative hegemony" (1991b: 141). However, although both strands invoked a discourse of national liberation, their interpretation of the themes of struggle

[51] This subtitle draws on the work of Bozzoli (2004) and her research on the uprisings in Alexandra in 1986.

varied. One of the most interesting aspects for our purposes is the challenge that the Alex experience poses to the notion of a homogeneous 'people'. The exercise of people's power in Alex reflects the way in which the phenomenon was differentially interpreted by the local community. Particularly significant is the way that these strands drew their strength but were also quite distinct from the dominant discourse of the ANC.

As reflected in some of Moses Mayekiso's statements, popular structures in Alex were erected not so much as part of a national agenda but as a response to local conditions. Amidst the social unrest and lawlessness which followed the 1986 revolt in Alex, Bozzoli describes how mobs of youth began to take hold of the township - both challenging the authority of the police while trying to direct and mobilise the community. That the youth became a breeding ground for militant, sometimes fundamentalist, activity was linked to the instability of life in the township, especially for young men (Bozzoli 2004: 96). Their project was guided by the ANC's calls for ungovernability, while also invoking practices of coercion and violence. Reports from Alex reflect how, in some cases, the 'comrades' inflicted a reign of terror in which ordinary, and often older, members of the community became fearful of the actions of the youth.[52] Bozzoli describes this younger generation as seeing themselves as the new "arbiters of justice" (2004: 84) whose view of the future was a characterised by a "millenarian utopianism" (ibid.: 92, 125).

Theirs was a project which sought the overturning of all authority - both of the state and existing traditional hierarchies, combining what Bozzoli describes as an "explosive mix of local politics and exile power" (ibid.: 91).[53] While enacted under the banner of the liberation movement, the youth's was a different script in which the young 'comrades' themselves were the vanguards of change. This emergence of a rebellious and politicised "grassroots youth" (ibid.: 109) brought with it a decline in respect for seniority and traditional hierarchies of authority. Older members of the community referred to the revolution being waged by children and youth (ibid.: 94-5); people became intimidated and disillusioned by youth behaviour (ibid.: 134); and a strain was placed on communities where, in people's courts, youth were seen to be adjudicating cases involving their seniors (Seekings 1990: 129-130; see also Scharf and Ngcokoto: 1990).

The 'grassroots' comrades generally fell outside of formal organisational control (Seekings 1993 cited in Bozzoli 2004: 109), and in some cases abuses were committed by wayward "new recruits" later punished for their actions (Scharf and Ncgokoto 1990: 356-7). Yet these

[52] Although the title of 'comrade' was frequently used to refer to activists affiliated to particular organisations, during the 1980s came to refer to "anyone who supported the struggle" - See Scharf and Ncgokoto (1990: 352) on the use of the term in the Western Cape. When thuggery and criminal behaviour was practiced in the name of the struggle, individuals often became referred to as 'comtsotsis' (See Bozzolii 2004: 104-5).

[53] See also Cherry (2000b: 99) on the actions of the *amabutho* who sought to destroy existing authorities and set up alternative ones.

individuals often understood their actions as part of the ANC-led struggle. The UDF, rather than accept some responsibility for occurrences of intimidation and violence, was often concerned to emphasise the role of 'agent provocateurs'. Authors such as Wentzel (1995) and more recently Jeffery (2009) have been heavily critical of the UDF and ANC for not sufficiently addressing or intervening in instances of local violence. Their accounts, however, are unfortunately state-sympathetic.

That being said, the ANC and UDF were not without fault. Marginalised youth in Alex saw themselves as vanguards of the revolution - pursuing a cause and a new order of which the older generation had little understanding. The emotive language used in ANC statements appealed to the sense of grievance and injustice amongst this group, as well as to a mood of rebellion.[54] A document on armed struggle from the ANC's 1985 Kabwe Conference not only insinuated that some targets were legitimate but recommended that the "hated puppets, police", when captured by guerrillas, should be dealt with "publicly"' as part of the process of "political mobilisation" (ANC 1985f: 4).

Although the notion of a new moral and collective order is not evident in the discourse of the ANC or UDF, it is possible to see how young people drew strength from the ANC's calls for insurrection. As ANC hegemony strengthened, so did the young comrades' confidence in establishing a new authority. While theirs may have been an unsanctioned utopia, it was also a pre-figurative one. The atmosphere of rebellion, spurred on by the discourse of struggle, reinforced the arbitrary nature of informal authority and the legitimation of unaccountable popular justice. Scharf and Ngcokoto's account (1990) of people's courts in Gugulethu is similar, while accounts from Alexandra suggest that some people were content with the more punitive courts (Tshabalala 1988: 3767). Paul Tshabalala referred to some individuals being of the view that if they approached the people's court their complaint would be addressed immediately by punitive measures (such as lashing of the accused) (ibid.: 3759).

In contrast to the 'utopia' of this youth generation an older generation of township residents, often more moderate in their outlook, sought to establish democratic structures to bring order to the township (Bozzoli 2004: 92, 114-123). In some cases they were set up to counter the lawlessness and indiscipline brought about by younger comrades. The adult generation sought to create something more formalised, orderly and, ultimately, harmonious than the youth. The control of organs of people's power by respected and sometimes older residents and civic leaders seems to have been the norm in other regions of South Africa. In contrast to Alexandra, Seekings asserts that in most townships in the PWV region, control over people's courts was established by older residents who had more concern for their popular support and legitimacy (1990: 133). Neil Coleman also emphasised

[54] See, for example the ANC's 'Call to the Nation' (ANC 1986a).

that “it was only through the development of these structures that they were able to stop the youth, in particular, from taking the law into their own hands” (Interview: 20 February 2013).

This alternative assertion of social order was done through formal structures and organisational discipline. In Alex, the notion that popular justice was the preserve of spontaneity and rebellion was challenged by more organised youth structures such as the Alexandra Youth Congress (AYCO) (Bozzoli 2004: 155; 113, 129-130). Marks provides a similar account of action by youth activists in Diepkloof (2001: 107-9). The adult generation in Alex also provided a counter to spontaneous activity. Bozzoli describes how this contingent had memories of the older generation of ANC leaders, were more influenced by intellectual thought and the participatory democracy of the trade union movement, and used popular organisational practices of the time such as the mass meeting and mobilising committees (2004: 122; see also 141). The ‘popular democracy’ that this generation advocated comprised some of the strands discussed already: active participation, social cohesion, service provision, empowerment, and the establishment of a pre-figurative but grassroots democracy.

3.3. Ideologues and Influences

It is possible to link some of the themes outlined above to particular ideological or theoretical roots. This section therefore draws out the main influences on the discourses of people power as well as identifying, where possible, the strands of the movement with which they were associated.

3.3.1. The Role of Intellectuals

An important influence on the theorisation of people’s power was the role of leading intellectuals and ideologues. Within the UDF, in particular, such individuals were especially influential in developing ideas about democracy. Often, however, they held multiple memberships and allegiances and so it is not possible to link ideas to individuals in an isolated manner. Nonetheless, there is value in identifying personal and intellectual influences to trace the emergence and spread of ideas.

As noted in the preceding section, the structures that came to be known as ‘organs of people’s power’ were not initially imbibed with a prefigurative democratic content. Prior to 1985, the UDF had been largely disconnected from local material struggles - focusing instead on the campaign against the tricameral elections. Indeed, Seekings has argued that the township revolt in September 1984 took the UDF somewhat by surprise (Interview: 19 February 2013) and that the structures which had emerged by 1985 were not yet linked to the national liberation agenda (1991).

That being said, although according to Janet Cherry, the UDF had no "grand plan" of where it was going, its leadership did have "lots of ideas about democracy" (Interview: 3 October 2012). Mark Swilling, at the time a leading member of the NGO, Planact, which supported civic organisations in urban consumption struggles, contends that the prefigurative discourse of people's power was developed by people within the UDF who "now had to develop a theory for all of this in terms of national liberation" (Interview: 20 February 2013):

> "So they brought in a discourse of prefigurative people's power in order to create a political language that they laid over these local struggles. And some of the local leaders who were connected into those networks would absorb that language to just legitimize what they were doing. But most of them, it was just a struggle for, against eviction, for land, consumer boycotts, boycott services, etc." (ibid.).

Not everybody therefore took a theoretical approach, or at least not initially, to what became known as 'people's power'. For many participants, local revolt was about material struggle. Cherry, who herself undertook research in Kwazakele near Port Elizabeth, suggests that activities were really being driven at the local level. While the UDF's theorists were writing about people's power and what it meant, she commented: "[p]eople here weren't reading that stuff; they were just doing it. They were saying we are making the township ungovernable, we are taking control, putting into place our own structures, and so on" (Interview: 3 October 2012). Seekings also suggests that 'people's power' became a good way for the UDF to 'package' what was taking place (19 February 2013).

From the archives of the UDF and ANC it is very difficult to ascertain the extent to which local affiliates and participants were reading theoretical texts or were influenced by similar ideas to the Front's intellectual activists. Raymond Suttner, who wrote for *Isizwe* and contributed to the theorisation of people's power, conceded that "I'm an intellectual and I make a lot of it. But for a lot of people … it's just a very practical thing" (Interview: 25 October 2012). The shortage of documented records on more localised activity is perhaps one explanation for the primary focus of existing accounts on regional- and national-level discourse. Nonetheless, the ideas which surfaced through ideologues such as Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin, Mark Swilling argues, "became the official ideology of the UDF" (Interview: 20 February 2013).

Suttner, along with Cronin, spearheaded an influential campaign in 1986 to popularise the Freedom Charter through the celebration of its thirty year anniversary. Although the UDF did not officially adopt the Charter until 1987, the anniversary was used to develop a theoretical connection between mass activity and the Charter's democratic demands. Cronin noted that it "was also an attempt to go back to those roots – the last period of sustained popular mobilisation … the Congress of the People, the collection of demands and

so forth, were all attempts to stir up an alternative form of democracy and participation by people to talk about their, you know, what they wanted" (Interview: 27 November 2012).

Of significance is that the clause of the Charter which referred to replacing structures of minority rule with "democratic organs of self-government" was resurrected in the 1987 campaign as a representation of precisely what was taking place via the formation of organs of people's power: "The Charter says that all bodies of minority rule shall be scrapped and replaced by democratic organs of people's power. The democratic organs being built today by our people in the towns, villages and factories will lay the basis for the government of the people" (UDF 1987b). What Cronin and Suttner sought to achieve was a correlation in theory and practice between people's power, on the one hand, and the Freedom Charter's vision of democracy, on the other. Suttner made the following comment about the way in which this connection was made:

> "At the objective level what it meant for me as an intellectual was for the first time I was seeing the 'popular' in the masses, in creativity; and the way they conducted themselves led me to think that the meaning of the Freedom Charter was being re-read … [T]he emphasis had been on the vote. Now the activities were not emphasising the national parliament … and what I interpreted it to mean, and what some of them – they didn't have the same theoretical interest as I had – but what some people said, as I say, what we are doing in Uitenhage in street committees is implementing the first clause of the Freedom Charter". (Interview: 25 October 2012).[55]

As a theorist and intellectual, Suttner's interpretation was that the Charter needed to be re-read and reinterpreted in light of new events. Sydney Mufamadi - a civic and trade union activist as well as a member of the ANC's underground structures - made a similar observation that many of the ideas set out in 1955 would come to make sense over time, with greater significance being added to them as people continued to experience the brunt of apartheid (Interview: 26 November 2012). Although it was not at all clear that the drafters of the Charter had envisaged 'democratic organs of self-government' as participatory democratic institutions, some of the movement's theorists sought to attach a new but organic meaning to the term.

Although the pre-figurative notion of people's power was inspired by popular grassroots activity, the concept itself seems to have originated with the movement's intellectuals. Seekings referred to the frequent quotation of the speech by the UDF's acting publicity secretary, Murphy Morobe in 1987 which referred to people's power as prefigurative.

[55] Civic leader, Weza Made in Uitenhange in the Eastern Cape indeed referred to implementing the first clause of the Charter through the establishment of street committees (Isizwe 1986b).

However he interestingly doubted very much that it was written by Morobe himself, instead citing someone such as Andrew Boraine as a possible author (Seekings Interview: 19 February). Similarly, the oft-cited speech by Zwelakhe Sisulu on 'People's Education for People's Power' (1987) seems to have been mostly written, according to Suttner, by Neil Coleman who he described as "a very important invisible theorist" (Interview: 25 October 2012). Sydney Mufamadi was another important theorist, although he didn't write on popular power (ibid.), and the article on 'discipline' in *Isizwe*, although anonymous, was written by Suttner himself (ibid.).

It is thus not evident whether the theorising that activists undertook during the 1980s is an accurate reflection of what most people envisaged. It is possible that some in the Front were merely keen to highlight the bogus nature of the 'democracy' proffered by the state as opposed to offering a pre-figurative vision of their own. Andrew Boraine conceded that he didn't know how widespread the debates about a prefigurative democracy were, or how many people were reading what was published about it (Interview: 21 May 2013). It is intriguing that Boraine, who elsewhere in a 1987 study of Mamelodi township had presented people's power quite unambiguously as prefigurative participatory democracy, was cautious with hindsight about overstating the connection between the future dispensation and the struggles of the 1980s:

> You know we may theorise about them and, you know you can build people's parks and - a lot of it is just symbolic ... it's saying to the apartheid regime: 'stuff you, we're going to do what we want to do', you know. And it was sometimes deliberately provocative to show that. And most of the time I would say they were strategies for mobilising participation in the struggle, which in itself is educating about democracy, but it wasn't necessarily consciously about building the new society. I would be hesitant to kind of go that far. (Ibid.).

Seekings' inclination is that "for a lot of activists … representative institutional models were so discredited that, anything else would seem better. And that the only thing that people had experience of … was these residence associations, civic organisations, etc." (Interview: 19 February 2013). He is therefore doubtful that during the late 1980s and early 1990s many activists "had a strong sense of participatory or direct democracy as an alternative to real liberal democratic forms of representative democracy" (ibid.).

Moreover, many of the activists involved in the street and area committees were not the same people as the UDF's patrons or its national and provincial leadership. Even at the most local level, distinctions existed between the strata of activists/organisers and the individuals in communities who carried out popular directives. A case in point is popular justice which, for many of its advocates, embodied notions of social cohesion, accountability and rehabilitation. Yet in practice the courts sometimes resorted to violence, terror and the

arbitrary issuing of punishments. Bozzoli's account of Alex reflected how the liberation narrative of the ANC could be re-interpreted quite differently by the township's youth. Moreover, she observed intellectual and ideological differences between the 'grassroots youth' and the formal youth leadership of organisations such as AYCO. The latter, she notes, had a greater focus on discipline and organisation as opposed to violence and spontaneity (2004: 113).

While the prefigurative discourse became the dominant one in the UDF, it was not uniformly adopted across the ANC camp. Janet Cherry did not recall participants themselves making the connection with the Freedom Charter, for example. But she also noted that the ANC itself "was saying nothing about democratic structures" (Interview: 3 October 2012). Its focus was on revolutionary objectives as opposed to democracy. Suttner, who saw a need to "re-think the meanings of the Freedom Charter", in light of popular activity, remarked:

> "I don't know whether people in Lusaka did that because sometimes the ANC statements would say what we are going to do is we are going to establish a state of people's power. Now, when they talked about that they were really talking about smashing the apartheid state and having some sort of ANC-led government … [W]hat that meant for the direct, local, I don't think they had thought out that." (Interview: 25 October 2012).

Ben Turok also suggested that forward thinking about democracy was not prominent within the ANC at that time. In relation to the means-versus-ends debate, he insisted that mass organisation was understood as a mechanism of struggle, not in terms of democracy (Interview: 19 February 2013).

On the one hand the ANC's cadres at home and abroad saw themselves as part of the same movement and the dual role of many individuals - between the ANC, SACP, UDF, and the civic and labour movements - led to conceptual cross-pollination. The Front's leading ideologues, however, were not the same as those of the ANC itself. In exile the ANC had its own intellectuals, such as Pallo Jordan (Head of the ANC's Research Department), Joel Netshitenzhe (the editor of *Mayibuye*) and the SACP intellectual and senior leader, Joe Slovo. The tone of the publications emerging from exile did not always have the same focus as those of the UDF. Thus, although we are able to identify many common threads, the movement's cadres were also influenced by slight variations in ideological thought. This, alongside people's own lived experiences, produced nuances in both the interpretation of people's power and the movement's view of the normative alternative to liberal democracy.

3.3.2. Marxism-Leninism

> *"A revolutionary democracy is a popular act and the popular writ forms its foundation, a foundation which ensures that the overwhelming majority -*

the working people - are in firm control of state power. In brief, a NDR is a popular act based on popular experience". (ANC, undated a: 3).

Marxist influence in the ANC comprised not only a variety of currents but was found across all strands of the movement. The way in which Marxism and its derivative ideas manifested in the ANC is partly apparent from the themes above. Notions of people's democracy, revolution, hegemony, and active participation derive from the Marxist tradition. Importantly, the specific interpretation of these themes, as well as the strands of Marxism from which they derive, have bearing on the means of achieving liberation and on the end-state envisaged. Although we must be cautious in attributing particular characteristics to those 'in exile', the influence of Marxism-Leninism was indeed more visible and influential in the external movement than it was within the UDF.

Overall, the ANC's adherence to revolutionary theory had considerable bearing on its democratic vision. Although people's power was shaped partly by local experiences, theoretical formulations and experiences of revolution internationally also provided a framework for interpreting popular struggle. The ANC both at home and abroad was strongly influenced by other liberation struggles and revolutions, including those in Cuba, Nicaragua and Vietnam, as well as in African states such as Algeria, Cape Verde and Guinea, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola. The external mission, in particular, drew inspiration from Vietnam and its strategy of 'people's war'.

A document from the ANC's archival collection, entitled 'Reading List for Study Groups on Guerrilla Warfare-Tactics and Strategy', with 'T.Mbeki' noted in handwriting at the top, is informative in the texts it recommends.[56] These include Lenin, Marx and Gramsci, as well as Basil Davidson on African revolution, Amilcar Cabral's writings on Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau, the Mozambican academic and FRELIMO leader Eduardo Mondlane, Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara, Vietnam's General Giap on people's war, Mao Tse Tung on China and guerrilla warfare, and Regis Debray on Latin American revolution. The list also includes South African writings from Joe Slovo, Govan Mbeki, Harold Wolpe, and Jack and Rae Simons, as well as a list of articles from Sechaba and the African Communist (ANC London Collection, undated b).

Lusaka's theorisation of people's power, as it relates to democracy specifically, seems to have been undertaken by the ANC's Political Commission. The establishment of this body in 1985 as a sub-structure of the Politico-Military Council (PMC) denoted renewed emphasis in ANC strategy on *political* as well as armed activity (Maharaj in O'Malley 2007: 234-5). In 1986 the Political Commission or Committee (sometimes also referred to as 'Political HQ') produced two discussion papers: 'Overview of the Internal Situation under the State of Emergency' and 'Ungovernability and People's Power'. The latter of these is particularly

[56] This document is filed under 'armed struggle', 1970s-80s.

interesting and, although marked with no author or date, is referred to in the former document as a 'Political Commission Discussion Document' (ANC PC 1986a: 6).

The 'Ungovernability and People's Power' document states its aim as being to "establish broad guidelines" for the further advancement of people's power and is described as "a response to the request of activists on the ground" (ANC, undated a). As well as drawing on reports and experiences of specific locations inside the country, the document is described as potentially serving as a guide for further activity (ibid.). It depicts people's power as a replacement democratic authority for the structures of the old order: "Our central demand is that the people must govern … The collapse of the regime's authority is to go hand in hand with the emergence of an authority of a new type - popular democratic authority morally, politically and structurally" (ibid: 1).

What is initially unclear is the precise form this alternative authority is expected to take. Here a closer reading of the text is required. A notable conceptual influence is Lenin's notion of 'dual power', originating with the events of the 1917 Russian revolution and drawing heavily on the model of the 1871 Paris Commune. The idea of 'dual power' and the extent to which a counter-authority to the South African state was actually established during the 1980s was debated amongst ANC activists. Hassen Ebrahim who was based with the ANC in Botswana emphasised that popular control of territories was important not just as a method of resistance but in "shaping and developing our own ideas with regard to power and what type of power should replace the current power" (Interview by O'Malley: 4 December 1999).

The document also draws on the emergence of organs of people's power in other revolutionary contexts (citing examples such as Vietnam, Cuba and anti-fascist revolutions in Europe). However it also emphasises that the conditions and path of each revolution can vary, making clear that no direct parallel can be drawn between South African conditions and those of struggles in which the organs established are "real prototypes of the new state to emerge" (ANC, undated a: 2). What is does do is to characterise the "rudimentary organs of people's power", as found in South Africa, as emerging "at the point when the masses start to address the question of the seizure of power" (ibid.). It then goes on to state that "What we have achieved are the beginnings of dual power" (ibid: 13).

The seizure of power by the people is of course linked with the process of NDR, and here it is worth quoting the document at length. The ANC's description of the power envisaged in NDR bears a strong resemblance to Lenin's conception, set out subsequently, of the alternative power established by the Paris Communards and later the Russian Soviets:

> "The National Democratic Revolution *entails the seizure of power* by the revolutionary forces … this implies, from the very start, an emphasis during the struggle and after - *different from that of bourgeois revolutions*.

> Particularly, a *revolutionary democracy encourages popular initiative and mass creativity* as opposed to actions solely from above. A revolutionary democracy is a popular act and the popular writ forms its foundation, a foundation which ensures that *the overwhelming majority - the working people - are in firm control of state power.* In brief, a NDR is a popular act based on popular experience" [emphasis added] (ANC, undated a: 3).

The following extract is taken from Lenin's writings on 'The Dual Power' (1917):

> "It is a revolutionary dictatorship, i.e., a power *directly based on revolutionary seizure*, on the direct *initiative of the people from below*, and not on a law enacted by a centralised state power. It is an entirely *different kind of power from the one that generally exists in the parliamentary bourgeois-democratic republics* of the usual type still prevailing in the advanced countries of Europe and America. This circumstance often over looked, often not given enough thought, yet it is the crux of the matter. This power is of the same type as the Paris Commune of 1871" [emphasis added] (Lenin, 1917).

The dual power to which Lenin refers, and which captures "the essence" of the Paris Commune, are the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Like South Africa's organs of people's power, the source of the alternative power described by Lenin is "the direct initiative of the people from below, in their local areas". It entails "the replacement of the police and the army" such that "order in the state under such a power is maintained … by the armed people themselves"; and "officialdom, the bureaucracy, are either similarly replaced by the direct rule of the people themselves or at least placed under special control" (Lenin 1917). Interestingly, the ANC Political Commission encouraged a structure not dissimilar to that of the Soviets in which "the Street and Area Committees should link up in a pyramid fashion and form a central people's organ" (ANC PC 1986a). As these committees were formed in South Africa, this is precisely how they were structured, with a large number of yard, block or section committees at the base of the pyramid, moving upwards to a decreasing number of street committees, and an area committee or council.

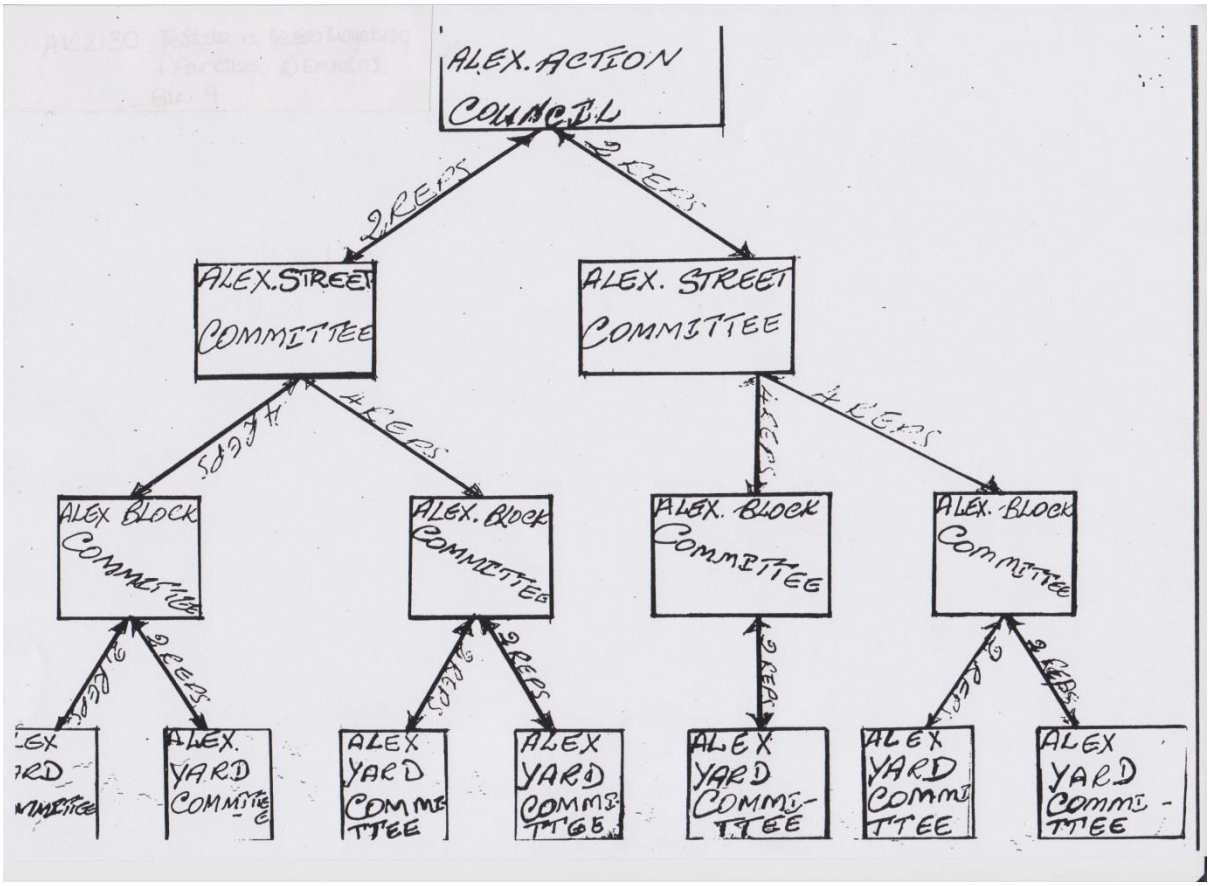

Fig 1.0. Structure of organs of people's power in Alexandra (Action Council and Street, Block and Yard Committees). Source: Wits Historical Papers, Mayekiso Trial AK2130: File 9 Court Records, B. Exhibits.

Although the ANC referred to the examples of the Paris Commune and the Soviets, it was also careful to distinguish the *national democratic*, as opposed to *socialist*, nature of the South African revolution and the specificity of South African conditions:

> "We use the examples of the 'Commune' and the 'Soviets' not to imply that people's committees are such organs. The nomenclature arises out of concrete situations. Above all, people's committees are not at this stage addressing the issue of a socialist revolution, let alone a communist society. From their content and concrete tasks we can only say they are revolutionary; they are democratic … What we should study is their content, ensuring all the time that they carry out the revolutionary task that is expected of them" (ANC undated a: 19).

While the two-stage nature of the South African revolution may have been emphasised, so, too, was the instrumental role of people's power. The structures were only democratic in so far as they incorporated everyone, elected their representatives, and involved active participation. They were not multi-interest forums or pluralist structures but were imbued

with a revolutionary task. Of particular note, is that the very same document also states: "the vanguard movement should be so firmly in control that political distinction between the ANC and the popular organs becomes non-existent" (ibid: 18). As the soviets themselves were eventually subjected to the central control of the Bolshevik Party, one wonders whether such centralised control was also envisaged by the ANC.

Those who were members of the SACP were more direct in comparing people's power to Lenin's 'democracy from below'.[57] Such theorisation could be found in the pages of the *African Communist*. The writings of Sisa Majola (also known as 'Mzala'),[58] for example, certainly draw more directly on Lenin's understanding of popular structures as an alternative power, and it is possible to see how these ideas were replicated through people's power. Mzala likened South Africa's people's committees to the Paris Commune (Mzala 1986: 8): as "embryos of the future state" (ibid.: 13). These structures, as he understood them, were aimed "at seizing control of every facet of life in their districts" (Majola 1986: 61), with the "final intention ... to form a people's government in the whole country" (ibid.: 62). He also places a much stronger emphasis than do the writings of the ANC on the need for the movement to theorise about the state and revolution.

Inside the country, there were some similar inspirations. Activists were influenced by ideologies relating to state power and revolutionary change, in particular the works of Marx (Seedat Interview: 13 May 2013; Mashatile Interview: 21 February 2013; Carrim Interview: 16 January 2013; Steinberg 2000: 187-8). In Alexandra, Mzwanele Mayekiso, brother of Moses Mayekiso, compared the AAC to the Paris Commune (1996: 83). Rashid Seedat, who was involved in youth organisation in the Indian community, indicated the strong influence of the Soviet model amongst people in the ANC and UDF (Interview: 13 May 2013). In particular, he referred to the models of the Paris Commune and the Russian Soviets as informing the theorisation of people's power (ibid.):

> "- you know when Lenin called 'all power to the soviets'? Now it was the same kind of thing. And the soviets were worker councils in Russia, and saying that in a socialist democracy the workers exercise power via their workers' councils. So [it's] a similar kind of notion of saying power should be exercised by the people in their own local organs. That was very much the kind of thinking …" (ibid.).

That these theoretical linkages were not drawn on more publicly by the UDF is understandable. The opportunities available as a result of its legal status were not

[57] The new power in which the people themselves directly participate was referred to by Lenin as 'democracy from below' (Majola 1986: 58).

[58] Sisa Majola was a pen name sometimes used by SACP intellectual Jabulani Nxumalo, most frequently known as Comrade Mzala.

something the Front wished to jeopardise. As Seedat explained, the UDF would need to 'temper' what it said (Ibid.). Moreover there was a lack of uniformity in revolutionary inspiration. Some activists were influenced by the Soviet Union and East Germany, as well as by African states such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola (Mashatile Interview: 21 February 2013). For others, the revolutions in Latin America made more of an impression (Boraine Interview: 21 May 2013). Either way, much of the Soviet influence is likely to have come from the overlapping membership between the ANC and SACP. Like many liberation movements of the time, the ANC was "very much influenced by socialist theory as articulated in the Soviet Union" (Mabandla Interview: 28 June 2013).

From analysis of archival documents, there is no strong suggestion that the ANC or UDF themselves drew on the Soviet Union as a model for a future state. Nonetheless, the Front's rejection of liberal, parliamentary-style democracy was fairly unambiguous. Valli Moosa's claim, that the UDF had always envisaged features such as political pluralism, freedom of speech and a bill of fundamental rights (ibid.), seems somewhat implausible. Neither UDF nor ANC discourses resembled the parliamentary and gradualist ideas of Marxists like Kautsky or Bernstein and instead reflected the influences (albeit themselves divided) of Lenin and Left-wing Marxism. In terms of the latter, there is little evidence of the commitment to civil liberties within socialism as defended by Rosa Luxemburg.[59] Cas Coovadia observed that, although the UDF was very insistent on organising democratically - on democratic practice and accountability - in "the throes of struggle", discussion about a multi-party future or bill of rights did not take place (Interview: 28 May 2013).

What is possible to identify, however, is that different strands of Marxism carried more weight in some parts of the movement than in others. This factor itself emphasises the value of examining *ideas* and *theories* as opposed to 'ideology' more strictly. The SACP in exile, for example, had very close ties with and was heavily influenced by the Soviet Union and a Leninist interpretation of Marx. The discourse emerging from the ANC in Lusaka (and official publications of the movement) drew more heavily on ideology and derivative theories of the South African condition. Examination of the syllabus and lectures of the ANC's Department of Political Education (DPE), for example, indicates its focus on revolutionary and socialist content, including the example of the Soviet Union (ANC DPE 1986-88). It also dealt with nationalist ideology - a reflection of the ANC's intellectual heritage - and referred specifically to "the cross-pollination of ideas between communism and nationalism" (ANC DPE 1989).

Some individuals in the UDF were also members of the SACP, and so the influence of Marxism-Leninism undoubtedly seeped into the internal movement through underground structures and academia. Yet, according to Ben Turok, while the Party was very influential in

[59] See Thatcher (2007: 30) on Luxemburg's place within Left-Communism.

exile, it was not so within the UDF (Interview: 19 February 2013). The influence of Marxism amongst domestic activists incorporated a greater variety of currents. Within the movement at home, alternatives to orthodox Marxism-Leninism were also taking root.

3.3.3. Alternative Currents of Marxism

One of the most significant of these alternatives was the work of Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, whose ideas were influential on many UDF activists (Carrim Interview: 16 January 2013; Cherry Interview: 3 October 2012; Tsenoli Interview: 11 March 2013; Moosa Interview: 30 April 2013). For some people, Gramsci was influential in shaping perceptions of people's power as *prefigurative* - a current which is dealt with in the subsequent section. Primarily, however, Gramsci seems to have been influential in revolutionary theory and the practice of struggle (Moosa Interview: 30 April 2013; Cherry Interview: 3 October 2013).

UDF strategy, according to Houston (1999), reflected Gramsci's 'war of position' - a concept based on waging a battle for hegemony through persuasion rather than force. Gramsci's ideas of hegemony involved the building of ideological consensus, requiring both moral and intellectual leadership and the forging of a popular and collective will (1971). For the UDF, ideological hegemony would be constructed through a process of struggle (Moosa Interview: 30 April 2013) and by working as a cross-class alliance of forces (Cherry Interview: 3 October 2013).

Related to the concept of hegemony is 'civil society', which Gramsci identified as a terrain of "consent, hegemony, direction, in conceptual opposition to the state (political society) which is a site of coercion, dictatorship, domination" (Gramsci 2000: 224). For a movement such as the UDF, operating on a legal terrain but in opposition to the state, the idea of the existence of a civil society was important: organised movements could build an alternative ideological hegemony to challenge that of the dominant class.

Although Gramsci himself did not tie his concept of hegemony to normative democratic discussion, his ideas came to inspire Left alternatives to Bolshevism such as that of Euro-communism (Killingsworth 2012: 14). His work is thus often viewed as a forerunner to democratic Marxism. Both Laclau and Mouffe (1985) and Brown (1990), for example, draw on Gramsci in order to distinguish between 'democratic' and 'authoritarian' hegemony. The former, according to Brown, rejects class reductionism: "'[it] is not a process of molding diverse groups' interests and tasks into conformity with what have been *imputed* to be those of the working class" (1990: 44). Instead, he argues that there is "no essential unity among diverse social groups beyond what can be created through articulation and democratic practice" (ibid.: 45).

Laclau and Mouffe thus distinguish *democratic practice* (which recognises democratic choice as a critical part of the creation of a socialist hegemony) from *authoritarian practice* (in which mass identity is 'predetermined' by "a necessary law of history") (1985: 58-59).

Contrasting this to Lenin and Bolshevism, they highlight how, in an authoritarian form of hegemony, representivity is presupposed through the "interweaving of science and politics": "there is no longer any problem in considering the party as representative of the class". Authoritarianism is needed when the working class does not identify with its 'historical interests' (ibid.).

Although Gramsci has been read as proposing a more democratic notion of hegemony, it is not clear that this was the influence that filtered through the broader movement. Moreover, authors such as Keane have critiqued Gramsci's veneration of the proletariat's role, arguing that what he seeks is still the abolition of civil society (1988). Some individuals in the MDM made a connection between Gramscian thought and a democratic hegemony - emphasising, for example, the importance of combining the socialist project with democratic practice in forging a popular will (Bloch 1983).[60] Yet it is not clear that this sentiment was broadly representative.

Overall, the drawing of a correlation between hegemonic struggle and democratic contestation is not prevalent in UDF discourse. Janet Cherry noted that the Gramscian approach was discussed in terms of its strategic utility, not its democratic credentials (Interview: 3 October 2013). In fact Gramsci's associated notion of civil society, which inspired many in the UDF, Friedman argues led *not* to a view of civil society in which hegemony was won through "pluralist political activity" but through the 'colonisation' of civil society institutions by ideologists of the liberation movement (1992: 86). Moreover, the neo-Gramscian acceptance, advocated earlier by Marxists such as Kautsky, of a democratic (parliamentary) path to power does not fit with the UDF's statements on the inadequacy of parliamentary democracy or with the acceptance by many activists of a Leninist-inspired insurrection.

The drawing of an inzile-exile distinction in democratic thought must therefore be made cautiously. Conceptual influence cut across the movement and the presence of the underground linked those abroad and at home. Nonetheless, it is possible to argue that the Gramscian influence on activists at home was not identifiable in exile discourse. Here, the absence of Gramsci's ideas is likely a result of the stronger influence of Moscow and Gramsci's location outside of orthodox Leninism. Amongst the external mission, a focus on central state power and attainment of hegemony through force shaped revolutionary strategy and the ANC itself exhibited a clear admiration for the Soviet Union. Gevisser, for example, refers to Thabo Mbeki's admiration for the Soviet crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968 (2007 cited in Glaser 2010: 14). Similarly, a 1969 report of the ANC NEC which noted the solidarity and friendship of the Soviet Union expressed the movement's "great anxiety

[60] Graeme Bloch, a UDF and student organiser, produced a paper in 1983 which drew on Gramsci's notions of hegemony and ideology, emphasising that socialism could not be guaranteed without struggle and democratic ideals (1983).

at the developments in Czechoslovakia" (presumably a reference to the Prague Spring) and stated its hope that "the situation there will soon return to normal" (1969: 28).

The SACP in particular exhibited little awareness of Western Marxist ideas and regarded as suspicious and 'heterodox' the socialist alternatives to Marxism-Leninism. In 1985 the ANC highlighted its own unease that the working class was "bedevilled with various ideological tendencies which are harmful to the development of the national liberation struggle" (ANC 1985g: 3; see also ANC 1985c). It also expressed similar concern at the lack of a "clear political perspective" amongst the expanding civic and community organisations (ANC 1985c).

The influence within the ANC camp of varying strands of Marxism is reflected in a comment by Yunus Carrim, who described differences in the understanding of 'people's democracy' as follows:

> "Theirs [in exile] was more of a neo-Stalinist approach ... You know, at that time, many, many of the key UDF leaders were in some form or another influenced either overtly or even subtly by Marxist approaches ... [A]nd the strong current of Marxism that was there was influenced by Gramsci, the Italian Marxist, and it was quite open and, although … there were many sides to our movement that were quite authoritarian and coercive in securing mass support and directing mass struggles in particular ways, … overall, there was also a significant open, inclusive, democratic tradition and to the extent that the people who were of a Marxist disposition were influential, it was less, I think, Stalinist and the traditional approaches of the Communist Parties of most countries, and more to do with a Gramscian approach" (Interview: 16 January 2013).

This position seems to be supported by Ben Turok, a member of the SACP's senior leadership in exile between 1960 and the early 1970s, who commented: "we were not Gramsci-ists … we were Stalinists. Central power was what mattered; take over" (Interview: 19 February 2013). Turok also suggested that the differences between the approach of the UDF and SACP resulted in the UDF being seen as a threat by some in the Party leadership:

> "Slovo argued consistently, and even in the Morogoro document, that the transition from a democratic revolution to a socialist revolution would not be a long one ... And he gave reasons for that and the sort of view was that because we have a strong proletariat and a weak bourgeoisie, a national bourgeoisie, therefore the transition would be fairly easy ... So if there were other forces like UDF which were not of the same mind, then this could be seen as a threat and a diversion. So it wasn't so much about the question of the forms of democracy and power it was about who would

> win and the nature of the transition … [The UDF was] … loose, amorphous, not Marxist … It was an alternative … On the one hand it was very welcome because it was this, the Arab spring. On the other hand, where was it going?" (ibid.).

The Front's cross-class nature and approach to revolutionary struggle that went against the grain of Leninist theory seems to have engendered some discomfort. Turok suggests that it was this perception of the UDF which ultimately led to it being 'closed down' (ibid.). Jeremy Cronin, who was active in the UDF as well as later reintegrating into the underground SACP, commented on the presence of a "school of thought" within the ANC that saw popular power as "a potential threat to the ANC and return of its hegemony" (Interview: 27 November 2012).

The presence of concerns about the 'direction' of the UDF was quite possibly linked to the split between Marxism-Leninism and alternative Left currents, which incorporated Lenin's dispute with his detractors, Luxemburg and Trotsky. Their concern that the revolution may be frustrated rather than advanced by the presence of a 'vanguard of professionals' (Geras 1972) underpinned debates about the role of vanguard leadership. It is thus also likely that it spoke to the contestation between Leninism and the 'workerist' positions of syndicalism and councillism. The trade unions in the case of syndicalists and workers councils in the case of councillists were viewed as the primary vehicles for revolutionary change. Both of these strands gained ground in the South African labour and civic movements - in the latter instance manifesting in the neighbourhood self-government of the street and area committees. Indeed, Gramsci, while defending the need for a Socialist Party, supported the model of a council movement, which had a greater emphasis on organisation from below, than on the leading role of the Party (Forgacs 1999: 78; Schecter 1994: 88-9). The ANC-SACP belief in the need for a vanguard movement and concurrent concern at the UDF's lack of ideological clarity thus mirrored divisions within Marxist theory.

Although the division between 'workerists' and 'populists' was resolved officially with the formation of COSATU in 1985,[61] it did not erase these alternative currents. There thus emerged some tension between workers' power (built from the shop floor upwards, through the trade unions) and people's power (established under the auspices of the vanguard movement). Jeremy Cronin referred to the growing influence on South African labour of the Polish union federation, *Solidarnosc* (Solidarity) and, later, the Brazilian Workers' Movement (Interview by Sheehan: 17 April 2001). Each of these organisations had sought to advance workers' rights through prioritising workplace issues and safeguarding their autonomy from the Communist Party. Solidarity, in particular, was scorned by the

[61] COSATU formed in 1985 to replace the 'workerist' Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU). Allying itself to the ANC, COSATU sought to pursue both political and workplace struggles

SACP. The Leninist view was that the narrowly economic struggles of the trade unions "could divert the working class from revolutionary activity" (Houston 1999: 16). The need for a revolutionary vanguard party (or movement) to guide mass struggle was a view held by Lusaka, which at times displayed a tendency to disregard the opinion of the movement at home. Thus although terms such as 'syndicalism', 'workerism' and 'ultra-leftism' were abhorred in the ANC's official discourse, some strands of the MDM retained roots in these traditions.

Tensions consequently emerged when these practices were transferred to the civic arena through individuals involved in both civic and union organisation. One example of such a person is Moses Mayekiso, who was both a leader of the Alexandra Civic Organisation and the National Union of Metal Workers (NUMSA). Visible in the organisation of civics and organs of people's power was the councillist tradition of a pyramid structure of people's councils or committees (Glaser 1998: 35 and 1991: 113-114). Like the Soviets, councillists were inspired by the model of the Paris Commune but deviated from the Bolshevik model by rooting power in the councils rather than the party (Schecter 1994: 92-5). Mayekiso notably referred to the presence of some individuals returning from imprisonment or exile being uncomfortable with the bottom-up structures of the civics and feeling that there was "too much power" from below (Interview: 8 April 2013).

3.3.4. Prefigurative Radical Democracy

As discussed in section 3.2, a prominent theme of people's power was pre-figuring a future state. In terms of its ideological and theoretical underpinnings, the pre-figurative discourse was rooted in a Marxist heritage. Some activists linked pre-figuration of the future to the Gramscian concept of an 'interregnum': between the death of the old society and birth of the new (Coleman Interview: 20 February 2013; Boraine 1987: 3). Neil Coleman noted that "people's power was very much seen in that sort of way" (Coleman Interview: 20 February 2013). Raymond Suttner also referred to 'pre-figurative democracy' as a Gramscian term (Interview: 25 October 2012). Gramsci's notion that "the old is dying and the new cannot yet be born" was drawn on as a formulation to understand how the 'goal' or 'end result' could be connected to the means of getting there (Boraine 1987: 3). It was in this sense that the present, or 'interregnum', offered "glimpses of the new" (ibid). The UDF's Andrew Boraine thus argued that "What we have with us now determines to a large extent what is possible in the future" (ibid.).

For others in the ANC, the pre-figurative notion was associated with the model of Marxist-inspired revolutions elsewhere. Here, the strategy of 'people's war' seems to have been important: popular structures established during the course of struggle were seen as embryos of a future people's government. The idea of establishing people's committees also bore resemblance to the model of the Paris Commune: a people's revolutionary committee that signified the overthrow of the old society and its replacement with a government of the

people that would undertake both legislative and executive functions. In line with Marx's idea of the withering away of the state, presumably such popular structures would be transitional, being replaced eventually with a dictatorship of the people.

In terms of the *form* of the state being pre-figured, influences were rooted in both ideological tradition and the practical experience of exclusion. In terms of the former, radical democratic and revolutionary theory informed the principle of active participation and inadequacy of representative democracy. A particular influence in this regard was the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. Murphy Morobe's 1987 speech for the UDF drew on the Nicaraguan revolutionaries' proposal for a "permanent dynamic of people's participation" as an inspiration for South African ideas about democracy (1987: 83). The 'democratic' in 'national democratic revolution' was also highlighted as representing a superior form of democracy: "- it involves the taking control by all the people of all aspects of their lives [sic]. True democracy means that people participate fully in shaping their own future. This means that political power must be in the hands of the people" (UDF 1986c: 740).

What was envisaged was that the state would not only be *democratic* but also *participatory*. In a document on the role of extra-parliamentary opposition, the UDF explained that the rise of popular localised struggles around daily living conditions and economic deprivation had led to an appreciation of the importance of seeing the national democratic state as "a function of mass organisation" (UDF, c.1987: 7). The UDF's ideologues made a distinction between 'real' and 'representative' democracy. The former constituted popular control, not via elites or professional politicians but by affected people themselves. It also extended the democratic principle to all areas of life: "A real democracy is one that allows individuals real control over all aspects of their daily lives and not just those areas that are defined as 'political'" (Boraine 1987: 8).

Although the term 'participatory democracy' itself was not always used to describe what was happening, some activists such as Jeremy Cronin were clear that people's power was understood as just that (Interview: 27 November 2012). Andrew Boraine also referred to people's power as going beyond representative to include "direct and participatory democracy" (1987: 8). A document written in approximately 1986 on building and consolidating organs of peoples power in Mamelodi referred to these structures as ensuring "participatory democracy in the whole township" (ANC London Collection, undated f: 5).

In terms of people's lived experience of exclusion, the prevalence of a desire to merely create something that represented the very antithesis of the existing system was arguably more widespread amongst grassroots participants than political or democratic theory. Lechesa Tsenoli, for example, commented that: "we were seeing our experiences of the apartheid state then, in the way it fragmented communities and it actually disempowered people by denying them of opportunities to participate in decision making, as something that we should not only remedy but we should ensure also that what comes into replacing it

makes that as part of its modus operandi" (Interview: 11 March 2013). Deprivation not only of political rights but control over all aspects of people's lives - from home life to education and the workplace - engendered a sense that democracy would entail popular control over all of those things. A 1988 discussion paper of the MDM thus stated that "true democracy is when all the people have a say over their daily lives and are able to determine it in their interests" (Mamdoo 1988). The formation of democratic mass organisation was a way of beginning to 'realise' this principle (ibid.).

A significant issue in the debate concerned whether or not emerging structures were understood as embryonic of a future local government. The literature review in Chapter One of this thesis drew on the various positions of the civics on this issue, noting Steinberg's reference to the existence of three views of people's power: as a vehicle of struggle by which the local state is to be destroyed; as a temporary power to be replaced by a democratic state; and as organs of a future democracy which would destroy apartheid structures but also 'replace' them (2000: 186-7). Overall, of those who viewed people's power as something *pre-figurative*, very few appear to have believed that these structures would themselves become a future local government. The majority seem to have understood their role to be primarily one of struggle but also of imbibing general principles of democracy, including an ethos that would allow for the participation of everyone. In this sense the structures pre-figured not so much the state as a future society in general (albeit an influential one in shaping what the future state would look like) (Coovadia Interview: 28 May 2013; Mayekiso Interview: 8 April 2013; Tsenoli Interview: 11 March 2013).

In terms of the participatory nature of the envisaged state, the practices and experience of the trade unions also served to shape the democracy being pre-figured. Much more so than the civics, the independent trade unions were consciously building democratic structures (Cherry, Interview: 3 October 2012; see also Glaser 1991: 109). The cross-pollination of ideas between union and civic organisation took place as a result of people such as Moses Mayekiso, as well as COSATU's Chris Dlamini on the East Rand (Coleman Interview: 20 February 2013; Tsenoli Interview: 11 March 2013) and Sam Ntuli of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in Thokoza (Coleman Interview: 20 February 2013) Mayekiso transferred his experience of building structures such as union shop steward committees and councils to civic work in Alexandra where he felt similar structures could work in the community context (Interview: 8 April 2013).[62]

It is possible also to locate the extension of ideas about worker control and citizen participation to the post-1960 emergence of the New Left and resurrection of participatory democratic discourse amongst socialist movements, intellectuals and students. One of the most famous of these was the USA's Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Janet Cherry

[62] See also Bozzoli (2004: 112) on the influence of Mayekiso and the union's participatory democratic tradition.

referred to an emerging 'democratic socialist' tradition amongst young intellectuals at home which was seen as a counter to the Marxist-Leninist and Stalinist influences emerging from the Soviet bloc (Interview: 3 October 2012). According to her, people within this group were reading "Gramsci, Laclau, Poulantzas, and European Marxists and debating hegemony and participation" (ibid.).

Cherry also commented that Rick Turner's *The Eye of the Needle* (1972), which advanced ideas about worker control and participatory democracy, was very influential on that generation of student activists (Interview: 3 October 2012). Turner's ideas about South Africa also sparked interest in particular models of worker control internationally, including Poland's *Solidarity* (Ibid.; Cronin Interview: 27 November 2012). Through these lines of influence, civic and shop-floor struggles became dynamically linked, while normative democratic thought about a participatory society and government filtered in through unionists, students and intellectuals. These ideas are notably absent in the discourse from Lusaka.

The combination of trade union experience and intellectual debate about the labour movement transpired not only in theoretical debate but in the replication of organisational practice. Moses Mayekiso's interpretation of the role of the civic, for example, was akin to that of a trade union: as a popular structure with layers of elected leadership in which the civic was given a mandate for action by communities (in this case to get rid of apartheid) (Interview: 8 April 2013). Much like a trade union, the civic in Alex was understood as an elected structure designed to negotiate with the authorities and improve living conditions (Mdakane 1988: 2313).

Influences of the workerist models of democracy can be seen in some of the UDF language as well. A document presented by Valli Moosa at the UDF national workshop in 1990 emphasised the importance of internal democracy and drew on union-style democratic practices such as elected leadership, seeking mandates from members, regular report-backs and ability to recall leaders (Moosa 1990: 11). These methods of organising in the civic context, however, did not always stem from ideological belief so much as being an effective way of addressing issues on the ground.

Notably, publications and documents from the ANC's exile collection do not show traits of union-style of organising, nor a desire to replicate workplace methods of representation. A 1985 ANC discussion paper acknowledging its own "weakness in the trade union field" made reference to deficiencies in SACTU (the ANC-affiliated trade union congress) and noted the need for the ANC to review the way it related to the trade unions (1985c). The observation that practices of 'participatory democracy' were being developed by the unions which the ANC could learn from (ibid.), implies that it had not done so already. The ANC's attempts to improve relations with labour in the mid-1980s were likely linked to concurrent efforts by the Party to revitalize its relevance to debates taking place at home.

Overall, it would be incorrect to exaggerate the extent to which discussion about democracy amongst internal activists took place independently of those in exile. Yet it would also be mistaken to argue that such theorisation was of equal concern across the movement. In general, the external mission does not appear to have grappled to the same degree with the form of a future democracy, nor do they make the link visible in UDF discourse between mass organisations and democracy. Thus, while the ANC's January 8 Statements made regular reference to 'people's power', it did not develop it further as a pre-figurative democratic idea. In addition to normative democratic debate within the domestic movement, other intellectual influences are identifiable that were perhaps even less visible in the movement in exile. Amongst internal cadres, people's power was also shaped by an 'activist' language rooted in ideas about community organising, the 'experience' of grassroots activism and activist movements internationally.

3.3.5. Activist Discourses and Community Organising: Democracy as Transformative

A prominent influence in this regard was the role of the applied theory of community organising. Overall, this aspect of people's power is not visible in official ANC publications or in those statements of the UDF focused on national-level political change. Rather, discussion about the *model* and *application* of community organising took place at a more local level.

In the first place, the organisation of communities and their conscientisation entailed a process of confronting the challenges that impact people's daily lives. Through so doing, organisers were raising popular awareness of the reasons behind people's circumstances (Moosa Interview: 30 April 2013; Coovadia Interview: 28 May 2013; see also Seekings 2000b: 54 and Mufson 1990: 109). Paul Mashatile, then a member of the Alexandra Youth Congress (AYCO), referred to the importance of mobilising people around the issues that affected them, rather than drawing on abstract theories: "I think we learned then sooner that if you mobilise people for the revolution, for them it's not an ideological thing and a concept, they want something that touches them. If you want to say to them the revolution is about a better life, you better show that you are dealing with what is bad at the time" (Interview: 21 February 2013).

