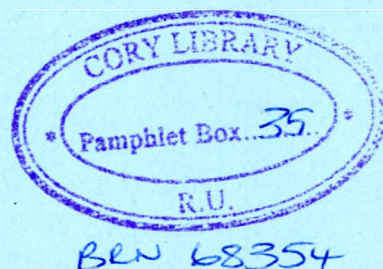


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Local Government Restructuring: White Municipal Initiatives 1985-1988

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The author would also like to thank IDASA and the Anglo-American Chairman's Fund for their financial assistance.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations were used in the text:

ASSOMAC	Association of Management Committees
BLA	Black Local Authority
CED	City Engineer's Department
CLAC	Coloured Local Affairs Committee
CMC	Coloured Management Committee
CPA	Cape Provincial Administration
CPMA	Cape Province Municipal Association
DCDP	Department of Constitutional Development and Planning
DVRA	Duncan Village Residents' Association
DUVCOR	Duncan Village Corporation
EF	Employers Federation (Port Alfred)
GBAC	Grahamstown Burial Action Committee
ILAC	Indian Local Affairs Committee
LAC	Local Affairs Committee
JMC	Joint Management Centre
Manco	Management Committee (Durban City Council)
NMA	Natal Municipal Association
NPA	Natal Provincial Administration
PARCO	Port Alfred Residents' Civic Organisation
RSC	Regional Services Council
UCASA	Urban Councils Association of South Africa
UME	United Municipal Executive
UMSA	United Municipalities of South Africa
WLA	White Local Authority

1. INTRODUCTION

The local government level has historically been the most neglected aspect of government in South Africa, both in research and in conventional political activity. Yet, paradoxically, it has been the level at which several crucial government policies have played themselves out, away from the public eye, but drastic in their effects on the material and political position of all inhabitants of towns and cities in South Africa.

This research into local government was begun with two basic questions in mind. Firstly, local-level attempts to alter their own institutional structures needed to be documented and analysed. A consideration of six case studies of white initiatives for change at the local level uncovered numerous political and economic dimensions which interact and set constraints on each other. It is impossible to produce one final interpretation of why these local events happened, what their significance was, and what possibilities they offer for the future. Invariably, each case study is a microcosm of the broader multifaceted conflict in South Africa. This report is an attempt to present as many of these dimensions as possible, even though it cannot ever be complete.

Secondly, government responses to these initiatives needed to be explored. In virtually all cases, the central government policy-makers were hostile to such events. There are several possible reasons for this, such as rightwing political pressure on the government, differences and divisions among the various agencies and levels of government, and the issue of information flows within government structures - exemplified by the great difficulty in detecting exactly where in the public service decisions are taken and for what reasons. An account of local initiatives and government responses is given in sections 3 to 10.

During the course of the research, two other kinds of issues emerged. Firstly, it became evident that there are numerous alternatives to segregated local government. These have very different administrative, financial and political implications. It also became clear that local government innovators were often not clear on what sort of alternative they had in mind, and this often influenced the way they acted. These alternative "models" of local government, as well as some suggestions for future negotiations, are dealt with in the concluding section.

Finally, more philosophical issues emerged. It appears that all local communities are at present faced with certain fundamental questions, which have hardly been explored at all. For example, what is the role of local government? Who or what is the community? How democratic should local government be? Is there a trade-off between democracy and efficiency? Are local innovators demanding some kind of racial integration, or are they simply demanding the logical implications of the principle of devolution of powers, i.e. the right to decide for themselves on how their institutions should be structured? What are the advantages and disadvantages of greater devolution of power from central to local level? What are the redistributive implications of integration? How should local authorities relate to security institutions? Are there any inherent advantages in a civil order, as opposed to a military one? It was remarkable how unfamiliar these issues are to most local government practitioners, and yet how crucially they underpin the most basic attitudes and activities at local government level. The concluding section also deals with some of these issues.

1.1 Methodology

The report itself was motivated by the desire to assess and promote the prospects of participatory democracy at the local level in South Africa. Such an elusive concept was hard to define, but it was even more difficult to find appropriate ways of analysing it. There seemed, at best, a six basic kinds of factors which contribute to explanations of the local attempts to broaden democracy:

a) analysis of historical political, economic and social conditions which gave rise to such initiatives and action;

b) analysis of government policy, which is formalised in legislative and administrative constraints;

c) analysis of subjective perceptions, interests and desires of the various groups of people involved or implicated in these initiatives, including:

i. Perceptions of public servants at central and regional level, who have to implement government policy, but also have a part in formulating or distorting government policy;

ii. Perceptions of white City Council representatives, who are constrained by their white electorates, and yet have to interpret the broader needs of their towns;

iii. Perceptions of municipal civil servants who have to deal with the practical realities of infrastructure provision at local level;

iv. The desires, interests and perceptions of opposition groups, both white and black, and their desire and ability to address local government problems;

v. Perceptions and interests of the security arms of the government, who have to respond to local initiatives.

d) analysis of possible political, administrative and economic outcomes which the various types of initiatives could entail. This involves considering the reaction of other social groups, such as business and political parties, to whatever municipal innovations are introduced. If different forms of local government are ever introduced, the reactions of these groups will affect the way in which ordinary people eventually experience these changes.

e) awareness of the role of the researcher, who dealt with information and ideas in terms of a very specific purpose, viz. the search for ways of promoting a greater degree of effective participatory democracy at the local level. This orientation involved the purposive search for possible financial, administrative and political arguments and rationales for, and constraints on, alternative structures of local government. These arguments were not defined ab initio by the researcher, but were developed as the implications of the current system gradually became clear.

f) the development of possible alternative models of local government, some of which were actually articulated by practitioners, and some which were constructed by the researcher. Although the usefulness of such abstract models is limited, they do spell out some of the potential directions for change which exist.

In summary, the analysis was a composite of the following: historical documentation; an account of government policy; the interpretation of various actors'

subjective perceptions and interests; normative evaluation by the researcher, in terms of her own overriding priorities; and finally, speculative analysis, to consider the possible alternatives to the existing system of local government.

1.2 Information Sources

a) Literature on local government

There has been a remarkable increase in academic interest in South African local government over the past three years. Prior to this, virtually the only writing on the topic was done from a rather apolitical public administration perspective, mainly by Afrikaans academics, who neglected the actual socio-political context of local government ⁽¹⁾. In contrast, the "new literature", written from a broadly critical perspective, has emanated from the English universities. It has succeeded in pointing out many of the political implications of government innovations, such as administration boards, regional services councils, black local authorities and joint management centres ⁽²⁾.

-
1. For example, J.J.N. Cloete, Munisipale regering en administrasie in Suid-Afrika (Pretoria: J.L. Van Schaik, 1983); D.L. Craythorne, Municipal Administration (Juta, 1980); H.J.N. Kotze, Munisipale Finansiële Administrasie in Suid-Afrika (P.J. de Villiers, 1979); and J.J. Hattingh, Owerheidsverhoudinge: 'n Inleiding (Pretoria: Unisa, 1986).
 2. For example, S. Bekker and R. Humphries, From Control to Confusion: The changing role of Administration Boards in South Africa, 1971-1983 (Shuter and Shooter/ISER, 1985); M. Bennett, A. Mason and L. Schlemmer, Servicing the Nation: Local and regional government reform (Indicator Project, 1986); R. Cameron, "The rhetoric and reality of local government reform", in Social Dynamics, 12 (1) 1986; Neil Dewar, "Municipal government under the new South African constitution: Who gets what, where, who decides, and who decides who decides?" in Social Dynamics, 11 (2) 1985; The South African Institute of Race Relations volume, Councils and Controversy, 1987; and C.S. Heymans and G. Totemeyer (ed), Government by the People? (Cape Town: Juta 1988).

The other main body of literature is government reports and reports of commissions of inquiry. Although usually written from a government perspective, it has highlighted some of the financial and administrative problems experienced by the various kinds of local government in South Africa (3).

There is a general dearth of research on the history of local government in South Africa. Much of what exists is uncritical, and simply documents the institutional structures. Virtually no analysis has been done on the historical relationship between white local authorities and the other racial groups in the community.

b) Newspaper coverage

This usually served as a basic entree to each case study. Often only a very superficial account of events appeared in the press.

c) Official and unofficial documentation of events

This includes Council minutes and reports, administrative records, pamphlets, letters, and manifestos, and this provided the backbone of research on each case study. However, it is important to remember that such documentation often conceals as much as it reveals, because this official information reflects institutions' perceptions and misperceptions.

d) Interviews

Interviews were held with as many and diverse participants as possible, to fill out the overall picture

3. Among the most important are the Report of the committee of inquiry into the finances of local authorities in South Africa (Browne Committee) (Pretoria: Government Printer, RP 50/1980); The Report of the Croeser Working Group on the report of the committee of inquiry into the finances of local authorities in South Africa (Pretoria: Department of Finance, 1982); The Joint Report of the Committee for Economic Affairs and the Constitutional Committee of the President's Council on Local and Regional Management Systems in the Republic of South Africa (P.C. 1/1982); and the various reports of the Council for the Co-ordination of Local Government Affairs (1984).

of events at local level. Interviewees included Councillors, municipal civil servants, central and provincial public servants, and prominent community leaders. Again, such interview material required careful assessment and interpretation, in the light of evidence gained elsewhere.

e) Local government workshops

Two mini-conferences were organised to stimulate dialogue between researchers, government "practitioners" (councillors, municipal officials and officials of the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning), and black community leaders.