In tackling basic socio-economic demands, Valli Moosa who worked as a political activist in Lenasia described how links were then drawn between bread and butter issues and the political system: "Importantly, you're doing constructive things but you're also consciously all of the time reminding people that the reason for this is because you've got a government that doesn't care about us, and we're living in an unfair society" (Interview: 30 April 2013). The discourse of community organising thus differed in its emphasis and inspirations to that of political liberation and revolution. It drew not on a grand narrative of national democratic revolution but on concrete local experiences and the inequalities of everyday living. The democratic ethos it came to embody was thus informed by practical experience and direct benefits as much, if not more, than normative democratic theory.

Activists involved in grassroots work appear also to have been influenced by discourses and theories of community organising that drew on global experiences. An influential document at the time was a 1978 manual for organisers written in the Philippines entitled 'Organising People for Power' (Seekings 2000b: 56-7 and Interview: 19 February 2013; Cherry Interview: 3 October 2012). According to Seekings, this was used by South African civics to build popular initiatives around local issues, drawing on both the material needs of communities and their psychological empowerment (2000b: 58-9). The manual emphasised both the potential for participants' psychological liberation and the need to organise on the basis of "real and felt problems" (Maglaya 1978: 4).[63] Domestic activists, more than those in exile, had contact with people's everyday challenges. There was thus an appreciation of the tangible benefits to communities of organising through people's power. Such benefits may not only have included an improvement in material conditions but a sense of empowerment and control. For those who were away from home and distanced from domestic activism, Valli Moosa noted that "there wasn't that same level of consciousness about the need to involve ordinary people". Although he noted that there was no conflict involved in this difference, there was a degree of 'tension' (Interview: 30 April 2013). In this way, individuals' differential experiences shaped their ideas about current conditions and the future they envisaged.

Lechesa Tsenoli (Interview: 11 March 2013) and Janet Cherry (2000b) refer to 'Rules for Radicals' (1972) written by American community organiser, Saul Alinsky. Alinsky's work in particular involved guidance for activists on the empowerment of low-income communities and, interestingly, sought to separate the notion of 'revolution' from ideology and communism in particular. He saw it instead as being about challenging inequality: about the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' (Alinsky 1972: 9-10). They also referred to the influence of community development and re-investment initiatives in the USA which promoted active citizenship and democracy around social needs such as inner-city housing (Tsenoli Interview: 11 March 2013; see also Cherry 2000b: 25-6).[64] These ideas resonate with the radical democratic discourse of active citizenship revived with the SDS and materialising in the rise of the New Left. Cherry noted that the ideas being espoused by community activists in the USA, such a Francis Moore Lappe, were similar to those of activists in South Africa during the 1980s: of "ordinary people taking control of all aspects of their lives" (2000b: 26).

The Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, whose work emphasised the empowering and liberating potential of education, was influential on 'revolutionary social movements' in Latin America and Africa (PFI: undated), including in South Africa (Tsenoli Interview: 11 March 2013; Coleman Interview: 20 February 2013; Cherry Interview: 3 October 2012). Freirian pedagogy

[63] My thanks go to Jeremy Seekings for kindly sharing with me a copy of this document from his own research collection.

[64] Tsenoli for example referred to the influence of WISH: Washington Inner City Housing in the USA.

covered the conscientisation of the oppressed, drew on the importance of adult and popular education in the establishment of democracy, and highlighted the importance of education relating to people's lived experiences (Infed: undated). In this sense the construction of democratic processes alongside popular education were mutually reinforcing: participation was, in the Rousseauian sense, educative.

It is possible to see how these inspirations came to shape ideas about the educative and empowering role of people's power, in which conscientisation also played an important role. The civics were strongly influenced by the idea that mass action itself could transform popular consciousness (Seekings 2000b: 58). During his state trial, Moses Mayekiso, described the act of conscientising people as "to make them aware of the conditions in which they find themselves and how they can solve them" (1988: 2100). For some people, conscientisation was therefore part of a process whereby community organising would increase ownership of problems and solutions: a process of people taking control over their own lives. In this sense, people's power introduced a notion of democracy that was not only *participatory* (in the sense of the process of political decision-making being the realm of ordinary people) but also *transformative.* It is a process of decision-making in which maximum participation produces not only democratic outcomes (policies) but facilitates what Pateman describes as "the development of the social and political capacities of each individual" (1970: 43). Its function is thus wider than that of representative democracy in that it develops human and, more specifically, citizen potential. In this way, people's power spoke to ideas about a *developmental* form of democracy.

The active involvement of people in the construction of solutions had the capacity to transform individuals and create responsible citizens. It was perhaps these strands of people's power - focused on grassroots organisation, self-help, community education and negotiation with the authorities - that contributed most to preparing people not only for struggle but for governance. Freirian ideas of pedagogy, for example, spoke to the rejection of Bantu education, and Education for People's Power. These attempts, rooted in organisation around everyday problems, imbibed communities with political, social and economic skills. Even the NECC's campaign for 'people's education', which played to both the liberation nationalism of the ANC and the popular militancy of the classroom boycott, also drew on ideas of building the new society through education and shaping people to become citizens (Sisulu 1986).

In this sense, democratic participation was also self-developmental and, as Pateman described, 'self-sustaining' (1970: 25; 43): it 'stretched' the individual through the notion that "responsibility can only be developed be wielding it" (Parry 1972: 26). By generating an idea of participation, as Macpherson describes, as developing human capacities (1977: 52), people's power both rejected elitist conceptions of democracy and touched on ideas about the development of human potential and intellect through giving people a "direct interest"

in government and thus the incentive to participate (ibid.). It also rejected the narrow, individualistic thinking of liberalism to promote a more communitarian view of democracy: "a politics of the common good, in which neighbours look for common solutions to their problems" (Stoker 2002: 34).

3.4. Reflection and Analysis

In exploring these thematic threads and the influences underlying them, it is possible to identify not only dominant currents but also conceptual tensions. This final section thus reflects on these commonalities and nuances and puts forward a series of arguments about the implications for participatory democracy.

3.4.1. Vanguardism and Hegemony

> *"The people must be with the ANC at all times and the revolutionary vanguard role must be felt. Perhaps in this way we can manage to lead the masses into a revolutionary armed seizure of power".* (ANC 1985h).

Although not exclusive to the phenomenon of people's power, 'vanguardism' appears as a key theme in the movement-people relationship. The role of the ANC as a political and "revolutionary vanguard" (ANC PMSC 1979) is both an identification the movement gives to itself, as well as one bestowed on it by its support base. The very status of a "vanguard", claimed by the ANC on numerous occasions (ANC PMSC 1979; ANC NEC 1986; ANC NEC 1988a; Mbeki 1984 cited in Johnson 2003: 328-9), embodies a belief in its historic role as a leader of the people. The ANC must sustain both mass political consciousness and self-organisation toward revolutionary ends. Generally associated with Marxist-Leninist revolutions, and originating with Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the concept of 'vanguard' organisation is overlooked in analyses of ANC identity. Yet the very notion of vanguardism shapes not only the role of movement and people but also the centrality of the revolutionary goal to the dynamic between the two.

While we must distinguish the role of the ANC from that of the SACP (which assumed the position of *vanguard of the working class*), the ANC's conception of its role as *vanguard of the people* is significant for understanding its democratic thought. The notion of the ANC as a popular vanguard has its intellectual roots in Marxist-Leninist and African Nationalist traditions. In the South African context the amalgamation of the thesis of colonialism of a special type with the Soviet push for the establishment of vanguard parties in 'third world' territories (Golan 1987: 599-600) produced an ANC-SACP alliance in a two-stage liberation struggle. It was a decision of the Comintern in 1920 that promoted Lenin's notion of a 'united front' and the formation of 'mass organisations' in third world states which, although not formed as communist organisations, would eventually take on a "popular, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist" character (Ul'yanovsky cited in Golan 1987: 604).

With the exception of a commitment to the doctrine of scientific socialism, several characteristics associated with a vanguard party, as set out in a 1976 article of the Soviet Journal, *Narody Azii i Afriki* (Peoples of Asia and Africa), can be applied to the character of the ANC in exile. These descriptors include: predominance over mass organisations and unions; representation of 'progressive classes and social groups'; a membership limited to those 'capable of assuming all the obligations of the vanguard detachment of society'; and, organised on the basis of democratic centralism (cited in Golan 1987: 599). In its ultimate objectives and doctrinal focus, the vanguard role of the ANC was certainly not that of a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party. Rather it was an African Nationalist organisation which conformed to a broad church character. However, as the discussion of influences showed, the ANC's conceptual leanings and modus operandi drew from the experience and ideas of its communist allies. The ANC's Department of Political Education included in the scope of its work the "organisation of a revolutionary vanguard party movement" (ANC DPE: 1986-88) and its vanguard leadership position appears to have derived from a theoretical framework associated with the Soviet Union and East Germany (Mabandla Interview: 28 June 2013).[65]

Although the ANC today is a mass organisation, prior to 1990 the restrictions of exile and illegality forced on the movement a mode of organisation more akin to a traditional Leninist party of 'limited membership', with a cell structure and centrally controlled corps of cadres - albeit with a broad church programme.[66] In this context it was the ANC's underground cadreship that played an important role in conscientisation. Cadres were responsible for organising the masses and imparting to them the revolutionary programme, strategy and tactics of the movement.

One of the most visible features of the vanguard status is the ANC's 'predominance' over mass organisations (and some trade unions) and its representation of 'progressive classes and social groups'. This particular characteristic informs the nature of popular participation, and speaks to the theme of hegemony discussed above. In Marxist-Leninist vanguard parties, organs of people's power were understood in a particularly instrumental sense, often as Party organs pursuing the Party programme.[67] In the case of the ANC, it's portrayal of popular structures is far more subtle. Organs are not directly described as appendages of the movement but the vanguard role is nonetheless clear. Joel Netshitenzhe, a member of the ANC's external mission and editor of the ANC journal, *Mayibuye* described the careful

[65] On the relevance of vanguardism and Leninism to national liberation movements in Africa, see also Johnson (2003).

[66] See Gunther and Diamond (2003) for a useful discussion of the class-based 'Leninist Party' and other typologies of mass party.

[67] See for, example, the interview undertaken by the SACP's Joe Slovo in 1978 interview with Lucia Lara of the Angolan Marxist-Leninist Party, MPLA (Slovo 1978a: 69).

way in which ANC cadres would come to assume leadership positions within structures of people's power:

> … [G]ood ANC cadres at community-level should so conduct themselves, should so distinguish themselves in the context of struggle, should have an appreciation of the general direction of things that when popular democracy expresses itself they would find themselves either elected or selected to lead … What the vanguard movement would seek to do … is to ensure that its cadres win the confidence of the people such that when popular democracy expresses itself, it finds its cadres in those leadership positions" (Interview: 14 May 2013).

This explanation aligns with the axiom that leadership must be 'earned' and not 'decreed' (ibid.). The vanguard must win the confidence of the masses. Other accounts of the role of underground cadres are less delicately phrased. An ANC discussion paper, very possibly produced by its Political Commission, pronounced that "The u/g structures per se cannot merge with the street committees, but the vanguard movement should be *so firmly in control that political distinction* between the ANC and the popular organs becomes *non-existent*" (sic) [emphasis added] (ANC, undated a: 18). Popular structures were conceived as directly linked to the movement: as vehicles of its revolutionary strategy.

The role of the masses was thus at times depicted with a tone of instrumentality, their participation providing strength in numbers for a revolutionary purpose. In a context of illegality, it was critical that ANC presence be felt through infiltration of popular organisations and establishment of underground structures and mass revolutionary bases (ANC 1985b: 7). Hence when the ANC made the call in 1985 to "render the country ungovernable" it sought to shape how this played out on the ground. The ANC reiterated the adage that 'the masses must be their own liberators' but what was critical was the controlled development of a revolutionary offensive, guided by a correct popular understanding of the revolutionary programme (see ANC 1985b and ANC 1985c). This envisaged role of popular structures conformed more to the model of the council state conceived under the Bolsheviks (albeit inspired by the Paris Commune) in which the councils or committees constitute mechanisms of the vanguard party (Glaser, unpublished). The ANC envisaged that its underground units were to fulfil a "vanguard role of leading the people in a united offensive for the seizure of power" (ANC 1985b).

Vanguardism thus implied a crucial and active role for the masses on whose participation liberation depended. In 1985, the ANC asserted that "Without the ANC, in contact with and as part of the masses of the people, enjoying their support and confidence and leading them into many-sided action, our victory is impossible" (ANC 1985b: 6). Just as a socialist

revolution cannot take place purely from above (Mandel 1983: 1),[68] the ANC, as popular vanguard, must ensure that the people are "with the ANC at all times" (ANC 1985h: 3). However, in order that this activity carried a *revolutionary* content, the ANC's guiding hand was needed. The movement emphasised the urgency of this in 1985:

> "The ANC seems unable to adapt and respond adequately to shifts and changes in day-to-day struggles. We seem unable to exert our will inside the country because the leadership is in exile … the key leadership must be inside the country; we must infiltrate every organisation; we must initiate political organisation among every sector; we must improve the flow of propaganda and information. The ANC's presence in the country must be felt." (ANC NPC 1985).

Mandel's formulation about the requirement of mass participation in socialist revolution is useful here. He remarks:

> "You cannot have a spontaneous socialist revolution. You cannot make a socialist revolution without really trying. And you cannot have a socialist revolution commandeered from the top, ordered around by some omniscient leader or group of leaders. You need both ingredients in a socialist revolution: the highest level of consciousness possible, and the highest level of self-organization and self-activity by the broadest possible segment of the population" (1983: 1).

Given the ANC's own emphasis on both mass participation and revolutionary leadership the movement's understanding of its vanguardism seems subject to the broader 'inconsistency' in Marxist doctrine identified by Femia: between "the demand for both political control from above and popular initiative from below" (1993: 136). While the emergence of the UDF was welcomed by the ANC, its revolutionary potential was still predicated upon its own influence amongst UDF affiliates. Ivan Pillay, a key operative in the ANC's 'Operation Vula' (established to secretly return a number of senior ANC leaders to South Africa), admitted that "Vula was not an attempt to plant new leaders inside the county but rather to shape internal leaders key decisions" (cited in Butler 2008: 230).

If we accept that vanguardism is a defining feature of the ANC-mass relationship, then it carries important implications for participation. To be a vanguard is a status earned only by virtue of being recognised as such by the people themselves. The establishment of a Congress hegemonic unity was facilitated by the UDF itself, which identified the ANC as the rightful 'vanguard' of the struggle (MDM c.1988; Molefe 1990a). The UDF was therefore not a political alternative to the ANC, nor did it wish to be seen as opposing it. Mufson also

[68] Mandel notes that the people must be convinced of the need for revolutionary transformation: the vanguard movement must secure their support for and active participation in that objective (1983: 1, 13).

comments that, although the trade unions were more independent of the ANC than the UDF was, the COSATU leadership's open support for the ANC and recognition of its "influence and popularity" ultimately "created pressure to conform to the ANC position" (1990: 211). It is interesting that some of the MDM's own commentary reflects similar thinking to the ANC on the necessity of vanguard leadership. A 1988 UDF discussion paper emphasised that mass organisations could only bring about change through linking with a broader political organisation; that on their own they "cannot lead themselves to a new society" (UDF 1988).

It seems possible that the "vanguardist self-perception" which Seekings describes the UDF as sometimes adopting (2000a: 190) was linked to its role of fulfilling the ANC's mandate. For those who were part of underground cells or had direct lines of communication to Lusaka or Robben Island, it is likely that greater responsibility to the movement may be felt. Sydney Mufamadi, an activist and member of the ANC underground in Soweto commented on how ANC influence was able to spread, via its underground cadres, into Street Committee structures:

> Oliver Tambo is the President of the ANC. I am a member of the ANC in Soweto ... I live in some street in Soweto … I'm an active member of the street committee. When we sit to discuss what to do and so on, because of my level of consciousness, even the chairman of the committee will feel that, you know, before he or she goes to the meeting there is a more knowledgeable member of our street. Why don't I consult this person to see how do we do this, so you actually find that you play this mentoring role … And before people know it, they think like the ANC. So Oliver Tambo does not have to try and micro-manage me from Lusaka. Because I am just as much a member of the ANC as he is. *When I am in my street, I know how the ANC would have acted if it was here* [emphasis added]. (Interview: 26 November 2012).

The influence and pull of the movement on those at home should not be underestimated. Indeed, Mufamadi's account reflects the strength of the bond that underground cadres felt with the ANC and the extent to which its vanguard role and personification of the popular will was felt by activists at home. It is of note that after 1990 the UDF appears to have begun consciously relinquishing its own role as a political organisation (Moosa, 1990). At its national workshop in 1990, it was also noted that some UDF affiliates may now be absorbed into the ANC (ibid.).

The broad acceptance of ANC hegemony did not of course mean that the MDM held a uniform conception of participation. Regardless of its vanguard status there were nuances in what this implied for popular structures. One of the most important of these was that, ***for many activists in the UDF and its affiliates, the vanguard hegemony of the ANC did not preclude the simultaneous existence of decentralised and popular structures in which***

***control and democratic decision-making resided with people themselves*.** As such, while it accepted and revered the movement's leadership, this was combined with a discourse of popular participation that allowed for a considerable degree of local control. This partly speaks to Cherry's argument that building local democratic organisation and mobilising against the state "were not seen as contradictory, since the capturing of state power was the common objective of both projects" (2000a: 92). The themes of active participation, pre-figurative democracy and local self-governance also contained within them a notion of participation rooted in the value of local democratic practice. What this represented was a conceptual discomfort in the understanding of vanguardism itself.

The ANC's notion of the state was rooted in a theory of revolution in which the *vanguard* (of professional revolutionaries) must lead and direct the struggle. Yet, for some in the UDF, a future democracy would be "forged though mass action from below" (UDF c.1987). The tension between these versions in some sense mirrors Lenin's dispute between Luxemburg and Trotsky over the role of the vanguard party. Luxemburg viewed the bottom-up initiative of the proletariat and development of its own consciousness as critical elements in a successful revolution. She objected to Lenin's approach which, along with Trotsky, she saw as "a division of labour between revolutionaries and workers" in which the party was cut off from its constituency. Instead, the movement's strength should be rooted in "the independence of the working class" (Thatcher 2007: 33). For the ANC, as for Lenin, mass mobilisation was also critical. But it required careful guidance by dedicated and disciplined cadres. In contrast, a 1990 statement by the Transvaal UDF Secretary, Popo Molefe reflected the Front's more decentralised leaning: "When members realise that their problems come to notice of the leadership, when their successes are acknowledged, when they are part of the formulation of policy and decisions, then we can say we a have a living breathing democratic vanguard" (Molefe 1990a).

Thus in one version, the role of an enlightened leadership is critical; mass mobilisation is underpinned by an ultimate truth that must be brought to the masses from without. In the other, the role of leadership is also fundamental but mobilisation simultaneously forms a basis for building popular power. As Luxemburg was concerned to emphasise - there was space for mass control alongside revolutionary objectives. Thus while the UDF's version may have maintained a commitment to the revolutionary objectives, it also underscored that the role of democratic practice for some popular organisations was *important in its own right*. People's power not only advanced the cause of a transfer of power but constituted a 'training ground' (UDF 1876a: 20-3), building the democratic foundations of a future state and society.

These dual understandings of vanguardism highlight the tension between people's power as a means versus an end of struggle. Either way, however, whether subject to revolutionary imperatives or pre-figuring a future society, people's power, overall, served a largely

teleological role. The notion that participation served a preordained purpose pervaded ANC theory. Even those for whom it represented not just a method but also a goal of struggle, its more democratic elements became subject to a greater good.

3.4.2. Teleology

> *"How to ensure at the mass level the participation of the revolutionary classes, not merely as objects of mobilisation but as creative participants in the whole process?"* (Slovo 1978: 39).

The role of people's power was tied inextricably to revolutionary theory and to notions of hegemony, discipline, the transfer of power and active participation. Yet these strands also overlapped and reinforced one another. The theme of active participation, in particular, formed the bedrock of people's power and itself embodied a number of the other themes. The realisation of the ANC's vanguard role, consolidation of hegemonic unity, transfer of power to the people, and establishment of an alternative order required active participation of the masses.

The teleological view of people's power is perhaps most visible in the strategy of people's war. The notion that popular structures were vehicles of insurrection instilled them with a clearly functional character and in the people's war narrative there is little indication that they were envisaged as playing a role beyond the defeat of the state. In 1985 the ANC's Commission on Armed Struggle stated that: "The aspirations, aims and the demands of the people, the objectives of seizing power, should dominate any strategies formulated during the cause of the struggle" (ANC 1985f: 1). Participation in this sense became linked to the realisation of something else: to both a theory of historical direction and a pre-constituted notion of the people. ANC intellectual, Pallo Jordan (who incidentally was involved in the process from 1986 to produce the ANC's Constitutional Guidelines) was emphatic that organs of people's power were never viewed as long-term structures. For him they were 'instruments' and 'institutions' of struggle whose administrative and governing responsibilities accrued merely by default as a result of the popular rejection of local state institutions (Interview: 12 November 2013).

Barrell argues that, prior to 1979, the movement had not viewed local struggles and 'community work' as contributory to the revolution (Barrell 1992 in Seekings 2000b: 60-61), and its focus on insurrection implied an absence of pre-figurative thought. Moreover even for those in the ANC who saw popular organs as a 'prototype' of a new state (ANC, undated a), it is not clear that they were conceived as structures of democracy necessarily. In the ANC, the pre-figurative discourse tied the popular will not so much to democracy as to revolutionary objectives. Jeremy Cronin referred to "significant parts of the ANC … not [being] particularly sympathetic to popular power or seeing it in a very instrumentalist way" (Interview: 27 November 2012).

The prevalence of the idea that organs of people's power were simply institutions of struggle, as Jordan suggests, is partly corroborated in the ANC's January 8 Statement of 1986. This referred to the future establishment of "democratic, non-racial municipal councils" elected on the basis of "one person one vote" (ANC NEC 1986), and made no correlation between such institutions and the organs of people's power. On the one hand, this view suggests there was no intention of people's structures prefiguring those of government, and indeed for very good reason. Jordan explained that they could never be "transposed into organs of democratic governance" by virtue of the fact that they were highly partisan, and that "the ANC was largely responsible for setting them up inside the country" (Interview: 12 November 2013).

On the other hand, although this confirms the presence of different conceptual influences in the ANC - with Jordan's position reflecting a more liberal strand that was critical of Soviet dogma - the emphasis on the impermanency of popular structures highlights that their *democratic* role in empowering communities was not present in the ANC's assessment. It rather implies that the structures of people's power came to life *only as a temporary creation of the movement*. Therefore, while the ANC may (correctly) not have conflated people's power with democratic local government, it was also not envisaged as a pre-figurative civic realm. In contrast to the UDF, any traceable influence in the ANC of civil society *a la* Gramsci would appear to be fairly atypical.

By the close of the 1980s this conceptual tension, between people's power as pre-figurative versus fulfilling immediate revolutionary imperatives, remained. While the activists who adhered to a pre-figurative understanding often saw no contradiction in its concurrent fulfilment of a revolutionary function,[69] it left open to debate the role that participation would play once revolutionary objectives were fulfilled. Parallel to this was a tension between community accountability and accountability to the movement. Yunus Carrim contrasted the approach of Lusaka with that of the domestic movement:

> "For the ANC the main focus was on overthrowing the state. I think for those inside it was both overthrowing the state and building an alternative source of power where civil society is strong. And some of the activists were then also, even then, warning that even if our own movement came to power, into government, we should still have a strong civil society". (Interview: 16 January 2003).

Even where the theoretical influences on people's power shared a common heritage, the active involvement of some individuals in these structures compared to the greater distance of others, led inevitably to variations in their presumed objectives and impact. A useful

[69] Janet Cherry (2000a: 92) and Raymond Suttner (Interview: 25 October 2012), for example, referred to seeing themselves as fulfilling both insurrectionary and democratic imperatives.

example in this regard concerns tensions in the accountability and role of popular structures. Cas Coovadia, who understood the objective of organisation to be the overthrow of the state and its replacement with an ANC-led government, maintained simultaneously that democracy was something being built from the grassroots: not an "imposition of either a philosophy or political culture or strategy from the top" (Interview: 28 May 2013). Whether or not the civics simultaneously served a function of national liberation, they were also "local social movements accountable to their local communities" (Coovadia c.1991: 3). The participatory democratic practice that grassroots ownership demanded anticipated the form of democracy envisioned for the future: NDR, for the UDF, was democratic precisely because it involved "taking control by all the people of all aspects of their lives" (1986c, Series II).

This tension also echoes the previous point about the presence of two conceptions of vanguardism. Within the domestic movement, awareness of the need to build and safeguard civil society as an arena distinct from state and party had, by the mid-1980s, already begun to surface. Andrew Boraine remarked that as early as 1987 people were "conscious of the failure of African democracy" (Interview: 21 May 2013). Admitting that "you don't exactly talk about that because it seems to be undermining what we're trying to do in South Africa", he added that the "post-colonial failed state and the post-colonial nationalist movement crushing the people's revolution were certainly debates going on at the time" (ibid.).

This is not to say, of course, that the ANC's support base did not identify with people's war, or that teleology was synonymous with the military struggle alone. The ANC's calls for insurrection were powerful inside South Africa and appealed to a strong sense of grievance, not least amongst the youth. What the ANC sought, as Slovo's statement above highlights, was not the passivity of the masses but their *creativity*. In cultivating this, the ANC appreciated the power of both propaganda and mobilisational work. Drawing on the Vietnamese experience of popular conscientisation, the ANC noted that "Once patriotism and rev.[olutionary] ideas have penetrated deep into the people, they become an invincible force" (ANC London Collection, undated c).

The emphasis on active involvement was thus a fundamental feature of the ANC's approach. The creativity that it sought from the masses, however, was not unbounded but should be geared toward a revolutionary end. Observations made in another ANC collection on Vietnam capture how this creativity was envisaged: "Rev.[olution] must first awaken people politically, their class consciousness must be awakened and they must be given a political outlook. Must avoid ideas that 'cadres' or 'leaders' are making the rev.[olution]. It is the masses themselves that make the rev.[olution] (sic)" (ANC London Collection, undated d). It thus reflected, as Femia described, the inconsistency of a twofold desire for "political control from above and popular initiative from below" (1993: 136).

What is important to note, however, is that, although we can identify conceptual discomfort *on reflection,* neither the archival documentation consulted nor the interviews undertaken for this thesis, suggest that this was *identified by participants at the time*. Many of those at home considered their approach to converge neatly with that of Lusaka. As Mufamadi's articulation conveyed: "[they knew] how the ANC would have acted if it was here" (Interview: 26 November 2012). It was perhaps only after 1990 when the formal (and not pre-figurative) construction of democracy took place that these tensions came to the fore. Moreover, the teleological view of people's power was not confined to the external movement alone. Seekings argues that even the pre-figurative democratic discourse emerging from the UDF was in a sense a 'top-down' impetus, essentially resolving the predicament facing the leadership of how "to move from just mobilisation and confrontation to organisation and sustained resistance" (Interview: 19 February 2013).

Activists who placed value on the empowering and educative benefits of popular organisation still often understood it as part of a broader process of achieving a national democratic future. Raymond Suttner's retrospective account is, in this sense, very useful, reflecting on both the UDF's 'autonomy' and its allegiance as an "agent of the ANC" (2004: 697). As someone who was involved in the UDF and linked into the ANC's structures, Suttner's argument that local affiliates were creative, not merely instruments, is an important one. Yet his account also implies that people in general were actively pre-figuring a future democracy (2004: 696), or that their creativity was a response to a 'policy' set by the ANC (2004: 698).

This view, in some senses, obscured both differing understandings of what people's power entailed and the extent of more localised conceptions. Suttner highlights one aspect of this relating to the notion of 'a transfer of power':

> "The problem with the notion of a transfer of power is that at a particular moment, something called power is handed over, a 'thing' is passed from one set of rulers to another, and after that something completely different is done. This conception tends to devalue immediate activity, whose relevance is understood purely in relation to realising something else - the seizure or transfer of power at some decisive moment in the future" (2004: 695-6).

The notion of there being a 'decisive moment' in the transfer of power speaks to the ANC's ideological heritage and, as Suttner suggests, "converges with most Marxist-Leninist texts as well as general conceptions of transition held by most national liberation movements" (2004: 696). The insurrectionary ends of people's power somewhat undermined a more democratic understanding of its role. Although Suttner contends that he re-thought his position on insurrection during the 1990s, he also noted that at the time "we saw everything that undermined the apartheid state as part of a process of seizing power"

(Interview: 25 October 2012). He contrasted the instrumental view of popular organs to a view of democracy as "valuable in its own right" (ibid.).

It is also of note that the continuation of people's power in a post-apartheid South Africa was not supported unanimously by cadres at home. Lechesa Tsenoli, a civic activist and member of the ANC involved in negotiations after 1990, emphasised that resistance to the preservation of people's power did not only come from exiled cadres: "also people from here as well; some of them who took senior positions who may have had different perspectives about how we should proceed and who made certain assumptions about what would happen now that the ANC was in force" (Interview: 11 March 2013). While he advised that this view lost out to the more dominant vision of a people-driven process of change (ibid.), it points to a lack of internal consistency in the civics' and UDF's own theory.

Although there was an appreciation that Lusaka by no means pulled the strings of mass organisation, the teleological way in which it was understood highlights the influence of vanguardism. Hassen Ebrahim remarked that the ANC's role in the generation of popular activity at home was possible because of its integration with people and struggles inside the country (Interview by O'Malley: 4 December 1999). Yet there's also an implication that the movement had a somehow superior appreciation or consciousness of popular activity. Ebrahim observed: "Often enough, and not often enough, generally in the eighties I would know more about what was happening in a community than people within that community and that's how effective our communication lines were" (ibid.).

The assumption of this vanguard position demeaned to an extent the value of local contributions. Yet it was a status also bestowed on the movement by those at home. Suttner admits, retrospectively, that the care with which he and many others studied the message of the ANC's January 8 Statements to find out how to apply it, "devalued the importance of the local by treating the ANC as hierarchically superior" (Interview: 25 October 2012).[70] Moses Mayekiso, who later joined the leadership of SANCO, reflected woefully on the extent to which activists had put the ANC on a pedestal - as the "super-organisation", portraying as somewhat naïve, with hindsight, the yielding of the civic movement to the ANC after 1990 (Interview: 8 April 2013).

While the ANC and UDF both had somewhat teleological conceptions of the role of people's power, it seems possible to argue that, overall, formal discussion within the ANC about the form of a democratic future was not especially forthcoming, while the more unambiguous account of people's power as embryonic of a democratic future rested largely with the movement at home. The ANC itself drew on broader revolutionary theory, informed by

[70] Each year on January 8 (the anniversary of the founding of the ANC), Oliver Tambo delivered a statement on behalf of the NEC of the ANC reviewing the movement's progress and challenges over the preceding year and setting new aims and goals for the year ahead.

ideas of a people's war and the establishment of national democracy. It was asking people to create the beginnings of 'people's power' and a state of people's power seemed to be what it envisaged. What was not always made clear was what that power entailed.

The UDF, while seeing itself as fulfilling the ANC's mandate, combined ideas of national democracy with a discourse of local popular power and the forging of democracy from below. 'Freedom' in this sense was associated with the securing of state power by the ANC but also with what Pateman described as "control over one's own environment" (1970: 26). Some of the themes emerging from the UDF and its affiliates reflect their concern not only with the realisation of national liberation but with local-level control and empowerment (Mamdoo 1988), and there is evidence that street and area committees came to be understood by participants as democratic structures. Cherry's research in Kwazakele suggests that they gave ordinary residents "a real sense of empowerment, and invited their active participation in both decision-making and campaigning" (2000b: 124). One resident in fact remarked: "No one can come and teach us how to build democratic structures now, we know that very well … We have built our own democratic government" (Cherry 2000b: 92). Thus, while the pre-figurative discourse may have been shaped by the movement's ideologues, the UDF imagining of 'building democracy now' was not a fabrication of what eventually happened.

3.4.3. Bounded and Unitary Democracy

Although we can identify the presence of conceptual difference, what appears to unite all the strands of people's power is the promotion of a model of democracy that was essentially *unitary* in form. The discourses of hegemony, unity, vanguardism and discipline contributed to the conceptual construction of democracy as something 'bounded'. This was neither in the sense of the exclusiveness to which democracy had been subjected in the past, nor in the sense of elitism in which decision-making was the preserve of professionals. *Rather, democracy was bounded by a participatory process that was circumscribed by an allegiance to the movement and its programme.*

Although domestic activists were engaged in normative debate about the empowering and transformative role of democracy, the structures they envisaged remained limited by Charterist hegemony. Democracy was often enabled *only in so far as it conformed to that agenda*. The ANC, although less explicit about the form of the 'democratic' in the NDR, linked the achievement of a democratic future to the ANC as the alternative government. However while it had less to say about the participatory democratic features of people's power, and more about insurrection, it would be incorrect to lay the movement's undemocratic traits only at the feet of those in exile. The UDF's vision of democracy also carried little respect for political tolerance or for individual rights. Its belief in political discipline and the subordination of one's will to the collective (UDF 1985a: 23) was linked to a rejection of pluralism, and to a unitary conception of the 'people' (Glaser 1991: 111). It

thus contributed to a unitary understanding of participatory democracy. The dismissal of parliamentary democracy transpired not only from Marxism-Leninism but from the civics' and unions' councillist traditions. Hence while we can lament the loss of the popular power that mushroomed in the 1980s, we must also examine carefully and critically the type of democracy it implied.

It is also worth noting that the Gramscian philosophy of 'hegemony', so influential in the UDF, also engendered, at least in practice, a "communal pressure" to conform (Cherry 2000b: 128). The UDF's appreciation of ideology as a terrain of struggle still did not account for the existence of alternative political affiliations in civil society. Presuming the homogeneity of popular views, what the UDF envisaged was democracy in a *unitary* form:

> "The key to deepening democracy lies in deepening mass organisations in all sectors of society … [D]emocracy for the oppressed lies not in the abstract notion of individualised choices. 'In the face of exploitation and oppression the major weapon of the broad working masses lies in their number and in their capacity for united disciplined action. It is united, disciplined mass action -- and not left-wing debating societies -- that will lay the basis for real democracy in South Africa'" (UDF 1987 cited in UDF c.1987: 7-8).

This extract supports the contention *that it wasn't just the insurrectionary agenda of people's power, as Suttner has argued, that undermined its popular democratic value. It was also the pre-figurative element itself*. In fact, as a method of struggle, people's power was arguably *less* problematic: people were, for the most part, united by a common goal to end apartheid. Differences on the basis of race, gender, social class and age were papered over in a joint effort to construct an alternative, or at least to ameliorate the suffering of every-day living. Thus, while we must concede that agreement on the means of getting there was *not* always reached democratically, it is arguably in people's power as *pre-figurative democracy* that its unitary nature is more dangerous.

The pre-figurative discourse incorrectly assumed that once apartheid had been overthrown, political unity over adversity and conformity over difference would also be absolute. By prefiguring, at the time, the society that was to come, the ANC and UDF assumed that a future South Africa would conform to Charterist hegemony, and did so prior to obtaining democratic consent. If the UDF was building democracy now, then the structures it built were indicative of its vision of the future. A more Leninist conception of building hegemony through coercion could also rear its head. There is no evidence to suggest that ANC or UDF leadership sanctioned or encouraged the exercise of violence in popular campaigns. But the messages they issued gave clear instructions to build unity in struggle and, on occasion, to ensure compliance with activities (ANC London Collection undated e).

The authority and legitimacy conferred on popular structures by virtue of residents' participation in them, also led to a degree of what Cherry describes as "non-violent coercion through communal pressure" (2000b: 128). Port Elizabeth lawyer, Fikile Bam, noted that "the almost complete control that the UDF established over certain townships … made it intolerant even of passive opposition or dissent", adding that "The success of its most important programs, such as the setting up of alternative structures, implied mass conformity" (cited in Mufson 1990: 130).

The construction of 'people's courts' represented the arm of popular collective justice. Such structures often held far greater legitimacy in the eyes of residents than did the institutions of the state, and there are accounts of the positive role of these courts in resolving conflicts through rehabilitative rather than punitive solutions. Some reports indicated that popular defence and justice mechanisms reduced crime in communities (ANC London Collection, undated e), supporting the maintenance of order in the face of both state onslaught and corrosion of the social fabric. In many cases there was a lot of popular support for the courts (Seekings 1990: 126), who were in some ways given a *de facto* mandate to carry out their function by virtue of the number of cases brought before them. Cases could range from neighbourly, family or intra-marital disputes to theft and other crimes (ibid.).

In other instances, however, people who wished to report crimes to the police were prevented by 'the comrades' from doing so (Bozzoli 2004: 148-9). The authority of the people's courts was therefore self-conferred; they were governed by neither impartiality nor accountability and made no acknowledgement of the separation of powers (Scharf and Ngcokoto 1990: 343). It is notable that in certain cases, such as Alexandra, a 'people's court' was not always a designated structure but came to refer to any gathering where people got together to resolve a problem (Tshabalala 1988: 3766-7). Some courts issued corporal punishment and lashing of offenders (ibid; Seekings 1990: 128) and, even when overseen by elected representatives of the community, they were infused with a political bias.

Glaser argues that "the notion that justice must be based on local participation, serve factional political ends, and respond to local traditions and even prejudices took precedence over any notion of legality or legal procedure" (1991: 111). A document on the practice of people's power, interestingly, linked the courts directly to political goals: "The courts are not simply to hand out punishment, such as in a bourgeois court, but also to provide political leadership … A people's court is called to address issues that cause divisions amongst the people". While the courts' jurisdiction included criminal offences, the document also cites "questions of political unity" (ANC London Collection, undated e).

Dispute resolution and the building of unity was also the role of street and area committees (ibid.). These structures often served as an initial port of call prior to cases being escalated to a people's court and were also used to ensure compliance and conformity. The same document noted: "If a stayaway or consumer boycott is called, it is the task of the

committee to make sure that everyone understands the call and participates in the campaign" (ibid.). There thus emerged a blurred line between the creation and maintenance of social cohesion and the enforcement of political obedience. Although the democratic features of the committees (elected representatives, mandates and accountability) were venerated by their participants, their purpose and role was foreordained.

If we reflect on the deliberative democratic element to people's power, discernible in the features of collective discussion and decision-making, it is not at all clear that this was a pluralistic process. Rather, deliberation was subject to political discipline. No guarantee was made that certain disagreements within the collective were not only 'reasonable' - as per Gutmann and Thomson's criteria (2004: 28) - but also inherent to democratic process (see Mouffe: 2000 15-16). In this sense it is arguable that the neglect of individual human liberty ultimately undermined the democratic element of collective empowerment (Glaser 1991: 94).

In a sense the conceptual tensions in the theory of people's power were played out in the structures themselves. The officially non-partisan character of popular structures blurred uneasily with their *de facto* function as vehicles of the Congress movement. An extract from an interview with an activist in Kwazakehle captures the democratic deficit that could result from this situation:

> "Of course, it was difficult for those structures … to be tolerant of views that are opposed to the ANC, because of the assumption that this area … was ANC based, and most structures in the democratic movement were dominated by people who either belonged to the ANC or supported the ANC. As a result our opposition, the PAC and AZAPO, did not find themselves comfortable within those structures. So from the onset the approach was conservative, because it was not representative of all political opinions within ourselves; it was representative of one opinion, which was the Freedom Charter opinion. The understanding was that no one was excluded, but because of the dominance of the ANC politics in the area, people thought that in our organizations they are going to be frustrated. So it was sort of a democratic structure, but the democracy was limited by the absence of other people. So the tolerance part of it became a problem" (cited in Cherry 2000b: 96).

In other instances there was not only a suggestion of an unintentional partisanship but also an intentional one. In the appendix to a document about building organs of people's power, the open membership of the street committee system is seen as having a 'disciplinary' effect on other political affiliations:

> "It does not depend on a person's political affiliations. This means that in some townships, for instance, there are a few Azapo members elected onto the street committees. This is not seen as a problem, because the dominant influence by far is that of the ANC or the UDF. In fact, participation of Azapo individuals within such structures places them under a progressive and collective discipline" (ANC London Collection undated e).

Notably, cases in which "only card-carrying members of UDF affiliates" could be elected onto street committees are criticised for failing "to bring the widest number of people within democratic structures and discipline" (ibid.).

People's power's most problematic aspect lay in the fact that it failed to cater for difference. Given that South Africa's public discourse was then devoid of a broader "rights culture" (Scharf and Ncgokoto 1990: 363) this is perhaps not surprising. In a sense, the 'social contract' involved in people's power reflected the Rousseauian principle of foregoing some individual liberty while gaining civil liberty: through participation, people would come to see themselves increasingly as 'public' individuals (Pateman 1970: 25). But in rejecting outright the exercise of what were considered 'bourgeois' rights and freedoms, people's power sacrificed basic democratic liberties in favour of revolutionary unity.[71] While this should not suggest that participation as a normative project is flawed, failure to recognise a plurality of interests resulted in a democratic deficit. The politically partisan nature of the organs of people's power should thus have precluded their preservation as structures of democratic local government. Yet the alternative, and more widespread, conception that people's power prefigured a future civil society is also itself problematic. Glaser highlights that, in contrast to the notion of civil society in its traditionally 'liberal' (pluralistic) form, people's power generated a radical interpretation in which society is constituted as a "unitary quasi-governing actor" (Glaser, unpublished).

The democracy advocated by the UDF thus appealed to the kind of unitary democracy described by Mansbridge (1983): to building a sense of community and the public-minded 'good citizen'. It shirked individualistic thinking and was premised on the existence of common interests. What was sought was collective discipline, not the free flow of ideas. Mansbridge's caution about the applicability of such a model applies equally here: unitary democracy may be appropriate and beneficial in cases where there is common agreement, and where everyone has the same interest, but in contexts in which this is not the case, unitary democracy may serve only to hide or suppress differences in the name of a false unity (1983: 4, 34-45). Bachrach and Botwinick's defence of participatory democracy is

[71] See Glaser (1991) for a critique of the historic failure of the discourse of democracy on the South African Left to recognise individual rights.

rooted in an understanding of participation as both self-liberating *and* promoting communal values: "self-development leads to the cultivation of a sense of full being as predicated on others' sense of full being" (1992: 31).

To heed Mansbridge's warning, a sustainable and rights-based participatory democracy must be able to take the developmental features of participation, as conceived here by Bachrach and Botwinick, and extend them not only to popular control over immediate collective concerns but to broader political questions about how a shared society is governed. On this last point it is not clear that people's power succeeded.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to show how people's power constituted a web of ideas and themes which interlinked and overlapped to inform how it was understood. It also set out the ideological and conceptual influences on these discourses, tracing them to particular intellectual traditions and strands within the movement. The third and final section reflected on these findings and analysed their implications for the participatory democracy envisaged.

Perhaps the dominant influence on the ANC during the 1980s was Marxism-Leninism. Amongst internal activists and intellectuals, Gramsci's ideas were also prevalent, as was a broader democratic socialist tradition which posed an alternative to Marxism-Leninism. Within the trade union movement, whose ideas began to transfer to community and civic organisations, a socialist tradition was also emerging which was increasingly distanced from SACP doctrine and its alignment to the Soviet Union. This understanding of people's power was also linked to localised forms of struggle. As such, those who saw it as a fulfilment of ANC policy were not prevented from also interpreting it as an educative and empowering experience or a practical means of negotiation and self-help. For activists inside South Africa, there was arguably a greater appreciation of localised experiences. Although spurred on by the ANC's liberation narrative, these individuals were often concerned as much, if not more, with ameliorating the hardships of everyday life as they were with broader ideological questions.

Although the ideas of exiled and domestic activists overlapped and informed one another, it is possible to identify conceptual discomfort between the views that emerged. While these strands did not conflict as such, they generated theoretical variation. Some discomfort existed between the role of people's power as a means and an end of struggle, and differences are apparent in the understanding of 'vanguardism' which pervaded ANC discourse. Each of these tensions left unresolved the amount of leeway provided for popular control. For the ANC, its role as a vanguard movement was rooted in Marxism-Leninism and this informed directly its relationship with the people. For the broader MDM, the acceptance of this hegemony did not preclude a simultaneous vision of more tangible local

democratic control. It is of note, however, that these conceptions were often not interpreted *at the time* as potentially at odds with one another.

Despite these nuances, what emerged across the board was a largely teleological understanding of participation, both in its function as a means of struggle and in prefiguring a post-apartheid order. Yet beyond this common goal there was no standardised vision of what the new order would entail: many within the ANC spoke of people's power but had different ideas about what it meant. What can be ascertained is that ***neither the dominant discourse of the ANC-UDF, nor the more localised conceptions, made provision for the existence of difference***. Even those structures which focused on social welfare and collective space papered over political diversity and precluded alternative ideas from flourishing. What their activities presupposed was a unitary form of democracy bounded by allegiance to the movement.

CHAPTER 4

'The People Shall Govern': the Codification of Ideas

Although the phenomenon of people's power incorporated a process of normative theorising about democracy, the ideas it engendered did not feature a language of constitutionalism. It is therefore of note that, in parallel to the activities of people's power, the ANC engaged in a separate, formal process of codifying its ideas regarding not only a democratic future but also a constitutional one. From January 1986 with the establishment of a Constitution Committee in the ANC's Department of Legal and Constitutional Affairs (DLCA),[72] the ANC began in earnest to formulate a series of constitutional foundations and guidelines - a move prompted by shifting international terrain and pressure on the ANC to codify its ideas in the event that a post-apartheid era became a reality. The constitutional principles formulated by the ANC's committee were later brought to the table in the Multi-Party Negotiating Process (MPNP) for an interim constitution which was followed in 1994 by the Constitutional Assembly responsible for drafting the final constitution.

The first part of this chapter analyses the ideas about participatory democracy that emerged from this constitutional work, assessing how the idea of popular participation was linked to constitutionalism. The chapter also incorporates analysis of ANC thinking about democracy generally, for the very reason that the Constitution Committee not only represented the first attempt by the ANC to codify its democratic thought but also marked a shift toward the formal acceptance of some classically liberal democratic features. It is argued here that these shifts provide an important context to complementary forms of radical democracy also envisaged by the ANC.

The second part of the Chapter looks at the development of ideas about participation and 'the local'. From 1988 onwards, there is evidence that the ANC began to envisage participatory democracy as something linked to the local sphere, encompassing ideas about both local government and the role of civil society. With the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, a number of local government negotiating forums were established which shaped the movement's ideas about citizen participation. This section thus focuses on the ideas that emerged through this process, identifying some of the key actors and intellectual influences on participation at the local level. The chapter also considers the extent to which the era of people's power was influential in shaping both constitutional thinking and the notion of democratic local government.

[72] The DLCA itself was established in Oct 1985, as a result of a decision of the 1985 Kabwe Conference, to carry out the ANC's legal work (ANC DLCA c.1990: 10).

4.1. Participation and Constitutionalism

One of the most noteworthy points about the Constitution Committee's formation during what was considered the height of 'people's power' (1985-7), is not only that people's power did not draw on a language of constitutionalism but that the Committee appears to have formulated its ideas for the most part in intellectual isolation from the people's power phenomena. With the exception of some discussion about provision for participatory democracy, there is curiously little evidence of conceptual cross-pollination between the two. Although the interpretation of many radical democrats was that people's power represented the model of a democratic future, it was the formulations of the Constitution Committee that were the precursor to the democratic negotiations. In spite of this, there has been no interrogation within academia of the inconsistency in these discourses of democracy: between the people's power movement on the one hand, and the Constitution Committee on the other.

The Constitution Committee, described in 1990 as having been "at the centre of all the constitutional thinking in the ANC since its establishment in January 1986" (ANC DLCA c.1990: 2), was a precursor to the movement's involvement in constitutional negotiations from 1993. The ANC's 1988 Draft Constitutional Guidelines could be considered the movement's first official publication since the Freedom Charter on its ideas about a democratic state. Although the Charter represented a programme of ideals, there was acknowledgement that it "didn't deal with … constitutional structures and the enforcement of constitutional rights" (Sachs Interview: 21 December 2005). The purpose of the Constitution Committee was "to serve as a 'think tank' of the NEC" regarding constitutional developments (ANC DLCA 1986c); and to "try and anticipate the current developments in the country and its political effects" (ANC DLCA 1986a: 1). After 1990, the Committee, along with other experts, returned to South Africa to act as an advisory group to the ANC in the constitutional negotiations.

The Committee's establishment seems to have been prompted by a number of circumstances including the realisation that an end to apartheid may not be far away. The ANC thus recognised the importance of beginning to codify its own ideas and pre-empt constitutional initiatives from its opponents, not least the South African state (ibid.). Joel Netshitenzhe also noted the need to address concerns emerging from the international community as well as from South African business about the type of state that would replace apartheid (Interview: 14 May 2013). The Constitution Committee itself also urged the movement to "outline and define the democratic organs of self-government envisaged in the Freedom Charter and the SACP Programme" (ANC CC 1986c) - a remark which suggests continued lack of clarity around the implications of this clause. On 7 February 1986, Ruth Mompati, on behalf of the NWC, remarked that the Committee's work was "the first occasion on which the ANC has even attempted to give constitutional expression to its

programmatic demands" (ANC NWC 1986: 2). Its work was essentially to produce constitutional principles or guidelines for a democratic future.

4.1.1. Meshing Ideological Traditions: Liberal and Radical Democracy

In many ways the Constitution Committee represented a merging of the ANC's ideological traditions. The principles it put forward suggest a resurfacing of former liberal ideas, the introduction of new ones, and a desire to retain in principle certain radical democratic features. The Committee's work was overlaid with both the acceptance of recent international human rights conventions and the influence of other constitutional models, including those of nations not historically influential on ANC democratic thought. While the ANC's position on liberal democracy is not of direct concern to this thesis, its conception of 'democracy' in general impacts its understanding of citizen participation. It is therefore worth setting out the core features of a democratic state envisaged by the ANC, and the traditions from which they emerge.

4.1.1.1. Multi-Party Democracy and Political Pluralism

One of the most important features introduced by the Constitution Committee was the commitment to a multi-party system. The ANC's 1988 Draft Constitutional Guidelines were the product of work and discussion by the Constitution Committee across a period of two years. Both the Guidelines and preceding drafts of the Committee's constitutional principles made a formal commitment to the establishment of a multi-party system and provisions for freedom of speech and association (ANC CC 1988b; see also ANC CC 1986a; ANC NEC 1987a and 1987b). These commitments, among many others, were echoed in the ANC's working document on a Bill of Rights (ANC CC 1990b), its Commentary on the Structure of a Constitution (ANC CC 1990a), and its 1992 policy guidelines entitled Ready to Govern (ANC 1992). In South Africa's final Constitution, which was a result of negotiation between parties in the Constitutional Assembly, these principles were embedded through a fundamental Bill of Rights (RSA 1996).

As set out in the previous chapter, neither the discourse of the ANC or UDF had historically drawn on an understanding of democracy that provided for competing alternatives. In some instances such liberal precepts were rejected outright. It seems that it was only after May 1986 that the ANC gravitated toward a formal position on political pluralism. An ANC memorandum in May of that year, quite possibly produced by its Constitution Committee, indicated that a press statement made by Oliver Tambo on 9 January 1986, in which he referred to a multi-party future, was the trigger for the ANC to reach a formal constitutional position on the very issue. The memorandum referred to Tambo's remarks as "the only official statement from our movement which does refer to the existence of a multiplicity of parties or 'political pluralism' in a post-liberation South Africa" (ANC DLCA 1986b: 2). Tambo's statement read:

> "It is conceivable, of course, that when we win our victory and we are a non-racial democratic and united people, within those parameters, there will be divisions; people will form political parties of one form or another, and that will be permissible. That will not be division about the Freedom Charter or its objectives. It will be that people see the situation differently at the time and have different approaches to the problems which a liberated South Africa will be faced with. There could be many organisations of that kind formed, and they will be exercising their democratic rights in a democratic society" (Tambo 1986: 20).

From analysis of the documentation of the Constitution Committee, it would seem that reservations about political pluralism centred on the issue of reconciling certain freedoms with the need to prevent ethnic and racial hatred (ANC CC: undated: 9). The Committee's proposals thus came to presuppose the existence of multiple parties provided that they did not operate on the basis of race or ethnicity. It is not clear, however, that the principle of political pluralism was uniformly accepted across the ANC, at least not initially. The DLCA's memorandum on multi-partyism went on to remark that Tambo's statement "raises many questions especially that we will be one of the last to achieve liberation in Africa and Africa having the experience of one party states" (ANC DLCA 1986b: 2). A briefing document produced by Pallo Jordan in July 1985 as Director of Research in the ANC's Department of Information and Publicity, spoke out against what seems to have been a penchant in the movement for one-party rule:

> "We shall also have to explicitly pronounce ourselves on the question of political pluralism (the multiplicity of parties and political space for the loyal opposition). There is a sad misconception which has taken root among us, that radical social transformation is only possible under one-party rule. This notion must be dispelled and laid to rest once and for all" (Jordan 1985).

The claim that such a view existed within the movement is not far-fetched. Indeed, by proclaiming a commitment to multi-partyism the ANC would have been defying the trend set by its fellow liberation movements in Mozambique, Angola and elsewhere. Sydney Mufamadi noted the influence of such states at the time:

> "[Y]ou will recall that there was a time when … just looking at the situation globally, outside your classical western democracies, post-colonial societies in some instances tended to see a one-party-state as the best form of democracy. So you must accept that there would have been people who also thought, amongst us, that this is the best way to organise your democracy … It's not like all of us started off thinking that this one

> form of organisation is the best and we are unanimous about it" (Interview: 26 November 2012).