The first workshop, held in September 1987, addressed broader issues related to local government, viz., regional services councils, joint management centres, local-central government relations, black local authorities, and administrative problems of local government. There were about 35 participants, and the workshop lasted for two days. This workshop, one of the first of its kind in South Africa, began the process of bridging the divide between academics and practitioners, and between different political perspectives.

The second workshop was held in June 1988, and was the culmination of the research for this project. A summary of the findings which appear in this report was presented to a gathering of 30 people, again drawn from these various constituencies. Individuals from almost all the case studies participated, and were given the opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the provisional research report.

At the second workshop, the prospects for alternative forms of local government were discussed. Financial, administrative and political issues were addressed. There was much discussion on the feasibility of "2 000" type initiatives, where the various communities in a single town collectively consider and try to shape the future of the town.

Both workshops were clearly a powerful learning experience for the participants, who were able to direct questions to constituencies previously unavailable to them. The participants also began to appreciate the usefulness of research on local conditions and events, as these could stimulate ideas and provide guidance on future trends in local government. The second workshop established an ad hoc committee, consisting of members of

2. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: THE POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1. Government policies towards racial divisions in local government

Local government institutions have traditionally been regarded in South Africa as not much more than service-providers. These services were quite narrowly defined: roads, health, water, electricity, sewerage, stormwater drainage, housing and town planning are their main functions. It is significant to consider which functions have NOT been devolved to local authorities. Generally, these include the more socially-oriented services, such as education, social welfare, justice and policing, which were kept at central or provincial level.

There are several historical reasons for this limited conception of local government. In 1682, the first "heemrade" were appointed to advise the Governor and the local landdrosts. The functions of these councils were judicial and administrative (¹), but under British rule, the judicial functions were removed and given to magistrates (²). The establishment of municipalities took place after the establishment of the central authority, and the decisive power of the central government was never removed. After 1836, for example, the Governor of the Cape Colony had to approve the establishment of local councils and the regulations which they made. He could reject or amend their regulations (³). The supervisory power of higher tiers of government was continued by the provincial administrations after 1910. Not only was the tradition of municipal autonomy weakly developed, but after 1910, the overriding need perceived by white South Africans was the need to protect and strengthen the Union against possible division and

1. J.J.N. Cloete, Munisipale regering en administrasie in Suid-Afrika, (Pretoria: J.L. Van Schaik, 1983), p. 5-6.

2. See Green, L.P.: History of Local Government in South Africa (Johannesburg: Juta & Co.), 1957, p.5.

3. Cloete, Ibid., p. 9.

fragmentation (4).

The limited nature of South African local government is clearly demonstrated if compared with the rise of European towns and cities from the 13th century. These towns were not just economic and commercial centres, but were distinct politically autonomous entities. Often their autonomy was gained against the expressed opposition of territorial and feudal rulers. Towns were "centres of solidary action by singly powerless individuals". The corporate nature of towns was a crucial part of their self-defence, and the towns conferred certain rights on individuals only by virtue of their membership in a constituted collectivity capable of operating as a unitary entity (5). Towns existed as political entities long before the establishment of central political governments, and though their power vis-a-vis the central state was gradually whittled away after industrialisation, they have never been regarded as the complete creatures of higher levels of government.

In comparison with European states, therefore the history of municipal government in South Africa, is very brief. Local authorities have always been seen as subordinate to central and provincial authorities, and the latter created local authorities and defined the scope of their local jurisdiction. The South African system of local government has never had any form of constitutional safeguards, and no court of law was competent to pass judgment on the nature of powers that were devolved down to local authorities. According to the doctrine of ultra vires, local authorities could only perform a statute if this was specifically authorised by a higher tier of government (6). The weakness of local authorities is further accentuated by the large number of small municipalities, and their constant financial difficulties (7). After 1910, the tendency in South Africa has been "to locate more and more responsibility upon the central

4. W. M. Macmillan, "The place of local government in the Union of South Africa", lecture delivered at the South African School of Mines and Technology on 20th September, 1917, p.16.