Thus, while there may have been those in the movement, such as Jordan, who saw "nothing to fear from political pluralism" (Jordan 1985), in the ANC as a whole this issue was far from finalised. The Freedom Charter itself, at the core of the ANC programme, did not itself guarantee the right of individuals to form political parties.

It is also apparent that provision for the existence of parties *not* in agreement with the ANC's programme also remained subject to discussion. The 1986 memorandum on a multi-party system set out the issue as follows: "The problem arises about what attitude would be taken to those who do not agree or agree fully with the Freedom Charter … Will they be allowed to form parties although they don't agree with the basic principles of the Freedom Charter?" (ANC DLCA 1986b: 2). The memorandum's interpretation of Tambo's statement is that he envisaged differences *within* the national liberation movement itself (ibid.). There was thus a lack of clarity on the tolerance of parties that fell outside of the movement's ambit.

4.1.1.2. Human Rights

A further commitment which emerged through the work of the Constitution Committee was the principle of individual rights. Notably, the ANC's first statement committing it to their protection appeared just one year after the Committee's establishment. In its January 8 Statement of 1987, the NEC provided assurance that "the revolution will guarantee the individual and equal rights of all South Africans"" (ANC NEC 1987b). In October of the same year, the ANC extended this by saying that the safeguarding of individual rights could be achieved through "an entrenched bill of rights" (ANC NEC 1987c: 3).

Despite claims by Legal Professor and member of the Constitution Committee, Kader Asmal and others that the ANC had a longstanding commitment to human rights (Asmal 1990; Asmal et al 2005), examination of its publications and archives suggest a gap in this record.[73] In fact, in a paper on developing a human rights culture in South Africa, Asmal's own reference to the ANC's documents of 1943, 1955 and then 1987 (Asmal 1990) itself highlights the thirty year gap. Just as people's power embodied a largely unitary conception of democracy, so had the ANC, prior to 1986, dismissed an individual rights-based political culture as a feature of bourgeois democracy.

At the time of the Constitution Committee's work, there appears to have been some aversion within the ANC toward the notion of a bill of rights. Rights had become associated not only with a discredited liberal tradition but also with efforts to protect minorities and

[73] For a discussion of the history and development of the ANC's rights tradition, including the identification of such a gap, see Dubow (2012).

maintain majority oppression under a different guise. In contrast to historic bills of rights developed elsewhere, in South Africa the discussion of rights had ironically come to be associated with the protection of minority privilege (Sachs 1988). Although the commitment to both pluralism and rights were decisions taken by the NEC itself, ANC cadre and lawyer, Albie Sachs was a key individual in shifting the perspective on rights within the liberation movement generally (Seedat Interview: 13 May 2013). In 1988, Sachs produced an influential discussion paper in which he explained that a bill of rights, rather than being an instrument to maintain existing privilege, could instead be used to guarantee those very rights and freedoms so long denied to the majority (Sachs 1988).

His paper reflected the way in which such misconceptions about rights were blocking constructive discussion of their role in a democratic society:

> "The most curious feature about the demand for a Bill of Rights in South Africa is that it comes not from the ranks of the oppressed but from a certain stratum in the ranks of the oppressors. This has the effect of turning the debate on a Bill of Rights inside out. Instead of a Bill of Rights being associated with democratic advance, it is seen as a brake on it; instead of being welcomed by the mass of the population as an instrument of liberation it is viewed by the majority with almost total suspicion" (ibid: 3.).

Despite the NEC's declared commitments in 1987, the date of Albie Sachs' paper (1988) suggests that undivided dedication to these principles remained tenuous. Kader Asmal continued even in 1990 to caution against the encouragement of "a negative culture of human rights … which sees the adoption of such rights as simply a restriction or limitation on a future government" (1990: 3). Acceptance of individual liberties such as those of association, organisation and speech did not sit all that comfortably with the notion of a unitary democracy, nor with a teleological conception of citizen participation. The re-thinking of rights by the ANC, or at least by some within its ranks, thus seems to have demanded a review of its own ideas about democracy, including re-consideration of those democratic features traditionally considered 'bourgeois'.

The ANC's shift during the late 1980s toward a rights commitment is therefore significant indeed. In 1992, the movement stated its commitment to the introduction of a bill of rights that would "enshrine principles for which we have fought all our lives" and which included a wide range of rights and freedoms (ANC 1992). The ANC's submissions during the sitting of the Constitutional Assembly in 1995 also reflected a progressive vision for a bill of rights as including civil, political, social, developmental and environmental rights (ANC 1995b).

It is interesting that several people involved at the time in theoretical or constitutional debates in the ANC referred to the movement as not committing itself to 'liberal

democratic' principles so much as humanistic ones, or at least to universal values associated with the development of humanity. Kader Asmal referred to the 1988 Draft Constitutional Guidelines, as well as the 1955 Freedom Charter and 1943 Africans' Claims, as presenting "a humanistic alternative to the paradigm of apartheid" (1990: 6). Human rights, he argued, "may be seen as inherent in our nature … as vital for the development of the human personality" (1990: 3). Joel Netshitenzhe similarly commented that the ANC's commitment to human rights was "not a question of the ANC becoming liberal democratic; it's the ANC appreciating that those things about the freedom of the human spirit … are achievements of humanity that should be embraced by all" (Interview: 14 May 2013).

One of the main reservations within the ANC camp about a bill of rights related to issues of private property. The UDF, for example emphasised "how can we successfully secure the protection of human and people's rights for all through a progressive Bill of Rights and not protect the property rights of the bourgeoisie as per a liberal, bourgeois Bill of Rights" (UDF 1989). In the ANC's own constitutional discussions and those of the constitutional negotiations and assembly, there is no suggestion of any reservations about the inclusion of first generation rights. Rather the ANC's concerns seem, understandably, to have reflected the classic democratic challenge of securing both liberty and equality (ANC 1995: 8 cited in Strand 2001: 51): to what extent could rights secure equality rather than prevent it?

In 1986 an NWC Sub-Committee, consisting of Joe Slovo, Pallo Jordan and Simon Makana (Nkokeli), was established to read and study the proposals of the Committee (ANC NWC S-C, 1986: 1). The Secretary of the Constitution Committee, Z.N. Jobodwana remarked that the inclusion of civil and political rights for the ANC was non-contentious. What the NWC sub-committee had wanted to see more of was discussion of socio-economic rights (Interview: 25 January 2006). The ANC's enunciation of rights in its constitutional proposals thus drew very much on the traditions of the Freedom Charter. By placing emphasis on substantive and socio-economic rights, the ANC objected not to the inclusion of civil and political rights but to their inclusion alone. The protection of first generation rights was necessary but also insufficient.

Overlapping with the discourse of rights is also the suggestion of their restricted application. Unfortunately, the documented detail on this is minimal, leaving open to interpretation the definition and scope of what can be considered 'people's rights'. Nonetheless, in the aforementioned report of the NWC Sub-Committee, some worrying remarks are made about the qualification and application of certain rights and freedoms. In particular, the report sought clarification on "political power and the forms it will take", asking: "do we envisage the enfranchisement of all or do we foresee disenfranchisement of certain classes, categories of persons, etc.?" It also suggests some reservations in the granting of civil liberties, asking "are these to be limited or unlimited? Do we envisage weighting the actual application in favour of certain classes or leave them as 'legally' neutral?" (ibid.: 4).

It is thus not clear to what extent the ANC envisaged rights, at the time, as being subject to programmatic demands. In some respects the document's character was to be determined by its purpose: either as "primarily a mobilising tool in the context of struggle" or "a tactical instrument in the event of negotiations" (ibid.: 5). It remains unclear whether political and civil liberties were to be circumscribed on the basis of 'class' or exercised within the ambit of a hegemonic unity. What we can deduce is that there was some initial uncertainty about the role of such rights and extent to which they served a purpose other than the protection of individual freedoms. At the very least, it suggests that prior to 1986 rights had not yet been discussed by the ANC in any detail.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the Constitution Committee's work is the way in which it brought together both radical and liberal democratic traditions. The constitutional discussions reflect a coming together of these currents but they also show signs of a wavering: between the influences of its nationalist and Marxist-Leninist heritage, and the conventions of prevailing 'western' democracy. At the very time that the movement at home and abroad was drawing on notions of popular power rooted in a collective 'people', the Constitution Committee was exploring a variety of debates in constitutional democracy. While these debates maintained the ANC's historic commitment to the realisation of socio-economic justice, they also opened up the possibility of a politically neutral constitution based on the rights of individuals and a commitment to political pluralism.

Given that the mushrooming of people's power and elaboration of constitutional thought took place in parallel, it is of note that these discourses remained quite distinct. While in the Constitution Committee's discussions there was early evidence of a merging of democratic traditions, there was also a gradual dissolution of the ANC's more radical language. In the Committee, what emerged was a more conventional language of liberal constitutional democracy. Debates taking place here, and amongst the NWC and NEC, were not apparent in the wider movement. In the latter, as Suttner suggests, what preoccupied people was "empowering the masses and dislodging the apartheid regime" (Interview: 25 October 2012).

4.1.1.3. Legal and International Constitutional Influences

Although the Constitution Committee's documents reflected new strands of democratic thought, the earlier period of its work (between 1986 and 1988) still showed traits of continuing Marxist-Leninist influence. Recommendations are made that study be undertaken of "the People's Democracies in Eastern Europe" (NWC-SC 1986) and "the constitutional evolution of Eastern Europe after World War II" (ANC CC 1986a). Despite Pallo Jordan insisting that Eastern Europe had not informed the work of the Committee (Interview: 12 November 2013), it does appear that in early 1987 a delegation from the DLCA and Constitution Committee visited the GDR and Czechoslovakia. The purpose of the visit was "to study and discuss with experts in the field of constitutional law in these two

socialist countries the historical development of their constitutional law since the smashing of fascism" (ANC DLCA: 1987). Although it is not evident from the report of this visit whether the ANC concurred with the advice offered, it is clear that guidance, lessons and potential areas for comparison were sought.

The delegation emphasised that socialism was not the ANC's immediate goal but there is an inference that a socialist republic was eventually envisaged (ibid.). The ANC's proposal for a multi-party system appears to have been accepted by the GDR representative but with a view to all such forces falling within the movement's camp. The summary of his recommendation stated: "The constitution, particularly at independence, will have to cater for the interests of all the forces rallying around and uniting behind the ANC and its allies" (ibid.). It is not clear what constitutional fate was foreseen at a later stage. Nonetheless, in the accounts of both the GDR and Czechoslovakia, 'people's democracy' was firmly associated with the programme of the socialist parties themselves (ibid.). The ANC's Constitution Committee in 1988 still used the term 'people's democracy', particularly in relation to the economy (ANC CC 1988a).

Perhaps the most concerning recommendation from the visit relates to the provision of a *constitutional guarantee* for the role of the ANC itself. One recommendation from the GDR stated that "the ANC as vanguard of the people's struggle should have that declared in the constitution" (ibid.) - a point which appears to have already been contemplated by the ANC itself. A DLCA document on the issue of political pluralism posed the question: "will the ANC as the vanguard that would have brought about liberation contemplate any special role for itself which has to be stipulated in the constitution?" (ANC DLCA 1986b).[74]

It is therefore clear that Marxist-Leninist-inspired ideas did retain some influence in the DLCA initially and thus penetrated the work of the Committee. However, from 1987-8 onwards, there is evidence of a gradual injection of legal-constitutional language and less and less the revolutionary-inspired language characteristic of earlier ANC documents. Indeed, the adoption of legal-constitutional language in the Committee's documents marks a largely-overlooked turning point in ANC discourse.

Just as ideologues and intellectuals played a role in shaping the discourse of people's power, so were they influential in the discourse of constitutional democracy. The work of the Constitution Committee was shaped by the composition of its members who were constituted largely from the legal profession. The position of Committee Chair was held by SACP member and academic, Jack Simons. Zola Skweyiya took the position of Vice Chair and Z.N. Jobodwana was Secretary. Others involved in the work of the Committee, although not

[74] This point is also raised in another document of the Constitution Committee which asked: "Does the NEC contemplate that the role played by the ANC should be contained in the constitution"? (ANC CC 1986b).

as administrative officials, were the lawyers Albie Sachs, Kader Asmal and Penuel Maduna (ANC DLCA 1986a: 1, 3).

In terms of international influence, the deliberations between 1986 and 1990 seem to have drawn on a variety of constitutional and country examples. As noted above, in 1986-7 the socialist states remained largely influential but there is evidence that this began to change from 1987 onwards. In some cases, this was influenced by the individuals involved in formulating the proposals. Pallo Jordan, for example - convenor of the NWC Sub-Committee - was a visibly more liberal influence. He referred to the movement's familiarity with bills of rights historically (Interview: 12 November 2013) and, in advocating the adoption of a bill of rights in South Africa, suggested application of the model of the French 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen' (Jordan 1985). Albie Sachs commented on the NEC's preference for what he called a 'post-dictatorship democracy' which looked to the constitutional examples of states such as Spain and Portugal, rather than either a 'people's' or 'liberal' democracy (Interview: 21 December 2005).

These Constitutions appear to have remained models for the ANC into the post-1990 period. Valli Moosa, who was part of a working group on constitutional principles during the MPNP from 1993, said that delegations were sent to countries including Germany, Spain, Portugal, the United Kingdom, the USA, India and Malaysia (Interview: 30 April 2013). Moreover, Pallo Jordan insisted that, "except by negative example", Eastern Europe had in no way informed the work of the Committee (Interview: 12 November 2013).

Here, it is likely that the broader global shifts of late 1980s played a role in dampening radical commitments. At the same time as the Constitution Committee's deliberations were taking place, there was increasing pressure on the ANC, including from Mikhail Gorbachev himself, to work toward a negotiated settlement (Esterhuyse 2014: 46). The onset of perestroika and glasnost in the Soviet Union and the discrediting of communism internationally were tipping the scales toward a new ideological era. It was from as early as 1987 - prior to the commencement of official talks - that the radical democratic tone of *constitutional* commitments began to fizzle out. Thanks to more recent accounts, we now know that during 1987 secret talks were beginning to take place in exile between senior members of the ANC and representatives of the Afrikaner academic and business communities (Esterhuyse 2014). Gorbachev's presidency in the Soviet Union, which commenced from 1985, also aligns with the commencement of formal constitutional discussion within the ANC's DLCA.

In general, these discussions also reflect the influence of the legal fraternity. Both Kader Asmal and Albie Sachs were influential in this regard and the mark of international rights

conventions can be seen in the content of ANC proposals.[75] Halton Cheadle, who in 1993 acted as a legal advisor to the ANC during negotiations for an interim constitution (focusing in particular on the bill of rights), commented that the Constitution Committee "played an important role in slowly diffusing a rights approach within the ANC" (Email correspondence: February 2006). With the commencement of CODESA II in 1992, the MPNP in 1993, and finally the Constitutional Assembly in 1994, the liberal approach dominated. In the MPNF, there was greater participation of lawyers and technical advisors to the ANC. Z.N. Jobodwana reflected: "there was not so much membership participation. I think that was how most of the ideas got diluted and drifted further to a more liberal type of acceptance of the constitution" (Interview: 25 January 2006).

The ANC's 'Working Document' on a Draft Bill of Rights, published for consultation in 1990, referred to the influence of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and 1966 International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ANC CC 1990b). The introductory note stated: "- we have relied heavily on these great documents. We have also drawn upon the European Convention of Human Rights and the African Charter of Human and People's Rights, as well as provisions dealing with protection of human rights in a great many constitutions, ranging from those of India to West Germany to the USA to Namibia" (ibid.). The ANC's Draft Bill of Rights itself also proposed a "constitutionally entrenched human rights commission" as a watchdog and safeguard for the public (Mayibuye 1992: 21). Both this document and the final Bill of Rights that accompanied South Africa's Constitution in 1996 encompassed a broad and progressive range of first, second and third generation rights.

By the time the ANC's Draft Constitutional Guidelines were published in 1988, the proposal of a constitutional guarantee for the ANC had disappeared and there remained no suggestion that the constitution would be in any way prescriptive. The ANC understandably used the Freedom Charter as a point of reference for the Guidelines (ANC NEC 1987a: 2; ANC CC undated b; Mabandla Interview: 28 June 2013; Sachs Interview: 21 December 2005) but it had also viewed the primary objective of drafting a constitution as being the translation of the Charter's "principles and programme" into "an operative constitutional document" (ANC DLCA undated)[76]. By 1990, the Constitution Committee, in a confidential document, stated:

> "(b) The Constitution should be an open, permissive constitution - allowing for the exercise of political power in any direction rather than a

[75] See for example, Asmal's reference to the influence of developments in international law on "contemporary notions of human rights" (1990: 3).

[76] Although this document is undated, it is contained within a DLCA archival folder labelled: 'Committee Minutes/Reports: 1985-88'.

> prescriptive constitution. It should not 'declare' socialism or a free market economy but it must not prevent a government from executing its political and economic programme; (c) The Constitution should be drafted for all South Africans rather than reflecting only the political programme of the ANC …" (ANC CC 1990a: 2-3).

It is interesting that while these ideas were surfacing in the Constitution Committee, within the internal movement there is little evidence of such discussion, at least not until after the circulation of the Draft Constitutional Guidelines in 1988. The ANC's Department of Political Education (DPE), up until 1989, continued to draw on the socialist, and largely Soviet, model in its syllabus. Like the Constitution Committee, the DPE was a product of a recommendation of the Kabwe Conference, yet the content of political education seems to have remained isolated from constitutional deliberations. The DPE syllabus does not appear to have discussed topics such as international human rights conventions, the ANC's rights tradition, or the nature of multi-party versus one-party systems. In fact, between 1986 and 1988 - arguably the most formative period in the *codification* of ANC democratic thought - the DPE continued to teach a syllabus focused on the history of struggle and on revolutionary and socialist theory (ANC DPE 1986; ANC DPE 1986-88).

It is therefore of note that, by 1989, additional material was added to study courses offered by the DPE, including the "Soviet experience reconsidered" (ANC DPE 1989). Updates in course material also include reference to the Draft Constitutional Guidelines themselves as well as to "the role of constitution and codes of rights" (ibid). Traces of Marxism remained, however, as these new elements were intermingled with topics on the state and class society, people's democracy, socialist transition, and the vanguard and masses in socialism (ibid.).

4.1.1.4. Retaining Radical Influence: Introducing 'Participatory Democracy'

Given the overlap in the timing of the Constitution Committee's work and the proliferation of people's power, it is worth analysing the extent to which ideas of popular power entered constitutional debates. Although ideological cross-pollination between the Committee and broader movement, in general, seems to have been minimal, popular structures were not overlooked entirely. It was through discussion of participatory democracy, specifically, that the influence of people's power manifested. The ideological and theoretical influences behind this provision, however, are a little harder to pin down.

It was argued earlier that the constitutional deliberations reflected a meshing of the ANC's intellectual traditions and that a language of constitutionalism and rights, uncharacteristic of its previous discourse, also emerged in the Committee's proposals. The Committee's discussions represented an attempt to merge liberal and radical forms of democracy. Linked to the NWC Sub-Committee's desire to see inclusion of socio-economic rights was a more

general 'critique' of the initial proposals. This surmised that the Constitution Committee's "approach to a future constitution was too wedded to liberal-democratic notions with some slight modifications" (NWC S-C 1986: 1). The Sub-Committee also made a significant comment on its preferred model of democracy, implying that people's power, in some form, should be accommodated in a future dispensation. Its critique noted that:

> "- The type of constitutional framework the document envisages is one very similar to conventional bourgeois-democracy and not a framework arising from or created by a revolutionary struggle. While we recognise that it is difficult to predict the shape of future institutions there are however already some indications in the embryonic forms of popular power that are being thrown up in the course of the struggle; that new and more far-reaching forms will emerge and that our constitutional thinking must necessarily accommodate these" (ibid.).

The Sub-Committee then made three related points: Firstly, it requested specifically that the Constitution Committee "examine how we can incorporate *mass organisations* in the constitutional model and *give them direct role in the legislative framework* (sic)" [emphasis added] (NWC S-C 1986: 4). Secondly, it reported the NWC's own insistence that "the constitutional document must create a framework through which *popular power* is translated into a reality, i.e. a government which is in reality subject to the people" [emphasis added] (ibid.: 5). Thirdly, it made a recommendation on economic democracy, advocating a basic principle of "entrenchment of the workers' participation in the economic management and planning of all enterprises in which they are employed" (ibid.: 8). Each of these points prepared the way for an emerging constitutional understanding of participatory democracy.

The first of these, the principle of a legislative role for mass organisations, perhaps speaks most directly to the notion of people's power. Just as the street and area committees became *de facto* bodies for decision-making and control, so a future dispensation should allow for participation in governance and administration. The very fact that apartheid had been so deliberately and unashamedly *exclusionary* bolstered the ANC's desire to construct a state in which all could partake in public life. NWC Sub-Committee member, Pallo Jordan, although emphasising categorically that the partisanship of organs of people's power meant they could never be translated into structures of democratic governance - remarked that "the fact that they were set up was demonstrative of the fact that people did feel the need to intervene, to run their lives, to govern themselves … and you had to create space for that in whatever democratic dispensation you created" (Interview: 12 November 2013).

The introduction of the term 'participatory democracy' into ANC lexicon can be pin-pointed to September 1986 with the Constitution Committee's first set of 'proposed foundations' for government in a democratic South Africa. This included the provision that: "Participatory

democracy shall be encouraged by means of involving the community, and community and workers organisations, directly in public and economic administration" (ANC CC 1986a). In fitting with the idea of formulating 'principles', no additional details or potential mechanisms were floated at this stage. Pallo Jordan remarked that they were aware of historic models of popular participation. He referred to the Russian Soviets and the Paris Commune, although these examples didn't arise in formal discussions. He also referred to some people finding the model of the New England town hall meeting "quite attractive" - likening it to the forum or assembly in pre-colonial African society (Interview: 12 November 2013).[77] However none of these models appear to have played a direct role in ANC constitutional thinking.

However, given the timing of the DLCA's visit to the GDR and Czechoslovakia (in early 1987), it is possible that the findings were of some influence - not least given the preceding recommendation of the NWC that the Committee "study the experience of the People's Democracies in Eastern Europe" (NWC S-C 1986: 5). The GDR's input, notably, reflects a particularly bureaucratic understanding of participation, advising ANC delegates that regional and local areas of administration should be introduced "to ensure the maximum participation of the people in the exercise of power and sovereignty" (ANC DLCA 1987). Interestingly, the report also notes that the GDR representative, on being informed of South Africa's street and area committees, cautioned against too much power being 'delegated' to lower organs, emphasising the role of "democratic centralism" in the proper exercise of people's power (ibid). The GDR's People's Chamber and Czechoslovakia's Federal Assembly were each understood as the "the highest organs of people's power" (ibid.).

Given that this delegation was sent by the ANC in 1987, it is possible that the Eastern European people's democracies, at the time, provided some inspiration. The second of the NWC's points - that provision be made for worker participation in economic management - is certainly in fitting with the ANC's socialist strand. Yet it is difficult to pin this commitment to a particular tradition of socialism: no detail is provided to suggest whether, for example, it be linked to a centrally-planned economy or to the establishment of workers councils. By 1988, beyond the inclusion of collective bargaining and workers' right to strike, the Draft Constitutional Guidelines made no reference to worker participation in planning or management of the economy.

One also wonders to what extent a role was envisaged for mass structures in democratic *decision-making* as opposed to merely in the execution of policy. The ANC's initial idea referred not to a legislative role for multi-interest structures of citizens but for 'mass organisations'. While these organisations were seen to comprise groupings such as trade

[77] This was a form of local-level participatory democracy introduced in town councils in New England, USA (See Mansbridge 1983).

unions, civics and other sectoral organisations, they were still understood as being aligned to and represented by the movement. The idea of incorporating methods of popular participation remained characterised by a bounded and unitary conception of democracy. What is more, the suggestion of both a *constitutional provision* for the role of the ANC, as well as for mass organisations, did not bode well for the guarantee of pluralism or the political neutrality of public institutions. It is possible that what was envisaged initially was a form of participation by proxy in which mass structures would play an important role but only through the maintenance of hegemonic unity. In this sense participation would take place *through the movement*, enabling a fusion of representative, participatory and bounded democracy.

Here we are able to interrogate the third of the NWC's points: that the constitutional document must create a framework through which "*popular power* is translated into a reality". It is of particular note that, once translated into *constitutional* terms, people's power is detached from its radical content. Jack Simons described it as "a government willing and able to give effect to the wishes of a majority of the population. Their wishes, needs and wants are communicated by and through *representatives of voters*, organised in one or more parties" [emphasis added] (1986: 2). It would seem that in a legal-constitutional sense, the Committee conceived of people's power as no more than representative government.

However, Simons then adds to this a participatory dimension: "These measures are not sufficient to guarantee that all governments in a liberated South Africa will at all times abide by and give effect to the will of the majority of voters. A democracy exists only to the extent that the voters ... *actually participate in decision-making and the process of government at all levels*" [emphasis added] (ibid.). In this understanding, constitutional democracy of a liberal-representative type could be supplemented by participatory institutions and features. As Kaufman (1960), Pateman (1970) and Barber (1984) have argued, democracy should be extended and deepened.

The development of ANC thought around participatory democracy as it relates to constitutionalism seems to have developed along this line of thinking, drawing on its historic belief in the inadequacy of representative democracy alone. Yet there is also some qualification. The "guarantee" of a form of democracy *qua* people's power is not the protection of pluralism, individual free will, participation in decision-making or the developmental notion of producing 'good' citizens but is instead the struggle for NDR. This, Simons argues, can only be realised through the direction of the Vanguard movement:

> "To provide the guarantee, the Revolution must be made permanent, ceaselessly agitating the people, raising their level of political understanding, organising local communities, trade unions, churches and other mass organisations for development and the fulfilment of the tasks of the Revolution. The task of 'revolutionising' the people is a process. It

> will continue for many generations of struggle … under the guidance of a revolutionary leadership" (Simons 1986: 3).

The emphasis here is teleological, equating democracy with a people revolutionised. Simons' solution to the NWC's charge that the Committee had adhered too closely to a "conventional liberal democratic" framework was to equate democracy with the realisation of the NDR. There is thus a tension between, on the one hand, the provisions of a fundamental bill of rights and institutionalised pluralism, and on the other, inhibition of these very liberties through a unitary and pre-defined will. It is not clear that the "participation in decision-making" which Simons refers to is understood as anything more than the fulfilment of revolutionary tasks.

Given this revolutionary emphasis and the NWC's cautioning against the confinements of liberal democracy, it is of note that the Committee's radical democratic language is toned down during the course of its work, being gradually replaced by legal-constitutional terminology. While certain principles (of equality, majority rule and one country with one people) were absolute from the outset (DLCA 1986a: 4), it seems that the status accorded to participatory democracy and the mechanisms by which it could be affected were not at that stage broached. Notably, the term 'people's power' is not used at any point in the published guidelines of the Committee.

Of course the Committee's provisions were designed deliberately to be flexible to refinement; they were 'principles', not details, and the ANC agreed that a constitution for South Africa could only be drawn up by an elected constituent assembly (ANC 1991a: 36). Moreover, the guidelines, much like the Freedom Charter, were understood as a mobilising document and in this sense devoid of detail (Jobodwana, Interview: 25 January 2006). Nonetheless it is notable that the provision for participatory democracy *as a form of people's power* seemed to weaken during the course of constitutional discussion. The role of popular organisation was replaced by administrative structures. Raymond Suttner suggests that in constitutional work "the future of popular power fell in the cracks" (Interview: 25 October 2012). Whereas the ANC's 1986 'Foundations of Government' referred to "participatory democracy" specifically, and made reference to the involvement of "community, and community and workers organisations" (ANC CC 1986a), the 1988 Draft Constitutional Guidelines stated only that: "Provision shall be made for the delegation of the powers of the central authority to subordinate administrative units for purposes of more efficient administration and democratic participation" (ANC CC 1988b).

Whether or not this was a result of the ANC's concern to keep the provisions vague, there seems to have been a lack of clarity as to how people's power could be effected in practice. The report of the ANC's In-House Seminar on the Guidelines in March 1988 noted that although there was general acceptance of their content amongst participants, it was "not clear as to how organs of Local People's Power would fit into the scheme" (ANC CC 1988a).

The movement wavered between a radical democratic view of participation (in which representative democracy was necessary but insufficient) and a revolutionary movement discourse in which participation was tied to the extension of movement hegemony. Elements of the latter discourse, discernable in the 1980s, would carry over into the post-1990 period and are picked up in Chapter six in the discussion of movement discourse.

Within the ANC, these conceptual tensions also manifested themselves. According to Willie Esterhuyse, a prominent Afrikaner academic then at the University of Stellenbosch, the key ANC figure in the early negotiations with Pretoria was Thabo Mbeki. Oliver Tambo, it seems, was aware of these discussions but was also trying to keep happy those cadres who remained convinced of a military seizure of power (ibid.: 84-5). Observing with hindsight the overlap in events, it is possible that Tambo wished to keep the constitutional foundations sufficiently vague as to cover representative *and* radical possibilities. It is also clear that by 1988-9, the ANC was aware that negotiations, rather than the seizure of power, had become a possibility (Mufumadi Interview: 26 November 2012; Constitutional Guidelines Workshop 1989).

The ANC was thus being pulled in several ideological directions: at the same time that people's power had set a precedent for democratic organisation, the codification of constitutional ideas was also taking place alongside the possibility of secret negotiations and the beginnings of an equally secret 'Operation Vula'. By the time of CODESA II, socialist inspired-language was noticeably absent.

Whatever role the exigencies of diplomacy, constitutional convention and strategic choice had to play, it is clear that the ANC did view participatory mechanisms - if in a more limited form than envisaged by some on the Left - as a desirable supplement to representative democracy. The ANC's statement of intent in January 1987 noted that "guarantees of genuine and active involvement of the people have to be introduced at all levels of government"; and that "A major thrust of the constitution will be the active involvement of wide sections of the people in the making and implementation of decision in the entire range of human activity (sic)" (ANC NEC 1987a: 5).

There in fact appears to have been general consensus across all political parties on the desirability of participatory democracy. What remained contentious was its "content and constitutional entrenchment" (CA TC1 1995). The Constitutional Committee on The Nature of the Democratic State described participatory democracy as emphasising "continuing participation by the citizenry in government between elections" but noted that as yet there was "no clarity on what forms this should take, and whether it should be entrenched in the constitution" (ibid.). The principle of establishing a constitutional right to participation, including participation in legislative process, elicited disagreement. Kader Asmal, citing the reference in the ANC's 1988 Draft Constitutional Guidelines to active involvement of the population in all levels of government, made a direct link between participation and rights,

commenting that the Guidelines "trench on an important and developing notion of participation in public life which is increasingly seen as a human right" (1990: 8). Yet this idea does not appear to have filtered through to the constitutional proposals themselves.

A key issue in this regard concerned the constitutional right of community based organisations (CBOs) to be consulted. In May 1995, the advisors to the 'Ad Hoc Committee on Local Government' set out in a discussion document some 'reservations' about entrenching such an entitlement to participation. These included the views that: governing should rest with a statutory body; elaborate and long-winded consultation procedures could be costly and hamper efficiency; people would be able to exercise power through voting; and that to retain a 'watchdog' function civil society should not be too closely and formally linked to local government (1995: 5-6). The document finally commented: "- the responsibility of government should not be that of communities. The way in which they govern is what matters. Hence it would be important for local government to create structures and institute processes which will allow and illicit community participation without it being necessarily a constitutional entitlement" (ibid: 6). This recommendation is a far cry from the councillist bent of people's power, in which legislative and executive functions were exercised by the people themselves. It also does not align with the (albeit ambiguous) appeal made earlier by the ANC for "the active involvement of wide sections of the people in the making and implementation of decisions" (ANC NEC 1987a: 3).

Although the period of the multi-party negotiations comprised a noticeable moderating of radical demands, the ANC continued to push for a role for civil society and in some way envisaged that the historic role played by civic and other structures should be provided for in a future dispensation. In its submission to the Technical Committee on Local Government the ANC argued that: "Civil society and its various organisations have a crucial role in democratising and transforming South Africa. The final constitution, supplemented where necessary by national legislation, should provide for the principles and appropriate mechanisms of participatory democracy, as well as for organs of civil society" (Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Local Government 1995: 5).

Although the ANC did not equate community organisations with democratic local government *per se*, it did envisage a constitutional role for the former in the governance process. In the final Constitution of 1996, however, participation is not phrased as a 'right'. Instead, it is encouraged through provisions for national, provincial and, most especially, local government. The term 'participatory democracy' is also not given any clear definition, stating only that the National Assembly, National Council of Provinces and Provincial Legislatures may "make rules and orders concerning its business, with due regard to representative and participatory democracy, accountability, transparency and public involvement" (Republic of South Africa 1996: Sections 57, 70 and 116).

In relation to local government the term 'participatory democracy' is not actually used but does include the most detailed provisions on citizen participation, including: "(a) to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities … and (e) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government" (Republic of South Africa 1996: Chapter 7, Section 152). From 1996, the constitutional provisions formed a basis for formulating policy on participatory governance centred on the notion of 'developmental local government' (see Chapter Five).

Overall, between 1988 and 1994, the discussion of mechanisms for citizen participation in decision-making was not a visible priority due more to political imperatives than ideological conviction. Before the issue of citizen participation through mechanisms other than elections could be broached, a legitimate and functioning state had to be established. Thus, from 1992, focus understandably shifted to inter-party negotiations and the reaching of a political settlement. Similarly, the Local Government Transition Act of 1993 was somewhat of a holding operation. It provided interim arrangements for the functioning of local authorities in the run up to the 1995 local government elections, only after which was the detail of participatory democracy taken up in earnest. As this chapter has identified, however, it was as early as 1988 that the principle of participatory democracy was located primarily in the local government arena. This shift also made more visible the debate between the role of civil society and local government in realising participatory democracy.

4.2. Participation and the Local

> *"Democratic local government means more than just having the right to vote in a local election. It also includes facilitating the creation of a strong, independent civil society, a high degree of accountability, transparency and the right to participate in decision-making processes which affect communities between elections"* (ANC 1992).

4.2.1. Themes and Influences on Participation and Local Government

Although the pre-figurative discourse of 'people's power' attached its significance to the form of a future state, prior to 1986 no official ANC statement had linked popular power directly to the sphere of local government. As the Constitution Committee embarked on its constitutional proposals, however, the future of people's power, and forms of participatory democracy more specifically, came to be viewed as the preserve of the local arena. What the ANC came to envisage and articulate more clearly from 1990 was the need for governmental powers and decision-making to be brought "closer to the people" (Skweyiya 1990: 135).

One of the Committee's earliest documents acknowledged the role of "popular insurrectionary-type struggles" in bringing to the fore the link between community and local government (ANC CC undated a: 14). Noting that this relationship would carry even greater importance under democratic conditions, the Committee outlined the significance of

regional and local government: "[These] structures are important because: they deal with concrete questions directly affecting the lives of the people; they involve large sections of the population directly and actively in questions of government; [and] they will be the scenes of direct transformation of the lives of the people" (ibid.: 15). Although the document is undated, references to it in another document in the same collection (ANC DLCA 1986c) suggest that it was written at some stage during 1986. Thus, although the NWC had expressed a desire for constitutional thinking to 'accommodate' "embryonic forms of popular power" (NWC S-C 1986), it had not previously linked this to local government specifically.

By 1990, positions on this had reached the clarity of "the importance of full participation by members of communities in local and regional government" (ANC CC 1990a). Again, in 1991, in a discussion document on Constitutional Principles, participatory democracy is linked specifically to the arena of the local: "Local tasks cover all the day to day aspects of living which most directly and intimately affect the citizen … The active involvement of all sections of the population will be necessary in the fulfilment of these tasks" (ANC CC 1991).

There is, at this stage, little sense of the institutional form this might take and no mention is made of possible structures, mechanisms or processes. Yet what does appear to be clear is that popular power and active participation were seen as being catered for through citizen involvement in *local* issues. Although the ANC referred to "popular participation" in all structures of government (ibid.) it is not clear that, outside of the *local* arena, this was envisaged as anything more than participation in elections. In the ANC's 1992 policy document, Ready to Govern, provisions and mechanisms for participatory democracy are discussed in their entirety under the heading: 'A New System of Local Government' (ANC 1992).

It is also of note that between 1986 and 1990 there was a modification of the envisaged substance of local government. ***In parallel with the Constitution Committee's shift toward more moderate constitutional language generally, there is a diminishing of the framing of local government structures as features of a Marxist-Leninist style state.*** One of the Committee's early documents on 'Non-Central Government Structures'[78] urged the ANC, not only to define the democratic organs of self-government referred to in the Freedom Charter but to "go beyond the creation of mere legal structures" (ANC CC 1986c). In doing so it made reference to the GDR's model of territorial popular units under a "central organ of people's power", and set out a range of possible tasks that South Africa's local structures of self-government could fulfil. The tasks listed carry the traits of states such as the GDR and Soviet Union, including: the "making of by-laws"; "implementation of decisions of the central people's assembly"; local-level development and provision of services; "taking

[78] Based on annotated notes on this document, as well as a reference to it in a 'Departmental Report for the NEC' (DLCA 1986c), this was one of a series of documents produced by the Committee during 1986.

charge of some of the nationalised industries"; and "controlling of the allowed private sector" for local-level benefit (ibid.). It also seems to envisage that these structures would have some programmatic or partisan content: they "must reflect the predominantly but not exclusively black democratic state dominated by the working class and peasantry" (ibid.).

By 1988, with the publication of the Draft Constitutional Guidelines, the ANC did not include any such level of detail, referring only to the delegation of power to lower levels (ANC CC 1988b). It also removed all suggestion that the constitution would reflect a particular political programme (ibid.; see also ANC CC 1990a). ***As with the ANC's thinking on democracy generally, the reduction of socialist influence in the proposals seems to have brought with it more explicitly democratic elements to participation***. The Committee's 1986 document on non-central government structures, for example, had provided no assurance that 'democratic organs of self-government' would involve popular participation in the *formulation* of policy. It referred only to their role in its implementation (ANC CCC 1986c; see also ANC CC 1986a). It also implied that the making of by-laws with which local units would be tasked would be bounded by the revolutionary programme. There was no guarantee that local government would provide the opportunity for real popular influence in the policy agenda.

In contrast, later documents refer specifically to participation in *decision-making* and not just in administration (ANC NEC 1987a: 3; ANC 1992). The most explicit statement by the ANC in this regard is in its 1992 proposals on local government (quoted at the opening of this section) which emphasised both the limitations of representative democracy and "the right to participate in decision-making processes which affect communities between elections" (ANC 1992). It also introduced the need to actively include women in decision-making processes and to give civil society groups opportunity to "influence the process of government" (ibid.). In October 1990, the ANC held a consultative conference on local government in which a number of research papers were produced. While these drew on various aspects of local government, the contributions showed the presence of participatory ideas and the importance of establishing citizen channels to influence government policy (CDS 1991).

Between 1990 and 1996 the ANC, at its leadership-level, was increasingly caught up in national and constitutional negotiations. These took place across a period of ten years, from the formation of the Constitution Committee in 1986 to the adoption of the final Constitution in 1996. During this time, the ANC's policy position zeroed in on local government as the most critical sphere for popular participation. In line with these developments, the final Constitution itself assigned participatory democracy predominantly to the local government sphere (Republic of South Africa 1996: Chapter 7, Section 152).

At the same time, however, beyond its acceptance in principle, citizen participation was not at that time a key policy priority - only being taken up in earnest after 1996 following the

first local government elections and publication of the final Constitution. Prior to this, however, ideas about participation were being discussed within civil society, through contributions from the civic movement, trade unions, NGOs and academia. For these groups, at the local level, popular participation continued to carry great consequence.

4.2.1.1. Civic Activism and Local Negotiation: Participation as Developmental

As the previous chapter showed, activist discourse and the applied theory of community organising was one of a number of influences that penetrated people's power. By 1990, as the ANC was unbanned and a political settlement increasingly likely, a number of strands from the activist community came together to embark on local negotiations as part of broader preparations for change. Forums for negotiation between local authorities and the non-statutory sector (comprised largely of civics) took place across South Africa in parallel to national negotiations and most extensively in metropolitan centres. The first, and most advanced, of these efforts was in the (then) Transvaal where state and non-state groupings came together to begin local negotiations as the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber.[79]

The Metropolitan Chamber, formally established in 1991, was preceded by the 1990 Soweto Accord - an attempt by the Soweto Civic Association (SCA) to reach agreement with the Transvaal Provincial Authority and local electricity supplier, Eskom, over the writing-off of payment arrears. When the affected communities failed to resume paying the minimum rates agreed by the Accord, participants and representatives sought a more comprehensive solution (Ottaway 1993:126-7). In April 1991, the Metropolitan Chamber formed and was constituted of representatives from the Transvaal Provincial Authority (TPA), the Regional Service Councils (RSCs), White Municipalities, BLAs, a number of local Democratic Party (DP) Councillors, and several civic associations from the Johannesburg metropolitan area[80] represented through the Civic Association of Johannesburg (CAJ) (Ottaway 1993:127).[81] One of the key figures on the non-state side was the Soweto People's Delegation's Cyril Ramaphosa, while the forum was chaired by the Progressive Federal Party's Frederik van Zyl Slabbert.

Although the Chamber's participants recognised that establishment of democratic and non-racial local government could only come about through formal negotiations aligned to a national-level strategy (Coovadia 1991; Ramaphosa in Collinge 1991: 9; Botha 1991: 20), the

[79] Although the Metropolitan Chamber was one of the first formal forums to negotiate interim structures, local negotiations over civic grievances and service issues had been taking place between civics and white city councillors since about 1985 (see, for example, Atkinson 1991: 273-5).

[80] This incorporated Johannesburg, Soweto, Alexandra, and Lenasia.

[81] Not all civic associations agreed to participate in the Chamber: half of Johannesburg's civics opted out (Collinge 1991: 8), some feeling that negotiation with illegitimate authorities was incorrect (ibid.: 8-9; see also Mayekiso 1992: 1).

total breakdown of BLAs meant that, by necessity, local negotiations could not wait for new local administrations (Ottaway 1993: 125). Local negotiating forums, like the Metropolitan Chamber, thus sought to negotiate a new integrated local government structure ahead of the national settlement (ibid.: 126). The Chamber established a series of working groups to formulate policy around issues including the tax base, electrification infrastructure, water and sewerage systems and housing provision (van Donk & Pieterse 2006: 111). Ottaway thus suggests that, as the ANC returned to resume its role of leading the struggle at the centre, civic associations "started devoting more attention to local issues as an end in themselves" (1993: 114-115). Whereas in the 1980s their focus had been on ungovernability, "in the early 1990s they were beginning to focus on how the post-apartheid city should be governed in the future" (ibid.).

The formation of local negotiating structures aligned with the UDF-ANC 'One-City' initiative, which argued for non-racial municipalities with one tax base and the creation of interim transitional bodies (Botha 1993: 66). With the Local Government Transition Act (LGTA) in 1993, local negotiating forums were formalised in local authorities pending the first local government elections in 1995. Despite these commitments, however, the ANC itself had concerns about the potential dislocation of local and national agreements. If the scope of the local forums became too broad, there was a risk of local-level initiatives being manipulated by the state and minority parties, thus undermining national-level demands (Ottaway 1993: 124; Cullinan 1992: 7).[82]

As such, some analysts have suggested that the real impact of the Metropolitan Chamber was limited. Van Donk and Pieterse refer to it as "a body without an official position or real power" (2006: 112), and although it had a formal constitution, it lacked the authority to enforce the agreements reached (Ottaway 1993: 127). Tensions also developed between local civic initiatives and the ANC's preference that local negotiations should respond to national strategic direction (Ottaway 1993: 124; see also Swilling & Boya 1997: 178-9). The ANC, and indeed some civics, were also concerned that the state's encouragement of local level forums was part of an attempt to divide the movement and promote regionalism (ANC undated b; Mayekiso Interview by Cullinan 1992: 1, 3).

Having said this, while the Chamber may not have succeeded in devising a "new, viable system of metropolitan government", its participants did make conscious attempts "to shape the future local government model", making it "de facto impossible for existing local structures to make decisions without consultation" (Ottaway 1993: 126, 128). Cas Coovadia, who represented the civic movement's key interlocutor in the Chamber, noted their awareness of the need to "prepare the democratic movement … to begin to influence the structures of government at local government level." (Interview: 28 May 2013). He also explained that, as the civics' representative, the CAJ sought a mandate from its members to

[82] See Schlemmer (1991) for a discussion of the challenges of local versus national negotiations.

reach agreement on particular issues (ibid.). Negotiation practices thus bore resemblance to established democratic process in the civics themselves. In some instances where compromises needed to be reached, Coovadia noted that he would return to communities to consult them or to sell a particular position. In other cases, where the constituency could not be convinced, he would return to the Chamber to put an issue back on the table (ibid.).

Through the Chamber's negotiations, participants engaged in a process of deliberation involving argument, reason, consensus-building and sometimes making concessions. It opened participants up to a deliberative form of democracy not previously experienced and, according to Coovadia, produced new levels of trust between the key interlocutors (ibid.). Swilling and Boya describe the local forums as "schools of the new South African democracy" (1997: 171),[83] 'grappling' with the challenge of urban local governance "in an integrated and participatory manner" (ibid.: 180). The participatory value of the Chamber was also emphasised by Coovadia. Although he did not see the Chamber itself as a model for future non-racial local government, he explained the way in which it was preparing people for the process of governing: "Through mass struggles and local level negotiations, individuals and organisations at a grassroots level are obtaining practical experience about the possibilities and problems of local government and development in a future South Africa" (Coovadia undated: 2).

Thozamile Botha, who also participated in the local negotiations and was centrally involved in the formation of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) in 1990, remarked on the Chamber's work as an indication that "civics are not necessarily transforming themselves into local authorities but they are engaged in a process which seeks to ensure that democratic local authorities are properly set" (1991: 20). It thus reflected the key 'assumption' of participatory theory: "that participatory experience generates a desire for more participation" (Bachrach and Botwinick 1992: 139).

Other activists who were involved in or worked with the civic movement noted the importance of local negotiations in involving communities and giving them a stake in the system as active participants. Crispian ('Chippy') Olver, who had established the housing NGO, Corplan in the Eastern Cape and produced research for the ANC's 1990 conference on local government, noted that, following the commencement of rural local government negotiations in the Border region, among the principles put forward for discussion was that "the establishment of interim structures must involve a process of local level consultation that draws in all significant interest groups in the area under discussion … The process must be designed to *empower residents and community activists* at the local level and *equip them for tasks of local government*" [emphasis added] (1991: 170).

[83] Swilling and Boya added that "This is where networks and relationships were built, mutual learning took place and a new culture of governance and consensus building developed" (1997: 171).

Coovadia, interestingly, also drew a parallel between the strategy of the civic movement and negotiations between national leadership, noting that the CAJ had grasped the need to move from "an insurrectionary agenda to one that had to prepare people for government" (Interview: 28 May 2013). His view was that the process of local negotiations, through structures such as the Metropolitan Chamber, also provided individuals and organisations with "practical experience about the possibilities and problems of local government and development in a future South Africa", adding that "If these processes only resulted in this educative process, it would be a significant achievement" (1991: 334-335).

In this sense, ***negotiations were also transformative, continuing and extending the educative and empowering process begun by the civics through people's power.*** Just as community organisations had begun a process of transforming the popular mind-set toward issues of collective good and public citizenship, so did local negotiations begin a process of developing citizens who were ready to participate in the new structures rather than fight them. Here, Bachrach and Botwinick's formulation seems useful, seeing "democratic participation with others … [as leading] to revised understandings of the participants' capacities and resources, leading in turn to new conceptualizations of their individual and collective self-interest" (1992: 29).

What was required in South Africa, Atkinson argued, was the creation of 'public space' (1992: 53). She draws on Hannah Arendt's idea of a space created for the purpose of debate, discussion, persuasion and exchange of views, which roots itself in the reality of difference and disagreement but does not need to be confined to "the conventional political sphere" (ibid; 53-4). Coovadia's reference to trust being developed between and amongst participants in the Metropolitan Chamber speaks to Arendt's claim that "by participating … citizens establish the reality of the shared world and build up their faith in one another" (ibid.: 53).

Having said this there was a degree to which participation and its benefits were restricted to people as collectives and not as individual citizens. Dominique Wooldridge, who was involved in the Metropolitan Chamber as a support and advisor to the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU), noted that there was a lot of contestation about which organisations had "the right to speak on behalf of the people" (Wooldridge Interview: 12 March 2013). She thus added that "speaking about citizen involvement often was more about representatives of civil society than direct citizen involvement" (ibid.). At the stage of the Chamber's negotiations, there was little discussion "about how an individual citizen would participate in something" (ibid.).

Nonetheless, Wooldridge emphasised that the CAJ's Cas Coovadia and the SCA's Lawrence Boya were key drivers in bringing into the negotiations ideas about participation (ibid.). Although the Chamber was established to deal with the provision of local services, issues in which they rooted ideas about participation continued the civic tradition of relating popular

input to people's material needs. Wooldridge thus noted that a lot of ideas about participation were "around things like social housing or attempts to get bits of budget pushed down so a community would be able to prioritise their own use of them" (Ibid.).

Simultaneously, therefore, the role of the civics in negotiations also prepared the ground for their continuing role in future policy formulation, serving as a forum for skills generation and technical expertise, especially in relation to the role of the public and private sectors in provision of municipal services (Coovadia, undated: 18). Coovadia noted that "the extent to which community based organizations such as civics are able to participate in actively formulating their needs and demands during the transition period, will determine the extent to which they will be able to play a leading role in the implementation of future policies" (1991: 335). For some participants, the experience of local negotiations touched once again on notions of democracy as educative and developmental.

4.2.1.2. Progressive Planning and Development Influences

In the development of the civics' technical expertise, a key role was played by a series of individuals from progressive planning and development NGOs who provided advice and support to the civic movement and their non-statutory compatriots. The support of such organisations, as well as of individual academics, in providing technical advice helped to facilitate a more substantial contribution by civics to negotiations of the Metropolitan Chamber.

The previous chapter observed that, during the 1980s, the influence of community organising and activism in the people's power discourse also shaped NGOs' approaches to urban citizenship, spatial contestation and political action. With the commencement of local government negotiations after 1990, many of these ideas and approaches to planning and development were transferred. Several key players in the Metropolitan Chamber also fulfilled roles in the National-level Local Government Negotiating Forum (NLGNF) (van Donk & Pieterse 2006: 113). This was the formal body responsible for drawing up the LGTA (1993) which provided formally for local-level negotiations involving representatives of communities. According to Swilling and Boya, the "core concepts" informing the national framework agreed by the NLGNF were "developed, designed and negotiated" within the Chamber: "the final settlement of the NLGNF was … a vindication of what the Metropolitan Chamber had been working on for some years already" (1997: 172).

In both forums the NGO, Planact, was particularly influential and consisted of individuals such as Mark Swilling, Andrew Boraine and Billy Cobbett. Crispian ('Chippy') Olver was also involved in local government policy research, and Thozamile Botha was an influential activist, heading both the ANC's Department of Provincial and Local Government and the local government arm of SANCO. Through such individuals, the work of the Metropolitan Chamber had a big influence on national-level local government agreements (ibid.). Via NGOs such as Planact and the Urban Sector Network, key influences were progressive

planning (Seedat, Interview: 13 May 2013) and radical political geography (Swilling Interview). Van Donk and Pieterse note that development theory and, in particular, 'participatory action research' (PAR), which gained popularity among Left development theorists and practitioners internationally from the 1980s, also gave rise to the generation of NGOs in South Africa in the late 1980s who became "central in formulating the first round of policy thinking on urban democracy and development" (2006: 125).

Although not synonymous with participatory development, PAR overlapped with some of its ideas and represented a shift away from top-down, paternalistic approaches to development previously incorporated in international 'development projects' (McGee 2002). The ideas of Brazilian scholar, Paulo Freire, which had influenced community organisers in South Africa during the 1980s, "promoting a view of people as conscious agents in social and political life" (McGee 2002: 94), also penetrated the development paradigm. From the 1970s ideas about participatory development gained ground, emerging from the experience of various social movements in the developing world as well as community development and worker and adult education in North America and Britain (Kemmis & McTaggart 2005: 560). By the mid-1980s, development theorists such as Chambers and Cernea were helping to shift the participatory discourse into mainstream development theory (McGee 2002: 94).

Given the global intellectual context it seems likely that these shifts influenced South Africa's left-leaning development NGOs. Mark Swilling, who was heavily involved in the Metropolitan Chamber in Johannesburg and the setting up of Planact in the mid-1980s, referred to radical geographers such as David Harvey, Doreen Massey and Manuel Castells as shaping their theoretical outlook at the time (Interview: 20 February 2013). Doreen Massey, interestingly, seems actually to have attended a workshop in South Africa in 1992 to debate scenarios for regional government (Marais 1992: 4). Geographer, David Harvey in the 1970s had begun to utilise a Marxist theoretical framework to understand urban space and later produced a geographical analysis of capitalism - an approach which would fit with ideas emerging amongst the Marxist academic Left in South Africa.