5. See G. Poggi, The development of the modern state (London: Hutchinson, 1978), chapter 3.

6. R.G. Cameron, The Administration and Politics of the Cape Town City Council 1976-86, M.PA Thesis, UCT, 1986.

7. J.J. N. Cloete, Ibid., p. 5 and p. 43.

authority, and to look with suspicion and distrust on local bodies" (8).

Local governments in South Africa have never been policy-makers in the full sense of the term. The central government has always claimed the right to make policy. Since 1948, the National Party government saw local authorities as the handmaidens of central government in the implementation of such policies (9). This gave the central government ample justification to intervene in local government matters. Uniformity and order, especially with regard to "native affairs", were increasingly emphasised under the policy of "separate development" (10).

2.2. Policy towards urban blacks

There has always been an underlying lack of clarity on the proper place of the black community within urban contexts in South Africa. Until recently, whites tended to regard blacks either as mere labourers for the sake of white convenience, or as linked to a different cultural entity, the tribe. Government policies since 1910 had a fundamentally divisive effect on South African cities. Race, language and class factors prevented a tradition of civic equality and community from emerging in the towns and cities. This section briefly documents the development of these divisions, based on a typology of successive phases of city development in South Africa (11).

a) The colonial city (Before 1910)

Before 1910, cities were designed according to European customs and preferences. "Non-whites" entered these

8. Macmillan, Ibid., p.9

9. H.F. Verwoerd, "Local Authorities and the state", Speech at 5th Annual Congress of the Administrators of Non-European Affairs, 17 Sept. 1956; p. 7.

10. See Verwoerd, ibid., p. 8.

11. D. S. Krige, Die transformasie van die Suid-Afrikaanse stad, Navorsingspublikasie nr. 10, Dept. Stads- en Streekbeplanning, UOVS, July 1988. The typology used in this section derives from this report.

cities as the subordinate sections of society. Spatial divisions, based on race, emerged. These divisions corresponded with socio-economic and status divisions, and black, Indian, "coloured" and Chinese people were housed on the periphery of the city. White residential areas remained exclusively white, because of their unrivalled economic and political position. Chinese, Indian, "coloured" and black people⁽¹²⁾ had different positions on the status hierarchy; and, accordingly, occupied more or less undesirable parts of the city⁽¹³⁾. Blacks, especially, were required to live on the outskirts of the city, so that the white areas would be safeguarded against the "unhygienic conditions" and crime characterising the black areas. This was the origin of the "location" system, which facilitated the application of restrictive legislation, such as the pass system and influx control, to black people⁽¹⁴⁾.

Yet segregation was not completely achieved. Indians owned business property in the central business districts; Indian, "coloured" and black residential enclaves still existed amongst white areas; and black domestic servants lived on their employers' property⁽¹⁵⁾.

b) The segregationist city (1910-49)

During this phase, segregation was increasingly refined, and uniform legislation was introduced to remove regional differences regarding racial separation. This was accompanied by a rapid growth in the black, "coloured" and Indian urban populations; and, by 1949, whites in the cities were outnumbered⁽¹⁶⁾.

Under the Stallard Doctrine, blacks would only be tolerated in urban areas if they ministered to the needs

12. These terms, as used in this report, refer to the official description of the "population groups", and do not imply the author's approval of racial categorisation in terminology or in policy.

13. Krige, *Ibid.*, p. 10-14.

14. Krige, *Ibid.*, p. 15.

15. Krige, *Ibid.*, p. 15-6.

16. Krige, *Ibid.*, p. 17.

of whites. Urban blacks suffered increased legal pressure, such as the removal of property rights, the stricter application of influx control measures, and the removal of "surplus" Africans from urban areas. Site-and-service schemes for Africans were established on urban peripheries. The "location" system was strengthened, and local authorities were compelled to provide housing for blacks in separate residential areas. The correspondence of spatial, class and racial divisions was reinforced, especially with the improvements in the socio-economic position of Afrikaners. However, "coloureds" and Indians still occupied ghettos scattered throughout white areas, and in these areas, racial mixing took place (¹⁷).

An administrative separation of white and non-white affairs also took place. After 1910, the Department of Native Affairs was responsible for legislation affecting blacks. Examples are the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1912, and the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1937, which refined residential segregation in the towns. Yet white municipalities controlled the day-to-day administration of the locations, either in terms of municipal by-laws or through legislation passed by the ex-colonial governments (¹⁸). Municipalities generally had discretionary powers in administering locations, within broad guidelines determined by the Department of Native Affairs.

Within the municipal administrations, responsibility for different racial groups was also allocated to different departments. Municipalities were compelled to keep Native Revenue Accounts, to record income and expenditure from the black townships. Any expenditure on black townships had to be approved by the Minister of Native Affairs (¹⁹). Income into the Native Revenue Account was derived from white municipalities' liquor monopoly in black townships, and from rent and service charges.

In most municipalities, the Native Revenue Account either

17. Krige, Ibid., p. 16-23.

18. S. Bekker and R. Humphries, From Control to Confusion: The Changing Role of Administration Boards in South Africa, 1971-1983, (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter & ISER, 1985), p. 2.

19. Randall, R.J.: "Some reflections on the financial policy of certain municipalities towards the natives within their boundaries", South African Journal of Economics, June 1939, p.1.

broke even or showed a surplus. This implied that the income from black townships had to cover virtually all capital and administrative expenses. It also meant that rents were kept fairly high (compared to individual incomes), and social expenditure low (20). There was virtually no subsidisation of the black community by whites. Given the low wages paid to blacks, the administrative system kept their standard of living very low.

In effect, therefore, the financial separation of municipal accounts for blacks and whites, and the desire to balance the Native Revenue Account, caused long-term differences between blacks and whites, in terms of their standard of living. This reinforced the class and status divisions referred to earlier.

c) The Apartheid City (1950-1987)

During this phase, residential segregation was taken even further, with the imposition of group areas and the reorganisation of urban space. Since 1960, several black and "coloured" "ethnic" cities were also established.

The government regarded the racial situation which it inherited as unsatisfactory because of the extent of black influx to the cities and the dissolution of tribal ties. The constraints on white municipal spending also caused the deterioration of black housing standards. The National Party also wanted to counter what it regarded as "iniquitous egalitarian propaganda" (21). According to government policy, blacks who have work and housing would be permitted to remain in the cities, while others would be refused entry. Finally, "mixed" suburbs, backyard lodging, and peri-urban squatting would be prohibited (22). The government would implement a more uniform policy towards urban blacks, and control by white municipalities over townships would be strengthened. "Legal" blacks in townships would be encouraged to establish advisory boards (23).

Krige, following Western, outlined several

20. Randall, *ibid.*, p. 5.

21. Jansen, 1950, p. 4.

22. Jansen, p. 9-10.

23. Jansen, p. 9.

characteristics of the "ideal apartheid city". Firstly, the city is arranged as a wheel, and each racial group's residential area is directed at the city centre, but with enough space at the periphery for future expansion. Group areas would therefore not constrain one another in their future development. Secondly, the white residential area is usually located on the high-lying areas, with winds blowing predominantly away from this area towards the rest of the city. Thirdly, rivers, roads, railway lines and industrial areas act as buffer zones between the various residential areas. Fourth, black residential areas are divided into ethnic areas, although black people may be forced to live in a homeland, if there was one within 70 km of the city. Fifth, each racial group has direct access to the industrial areas; they should not commute through the residential area of another group. Finally, each population group should have its own civic centre and business area (24).

One implication of this reorganisation was the "whitening" of the central area. Ownership of businesses, occupation of apartments, the reservation of the nearest and most convenient areas with the most developed facilities for the residential use of whites (25), meant that other race groups were excluded from the hub of the city. Because they lived out of sight of the white community, and only entered the central business district as shoppers or workers, the other race groups became excluded from the corporate identity of the city. It is no wonder, then, that the boycott strategy made so much sense to black activists during the 1980s. The city was already carved up; privilege and power was unambiguously located within the white residential and business areas; and consumer boycotts could, therefore, be easily directed at a clearly demarcated target. Furthermore, whites had forgotten that the interests of all urban residents were actually intertwined; and it required the withholding of blacks' labour and custom to demonstrate the functional interdependence of the various racial groups of the city.

As in the case of the "segregation city", the apartheid city was also characterised by administrative divisions on a racial basis.

24. Krige, *Ibid.*, p. 35. His discussion is based on J. Western, Outcast Cape Town (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1981), p. 91.

25. Krige, *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Before the introduction of Administration Boards, the black and white sectors of towns were administered by the same officials, but in a segregated way.