Castells' influential work, 'The City and the Grassroots' in 1983, had developed the idea of urban social movements as 'harbingers' of fundamental social change (Lowe 1986: 2). The idea of urban social movements, not only under democratic environments such as Spain (where Castells' analysis was based) but in the revolutionary context of Latin America, were influential for planners such as Swilling in understanding collective contestations over urban space (Interview: 20 February 2013). While popular struggles in locations such as Nicaragua and Brazil were revolutions rather than social movements *per se*, they in a sense fitted Castells' notion, as described by Mayer, of "movements which combine struggles for improved collective consumption with struggles for community culture as well as for political self-determination" (2006: 202).

It is thus possible to see how this theoretical framing helped planners and activists alike to see local movements as engaged not only in a struggle for political citizenship but for urban citizenship as well. It was also the very antithesis to the development discourse of the state which had for a long time co-opted a language of 'development' to justify racial separation.[84] The potential for collective consumption issues to themselves garner popular organisation for change was expressed in the civic movement. Although the local spatial contestations of the 1980s had become subsumed in the struggle for national political change (Swilling, Interview: 20 February 2013), the transitional period and local-level negotiations, in particular, provided opportunity for urban consumption concerns to shape new power relations. From this perspective, the NGO movement, according to Swilling, was "trying to think of modes of democracy that were appropriate to the urban space" (ibid; see also Coovadia 1991: 334-5).

The influence of the ideas of planners permeated the Metropolitan Chamber, filtering into proposals for local government more broadly. Although the Chamber did not pre-empt a new local government model as such, it did set a participatory precedent as to what was expected. Mark Swilling noted that the vacuum which civics had begun to fill as a result of the collapse of BLAs, as well as the broad recognition they received as "legitimate community representatives", gave them "political clout and access to technical resources … [enabling] the civics to deliver tangible benefits to residents" (Jacobs 1992: 24).[85] Moreover, through the support that NGO staff provided to non-statutory players (comprised largely of those from the Congress camp), these NGOs also transferred skills and introduced ideas about future local government that incorporated notions of civic involvement. Cas Coovadia noted:

> "I think we were fortunate in that we had PLANACT there at that time … A group of progressive town planners who understood town planning and how to actually progress town planning with the involvement of the people for whom this is being done. So at times it was a very slow and laborious process but you spend that time and I can tell you the buy-in after that is immediate" (Interview: 28 May 2013).

Through the process of negotiations in the Metropolitan Chamber, civics also embarked on an educative experience of democracy (a la Rousseau, Pateman and Macpherson) which drew on their past traditions of empowerment but in a more structured environment. Civic

[84] For an account of changing discourses of development in South Africa up to the 1990s, in particular that of the state, see Tapscott (1995). See also Atkinson (1992: 48-9) on the notion of urban citizenship in the South African context.

[85] Ben Jacobs was the pseudonym used by academic and members of Planact, Mark Swilling (Swilling Interview: 20 February 2013).

officials received technical advice and support (Wooldridge, Interview: 12 March 2013) but also took their own initiative to develop education and training programmes which would build their own expertise and capacity and "achieve levels of community participation in the formulation of development strategies" (Coovadia 1991: 345). As Coovadia saw it, the civics in the Metropolitan Chamber were in many ways "trail blazers" (Interview: 28 May 2013).

Progressive planning discourses and ideas of participatory development also fitted nicely with emerging ideas about the key role of civics in development and reconstruction. A 1990 UDF discussion paper on current political conditions and implications for the civic movement defined development as "a process which builds democracy by involving people in the process and putting power into the hands of the people so that they can control their lives while it also contributes to improving the living standards of the people" (UDF 1990b). Development was linked to both democracy and to empowerment. The influences of participatory development theory are thus visible in the discourse of the MDM itself. In a workshop paper in 1990, the MDM set out its 'development principles':

> "We have always argued that communities should have direct control over the process of development, from determination of basic needs and priorities, to project conceptualisation and design, to allocation of funds, to project implementation, to management and maintenance of development projects. This ensures that communities are empowered and strengthened rather than communities becoming hostages to a development process over which they have no control" (MDM 1990).

This view of development incorporated the notion of participation as both a process and an outcome: as a means of achieving development goals and as a feature of successful development in itself. During the negotiation period, Coovadia advocated "the building of community-based vehicles for development … rather than waiting for centralized technocratically conceived planning exercises" or delivery by a future democratic state (1991: 335). These ideas of development thus incorporated features of self-reliance as well as self-governance, echoing Coovadia's perception, expressed elsewhere, of people's power as having engendered a deeper form of democracy in which participants were empowered rather than dependent (Interview: 28 May 2013).

Those involved in the Metropolitan Chamber and in local negotiating forums elsewhere understandably defended the gains they made and the degree to which their input shaped interim local government. However, as Van Donk and Pieterse note, the end of the interim phase of local government in 1995 and commencement of formal policy development "signalled the beginning of a break between NGOs and grassroots movements". (2006: 125). Since 1994, the exodus of skilled leadership from the civic movement has been much lamented: many civic leaders and those who built up expertise through local negotiations joined the ANC leadership, were transferred to parliament or began work in the new state

structures. Their departure left a gap in both local skills and leadership. Thus, in some respects, the participatory democratic traditions developed in the Chamber did not manifest themselves in the bottom-up community controlled development or community-state partnerships envisaged by the Chamber's proponents.

At the same time, the role of experts and advisers - in both the local forums and the NLGNF - speaks to concerns about the exclusionary nature of some participatory processes (Cornwall 2008: 275-6) and the representivity of those who claim to speak for communities (Botes & van Rensburg 2000: 46). Glaser, for example, notes the predominance of professionals, professional activists and men amongst civic leaders: as such they were "[not] necessarily microcosmically representative in the sense of being *like* those they claim to represent" (1997: 13). At the time, Doreen Atkinson alluded to the problem that participation by some on behalf of others could produce inequalities within the civic itself, asking: "if participatory planning is a good thing, how will it affect the egalitarian nature of civic organisations?" (1991: 287).

The traditional aggregation of 'communities' or 'the poor' as homogeneous categories (Cohen and Uphoff cited in Cornwall 2008: 277-8) perhaps did not account for competing interests and class differences. There are thus grounds to argue that advocates of the Metropolitan Chamber and NLGNF assumed a 'common good'.[86] Elton Ngcobo of the Amahlongwa Interim Civic Organisation voiced the concern that SANCO, who was included as a participant in the NLGNF, did not and could not represent all civics. He emphasised the need for a more 'inclusive' process, stating that "we question whether technical committees sitting in Johannesburg can understand these dynamics without input from local and regional players" (1993). The role and value of the Metropolitan Chamber and NLGNF were thus not accepted unanimously across the civic movement.

Having said this, it is not clear that the Metropolitan Chamber's composition was deliberately exclusionary. All forms of participatory democracy generally include some element of representation (See Cornwall 2008: 277) and, depending on the form this takes, this need not be problematic. Cornwall notes that a process which seeks "only the engagement of a small group of articulate leaders is something very different to one in which community members delegate power to such a group to engage with the authorities" on their behalf (ibid.: 273). Here, as was the case in the Metropolitan Chamber, communities "receive information" from their delegates and are "consulted on key issues" (ibid).

Whatever the model adopted by the Chamber itself, we can argue that the process of both local and national negotiation generated and circulated ideas about participatory

[86] On the notion of a common good and the argument that deliberative participatory forums can work well in conditions where there are shared goals and interests, see Young (2000: 41-3) and Mansbridge (1984).

approaches. While this did not represent the beginning of formal policy formulation (a process which commenced only after the adoption of the final constitution), it began to show the range of influences, both new and historic, on the ANC's thinking about local democracy.

4.2.1.3. Caution about Decentralised Power: Participation as an Instrument of the Right

It is also of note that the push for participatory mechanisms at local government level was by no means the preserve of the ANC camp alone. Some of the movement's hesitancy about the devolution of power was a result of participatory democratic language emerging from the state itself. During the early 1990s a discourse of participation was co-opted by both the DP and the National Party (NP). In June 1990 the NP Government published the Thornhill Report which set out its ideas for a new local government model. The proposals, widely rejected by the ANC and civics, were rooted in a strategy of devolving negotiating powers to the local level and allowing towns and cities to establish their own local government charters. Through these proposals, the ANC claimed, the government was trying to: "separate local issues from national negotiations"; "rule from the grave by preserving local level apartheid after transfer of power at the national level"; and "end its responsibility for financing local authorities" (ANC undated b). One therefore wonders whether suspicion of the government's motives prevented the ANC from taking a more radical stance on decentralisation and devolution.

The NP's Constitutional Proposals in September 1991 also expressed support for decentralisation and local autonomy. Ottaway described, "[it] had decided that local control, particularly if extended to the neighbourhood level, would offer whites the best possible protection after the repeal of the Group Areas Act" (1993: 119). The ANC position, in contrast, was that non-racial local authorities with one tax base must first be established before they could negotiate their own local government (ibid.). By encouraging civics to negotiate with local authorities, the NP government was seen to be both putting pressure on civics to reach agreements and compromises (Botha 1991: 17) and shrinking the remit of CODESA (Cullinan 1992: 6). It was with great irony that the NP referred to its local government proposals as 'Constitutional Rule in a Participatory Democracy" (Ottaway 1993: 120). Through the process of negotiation about regional and local government, participatory democracy became the language of 'the Right' (Wooldridge Interview: 12 March 2013).

Perhaps one of the most intriguing aspects of the government's proposals was the idea of neighbourhood assemblies: "This will be a common local authority made up of non-racial geographically based neighbourhood management committees with a single tax base and administration" (Schmidt 1990 cited in Botha 1991: 16). The notion of neighbourhood committees and assemblies, to which the ANC-MDM had historically laid claim as radical structures for popular power, were co-opted by the state as structures for the retention of privilege. Schmidt thus described the state's proposals for geographically based committees as intended "to allow richer communities some power to control their own affairs" (ibid.).

Devolution of power as proposed by the government risked replicating pockets of privilege and underdevelopment. The ANC-CDS also voiced concern that "neighbourhood committees" would draw decision-making powers away from democratically elected local authorities (ANC undated b). Thus while both the ANC and NP agreed on the need for local negotiations and, by 1995, on the desirability of strong local government (Siddle & Koelble 2012: 70), where they differed was on the premise for this.

4.2.1.4. Popular Assembly and Trade Union Influences

Regardless of the state's motives, the post-cold-war ideological context and steps toward a negotiated settlement generated conditions less favourable to experiments in radical democracy. As noted earlier, it was from as early 1987-8 (during the work of the Constitution Committee) that a legal-constitutional and liberal democratic language supplanted suggestions of more radical modes of participation. From the late 1980s, references in ANC discourse to people's assemblies and councillist structures are in short supply and, in some cases, are phrased in such a way that they are indistinguishable from representative democratic arrangements. By the 1990s, Glaser suggests that "the international and domestic power balance … meant that the ANC, even if it came to power, would not do so entirely on its own terms" (1991 8).

Yet this argument could be dated even earlier. In a Constitution Committee document, which looks to have been produced during the late 1980s, there is an indication that the ANC had to hold back on proposals for more radical forms of power:

> "If we had already succeeded in destroying the coercive power of the apartheid regime and establishing popular organs of government throughout the country, we would be able to proclaim a new constitution corresponding to this new reality. Since, however the question of a new constitution may well be placed separately on the agenda before such a stage is reached, *we have to prepare a document consistent with a reality somewhat less favourable to our position*. Our document accordingly would be provisional in the sense that if the situation were to advance dramatically and irreversibly in our favour before the new constitution were put into force, it would be possible to propose *a new version containing provisions reflecting more advanced forms of popular power*" [emphasis added] (ANC CC undated a).

Activist, Rashid Seedat, noted that the transition came about in a different ideological milieu and speculated that "if we had taken power in '87 or something my guess is that we would probably have experimented with those things" (Interview: 20 May 2013). The ANC thus had to reach compromises on the form of structures it envisaged. Yet the ideas embodied in these earlier models were not lost entirely. Efforts to retain their principles are discernible in theoretical discussions about democracy and the model of local government.

The November 1991 edition of the ANC's theoretical journal, *Mayibuye* included an article which specifically set out the movement's understanding of 'Democracy', providing one of the ANC's most explicit accounts of its understanding of the term. It stated: "Meaningful democracy is based on the active participation of people in all activities and processes that affect their lives. Through it ordinary people are empowered to take control of their lives in all spheres; political economic and social" (ANC 1991a: 36). It thus encompassed a view of democracy as participatory, empowering, and extending beyond the political to economic and social spheres. It also echoed earlier discourses of the inadequacy of parliamentary democracy, advocating instead a form of democracy that included direct popular control (ibid.).

Perhaps most importantly, the very notion that 'The People Shall Govern' was understood to have been "built and expressed in practice" through structures such as the organs of people's power and independent trade unions. It described these bodies as "based on the daily participation of ordinary people in deciding on matters affecting their lives" (ibid). Interestingly, another article in the same series set out the ANC's understanding of *internal* democracy (i.e. within the movement itself). In contrast to the discourse of its exile years, this drew noticeably on the traditions of the trade unions (ANC 1991b: 36), including ensuring that leaders are subject to regular election, accountability, mandates and recall. The movement also emphasised the importance of trade union participation in the "control and planning of work" and municipalities' consultation of communities in planning local economic activity and finance (ANC 1991a: 37). Less surprisingly, the model of development advocated by the MDM also drew on its trade union traditions, recommending principles of collective bargaining, the election of mandated representatives, and report-backs to constituents (MDM 1990).

This expression of democracy as participatory represented a further attempt by the ANC to merge liberal and radical traditions. Alongside commitments to popular participation in decision-making were the promotion of political tolerance, free political activity, and a strong civil society of multiple interests for the safeguarding of democracy (ibid.). In its 1992 document, Ready to Govern the ANC took its earlier commitments-in-principle one step further by outlining possible mechanisms for participation (ANC 1992). Relating this specifically to the system of *local* government, the suggested options include: "People`s assemblies to debate issues of major significance to that town, city or rural area; Local government sub-committees with outside representation to consult on specific policy areas; and Local government commissions to conduct public hearings and to consider submissions from outside interests on proposed local government activities" (ibid.). It also emphasised the need for concerted and targeted efforts to bring women into decision-making (ibid.).

However, although the local government proposals opened by affirming that "Local government will bring government closer to the people and actively involve them in decision-making and planning processes which affect them", the aforementioned

mechanisms are described, not as structures for control or partnership but for *advice* and *consultation* (ibid). Using Arnstein's phraseology, there is "no assurance that citizen concerns and ideas will be taken into account" (1969: 219). Instead, 'consultation' may serve merely as evidence for powerholders "that they have gone through the required motions of involving 'those people'" (ibid.). Therefore, while 'Ready to Govern' went further than the Constitutional Guidelines in suggesting specific structures, it still did not get to grips with how democracy could be 'deepened' beyond a form of consultation. One also wonders whether the ANC's vision of a strong central state with adequate powers to effect development alongside the decentralisation of certain powers for purposes of participatory democracy proved difficult to reconcile.

4.2.2. The Idea of 'Civil Society' as the Domain of People's Power

Within the ANC's proposals on local government, there were indications of linking participatory democracy, not only to subordinate state structures but to organisations of civil society. The ANC's democratic thinking by 1990 had been penetrated by a civil society discourse that had become prominent amongst both radical and liberal democrats globally, partly for different reasons (Glaser 1997: 5, 8). The role of civil society organisations in toppling the ruling regimes in Eastern Europe during the late 1980s, and discovery of the extent of human rights abuses in the former socialist states, reinforced global acceptance of the importance of an active and autonomous civil society to the transition and consolidation of democracy. For those on the Left it also connected participatory structures directly to civil society.

Although the ANC had begun to articulate a view of local government as the domain of participatory democracy, from 1990 civil society also came to be understood as a forum for citizen engagement in political issues. Indeed, with the unbanning of political organisations in February 1990, the documents of the MDM produced a much clearer distinction between the proposed structures of new local government and the civil society sphere. During the early 1990s, the ANC itself asserted the need for both the constitutional protection of institutions of civil society and their importance to "a deep and thorough democratic order" (ANC 1992). Given that the 1980s discourse of the liberation movement had not made a clear separation between popular and movement structures, Glaser argues that recognition of the value of an autonomous civil society constituted "a remarkable democratic advance" (1997: 11).

It is also of note, however, that ***as the lexicon of 'people's power' died out in the ANC's policy discourse, it began to appear more manifestly in the discourse of civil society***. Going into the 1990s, 'people's power', as Eastern Cape civic leader Guglie Nkwinti described, was a 'civic activity': something that needed to be built by civil society (cited in Collinge 1991: 1). Activist Lechesa Tsenoli, who was involved in the formation of SANCO, remarked that SANCO had a slogan which said that it was fighting for "'genuine democratic engagement of

people in decision-making' … to give people a sense of the value of being involved in the decision making processes" (Interview: 11 March 2013). Participatory democracy as an institutional mechanism had become linked to the sphere of local government. The baton of 'people's power', however, was picked up by civil society.

4.2.2.1. Autonomous Representatives

Discussion of the role of civic and sectorial organisations was of course wrapped up in the question of the UDF's future. In 1990 a decision was taken to disband the UDF, proposing instead the erection of a national civic organisation which would come about a year later with the formation of SANCO. As noted in Chapter 4, the UDF ceded the role of political organisation to the ANC as the rightful vanguard. Thus, while the ANC focused on constitutional negotiation and the broader political framework, people's power became located more clearly amongst civic, sectoral and other popular organisations as representatives of their constituents, autonomous from political organisations and the state. Defence of the civics' independence appears to have been the dominant position within the civic and UDF camp (UDF 1991). A 1990 discussion paper of the UDF set out the role of civics in the transition:

> "Civil society includes all organisations outside politics and the state who represent specific sectors of people in society. Examples include trade unions, civics, student organisation, rural peoples organisations (sic). Civics therefore will be independent organisations representing their constituency, even in a situation where there is democratic government, they should continue to be watchdogs for the community and not become part of the local government structure. It is within this context that we say that civics are a crucial part of civil society. They will be key in giving power to the people and building real democracy by involving all the people in the development process" (UDF 1990b).

The civics, alongside other residential and sectoral organisations, would occupy an autonomous space, acting as both a 'counterweight' to the state and a forum for participatory democracy (Glaser 1997: 5-10). For the UDF, civil society thus incorporated both liberal and radical democratic perspectives. A 1991 memorandum of the UDF, ANC and Border Civics Congress on restructuring local government in the Ciskei went further in elaborating the envisaged relationship between state and civil society:

> "A clear distinction needs to be made between the structures of government and the structures of civil society … the most important way in which we can the ensure the future accountability of local government is through the operation of strong and dynamic residents' associations, which build a cooperative but critical relationship with the local authority.

> It is important for the entrenchment of democracy that civic organisations representing the interests of the community remain outside the direct structures of government. Residents associations should play a watchdog role as regards the institutions of government" (UDF - Border 1991: 2).

A key part of this debate as it relates to participatory democracy was the need for civics to retain autonomy from political parties, while allowing them the flexibility to support particular programmes or organisations where they saw fit (Collinge 1991: 2). In 1990 the UDF emphasised that **"**even in a situation where there is democratic government, they [civics] should continue to be watchdogs for the community and not become part of the local government structure" (UDF 1990b). There was thus recognition amongst UDF and civic activists that even under conditions of democracy (including an elected ANC government), "government policy may not always meet the aspirations of the residents" (Conference: Developing Civic Unity, 1991). Having said that, the fundamental link between local material grievances and the national political system perhaps limited the extent to which the civic agenda could remain distinct from political programmes**.** Although civics saw themselves as adopting a 'civil society' space, by virtue of their role in local negotiations around urban governance, Ottaway points out that they were partly stepping into local government shoes (1993: 123-4).

Some within the civics cautioned that their historic alignment with the ANC would implicitly limit their autonomy. Based on the experience of Communist Eastern Europe and post-independence Africa, some activists were alert to the danger of civil society groups being crushed or co-opted by the state (Coleman Interview: 20 February 2013; Coovadia Interview: 28 May 2013). At the same time, the ease with which civic autonomy could be accomplished was perhaps taken for granted. Coovadia noted that from 1990 there was a concentration on re-building ANC structures (Interview: 28 May 2013). Whether or not that approach had been correct, he added that:

> "We all felt that the ANC as a party will be able to actually build structures, will be able to maintain those structures and that to a certain extent there would be a distance between those structures and the ANC-in-government … It was assumed that would be the case; and that we would do things a bit differently to other liberation movements when they went into government but unfortunately we didn't" (ibid.).

Some disagreement surfaced around the choice by SANCO's leadership to adopt a unitary organisational structure. The civic movement was comprised of a variety of individual local organisations across the country and, given their differing contexts and priorities, might have best been organised as a federation. A unitary structure required that individual civics become branches of SANCO, and appears to have been linked to the ANC's push for a unitary state (Mayekiso Interview: 8 April 2013; Botha Interview: 14 April 2014). According

to Swilling, the ANC's rejection of a federal structure for South Africa itself resulted nonsensically in the discrediting of federalism in its entirety, regardless of its applicability to the civic movement (Interview 20 February 2013) - a decision which some suggest contributed ultimately to SANCO's ineffectiveness (Mashatile, Interview: 21 February 2013; Swilling, Interview: 20 February 2013).

Feeding into debates about participation was the potential for creating spaces in which civil society and state could interact. Although the policy formulation around such spaces in local government only began in earnest after 1996, discussion of possible structures for engaging civil society were raised during the transition period. As a movement/party, the ANC itself began to make some statements on this. Most discussion, however, appears to have been taking place amongst civics activists and sympathetic NGOs and advisors.

The ANC's 1992 policy guidelines for a democratic South Africa stated:

> "The ANC believes that all legislative and executive power at the local level must be constitutionally vested in elected structures. In order to deepen democracy and ensure grassroots participation in the organs of government, the ANC believes that all organs of civil society, such as civic/residents associations, trade unions, traditional leaders, business organizations, cultural organisations, women`s organisations, religious groups, and other interest groups, need to be given the scope to influence the process of government" (ANC 1992).

Its 1992 Draft Policy on Local Government also asserted that "while elected LG structures would hold power, there would also be room for civil society to influence local government through people's assemblies, commissions and appeal boards" (cited in Cullinan, 1992: 7). The movement thus envisaged that some form of assembly or committee structure would facilitate citizen influence in decision-making. As participatory democracy became associated with local government it thus also became linked to a *shared* democratic space or 'participatory sphere', as Cornwall (et al) define it, comprising "a distinct arena at the interface of state and society" (2007: 1).

During the latter part of the 1980s, the ANC had recognised the need to begin preparatory work on local government, and in 1989-90[87] commissioned research by both technical experts and its own cadres culminating in an ANC-Centre for Development Studies (CDS) National Consultative Conference on Local Government in October 1990. In 1991, the CDS published the papers from the conference in a booklet on 'Local Government and Planning for a Democratic South Africa'. As part of this research, proposals were formulated which drew on models for local participatory forums and, despite suspicions as to the state's

[87] In April 1989 the Democratic Movement held a Seminar on Local Government in Harare.

incentives, the ANC also acknowledged the benefits of decentralisation for both democracy and efficiency (Skweyiya 1990: 137).

At the conference, civic activist and ANC cadre Thozamile Botha produced a paper in which he proposed the idea of 'people's assemblies', a model in fitting with Cornwall's concept of the participatory sphere. Botha described the model of a people's assembly as: "an open forum convened by the civics and attended by all elected representatives of state institutions, community organisations, sectoral interest groups and service organisations" (1991: 21). The idea of a people's assembly seems to have been promoted at the ANC conference and was hailed as a model for civics to engage with the interim and democratic state going forward.

Importantly, the assembly it was not a structure of local government itself but a structure for democratically engaging with it (Botha 1991 and Interview: 14 April 2014). Botha cited two cases (Haarlem in the Western Cape and Alice in the Ciskei) where the local civic had taken over the running of the local authority, "[appointing] people within their own structures to run the councils while it, the civic, remains outside as a watchdog" (1991: 21). As he explained it, "these councils are accountable to the community *through the civic structures*. In essence, *the civics have become local people's assemblies* where all issues affecting the community are discussed and the councillors are mandated to implement them" [emphasis added] (ibid.).

What Botha appears to have envisaged is some form of non-partisan assembly that would "create fora or forums that would give people, both the state and the public, a platform through which to debate issues that affect them. So there would be a structure or a structured way of reporting to the state and the state feeding back to the people" (Interview: 13 April 2014). As such, ***civic organisations would not replace local government but would occupy an institutionalised space for engaging with it.*** The conference also appears to have discussed the introduction of a 'Local Government Charter' which would include the "basic principles" by which such a people's assembly would be guided. This would include, "among other things a set of principles to guide a democratic local authority and to ensure grassroots participation in decision-making" (Botha 1991: 22). Botha emphasised the need for such a structure to prevent exclusion and involve people who are not organised in formal structures (ibid.: 23).

What is not clear is the extent to which such an assembly would provide for *decision-making powers*. Botha seems to suggest that its key role would be one of oversight through monitoring government performance and delivery and holding it to account over commitments made (Interview: 14 April 2014). Either way, the idea of creating some form of assembly *at the interface* of state and society appears to have been considered as early as 1990. The civic movement also envisaged a part for itself in formulating such proposals and developing ways for civil society to contribute to and shape the development process (UDF

1991). Researcher, Doreen Atkinson, at the time combined the idea of such a participatory assembly with participatory planning theory, citing the need to move away from "technicist and exclusive" planning processes toward greater levels of popular participation. The models for participation which she suggested included participation "in the planning activities of the local municipal bureaucracy itself" (1992: 52).

For some activists who worked with civics in a support and advice capacity, the process of civic organisation and local negotiation itself provided a model for future state-civil society relations. Mark Swilling explained that some participants had viewed the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber not as a transitional structure but as a longer-term participatory assembly which would continue *after* the election of a democratic government. He remarked: "- there was a strong feeling that once we'd established a metropolitan government for Johannesburg, the metropolitan chamber – the forum – would continue as a parallel structure, [and] should continue to meet" (Swilling Interview: 20 February 2013).

In promoting the model of the assembly there thus emerged some dispute as to who legitimately 'represented' communities. Through the establishment of local level negotiations, a tension surfaced between civics' support for elected democratic government and the belief that they themselves effectively represented constituents. Also referring to the Metropolitan Chamber, civic activist Cas Coovadia remarked on the degree of strain between the ANC and civics over the leeway of the latter to negotiate on their own terms:

> "[R]ightly or wrongly, I think the ANC sort of took the view that, look, in many ways you guys were fronting for us; we're now unbanned, we take over. We said hold on a second; there's history here, there's processes, there's relationships built, and so on and so on. And it was towards the end of '91, I think, that I left because of those clashes". (Interview: 28 May 2013).

Mark Swilling made a similar point about the civics' representivity but in a way more reminiscent of Castells' urban social movements. Just as Castells understood urban social movements as fundamental agents of transformation, "ideologically untainted by political party programmes" (Lowe 1986: 35), so Swilling[88] argued that "The civics were social movements in the true sense. They were not guided or goaded by an imposed political agenda, nor were they constitutionally compelled to apply the programmes of national organisations" (Jacobs 1992: 24). His view touched again on the value of their autonomy. This perhaps also highlighted a conceptual disconnect between movement leaders returning from exile (where a more Marxist-Leninist understanding of participation predominated)

[88] Here Swilling again writes under the pseudonym of 'Ben Jacobs'.

and the democratic socialist and New Left traditions that shaped the discourse of activists at home.

Through the creation of a state-society interface, a 'participatory space' between state and society, the very notion that 'the people shall govern' is given institutional form. At the same time, however, it is burdened with conceptual discord between the ANC-as-vanguard and civics-as-representatives. AYCO and UDF leader, Paul Mashatile noted that, although the ANC was committed to the principle of independent civil society organisations, "[on] the question of how you work with them post-the unbanning of the ANC, we thought because the ANC is a broad church we should be able to continue to mobilise all these other forces behind us" (Interview: 21 February 2013). The continuing tension between top-down direction and bottom-up initiative is picked up again in Chapter six.

Just as MDM activists during the 1980s drew on a variety of ideas and influences so, too, did their thinking after 1990 not exist in a conceptual vacuum. As such, although those with a history of organisation and activism at home often pushed for a greater role for civil society and popular participation, it would be inaccurate to attribute this view only, or indeed uniformly, to those from the MDM. In 1991 at the ANC's first national conference since its unbanning, senior cadres from both the external *and* domestic wings of the ANC were integrated into the NEC. Sydney Mufamadi, for example, who was a founding member of COSATU and Transvaal Secretary of the UDF, as well as having been a member of the ANC underground, joined the ANC NEC in 1991 and was a delegate of the SACP at CODESA. He noted the continuing influence of the principle of people's power post-1990 but also alluded to it belonging to a particular era. For him, the question of its ongoing applicability had to be considered in context:

> "So the four of us can be in some committee that emerged in circumstances where it became necessary for a committee to form. The four of us are serving in this committee. It does not mean that if we do something that is considered useful today we can remain in this committee in twenty years' time and be relevant to the challenges of then … [the principles of people's power] also have to be adapted to the evolving situation, so there is always the tension - constant tension - between comparability and contextuality" (Interview: 26 November 2012).

If, as Mufamadi argues, we are to look at such structures *in context* then, while in comparison to the MDM, we might see the ANC's more limited emphasis on institutionalising people's power as suggestion of a weaker commitment to citizen control, it also signifies a separation of government and civil society critical to the foundation of democracy. The ANC's proposals on local government emphasised that, although civil society participation would be provided for, power must rest with *democratically elected*

structures (ANC 1995c; ANC 1992). As such, there was a democratic premise for its proposals.

On this point, Glaser (1997) has criticised the Left in South Africa for historically conceiving of civil society in collective terms. Emphasising its inherently pluralistic character, he states that civil society is not a "collective subject or alternative sovereign", nor does it have a "popular mandate" (ibid.: 16). Yet in some ways the UDF and civics' own identity was potentially hegemonic in aspiration - presuming that, as "a broad based grassroots movement", everyone would be able to "find a home irrespective of political affiliation or lack of political affiliation" (UDF 1991). Just as alarm bells should sound with the suggestion that the ANC receive constitutional protection, so should we be concerned at what Glaser describes as the "constitutional elevation of particular organisations as representatives of sections of society" (1997: 22). While many in the MDM came to see civil society as the domain of people's power in a democratic South Africa, if divorced from elected institutions this was itself not entirely unproblematic.

4.3. Conclusion

The period between 1986 and 1996 encompassed a codification of the ANC's ideas about democracy. This chapter has sought to document this process, with a focus on its commitments to and conceptualisation of participatory democracy. It is possible to see that the ANC's discussion of participatory democracy from 1986 was approached within a framework of constitutionalism and local government, becoming linked more formally to the notion that 'the people shall govern'.

It has also been argued, however, that constitutional discussion in the ANC occurred as a discrete process, distinct both organisationally and intellectually from the phenomenon of people's power. In stark contrast to the ideas informing the latter, the Constitutional Committee's work became increasingly shaped by the legal fraternity and human rights discourse. What took place was a merging of radical and liberal democratic traditions which continued to shape the ANC's ideas about democracy after 1990.

Although the formal process of policy formulation on the new local government model did not commence until after 1996, the civic movement and activists at home had already begun to feed into local negotiations their ideas about participation. Amongst this contingent, additional currents were influential, including trade unionism, community activism, progressive planning and participatory development. Linking in with these discussions was a discourse of civil society. This placed emphasis not only on the importance of an autonomous civic realm but on civil society as an arena for the exercise of people's power.

While the early 1990s produced the beginning of discussions about how to provide for citizen participation, it also brought to the surface a conceptual discord: between civics' historic allegiance to the ANC and desire for a new autonomy; and between the ANC's role

as vanguard of the people and the civics as representatives of communities. The unresolved tension between these strands is taken up in the final chapters.

CHAPTER 5

Participatory Democracy and Formulation of Post-1994 Policy

> *"Although it can be argued that the Burkean[89] form of representative democracy is most appropriate to the scale of modern life and is most conducive to efficiency, it carries the risk of alienating the broader citizenship from the process of government. Where people believe they have limited power to influence, they lose faith in the electoral system and in the checks and balances that regulate the use of power. If democracy is about involving people in the decisions that affect their lives, the challenge for modern governments is to seek a balance between efficiency and effective administration on the one hand, and accountability and public participation on the other"* (Parliament of South Africa, 2001).

Although not established as a constitutional right, South Africa's final Constitution provided a framework for participatory democracy alongside representative democratic government. The Parliament of South Africa's 'Review of Public Participation in the Law and Policy-Making Process' asserts that "public participation processes strengthen and further democratise the institutions of representative democracy. Participatory democracy is not necessarily a new or different form of democracy, but a strengthening or expansion of formal representative democracy to include greater levels of participation by civil society" (2001). The detail, design and implementation of such a system are determined in national legislation.

It was identified in the previous chapter that by the late 1980s the ANC envisaged participatory democracy as being located primarily in the sphere of local government. Drawing on the principles set out in Chapter 7 of the Constitution, between 1997 and 2001 a series of policy documents were developed to design a new system of local government. Policy and legislation centred on the notion of 'Developmental Local Government' (DLG), a model shaped in part by the ANC's broader development vision. After 1994, the participatory democratic discourse of the ANC also found a home in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which situated citizen participation not only in the local government arena but in the development process as a whole.

This chapter examines the intellectual and theoretical influences on the post-1994 policy discourse of participatory democracy. It shows the amalgamation of theoretical currents which shape how participation is understood and practiced, linking this to broader

[89] Here, the document refers to political philosopher Edmund Burke who argued that elected representatives could "exercise independent judgement" during the policy and law making processes (cited in Held 1996). As such, Burke's understanding of representation was one of trusteeship.

intellectual and development trends. It identifies traditions of radical democracy, participatory development and planning, performance management and international best practice. The chapter goes on to set out the various mechanisms of institutionalised participation. Particular attention is given to the local government ward committee as the mechanism located at the centre of participatory governance. However, it also examines sector-specific forums for participation, as well as mechanisms for public participation in the national and provincial government spheres. The final part of the chapter deals thematically with the ideas and conceptions of participation that these structures entail, reflecting on the extent to which they fulfil their legislative objectives and represent mechanisms for citizen participation in decision-making.

5.1. Participatory Democracy as Principle

> "*Democracy for ordinary citizens must not end with formal rights and periodic one-person, one-vote elections. Without undermining the authority and responsibilities of elected representative bodies (the national assembly, provincial legislatures, local government), the democratic order we envisage must foster a wide range of institutions of participatory democracy in partnership with civil society on the basis of informed and empowered citizens (e.g. the various sectoral forums like the National Economic Forum) and facilitate direct democracy (people`s forums, referenda where appropriate, and other consultation processes)*" (ANC 1994a: 2).

Documents from the proceedings of the Constitutional Assembly between 1994 and 1996 suggest general agreement amongst the negotiating parties on the democratic ideal of popular participation in government between elections. The constitution-making process which itself involved the conduct of public events, hearings, meetings and education programmes also indicated a desire for popular input. However, according to a supplementary report to one of the Assembly's theme committees, it remained unclear as to what was meant by 'participatory democracy', the "forms this should take", and "whether it should be entrenched in the constitution" (CA TC1: 28 February 1995).

In the end, the Constitution made provision for participatory democracy, stating that all spheres of government must "make rules and orders concerning its business, with due regard to representative and participatory democracy, accountability, transparency and public involvement" (RSA 1996: Sections 57.1, 70.1 and 116.1). This principle was articulated most extensively in relation to local government. However the constitution provided neither a definition of the term 'participatory democracy', nor did it stipulate the mechanisms through which it would be achieved. Much of this policy debate took place over the years subsequent to 1996. It was not until the Local Government White Paper in 1998 that a

policy position on citizen participation was formally articulated and, in 2000, the new system of local government introduced.

The ANC's 1994 policy stance on reconstruction and development, however, had already articulated the centrality of participatory democracy and citizen empowerment to socio-economic development. The 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) represented perhaps the earliest expression of the ANC's position (as a party of government) on the role of participatory democracy. It touched on themes of empowerment, citizenship, state-society partnership and people-centred development. In the same year the RDP was translated into a White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, which in turn informed the drafting of the White Paper on Local Government (Everatt et al 2010: 224). Many themes contained in the RDP were carried forward into local government policy.

5.2. Participatory Democracy in the Restructuring of Local Government

A foundational principle of the RDP was the notion of 'people-driven' development: a process in which citizens are not merely recipients but also key actors and agents. The RDP stated that "Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment" (ANC 1994a: 5). The policy also reiterated the ANC's position on the need for participatory as well as representative institutions, stating that "Democracy for ordinary citizens must not end with formal rights and periodic one-person, one-vote elections ... the democratic order we envisage must foster *a wide range of institutions of participatory democracy in partnership with civil society on the basis of informed and empowered citizens* …" [emphasis added] (ibid.: 120-1).

Fulfilment of citizen needs, moreover, was seen as being both reliant on popular energies and on a partnership between state and society. The RDP spoke not only about the institutions of governance but about fostering the development of NGOs, social movements and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and enabling organs of civil society to influence policy making (ANC 1994a). The RDP also envisaged local government as playing a critical role in realising the RDP's vision. Not only was it acknowledged to be "the level of representative democracy closest to the people" but it also stated that "Local authority administrations should be structured in such a way as to ensure maximum participation of civil society and communities in decision-making and developmental initiatives of local authorities" (ibid.). Chapter Seven of the constitution itself entrenched this vision, requiring that local authorities "encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government" (RSA 1996: Chapter 7; Section 152).

The fact that the constitution established local government as its own 'sphere' also reinforced the centrality of its development role. Andrew Boraine explained that local government was established not as a "creature of statute" of national or provincial government but became its own sphere with decentralised responsibilities (Interview 21

May 2013). Through the development of further policy on local government, municipalities would become key agents of both development and democracy. In a publication of the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), then Minister Sydney Mufamadi remarked that: "When we introduced the new system of local government in 2000, we correctly positioned this as the sphere of government that is best placed to give practical meaning and substance to the basic political commitment, that the People Shall Govern" (DPLG & GTZ 2005a: foreword). Participatory democracy in local government was linked once again to the traditions of the Freedom Charter.

The development of more detail around participatory democracy was not picked up in earnest until the commencement of the Local Government White Paper process. Ottaway notes that, in South Africa, local government was a more important part of political transition than it had been elsewhere. Because South Africa's towns and cities had been set up deliberately by the apartheid state for the purposes of separate development, regime change required the restructuring of the entire system (1993: 130). The complete overhaul and (in rural areas) the introduction of local government thus occupied policy makers and advisors during the stage of constitutional negotiation. The Local Government Transition Act (LGTA) in 1993 was also somewhat of a holding operation, providing interim arrangements for the functioning of local authorities in the run up to the 1995 local government elections.

The reform of local government as a whole was a sensitive topic. With the restructuring of municipal boundaries, all previously 'white' local authorities were affected and the new system would require not only the negotiation of a new tax base for each municipality but agreement on their powers and functions. As such, detail around participatory democracy in the Constitutional Assembly was kept to minimum. Andrew Boraine, who was part of both the constitutional negotiations and the NLGNF, remarked:

> "The first thing was to get new structures in place, to get legitimacy into the system. And that's to be in the principle of one-person, one-vote based on the new [municipal] boundaries ... So you're not talking so much about participation … You have to get the system right first before you come to issues of participation because you can't participate in an illegitimate system" (Interview: 21 May 2013).

Dominique Wooldridge, a member of the editorial team for the Local Government White Paper, also emphasised that before issues of participation or decentralisation could be broached, the white paper committee focused on structural issues and the 'one city, one tax base' campaign in particular (Interview: 12 March 2013). Closely related to concerns about municipal capacity and resources was the issue of local economic development. It was through this strand of the discussion, centred on the role of the local state in development, that citizen participation became located. The idea of local economic development was an

important inspiration for the white paper's central vision of 'developmental local government'.

5.3. 'Developmental Local Government': Intellectual Traditions and Influences

> "*Developmental local government is 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*." (RSA 1998a: section B.1).

This section analyses the intellectual traditions and influences on 'developmental local government' (DLG), with a focus on those policy components encouraging public participation. DLG, as set out in the White Paper on Local Government, is described as having four interrelated characteristics: maximising social development and economic growth; integrating and coordinating; democratising development; and leading and learning (ibid.). It is in the section on democratising development that the paper states: "Municipal Councils play a central role in promoting local democracy. In addition to representing community interests within the Council, municipal councillors should promote the involvement of citizens and community groups in the design and delivery of municipal programmes" (ibid.: section B.1.3).

The White Paper re-emphasised the RDP's spirit of people-driven development, endorsing a view of citizens as not only voters and consumers but also participants in the policy process (RSA 1998a). It also introduced the idea of the ward committee to facilitate "local community participation in decisions which affect the local community" (ibid.: section D.2.3.3). The ideas introduced in the White Paper found legislative expression in the 1998 Municipal Structures Act and the 2000 Municipal Systems Act. The former required municipalities to develop mechanisms for consulting communities, referring specifically to the establishment of ward committees (RSA 1998b). The Municipal Structures Act then called for "a culture of municipal governance", combining "formal representative government (that is elected leaders) with a system of participatory governance (that is community participation)" (RSA 2000). In 2005, Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Municipal Ward Committees (DPLG 2005b) were also published to be read in conjunction with the Systems Act.

A variety of influences diffused the discussions which produced this legislation. Policy makers drew on both the traditions born of South Africa's own history and on development and policy trends gaining ground internationally. Parnell and Pieterse describe DLG as representing "a fusion of local and global visions about how to achieve sustainable democratic urban government" (1999: 82). Importantly, these multiple currents have generated both conceptual tensions as well as complementarities.

5.3.1. Historic Traditions of Popular Participation

The commitment of the ANC government to participatory democracy is partly a result of its longstanding tradition of mass organisation. Chapter two of this thesis located the ANC's origins as a mass movement in the 1950s, following efforts by the ANC Youth League to develop a mass membership. The post-1976 period, and the 1980s in particular, formed perhaps the most pivotal period in mass movement politics, with the rise of the civic movement and UDF, as well as the consolidation of a strong independent trade union movement. People's power, in particular - as both a theory and practice - continued after 1990 to provide a frame of reference for the ANC and MDM in their conceptualisation of democracy. Chapter Three discussed in detail the ideas informing the people's power discourse.

Differences within the ANC camp over the extent to which people's power represented rudimentary principles rather than a pre-figurative system became perhaps more distinguishable *after* 1994 as policy makers grappled with giving legislative and practical expression to the ethos of popular power. Historic ideas and expectations of community participation in development permeated policy discussion. This was often attributable to the actors involved. Many of those who participated in developing and implementing local government policy cut their teeth in the UDF, civic, trade union and student movements. Andrew Boraine, a former UDF activist involved in the Local Government White Paper, remarked on the inspiration for the policy's participatory elements:

> "I think all of us that were writing this stuff or involved in implementing it had been involved to a greater or lesser extent in organs of people's power, civic organisation, student movements, etc. That was the tradition. So I mean we didn't really need to go to other countries … I mean obviously there were study tours but generally we drew on … the post-1976 experience. So that was out era; that was our point of reference" (Interview: 21 May 2013).

Although policy makers undertook overseas visits from South Africa to look at other local government models, in terms of ideas about citizen participation these were, according to Boraine, of "secondary importance". While international models provided lessons in other respects, he reflected that "participation was more from our own ranks" (ibid.). A 1995 Constitutional Assembly document on the constitutional principles relating to local government observed that: "historically there has been a long tradition and demand for local government to be participatory by allowing for the participation of the communities that they govern" (Advisors to the Ad Hoc Committee on Local Government 1995).

Several post-1994 government Ministers with roots in the trade union and civic movements referred to contemporary structures for citizen participation, including ward committees, Community Policing Forums, and School Governing Bodies - discussed in the sections below

- as being akin or having links to the 1980s organs of people's power (Mashatile Interview: 21 February 2013; Carrim Interview: 16 January 2013; Tsenoli Interview: 11 March 2013). Others went back further, linking the commitment to participatory democracy to the Freedom Charter's demand that 'the people shall govern' (Botha Interview: April 2014; Mufamadi Interview November 2012).

Ideas informing public policy on participation also echo the ANC's historic belief in the inadequacy of representative democracy, a principle advocated clearly in the discourse of people's power. Former Soweto civic activist and trade unionist, Amos Masondo, who in 2001 became the Mayor of Johannesburg, commented on this tradition historically: "The notion was that democracy would not mean much if it doesn't involve people and people directly. There was a notion obviously that you can't all be in parliament, in a legislature, and therefore you have to elect some people to represent you but that you would not cede all your power and your mandate to them" (Interview: 13 March 2013). He also referred to the expectation "that effort or steps would always be taken to ensure that the notion of participatory democracy and local organs remained a reality" (ibid).

Others in the ANC-aligned movement were more vehement in their assessment, interpreting people's power as both a pre-figurative and superior form of democracy. The discourse of UDF ideologues which became prominent in the Front's official publications advanced a unitary and direct form of democracy. This rejected pluralistic and liberal ideas and rooted itself, rather, in the promise of united action and mass discipline in providing direct popular control. Given the civic and trade union background of those involved in drafting the RDP, it seems likely that the document drew on some of these ideas. The RDP asserted both the role of community organisations in the struggle against apartheid and the programme's foundations in the principle of participatory democracy: "that people who are affected by decisions must take part in making those decisions" (ANC 1994a).

Through exploring the various influences which shaped people's power, Chapter Three identified a discourse amongst the UDF and civics which highlighted its empowering potential. Through the act of people taking control of their own lives, activists highlighted democracy's developmental and transformative role. The importance of popular empowerment was subsequently emphasised in the RDP, which asserted that "Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment" (ANC 1994a). The Local Government White Paper similarly made reference to "democratising development, empowering and redistributing" (RSA 1998a), although its focus was arguably more on empowerment through social and economic development than through democracy *per se*.

Also pertinent to popular democratic traditions is the ANC's largely unitary view of democracy. Critics of the participatory tradition have sometimes highlighted its tendency to view popular interest in collective terms - an approach which, they argue, seeks to eradicate

the difference and conflict constitutive of democracy. Others contend that participatory democracy can be used as a smokescreen to disguise decisions already taken by dominant groups (Glaser 1991: 103; Glaser 2007); or to suppress disagreement and individual rights in the interests of a 'higher' form of democracy (Glaser 1991: 105, 109). Such a collective conception of 'the people', however, is not specific to traditions of the ANC. It has been viewed as a weakness of radical democracy generally. The danger that participatory forums can sometimes reinforce existing inequalities, or become dominated by the interests of a few, has been highlighted by democratic and development theorists alike (Cornwall & Coelho 2007; Cooke and Kothari 2001; Mansbridge 1983).

It is also associated with a view of representative democracy and its concomitant features as at best inadequate and at worst surplus to requirements. While people's power provided rudimentary principles, as well as a model for the structures by which popular power might be realised, by the close of the 1980s many of its democratic deficits remained unresolved. These included questions of its collective nature, a lack of representivity, limited political pluralism and an absence of mechanisms to guarantee the equal access of all to participate.

5.3.2. Radical Democratic Theory

Speaking to and linking in with the tradition of popular participation is a radical view of democracy that goes beyond participation in elections to include direct, popular involvement. The people's power structures of the 1980s, for many of their participants, constituted grassroots structures of decision-making. Their mode of organisation drew both on practices of community organisation and activism, and on models of trade union organising. This radical democratic tradition remains partly visible in post-1994 policy in which participatory governance continues to be understood as a necessary supplement to representative democracy.

Former Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA)[90], Yunus Carrim remarked of the 2000 Municipal Systems Act that: "Alone in that Act you can see both state organs based on democracy plus the idea that democracy means more than just voting once every five years. It means active participation in shaping your life" (Interview: 16 January 2013). The South African Local Government Association's (SALGA) Councillor Induction Programme also explains participatory democracy as being "where citizens have the right not only to elect their representatives, but to participate actively in government decision-making" (SALGA & GTZ 2006: 49).

The RDP itself was also rooted in this ethos, reflecting, as Maree points out, the influence of COSATU's ideas about democracy (1998: 30, 33). Individuals involved in producing the RDP included the UDF's Cheryl Carolus and the trade union leaders Alex Erwin and Jay Naidoo

[90] In 2009 the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) was renamed Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA).

(Stewart 1997: 5). According to Heller and Ntolonkulu, SANCO also "had a role in shaping the RDP chapter on housing" (2001: 13). Notably, the document illustrated the Left's concern with social and economic empowerment as vital to the creation of politically empowered citizens. The RDP stated that: "Deepening democracy in our society is not only about various governmental and non-governmental institutions. Effective democracy implies and requires empowered citizens. Formal rights must be given real substance. All of the social and economic issues (like job creation, housing and education) addressed in previous chapters of the RDP are directly related to empowering our people as citizens" (ANC 1994a).

As identified in the preceding chapters, in addition to the influence of the independent trade union movement and its intellectuals, ideas about participatory democracy were also influenced by the 1980s generation of progressive NGOs. After 1994, a great number of these organisations continued to influence and shape local government policy, and included prominent NGOs such as Planact, the Urban Sector Network, Corplan and Idasa, all of whom were involved in providing expertise and technical advice. Individuals from Planact had of course already been influential in the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber.

It is of note that much of the DPLG's recent hand- and resource books for councillors and ward committees have been compiled by NGOs such as Idasa, the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) and Afesis-Corplan.[91] However, while there is a clear influence of this sector, it is not clear to what extent it predominates in the discourse as a whole. The language and emphasis of the DPLG's resources differ from base policy documents such as the Local Government White Paper and, indeed, from the language used by the ANC in its own party publications. On the one hand, it is appropriate that this be the case: the DPLG guidance has a targeted audience and is designed to be accessible to local councillors, municipal officials and ward committee members. In addition to explaining concepts, it provides practical guidelines, ideas and suggestions for implementation, as opposed to merely a theoretical framework.

Yet the language is also different in another sense. In addition to being user-friendly, the guidance documents compiled by NGOs *put a greater emphasis on the empowering potential of democracy*, referring to aspects such as community control and joint-decision-making in municipal planning (SALGA & GTZ 2006: 70). The Ward Committee Resource Book also refers to the creation of a more participatory system as not only exceeding the representative dimension of democracy but as a process of democratic "deepening"; of "empowering citizens to fulfil their potential as partners with government" (DPLG & GTZ 2005b: 10). Not dissimilarly to Arnstein's (1969) gradation of citizen involvement, the Resource Book highlights the need to distinguish between "providing information",

[91] See DPLG & GTZ (2005a); DPLG & GTZ (2005b) and SALGA & GTZ (2006).

"consultation" and "participation". The three cannot be conflated and their appropriateness in different circumstances is emphasised (DPLG & GTZ 2005b: 11).

The contrast between the NGO-compiled handbooks and the ANC's own 'movement' discourse on participation is particularly evident. Since 1990, the latter has continued to situate participation largely in a context of movement building (ANC 2012) or has conflated popular will and citizen choice with its own vision of the 'national democratic' programme. The conceptual influence of this discourse is more akin to the Marxist-Leninist strand of participation prominent during the ANC's years in exile, as well as to the largely teleological conception of participation held by many in the ANC and UDF. Analysis of this discourse in the post-1994 period and its implications for participatory democracy are taken up in the following chapter.

In public policy documents, however, radical democratic thought is indeed discernible. One of the most elaborate in this regard is the DPLG's 'National Policy Framework for Public Participation' (2007), a document described as "build[ing] on the commitment of the democratic government to deepen democracy" (ibid.: 6). It draws, in particular, on Arnstein's 'ladder of participation' (1969 cited in DPLG 2006: 15-16). In setting out the varying degrees of citizen involvement, the policy document "advocates … a partnership approach between citizens and government, moving to citizens represented by ward committees having recognised powers, with delegated responsibilities" (2006: 17).

By setting out an understanding of participation as a form of 'partnership' between citizen and government, the DPLG appears to recognise participatory democracy in two important senses: as both *deliberative* and *empowering*. The framework utilises a definition of 'public participation' as: "an open, accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision-making. It is further defined as a democratic process of engaging people, deciding, planning, and playing an active part in the development and operation of services that affect their lives" (DPLG 2007: 15).

Both Pieterse (2002: 5) and Stoker (2002: 32-3) refer to the re-thinking of approaches to local government as highlighting an understanding of democracy as 'problem-solving'. This draws not only on democracy *qua* universal suffrage and human rights but on "our collective capacity to address unsolved social problems" (Cohen & Sabel 1997 cited in Stoker 2002: 32). As such, democracy is also about reason, deliberation, and collective agreement. Pieterse, for example, refers to South Africa's policy of Integrated Development Planning (IDP), which provides a way for local residents to participate in the preparation, adoption, implementation and review of their municipality's development vision (RSA 1998a; RSA 2001), as "a future-oriented, problem-solving approach [which] … aspires to provide a framework for diverse communities, citizens and interest groups to enter into public dialogue and debate about the desirable future that they want to construct" (2002: 6).

In this sense, although this model of democracy is based on achieving consensus, it is proposed that this be achieved through a process of deliberation and problem-solving. Moreover, ***by seeing participation as both a developmental process and outcome, the idea of participatory democracy is also something empowering.*** The Policy Framework underlined the government's belief that participation must 'empower' citizens "to take charge of their own development" (DPLG 2007: 17).

Emphasis has also remained on the notion of participation *as a right* and on enhancing citizens' capacity to exercise that right. The 2006 'Handbook for Municipal Councillors' asserted that:

> "Democracy in South Africa is about more than just voting. It is about people *having the right* to be informed about what their government is doing, and *having the right* to participate in decision-making, especially when the decisions directly affect them. This helps create *empowered citizens* who have the initiative to continue to contribute to the development of their communities" [emphasis added] (SALGA & GTZ 2006: 45).

This approach captures the Rousseauian notion, expressed by Pateman (1970) and Macpherson (1977), of democracy as 'developmental'. The very same handbook, for example, poses questions for municipal councillors about the extent to which they: "are helping to educate constituents"; "promoting respect for human rights"; and "encouraging the potential and initiative of [their] constituency" (2006: 46). There is a visible current of thinking which seeks to emphasise the transformative and self-reinforcing role of participation in decision-making.

With the RDP's effective replacement by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR) in 1996, disappointment set in amongst those in the ANC camp who had hoped for a more radical form of democracy. GEAR's focus on a market-oriented, growth-led model of development has been interpreted by the Left as not only removing macro-economic policy from the sphere of democratic contestation but as marking a break with participatory traditions. The ensuing argument is that a reduction in citizen control is necessary for the maintenance of a neoliberal macro-economic model. Notably, Harrison suggests that the closure of the RDP office in April 1996 and transfer of its staff to the Department of Constitutional Development led to the RDP's vision of development planning shifting to the *local* rather than *national* terrain (2001: 186). It is possible to see how the side-lining of the RDP enabled a veneer of participatory discourse to remain, while shifting the locus of citizen influence to the local level. As such, popular control over macro-level policy is severely limited.

Participatory ideals, no matter how deeply rooted in the movement's history, are not immune to other theoretical debates. Indeed, the perceived repeal of ANC commitments to a more radical form of democracy links in part to policy shifts internationally and the consolidation of a global economic orthodoxy. Conceptions of participation are thus shaped by other discursive traditions, including development theory, international best practice, and the discourse of good governance. I continue here with development.

5.3.3. Participatory Development and Planning

The post-1994 design of the new system of local government in South Africa coincided with international shifts in development theory regarding the role of state and citizen. One part of this, acknowledged during the constitutional negotiations, was refocusing the role of local government on development rather than delivery. Although it was the 1998 Local Government White Paper that formally introduced the notion of DLG, the idea appears to have first emerged during the work of the Constitutional Assembly. Advisors to the Ad Hoc Committee on Local Government in 1995 described DLG by listing a set of characteristics almost identical to those later included in the White Paper. The model was described as being: where local government is integral to local development and responsible for stimulating local economic growth; it must promote development that is integrated and sustainable; and it must build the "institutional capacity of communities to enhance their participation in the developments intended for them" (1995: 43).

In terms of the third of these (the participation of communities), Andrew Boraine, a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Local Government, remarked during a theme committee meeting on the shift in many countries *away* from municipal service delivery, explaining that "service delivery is almost an incidental side of what local authorities do" (CA TC3, 1995: 30). He instead linked local government to deepening democracy, highlighting, in particular, how people must participate in decision-making as citizens and not as rate- or tax-payers (ibid). Ideas about people's participation in local development thus spoke to the importance of 'citizenship', a term receiving growing attention in democratic theory.

The relationship between the 'public' citizen and participatory democracy is discussed by Held (1996). He argues that "If democratic life involves no more than a periodic vote, the locus of people's activities will be the private realm of civil society and the scope of their actions will depend largely on the resources they can command … Few opportunities will exist for citizens to exist as citizens, as participants in public life" (ibid.: 323). The RDP had also endorsed the importance of citizen participation in development, noting the need to move away from the 'dependency' and victim mentality bequeathed by apartheid (ANC 1997a).

The rise of the school of thought around DLG in the early 1990s is substantiated by Dominique Wooldridge, editor of the Local Government White Paper. She referred to some influential research produced during the preceding Green Paper process by local academic,

Ben Cashdan which advocated the re-direction of local government spending toward developmental ends. Wooldridge highlighted Cashdan's paper as forming the basis for the DLG idea (Interview: 12 March 2013). Mark Swilling also referred to Left experiments in the United Kingdom (UK) at reforming local government as having been especially influential on South Africa (Interview: 20 February 2013). The UK had implemented a more 'radical' model of local government that focused on community-level citizen participation and not just state delivery of services. He referred, in particular, to British academic John Bennington who was involved in UK local economic development work, including in the Greater London Council. According to Swilling, Bennington was brought on as an advisor to the White paper process in South Africa (ibid.).

A theme that surfaces with these shifts in development theory is both the role of the 'people' (or 'beneficiaries') and the relationship between people and the state. Influencing changes in the conceptualisation of local government is the idea, highlighted in Chapter Four, of participatory development (McGee 2002). Spurred by the failure of top-down state-driven projects, and later the damaging effects of economic structural adjustment policies in much of Africa and the developing world, development theory underwent significant changes from the 1980s (Leal 2011). A new wave of thinking emerged that located popular participation not only within discrete development 'projects' but in the development process as a whole (McGee 2002: 94-5).

The ethos of participatory development fitted nicely with the intellectual heritage and practical experience of the UDF and civics. A document of the MDM (1990) argued that: "-communities should have direct control over the process of development … This ensures that communities are empowered and strengthened rather than communities becoming hostages to a development process over which they have no control". Ideas emphasised in recent municipal guidance - such as human agency, meaningful participation and community ownership of development planning (SALGA & GTZ 2006: 64, 70) - echo the principles of grassroots democracy and community organisation reminiscent of people's power.

It has been argued in this thesis that civics' ideas about community organising in the 1980s intersected with the approach of NGOs working in urban citizenship and political action; and that with the commencement of local government negotiations in 1990, many such ideas transferred. This ethos remains visible in the formulation of local government policy. From 1994 various universities and NGO research institutes assisted the government in developing policy proposals on housing and local government (Botha Interview: 14 April 2014). Although, in the white paper process, the initial concern of policy makers was the racial integration of cities and the securing of a unitary tax base, Parnell and Pieterse note that "The most important addition … is the current emphasis on the transformation of

government itself: on the establishment of democratic municipalities that are in turn structurally dependent on civil society forums for input, vitality and legitimacy" (1999: 73).[92]

NGOs and other research institutes brought to the table ideas about citizen participation in development and planning. During the Constitutional Affairs Portfolio Committee Hearings on the Local Government White Paper, submissions and presentations were made by a variety of stakeholder groups and NGOs. One such example is 'Fair Share', a programme based at the University of the Western Cape which works to build community partnerships with local government and develop economic literacy amongst communities (Constitutional Affairs Portfolio Committee: 24 April 1998). Fair Share's submission to the Committee highlighted the importance of citizen-government partnerships in development, arguing that "In most community development theory and best practice, citizen participation is key to the success for sustainable development. If citizens 'own' their own resources and have been part of the decisions about the priorities of their area, they will freely give their time, money [through payments], and labour" (ibid.)

Moreover, the timing of South Africa's entrance into debates about development and democracy coincided with the rise of 'civil society' discourse. This was combined in development and planning circles with a discourse of 'citizenship' which understood the public's role as not only consumers and voters but participants in the policy process. Greater focus on the role of the civic sphere, and on political and civil rights generally, fed into ideas internationally about civil society's role in the development process. Combined with this were experiments by development practitioners and Left governments to introduce broader-based citizen participation in both development and municipal governance.

In addition to South Africa's own history of civic activism, international experiences seem to have provided some lessons. Wooldridge referred to the academic, Brendan Martin, who had been working on the participatory budgeting process in Porto Alegre, Brazil, coming out to South Africa to work with the White Paper team. Yunus Carrim also noted the influence of other metropolitan city models such as those in South America, recalling Bolivia as one example (Interview: 12 March 2013). Wooldridge noted, however, that although there were "exciting" ideas for many projects, the team ran into the issue of first needing to create an equal tax base before powers could be decentralised (Interview: 12 March 2013).

Mark Swilling also suggested that limited thought went into issues of urban citizenship and space, with many of the battles that progressive urban NGOs had fought during the 1980s being collapsed into either 'local government' or 'housing' (Interview: 20 February 2013). Interestingly, Swilling referred to recent efforts by CoGTA to finally draw up an urban policy as "a resurgence of the discourse that influenced the urban centre network, urban NGOs and certain civics" (ibid.). As such, while there was recognition by policy makers of the need

[92] On ideas about 'partnership' in the White Paper, see Pieterse (2002).

for popular participation, there was perhaps some absence of thought about the ways that citizens on the ground interpret and negotiate development challenges.

5.3.4. 'Governance' and Participatory Governance

South Africa's transition was affected by both global ideological shifts and the numerous local and international advisors asserting influence on the transition. Gaining popularity during this period was the idea of 'governance' (Seedat, Interview: 13 May 2013). Minogue defines governance as "the entire set of relationships between the state, the market and society" (2002: 117). According to Harrison (2006), the focus on 'good governance' internationally is associated with 'third way' politics promoted by centre-Left governments in the 1990s and with the discourse of New Public Management (NPM) (Harrison 2001; Minogue 2002: 117).

It is the 'governance' aspect of the NPM model that speaks to participatory discourse. Governance is concerned not with the state alone but with the state-citizen relationship in the realisation of effective policies. As such, 'good governance' itself requires 'good citizenship' (Cloete 1999: 12). In South Africa, the DPLG's Workbook and Guide on 'Public Participation in Local Governance' sets out democratic governance as follows:

> Democratic governance requires democratic participation through the voice of all civil society actors in policy and governance processes. This requires open decision-making and a people centred approach. It also requires citizens who are able to exercise judgement, contribute to debate and discussion that impact on their lives and awareness of the challenges in their communities and the skills and knowledge find solutions to these challenges (sic). Participation is a necessary part of good governance as it allows for the flow of information between citizens and elected leaders and accountability. It also gives a voice to those citizens most affected by public policy" (DPLG & LGSETA, Module 3, Part B, p.18).[93]

In strengthening the system of local government, the ANC has continued to emphasise the importance of citizen-state co-operation. Then Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Yunus Carrim, spoke of the need "for more effective cooperative govern*ance*, not just cooperative govern*ment*", adding that "more active intervention of provincial and national government in local government needs to be complemented by greater public participation in municipalities" (2011: 16-17).

Governance discourse also draws on the role of political accountability, legitimacy and human rights (see Minogue 2002: 118-121). These features have been widely encouraged

[93] The workbook is undated as it constituted certified course material produced by the DPLG and LGSETA. However, the acknowledgements listed in the document would suggest that it was published after 2007.

by international financial institutions and major aid donors, and with the 1989 collapse of the socialist bloc from whom the ANC had previously received much support, the emergence of governance as a buzz-word of mainstream development complemented simultaneous shifts in the ANC itself toward an embrace of liberal democratic principles. The DPLG's Policy Framework on Public Participation notes that the "basic assumptions underlying public participation include … the values of good governance and human rights" (2007: 15).

The aspect of governance concerned with citizen participation specifically has also appealed to Left regimes elsewhere. Stoker points toward an international shift in thinking about local government in which states have extended their focus beyond government as a service-provider toward its concern with "community leadership" and local democratic input beyond electoral and representative democracy (2002: 31). The 1990s, in particular, saw a focus on participatory municipal governance amongst lower and middle income countries, including Porto Alegre in Brazil and Kerala in India.

Yet although international experience has provided some inspiration for South Africa, there is also a considerable degree of contrast. The local budgeting process in Porto Alegre is shown to have delegated a tangible degree of control to citizens (Heller 2001: 140; Abers 1998). Similarly, Kerala's neighbourhood *Panchayats* (or assemblies) draw in a large number of participants and act as committee structures for local planning of development priorities (ibid.: 141-2). In South Africa, ward committees are merely advisory structures, providing more a mode of communication between council and community than any real mechanism for influence. As such, municipal councils are under no obligation to act on their recommendations.

South Africa has, however, drawn on international standards in its public participation strategies. Those used in the application of the local Government IDP are based on the 'core values' of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) (Theron & Ceasar 2008: 112-113). Participatory policy adheres to IAP2's *core value 1,* that: "the public should have a say in decisions about actions that could affect their lives" (ibid: 117). Nonetheless, Theron and Ceasar argue that the 'say' which public beneficiaries have correlates more to 'informing' or 'consulting' than to 'collaboration' or 'empowerment' (ibid.). In this sense, participation in the IDP and ward-level processes amount to a form of 'tokenism'.[94] Buccus' research on public participation in policy making suggests that, even though positive perceptions about the value of participation were identified amongst policy makers and bureaucrats, the planning process still only involved community input *after* policy responses had been formulated (undated: 11).

[94] See also Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969).

'Model' experiments in participatory governance have themselves not escaped criticism, for example in failing to address issues such as unequal power relations and social inequalities or to account for local political contexts (c.f. Cornwall 2008; Baiocchi 2003; Cornwall & Coelho 2007; Theron & Ceasar 2008). Local party politics itself can negatively affect the dynamics of participatory institutions (Cornwall 2008: 513). In South Africa, the latter is particularly relevant where ward committees are themselves the site of party dominance and intra-party rivalries.

In other cases, participatory governance has been replaced by technocracy and expediency. During the hearings on the White Paper it was questioned whether the IDP would necessarily build local capacity, with one presenter highlighting the lack of capacity in municipalities, commenting that "much of the know-how comes from contracted consultants" (Constitutional Affairs Portfolio Committee: 22 April 1998). Indeed, implementation of IDP was initially met with a lack of local government capacity and quite possibly a limited appreciation on the part of officials of the role of public input. Former Minister for Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, Valli Moosa, remarked that there were incidents of some local authorities commissioning a consultancy to draft an IDP for them (Interview: 30 April 2013).

What appears to have crept into the discourse of governance is a more 'limited' and 'formalised' interpretation of participation, "stripped of the political volatility of direct popular involvement" (De Beer 1997: 67). Through increasingly technocratic processes in development, and by *detaching* participation from policy formulation, participatory governance is in effect *de-politicised*. However, at the same time, Tapscott points out that "because development is so frequently portrayed in technocratic and depoliticised language, this should not disguise that it is rarely if ever politically neutral". It can in fact serve to 'reproduce' existing relations of power rather than induce social transformation (1997: 87). Issues that have surfaced in research on the ineffectiveness of ward committees include the prioritisation of party loyalty over accountability to constituents (Benit-Gbaffou 2008), the inadequate power of ward committees and councillors in allocating development resources (Malabela & Ally 2011: 1), and the inadequate power of local government generally "to determine key development decisions" (Sinwell 2011: 371).

While inadequacies in implementation can partly be attributed to logistical, training and resource deficiencies, they also lie in the underlying conceptual framework. During the Local Government White Paper hearings, some stakeholders remarked that power in the White Paper remained too centralised (Constitutional Affairs Portfolio Committee: 20 April 1998) and that the document did not go far enough to empower local government (Constitutional Affairs Portfolio Committee: 22 April 1998). In fact, Smith contends that the notion of participatory governance in the White Paper was "under-theorised", giving aspects such as empowerment and participation very little elaboration (2007: 8). Indeed, the document did

not set out any definition of 'participation' and little explanation is given as to how communities might participate and to what ends.

The resources compiled by NGOs in support of DPLG have somewhat filled the gap by providing such detail. However underlying policy remains lacking. Although the White Paper states that "municipalities should develop mechanisms to ensure citizen participation in policy initiation and formulation, and the *monitoring and evaluation* of decision-making and implementation" [emphasis added] (RSA 1998a), there is no reference to citizen participation in decision-making itself. It is the document's lack of theoretical grounding in relation to participatory governance that, Smith argues, has led to citizen participation being "confined to a narrowly prescribed set of structures and processes, to the exclusion of a more open and inclusionary practice" (ibid.: 3). Although subsequent guidance has been more explicit in this regard, the underlying policy does not capture the desire to develop a truly empowered citizenry who can exercise judgement and contribute to decision-making.

5.3.5. Performance Management

While the themes of governance and citizenship speak to normative debates about participation in development, they are by no means exhaustive. The NPM model, with which mainstream 'governance' discourse is associated, is concerned not only with state-society relations but with improving public sector performance (Harrison 2001: 178-9). Alongside "public participation", municipal legislation also incorporated the concept of "performance management", introduced "in the interests of efficiency and transparency" (Provincial and Local Government Portfolio Committee & Local Government and Administration Select Committee: 19 April 2000).

As noted earlier, the international shift toward participatory development was spurred in part by the failure of top-down development approaches. New development thinking included a desire to generate greater self-sufficiency by rolling back the state not extending it (McGee 2002: 95; see also Leal 2011). Cornwall and Coelho explain that, "On the one hand, participation is cast as a project constructed around the extension of citizenship and the deepening of democracy. On the other, participation has come to be associated with shrinking state responsibilities and the progressive exemption of the state from the role of guarantor of rights" (2007: 5). As such, while participation is considered an important feature of such self-sufficiency, its costs to efficiency and delivery must also be weighed up (Pieterse 2002: 12).

It is in the field of development planning in South Africa that this tension is especially visible: between the neo-liberal concerns of efficiency and performance and those focused on the need for a bottom-up approach to development (Harrison 2006: 202). South Africa's IDP embodies this very conundrum. Intended to ensure fiscal responsibility, efficiency and effectivity, as well as provide space for citizens to influence development priorities, Pieterse

describes the IDP as combining "democratic governance, participatory planning and efficient, modern managerial practice" (2002: 5). It thus contains some internal conceptual tension. While both participatory development and democracy discourses draw on notions of empowerment and agency, in the performance management strand the objective of partnerships with civil society is the creation of a more efficient system (Pieterse 2002: 7, 13). Sinwell goes further to suggest that the spaces for participation created by the ANC government since 1994 "are fundamentally similar to those spaces adopted by the World Bank" (2011: 372).

In South Africa, the shift in focus toward public sector performance and delivery was particularly visibly from 1999 with the commencement of Thabo Mbeki's Presidency. The importance of fiscal accountability in local government, however, was emphasised by GEAR in 1996, and it is "at the local level within the context of DLG" that Parnell and Pieterse argue "the tension between GEAR and RDP will be contested" (1999: 75). Notably, Tapscott contends that in the development discourse of the 1990s the influence of those who had come from the anti-apartheid camp was not so apparent (1997: 94-5). He argues instead that a feature of that era "was the persistent attempts to foster a technocratic justification of the social and political order. Practical socio-economic issues, thus, were defined as technical problems, devoid of substantive political or ideological content, and solvable only by experts" (ibid.: 91).

An example of this can be found in the IDP process, where research in Gauteng shows that participation is sometimes seen in a very utilitarian sense by officials, with the key motivator being legitimation and the desired development outcome, rather than the democratic value of the process itself (Everatt et al 2010: 228). Although international development in the 1990s leant toward rolling back the state's 'delivery' role, it remained concerned with efficiency and fiscal accountability. Penetrating the local government debate in South Africa was also the increasing popularity of privatisation amongst governments in the UK and New Zealand and the rise of public-private partnerships. The discourse of participatory development, which emerged originally from Freirian pedagogy and was taken up by progressive planners and community activists in South Africa and elsewhere, has become appropriated and adapted by mainstream international development agencies and bilateral donors to fit the demands not only of public sector 'performance' but also the ideological status quo. Its adoption by organisations like the World Bank, Leal argues, has been used as a way of making neo-liberal development discourse more palatable and people-friendly (2011: 71, 75-6).

South Africa's DLG model firmly links the management of public sector performance to community-based participation (see Parnell & Pieterse 1999: 76) and enhancing accountability to the electorate. The Municipal Systems Bill of 2000, by introducing a system of participatory governance, was understood as "[laying] the foundation for the later

Chapters in the Bill in which participatory processes are critical to the success of initiatives such as planning and performance management" (Provincial and Local Government Portfolio Committee & Local Government and Administration Select Committee, 19 April 2000: 6).

At the same time, however, there was caution that participatory processes could equally hamper development and delivery. The White Paper remarked that "participatory processes must not become an obstacle to development, and narrow interest groups must not be allowed to 'capture' the development process. It is important for municipalities to find ways of structuring participation which enhance, rather than impede, the delivery process" (RSA 1998a: Section B.1.3). During a discussion on the Municipal Structures Bill, Minister and former civic activist Valli Moosa - was recorded as saying that "the key criterion for local government should be: are citizens receiving value for money?" and that local government "should develop a business-like approach to service delivery" (Constitutional Affairs Portfolio Committee: 1 Sept 1998). Although the challenges of balancing performance and participation began to face South Africa in the 1990s, it of course reflects the broader challenge facing modern governments (and set out at the opening of this chapter), of achieving "efficiency and effective administration on the one hand, and accountability and public participation on the other" (Parliament of South Africa, 2001).

The Gauteng Provincial Legislature's 'Public Participation Strategy' also reflects the combination of technocracy and participation encompassed in performance management. It phrases this as "effective public participation … [marking] a shift from techno-bureaucracy towards techno-democracy" (GPL 2011: 18). It is interesting that current Head of the Gauteng Planning Department, Rashid Seedat remarked that it is in some ways much easier for governments to focus on delivering services than it is to practically implement mechanisms for citizen participation (Interview: 13 May 2013). He also commented that, from his experience in the City of Johannesburg, the increasing bureaucratisation of processes for public participation could themselves take the 'dynamism' out of it (ibid.).

Although, according to Harrison, international theoretical influence on planning has been subtle in South Africa, it can be seen in the presence of international agencies and their influence on public sector policies (2001: 178). The Local Government White Paper process was funded mostly by USAID and the UK's Department for International Development (DfID) (Wooldridge: Interview: 12 March 2015). Similarly, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) has undertaken programmes with both the DPLG and SALGA to produce a series of hand- and resource-books on participatory democracy and governance in South African municipalities.[95] Harrison also suggests parallels between the IDP and the policies of

[95] See, for example, DPLG & GTZ (2005a and 2005b) and SALGA & GTZ (2006).

'New Labour' in the United Kingdom, where despite a trend toward decentralisation, policy design remains at the centre (2006: 190).

Other models of NPM internationally include Australia, New Zealand and the USA (Harrison 2006). During a meeting on the White Paper process, Crispian Olver, then Director of the RDP, recommended the New Zealand model for measures to assess overall national performance in local government (Constitutional Affairs Portfolio Committee: 20 April 1998). The New Zealand model of local authorities publishing their plans and discussing them with the community appears also to have been raised by the Ad-Hoc Committee on Local Government during the Constitutional Assembly (CA TC3, 1995: 15-16), as does the German model of providing an 'enabling' (rather than prescriptive) constitutional framework for participatory democracy in local government (ibid.: 14).

Dominique Wooldridge remarked that, during the White Paper process, tours were undertaken of the UK and especially Scotland on the devolution of powers (Interview: 12 March 2013). Although there was no one especially strong influence, she remarked that "there were a lot of donors pushing models and a lot of American consultants. Every time you turned around there was an American consultant!" Wooldridge also commented that she had brought in the consultant, Brendan Martin (who had previously worked on Porto Alegre's participatory budgeting system in Brazil) to 'counter' those consultants working on public-private partnerships (ibid.). Yet models of metropolitan government such as those in Latin America are themselves shaped by global development discourse. Reflecting on international influences in the White Paper, Yunus Carrim recalled the relationship between budgeting, IDPs, delivery and performance management as being drawn and adapted from the Bolivian example (Interview: 12 March 2013).

It is thus possible to see how policy frameworks themselves can serve an ideological function. Leal argues that the discourse of participatory development has been "modified, sanitized and depoliticised", and is used as a mechanism for participation *within* the existing neo-liberal paradigm (2011: 75-6). He also posits, however, that, having been "detached from its radical nature", participatory action has been "*re-politicized* in the service of the conservative neo-liberal agenda" [emphasis added] (2011: 76). This lack of ideological neutrality in the development process is borne out by the tensions and conflicts within it. Parnell and Pieterse capture this when they highlight the tension between "acceptance of mainstream economic policy and dealing with its structural consequences" (1999: 71). As such they argue that "DLG in South Africa is … born of both the consensus and the conflict apparent in international development thinking" (ibid.).

The ascendancy of 'participation' in neo-liberal discourse has prompted calls by Left development theorists for it to be re-claimed and reconnected with its radical, transformative roots (Leal 2011: 79; see also Kothari 2001). Policy frameworks, while drawing on contemporary trends in development, planning and governance, may also be

rooted in dominant orthodoxies. Where this is the case, the extent to which prevailing ideological paradigms can be challenged may remain slim, rendering policy texts merely hollow commitments to citizen participation. Leal maintains that the "technification of social and political problems" reduces its empowering potential (2011: 76). Authority to deliver services may be transferred to the local level but real power may not (Mastenbroek & Steytler 1997: 236). In South Africa, mechanisms for citizens to influence planning exist only at the most local level, thus closing off the broader policy agenda from popular democratic debate.

Within the ANC itself conceptual tensions in what is understood by 'participation' also endure. Here, participatory discourse remains infused with the conflict referred to previously - of "political control from above and popular initiative from below" (Femia 1993: 136). Raymond Suttner posited his view that "the popular subject was displaced from 1990 and it became the 'people's government'" (Interview: 25 October 2012). This speaks both to the persistence of multiple interpretations of 'people's power' discussed in Chapter Three, and to Leal's contention that 'power' in mainstream development theory is viewed not as the process by which marginalised groups gain the capacity to claim rights and resources, but rather as something that "can be 'given' by the powerful to the powerless" (2011: 77).

The post-1994 narrative of popular participation in the ANC's own discourse is discussed in Chapter Six. This deals, in particular, with the discussion and policy documents of the movement itself rather than the discourse in legislation. It is worth noting here, however, that within the ANC itself, understandings of popular power and participation remained inconsistent. Suttner, who wrote speeches for Nelson Mandela during his presidency, remarked:

> "I always had in mind a range of ways in which democracy could be people-driven. [When writing] speeches for Mandela … I used to bring in this type of thing but then when he was interviewed afterwards he would say something completely different because what I think they had in mind is that a government must govern and concentrate on the central government" (Interview: 25 October 2012).

Indeed, not only did the government's delivery function take precedent but Sinwell (2011: 369) and Gumede (2005: 284-5) argue that that Mandela and other ANC members saw civil society as needing to reorient itself toward acting "as service delivery agents for the state's development trajectory" (Sinwell: 2011: 369).

The idea that 'governments have to govern' and 'leaders have to lead' is a view that Suttner attributes to many of those on Robben Island and in exile (2014: 13). Nonetheless, his observation speaks to concerns about the difficulty of balancing the multiple demands of governance: of development and delivery, on the one hand, and public participation and democracy on the other. Notably, during the hearings on the Local Government White

Paper, Steven Friedman, then at the Centre for Policy Studies, argued that insufficient attention had been paid to the "fundamental problem" of "enhancing democracy and development side by side". He argued that "these two ideals are difficult to combine, and that the White Paper should focus mostly on enhancing the democracy ideal in local government" (Constitutional Affairs Portfolio Committee, 20 April 1998: 2).

It also concerns the extent to which control over development issues are decentralised to the local level. This is especially relevant when development plans are to be devised via local participatory processes while simultaneously speaking to national-level development policies and ideological frameworks. Research on decentralisation in the UK suggests "that the rolling back of the state in favour of the market has had a particularly detrimental effect on local government's power to govern" (Mastenbroek & Steytler 1997: 236). In the South African case, Parnell and Pieterse's summation is that the key challenge of DLG is achieving all of its visions simultaneously: that is, integrated, sustainable and equitable urban management while upholding the principle of local democracy and autonomy (1999: 82).

5.3.6. Radicalism versus Realism

A further strand feeding into conceptions of participation is not so much rooted in a particular theoretical framework as in the day-to-day experience and exigencies of governing. Here, policy makers' interpretations of participatory democracy have been shaped by changing ideology, political imperatives and pragmatism. A notable theme identified amongst some of those interviewed about participatory democratic policy concerned the extent to which the changed ideological milieu between the 1980s and 1994 altered their perceptions about what was both possible and desirable.

Andrew Boraine, a former UDF leader who was later part of the NLGNF, the Constitutional Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Local Government, and the early stages of drafting the White Paper, reflected on the idealism with which many in the ANC-UDF camp had viewed popular power during the 1980s. Looking back, he remarked that many of the ideas which had influenced them had been somewhat romantic: "I mean if I go back there now, you know, you're looking at everything from Che Guevara to Franz Fanon to Lenin and things like that, Gramsci. And, quite frankly, a lot of that's romantic, you know. And that was part of the struggle culture of the time and that's what we believed" (Interview: 21 May 2013).

Rashid Seedat, also involved in civic activism and later in work on the post-apartheid local government model, similarly commented that their understanding of the role of civics and their vision of a democratic future in the 1980s had been shaped by the local and global ideological context of that time:

> "I mean I think it was a different era. And I there was a u-change in what happened in the intervening period: at the leadership level, in terms of membership … And you must remember it was a good, almost thirty years,

> and a hell of a lot can happen in thirty years! It may sound like a cliché but it's true. And of course a lot of people don't have that kind of institutional memory in any case. You know I think that people just, you move on … So a lot has changed and I don't think you can really compare it. I think that the whole, I mean the milieu was different. It was a different milieu, you know; it was during the cold war; it was during a particular kind of contestation on a global basis" (Interview: 20 May 2013).

Seedat also reflected on the extent to which many ideological principles during the 1980s had been accepted unquestioningly: "Our belief in the '80s in socialism and all that was almost like a religious belief. It was sort of like one took a completely uncritical view of things. I mean, as things changed, and we spoke about Slovo's 'Has Socialism Failed'… you know those things don't work anymore" (ibid.). The White Paper's editor, Dominique Wooldridge also looked back with some discomfort on the socialist ideological lens through which the future had been conceived, even during the early part of the 1990s:

> "It was just the way we, it was the language we used. But it was that thing where you were a 'comrade' and it was, you know. It's ridiculous looking back at it now. At the time we weren't at all self-conscious about it. It was the way you greeted other people. Comrade and proletariat; that's the way we conceived things" (Interview: 12 March 2013).

As discussed in the previous chapter, the end of the cold war and change in global ideological climate instigated shifts in the ANC's own ideological outlook. This, in turn, generated a transition in its democratic thought. From 1986 onwards, the ANC made formal commitments to liberal democratic principles such as a multi-party system and individual civil and political rights. These changes took effect not only at the leadership level but also amongst activists who would come to participate in policy-making. Seedat remarked on how these shifts impacted the democratic project itself, changing not only the *possibility* but the *desirability* of institutionalising people's power:

> "[I]f we had taken power in '87 or something my guess is that we would probably have experimented with those things because, number one, you're seizing power; number two, you believe this is now kind of a revolutionary context ... I think that actually, in a funny way, maybe it wasn't a bad thing that we didn't do it because I think we were forewarned about particular issues. And I also think the issue around formal institutions of procedural democracy and so on is actually quite fundamental. You can be quite, sort of, dismissive of it and say well, voting every five years ... But if you don't vote every five years you're basically not a democracy" (Interview: 20 May 2013).

His remark suggests the emergence of a new appreciation for certain principles and practices of representative and procedural democracy, previously overlooked or dismissed. Wooldridge likewise remarked that there had been a "strong suspicion" of what they referred to as "neo-liberal democracy" (Interview: 12 March 2013).

As well as pointing to a rethinking of democratic principles, it is interesting that Seedat's reflections on popular power also address the challenges of converting theory into practice. Not only did he consider people's power to have been part of a particular revolutionary era but also that its implications in a post-revolutionary context had not been thought through:

> "- the milieu was such that, I mean, this is a revolution, etc. You know, we're going to kind of push the boundaries of the state; we're going to take more direct power and so on. But I mean where does it take you eventually? I'm not saying it by way of a judgement but I'm saying the difficulty with that is how do you apply this uniformly across the country? What rules do you put into place? What mechanisms do you establish to get them set up and so on? Because these things happen spontaneously and so on, right? Whereas in many ways democracy has to be organised - I think that's the reality. I think you need rules, you need precepts, you know; … so there isn't an arbitrariness and there isn't a making up the rules as you go along … Because you want to ensure equality and you want to ensure fairness and all those sorts of natural-justice principles. How do you make sure that everyone has an equal chance to be part of an organ of popular power? So it's a very nice romantic notion of organs of popular power ..; [but]… you need to organise yourselves and I think that's the difficulty" (Interview: 20 May 2013).

Seedat's observation speaks to a number of the challenges highlighted by participatory democracy's critics, as well as by those radical democrats seeking to extend and deepen democracy without undermining individual freedom and political choice. Ensuring equal access to participatory structures and preventing their domination by narrow interest groups, are challenges raised by various development theorists (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Cornwall 2008). It is interesting that Seedat considered the ANC to have never clearly thought about *how* people's power as a conceptual ideal could be successfully translated into an implementable model: "A representative component is a necessary but insufficient condition, as we put it. But to make that more than just a sufficient condition was what we had to kind of figure out and I don't think we really got to grips with that" (Interview: 20 May 2013). Wooldridge similarly reasoned that, although she felt most people were committed to the principle of participation, "when it came down to what it would mean in practice there were a lot of diverging views" (Interview: 12 March 2013).

In suggesting possible reasons for the challenges facing policy makers, Seedat highlights both the imperatives of delivery but also the difficulty of translating ideas into a realisable policy:

> "… I think there were several reasons probably. Maybe the one was that we hadn't been able to figure out how we actually do this, practically. Because if you work in the state, broadly defined, you have to agree on a set of ideas which are implementable, which are rational, which can be described in policies and legislation and so on. You can't put philosophical notions down; I mean you can but you have to boil it down to nuts and bolts and I don't think we were ever able to do that effectively." (Interview: 20 May 2013).

Reflecting on these comments, there is value in considering the extent to which policy-makers in the ANC either felt that the principles they once held now belonged to a period of history, versus the extent to which the realities of governing simply instilled in them a new pragmatism.

The required overhaul of local government after 1990 also loaded the policy agenda with an array of foundational and structural challenges that demanded attention before citizen participation could be contemplated. Moreover, the introduction of a system of representative democracy itself was no mean feat. Wooldridge remarked that "the idea of representative, like very old fashioned, representative democracy was still new enough in terms of getting it working on the ground that a lot of people ended up pouring their energy into that" (Interview: 12 March 2013). Similarly, Suttner noted that the ANC's Department of Political Education had poured its effort into electoral education in the run up to 1994, such that attention was diverted from the issue of popular power (Interview: 25 October 2012). Due to the power-sharing arrangement between 1994 and 1999, Wooldridge also remarked that political considerations effectively put the brakes on what could be achieved in terms of a more radical form of democracy:

> "My sense of it when editing was you can't really say too much about just how you envisage local government participation working when that local government isn't going to be representative, it's power-sharing … we were tied into that deal. We knew it before we wrote one word of the White Paper. And I mean there was a lot of really nice stuff coming from NGOs, Planact, the Urban Sector Network, but, ja, there was a real caution in terms of how that was received and what we would want to write in, in the sense that we were giving away additional power to somebody for an election term." (Interview: 12 March 2013).

Her comment speaks to the concern raised earlier that participatory arrangements could be utilised by the Right to entrench existing interests and local political strongholds: "I think there was quite a lot of holding back and let's agree what we can and what we can live with for this power sharing period that will put something in place but let's also not over-commit and create structures that we're basically inviting the opposition to take over" (ibid.).

The challenges of devising practical mechanisms for participation have a knock-on effect at the implementation stage. Referring to the IDP process during his time working in the City of Joburg, Seedat commented that, despite real commitment to making it work, "we were really struggling, methodologically, … to find the right kind of ways of actually doing this" (Interview : 20 May 2013). He referred to the large public meetings held as part of the IDP as being "a good PR exercise in many ways" but that they did not yield the sort of results they were looking for (ibid.). Successfully enabling the participatory principle to gel with bureaucratic process and structures also remained elusive:

> "The way a bureaucracy is organised is very different to what people actually need … Communities think about their lives in a much more integrated way but bureaucracies are necessarily organised on a sectoral basis. So that becomes the difficulty in trying to match what people on the ground are saying … and how to transpose it into the bureaucracy. And that's why we were struggling for a long time with this stuff" (ibid.).

Government departments do, however, appear to be aware of such challenges. The DPLG's National Policy Framework on Public Participation states:

> "It is widely accepted that it is a challenge for governments to design and implement effective forms of public participation. Doing this well requires participatory institutions and practices that (i) aim at empowering citizens in meaningful ways whilst simultaneously taking into account (ii) real world conditions, including experience from elsewhere in the world, but especially the conditions of local governance in South Africa, and (iii) the broader legislative and policy context which frames institutional design. At its heart the challenge is one of *balancing lofty ambitions with the real-world constraints*" [emphasis added] (2007: 11)

Nonetheless, Seedat added to his own observations the tremendous value of the IDP process in identifying and understanding communities' needs. Such engagement, he argued, gave the City of Joburg a good sense of what people on the ground were saying. In circumstances where there was insufficient budget to cater for particular demands, officials were at least able to gain a sense of where money needed to be directed (ibid.). The process also enabled the City to identify broader, underlying challenges.

Some of the obstacles to implementation highlight the broader challenge of citizen education. Former Minister of the DPLG, Sydney Mufamadi, referred to participatory democracy as "knowledge-intensive". As such, he observed that there is sometimes a discrepancy between the aspiration of a policy and the reality:

> "Experiences made us to understand that any participatory system of government is a knowledge-intensive system because *it presupposes that people know something*. If you say integrated development planning, if you are dealing with a community in which there is a level of illiteracy which is as high as seventy per cent, *theoretically people have got this right but they don't have the means to exercise it* … So it imposes other obligations: how do you equip people to enable them to exercise these rights that they have? So these rights are not self-enforcing … there are issues of civic education that arise" [emphasis added] (Interview: 26 November 2012).

That being said, pragmatism was not the only factor guiding policy makers. In reference to drafting the constitution, Valli Moosa, noted some 'tension' between the approach of those in the ANC who had spent their time in exile and those with a background in the MDM, suggesting that "there wasn't that same level of consciousness about the need to involve ordinary people" (Interview: 30 April 2013). While "it was almost automatic" for those from the MDM that they would have to set up a participatory process, he remarked that, for others, "it wasn't an automatic instinctive thing, I think. And people didn't always think that it was workable or that it was practical to want to consult fairly uneducated people about the constitution" (ibid.).

Moosa's comments speak also to the conceptual divergences within the ANC about the role and future of people's power: between those for whom it represented a democratic ideal and a pre-figurative form of democracy, and those for whom it was rather a means for the establishment of what Suttner referred to as "the people's government". The 'romanticism' of the 1980s and the possibilities for people's power began to clash with the 'realism' after 1994 of what was both possible and desirable. The emergence of this realist sentiment within the ANC was at various stages prompted and reinforced by various factors, including shifts in ideology, a realignment of democratic thinking, the pragmatism of implementation, and the exigencies of state delivery, all of which overlapped with efforts to introduce the system of participatory governance.

5.4. Institutionalising Participation

5.4.1. Ward Committees

The institutionalised mechanisms for participatory democracy in South Africa take a variety of forms, the primary one being the local government ward committee. The idea of ward

committees was introduced in the Local Government White Paper, and subsequently legislated in the 1998 Municipal Structures Act. Municipal policy frames the role of ward committees as: "the facilitation of local community participation in decisions which affect the local community, the articulation of local community interests, and the representation of these interests within the metropolitan government system" (RSA 1998a: section D.2.3.3). According to the DPLG, the ward committee is also conceived as playing a critical role in specified participatory processes such as Community-Based Planning, IDP and performance management (2007).

Most ward committees were established in 2001 following the 2000 local government elections. Exceptions to this were in the Western Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal where provincial governments opted not to adopt the ward committee system until 2004 (DPLG & GTZ, 2005b: 22). In 2005, the DPLG stated that "the establishment of ward committees is still at an early stage, and a great deal of capacity-building still needs to be undertaken" (2005a: 8). Notably, the minimal entrenchment and success of the system seems to have triggered the publication of a range of guidance to support and improve the ward participatory system. Key documents which those establishing ward committees are encouraged to refer to include: Having Your Say: A Handbook for Ward Committees (DPLG & GTZ 2005a); the National Ward Committee Resource Book (DPLG & GTZ 2005b); and the 2005 National Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Municipal Ward Committees (DPLG 2005b).

The National Guidelines are intended "to provide uniform and simplified guidelines to ward committee members, ward councillors and metropolitan and local municipalities on the establishment and operation of ward committees" (DPLG 2005b), while the Having Your Say Handbook "aims to provide handy hints, practical ideas and guidance for running ward committees" (DPLG & GTZ 2005a). In addition, some municipalities may also have their own 'Public Participation Policy'. Amongst these resources is a skills programme from the DPLG which provides certification to ward committee members. This not only entrenches certain standards but is a means of upskilling community members that is given recognition through a national qualification. The module draws on materials developed by NGOs including EISA, Planact, the Foundation for Contemporary Research, and the Open Society Foundation. Some of the DPLG's resources also use examples of existing good practice, drawing on positive experiences in model wards where ward committees and citizen involvement have been established successfully.

The ward committee is of course a structure of the broader DLG model. As such, the ideas informing it draw on the theoretical currents discussed already: traditions of popular participation, radical democratic theory, participatory development, participatory governance, and performance management. It is the ward committee specifically that is identified as the mechanism for government to work with communities and fulfil the White Paper objective of democratising development. At the ANC's summit on provincial and local

government in December 2010, its discussion document stated that: “The ward committee system is aimed at giving expression to people-centred government and deepening community and public participation at a local level ... [W]ard committees have the opportunity to become the single and most elementary point of community and cooperative governance”. (ANC 2010: 17).

5.4.2. Sectoral Participation

In addition to the ward committee, sector-specific structures are also provided for local participation by citizens. Two key examples are Community Policing Forums (CPFs) and School Governing Bodies (SGBs). Although not falling within the remit of ‘local government’, CPFs and SGBs provide for local community-level participation in policing and schooling respectively.

The formation of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South Africa can be linked directly to the post-1976 discourse of ‘people’s education’. This was spearheaded in the 1980s by organisations such as the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) through which students, parents and teachers pushed for a say in the running of schools. The South African Schools Act (1996) and the Education White Paper (1996) provided for the establishment of SGBs as part of a broader reform of education whose principle purpose was “the democratisation of schooling” (Karlsson 2002: 328). The idea of SGBs is that they are constituted by those who have the most vested interests in the school: parents, teachers and learners (ibid.: 329).

Community Policing Forums (CPFs), in contrast to SGBs, are not purported to be a form of self-governance. Rather, they are “consultative” structures (DPLG 2007: 68). The South African Police Service (SAPS) Act of 1995 established and detailed the role of CPFs (Gordon 2001: 131), setting out their objectives as: “establishing and maintaining a partnership between the community and the Service” as well as promoting communication and co-operation; improving the rendering of police services to the community; improving transparency and accountability; and promoting joint problem-identification and problem-solving (RSA 1995: Section 18.1).

The idea of community input in local policing, however, was first mentioned in the Interim Constitution as a means of increasing police accountability to the community and encouraging community cooperation (RSA 1993: Section 221). According to Pelser, the idea emerged out of the 1991 Peace Accord between the ANC, the South African Government and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) following mounting violence and “evidence of police collusion” in Kwa-Zulu Natal and the Transvaal (1999: 3). The Accord included the provision that: “The police shall be guided by the belief that they are accountable to society in rendering their policing services … [T]he police shall endeavour to obtain the co-operation of the public whose partnership in the task of crime control and prevention is essential”

(1991, cited in Pelser 1999: 2). The idea of community-police cooperation thus seems to have emerged out of the need to reconcile community-police tensions and to make the police in a new South Africa legitimate and accountable to citizens (Gastrow & Shaw 2001: 262).

A further sectoral mechanism for participatory governance, this time at the national level, is the National Economic, Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). Established as a statutory body in 1995 NEDLAC's key function is to "consider all proposed labour legislation relating to labour market policy before it is introduced in Parliament; and consider all significant changes to social and economic policy before it is implemented or introduced in Parliament" (RSA 1994: Sections 5.1 and 5.2). NEDLAC is a classic 'corporatist' arrangement as defined by Held, constituting what he describes as "tripartite relations between organizations of employers, labour and the state, steered ultimately by the latter" (2006: 180). However, it also contains a fourth 'development' chamber in which relevant sectors of civil society are incorporated in the policy process (Friedman 2006: 2). Habib describes NEDLAC as "the vehicle by which government, labour, business, and community organisations negotiate agreements and policies that would, it is hoped, facilitate sustainable growth, greater social equity and increased participation of all stakeholders in the economy of the country" (1997: 65).

5.4.3. Public Meetings and Hearings

Another well-known, although non-statutory, mechanism designed to bring government closer to the people is the Executive's Imbizo Programme. The name *imbizo* (or *izimbizo* in its plural form) is derived from the Zulu term meaning "a calling-together". *Izimbizo* were started under former President Thabo Mbeki and incorporated a process in which members of the Executive including the President, government Ministers and Municipal Electoral Councillors (MEC) visit areas of South Africa to meet with communities in order to exchange views on service delivery (Government Communications Handbook 2000, cited in Hartslief 2009: 328).

At the provincial level, a similar principle is reflected in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature's (GPL) *Bua le Sechaba* programme, loosely translated as 'talking to the people'. In contrast to the executive *izimbizo*, provincial legislatures are multi-party oversight bodies. *Bua le Sechaba* is thus a way of taking the legislature to the people. The Head of the Public Participation and Petitions Unit at the GPL explained that "[it] seeks to go out to communities and to address issues at the source of the problem … it's 'talking to the people' to solicit their views on service delivery issues" (Mogale Interview: 9 April 2014).

The exercise of public participation in the national and provincial government spheres is guided, respectively, by sections 59 and 118 of the Constitution. A key mechanism in both of these is the conduct of public hearings on draft legislation. Public hearings largely take place through the committee system. Parliamentary or legislative committees are formed on the

basis of a particular policy field or sector and have powers to "monitor, investigate, enquire into and make recommendations" relating to the legislative programme and process (Parliament of South Africa 2001). It is through committees that the public is able to influence the policy process and engage in oversight of the executive.

5.5. Ideas and Conceptions in Institutionalised Participation

While there are a variety of ways and processes through which citizens can communicate with government, it was noted at the outset of this thesis that we must allow for competing conceptions of participation. The following sections discuss the institutionalised forms of participation provided in South Africa, drawing out the particular ideas that have shaped them and the form of participation they entail

5.5.1. Placation

The ward committee system is one of the most extensive forms of institutionalised participatory democracy. Despite the production since 2005 of a series of guides and handbooks to assist and support the establishment of ward committees, the system continues to have limited success in realising its legislated role. As such, the roots of these policy ideas are worth examination. Notably, in contrast to the participatory and empowering function assigned to ward committees today, they seem originally to have been conceived, not as mechanisms for empowered local government but as a concession to the opposition.

Dominique Wooldridge, who was part of the 1998 Local Government White Paper's editorial team, remarked that although she felt the ANC-camp was generally committed to participatory principles and to the importance of building a strong civil society, the push to locate participatory democracy at the lowest level of government was a position adopted by the Right (Interview: 12 March 2013). For opposition parties whose constituents resided in the white suburbs, small local government and retention of their own tax base would not only preserve the existence of white enclaves but also give them greater autonomy (Boraine Interview: 21 May 2013):

> "At the time, the kind of strategy-side was arguing that we need to push everything as low as possible. And while normally that sounds like a good idea, in an apartheid city it's not a good idea. What it really means is if you fragment things far enough you have some people who have no resources. So in a way it was very awkward because here we were the good guys on the side of democracy and participation and so on, arguing against that in order to not get, and not end up supporting, a fragmented city and a fragmented tax base! … It led to some very weird things like right-wings arguing for local-level participation!" (Wooldridge Interview: 12 March 2013).

Ironically, then, the case for decentralisation and local-level power, both of which were features of civic and UDF discourse, in fact possessed the potential to *limit* transformation. Wooldridge suggests that the ward committee system was largely proposed as a way to placate opposition parties: meeting them half-way and granting communities a degree of local autonomy, while the ANC continued to push the case for a single tax base. As such, while ward committees have since been located as a centrepiece of democratic local government, they were, according to Wooldridge, not originally conceived as an empowering mechanism:

> "[T]o a large extent the idea of ward committees was a fob. They were adopted nationally as a way of kind of sweetening the pill, or trying to sweeten the pill, so we said it's not a move to macro-government because there are these small ward committees … So, I mean I'm crudifying it a bit but that's my broad sense of it; that there wasn't that much commitment to establishing ward committees or any smaller level of really empowered government" (ibid.).

The ANC's aversion to small local government is certainly logical. In order to fulfil the RDP's transformative objectives - for which local government was the primary vehicle - the devolution of powers to existing communities of privilege would prevent the realisation of transformation as well as restrict the power of national government to effect change at the local level.

During discussion on the Municipal Structures Bill in 1998, concerns were raised by the DP and IFP that it still allowed too much involvement of national government in the affairs of local government (Constitutional Affairs Portfolio Committee: 1 September 1998). Although the DP and IFP had their own motives for ensuring the autonomy of their communities, recent research on the ward committee system has identified the insufficient powers held by local councillors as a hindrance to its effectiveness (Benit-Gbaffou 2008).

The purely 'advisory' role allocated to ward committees would indeed support the contention that they were never envisaged as providing a substantial degree of local control. Moreover, although White Paper discussions on aspects such as social housing drew on participatory traditions, Wooldridge noted that these debates took place quite separately from those on ward committees. She also added that the committee meetings in which debates about democracy and participation were taking place were often those considered less urgent (Interview: 12 March 2013).

5.5.2. Informing, Consulting and Aspiring to Empower

The Municipal Systems Act (2000) builds on the constitutional provision for communities to be involved in the matters of local government and to be encouraged to participate in policy-making (RSA 1996: Chapter 7). The Act sets out the local council's duty to develop a

system of participatory governance; create conditions for the community to participate in municipal affairs; and build the community's capacity to participate (RSA 2000: Chapter 4, Section 16). Worth noting, however, is that it is only the section of the Act which lists the *rights of the community* (rather than the *duties of the council*) that makes any reference to citizens contributing to decision-making processes (RSA 2000: Chapter 2, Section 5). As with the White Paper, no definition or elaboration is provided as to what 'participating' or 'contributing' means.

According to Theron and Ceasar (2008: 112-113), South Africa's local government IDP strategy is based on the core values set out by IAP2. This includes the specification that public participation "is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process" (IAP2 2007b). It also includes "the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision" and that their input will be actively sought (ibid.). IAP2 has also produced a 'Spectrum of Public Participation' not dissimilar to Arnstein's ladder which includes the ascending categories of: inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower (IAP2 2007a). From a reading of South Africa's legislation on the ward participatory system, the notion of 'participation' conceived there seems to correlate to the IAP2 categories of 'informing' and 'consulting', as well as, in some instances, 'involving'.

Inform: "to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions."

Consult: "to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions."

Involve: "to work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered."

SOURCE: IAP2 'Spectrum of Public Participation', 2007.

The DPLG's National Policy Framework on Public Participation (2007), despite making continued reference to 'empowering' ward committees and communities, does not make use of 'empowerment' as a category of participation. Instead, it states that the legislation requires municipalities to either "inform", "consult" or "involve" communities, depending on the type of communication required (ibid.: 45-6).

Having said this, the document also asserts that municipalities must "empower and support" ward committees and IDP forums (2007: 13), while the overarching term "public participation" is understood to mean "an open, accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence

decision-making" (ibid.: 15). 'Involvement' is understood by the DPLG to mean "an active working relationship between the public (represented by ward committees and stakeholder groups) and the municipality in order to ensure that concerns and issues raised by the community are directly reflected in the way the municipality deals with it" (2007: 48). In the DPLG's interpretation, therefore, 'involvement' implies some community share in decision-making processes.

The National Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Municipal Ward Committees assert that ward committees should "ensure the active participation of the community in … decisions about the provision of municipal services; and decisions about by-laws" (DPLG 2005b). Where citizens participate in the making of decisions and, most importantly, *have influence* over the decisions reached - in other words, their "concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered" (IAP2 2007) - then participation could be deemed as 'involvement'. For Everatt (et al), participation fundamentally requires "the transfer of decision-making power and resource allocation decisions from state to citizens" (2010: 225). The DPLG's ward committee handbook is more explicit than the municipal legislation in this regard, stating that the role of ward committees is not only to "raise issues of concern" but also "to have a say in decisions, planning and projects that the council or municipality undertakes" (DPLG & GTZ 2005a: 5).

However, it is difficult to see how the mechanisms put forward for public participation are able to 'empower' communities in any real sense. Despite the DPLG's claim to, at least, aspire to the 'involvement' of communities, the key mechanisms put forward for public participation - the ward committee and the IDP forum - *do not carry decision-making powers.* The ward committee is as "an advisory body" (DPLG 2005b) and the IDP forum is considered a "consultative forum and not a decision-making one" (DPLG 2007: 14). There is no detail in the DPLG's Guidelines (2005b) as to what councils will 'do' with the input from residents, nor is there any explanation as to how this might constitute 'involvement' as the DPLG itself defines it. The effectiveness of participatory institutions in generating greater citizen control thus also depends on their relationship with the institutions of representative democracy.

As such, despite the use of language indicating a more radical and empowering form of participation, Buccus (et al) argue that key legislation and policy frames public participation "mostly as consultation rather than formal empowerment" (2007: 3). Indeed, in certain instances only 'informing' is required, thus constituting a unidirectional communication channel from council to community. In line with this 'consultative' approach, municipalities are required to seek the input and views of the community but are not obliged to take on board their recommendations. Indeed, Sydney Mufamadi referred to the role of ward committees and the IDP as being one of consultation (Interview: 26 November 2012).

Understandably, the DPLG's guidance and handbooks are more detailed about the role of ward committees than is municipal legislation. However, ***there is also a greater emphasis in the guidance and handbooks on the participation of ward committees in decision-making - something which is not so explicit in legislation.*** The training material for ward committees on public participation in local governance gives the sense that community participation via the ward committee can lead to a tangible degree of community control and influence. The training module for ward committees lists the benefits to the ward:

> "Citizen focused service delivery … [in which] the municipality responds to the needs of the community rather than imposes its ideas on the community; municipalities can tap into the resources in the community; communities have a wide range of skills and experience that can benefit the municipality; … the community develops ownership for the projects being implemented; … the community has a better understanding of a project and its objectives; … it makes the legislation to encourage public participation a reality" (DPLG & LGSETA 2007: 22).

This training material, as well as other handbooks, has been compiled for the DPLG by NGOs such as EISA. It, again, taps into the idea of democracy as developmental and educative (c.f. Macpherson 1977 and Pateman 1970), thus producing citizens who are better informed and empowered.

On the issue of citizen influence, *Izimbizo* are also relevant. The tradition of these 'callings together' can be traced back to the gatherings of communities and their leaders in pre-colonial Africa. The *imbizo,* as present policy, thus brings together the indigenous tradition of the pre-colonial forum with contemporary governance processes in what Hartslief refers to as "a process of listening to the people, prior to decision-making" (2009: 330). In her research on the Presidential *imbizo*, Hartslief (2009) provides a particularly positive account of its effectiveness as a participatory mechanism, linking the ethos of the *imbizo* to the participatory tradition of the ANC itself, with particular reference to the 1955 COP.

Analysis of the *imbizo*, however, reveals it to be more of a feedback mechanism than a forum that influences decision-making. Whereas the demands collated through the COP campaign served to inform the drafting of the Freedom Charter, views gathered at *izimbizo* provide *feedback on existing delivery*. They do not inform the design or content of a particular policy. Moreover, as argued in Chapter Two, the COP itself largely fulfilled a mobilising function. The process that Bernstein referred to, of "listening to and learning from the people" (1999: 150), did not signify any transference of decision-making powers or influence to participants themselves.

The provincial *Bua le Sechaba* serves a similar function to the *imbizo,* acting as an "oversight mechanism" of delivery by provincial government (Mogale Interview: 9 April 2014). *Bua le Sechaba* does not seek feedback alone, however. Rather, it acts as a fact-finding exercise in

which the legislature's committees gain an idea of the lay of the land in a particular community or setting, and people are "able to channel their concerns and issues to various committees" (ibid.). It also has a clearer process than *izimbizo* of tracking issues raised by the community, with a follow-up meeting one year later. The very same stakeholders will be present, as well as relevant government departments who provide a report-back to the community on how the issues they raised are being addressed (ibid.).

The effectiveness with which the GPL conducts such activities is arguably related to scale and the greater proximity of provincial legislatures to their residents. Moreover, while the provincial legislatures are required constitutionally "to facilitate public involvement" (RSA 1996: Section 118), this is not a constitutional requirement of the executive: the presidential *izimbizo* are conducted on a non-statutory basis. Hartslief's analysis of the *imbizo* seems to somewhat overestimate its potential to serve an educative and empowering function. She describes the expression of the public's views as "significant forces of influence" (2009: 335). Yet by virtue of being a method of garnering *feedback* from communities, participation is essentially tagged onto the end of the policy process, providing government with an evaluating mechanism subsequent to both design and implementation.

Arguably, of course, provision for citizens to influence policy design lies elsewhere, for example in the requirement on national government to encourage and facilitate public comment on draft policies. However mechanisms such as public hearings and consultations on draft policy are not themselves especially radical, nor do they grant citizens any degree of control. In and of itself, the *imbizo* does not constitute a decision-making forum. Community feedback may assist government departments to guide their future programmes and priorities but this is by no means guaranteed, nor is there a consistent system of accountability and follow-up after an *imbizo* takes place.

Kondlo argues that to render the *imbizo* more effective as an instrument of participatory governance, "attention [must] be given to design and content issues first, and then coordination, follow-up and implementation" (2010: 384). Former civic activist and SANCO leader Thozamile Botha, who became Deputy Director General in the DPLG between 1994 and 1997, remarked that the people's parliaments currently held by the executive branch are not comparable to what he had in mind as 'people's assemblies' during discussions on the local government model (Interview: 14 April 2014). He remarked: "those people's parliaments, they just go, brief people, make political statements and, of course, people are able to ask questions. I don't know in reality what happens to that" (ibid.).

On the other hand, former Premier of Gauteng, Paul Mashatile, who undertook *izimbizo* amongst communities in the province, views them as an important method of public participation (Interview: 21 February 2013). He did recognise weaknesses in the system, however, emphasising the need for *izimbizo* to be better developed as *empowering*

mechanisms - an approach which again reflects a desire for state and society to work together:

> "[Izimbizo] must be designed not just as complaint sessions. I think we must be able to say to people. 'Yes, we hear you but what do you think should be done? What do you think your role is?' I think we must find a way of using them to empower the communities rather than waiting for government to deliver" (Interview: 21 February 2013).

Mashatile's comment speaks to numerous strands of participatory discourse: the centrality of governance; the role of partnership between state and society; the importance of empowerment rather than passivity; and government's preference for constructive input and support from citizens rather than merely 'complaints'. State-initiated mechanisms for participation are designed to facilitate such structured input. At the provincial and national level, there are mechanisms other than *izimbizo* to provide for citizen participation. Although they may not involve the same degree of unmediated contact between government and people, these alternatives may be more effective in achieving public influence over policy.

In the case of the national assembly, parliamentary committees have oversight over the national executive and national government departments, while provincial legislative committees have oversight over the provincial executive and provincial government departments. The committee system provides public hearings on draft bills, as well as consultations in which the public are invited to make written or oral submissions. It is notable that Sydney Mufamadi, reflecting on the principle that 'the people shall govern', referred to its practical application by drawing on the public consultations held by government departments and parliamentary committees during the process of drafting policy (Interview: 26 November 2012). He also viewed the role of civil society in participatory democracy as taking place through such processes as public comment and input on published bills (ibid.). However, citizen influence in consultations may vary and it is not clear to what extent views submitted by the public, as individuals or organised groups, will be incorporated in policy development. As Arnstein argues "if consulting … is not combined with other modes of participation … [it]… is still a sham since it offers no assurance that citizen concerns and ideas will be taken into account" (1969: 219).

At the provincial level, a good example of the consultation process can be found in the GPL's public petitions process. The Petitions Act (2002) "encourages the people of Gauteng to petition and make submissions to the Petitions Standing Committee of the GPL" (GPL 2011: 27). This process allows citizens to petition the legislature on particular issues within its jurisdiction and allows the public to access the oversight function of the legislature. When petitions are raised around issues such as housing or municipal billing, for example, the Petitions Committee will bring together the relevant municipal authorities and managers, as

well as the affected community. The Committee also has the power to subpoena structures that do not comply (Interview, Mogale: 9 April 2013). In addition to receiving submissions from the public, the Committee also undertakes public hearings in communities on a quarterly basis (ibid.).

Via the GPL, citizens can also petition their local authority. According to Tiragalo Mogale, who heads the Public Participation and Petitions Unit at the GPL, local authorities in the province have responded positively and take the petitions process "very seriously" (ibid.). In addition to assisting walk-in cases where people wish to make a petition in person, the Unit runs workshops to educate people about the petitions process. In the GPL's Public Participation Strategy, educating the public and generating greater knowledge about how citizens can participate in legislative processes appears to be a key priority (GPL 2011: 20).

At first, public consultations and hearings would seem to be a less radical model of democracy than the local government ward committee which provides for regular, structured contact between councillor and community. However the ward committee is an advisory body only and there is no guarantee that its input will be taken on board by the municipal council. In contrast, the GPL's Public Participation Strategy, which draws on the IAP2 core values, asserts not only "that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process" but also that "public participation includes *the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision*" [emphasis added] (2011: 11). One of the objectives of the petitions process is that "policy imperatives should be derived from lodged petitions" (GPL 2011: 27).

Interestingly, the GPL's strategy document makes reference to the example of Porto Alegre in Brazil as a model of citizen participation in budget formulation (GPL 2011: 16-17; Mogale Interview: 9 April 2013). The budgeting process in Gauteng may be a far cry from the Porto Alegre model where citizens have substantial influence and responsibilities in the budgeting process. In South Africa, public recommendations on budget priorities are sought but the degree and scope of participation is not especially extensive. Nonetheless, the GPL asserts that "the committee report on the budget vote *must reflect public inputs* during hearings and other public participation activities [emphasis added] (2011: 25). It adds that "the public act as a source of verification on budget priorities in line with service delivery priorities" but also that the public "develop recommendations for future budget priorities" (ibid.: 26).

The GPL also undertakes sector parliaments to inform policy-making processes "as part of channelling issues and interests within different sectors of society" (ibid.: 28). Sectors include women, youth, workers, senior citizens and the disabled. Due to sector parliaments themselves not having an 'official status', it is required that their "resolutions … be tabled in the House, by the relevant committee for adoption". Issues raised by sector parliaments must then be "factored into the committee processes" (ibid.: 28-9). In this sense, comparing the GPL's initiative to IAP2's spectrum of participation, it could potentially constitute a form

of 'involvement' in which elected institutions "work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered" (IAP2 2007a).

Overall the public participation strategy of the GPL falls in line with the legislature's own oversight role of legislative implementation and delivery. However it is also guided by principles of openness, transparency, accountability and oversight. In a sense, these provincial-level mechanisms allow for citizen initiative and explicitly seek citizen input for incorporation into policies, plans and budgets. The GPL's strategy describes participation as "a process wherein people exercise their collective and individual initiatives to promote their interests in decision-making" (2011: 13). It includes the premise of both the "strengthening of participatory democracy" and "a need to allow citizens, especially the disadvantaged and marginalised, to be heard on issues that affect them" (ibid.).

At the same time, despite their stated ambitions, some policy documentation reflects a failure to distinguish between the different types of participation offered. The GPL, for example, lumps the Thusong Service Centres together with the ward committee and *imbizo* as forms of "extended engagement, access and participation" (GPL 2011: 19). While ward committees and *izimbizo* have their own limitations as participatory forums, the Thusong Service Centres are not a forum for participatory democracy in any sense. They are rather designed as accessible, one-stop community centres that can assist citizens to access government services. While constituting a valuable initiative in itself, there is no suggestion that these centres involve community participation in policy or decision-making processes. Rather, they "aim to empower the poor and disadvantaged through access to information, services, resources and technology" (Office of the Presidency 2010: 30).

Although both national and provincial policy draws on democratic and development theory, there is little recognition that certain mechanisms do not so much represent forms of participatory democracy, as they do mechanisms for consultation or merely information. Participation is, in this case, truncated and fails to involve any real degree of citizen control, delegated power or partnership.

5.5.3. Partnership

5.5.3.1. Partnership: Legitimation and Consensus

A further role of the ward committee is its function as an interface between community and council: "an institutionalised channel of communication and interaction between communities and municipalities" (DPLG & GTZ 2005b: 20). The DPLG's policy framework, in fact promotes a shift in focus from citizens as passive recipients, toward communities working in partnership with the municipality: "What this framework advocates is a partnership approach between citizens and government, moving to citizens represented by ward committees having recognised powers, with delegated responsibilities. In other words,

we are aiming to move beyond a rhetoric of participation, to practical means of empowering citizens to take charge of their own development, in partnership with government" (2007: 17).

On the 'partnership' rung of Arnstein's ladder, power is "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" (1969: 221). In other words, citizen and government *work together*. IAP2 instead use the term 'collaborate', meaning "to partner with the public in each aspect of the decision" (2007), an idea which aligns with international discourse on good governance generally.

It is not clear, however, that the partnership envisaged between community and council fits the notion of shared decision-making. Existing research suggests that it veers toward a method of legitimating decisions already taken, rather than ceding real influence to communities. In Everatt (et al's) research on the IDP process in Gauteng, one IDP coordinator referred to public participation as lending "legitimacy to the plans the city puts on the table" (cited in 2010: 227-8), a comment which suggests that what is sought is not the community's input but their endorsement of the council's plans. It was also noted that "[the IDP is] important for us because we need to enforce the things we bring on the table" (ibid.: 2010: 228).

This raises issues about the type of participation taking place. Everatt (et al) link the IDP to a 'corporatist' style approach in which the value of public participation is the legitimacy it lends to development processes and initiatives (ibid.). The mere occurrence of a public participation exercise may be taken as validation from the community of the municipality's plans. It also highlights a form of democracy based on the achievement of consensus. Consensus-based democracy is by no means *un*democratic, and one might argue that for the participatory planning processes to work, a level of consensus or agreement is fundamental.

However, if a participatory process either *limits* or *skips* the deliberative stage, while still seeking consensus¸ participation may simply be consultation or even tokenism. What manifests then is a unitary form of democracy - a model whose logic, Mansbridge argues, is based on the existence of a collective who have identical or common interests (1983: 24-27). Where interests collide, then ensuring that all participants have equal influence over decision-making is all the more important. In a unitary model, decisions may be taken *prior* to the participatory forum itself or by those who hold greater power or influence. Mansbridge also highlights how participants may then feel unable to challenge or oppose what is purportedly in the 'common interest' (1983).

Critics have therefore highlighted participatory democracy's tendency to minimise the conflict inherent to democracy by treating people/participants as a homogenous whole (see, e.g. Mouffe 2000). During the hearings on the Local Government White Paper, one participant highlighted as problematic the IDP model's assumption "[of] a shared view about what needs to be done and what is the common goal" (Constitutional Affairs Portfolio Committee, 22 April 1998). Dominique Wooldridge, reflecting on the local government green paper process, remarked that it had been very participatory and that everybody got to comment on it (Interview: 12 March 2013). When it came to the white paper, however, she remarked that "participation was much more structured and things were kept much more in the ANC caucus; like real debate. We'd kind of decide what to say before a public thing not at a public thing. And it became more of a policy process" (ibid.).

Returning again to the IDP, informing communities of municipal budgets and development plans is imperative. It enables citizens to exercise their right to participation in an informed manner. However, this does not *in itself* guarantee community ownership or control. Part of the discourse of participation in the ward-based planning model highlights low expectations amongst policy makers and practitioners as to the capacity of communities to provide input. Issues such as low literacy levels, for example, present an enormous challenge to the engagement of communities in exercises like participatory budgeting - a factor which reinforces Mufamadi's comment that citizens' right to participate is not "self-enforcing" (Interview: November 2012).

Illiteracy amongst communities presents a genuine obstacle to participation, and is not something municipalities can rectify overnight. Yet there is also some evidence that the *value* of citizen input is not appreciated. Everatt (et al's) research on the IDP in Gauteng revealed how the process was sometimes seen as little more than an obligation, undertaken only due to legal requirement. Interestingly, this view is reflected not only amongst municipal officials but amongst communities themselves (2010: 227-9). As such the underlying philosophy that "development … is about active involvement and growing empowerment" (ANC 1994a) is undermined, not only by emphases on participation *qua* consultation but by the presence of a view of participation as obligatory.

In other cases, officials may be more vehemently dismissive of public input, seeing it as incidental to the planning process. Buccus et al (2008: 302) note the opinion amongst some council officials that "they know what people want and therefore participation is not necessary". A 'top official' in one municipality is quoted as saying "we know what people's needs are, and what they will be for the next 100 years, only the rank order will change" (ibid). This highlights not only the primacy placed on experts but also traits of elitist democracy in which public participation is viewed as leading to instability and poor policy choices. Indeed, the above quote reflects the sentiment that 'government know best'.

In light of this, it is encouraging that Everatt et al's research on the IDP revealed that, for some officials, "the democratizing potential of participation held the most attraction" (2010: 229). This perhaps shows that targeted guidance for municipalities, emphasising the values and objectives of participation, and not just the methods, can indeed pay off. The DPLG Ward Committee Resource Book, compiled by Idasa and Afesis-Corplan, in fact emphasised that "these strong policy provisions for public participation *will only be translated into reality* once they are broadly known to citizens and there is increasing awareness of the *existence and practical value* of ward committees" [emphasis added] (DPLG & GTZ 2005b).

It is also possible that broader city or district development objectives sit uneasily with the needs articulated by communities. Rashid Seedat, citing the example of the City of Joburg where he was Director of the unit responsible for strategic planning, including the IDP, gave the following example:

> "Every other ward is asking for a skills development hub; it's just really a reaction to the jobs crisis. And so people think if you build a skills building where you can train people in this or that then you will solve the unemployment problem. Well it doesn't quite work that way. But people believe that and that's why they will push for that. But on the other hand if you invest R250 million in improving the public transport system, which you can't pinpoint to a particular ward but you're improving the overall efficiency of the economy, you actually make a bigger impact in terms of investment and so on; you make your city more conducive to investment. So you have to constantly balance those things" (Interview: 20 May 2013).

This again points to the challenge of civic education around citizen participation, and the difficulties of balancing the demands of public sector performance (which may require the input of experts) with those of participation by ordinary citizens.

5.5.3.2. Partnership: Cooperation and Support

Just as guidance provided by the DPLG is intended to support municipal councillors, officials and ward committee members with the effective establishment and running of ward committees, so too is civic education important for citizens to play a partnership role with government. In a discussion of participation, Sydney Mufamadi placed the onus for civic education, in part, on South Africa's Chapter Nine institutions (Interview: 26 November 2012). These institutions, which include bodies such as the South African Human Rights Commission and Public Protector, are indeed pivotal in the promotion and protection of human rights. However, Mufamadi was also concerned that they should support and assist the state, rather than just act as a watchdog:

> "You have in the constitution, what you call 'Chapter Nine institutions' which exercise some sort of oversight over the activities of the state and

> so on. I always say these institutions must not see their role as one of just watching and recording whether the state is behaving according to the norms and the dictates of the constitution. They must also ask themselves whether they have a role to play in educating the people to be in a position to hold state organs to account for what they do" (ibid.).

Mufamadi also placed responsibility on citizens themselves. While recognising the infrastructural and service demands of communities as entirely legitimate, he remarked on citizens' "obligation to know what resources actually are at the disposal of these authorities", adding that "it's not only about what should be done but by what means" (ibid.). Notably, when asked about his view of the *role* of participation in local government within the broader scheme of South Africa's democracy, Mufamadi's emphasis was on the importance of people understanding the limitations on resources (and how to budget and prioritise accordingly), rather than on the democratic value of participation *per se*.

A discernible thread in the policy discourse of participation is thus the emphasis on citizens working with the state and not against it. This push for cooperation, however takes two forms: the first stems from the technocratic and performance-driven emphasis of NPM in which issues of development are depoliticised and controlled by experts. As highlighted earlier with respect to DLG, citizen involvement in decision-making is confined to the most local of issues: questions of strategic and ideological direction are not for popular debate but fall, rather, in the remit of central government.

In addition to this, a second current has emerged in which the limited capacity of the state itself has generated renewed interest on the part of the government in local-level initiative and community organisation. The ANC has expressed its unease at the rise of what have been commonly termed 'service delivery protests' (ANC 2012a: 15). Former Mayor of Joburg, Amos Masondo, remarked on the more cooperative role that citizens should play alongside government. While emphasising the importance of strong civil society formations, he also argued that it would be more effective if civil society engaged with the question of how it could *help* government, rather than just criticise it:

> "Civil society can't just become a voice that's critical of government. There must be an answer to the question: what is the developmental role, or what is the role of civil society on the question of development? So that whilst you criticise you are also seen to be practically engaging with all the issues … I don't think that part of the work is getting enough kind of focus, because you can't just be critical. I'm not saying that role shouldn't be played by civil society. But they should also be saying 'how do we help government?' Or 'how do we ourselves point out the way in government by doing certain practical work and engaging in broader society'?" (Masondo Interview: 13 March 2013).

Yunus Carrim also referred to organisations such as NGOs and CBOs as constituting 'organs of people's power', which he viewed as: "Any organisation whether national or local or provincial which actually seeks to advance the needs and interests of people on the ground who are disadvantaged" (Interview: 16 January 2013). He also recognised the role of extra-state methods of participation, such as community protest, as a non-institutionalised form of participation that "municipalities are forced to come to terms with" (ibid.). However, while noting that there is value to protest, Carrim remarked that "it would be more productive and they would be able to achieve far more if they also used state structures beside their own" (ibid.). Paul Mashatile also referred to the ANC's 2009 election slogan, 'Working Together', as signifying the desire "to move away from the notion that government delivers to you whilst you are sitting. We want to say to citizens, 'no, this is partnership, let's work together to do all these things'" (Interview: 21 February 2013).

There is also some encouragement - perhaps even nostalgia - for a form of 'partnership' in which government delivery is supplemented by forms of community self-help so prevalent in the 1980s. Mashatile, who was an activist in AYCO and later MEC for Safety in Gauteng, reflected on the impact of civil society's demobilisation after 1990:

> "I think that demobilisation of your civil society movement was not deliberate. But I think once we started grappling with governance I think there were weaknesses there; we were not able to maintain the balance so a lot of things shifted into governance and government and so on ... I think we need to be gradually assisting to ensure very vibrant organs of civil society; I think that's what we need because I think, sooner than we're there, we realised that government can't do everything on its own and that reality has dawned now to say that, you know, we need organs of civil society. We need people, because they will assist to get people involved, rather than people going out and then there's service delivery protests. Protest will always be there but you need a greater appreciation of people that this is also our responsibility to change the conditions and lives in our communities (Mashatile, Interview: 21 February 2013).

He linked the importance of a role for civil society to the introduction of structures such as constituency offices and ward committees but also to citizens' responsibility to help themselves. He went on to give an example of his own involvement in private fundraising initiatives for university education in Alexandra, where the message to communities was that "there are things we can do on our own" (ibid.). Mashatile linked this type of initiative to the self-organising ethos of the 1980s:

> "Government can put money to schools, assist with bursaries but we can also do it ourselves. So we go, we do fundraising, go out there, business people come, we raise funds ... And it's that kind of spirit that is required

> in our communities today because when we started with organs of people's power in the years of struggle it was more, we, the people, can do it, and we must not lose that" (ibid.).

Another mechanism for participatory governance, this time at the national level, is NEDLAC - a statutory, tripartite corporatist arrangement (of government, labour and business - plus in South Africa's case community organisations) to consider all proposed labour legislation and any significant changes to social and economic policy before it is introduced in Parliament (RSA 1994: Sections 5.1 and 5.2). Friedman observes that "those who are afforded a role in governance in this model are not being given a voice - because they are organised, they already have one. They are rather offered an opportunity to *express that voice directly* to the government and other key interests *in officially sanctioned channels and in ways which give them a guaranteed say in policy*" (2006: 4).

The very emergence of NEDLAC can be traced to the desire to resolve the historically antagonistic relations between labour and capital in South Africa through the development of a social contract and a strategy of 'strategic unionism'. Then editor of the South African Labour Bulletin, Karl von Holdt, described strategic unionism as "a step-by-step program of radical reforms — each of which extends the arena of democratic decision-making, and deepens the power of the working class" (1992, cited in Habib 1997: 63). NEDLAC is thus more than merely consultative. Representatives of labour and business are invited to join the policy making process itself.

Parallels can be seen here with the model of DLG: just as initiatives such as the ward committee and IDP reflect an increasing role for civil society and a shift away from top-down development, so does corporatism embody the ethos of state-society partnership characteristic of good governance generally. Simultaneously (and conveniently) it also complements the post-1994 government's own focus on national reconciliation and unity. Habib notes that NEDLAC's establishment was rooted in the attempt to establish a 'cooperative' policy-making process that would bring together "the three contending actors" and foster efforts "to consolidate national unity, reconciliation, and development" (1997: 65).

However, it is for these very reasons that corporatism has not been without criticism. It has not produced the radical form of working class power that its advocates in the labour movement might have hoped. The corporatist model is premised on the achievement of consensus. Friedman thus links its rationale to the recognition by governments that its goals cannot be achieved without the "acquiescence to or active support of organized private constituencies" (2006: 4). Corporatism's rationale is thus the desire for societal cooperation and support for government objectives. Formally corporatist arrangements like NEDLAC may therefore be utilised as legitimating mechanisms or provide endorsement of policy proposals *merely by virtue of the organised interests being present*. This is perhaps

comparable to the corporatist characteristics of IDP in which the value of public participation is the legitimacy it lends to the initiatives proposed by government (Everatt el al, 2010: 228)

Friedman explains corporatism's logic as follows:

> "The implicit or explicit expectation is that the organizations invited to participate will support decisions to which they are party – and will be able to bind their constituents to agreements. These arrangements, often justified as vehicles for enhancing values such as 'social partnership' and co-operation in the common interest are pragmatic devices to prevent resistance by, and induce co-operation from, organized interest groups" (2006: 4).

It is thus argued that corporatism is one method adopted by the ANC government to "neutralise opposition" to the new neo-liberal economic order (Habib 1997: 70-1). Moreover, NEDLAC is designed as a consensus-seeking structure, intended "[to] conclude agreements on matters pertaining to social and economic policy" (RSA 1994, Section 5.1). The contention that NEDLAC contributes to the *deepening* of democracy thus runs up against the same critique as participation in local government: ***citizen influence is confined to shaping social and economic policy within the existing ideological paradigm.***

Via NEDLAC, democracy may be broadened through the incorporation of organised groups. But the depth of their participation does not extend to delegated powers or control. While participatory democracy is regarded as being able to achieve both citizen empowerment and more efficient and sustainable development, Friedman notes that "there is an important difference between corporatism's concern to include organized groups in decisions so that they can bind their constituency to them and the assertion that people need to be heard so that their preferences will be known to planners and policy-makers" (2006: 5). As a participatory decision-making body, it is not clear that NEDLAC is premised on the latter.

The final structure for consideration here, whose role implies a form of partnership, is the CPF. The SAPS Act (1995) embraced a more extensive notion of consultation than that set out by the DPLG, advocating instead the idea of 'partnership' and 'cooperation' between communities and the police service (RSA 1995: Section 18.1). The Community Policing Policy Framework and Guidelines (1997) defined community policing "in terms of a collaborative, partnership-based approach to local level problem solving" (Pelser 1999: 4).

Similarly to the ward committee, there is a link between the community activist traditions of the 1980s and the idea of community policing as a form of crime prevention, emphasising "decentralized command, and community involvement" (Gordon 2001: 127). Gordon suggests that "the early proponents of CPFs were largely scholars and NGO representatives

outside the government, many of them former activists in the antiapartheid struggle" (ibid.). A tradition which fed into the community policing model was thus "a vision of democratic policing as a more communitarian process" (ibid.: 131). This, Gordon argues, was based on the "long tradition of organized self-help in many black communities" (ibid.). It also reflected the conceptual strand of people's power in which political democracy was fundamentally linked to the development of grassroots participation and institutions.

In this sense, the model of community policing builds not only on historic activist traditions in South Africa but also on revised approaches to local government in which democratic governance is about 'problem-solving' and developing "our collective capacity" (Cohen & Sabel 1997 cited in Stoker 2002: 32). The 1997 Policy Framework and Guidelines also include 'empowerment' amongst its core characteristics, defining this as "the creation of joint responsibility and capacity for addressing crime" (ibid.). This element of the policy speaks to radical democratic debates about the transformative nature of democracy, as well as its potential to be self-enforcing through the creation of publicly-minded citizens.

Parallels in the intellectual heritage of CPFs and DLG extend further to include the notion of governance associated with NPM. In line with the growing trend of state-society partnerships and the role of the state as a *facilitator* of development, rather than a deliverer, Pelser suggests that the idea of community policing "corresponds with the distinctive features of the neo-liberal model of community policing as it evolved in Western Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom" (1999: 5). Drawing on research by Shearing and McMahon (1998), he highlights the two "distinguishing features" of this model as, firstly, the "change in definition of the police from a 'force' to a 'service' … [including] … the development of 'consultative forums' designed to permit communities to make their policing concerns known"; and, secondly, "the re-conception of the police as people who enable communities to solve their own problems rather than as people who solve problems on their own" (cited in Pelser 1999: 5).

As such, Shearing and McMahon highlight that the neo-liberal agenda is encapsulated in the principles of: policing being shifted to "the civic realm"; "the use of non-state resources and knowledge"; and the rise of the private security sector (1998 cited in Pelser 1999: 5). They describe the South African approach as a partnership in which the state is "steering" and civil society/communities "rowing" (ibid.). Former MEC for Safety in Gauteng, Paul Mashatile expressed his support and encouragement of the CPF initiative as something that citizens could do to take initiative themselves: "to empower the communities rather than waiting for government to deliver" (Interview: 21 February 2013).

Although CPFs are not structures of DLG, they reflect a similar idea of bottom-up development alongside a more efficient and effective state. It is possible to see how participatory democracy is understood by policy makers as serving multiple purposes. Lechesa Tsenoli, Chairperson of the NLGNF and later of the CoGTA Portfolio Committee,

when asked whether structures such as ward committees, SGBs and CPFs represent contemporary 'organs of people's power', replied:

> "In a sense, yes. Yes, in other words, structures in which people themselves drive change; they define their agenda, they define its implementation, they define it's monitoring and evaluation. That's what we had in mind, because we recognised the state on its own would not be adequate for the task of dealing with people's problems in that area, without active involvement and participation of those organs of people's power, structures that involve citizens effectively engaging in that work" [emphasis added] (Interview: 11 March 2013).

Tsenoli's understanding thus drew not only on a notion of development as people-driven but also recognised the *limitations of the state-as-deliverer*. Therefore while inspired by past experiences of popular power, it is also not uncomplementary to the performance-driven trend which seeks an alternative to top-down, state-driven development initiatives. Organs of people's power are thus not understood only as government-initiated structures. Both Tsenoli and Carrim placed emphasis on the citizen/civil society component as crucial to present-day structures of people's power (Tsenoli, Interview: 11 March 2013; Carrim, Interview: 16 January 2013).

However, Gordon highlights an additional problem in the South African case. He argues that, contrary to the policy intent of the partnership-based model of policing, "once the legitimacy of the new government has been established the imperative of regime performance carries more weight than the need to deepen democracy" (2001: 121). The practice of participation thus comes up against citizens' own expectations of delivery. As such, the model of community policing has veered more towards its function as an assistance to the police - "gathering intelligence and improving public relations" (ibid.: 131) - rather than as the "arena of local democracy" that activists and scholars had envisaged (ibid). The battle between radicalism and realism once again rears its head.

Arguably, policy documents on CPFs, despite what their drafters may have intended, reflect the CPF's role as an *assistant* to the police. The structures certainly reflect an important means of citizen involvement in safety and crime-reduction. However they are not presented in legislation as *democratic* mechanisms or as a means of democratising local policing. They are, in the main, a method of tackling crime and improving police-community relations. In fact, the failure since 1994 to reduce South Africa's crime rate has exacerbated the shift toward focusing on police performance and tougher crime-fighting rather than on police-community partnerships (ibid.: 134-5). As with DLG, policing has become subject to the dual demands of performance and democracy: between reducing crime and ensuring public safety; and facilitating a process in which citizens and police collaborate and share responsibility for community safety.

In this context it is understandable that, much like the ward committee, the exigencies of public sector performance may render CPFs a legitimising structure which makes for good public relations while ticking the box of community consultation. Moreover, much like other participatory structures, the application of the notion of 'community' is not unproblematic (cf. Mohan 2001). It assumes that 'a community' is constituted of homogenous interests, and that those representing community members are able to speak for and articulate the interests of all rather than the few (Pelser 1999: 6). Nonetheless, the educative and upskilling potential of structures like the CPF should not be dismissed. Community forums for consultation and partnership can develop administrative and organisational skills amongst participants which can be replicated in other contexts, both public and private.

Having analysed the forms of partnership entailed in the preceding mechanisms, it is possible to conceive of it in three senses. In the first, as defined by Arnstein (1969) and IAP2 (2007a), 'partnership' is a form of ***collaboration*** involving the sharing or redistributing of power between state and citizens. Influence over decision-making is shared and citizen input is substantial. Importantly, it implies a *partnership between equals* such that each side holds equal right to influence the decision-making process and is equally able to access that right. This version of partnership is reflected in some of the DPLG's documentation on participatory governance which makes reference to shared responsibility and control. It falls short, however, of criteria for really empowering communities or institutionalising the mechanisms to make their 'influence' a reality.

In the second version, civil society's role is not only that of watchdog but of ***support*** **and** ***cooperation***. Where there is dissatisfaction, civil society structures have a duty to support government in its delivery. This may be done through assistance and cooperation with state structures to improve existing programmes, and/or by providing informed recommendations and suggestions to government rather than merely criticism. This form of participation is envisaged as taking place primarily through state-invited structures. The onus is placed on civil society not only to take advantage of the structures provided but also to assist the state in furthering civic education. An example of such partnership can be seen in the corporatist-type models of NEDLAC and the IDP, as well as in the arena of community policing. Indeed, the strands of participatory policy in South Africa which advocate a form of partnership fall mostly within this second category.

Thirdly, partnership can be understood in the sense of ***self-help*****.** Here, communities and civil society organisations are understood as needing to 'do their bit' through taking initiative and finding their own methods of development and access to resources. This current draws partly on a long-standing tradition of 'doing things for oneself'. The spirit and practice of self-help and community organising, as chapter three highlighted, constituted a visible strand of people's power. Moreover as Mashatile's comments imply, there is increasing recognition on the part of government that to address development challenges the

command of state power on its own is insufficient. This third category also complements trends in mainstream development which advocate greater reliance on market-driven development initiatives. It draws not only on citizens' responsibilities in partnership with the state but on the growing attraction of privatisation and the use of non-state resources in the advancement of development.

5.5.4. Confined Citizen Control

Although NEDLAC, CPFs and SGBs constitute sector-specific structures for participation, SGBs are addressed separately here by virtue of the type of participation involved. SGBs, introduced from 1996 as a method of democratising schooling, are constituted by parents, teachers and learners (ibid.: 329). Karlsson remarks that the inclusion of students, via a Learner's Representative Council (LRC), gives school learners an opportunity to "experience democracy in student affairs" and "to engage in democratic structures" (2002: 329). SGBs thus provide greater control by the school's community, as well as nurturing the 'educative' and developmental benefits of democracy highlighted by Pateman (1970) and Macpherson (1977).

The DPLG's National Policy Framework for Public Participation describes SGBs as being "legally responsible for the management of schools" (2007: 68). Notably, the earlier draft of this policy framework, referred to in some of the DPLG guidance, described SGBs as "[conforming] to the Self-Managing aspect of the Citizen Power in the ladder of participation" (sic) (2005a: 15). Analysis of the effectiveness of SGBs, however, suggests that, overall, participation serves the purposes of greater efficiency rather than democracy (Grant Lewis & Naidoo 2004: 108). Grant Lewis and Naidoo suggest that the SGB initiative is not translating into real empowerment of communities (ibid.). The setting of fees by SGBs - influenced by the socio-economic make-up of the parents - continues to reinforce existing patterns of exclusion (Karlsson 2002: 331). As such, while they may grant direct influence in decision-making to those who sit on the structure, Karlsson argues that there is no "mechanism for avoiding and overcoming a re-enactment of the traditional power relations in South Africa in terms of gender, class and race" (ibid.). In addition to the unintentional perpetuation of racial inequalities (ibid.; Grant Lewis & Naidoo 2004), good policy intentions in the remit of local schooling are hampered by the limited resources available to SGBs to tackle their development challenges (Karlsson 2002: 335).

Importantly, although SGBs represent a form of direct participation in decision-making by the school's stakeholders, like in the ward committee system it is confined to the most local level. SGBs are by nature *sector specific*, providing for public participation in the running of the school but not increasing citizen control of broader education policy.

5.6. Conclusion

The variety of intellectual influences shaping policy on citizen participation, as well as the presence of conceptual tensions within and between these strands, attests to the value of studying the ideas underlying practice. This chapter has shown how some of the theoretical strands constituting people's power continued into the post-1994 period through both radical democratic thought and historic participatory traditions. Conceptual continuity was also made possible by the continued involvement of individuals from the ANC and MDM who participated in policy formulation.

In shaping the model of DLG and in the design of other institutionalised forms of citizen participation, policy also absorbed new theoretical influences, drawing on emerging local and international trends in development theory, planning and governance. Coinciding with these currents was the global ascendency of performance management, adopted by many Western governments and advocated by international organisations and donors. While governance and performance discourses provide some complement to citizen participation - encouraging bottom-up development, a greater role for civil society and a reduced role for the state - they also pose a challenge to the realisation of participatory democracy. Public sector efficiency and delivery are pitted against participation and democracy, depoliticising citizen influence and narrowing it to the most local level.

Restriction of citizen influence to issues that do not challenge broader policy has ensured that 'participation' in the affairs of governing is confined predominantly to information, consultation and legitimation. In some instances, it is intended that citizens work in 'partnership' with government. However this is often understood by the latter as constituting either public support for government programmes or the resurrection of self-help traditions in which citizens further their own development rather than waiting for government to deliver.

Simultaneously, the change in ideological milieu from the 1980s to 1990s brought with it new perspectives within the ANC about the possibility and desirability of institutionalised people's power. Combined with the exigencies of governance and delivery, previously radical thinking about participation has been replaced by a creeping realism.

Nonetheless, the public policy framework does provide for multi-interest mechanisms for participation by civil society which are intended to facilitate citizen influence. More recently-published guidance on municipal participation draws particularly on democratic thinking rooted in empowerment, education and citizen agency. It is not clear, however, that this current is dominant. Strands of participatory discourse driven by performance and efficiency, as well as the confinement of citizen influence to non-ideological issues, undermines the potential for these empowering objectives to be realised.

CHAPTER 6

Participation and Movement Discourse

The previous chapter explored the theoretical and intellectual influences on the development of participatory democratic policy. The theoretical underpinnings and successful realisation of such policy, however, are not guided by this alone. Coinciding with and parallel to public policy discourse is a discourse of participation that emerges from the ANC as a movement. This discourse is identifiable not so much in official legislation, as in the discussion documents, statements and commentary of the ruling party itself. Thus although new theoretical influences have certainly shaped policy formulation, historic traditions, political conventions and organisational culture continue to play their part.

The chapter examines the understanding of participation *within the ANC*. While there are some overlapping influences between this discourse and that reflected in public policy, there are also identifiable differences. The language and commentary of the ANC-as-movement draws much more clearly on its national liberation character, resurrecting those strands of people's power concerned with the notion of vanguardism. Although movement discourse is not analogous with legislation, it does not exist in isolation from it. The intellectual history and organisational culture of the ANC plays an important part in how policy is interpreted and practiced.

The chapter begins by examining the ANC's 'mass' character, drawing on the significance of its 'national liberation movement' heritage in the democratic era. It also identifies linkages between the historic identity of the ANC-as-vanguard, and the continued relevance and application of vanguardism post-1994. It goes on to examine how participatory spaces are understood by the ANC, as well as asking *in what capacity* the movement envisages citizens participating. The chapter closes by identifying the conceptual tensions and parallels identifiable in policy and movement discourse. It highlights the ongoing relevance and pervasiveness of vanguardism in contemporary ANC identity, as well as the way in which popular participation is linked not only to democracy but to the realisation of programmatic goals. As such, the revolutionary (or national democratic) objectives of the ANC-as-movement trump the democratic objective of achieving popular empowerment.[96]

6.1. From Building People's Power to Building the ANC

The constitutional and local government negotiations, as well as the subsequent process of policy formulation, took place in parallel with the re-building of the ANC. Until 1990, ANC structures inside South Africa had been either non-existent or underground. A key focus of the movement from 1990, and even more so from 1994, was rebuilding the organisation

[96] Some of the material presented in this chapter draws on a chapter published as a contribution to an edited book on mass parties. See Brooks Yung (2014).

and its leadership capacity. Efforts toward establishing organisational presence in communities and rebuilding an ANC "capable of assuming its historical role" (ANC 1997c) involved both the ANC and its Alliance partners. Given the overlap between the conduct of constitutional and local government negotiations and the rebuilding of the movement, it is of little surprise that ANC tradition - both organisational and ideological - penetrated policy discussion. At the centre of this movement tradition is the ANC's relationship with the people.

6.1.1. Vanguardism: Linking Movement and People

> "*The ANC has to operate as a vanguard movement with political, ideological and organisational capacity to direct the state and give leadership to the motive forces in all spheres of influence and pillars of our transformation project*" (ANC 2012a: 12).

Into the post-1994 period, the ANC has continued to reiterate its role not only as a political party but also a mass movement. Its mass movement history shapes both its conception of democracy and its relationship with the people. The ANC's 1997 document, 'The Character of the ANC', linked its movement identity to three historic factors: firstly, the desire to be "a movement of mass participation"; secondly, its tradition as a 'broad church' and 'hegemonic organisation'; and thirdly the "style" in which it has functioned: "[attempting] to be a force for cohesion in the centre of a broad range of allied organisations, mass democratic and community based structures" (ANC 1997c).

In light of these characteristics, and the longstanding objective that 'the people shall govern', the people themselves were envisaged as playing a role in rebuilding the ANC. As indicated in Chapter Four, however, the role of the civic movement in this respect was complex. Civics represented simultaneously part of the new 'civil society' *and* part of the broad movement of forces that historically identified with the ANC. In contrast to the dominant position put forward by the civics, in which they would act as autonomous safeguards of community interests and a check on government power (UDF 1990b; UDF - Border 1991: 2), the ANC's Commission on Organisation Building in 1991 described the ANC-civic relationship as follows:

> "Relations between ourselves and the civics in many areas are becoming strained. We need to remember that civics were created by the ANC at a time when there were few other legal formations. The fact that the ANC has been unbanned does not make the civics redundant. They have a crucial role in uniting the masses of our people across the political spectrum … Now there are tensions between the two and we need to provide discussion around the role of ANC members in civic structures in order to see that the civics are part of the broader democratic movement -

> otherwise they can and will be used by other forces against the interests of the people" (ANC 1991c: 5).

The document therefore made clear that, while civics could not be replaced by the ANC, their task should be one of building unity. Having, as this document claims, been "created by the ANC" (ibid), they must continue to be a part of the ANC-aligned movement. Elsewhere, the movement encouraged dual membership of both ANC and mass formations such as civics and trade unions (ANC Ismail Vadi Collection: undated).

As the ANC sought to shift from a politics of resistance to one of reconstruction and nation-building, it saw this as requiring renewal and innovation but also a continuation of its national liberation traditions (ANC undated c: 13).[97] A 1991 political education document of the ANC commented:

> "- for the ANC to succeed in its goal of dismantling apartheid and building a democratic state in its place it needs to retain its broadness and unity … [A] central component of the ANC's character must remain an identity with 'the people', to represent their aspirations and to involve them in active struggle for the creation of a new nation … [T]he ANC's link to the masses is not only vital to its character but it is also essential to its strength both in the current period and under a democratic government where transformation will require the mobilisation of the energies of all South Africans" (ANC DPE 1991a).

As per the 'mass party' typology originally theorised by Maurice Duverger (1964: 63), the ANC draws its strength and very *raison d'etre* from its membership. Its link to the masses is what makes it more than a political party: "the power of the ANC lies in its mass base" (ANC DPE 1991a). Darraq insists that the membership of the ANC is "very strikingly and emotionally attached" to the organisation's "national liberation movement character" (2008: 439).

Yet in assuming the post-1994 'dual identity' of both a party *and* a movement, the ANC embodies a complexity of characteristics and traditions for which a purely organisational party typology cannot necessarily account or explain.[98] Chapter three of this thesis dedicated significant attention to the presence of a discourse of vanguardism. Vanguardism became increasingly prominent in ANC discourse after 1960 and can be identified in the theorisation of people's power. The movement's self-identification as 'a vanguard' reflects its dominant roots in both African nationalism and Marxism-Leninism. It is this heritage

[97] Although this document is undated, the reference to organisational challenges "over the past 5 years" since 1990, suggests it was written c.1995.

[98] On the limitations of exclusively 'organisational' or 'sociological' classifications of parties see Gunther and Diamond (2003: 169-70).

which helps to explain the movement's display of certain features reminiscent of a vanguard-type party, while aspiring to retain the broad 'united front' politics of a movement.[99]

It was also argued in chapter three that the role of vanguard organisation is often overlooked in analyses of ANC identity. The relevance of vanguardism, however, is pertinent not only to its history as a liberation movement but to its ongoing role as a governing party. The ANC today continues to identify itself as a vanguard of the people - an organisation able to give revolutionary leadership to state and society. In various documents and statements, the ANC refers to itself directly as: "the vanguard of the liberation struggle" (Nzo 1991); "a vanguard movement" (ANC 2012a: 12); "the vanguard of the NDR" and of the "motive forces of the NDR" (ANC 1997b); and as "a vanguard movement for transformation" (ANC 2012a: 67). The ANC's perception of its vanguard status is also linked to its claim to an historic role and purpose. In 1991, Alfred Nzo stated: "we are honoured to be the vanguard of the liberation struggle. This has not been achieved by proclamation but by the correctness of our policies and by concrete actions" (1991: 28).

On the question of participatory democracy, vanguardism's relevance lies in *the relationship with the people it implies.* Most critically, vanguardism cannot be imposed. Instead it requires that the people themselves identify with and actively participate in the achievement of revolutionary objectives.[100] The masses cannot be passive spectators but must be active participants: the 'mobilisation' of all their 'energies' is required (ANC DPE 1991a).

It was noted in Chapter Three that we must distinguish the ANC's vanguard identity from that of the SACP. Communist Parties historically have identified themselves as the vanguard of the working class. Here the SACP is no exception, considering itself to be the vanguard party of the struggle for socialism. This is not something that the ANC disputes. However, while the ANC recognises the SACP as "the vanguard party of the working class" (ibid.: 57), it simultaneously understands *itself* to be the vanguard of the people. While the SACP is historically a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, at the head of the struggle for socialism, the ANC is the *vanguard of the NDR*. Although there is no inherent conflict between these roles, there is perhaps a degree of tension. It is arguably the continuation in the present of the phase of *national democratic* struggle that enables the ANC to retain its intra-Alliance dominance.

[99] On the topic of a united front, see the ANC's reference to "three key features of a progressive movement for national liberation or social emancipation" which include adopting a broad church character: "Unlike a tightly knit organisation, a movement promotes united front politics among the 'broadly like-minded forces and formations'" (ANC 2012a: 22).

[100] Chapter three set out the notion of vanguardism and the socialist vanguard party as described by Mandel (1983: 1).

The implications of vanguardism post-1994 are related fundamentally to context. Although, from the 1950s onwards, we can speak of the ANC as having a 'mass' character, during its period in exile it also displayed characteristics reminiscent of a Leninist or vanguard-type party: it had both a cell structure and a centrally-controlled corps of cadres, albeit with a broad church programme.[101] From 1990, although the ANC sought to retain its vanguard identity, there was also recognition of the need to change this mode of operation. In an interview at the time, Valli Moosa explained: "We have had underground units doing various things, that's different from a visible branch which ordinary people who like the ANC could join and participate in its decision-making. So that we need to break out, very decisively break out, of the old mould way of working as an illegal organisation and become a democratic, mass-based organisation" (Interview with O'Malley: 13 August 1990).

Breaking with the practice of centralised control, however, did not necessarily come easily. On its return to South Africa, activist Rashid Seedat recalled suggestions by the ANC that the Indian Congresses should disband and collapse into the ANC:

> "They were coming and saying, listen, you guys have to close down because there's only one show in town; that's the ANC. I mean we were all ANC people, running ANC branches, and so it wasn't that. We thought that tactically you should see if you can use us as an instrument. But they were just adamant: no ways; you can't do it. And that was just a highly problematic attitude and we stood up to that." (Interview: 13 May 2013).

Seedat's recollection speaks to similar concerns raised at the time as to who best represented 'the people' and was thereby best placed to establish ANC branches. In the PWV region a tension existed between those 'stalwarts' of the ANC who were part of the organisation before its banning, and activists who had "borne the brunt of the mass struggles in recent years" (ANC PWV Region 1990).[102] Although the ANC needed to reconnect itself with people at home, it was the civic movement that had established such a connection in its absence. Tensions thus surfaced over issues of representation and over the continuation of a multiplicity of mass structures rather than one all-encompassing 'ANC'.

Seekings referred to the ANC as sometimes subscribing to a "'leaderist' conception of politics" (1991: 297). On this account local leadership and protest are understood "as simply part of the national political struggle" and the intentions of national leadership are conflated with concerns at the local level (ibid: 296-7). In reconnecting itself with the people, the ANC to an extent overlooked the value of relationships established between

[101] See Gunther and Diamond (2003) on party typologies and a useful categorisation of types of mass party and their varying characteristics.

[102] On tensions within the ANC between the earlier leadership of the 1950s and the activists of the 1980s see also Friedman (1992: 85).

'the people' and other organisations. Some individuals, such as the ANC and SACP's Blade Nzimande and Mpume Sikhosana were charged with suggesting that there was no need for separate civic structures once the ANC was legally re-established (Mayekiso 1993: 27). They contended that both civics and ANC branches were part of the national democratic revolution (Nzimande & Sikhosana 1992: 26).

Given Ben Turok's claim that some within the Party leadership viewed the UDF as a threat (Interview: 19 February 2013), one wonders whether there remained a concern after 1990 to limit its conceptual influence. At the SACP's consultative conference it was noted that "unnecessary overlaps" should not be created "in treating the UDF as another entity of the Alliance" (SACP undated: 8). In 1994, with the departure of much of the civic leadership to the structures of party and government, the civics contributed unintentionally to their own demise.

As the ANC rebuilt itself as an organisation that would compete in electoral politics it also sought to maintain the predominance over mass organisations that characterised its leadership as a liberation movement. Aware of the greater fragility of popular support in a pluralistic democratic context, the ANC remarked in 1991 that "the sort of aura and respect that we commanded as a clandestine vanguard is receding at an alarming pace" (ANC 1991c: 1). Over more recent years, there has been increasing awareness within the ANC of the need to reconnect itself with the masses. Following the ANC's national consultative conference in 2007, the NEC called for "a period of renewal" (ANC 2007a), while the Commission on Organisational Renewal asserted that "mass mobilisation and organisational work should be stated as the primary pillar" (ANC 2007c). Its subsequent policy conference in 2012 placed even more emphasis on the dangers of losing contact with the people.

As explained earlier, the ANC's status as a vanguard movement by its very definition has implications for its relationship with the people. As the ANC has sought to both maintain and renew this status as a political and governing party, its movement discourse continues to shape its understanding of the popular role in democratic politics and in participatory democracy in particular.

6.2. Participation in What Capacity?

The previous chapter interrogated the ideas and intellectual currents that have been woven into South Africa's policy on participatory democracy in order to uncover how 'participation' is understood. It showed how public policy has been informed by a multitude of influences, from domestic traditions of popular organisation to radical democratic theory and development and planning discourses. These various threads have contributed to some well-developed policy but also some conceptual tension in which the goals of citizen influence come up against the exigencies of state performance and delivery.

Analysis of the 'forms' of participation constituted in institutionalised mechanisms suggest that, in practice, most citizen participation conforms to a type of consultation. Nonetheless, there are visible strands to policy discourse which place a high value on citizen empowerment. Both policy frameworks and legislation are clear that the institutionalised mechanisms provided constitute politically pluralistic spaces for participation by civil society.

The ideas informing the ANC's own discourse of participation, however, are somewhat different. The conception of participatory democracy reflected in internal ANC documents, speeches, publications and commentary draws less on ideas from development theory, participatory governance and performance management and more on its own historic identity. Here, the capacity in which citizens are envisaged as participating continues to be shaped by the concept of *vanguardism.* As such, its objectives are linked not to citizen influence but to realisation of the NDR.

6.2.1. Partners for Hegemonic Unity

> "- *[D]espite the very real organisational difficulties the ANC is confronted with, we do have in South Africa the unique reality of a party which is solidly anchored in a broad social movement*" (ANC 1994b: 4).

In keeping with its vanguard character and the relationship with the people this entails, popular participation is often portrayed by the ANC as a form of partnership between movement and masses. This understanding is particularly visible from 1990 during the rebuilding of the ANC inside South Africa and the establishment of organisational unity. This post-1990 discourse draws not only on nation-building but on the idea of 'progressive' civil society working with and supporting the state.

The linking of popular participation to the establishment of hegemonic unity has been sustained and, arguably, amplified during the ANC's time in office. The ANC recognised in the 1990s the potential danger of social distance. From the mid-2000s, however, open acknowledgement by the movement of a weakening connection with its support base brought with it a revived movement discourse in which the strengthening of popular participation is linked to the strengthening of its own hegemony. As an illegal organisation in exile, internal unity was an understandable priority. With the ANC's return as a legal organisation intending to compete in democratic elections, the role of civil society organisations - and civics in particular - became an issue of some debate.

Some discussion on the role of civics in a democratic state was discussed in Chapter Four.[103] Views ranged from those who saw the civics' role as effectively nullified with the ANC's

[103] For competing academic debates on this topic see, for example, Friedman (1992), Swilling (1992); Glaser (1997).

return (Collinge 1991: 1; see also Nzimande and Sikhosana 1992: 26), to those who felt strongly that civics must not only maintain their autonomy but their role as safe-guarders of community interests (UDF 1991; Conference: Developing Civic Unity 1991; Ebrahim 1990). Those who questioned the ongoing relevance of civics appear to have been in a minority. Left democratic debate in the late 1980s and early 1990s, in South Africa and elsewhere, came increasingly to view an independent civil society as a requisite feature of democracy (Friedman 1992: 83, 84; Glaser 1997). This was a position also supported by the ANC (ANC DPE 1991a). However, although consensus of opinion was in favour of the civics' independence, both from political organisations and government, nuances existed in precisely what this meant.

While the UDF depicted civics as independent structures who would play an important role in keeping a check on local government and representing the interests of their communities (UDF 1991), the ANC placed its emphasis on the link between the civics and itself. An ANC political education paper on its relationship with the civics stated that, although civics are not ANC organisations nor do they 'belong' to the ANC, "it is not an accident that the civics have in the past and still do identify with the ANC" (ANC DPE 1991b: 5). It went on to remark that "from their struggles, residents' organisations have found that the interests of their members can be accommodated within the framework of the Freedom Charter" (ibid.).

On the one hand it emphasised the importance of building "strong mass organisations" separate from political parties and the state. Yet it also encouraged *ANC members* to continue building mass democratic structures (ibid.: 7). The same paper also envisaged an organisational and leadership linkage between party and civic movement, stating that: "Through ideological debate, the actions of its members, joint strategizing and campaigning, *the ANC must win its leadership role in relationship to the civics*" [emphasis added] (ibid.). It is "political leadership" and the raising of "political consciousness", specifically, that that the ANC envisages itself providing to civic struggles (ibid.: 7).

Just as the UDF's own aspirations were potentially hegemonic, claiming to be a Front that could house all political affiliations (UDF 1991), so too did the ANC's broad church character, historically incorporating the civic movement, enable it to claim the civics as an ongoing part of the 'broader democratic movement'. Despite confirming the requisite of an independent civil society, the ongoing importance of ANC-civic unity was expressed in a statement by then ANC Secretary General, Alfred Nzo. Highlighting concern at the "very poor relationship between ANC structures and civic associations", Nzo emphasised the importance of a joint approach:

> "Apart from the lack of coordination between ANC structures and civics, in many instances there are different approaches being taken on the burning issues affecting our people at a local level. The ILC [Interim Leadership Core] has also found that regions and branches were not consistently

> trying to mobilise the broad democratic forces like religious bodies, cultural and sporting organisations, etc. behind the programme and the positions of the ANC" (Nzo 1991: 10).[104]

The implied role for civics is one of *unification*. As the struggle is not yet over, their participation and that of other mass organisations, remains indispensable to victory. The conceptual glue that holds this unity together is the connection made between the ANC and democracy itself, both in the struggle to end apartheid and in the post-apartheid era. Broad-based popular identification with the Freedom Charter emanated from the ANC's ability to unite people of different ideologies under the principles of a non-racial democratic future. While associated with and adopted by the Congress Movement, the Freedom Charter became a document that spoke to a more general desire for freedom, equality, democracy and non-racialism.

After 1990, despite the ANC's acceptance of the principles of multi-party politics, it continued to emphasise an inherent connection between *itself* and the consolidation *democracy. S*trengthening the ANC is understood to also mean strengthening democracy. During the phase of democratic negotiations, the ANC asserted that "its specific task is to conduct a political struggle for the transfer of power to the people. It strives to organise the people and provide leadership to the entire liberation movement. In doing this, it unites, organises, educates and mobilises the people and *all democratic forces* for the winning of political power" [emphasis added] (ANC DPE 1991b: 6).

In this portrayal, the ANC represents *all* people who wish to see democracy in South Africa. Those who form alternative political groupings fall outside of the definition of "democratic". Yet in a politically pluralistic system there is no inherent homogeneity in political outlook amongst those in favour of democracy; and it cannot be assumed that all pro-democratic forces will be won over *en masse* to the ANC.

That being said, the MDM itself - the range of organisations in the 1980s united behind the ANC - has contributed to the reinforcement of this position. The ANC's status as a 'vanguard' is endorsed by its support base. Indeed, despite asserting their own independence, civics were themselves not clear as to how their historic identification with the ANC could be reconciled with the desire to act autonomously while influencing policy formulation. Civic activist, Thozamile Botha who became a leader of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) established in 1991, highlighted both the challenge of re-defining the civic-ANC relationship and the dilemma of translating participatory theory into practice:

[104] Following the legalisation of the ANC in 1990, the ILC included Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba and Mac Maharaj (Nzo 1991: 10).

> "- there was no clear structured way of saying how we would facilitate participation of civil society. It took quite a lot of lobbying and mobilisation and asking the government to help finance some of these organisations … the NGOs … But of course SANCO itself became part of the ANC alliance. Now whether that was good or bad, that's another issue that can be explored because SANCO gets to a stage where it is not clear whether it is part [of those] that should push for the agenda of the ruling party or whether it should identify issues - because those issues that were raised through civics in the '70s won't disappear because there's a democratic government" (Interview: 14 April 2014).

For some in the civics, the conception of their continuing role as a champion of residents' interests sat uncomfortably with the idea of assuming support for an ANC government. While the ANC encouraged the building of civil society formations, it continued to envisage itself as the driving and facilitating force.

For other civil society activists, that the democratic era would present such a dilemma had not been clearly foreseen. Dominique Wooldridge, who undertook activist work and became involved in policy development on local government, noted that many activists saw their work as already building a strong civil society. However her remarks also suggest that some people had simply envisaged that the interests of civil society and ANC would continue to converge under a democratic government:

> "I think, kind of, everyone I was working with was an activist in some non-state organisation and it was just kind of assumed that, you know, what we're doing would continue. Although what actually happened is everyone went into government! There was no-one left in civil society organisations … I think it was kind of an almost unspoken assumption: you'd meet at a hall on a Saturday morning and everyone who was there was an activist and, you know, it was just, we assumed that that would continue, and grow even; that it would get easier if 'we' ended up taking power" (Interview 12 March 2012).

The belief that civic and ANC interests would coincide was echoed by Moses Mayekiso (Interview: 8 April 2013), yet in a sense this very assumption undermined the simultaneous emphasis on the importance of civil society autonomy.

On the ANC's part, the role it envisaged for mass organisations was carefully worded. The need for their independence was reiterated but also carried a subtext: although civics must remain autonomous organisationally, and even ideologically, this applied to their immediate local-level activities, rather than to their contribution to the national policy picture. The ANC's role was still to provide political 'leadership'. The civics' role, in addition to engaging in local bread and butter issues, was to participate actively in the general task of political

struggle. As such, their individual interests should converge with those of the whole. Three years into democracy, at its National Conference in 1997, the ANC remarked:

> "We have attempted to be a force for cohesion in the centre of a broad range of allied organisations, mass democratic and community based structures. We have, as the ANC, *not undermined the ideological and organisational independence or autonomy of these organisations*, but rather to interact with them, and fuse or combine their energies, constituencies and diverse capacities into *a common national democratic purpose*" [emphasis added] (ANC 1997c).

As with public policy, the ANC's discourse draws on its tradition of mass participation. However, it also injects the notion of popular participation with a programmatic objective: organisational autonomy requires broad-based cohesion for a common objective. Having reached the goal that previously united them, mass organisations are now expected to join forces for national democracy. Underpinning the ANC's endorsement of local control alongside national unity is the assumption of the national democratic project as a collective good.

6.2.2. Structures of Participatory Governance: the New 'Organs of People's Power'?

Notably, it is not only civil society organisations that the ANC has linked to its movement tradition but structures of democratic governance. The 1997 document, The Character of the ANC, stated:

> "This movement tradition, which can be referred to as the masses in movement, is continued in our present commitment to a people-driven RDP. It is found in our attempts to develop, in the new conditions of our country, many new forms of popular activism and governance (ranging from community policing forums, to participatory local government budgeting, to work-place forums)" (ANC 1997).

As the above extract reflects, the mechanisms for popular activism created since 1994 are themselves structures of governance, providing a means for citizens to interact and engage with government in the realisation of effective policies. The ANC's discourse on participatory governance, however, contains some internal conflict. On the one hand, popular participation and empowerment are key ideas in its understanding of democracy. Its National General Council in 2000 set out one of the NDR's "strategic tasks" as "the mobilisation of the masses of the people to govern themselves in the context of the objective that "the people shall govern" (ANC NGC 2000).

Noting the importance to the system of governance of voluntary, popular and non-governmental organisations, it stated: "The empowerment of the people to participate in the process of governance, expressed in the concepts of a people-centred society and

people-driven processes of transformation, indicates the centrality of the concept of popular and participatory democracy to our understanding of the functioning of the democratic state" (ibid.).

At the same time, however, ***in contrast to public policy in which structures for participatory governance are a civil society function, in the ANC's own discourse, such structures for participation are located in the context of movement-building***. From the early 1990s, ANC debate around the institutionalisation of popular participation, rather than developing a strong civil society, centred on developing strong mass organisations for the consolidation of ANC support. In the RDP, the ANC emphasised principles of participatory democracy. However it also offset the promise of popular power with the priority of extending its own influence. Reflecting on the RDP, the ANC remarked:

> "If the RDP is to live up to its vision of 'democratising power', such that 'democracy' means the active participation of the people affected in decision-making and policy formulation, then the ANC must not only survive, but thrive, as an organisation outside government. Furthermore, the ANC must also *ensure it is firmly and deeply rooted in the organs of civil society,* encouraging the growth of such organisations, and ensuring that people do have the necessary vehicles through which to contribute to reconstruction and development" [emphasis added] (ANC 1994b: 3).

On the one hand it recognised the need for participation not merely in the form of legitimation but in the sense of agency and influence (involving affected people "in decision-making and policy formulation"). It also reiterated the movement's longstanding belief that "democratising power" meant going beyond representative democracy. The counterpart to this, however, was the corresponding belief that it also required the extension of the ANC's hegemony - a process by which the ANC "is firmly and deeply rooted in the organs of civil society" (ibid.).

In linking the RDP to the reorganisation of the ANC itself, the movement failed to make a clear distinction between popular participation and popular mobilisation. Yet, as Sartori explained, the distinction between the two is critical. "Participation is self-motion": it is therefore "the exact reverse of being put into motion (by another will), i.e. the opposite of mobilisation" (1987: 113). It also blurred the line between institutions of participatory governance and those of party mobilisation. All political parties seek to expand their influence and mobilise support for their policies throughout society. This in itself forms part of pluralistic democratic life. There is, within ANC discourse, however, a conflation of popular mobilisation with participatory democracy**.** On the one hand the RDP represents a clear statement of participatory democratic commitments - "the active participation of the people affected in decision-making and policy formulation" (ANC 1994a: 3). Parallel statements of the ANC, however, blur the line between participation and mobilisation, and between democracy and hegemony:

> "[T]he ANC faces the challenge of ensuring that the RDP is indeed a people-driven process, and not something that is entirely delivered by government to the people. This means, amongst other things, ensuring not only the consolidation of our own structures on the ground, but also the fullest mobilisation of communities and sectors of the community in the country as a whole" (ANC 1994b: 2).

Referring to the continuation of the people's power ethos in the democratic era, former member of the ANC underground and a founder member of SANCO, Lechesa Tsenoli linked the idea of organs of people's power to the 'Building Organisation' Commission of the ANC (Interview: 11 March 2013) - a 1991 commission geared toward "building the ANC and maximising support around our positions" (ANC 1991c: 1). Whether organs of people's power are understood as state-initiated forums and/or structures of civil society, their role here is linked to building support for the ANC, not with providing opportunity for public involvement in decision-making.

Of the structures for participatory governance, the local government ward committee, in particular, has been linked to the extension of ANC hegemony. The legislation and municipal guidance providing for ward committees was discussed in the previous chapter. The local government policy framework establishes the ward committee as a structure for the enhancement of participatory democracy. Its effectiveness in the fulfilment of this objective, however, remains subject to considerable critique. In public and academic discussion, it is not uncommon to hear it argued that ward committees are dominated by the ANC, functioning as forums for intra-party contestation rather than real citizen influence.

The ANC is by no means been blind to this, nor to the systems' limited effectiveness. It has recognised that the performance of many municipalities has been hindered not only by capacity and functionality issues but by "political factors which are internal to the ANC and the Alliance" (ANC 2010: 14). The NEC discussion document at the ANC's 2010 summit on provincial and local government noted that, although the ward committee system should be seen as a big achievement, a number of weaknesses remain, including: the negative impact of many "seasoned" ANC cadres being deployed to provincial or national government; tensions between the political and administrative roles in municipalities; the limited enforcement of councillor accountability; intra-ANC and intra-Alliance factionalism at municipal level; and the rise of service delivery protests (ibid).

The same document went on to propose that "a fundamental review of the current ward committee model" be undertaken: "critical areas of legislative and functional reform include making the establishment of ward committees legally mandatory and providing for a more developmental role that is adequately resourced" (2010: 17). Government has also recognised ANC dominance of ward committees as problematic. In 2013, Yunus Carrim, then Deputy Minister of CoGTA, also remarked that the government was "considering reviewing

the legislation to explore the possibility of reducing the prospects of political activists, party-political activists, dominating the ward committee" (Interview: 16 January 2013).

However the ward committee is not only a feature of public policy discourse but of the ANC's own discourse of 'participation'. In the latter, ward committees are located not in the context of empowering citizens to participate in decision-making but in the context of strengthening the movement. Given the extent of ANC electoral dominance, we might argue that its effective monopolisation of many ward committees is somewhat inevitable. Indeed, the principle of committee members representing a multiplicity of sectoral and other interests in the ward is not necessarily incompatible with the ANC dominating each of those sectors.

Closer examination of the origins of ward committees, however, suggests that their initial conception differed from that later published in legislation. An interview with member of the editorial team for the Local Government White Paper, Dominique Wooldridge, suggests that, as well as being a means to "sweeten the pill" for those opposition parties who objected to 'big' local government, the ward committee was originally linked to the objective of re-establishing the ANC (Interview: 12 March 2013). Wooldridge remarked: "I think the ANC very explicitly, from some informal discussions more than anything formal, they explicitly saw ward committees as a way to rebuild ANC branches" (ibid).

On this account, rather than being seen as way to link citizens with the decision-making processes of local government, ward committees were seen as a way of strengthening the connection between movement and people. Although Wooldridge qualified that she was not sure how much consensus existed on this approach, she recalled the strategy being used in Johannesburg. She also added that one of its "drivers" had been Yunus Carrim, who she recalled "talking about it nationally" (ibid.). With this in mind, it is possible that weaknesses in the ward committee may relate to its original conceptualisation as a politically partisan structure. Wooldridge explained:

> "I think part of the reason why they didn't work very well was that in a lot of people's minds they were never really seen as multi-interest forums. And when they became multi-interest forums it led to conflict. So, ja, I think the ANC very much linked the re-building of branches to ward committees, to the detriment of ward committees". (ibid.)

However, ward committees were not only understood as playing a role in re-rooting the ANC organisationally but in establishing popular unity behind its policies. Speaking as the Deputy Minister of CoGTA in 2001, Yunus Carrim gave political inflection to them directly, noting that "Ideally, the ward committee should be used to mobilise the broadest range of interests in the community behind progressive goals as part of the overall national democratic transition" (2001). The inference here is that community shaping of development is subject to movement imperatives or is somehow an intra-ANC activity.

Former Mayor of Johannesburg, Amos Masondo, despite supporting the idea of the ward committee as a multi-interest forum, still saw the ANC as "a very, very important role player in terms of making sure the ward committee exists, that the ward committee is properly constituted", adding: "Where it's not properly constituted it's a reflection on the ANC local structures there as well. So the relationship between ward committees and ANC local branch culture is a very close one" (Interview: 13 March 2013).

The injection of programmatic content into purportedly non-party political structures renders uncertain the protection of civil society's autonomy as a check on state power. This strand of participatory discourse resonates with the historically teleological conception of participation in the ANC. It also echoes the earlier idea of people's power as proposed by the ANC Constitution Committee in 1986, in which its guarantee was fulfilment of the NDR. In the ANC's contemporary participatory discourse there remains a tension between the guarantee of political pluralism and the conflation of democracy with ANC hegemony.

6.2.3. Loyal Civil Society

The unclear line between what constitutes 'civil society' and what the ANC refers to as 'progressive' organisations, blurs the line between uniting society behind a democratic purpose and extending the movement's hegemonic reach across the institutions of 'independent' civil society (Glaser 1997). This overlap was reflected in Wooldridge's remark that many of those who were activists in the ANC camp assumed that the building of civil society would "continue" if 'we' (read the ANC-aligned movement) took power (Interview: 12 March 2013). Although the conversation was had about civics potentially taking over local urban administration, as was the possibility of them being effectively "replaced" by ANC structures (1991: 1), examination of the UDF archives suggests that emphasis was placed on their 'watchdog' function (UDF 1990b; UDF 1991; Conference: Developing Civic Unity 1991; Ebrahim 1991 and 1990).

The UDF National Civics Workshop Report in December 1990 emphasised that "civics cannot involve themselves in power-sharing. Civics are not intended to replace apartheid local government structures. We are community organisations, not organs of government" (Ebrahim 1990). At the civics' National Consultative Conference in May 1991, the importance of their autonomy from political organisations was also underlined:

> "[T]he new conditions require that the civic movement should be broad and straddle the political spectrum. Our civic must be open to all the residents. Members of Azapo, the PAC, IFP, should be free to join the civic. And the civic association should be independent of political organisations. If it should support the position of any political organisation, it should be because it agrees with that organisations position on a specific issue or with certain aspects of the organisation's policy" (Conference: Developing Civic Unity, 1991).

Given the civics' historic relationship with the ANC, ensuring such autonomy was not that easy. Reflecting on the civics' experience in the early 1990s, the national education officer of the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) observed that: "The civic has often become the base for leadership who missed out in the ANC branch. There is also extensive overlapping leadership. This means that, even where there is awareness within the civic in the need to strengthen the 'watchdog role' there is the contrary pressure to go into councils on behalf of the ANC" (Mawby 1994: 81).

During the struggle itself, activists do not appear to have been oblivious to the risks associated with political allegiance, even if not spoken about openly. Andrew Boraine, formerly part of the UDF executive and later involved in work on the local government transition, explained that there was an awareness at the time of the fallout from other revolutionary and liberation struggles, in Africa and elsewhere, where popular structures were 'crushed' by the nationalist movement: "People were conscious of the failure of African democracy, even though you don't exactly talk about that because it seems to be undermining what we're trying to do in South Africa in 1987. But the sort of post-colonial failed state and the post-colonial nationalist movement crushing the people's revolution were certainly debates going on at the time" (Interview: 21 May 2013).

Within the ANC camp there were interestingly different takes on the danger of political allegiance. Among the reasons influencing the civics' choice to remain independent, Collinge lists the experience of other African states where liberation movements after coming into power turned out to be undemocratic, as well as the experience of Eastern Europe where people's organs became mere 'conveyer belts' of the ruling party (1991: 1). Neil Coleman also remarked that in South Africa activists "had the benefit of hindsight": of the experience of African states in the 1960s (Interview: 20 February 2013). However he referred not to the suppression of political freedoms but to "the dangers of neo-colonialism" and the "comprador bourgeoisie" (ibid.). These comments in themselves reflect the variation in ideological outlook within the liberation movement.

Nonetheless, the civics do not appear to have put forward any clear, institutional model for their own participation while their role in assisting the re-building of the ANC became something of a priority. With this focus on rebuilding ANC structures, as well as the fact that policy on citizen participation was not an immediate priority for reaching a political settlement, concrete discussion about the participation of civil society structures took something of a back seat.

Having said that, as the ANC became a governing party it also appears to have demonstrated some unease at both civil society's role as a check on state power and on the value of continuing practices of local participation established during the transition. Swilling and Boya highlight that it was in 1994 that political parties became fully involved in the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber - Johannesburg's local negotiating forum of

state and non-state actors established to negotiate a new integrated local government structure (Ottaway 1993: 126). They emphasize that the delay in political parties joining the Chamber, "was caused in part by the belief amongst certain provincial ANC leaders that the MC [Metropolitan Chamber] was a threat to their own desire to centralize political control of the transition" (1997: 178-9).

Swilling made the following comment, worth quoting in full, about the ANC's view of the Chamber and of democracy in general, once it had taken power:

> "I think that one of the first things that the hard-line ANC people did when they moved in and took over that whole process was to kill that whole idea [of the Chamber as a parallel structure]. So the notion that the metropolitan chamber would continue after you have a metropolitan government was, like, seen as madness … I think it was just a very limited conception of … the nature of power in a democratic society. There was a genuine assumption that the state would be seized as an instrument and the people would be able to deploy it, so why you would then have to have checks and balances; why you would have institutional arrangements for institutionalising and formalising the involvement of a whole bunch of organised civic parties when, afterall, that's what councillors are going to be representing for people? There was nothing, absolutely nothing in their conception of democracy that prepared them to think about that – nothing" (Interview: 20 February 2013).

It is not clear to what extent Swilling's view was widespread within the movement. It perhaps highlights, again, the role of activist intellectuals in shaping normative ideas about a radical democratic society in which popular structures would play a more central role. Either way, by the time policy makers turned their attention to citizen participation after the local government elections in 1995, the locus of participatory democracy moved almost entirely to establishing institutionalised state structures. By this stage, the voice of the civics seems to have diminished substantially.

Despite formal commitments, the idea of an 'independent civil society' appears to have been treated with some suspicion by the ANC. A political education document on its relationship with the civic movement asserted that, although the role of civil society organisations is one of "ensuring checks and balances on the state … they also have an interest in ensuring … that the ANC fulfils its democratic tasks" (ANC DPE 1991b: 9). It then went on to state that "the task of the ANC … is to interact with and *unite these formations in the direction of democracy*. Then they will not be seen *in opposition* to the ANC, but as having *common interests* …" [emphasis added] (ibid.).

It is not clear what the ANC means by its "democratic tasks". However it fundamentally links the interests of the ANC to those of democracy itself. Accordingly, if an organisation is in opposition to the ANC, it is also in opposition to democracy. Alternatively, if the implication is that organisations may not necessarily be united ideologically but are united in favour of democracy, then this should still not preclude them from being critical of, or in opposition to, the ANC. If this summation of the ANC-civic relationship lacks some clarity, the critique provided in the same document of the very concept of 'civil society' is more revealing:

> "Some comrades in the civics, as well as in other organisations, see the civics as part of 'civil society'. The words 'civil society' come from liberal social science. It refers to all those parts of society which are not part of the state … Comrades are using the term 'civil society' because they feel that one of the lessons that we need to learn from Eastern Europe is the need for a strong and independent "civil society". A strong civil society can balance the power of the state and through providing channels for participation by ordinary people, ensure that democracy is built and strengthened. However … the argument for a strong civil society often contains some incorrect assumptions. Some comrades putting forward this argument assume that the ANC is not capable of democratising itself and when it comes to power it will automatically be opposed to the democratisation of society" (ANC DPE 1991b: 9).

On the one hand it recognises the theoretical premise of civil society as important for the defence of democracy (that it can balance the power of the state and provide for participation by ordinary people). On the other hand, there is a subtext that links it with 'liberal' (and thus possibly 'bourgeois') democracy. The statement that "some comrades ... see the civics as part of 'civil society'" is not an affirmation of the ANC's own belief in this. Instead, those who hold this view are referred to in the third person, while the document subsequently seeks to right some of their "incorrect assumptions". Understandably, the ANC seeks to emphasise its own commitment to the democratisation of society but also defines for itself those organisations that should be considered "progressive or democratic" (ibid.).

The document correctly highlights the continued risk posed by organisations in civil society who seek to prevent the advent of democracy. However, in correcting what it believes to be a misplaced emphasis on civil society - the danger that they "see it as the solution to all South Africa's problems" (ibid) - the ANC also seeks to discourage the civics from playing a political role (ibid.: 8). Although written prior to the commencement of ANC rule, it seems nonetheless to be referring to "when it comes to power" (ibid.: 9). Simultaneously it argues that the vehicle for involving people in policy formulation is "the mass democratic formations of civil society" (ibid.: 10) - i.e. structures of the broader liberation movement historically aligned with the ANC. This critique echoes the Marxist suspicion of civil society as the private sphere of atomised individuals: the egoistic man, rather than the community-

oriented citizen (Cohen & Arato 1994: 97. 117), thus helping to explain the desired merging of state and civil society in Marxist theory.

Since assuming power the ANC has also chastised civil society structures, particularly those historically supportive of the movement, who see their role as keeping a check on government. At the ANC's national conference in 1997, Nelson Mandela attacked "sections of the non-governmental sector which seek to assert that the distinguishing feature of a genuine organisation of civil society is to be a critical 'watchdog' over our movement" (Mandela 1997). This view highlighted the ANC's discomfort over organisations assuming political independence rather than support for and partnership with the movement. Those who act as critics are seen as impeding efforts to transform South Africa (ibid.). Thus while the ANC saw civics as having ongoing relevance after 1990, their allocated function was to build unity. By ensuring that they remain "part of the broader democratic movement" (ANC 1991c: 5) what the ANC sought was not the cultivation of a strong civil society in the form of independent watchdogs but rather a civil society that will remain loyal: "otherwise they can and will be used by other forces against the interests of the people" (ibid.).

Some within the ANC, and in the SACP in particular, cautioned against the "uncritical use of the notion of 'civil society'" (Nzimande and Sikhosana 1992: 27). In an 1992 article entitled 'Civil Society does not Equal Democracy', and referring to its application in "advanced capitalist countries", Nzimande and Sikhosana argued that "civil society is "an institutional expression of the rule of the bourgeoisie and the exploitation of the working class" (ibid.). In Marxism, 'the interests of the people' would of course be reflected in the disappearance of the state-civil society divide. It is perhaps worth considering whether it was precisely the civics' characteristic of housing a multitude of political orientations that presented a threat to the consolidation of an ANC-led project.

The narrative of the strong yet loyal civil society has remained a feature of ANC discourse and has, I would argue, been resurrected during the 2000s through efforts to reconnect the ANC with its support base and retain its vanguard status. ANC conferences in 1997, 2002 and 2007 generated resolutions to strengthen relations with the Alliance partners and civil society (ANC 1997d; ANC 2002; ANC 2007a). During the 2000s, in particular, there has been increasing acknowledgment of a weakening connection with the people and loss of its 'mass character'. ANC conference and discussion documents from 2005 onwards focus increasingly on the need to reinvigorate ANC branches, with Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe in 2006 making the notable observation that the ANC was "dead on the ground" (cited in Darraq 2008).

The ANC has often affirmed its role in encouraging the formation of and working within 'progressive' civil society (ANC 2007b). Although during the 1980s it was the structures of the MDM through which people were able to participate in political and grassroots struggles, the idea of the MDM or 'mass democratic formations' is today somewhat

redundant. However it is occasionally used ambiguously in ANC parlance as a catch-all phrase for 'progressive' civil society. In this regard it is especially noteworthy that the ANC's most recent policy conference in 2012 set out the movement's intention to revive civil-society-based structures in a way that implies a return to a past ANC-MDM relationship (ANC 2012a). Among the subsequent conference resolutions is a decision "to build and revive structures of the mass democratic movement and progressive civil society" (ANC 2013: 8).

Yet there is a democratic deficit in these proposals. ***When it is the ANC that holds claim to define what constitutes 'civil society' and then seeks to extend hegemony over it, this undermines not only the role of civil society as an autonomous and independent watchdog but also the legitimate existence within such a society of the presence of political opposition***. It mirrors the very situation of which Friedman warned: "the colonisation of civil society" (1992). Writing in the early 1990s about the tension between the re-birth of civil society discourse and the liberation movement's historic assumption of 'the people' as a homogeneous whole, he highlighted that "To argue for civil society's independence from the state is surely to argue for the freedom to associate and speak as well as for the right of the organised citizenry to influence, and check the power of, governments" (Friedman 1992: 83). Yet, in ANC discourse, it is implied that 'progressive' civil society' constitutes those who associate with and support the policies of the ANC (ibid.: 86-88; Glaser 1997: 12). Correspondingly, *non*-progressive civil society would not be confined only to those opposed to democracy and non-racialism but to *those who stand in opposition to the liberation movement*.

Although these debates were taking pace in the early 1990s, the discourse of "progressive" civil society has continued through the democratic era. Speaking in 2013, then Deputy Minister of CoGTA, Yunus Carrim highlighted the importance to democratic local government of a 'strong civil society'. But he also moved to define it as those who fall within the MDM:

> " - even if you actually have popular power at local government level via the state structures, you also have to have a strong civil society movement as well ... If you have a strong civil society it empowers the municipality and if you have a strong municipality, it should I believe empower civil society too ... Of course, the term civil society is being increasingly contested in our movement … because of *the nature of some of the organisations, individuals and other actors that occupy this space* in recent years, and the crude juxtaposition of some of them that civil society is all good and the state is all bad … [I]ncreasingly some of us speak of *progressive civil society* as important. *Or we might, in a more limited way, speak of the mass democratic movement when we speak of progressive*

actors that engage in civil society [emphasis added]" (Interview: 12 March 2013).

According to this view, local government can only be strengthened by civil society actors identified *by the ANC* as 'progressive'. This poses the danger that those who seek to challenge the movement, or to make their voices heard through other actors and organisations, are somehow non-transformative.

Commitments by the ANC to political pluralism remain, and there is no suggestion that it would seek to renege on this formally. It is problematic, however, that popular involvement and the right to free political choice are viewed by the ANC as a double-edged sword. In a 1996 document looking at the progress of the NDR, the ANC made the observation that: "Thoroughgoing democracy, human rights, transparency and mass involvement are matters of principle. But they are, in a sense double-edged swords. We are able to utilise them even in the early stages of the changeover as the most effective and suitable forms of revolutionary self-defence. But they can also be used by criminals and counter-revolutionaries" (ANC DPE 1996: 7). This may well be a reference to forces within South African society seeking to stall the advent of non-racial democracy. However it is not clear exactly who is included in the definition of "counter-revolutionaries".

The participation advocated in this discourse falls into the category, discussed in Chapter Five,[105] of ***support and cooperation*** rather than ***collaboration*****.** While the latter concedes some control to citizens, as well an equal right to influence the decision-making process, the former centres on civil society's role in supporting government in delivery. The role of 'progressive' civil society, as the ANC envisages it, seems to involve cooperation rather than criticism and there is no reason why it should conflict with the simultaneous existence of ***self-help***. Elsewhere ANC officials have encouraged the formation of civil society organisations that assist government through helping communities to develop their own initiatives and solutions to development challenges (Mashatile, Interview: 21 February 2013).

The distinction, however, is that while the support and cooperation discernible in public policy emphasises civil society participation through state-invited structures, within the ANC's movement discourse, it is encouraged primarily through movement structures: those of the MDM, Alliance partners and ANC branches.

[105] Chapter Five of this thesis discussed the notion of 'partnership' identifiable in public policy, suggesting that partnership (as a *form* of participation) could be understood in three senses: collaboration; support and cooperation; or self-help.

6.3. Conceptual Tensions and Parallels

The revolutionary language which remains a feature of the ANC's discourse is today considered rhetoric, not least in light of the ideological conflict between NDR and the ANC's market-oriented macro-economic policy. Emanating from the thesis of colonialism of a special type, national democracy was originally envisaged as a necessary transitional stage that would achieve political democracy while paving the way for socialism. The notion of the national democratic state today may thus be considered a smoke screen for policies that kow tow to the interests of big business and international capital. As policy on participatory democracy has come increasingly to absorb a multitude of other conceptual influences - some rooted in domestic traditions of popular organisation but others drawing on shifts in development and planning theory - one might consider the ANC's revolutionary discourse to belong to a bygone era.

Yet notions such as 'vanguardism', 'national democracy' and 'mass organisation' should not be too readily dismissed. ***The ANC continues to see itself as engaged in NDR, while the legal, rights-oriented constitutional language that began to penetrate the movement during the late 1980s is no longer easy to discern.*** In contrast to the suggestion put forward by Johnson (2003), that the ANC has become an elitist, liberal party with a mere rhetoric of participation, I argue that it has rather retained many of its African nationalist and Marxist-Leninist traditions. Each of these currents promotes the importance of conscientisation and while the path may be planned for the people by the leadership, parliamentary democracy is generally seen as insufficient. Far from being 'elitist', mass participation remains critical to the ANC project. Its 2000 NGC reiterated "the centrality of the concept of popular and participatory democracy to our understanding of the functioning of the democratic state" (ANC NGC 2000). The extension of these ideas into legislation shows that they are not mere rhetoric. The question this thesis has sought to answer is what the ANC understands 'participation' to mean.

The final two sections below draw together the ideas identifiable in movement discourse. In so doing, conceptual tensions and parallels are highlighted between the participatory discourse of the ANC-as-movement and the participatory discourse in public policy (set out previously in Chapter Five). While there are overlaps in the intellectual currents shaping each of these discourses, there are also unresolved tensions. It is the coexistence of these multiple influences and conceptions of participation that have repercussions for the effectiveness of policy.

6.3.1. Restricted Participation and Vanguardism

The very essence of the ANC's vanguard character is its relationship with the people. As the movement stated in 1991, its link to the masses is "essential to its strength both in the current period and under a democratic government" (ANC DPE 1991a). The movement has

thus sought to retain its mass movement character. A critical part of this identity is its role as a political vanguard. As set out earlier, a vanguard is a leadership organisation and educator able to lead the people in a correct and revolutionary direction. The status of a vanguard party is one that needs to be established: in other words, according to Mandel's definition, ***the people to whom the leadership organisation links itself must themselves identify it as their vanguard*** (Mandel 1983: 9).

Moreover, as in a socialist vanguard party, the revolution cannot take place purely from above. Rather, the people must be convinced of the need for revolutionary transformation, and the vanguard movement must secure their support for and active participation in that objective (ibid.: 1, 13). ***Vanguardism thus requires the masses themselves to identify with and actively participate in the achievement of revolutionary objectives***. As Evans describes of Marx's idea of political participation, "Theory, organisation and a will to revolution are all vital factors if the proletarian is to participate effectively … Participation must be both conscious and intentional" (1972: 135). Therefore they cannot be passive spectators but must be active participants.

As a revolutionary organisation in exile, the ANC's vanguard character was overlaid with features of clandestinity. Although characterised historically as a mass movement, this was paired with traits more akin to a centrally-controlled Leninist-type party (Johnson 2003). While the masses were fundamental to its identity, it was the ANC's cadres that fulfilled a vanguard function, bringing the movement to the people in a context in which membership was illegal. Carefully deployed and ideologically trained, their work amongst the masses was the key to realising revolutionary objectives.

Just as vanguardism constituted one of the conceptual strands that shaped people's power, so too does it constitute a conceptual influence on popular participation today. Equally, just as 'active participation' comprised a fundamental feature of people's power, so it remains today a driver of transformation and development (ANC 1994; ANC 2012a). As a party in government, the ANC has sought to consolidate its relationship with the masses. Yet its predominance over mass organisations has been combined historically with both the desire for a hegemonic unity and a somewhat instrumental role for participation. It should therefore be asked whether, in the democratic era, vanguardism sustains a form of popular participation that replicates this hegemony and teleology. ***Under democratic conditions, what are the implications of vanguardism for participatory democracy?***

One of the fundamental problems which vanguardism poses to the realisation of participatory democracy is mirrored in Femia's critique of Marxism (1993: 136). Through its two-fold features of both vanguard hegemony and active participation, vanguardism embodies Marxism's own inconsistency of "both political control from above and popular initiative from below". Concurrent with the control and direction of revolutionary leadership is the requirement for popular initiative and creativity. Yet revolutionary theory inherently limits the extent to which popular initiative can extend beyond the bounds of the prescribed

framework. It dictates that the political vanguard lead the people to a foretold end. Whereas public policy on participatory democracy advocates the creation of 'empowered' and informed citizens (SALGA & GTZ 2006: 45, 70; DPLG 2006; ANC 1994a: 120-1; DPLG & GTZ 2005b: 10), vanguardism seeks the creation of participants who accept the vanguard's theory unquestioned.

Of particular note is that the ***educative and empowerment*** strand (discernible in the people's power tradition and in policy on local governance) is not especially a feature of the ANC's own participatory discourse. The 2006 Handbook for Municipal Councillors refers to the importance of councillors "encouraging the potential and initiative" of their constituency (SALGA & GTZ: 2006: 46). Tapping into community experience and knowledge, developing local capacity, and producing informed citizens able to actively participate and influence decision-making are ideas drawn on in the DPLG training material to assist the building of ward committees (DPLG & LGSETA 2007: 22). Whereas the DPLG speaks of democratic deepening (2007: 6), the ANC speaks of mass mobilisation (2012a).

Although public policy remains far removed from entrenching participation as 'collaboration', it does encourage a far greater degree of influence and responsibility to citizens than does ANC discourse. The revolutionary rhetoric currently espoused in discussion documents, publications and speeches of the ANC contrasts even to those contained in its own RDP. Even the educative strand that emerged from the ANC camp itself - promulgated during the 1980s by activists who viewed community-level organisation around basic needs as itself empowering and educative - is not visible in contemporary ANC narrative. Where such community organisation is mentioned, it is in reference to citizens being drawn into the broader camp of 'democratic' (read ANC-aligned) forces.

Consequently, where public policy has sought to foster a deeper understanding of democracy, in which citizens are given real 'voice', "exercise judgement [and] contribute to debate and discussion" (DPLG & LGSETA, Module 3, Part B, p.18), this is undermined by a movement discourse that links participation to the extension of the ANC's hegemony. The notion of participation captured in vanguardism, does not foster the creative initiative and empowerment on which people-centred development rests.[106]

In light of this, it is notable that, in more recent years, the ANC has revived a language of people's power. In a document on organisational renewal presented at the ANC's 2012 policy conference, the ANC made reference to the importance of participatory democracy as an element of activism (2012a: 44). The ANC describes participatory democracy as "organising and mobilising our people for active participation in local transformation and development initiatives, i*ncluding the creation of organs of people's power*" [emphasis added] (ibid.). It is not clear what the ANC envisages for 'people's power' in the present. Although many activists involved in its theorisation and practice in the 1980s were

[106] On this definition of people-centred development, see Korten and Carner (1984: 201).

influenced by ideas of empowerment and self-organisation, its structures were also marred by democratic deficit, coercion and political intolerance of other organisations and influences (Mufson 1990: 129-30). They were, in general, aligned to the ANC.

In the 2012 organisational renewal document, the proposed form and content of "organs of people's power" is given little elaboration. However it is useful to examine the idea by reflecting on other earlier references to the resurrection of such structures. A notable example is the resolution of the ANC's 2007 national policy conference to re-establish 'street committees' as a way for communities to support local police in the fight against crime (ANC 2007b). In a subsequent article in the *ANC TODAY,* ANC government minister and SACP General Secretary, Blade Nzimande suggested that street committees should not be party political but should "seek to organise our people irrespective of political affiliations" (2008). He was also clear, however, that they were linked to the ANC's identity, commenting that "By taking a lead in re-building such structures, the ANC will be affirming its 'dual' but necessary, roles as both a ruling party and a mass mobiliser of the people" (ibid).

While there is indeed no "inherent contradiction between governing and mobilising" (ibid.), what is problematic is when mobilisation is equated with democratic participation such that the discourse of *participatory governance* stands in tension with the discourse of *mobilisation*. Street committees may not be conceptualised as structures of the ANC *per se*. Yet they still appear to be envisaged as "a new platform to intensify the struggle for the renewal of the revolutionary values of our movement" (ibid.). What this seems to imply is that popular participation be exercised through the vanguard. On this issue Reddy observes that "The notion of differentiating party from state structures poses a problem, as historically and ideologically the dominant view in ANC political culture, enunciated in the NDR concept, is that the state serves as an instrument to transform society" (2010: 198). As such, while ANC discourse does draw on ideas from democratic theory - particularly the extension of representative democracy to include features of participatory democracy - its own ideological tradition sees the state and masses as the drivers of NDR.

The ANC does refer in the RDP to the 'empowerment' of citizens (ANC 1994) and, in more recent documents, to participatory democracy as "empowering" (ANC 2012a: 44). These principles are not developed in any detail, however, while the educative and empowering benefits of participation, identifiable in public policy discourse, do not appear to be influential in the discourse of the ANC. What the movement discourse lacks is an understanding of mass participation *as a developmental or learning experience for individual citizens*. As such, rather than being understood as educative or self-sustaining - developing individual capacity as argued by those such as Pateman (1970: 24-25, 43) - ***participation is understood in a teleological sense, echoing the strand of ANC discourse from the 1980s in which popular power constituted a means to a greater (revolutionary) end.***

Mass participation in the ANC's discourse is developmental and educative only in the sense of developing *popular political consciousness.* This takes place through political education and collective work in the direction of a common interest. While civil society organisations may retain their "ideological and organisational independence", the movement still seeks to "fuse or combine their energies, constituencies and diverse capacities into a common national democratic purpose" (ANC 1997). Participation is thus achieved not through "self-motion" as described by Sartori but through "being put into motion (by another will)" (1987: 113). What takes place is mobilisation.

The conception of political conscientisation and active participation of its members is comparable to that of a revolutionary Leninist-type party. What appears to be encouraged, is not so much individual initiative and the sharing of ideas as it is ideological and theoretical conformity. In this regard, Evans' reflection on Marxism and theoretical understanding amongst the proletariat is rather useful:

> "If theoretical understanding is one criterion of genuine participation, then most of the proletariat have never participated, and it is difficult to see how they ever will. Further the understanding must be of the right (Marxian) kind. The role of individual initiative remains limited. The proletarian fits himself into the organisation in a manner guided by the communist as educator. Thus the educative effects of participation remain confined" (1972: 137).

This takes us back again to the contradiction within vanguardism: of political control from above and popular initiative from below. Active participation is essential for the fulfilment of revolutionary (in this case national democratic) tasks. Yet while this requires 'theoretical understanding', this "must be of the right kind".

The very existence of a political vanguard that sees itself as leading an identified 'people' in the direction a predestined common interest immediately limits the extent to which the initiative and ideas of these people are taken into account. However, this is not the imposition of hegemony by undemocratic means. The ANC has been democratically elected and given a mandate by the majority of voters to implement its policies. The problem arises when institutions of participatory democracy are utilised as a means of extending this hegemony. In these circumstances, the strands of participatory democratic policy which seek to develop and enhance citizen capacity to participate in decision-making stand fundamentally in tension with vanguardism's requirement of active participation within the bounds of the movement's framework. This manifestation of this conceptual tension in the structure of the ward committee is discussed below.

6.3.2. Teleology: Revolutionary Objectives Trump Empowerment

As a movement in power, the discourse of the ANC continues to reflect its dominant ideological heritage in African nationalism and Marxism-Leninism. The Freedom Charter

continues to be hailed as a reflection of the movement's values, while, despite its unclear applicability to the present context, NDR remains its official programme. The ANC's failure to critically review the NDR's applicability has, nevertheless, confined it largely to political rhetoric.[107] Increasing socio-economic division within the black majority itself has not been revisited by the theory, while its ideological underpinnings remain worlds apart from policy commitments to a neo-liberal economic framework. Nonetheless, ANC discourse continues to draw on the NDR for the maintenance of its hegemony. What can be discerned is a programmatic connection between the role of participatory democracy and the achievement of national democratic objectives (no matter how much of a smoke screen they might be).

It is not uncharacteristic of the ANC to presage speeches and publications with an historic pre-amble. Indeed, reflections on its history are in fitting with the ANC's continued ability to play to its strengths by drawing on both its liberation heritage and broad popular following. As I have argued elsewhere, the ANC utilises historical claims and the resurrection of a discourse of the past as a means of renewing itself in the present (Brooks Yung 2014).

As far as popular participation goes, these observations are not especially noteworthy. Ruling parties generally have to govern and mobilise support for their policies at the same time. Problematic for democracy, however, is when the structures of governance themselves are infused with a partisan purpose. In an article in *Umrabulo* in 2001 following the introduction of local government legislation providing for participatory democracy, Yunus Carrim recommended that "the national framework [on the local government system] be given more political detail and be linked closely to our national democratic tasks". He added to this: "We are not just seeking to effect a new system of local government. *We are also seeking to use this new system to significantly advance the national democratic transition*" [emphasis added] (Carrim 2001). In a more recent interview, Carrim gave the following description of the ward committee:

> "The Ward Committee would be a broader structure than the ANC branch … [It] would draw in people who wouldn't otherwise join a political party even if they may vote for it. It will also draw in people who don't interest themselves in a political party to even vote for it … the aim was that it would be a broad civil society structure which would mobilise people who are not otherwise mobilisable by an ANC branch structure" (Interview: 16 January 2013).

The ward committee is described as fulfilling a 'mobilising' function. However, acknowledging the problem of ward committees being dominated by ANC members, Carrim clarified that they are primarily aimed at "reach[ing] people who don't normally play an

[107] For comments and criticisms on the ANC's use of NDR see, for example, Fakir (2007) and Sachs (2007: 37).

active role in local government" (ibid.). Their longer term goal, he explained, was "mobilising communities as a whole to play an active role in our democracy" (ibid.). Mobilising people to participate in a democratic decision-making process aligns with the legislated function of the ward committee. However, in *Umrabulo* (where Carrim is presumably wearing his 'ANC' rather his 'CoGTA' hat), he refers to the local government system in such a way that the mobilisation of people behind fixed goals stands in tension with the idea of mobilising them to participate in democracy:

> "As the ANC we need to develop our policy on ward committees. We need to give guidance to ANC-run municipalities on how these committees should be elected and what *political meaning* should be given to the 'diversity of interests' that the law requires to be represented in these committees. Ideally, the ward committee should be *used to mobilise* the broadest range of interests in the community *behind progressive goals as part of the overall national democratic transition*" (2001).

Here, the role of the ward committee is given political inflection in such a way that it is seen as means of advancing revolutionary objectives. Equally, the basic policy principle that ward committees are multi-interest, civil society forums is undermined by Carrim's suggestion that their "diversity of interests" be given political meaning. The DPLG's 2005 Ward Committee Resource Book emphasised that "by virtue of being a function of civic society and not party political they can function independently of the strictures imposed by party alliances" (DPLG & GTZ 2005a: 34). The DPLG has therefore warned of the risks of party political influence on ward committee nomination processes, explaining that it "brings a high degree of party influence into what, in policy terms, is intended to be a civil society function" (ibid.: 31).

The duality of policy versus movement discourse is thus especially visible in the tension between ward committees' as vehicles of the NDR and simultaneous efforts to prevent them from becoming dominated by political parties. Although Carrim infuses ward committees with political meaning, while still Deputy Minister of CoGTA in 2013, he also stated that: "We are considering reviewing the legislation to explore the possibility of reducing the prospects of … party-political activists dominating the ward committee" (Interview: 12 March 2013). This pull between the objectives of democratic governance and those of movement ideology brings to light the parallel tension between the principles of liberal democracy and those of NDR. Reflecting on this in the post-1994 context, Steinberg observes that: "- the theory of NDR is left stranded between two competing conceptions of democracy; the first, a pluralist representative democracy and the second, a platform on which history's privileged agent (here the oppressed nation) is to destroy the *raison d'etre* of political contestation in any form" (2000: 184).

By furthering the NDR, the ward committee negates the very reason for its establishment: to provide a participatory democratic forum for multiple (potentially competing) interests. Homogeneity is instead presupposed and the need for contestation and debate is nullified. In this way the ward committee also enforces a unitary form of democracy. Unitary models are oriented toward consensus and, as Mansbrige notes, may be effective where people have common interests (1983: 4-5). However in a context in which unity cannot be assumed, then pluralism and contestation must be catered for.

Reflecting on the ward committee system, Wooldridge remarked: "it was very much a thing of whoever won the ward got to define which interests were in or out … I remember there being very few cases where an ANC ward councillor would go out of their way to include interest groups that were going to fight with them" (Interview: 12 March 2013). Given the failure to do this, they are commonly seen as ANC structures. If we are willing to consider that ward committees were not originally conceived as "multi-interest forums" but rather as a way of re-building ANC branches (Wooldridge, Interview: 12 March 2013), then it is possible that they were always understood in a teleological sense: as popular organs to carry out the transformative tasks of the national democratic state.

Revolutionary purpose has similarly been linked to the proposals to re-establish 'street committees'. During the 1980s, street committees brought material and psychological benefits to communities, and their resurrection in the present-day draws on some of these successes, most especially a reduction in crime.[108] Yet there are parallels with the 1980s in terms of both prospects *and* risks. The key difference between then and now is fundamentally one of context. Under apartheid, organs of people's power filled a crucial gap: their activists and proponents developed alternative ways of organising society in the face of state neglect, while some also argued that they constituted a school of democracy (UDF 1986: 2-3). Today, however, South Africans live in a formal democratic state, in which people's rights have constitutional protection and they are able to vote for the structures of government. Thus while the widespread realisation of socio-economic rights remains a challenge, we cannot ignore the requirement that programmes to protect rights and advance development must operate within the bounds of accountable institutions. What the street committee initiative leaves unclear is how it will relate to such institutions.

Reflecting on the NDR's theoretical foundations, in which the state is used as an instrument to transform society, normative concerns accordingly arise about the relationship between organs of people's power and legislated governance structures. The introduction of CPFs from 1995 was intended to improve community-police relations and to mobilise communities to assist in crime prevention. Yet there is no real clarification of the role of the

[108] On the street committee in Newlands East, which has undertaken tasks such as helping single mothers to access help from local government, see IRIN (24 September 2008). See also the Mail & Guardian (8 November 2013). Marks and Wood also cite claims to its effectiveness in reducing crime (2010: 316).

street committee in relation to the CPF. Nathi Mthetwa, who subsequently became Minister of Safety and Security, set out the role of the street committee in 2008 as being supplementary "to the work of the other civil society and governance organs and institutions" (Mthetwa 2008).

However, while street committees are not 'officially' structures of the party, the intention is implied that they be imbued with ideological purpose. Recognising that there is a potential risk of 'vigilantism', Mthetwa proposed that this be addressed through "ideological training" to prevent them being exploited by "counter-revolutionaries" (ibid.). Rather than address existing weaknesses in CPFs, such as a lack of broader community involvement, the proposed solution is that street committees play a leading role instead (Nzimande 2008). Yet what is to stop street committees, themselves, becoming dominated by the same voices? If they are subject to ideological direction, we can only presume they will be comprised predominantly of ANC-aligned individuals.

Reservation about the resurrection of street committees is not to dismiss entirely their role in crime prevention or other development strategies. To understand their potential, further research is required to ascertain the extent to which the meanings bequeathed to them by their participants align with those stated by the ANC. However, the solution to challenges of participatory governance should not be the introduction of seemingly partisan structures which fall outside of legislation. There is nothing to stop the movement from introducing street committees as party political structures, perhaps intended to link residents with the local ANC branch. ***But the problem arises when they are created under the pretence of political neutrality, or at the expense of improvements to mechanisms for participatory governance.***

In contemporary usage of the term, Carrim referred to 'organs of people's power' as including legislated or state-invited structures, such ward committees, IDP forums, SGBs, CPFs and health committees, as well as civil society groups such as NGOs and community based organisations. He refers to "any organisation whether national or local or provincial which actually seeks to advance the needs and interests of people on the ground who are disadvantaged" (Interview: 16 January 2013). Both local government structures and civil society groups can thus constitute an organ of people's power. Yet, despite affirming that these structures can be either state-invited or citizen-invented, the lines between party and state and between party and society are once again blurred.

Reflecting on the understanding of people's power today, Carrim explained it as also being intended to spread ideas and values of a more egalitarian society (Interview: 16 January 2013). In terms of the ongoing NDR, he described people's power as "essentially the power of organised people to transform their society to serve their interests, working often in cooperation with the progressive government and state but sometimes, if necessary, acting

beyond the government and state and even against it. A national democratic state needs organs of people's power to carry out its transformative tasks" (ibid.).

On the one hand, people's power is intended to build popular capacity and self-organisation, guided by the people's own interests. Yet there is also an assumption that these interests are represented by the NDR. The need for people not only to *work with* but also to *challenge* government is acknowledged. Yet, by stating that "a national democratic state needs organs of people's power to carry out its transformative tasks" (ibid), the structure of party and state become conceptually linked. Popular power is once again teleological.

It should be qualified that this aforementioned statement from Carrim referred to the contemporary understanding of people's power *within the SACP*, of which he is also a member. However the extent of dual membership of the Party and ANC results in conceptual cross-pollination. Carrim explained that the distinction in the SACP's understanding was one of class emphasis: the SACP focuses far more of the power of the working class and the ultimate struggle for socialism (ibid.).

There seems overall to be a somewhat blinkered understanding of people's power, reflected in the assumption of popular homogeneity and adherence to the NDR's precepts. What is implied here, in contrast to published policy, is not the cultivation of an empowered and educated citizenry but one that conforms to a pre-conceived programme. The space of participation as open and contested is potentially at risk from the presence of a discourse that removes the overarching policy framework (i.e. the NDR) from democratic debate. Interestingly, in reference to internal party democracy, Lodge remarks that although efforts are made to 'induce' membership participation in policy discussions, "the agendas for such deliberations are quite carefully controlled" (2004: 208).

There is some suggestion that historic adherence to the NDR's directives was fairly dogmatic, in such a way that precluded discussion and incorporation of ideas outside of the NDR framework. Wooldridge made an interesting observation about the way in which revolutionary theory guided thinking during the early 1990s by using the example of feminist issues raised at ANC and civic meetings:

> "I remember there was a lot of union work on, working on gender issues, and people would always get included in forums and then get told 'no, this is a two-step revolution. First we do this and then we will deal with women's rights'. You know there were a lot of assumptions made as this is the kind of path that is laid out in the NDR, played out in terms of what gets said at this meeting, what gets taken up. So, you know, feminist activists are welcome to come; say anything you want but you do understand: second part of the revolution only! … It was bizarre but it was

> just very widely shared, you know? Feminist activists would take that at a meeting. They would never do that today! … It was pervasive" (Interview: 12 March 2013).

Thus while the NDR may have begun to lose some conceptual relevance by this period, there still appears to have been rigid adherence to its prescriptions and principles. While perceiving itself as having allowed the structures of the broader movement to maintain "ideological and organisational independence", the ANC still sought to "fuse or combine their energies … into a common national democratic purpose" (ANC 1997). The interests and will of the people are thus equated with the NDR.

6.3.3. Bounded Democracy: the NDR and NPM

Preservation of the NDR discourse into the third decade of democracy, begs the question as to how we understand the role of GEAR. While ANC policy retains some characteristics of state-welfarism, GEAR's ideological foundations, discussed in the preceding chapter, lie in the neo-liberal assumption that market growth will facilitate development. In stark contrast, the historic idea of 'national democracy' is that it would include a mixed economy and was considered by the ANC and SACP as a necessary prelude to a transition to socialism. Sat next to the post-1994 macro-economic framework, the NDR is rather incongruous.

If, however, we reflect back on the intellectual influences explored in the previous chapter, it was argued that the rise of discourses of governance and 'performance management' have limited the scope of democratic debate through a centralised process of policy formulation. Macro-economic policy is thus protected from formal challenge. Local government policy in South Africa, including that on the role of citizens, has been penetrated by these same concerns of public sector efficiency, reduction in the use of state resources, and retention of policy direction by central government. ***This technocratic, centralisation process has thus also enabled the ANC to simultaneously remove the NDR from popular scrutiny and contestation.***

While at the most local of levels South Africans have the opportunity to influence municipal planning, this is divorced from their ability to contest policy itself. Challenge to the broader system, and to the centrally-planned development agenda, is significantly confined. Simultaneously, the ANC's vanguard discourse encourages the active participation of MDM structures. Yet by virtue of the ANC determining which contributions from civil society are considered 'progressive', and by narrowing the agenda for debate to those issues that fall *within* NDR, both the broader policy framework *and* vanguard discourse carry a self-sustaining ideological function.

Therefore, although the NPM and movement discourses have starkly different ideological origins - one seeking performance and efficiency and the other a hegemonic unity - their simultaneous usage has been mutually reinforcing. Technocratic and performance-driven

elements of public policy, in particular, have enabled the ANC-as-movement to mask where power really lies.[109] As such, ***a weak or more restricted understanding of participation in public policy, "stripped of the political volatility of direct popular involvement" (De Beer 1997: 67), has in effect enabled a continuation of a top-down mode of development, appearing at the level of the movement as 'vanguardism'.***

This vanguardist approach, however, is linked to the ANC's intellectual heritage which differs significantly from that of the NPM. Harrison notes that influences of planning theory in the ANC camp have been shaped not only by multilateral development agencies but by the East Asian developmental state and the top-down approaches of "newly-independent" and/or "socialist countries to which the ANC in exile was exposed" (2001: 182). As noted earlier, the movement's resemblance to a vanguard-type party, as much as a broad united front, has influenced its view of the popular role. As such, it has adopted what Heller describes as a "bureaucratic and commandist logic of local government" (2001: 134).

What is important to clarify, is that it is *a particular type of vanguardism* that the shift toward neo-liberalism has reinforced. In Chapter Three it was argued that a tension existed in the notions of vanguardism that penetrated people's power. Whereas those in the UDF and civics recognised the ANC as the rightful political vanguard, they did not see this as precluding the coexistence of bottom-up structures of popular power. As such, although they themselves reinforced the ANC's vanguard status, they also encouraged the development of people's power as an educative and empowering experience. While its goals were still political (i.e. the seizure of political power under the leadership of the ANC), participation was also seen as *valuable in itself*. This conception both encouraged a form of developmental democracy and recognised the material and psychological benefits to be accrued from community organisation and self-help.

The strand of vanguardism parallel to this was more visible in the external ANC and it is this discourse that characterises much of the movement's official documentation during its period in exile. This strand showed greater concern to ensure top-down direction by the vanguard leadership, whereby mass participation was controlled by the guiding hand of the movement. It did not exhibit concern for individual development and empowerment, nor did it cultivate popular initiative outside of the NDR framework. Organs of people's power, moreover, were understood in a far more instrumental sense - as weapons of struggle and bastions of the movement through which the line between ANC and masses would be blurred. Due to its prevalence amongst the ANC's top leadership and some of its most influential cadres, it was this latter strand of vanguardism that was arguably most dominant in the ANC of the 1980s.

[109] My thanks are due to Shireen Hassim for her assistance in this formulation.

Within the discourse of people's power this competed with a more bottom-up vision prevalent in the movement at home. Chapter Five set out how activists' ideas about community organisation informed the policy process. It is due to the strength of this strand of political culture in the UDF and civics that its influence is visible in the current local government system. Within the ANC, itself, however, this empowerment strand is arguably much weaker. The discourse of vanguardism that prevails today in the ANC-as-movement is of the former kind, in which the real scope of popular input and agency is limited by the NDR. ***Participatory democracy, contrary to what some argue, is not merely rhetoric: 'active participation' is a crucial feature of NDR. However it is guided by a vanguardism in which democracy is bounded by a form of participation circumscribed by allegiance to the movement.*** The predominance of this strand is a result of the ANC's history, both ideologically and organisationally and highlights the survival of traditions emerging from Marxism-Leninism.

It is thus with great irony that this vanguard discourse has been bolstered by its ideological nemesis: neo-liberalism. The trend toward technocratic process, the use of experts and the push for efficiency and performance have protected economic policy from popular influence. The development sphere is thus sectioned-off from the powers of participatory governance. Top-down development processes, control from the centre and the cultivation of a 'bounded' democracy appear at the level of the movement as *vanguardism*.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the participatory discourse of the ANC which overlays the range of influences discernible in public policy. While there are of course overlaps between the two, the movement discourse draws far more heavily on the ANC's liberation heritage. Here, vanguardism is the dominant concept informing the understanding of participation. Active participation by the people is critical to both the endurance of vanguardism and continuation of the NDR, no matter how ambiguous the content of the latter. While the form of participation this requires may not meet normative democratic criteria, it is a form of participation nonetheless and, perhaps most important of all, is understood *by the ANC* as constitutive of participatory democracy.

In the preceding chapter which traced the intellectual currents shaping participatory democratic policy, it was argued that the shift toward a more technocratic approach to local government has removed from popular contestation the direction of broader economic and development policy. While South Africans can participate in development at the local level, they lack influence and power over the policy agenda itself. Looking in parallel at the discourse of the ANC, it is possible to see how the notion of 'weak' participation embodied in the technocratic approach has enabled the simultaneous continuation of vanguardism which also removes from the sphere of contestation the ANC's programme of NDR. Despite differences in their ideological premise, what both discourses facilitate is a *narrow form of*

participation in which the real locus of power is concealed by the formulaic discourse of policy on the one hand and the nostalgic discourse of the movement on the other.

Although many in the UDF and civics recognised the ANC as the rightful political vanguard, and themselves promoted an idea of democracy deficient in providing for pluralism, their notion of vanguardism nonetheless included establishing popular control and empowerment. In the discourse of the movement since 1994, however, this strand appears to have lost out to a more dominant current. In the latter, what is advanced is not so much popular power as it is a hegemonic unity. Civil society must be independent yet loyal, while the conflation of revolutionary policy with the popular democratic will undermines the objective of citizen agency and influence set out in public policy.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion: How Shall the People Govern?

Vanguardism and Democracy

This thesis has examined how the ANC has understood and practiced participatory democracy, with particular reference to 1980s people's power and post-1990 policy formulation. Framing the research within democratic theory it has interrogated what the ANC means by 'participation' and 'participatory democracy'. It embarked on an analysis of 1980s people's power, the codification of ANC democratic thought and the formulation of post-1994 policy on participatory democracy. It considered the way in which *ideas* (incorporating theories, ideologies, intellectual traditions and schools of thought) have informed the ANC's conception of the role for 'the people' and popular participation in a democratic state.

The thesis essentially traces the development of ideas. Although the period of focus is from the 1980s, the analysis is rooted in an understanding of the ANC's ideological lineage. Based on the premise that ideas inform practice, the dominant ideological currents in the ANC, as well as the development of its democratic thought more generally, are crucial to understanding its ideas in the present.

It has also sought to challenge existing approaches to analysis of the 1980s which have tended to view the democracy established after 1994 as inferior or unrelated to that pre-figured by people's power.[110] Instead, I have argued that the discourse and practice of people's power *has* had bearing on the character of South Africa's democracy since 1994, and that people's power, itself, did not constitute an entirely democratic form of participation. Its proponents, while embracing ideas of decentralised grassroots control, also embraced a notion of participation as teleological. For those in the ANC and UDF, people's power was tied fundamentally to the achievement of political goals. It also rejected many of the features of democracy that allow for freedom of political choice and association, establishing structures for popular power that were aligned predominantly with the ANC.

The thesis has also sought to show that democratic deficiencies in South Africa's democracy cannot be attributed to a post-1994 change in the 'character' of the ANC from that of a popular democratic organisation to an authoritarian elite-driven structure. It also contends that democratic deficits should not be attributed to the acceptance of features of political and economic liberalism alone. Such accounts ignore the presence of ideas about people's power and a radical form of democracy that themselves lacked key democratic features.

[110] See, for example, Neocosmos (1998), Legassick (2007) and Sinwell (2011).

Instead this thesis has suggested that the source of undemocratic and centralised tendencies in the ANC can be found in its dominant ideological traditions of African nationalism and Marxism-Leninism, both of which fostered notions of leadership as *vanguardism* and active participation as *teleological*. These traditions and the ideas that they encompass, rather than being attributable only to a particular 'strand' of the ANC, constituted powerful conceptual influences on the theory of people's power. Thus while conceptions of participatory democracy in the ANC have been shaped by a number of traditions and theories, they cannot be delinked from undemocratic traits in the theoretical heritage of the ANC generally.

What the thesis has drawn out is a series of themes and sub-themes in the discourse of participation. It has traced the way in which these ideas have been woven through the policy process. It examines the extent to which those currents influential in the theory and practice of people's power have been carried over into the post-1990 period of policy formulation, as well as tracing the emergence of new influences and schools of thought.

Examination of the development of these ideas reveals that there is no one, identifiable theory of participatory democracy in the ANC but that it *is* possible to identify a number of *dominant themes and conceptions*. This enables us to formulate a much clearer understanding of the ANC's conception of participatory democracy. It is argued that its conception has developed out of a variety of intellectual traditions that can themselves be linked to particular points in the ANC's history and to certain strands of the movement. It has also been shaped by strategic considerations and external theoretical and political influences, in South Africa and globally.

This multiplicity of influences, however, has led to some conceptual tension. Firstly, South Africa's public policy on participatory democracy, which focuses largely on local government, draws on a range of local and international ideas. These include radical democratic theory, domestic traditions of popular participation, participatory development theory, progressive planning, the discourse of 'governance', and performance management. This array of influences has made for some well-researched policy. Those ideas emerging, in particular, from local activist traditions, radical democratic theory and participatory development have contributed to an aspect of policy which seeks not just the consultation of citizens but their empowerment to contribute to decision-making. Policy draws on both the efficiency benefits to be gained from enlisting local insight, as well as the democratic benefits of developing more empowered citizens while increasing popular influence.

However, the policy strands rooted in governance and performance management focus not so much on the democratic aspects of participation as they do on the desirability of a more efficient state. Under this influence, participation is depoliticised and "detached from its radical nature" (Leal 2011: 76). Citizen participation thus takes place within the existing

policy framework and popular influence on decision-making is reduced to the most local of levels.

The second conceptual tension is that what has emerged since 1994 is a discourse of participation found in public policy on the one hand, and a separate, distinct discourse of participation found in the ANC as a movement on the other. In the latter*, mechanisms for participatory governance, intended to allow for the influence of a plurality of civil society interests, are equated by the ANC with mechanisms for the extension of its hegemony*. Structures intended in legislation to be vehicles for participatory democracy are characterised in the ANC's discourse as both party political and teleological.

While South Africa's public policy on participatory democracy is not without its weaknesses, the ideas and theories that shape it should provide citizens with a degree of influence in decision-making, at least at the local level. The parallel discourse of the ANC as a movement, however, rooted in ideas of its history as a 'vanguard' movement, risk undermining the democratising objectives of South African public policy. An identifiable theme throughout the development of ANC's ideas is an ongoing and unresolved tension between a desire for political control from above and popular initiative from below. Post-1994, this can be framed more concisely as a tension between *vanguardism* and *participatory democracy*.

Chapter One of this thesis set out the scope of this work, providing the aim, rationale, key research questions and methodological approach. It situated the research within a framework of democratic theory, outlining the intellectual traditions from which participatory democratic thought has evolved. It also drew on other traditions, located outside democratic theory, that have also played a role in shaping experiments in participation within organisations, the workplace, in development projects and in municipal government. This sought to show that the lineage of participatory democracy is not only varied but that its history on the political Left has itself not gone uncontested. The existence of normative democratic debate amongst theorists and practitioners strengthens the case for an analysis that allows for competing conceptions of participation.

Discussion of a normative idea of participatory democracy and clarification of its features in relation to other models or types of democracy provided a benchmark against which to examine the ANC's own understanding. This also helped to inform the questions asked of the ANC throughout the course of the thesis. The chapter also provided a review of existing literature, highlighting its value in providing historical accounts and context and emphasising the gap in current research on people's power and participatory democracy as part of a broader trajectory of ANC democratic thought.

Chapter Two provided an overview of the presence and role of participation in the development of ANC democratic thought. The premise of the chapter was that the ANC existed as an organisation for over seven decades prior to people's power. Understanding

the main ideological influences on the movement and the extent to which its thinking incorporated a role for popular participation historically was critical for the exploration of subsequent years.

It characterised the ANC's early years as constituting a conservative liberalism and the favouring of parliamentary representative democracy. The chapter also noted that ANC democratic thought at that time was influenced predominantly by the notion of *trusteeship* - a form of representation in which Congress would act as a trustee, guided by what they believed to be in the best interests of Africans. Representation as trusteeship would not involve any form of popular participation but rather the entrustment of this role to Congress, who could best understand and determine the interests of their disadvantaged people. The ANC's perception of itself as a spokesperson of Africans formed the basis on which its early ideas of representative democracy lay.

The chapter then went on to explore the spread of African nationalism in the ANC which, with the rise of a new leadership generation from the ANC Youth League, became the dominant ideology of Congress from the mid-1940s. It also highlighted, however, that from 1950 onwards Marxist ideology began to permeate the movement through its contact with the Communist Party. By the close of the 1950s and the banning of the ANC, both African nationalism *and* Marxism-Leninism constituted dominant ideological influences.

Despite the rise of these new currents, however, 'democracy' as articulated by the ANC still appeared to be nothing other than representative in form. The influence of African nationalist and Marxist-Leninist thought however did have two critical implications for the ANC's ideas about democracy. The introduction of African nationalism from the mid-1940s induced a shift away from delegations and reformist appeals for change toward the conversion of the ANC into a mass movement. The type of mass participation it generated, however, constituted a form of mobilisation. The key goal of the ANC's campaigns during the 1950s was mass mobilisation behind the goal of political freedom. The Freedom Charter itself, while constituting a broad statement of aims, did not generate greater clarity on the model of democracy sought. The lack of indication on this point reflects both the underdevelopment of ANC democratic thought at that stage, and a deliberate strategy to broaden the alliance of forces under its hegemony. As such, the Freedom Charter served predominantly as a unifying and mobilising tool.

Secondly, despite comprising vastly different sets of ideas to the liberalism that guided Congress previously, both ideologies served to buttress the premise of trusteeship*. African Nationalism and Marxism-Leninism contained theories of organisation that entailed an active role for the masses and the political direction of a dedicated leadership*. Just as trusteeship entailed representation of the people by a leadership able to determine their best interests, so too did African nationalism and Marxism-Leninism embody the idea of a movement able to convince the people of both the need for its leadership and the

correctness of its revolutionary objectives. *Leadership*, as conceived by the ANC, thus shifted from one top-down form to another. Early traditions of trusteeship and paternalism provided favourable conditions and a conceptual foundation for a new view of leadership as *vanguardism*.

It was in exile from 1960, with the ANC's adoption of revolutionary discourse, combined with the decision to embark on armed struggle and the growing influence of Marxism-Leninism, that *trusteeship* began to manifest as *vanguardism*. Concomitant with this was the consolidation of its view of the masses as *active participants*, and the increasing subjection of participation to the revolutionary imperative of seizing state power.

Chapter three focused on the 1980s, tracing the ideas informing the ANC's conception of people's power and, in particular, its role and future. It showed how people's power as a phenomenon constituted a web of interlinking ideas and themes. Perhaps the most dominant influence on the ANC during the 1980s was Marxism-Leninism. Amongst internal activists and intellectuals, Gramsci's ideas were also prevalent, as was a broader democratic socialist tradition which posed an alternative to orthodox Marxism.

Within the trade union movement, whose ideas began to transfer to community and civic organisations, a socialist tradition was also emerging which was increasingly distanced from the SACP and its alignment to the Soviet Union. This understanding of people's power was also linked to localised forms of struggle. As such, those who saw it as a fulfilment of ANC policy were not prevented from also interpreting it as an educative and empowering experience or a practical means of negotiation and self-help. For activists inside South Africa, there was arguably a greater appreciation of localised experience. Although spurred on by the ANC's liberation narrative, these individuals were often concerned as much, if not more, with ameliorating the hardships of everyday life as they were with broader ideological questions.

Although the ideas of exiled and domestic activists overlapped and informed one another, it is possible to identify conceptual discomfort between the views that emerged. While these strands did not conflict as such, they generated theoretical variation, not only between people's power as a means versus an end of struggle but in the interpretation of *vanguardism* and the *masses as creative participants*. For the ANC, its role as a vanguard movement was rooted in Marxism-Leninism and informed directly its relationship with the people. 'Democracy' was thus rooted not so much in local democratic control as in the *fulfilment of revolutionary objectives*. Active participation required that political consciousness be brought to the people from without, and that mass participation for revolutionary ends take place under the guiding hand of the movement.

For the broader MDM, the ANC's vanguard status and the depth of its connection with the people was never questioned. However, acceptance of this hegemony, and the use of

popular power for revolutionary ends, *did not preclude a simultaneous vision of tangible local democratic control*. Democracy, for the UDF and civics, was also linked to their own role and structure as independent organisations connected to grassroots concerns. Thus while political conscientisation was characteristic of UDF discourse too, it also involved raising the people's consciousness that collective organisation and democratic practice could themselves ameliorate shared problems. Amongst this strand of the movement, ideas of grassroots organising, community self-help and democracy as developmental shaped their view of the future.

It is of note, however, that these conceptions were often not interpreted at the time as potentially at odds with one another. Indeed, what emerged across the board was a largely teleological understanding of participation, both in its function as a means of struggle and in prefiguring a post-apartheid order. While the UDF and civics may have envisaged a form of democracy in which communities would govern and control their local affairs - holding direct influence over the decisions that affect their lives - this was still envisaged as taking place *within the remit of Charterist hegemony*. Even those structures which focused on social welfare and collective space papered over political diversity and precluded alternative ideas from flourishing. Thus, although they fostered notions of popular activity which embodied empowering and educating characteristics, its manifestation in *participatory democracy* failed fundamentally to cater for political difference. What was produced was a unitary form of democracy, bound by allegiance to the movement.

From 1990 as the ANC moved into a process of process of clarifying and formalising its democratic ideas, these conceptual tensions remained unresolved. *The failure to reconcile the premise of vanguard leadership with the concurrent belief in popular initiative manifested after 1990 in a tension between vanguardism and democracy.* Moreover, beyond the common goal of political freedom, there was no common, standardised vision of the institutionalised form that people's power would take. The lack of a common resolution by the end of the 1980s as to what people's power implied for a democratic future had a knock-on effect in the codification and formalisation of ANC democratic thought.

Chapter Four went on to explore this very process. The first part of the chapter focused on the period of constitutional discussion from 1986, firstly within the ANC and then in the multi-party constitutional negotiations from 1993. It was suggested that this marked a critical period in the codification of ANC democratic thought. The analysis made three critical points: Firstly, it identified that, with the formation of the ANC's Constitution Committee in 1986, this process of codification took place within a framework of constitutionalism and that the work of the Committee represented a merging of liberal and radical democratic ideas.

Between 1986 and 1996 new theoretical influences began to penetrate the ANC through support from the legal fraternity. Through their participation in the internal discussions of

the ANC, the influence of lawyers succeeded in bringing a rights-based discourse to the ANC's constitutional formulations. Statements of the ANC's Constitution Committee during the late 1980s, which culminated in the publication of its 1988 Draft Constitutional Guidelines, signified the first formal commitment by the liberation movement to the principles of a multi-party system and individual civil and political rights.

Secondly, and particularly importantly, it was argued that *this process of constitutional discussion and written codification of the ANC's ideas took place largely in conceptual isolation from the phenomenon of people's power.* Examination of the documents of the committee and the ideas filtering into its discussions suggest very little conceptual cross-pollination between the two. During the late 1980s, the discourse of the MDM and broader ANC was not at all penetrated by ideas of constitutionalism, human rights or discussion of multi-party versus one-party systems. The domestic movement was also not moved by the same urgency to clarify its ideas about a future state form. Instead, within the broader movement other ideas continued to be influential, including revolutionary theory, Marxism-Leninism, and the more localised, home-grown experiences of popular organisation and control.

Thirdly, the chapter identified that, during this period of constitutional discussion, *the ANC began to locate participatory democracy in the local government arena specifically*. Although people's power had, by its nature, taken place at a local/community level, the ANC had not previously given any indication of the institutional location of popular participation in a future state. The discussion of constitutional principles and guidelines, however, seemed to situate participatory democracy within a framework of local government.

Although the formal process of policy formulation on local government did not commence until after 1996, with the unbanning of the liberation movement in 1990 the civic movement and activists at home began to feed their own ideas about participation into local-level negotiations. The second part of Chapter Four thus explored the discussion of these ideas within the ANC, MDM, and civics in particular, about a future model of local government. Some of this debate took place quite separately to discussions of the ANC, whose leaders were preoccupied with national-level negotiations for a political settlement. The exchange of ideas and discussion of government models was taking place at the local level between municipal administrations and representatives of the non-statutory camp. The chapter drew, in particular, on the example of the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber which pioneered and provided a model for other metropolitan areas to address the collapse of local administrations and the interim provision of services in the absence of a national agreement.

Although the Metropolitan Chamber did not succeed in developing a new local government model, through technical support from NGOs and academics, it did provide non-statutory participants with the opportunity to influence the direction of local government. The chamber and other forums like it set a precedent for the involvement of civics in governance

and in the formulation of development strategies. It also prepared them for engaging the state rather than fighting it. Amongst those involved in discussing new local government, a number of ideas and traditions were influential, including trade unionism, community activism, progressive planning and participatory development.

Linking in with local government discussions was the theme of 'civil society', an idea that grew in popularity in democratic theory in the early 1990s. The experience of the socialist states in Eastern Europe and of post-independence Africa demonstrated to South African activists the risk of popular organisations being crushed or co-opted by liberation movements on coming to power. The discourse of civil society thus placed emphasis not only on the importance of an autonomous civic realm but on civil society as an arena for the exercise of people's power. What seems to have taken place from 1990 onwards is *a shift away from the ANC as delivering people's power, toward people's power as a project of civil society autonomous from the ANC-in-government.* In ANC discourse, revolutionary and radical democratic language became replaced by that of constitutionalism, while the language of people's power instead begun to appear more manifestly in the discourse of civil society.

This did not mean that the ANC was no longer expected to provide for participatory democracy. On the contrary, participatory structures would constitute the interface (or 'participatory space') for policy influence between government and civil society. 'People's power', however, became something that could only be guaranteed by civil society itself. Under a democratic state, civic organisations and others in the MDM began to see themselves, and not necessarily the ANC, as the legitimate representative of popular interests. Thus while the early 1990s produced the beginning of discussions about how to provide for citizen participation, it also brought to the surface a conceptual discord: between the civics' desire for a new autonomy and the ANC's distrust of an oppositional civil society; *and* between the civics as representatives of communities and the ANC as the vanguard of the people.

Against the backdrop of this genealogy of ideas, Chapter Five focused on the ideas informing post-1994 policy on participatory democracy. Although it has been argued that the ANC's democratic discourse by the early 1990s had been stripped of its more radical character, the idea that South Africa's constitution embraces a notion of both representative *and* participatory democracy is widely accepted (Parliament of South Africa, undated). The national parliament describes participatory democracy as "a strengthening or expansion of formal representative democracy to include greater levels of participation by civil society" (ibid.).

Since 1998 there has been a series of policy frameworks, municipal legislation, guidance and handbooks detailing participatory democracy in local government. While this has been identified as the primary arena for participatory democracy, mechanisms for public participation in governance also exist in the fields of community policing, school governance

and economic and labour policy, as well as within initiatives of the executive and the national and provincial legislatures.

Chapter Five thus showed how some of the theoretical strands constituting people's power continued into the post-1994 period and were woven into public policy. Participatory traditions of the 1980s as well as radical democratic thought from within the ANC camp generally (most especially its longstanding belief in the inadequacy of representative democracy) formed the very basis on which the project to develop participatory democracy policy lay. Direct association is often made today between the idea of popular participation in governance and the Freedom Charter's premise that "the people shall govern" (Tsenoli, Interview: 11 March 2013; Botha, Interview: 14 April 2014). The import of past traditions on the premise of establishing a participatory democratic system can be attributed to the continued involvement of individuals from the ANC and MDM in formulating local government policy.

That being said, policy development also absorbed new ideas and experiences. The 1980s and early 1990s activist traditions, especially around challenges of urban development, surfaced more visibly after 1994 through the influence of progressive planning and participatory development theory. These strands, alongside models of participatory municipal governance elsewhere on the globe, can be identified amongst the influences on policy. Although development and planning traditions were identifiable in the 1980s, particularly amongst intellectuals and NGOs, during the period of policy formulation they came much more clearly to the fore as schools of thought shaping the governance project.

Ideals of citizen empowerment remain clearly influenced by the ideas of contemporary NGOs. Chapter Five highlighted the role played by organisations and think tanks such as Idasa, Planact, Afesis-Corplan and EISA in assisting the DPLG to compile guidance documents for use by municipalities. These documents draw out the benefits to be gained by both communities *and* municipalities from engaging citizens in participatory governance. They encompasses ideas such as municipalities responding to the needs of communities rather than imposing its own ideas; communities' wide range of skills and experience that can benefit the municipality; and the development of better community understanding and ownership for the projects being implemented (DPLG & LGSETA 2007: 22).

The chapter also showed, however, that debates about democracy, development and the state also absorbed the dominant global discourses of Western governments, international financial institutions and technical advisors. Contained within this paradigm were the ideas of good governance and performance management. Both of these strands provide some complement to citizen participation, encouraging bottom-up development, a greater role for civil society and a reduced role for the state. It was also identified, however that they equally pose something of a challenge to it. The NPM model is concerned primarily with ensuring efficiency. Its ideas about governance thus have their own internal tension in which the exigencies of performance are weighed up against the costs of facilitating citizen

input. Partnerships with civil society are a key feature of the NPM and of mainstream governance discourse. Their primary concern, however, is efficiency and doing more with less. The exigencies of being more business-like often sit uncomfortably with more elongated processes of citizen participation and democracy. The potential for participation to slow down development therefore undermines it being seen as a crucial step in the process.

Constraints on citizen influence are thus attributable to the nature of the state and its development strategy. Cornwall and Coelho, highlight that in states such as South Africa, India and Brazil, the existence of a relatively strong state has generated "a fear of letting go of control, high levels of bureaucratization and embedded aspects of political culture [which] provide potent obstacles to the participation of traditionally excluded citizens" (2007: 22). In South Africa, the tendency to control policy direction from the centre and to convert participatory exercises into technocratic ones in the interests of performance and efficiency has had the effect of *removing from public democratic influence South Africa's macro-economic framework*. As such, schools of thought which place a premise on citizen participation have also by their nature restricted citizens' ability to exercise influence beyond the most local of levels.

The spread of global rethinking about local government, alongside the change in ideological milieu between the 1980s and 1990s, generated new perspectives within the ANC itself about the *possibility* and *desirability* of people's power. After 1994, with the pressures of governance and delivery combined with the fact that converting people's power into an institutionalised form had not been clearly thought through by the movement, previously radical thinking about participation begun to be replaced by a creeping realism. Chapter Five's analysis of the legislated mechanisms provided for participatory governance showed that public participation in South Africa often takes the form of consultation, rather than granting citizens any real influence in decision-making processes.

Despite aspects of policy aspiring to empower communities, they have often not had this result. The ease with which participation has fallen into a category of 'informing' and 'consulting', or at best 'cooperating', perhaps relates both to the lack of detail ascribed to it during the ANC's own constitutional formulations, and to the more moderate feel given to participation during the Constitutional Assembly. In both cases, there remained a lack of clarity as to *how* participatory democracy would be realised.

The claim is therefore made that the absorption of a language of 'participation' in mainstream development discourse has actually been used as a way of making neo-liberal development more palatable and people-friendly (Leal 2011: 71, 75-6). The notion of partnership incorporated in NPM discourse should not be mistaken for a sharing of power between citizen and state. Rather, the encouragement of self-help initiatives in civil society reduces pressure on the state. By civil society structures finding their own solutions to

development challenges, their 'participation' via self-help plays into the hands of neo-liberalism's trend of "shrinking state responsibilities" (Cornwall & Coelho 2007: 5).

Chapter One of this thesis argued that there is no clearly articulated theory of participatory democracy within the ANC historically. The opening to this conclusion also contended that that a singular, standardised conception cannot be identified from examination of its ideas and practice. What can be detected however is, firstly, that multiple ideas and conceptions of the role for 'the people' and 'participation' have fed into post-1994 policy. Secondly, there are *two distinct but parallel discourses of participatory democracy in the post-1994 period: one contained within public policy and the other in the commentary of the ANC*.

The final chapter of the thesis explored the latter of these, examining the ANC's understanding of participatory democracy as expressed in its own discussion documents, publications, speeches and commentary. In contrast to the variety of influences on public policy development, the ANC's 'movement' discourse draws far more heavily on its liberation heritage. Here, the concept of *vanguardism*, prominent within the ANC during its years in exile and in the discourse of people's power, continues to inform the movement's understanding of popular participation. *Vanguardism, and the relationship between people and movement it implies, is a fundamental characteristic of the ANC's identity, both historically and today.*

One of the key emphases of this thesis is the ANC's relationship with the people. As both a movement and political party, its identity must be understood through the lens of historic struggle and ideological tradition. Discussion of the ANC's ideological history in Chapter Two identified the emergence of *vanguardism* - a strand born from the growing influence of Marxism-Leninism but also complemented by existing nationalist sentiments involving popular conscientisation and the role of a dedicated leadership. This was then developed in Chapter Three through examination of the conceptual relationship between vanguardism and people's power. Chapters Four and Six then showed how vanguardism has remained a conceptual current in ANC discourse, experiencing a revival in the movement since 1994. Vanguardism thus remains relevant not only to the ANC's history as a liberation movement but to its ongoing role as a governing party. The ANC today continues to identify itself as a 'vanguard'. What Chapter Six brought to the fore are ***the implications of vanguardism for participatory democracy in the context of a democratic state.***

The very premise of vanguardism is the need for a dedicated movement or party able to give ideological, moral and intellectual leadership through a process of conscientisation in which the people themselves come not only to see the vanguard's revolutionary objectives as in their best interest but also see leadership by that vanguard as essential for those interests to be secured. ***Vanguardism implies a fundamental connection between the people's needs as a collective and the leadership of their vanguard organisation.***

Secondly, and importantly, ***an active role for the people is critical to both the endurance of vanguardism itself and to the continuation of the revolution***. In the ANC's case, this is the NDR, no matter how ambiguous its contemporary relevance and objectives. Thus while the path maybe planned *for* the people *by* the leadership, active participation remains critical. While the form of participation this requires may not meet normative democratic criteria, it is a form of participation nonetheless and, perhaps most importantly, ***is understood by the ANC as constitutive of participatory democracy***. In movement discourse, the capacity in which citizens are envisaged as participating continues to be shaped by the concept of vanguardism, while 'participation' is linked not to greater citizen influence but to realisation of the NDR. Although the NDR may well constitute a cover for neo-liberal policy, this thesis has contended that the NDR's utility and resilience cannot be ignored. The ANC continues to use a language of liberation and national democracy for the retention of its own hegemony.

Reflecting on these ideas and the form of 'participation' they imply, Chapter Six highlighted the conceptual tension between the discourse of participation in public policy and the discourse from the ANC as a movement. On the one hand, those strands of people's power embedded in ideas of community organising, education, empowerment and development remain visible in government policy, attesting to the influence of the ANC-aligned movement in shaping a policy framework that takes account of local experience. The thesis noted that members of the ANC camp, especially those involved in the UDF, civics and trade unions, were involved in the policy formulation process around local government. As such, theoretical linkages and overlaps can be identified.

However, it is perhaps precisely the predominance of actors from the MDM (rather than the central ANC leadership or its external mission) that helps to explain *some* of the conceptual tension between policy and movement discourse. In the latter, not only are new theoretical influences such as international development, planning and governance absent, but traditions from the ANC camp's own heritage - of education, empowerment and democratic grassroots control - also do not feature. ***In the ANC's discourse of participatory democracy today, the surviving strands of people's power are those rooted in vanguardism, speaking most clearly to the ANC's ideological heritage in Marxism-Leninism and to a teleological conception of participation.***

As such, while South Africa's policy on participatory democracy is not free from *internal* tension (between the demands of efficiency and performance and the commitment to bottom-up participation), it nonetheless remains firmly a function of democratic *governance*, involving the engagement in decision-making processes of a pluralistic civil society. Moreover, while much more may need to be done to redress the internal tensions in policy imperatives, the framework still draws on a democratic discourse that seeks both a democracy that is developmental and a citizenry that is active and empowered.

The risk to participatory democracy in South Africa is this: the discourse of participation emerging from the ANC itself *risks undermining* the parallel discourse contained in public policy. The ANC equates democratic participation with mass mobilisation and links the objectives of participatory democratic structures with the realisation of the NDR and the extension of its own hegemony. In public policy, however, legislated structures for participatory democratic governance are intended to provide forums and mechanisms for influence by a politically pluralistic society. As such the revolutionary (or national democratic) objectives of the ANC-as-movement trump the democratic policy objective of achieving popular empowerment.

Current weaknesses in the realisation of participatory democracy can be explained in part by this discord. Its roots, however, also lay in the conceptual tensions within people's power which themselves remained unresolved by the end of the 1980s. The strands of people's power that placed value in local democratic control have lost out in the post-1994 era to a form of people's power in which participation can only be realised through the structures of the vanguard. Civil society must be independent yet loyal, while the conflation of revolutionary policy with the popular democratic will undermines the objectives of citizen agency and influence set out in public policy.

Examination of participatory democracy in the discourses of policy and movement also draw attention to another weakness in the theory. This time, however, its source is a conceptual parallel, in which the question of macro-level policy frameworks, in both policy *and* movement discourses alike, are protected from democratic contestation. In South Africa, participatory democracy is located primarily in the local government arena. The post-1994 shift toward a more technocratic approach to local government has removed from popular contestation the direction of broader economic and development policy. As such, although South Africans can participate in development *at the local level,* they lack influence and power over the policy agenda itself. Processes of participation that take place from the grassroots upwards collide with the simultaneous imperatives of controlling policy at the centre, enlisting the help of experts and raising performance and efficiency.

Looking in parallel at the vanguard discourse of the ANC, it is possible to see how the notion of 'weak' participation embodied in this technocratic approach has enabled the simultaneous continuation of *vanguardism* which also removes from the sphere of contestation the ANC's programme of NDR. Through the requirements of a hegemonic unity, the ability of citizens to contest the ideas of government is effectively removed. Policy and movement discourse similarly draw on the idea of state-society partnership. However the restriction of citizen influence to issues that do not challenge broader policy has ensured that partnerships are framed as public support for government programmes or are equated with the resurrection of self-help traditions in which citizens further their own development rather than waiting for government to deliver. Despite differences in their ideological

premise both the 'performance' and 'vanguard' discourses facilitate *a narrow form of participation.*

This thesis has undertaken an exercise in normative democratic theory. However it has also sought to identify the conceptual underpinnings of the ANC's own theory of participatory democracy. It so doing, it has drawn a causal linkage between ideas and practice, seeking to show how the way participatory democracy is understood by policy makers and the ruling party can help to explain its weaknesses in practice. It was acknowledged in Chapter One that a range of research analysing specific mechanisms for participatory democracy, such as ward committees and IDP, has already been produced. This has pointed to a number of the difficulties facing municipalities in the implementation of ward participation. Challenges identified include issues such as limited resources, inadequate civic education, insufficient municipal capacity and logistical difficulties. Party political influence over ward committees has also been acknowledged as presenting a challenge, not only to the incorporation of other interests in the ward but also to ensuring that councillors are accountable to their constituents rather than the party.

'Ideas' are thus not the only factor influencing successful policy implementation. Individuals and parties are also influenced by their own interests and it would be unrealistic, perhaps naïve, to suggest that *all* action is theoretically driven. The range and depth of ideological and conceptual influence featured in ANC discourse, however, suggests that ideas have historically played an important function. The adoption of revolutionary theory after 1960 and the linking of its strategy and tactics to theoretical frameworks of African Nationalism, Marxism-Leninism and NDR imply the influence of ideas.

Throughout the 1980s the ANC and UDF produced a number of theoretical publications. Even where discussion was not necessarily focused on the form of a future democratic state, activists and cadres drew on theoretical frameworks and the influence of international revolutionary experience. The UDF's theoretical journal, *Isizwe* often complemented its articles with questions for further discussion by its readers and affiliate organisations. The ANC's Department of Political Education played a prominent role in exile and much of the material included in its syllabuses and lectures related to the very ideas developed and espoused in the movement's key documents. Moreover, as Chapter Three noted, while some theoretical influences can be attributed to particular intellectuals and ideologues, their ideas filtered through parts of the movement and also shaped official discourse.

It is also clear that theory did not guide all participants equally. As Suttner noted in reference to people's power, for some people "it would be just a practical thing" (Interview: 25 October 2012). However, whether or not actions were guided by theory from the outset, it is possible to argue that much of the organisational work undertaken by activists and local structures themselves generated principles and models for further action.

There are, of course, limitations to this research. It has not been possible to examine more fully the ideas and conceptions of ordinary community members who joined or were caught up in local popular activity. It is also not possible to elicit the views of everybody involved in people's power activity, nor in the processes of formulating ideas and developing policy. However the research has tried to draw on insights from across the liberation movement, and has incorporated the views and accounts of those in a variety of roles: in exile, at headquarters, at home, in the trade unions, in community structures and NGOs, and in the ANC underground.

In some instances, the research covered more detail of local cases than in others. The example of Alexandra was referred to frequently in discussing people's power. When looking that the transitional period, the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber in Johannesburg was highlighted as the leading example of the local government negotiations in which civics and local authorities agreed interim arrangements for the provision of services. The thesis has not, however, provided an analysis of a particular organisation or locale in its entirety. This is precisely for the reason that its primary concern is the *study of ideas*. Although existing research has provided accounts of people's power in particular locations, as well as examining more broadly the different interpretations of what was taking place, ***there has been no interrogation to date of the theory of people's power as part of a broader trajectory of ANC democratic thought.*** This thesis has therefore made that contribution by linking together the study of ideas from the 1980s into the post-1994 period, enabling a far more complete picture of how the ANC understands a form of democracy to which it frequently refers but of which it has given little articulation.

Our existing understanding of participatory democracy has been missing an examination of theoretical and conceptual continuities and discontinuities between the 1980s and the present. This thesis has challenged both the view that the democratic traditions of the 1980s have been forgotten entirely, and that the post-1994 model of democracy in South Africa is wholly unrelated to that prefigured by people's power. It has also sought to avoid a rose-tinted account of what people's power entailed. Rather, it has highlighted the variety of currents, traditions and influences that fed into what was a complex and nuanced discourse.

In so doing, the thesis has made two important points: Firstly, ***democratic ideas and models during times of struggle can tell us something about the forms that then emerge under conditions of democracy. The model of democracy espoused in the 1980s is not entirely unconnected to the post-1994 dispensation.*** Far from the conceptual influence of people's power coming to an abrupt end in 1994, or even in 1990, ideas and traditions from that time have been fed into policy formulation. Many of those involved in the labour movement, civic activism and UDF leadership carried their values and ideals with them into the new local government model. Ideas of community organisation, citizen empowerment,

participatory development and the educative benefits of democracy can be identified in the post-1994 policy framework. What has been included, and was absent during the 1980s, is a language of constitutionalism and rights. Through this addition, popular participation has been *un-bounded* such that public policy has delinked participation from political partisanship and situated it instead within a broader democratic framework of political pluralism and individual civil and political rights.

Secondly, it has challenged the idea that people's power in itself represented a thoroughly democratic model for the future; and, had its pre-figurative character been realised, that it would have guaranteed a model of democracy superior to that which exists in South Africa today. People's power was shaped and guided by a multiplicity of ideas, not all of which sat comfortably with one another. Aspects of the discourse rooted themselves in democratic ideals and local experiences. Many were shaped by their participants' own ideas and beliefs while some responded to existing theoretical frameworks and others to immediate material concerns.

Most importantly, however, people's power constituted a web of interlinking themes, none of which can be considered in conceptual isolation. Rather, they formed a part of the whole. Some strands of the discourse rooted themselves in ideas about empowerment, decentralised control, resolving shared problems and bottom-up decision-making. Others, however, were not premised on such democratic ideals or, if they were, they allowed for local influence and control only where it conformed to broader political objectives.

Chapter three highlighted that, although the UDF and civics saw themselves as establishing structures of local democratic decision-making, what they practiced was a bounded and unitary form of democracy. Organs of people's power were predominantly aligned to the ANC. Even where structures were open to all residents, the subtext remained that participants should agree with the ultimate objectives of political struggle. The idea of individual rights and a pluralistic parliamentary-style democracy were considered by many in the UDF to be features of bourgeois democracy. Whether or not they were democratically constituted and locally controlled, organs of people's power themselves served a largely teleological function.

Moreover we cannot be selective in our conceptual analysis of people's power. Across the ANC-aligned movement, people had different interpretations of its role and future. We must therefore resist the urge to overlook those aspects rooted in traditions that undermined or openly sought to eliminate democratic principles and practice. Currents which placed emphasis on vanguard leadership, on the conscientisation of the masses, and on active participation of the people were ideas also rooted in Marxist-Leninist theory. As such, ***while we can agree that elements of the people's power discourse held democratic process in very high regard and emphasised the developmental benefits of democracy, not just the objective of seizing power, we must also accept that the people's power constituted other***

conceptual threads which included the direction of a vanguard leadership and the belief in a foretold will.

For those who see participatory democracy as a feature of the past, now lost to a liberal democratic framework, attention should be paid to its conceptual foundations. Not only did the form of democracy espoused by people's power lack certain key democratic features but the democracy espoused in ANC discourse today retains a number of its characteristics. The teleological nature of participation, the push for a hegemonic unity, and the parallel desire for both political control from above and creative participation from below can be identified in people's power.

Participatory democracy remains central to the ANC's governance programme and the movement continues to reiterate this in its documents, statements and at party conferences. It may not meet normative democratic criteria, nor may it draw on those strands of people's power that those in the MDM might have hoped. It remains, nonetheless, a conception of participatory democracy whose weaknesses can be found in its intellectual and ideological heritage.

In conducting this research, extensive used was made of archival sources and interviews. It was set out in Chapter One that the primary research method was the analysis of texts. The thesis has referred to a variety of ANC, UDF, SACP and MDM documents. Some of these are well known and/or published, while others are less frequently cited but are publicly available. However, the thesis also uncovered a range of archived material from the UDF and ANC that are not referred to in existing academic research. Thematic analysis of the 1980s, covered in Chapter Three, and of the period of intra-ANC constitutional discussion, covered in Chapter Four, has drawn on a series of materials previously uncited in accounts of this period.

It was also noted in Chapter Four that the work of the ANC's Constitution Committee, has, according to this author, been given insufficient attention in existing research. This is perhaps a consequence of the Committee's discussions taking place in a rather isolated manner. The proposals and reports of the Committee seem to have been shared with the NWC and its sub-committees but not much more widely than that. The first published document circulated through the broader movement seems to have been the 1988 Draft Constitutional Guidelines. Although interviews with activists suggest that concerns were surfacing in the UDF at that time about the authoritarianism of revolutionary movements in Eastern Europe and Africa, evidence suggests that the Committee's elevation of a rights-based discourse was not representative of the broader movement.

However, it is precisely for this reason that its ideas require interrogation. The formulations and proposals of the Committee bear little resemblance to the discourse of democracy in the broader ANC. They reflected neither the radical democratic tone of people's power, nor

the African nationalist, Marxist-Leninist inspired language of the ANC's own documents. ***It was the thinking of the Constitution Committee, however, that from 1990 became the official discourse of the ANC in its constitutional proposals for a democratic South Africa.*** The very fact that it was not a discourse that emerged organically from the ANC as a whole, nor was it immediately embraced by the ANC camp, goes some way to explaining the endurance of the vanguard discourse into the post-1994 era.

Analysis of primary documents for this research was accompanied by interviews with activists involved in people's power and in the external mission of the ANC, as well as with those who played a part in the process of formulating policy on participatory democracy. Given the passing of time between the 1980s and today, interviews were intended to supplement document analysis and, indeed, they did. However they also provided an extraordinary amount of insight into the development of thinking that has otherwise been undocumented.

Interviews were also undertaken with individuals not immediately identifiable from existing records and data but who played a key role in the development of ideas or were present at points what particular conceptual shifts or clarifications took place. Neil Coleman, for example appears to have played an important role in theorisations alongside more visible theorists such as Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin. Janet Cherry was involved in local activism in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth but also undertook her own academic research on people's power in the Eastern Cape. Sydney Mufamadi, Thozamile Botha, Lechesa Tsenoli and Paul Mashatile were activists during the 1980s but also went on to play roles in local or provincial government.[111] Z.N. Jobodwana, was Secretary of the Constitution Committee, while Dominique Woodridge, who had been working with trade unions in a support capacity, headed the editorial team for the Local Government White Paper.

Similarly, while interviews have previously been undertaken with officials responsible for implementing participatory democracy, there has been little reflective analysis through interviews with those who also participated in policy development. Individuals such as Rashid Seedat, Andrew Boraine and Yunus Carrim were part of the conceptual discussion around the future of local government while also going on to be involved in its practice.[112]

[111] Sydney Mufumadi was Transvaal Secretary of the UDF, a member of the ANC underground, and a founding member of COSATU. Between 1999 and 2008 he was Minister in the DPLG. Thozamile Botha, a former civic activist, was involved in the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber, headed the local government arm of SANCO, and became Chair of the Commission on Provincial Government. Paul Mashatile was a leader of AYCO and the UDF and later became an MEC in Gauteng. Lechesa Tsenoli was a civic activist, a founder member of SANCO, was involved in the NLGNF and the Local Government White Paper process and chaired the portfolio committee on CoGTA.

[112] Part way through the drafting of the Local Government White Paper, Andrew Boraine left to work for the City of Cape Town. Rashid Seedat who, for a period, worked at Planact undertaking research on the new local government model, later headed the strategy unit responsible for IDP in the City of Joburg. Yunus Carrim, a

The people interviewed and the periods of time across which they provided insight enabled valuable data to be gathered on the evolution, or genealogy, of ideas. Interviews also provided new insights into undocumented discussions and the origins of certain ideas and mechanisms, such as the local government ward committee.

Although this thesis did not set out a specific cut-off date, its post-1994 analysis is primarily concerned with the policy formulation period. Although the last piece of relevant municipal legislation was the 2000 Municipal Systems Act, it was noted that some ward committees did not begin to be established until 2004. Moreover, given the time taken for the ward participatory system to bed in, between 2005 and 2007, a series of guidance and support documents for municipalities and municipal officials were produced by the DPLG. The thesis therefore covered this broader period to allow for a more complete analysis of policy and related documents. Examination of the ANC's own movement discourse thus also covered the same period.

In is of note that, at the time of this research, the ANC's 2012 National Policy Conference put the issue of participation democracy on its own renewal agenda.[113] The conference produced a document on Organisational Renewal which, extending concerns raised at its previous conference in 2007, raised the issue of the ANC's growing distance from its support base. It lamented the post-1994 decline in the movement's ability to carry out "sustained political and ideological work", and emphasised the need for "a dedicated machinery to interact with sectors dynamically" lest the movement "lose touch with key sectors of society" (ANC 2012a: 60). Its recognition that the space of mass mobilisation had been left open to alternative forces (ibid.: 18) underscored the presence of a threat to its vanguard status. This conference, more than any of those previously, recognised the danger posed by a loss of its mass character.

Notably, a part of the ANC's 2012 proposals for organisational renewal referred to "strengthening grassroots development activism and participatory democracy" (2012a: 44). It defines participatory democracy as "an on-going process of empowering our people to play an active part in the processes that affect their lives" (ibid.). However, its discussion of participatory democracy is not framed by public policy *but by the renewal of the ANC*. It emphasises the relevance of participation - of the masses not becoming "spectators of

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former civic activist and a member of the SACP, was involved in the Local Government White Paper process. He also chaired the Provincial and Local Government Portfolio Committee between 1998 and 2004 and was Deputy Minister in CoGTA from 2009 to 2013.

[113] The material presented here that discusses the ANC's 2012 'Organisational Renewal' document (ANC 2012a) draws heavily on a chapter published as a contribution to an edited book on mass parties. See Brooks Yung (2014).

government delivery" (ibid.) - but ties this to the role of ANC branches, rather than to the structures of participatory governance.

The role of civil society as autonomous and pluralistic is undermined by its characterisation as a terrain reserved for extending ANC hegemony. While state-society partnership in the discourse of public policy emphasises citizens' participation through *state-invited structures,* within the ANC's movement discourse, participation is encouraged primarily through *the structures of the movement*. As such, while the ANC has reaffirmed the importance of participatory democracy, it's positioning within a discussion of ANC organisational design does not augur a strengthening of participatory institutions and practice. Instead, citizens' ability to shape development is limited by the claim that "communities can shape the kind of development they want *if led by an agent for change* [emphasis added]" (2012a: 44). As the ANC understands itself to be the "agent for change" (ibid.: 7, 23, 29), then participation of communities in shaping development is bound by their allegiance to the movement.

The same document goes on to say that "[communities] can also be misled by other forces contesting the space to turn against the ANC". While this is conceded to be a result of "social distance" and the ANC's "absence on the ground" (ibid.: 44), there is a lack of recognition that people can contribute to transformation through other forces or representatives legitimately contesting that space. Moreover, its references to 'participation' do not suggest a role for citizen influence in decision-making itself.

It is hoped that the findings of this thesis will enable policy makers and practitioners to re-examine the extent to which the content of participatory democratic policy enables the objectives set out in legislation. The findings of the thesis point to some competing policy imperatives between public sector efficiency on the one hand and participatory democracy on the other. It also highlights a conception of participation in which citizen influence is reduced to consultation or is fenced off from discussion of broader policy direction and content. Those proposing measures to target logistical and capacity constraints in local government may do well to consider whether civic education, increased resources and improved training of municipal staff will succeed in combatting challenges that are located in the conceptual framework itself.

Furthermore, limitations on the realisation of participatory democracy in South Africa remain fundamentally linked to the discourse of the ruling party. The ANC is not only in power but remains electorally dominant, and it is unlikely that its influence will diminish any time soon. From this perspective, although policy revisions and improvements can be made, this will not necessarily bring about a more democratic form of participation. It is of note that the ANC's acknowledgement of its fledging connection with the masses and subsequent launch of its 'period of renewal' coincided with the publication of the DPLG's National Policy Framework on Public Participation (2007) and the release of a series of hand and resource books for municipalities and councillors implementing the ward committee system. These

publications contain valuable guidance on understanding the principles and benefits of citizen participation, as well as tips for its practical application.

However, so long as the corresponding discourse of participation from the ANC as a movement links the structures of participatory governance to realising the NDR and renewing its own mass character, there remains no guarantee that participatory democracy can be realised in practice. It is the pull between these two - between *vanguardism* and *participation* and between *democracy* and *teleology* - that places a limit on the extent to which participation in South Africa can generate the democratic influence of its citizens.

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