The role of the white local authorities in the establishment of facilities in the locations gradually decreased in crucial respects. The central government realised that the provision of housing for a rapidly-growing black population was placing financial strain on white local authorities. In terms of apartheid ideology, it was also wrong to "burden" the white taxpayer with this expense. The result was growing pressure on white business to shoulder the housing and travel expenses of their workers ⁽²⁶⁾. The task of controlling black migration was given to Departmental labour bureaux. In general, therefore, as the immense problems of black urbanisation increased, the evident inability of white local authorities to cope with the situation resulted in a desire on the part of central government to take over full control of urban blacks. As the presence of blacks in cities became to be defined as a "problem", racial divisions were entrenched in the cities, because the "problem" required the establishment of separate measures and institutions. Yet the financial principle of self-sufficiency was maintained: apart from employers' contributions, black townships had to finance their own development.

The policy also strengthened the tradition of municipal powerlessness. The central government intervened in many cities to impose its conception of black urban development. In the case of Johannesburg, for example, the Minister was "compelled to use the powers which (he) has and may exercise in respect of any municipal council, to take the task away from them and entrust it to another body (the Resettlement Board) created as the result of new legislation" ⁽²⁷⁾. The all-encompassing and uncompromising nature of central government policy-making has extended to the 1980s. Despite changes in actual policies, "They (State policy) are not just casual ideas touching an odd point here and there, but is a programme extending its fingers deeply and affecting the circumstances in the lives of people. (If) it is to be accepted that the various directives are not just random ideas but part of a comprehensive all-embracing programme, then you will understand why deviations cause

26. Verwoerd, p. 12.

27. Verwoerd, 1956, p. 24.

confusion irrespective of whether the deviations are caused by expecting concessions from me or by Local Authorities wishing to pursue their own direction ... Concessions may at times superficially appear to be reasonable but one has to bear the results in mind ... The Government is not prepared to allow this" (28).

The final step in the separation of white towns from their black counterparts, was the establishment of Bantu Administration Boards in 1971. The main goals of the Administration Boards were to tighten the procedures of influx control and labour regulation, to control the affairs of black persons living and working in both urban and rural areas within their regions, and to supply appropriate urban services. Urban blacks were now totally defined with reference to their race. Blacks were administratively and politically excised from the cities in which they lived. Until the demise of the Administration (later Development) Boards in 1986, the corporate identity of South African cities has virtually been destroyed, especially in the eyes of the youth, both black and white, who never experienced other race groups as being part of their city.

2.3. Local government since 1980: "Own" and "general" affairs

Developments in local government during the last decade can be summarised as a set of attempts to deal with two interconnected problems: the growing financial crisis of white municipalities, and the need to find a political accommodation for urban black people. These two impulses have produced a wide diversity of responses from government actors as well as municipalities.

The government's attempts to deal with the constitutional position of urban blacks has set the parameters for its approach to local government generally. After the failure of the Administration Boards to improve township conditions, and the resultant widespread unrest, destruction of property and general insecurity, it was evident that both the political and economic position of blacks would have to be attended to. This was

28. H.F. Verwoerd, Institute of the Administrators of Non-European Affairs, proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference, 1958, p. 114.

accompanied by the recognition that urban blacks need to have permanent residence rights in towns and cities, as well as the growing pressure of urbanisation. The government's economic policy in this regard gradually developed into the promotion of free enterprise, land ownership, greater freedom of movement and the upgrading of education for blacks. The political position of blacks has been more problematic for the government, because of an a priori decision that blacks cannot be accommodated in a fourth house of Parliament. The government also refused to contemplate the reunification of cities, and persevered with the establishment of community councils and later black local authorities.

Between 1978 and about 1984, the development of black local government was explicitly seen as an alternative to political power at central government level. During this period, the powerless and unpopular community councils were rapidly upgraded into autonomous black local authorities (BLA's), enjoying the same formal powers as white municipalities. Since 1984, many unprecedented attempts have been made to improve conditions in black townships: government subsidisation of black local authorities has escalated; BLAs are now allowed to own and administer land; a national training programme has been introduced to improve the performance of black councillors; BLAs are represented on regional services councils alongside their white counterparts and already seem to be deriving benefit from their participation. In addition, the militant challenges to BLAs during the 1984-6 unrest has been quelled by security force action, and BLAs have also secured their position by employing their own municipal police forces. Despite the lack of legitimacy of these bodies in many townships, the BLAs are quickly becoming entrenched organisationally and financially.

As this process of BLA consolidation proceeded, other aspects of the racially-structured political order were being worked out. The accommodation of "coloured" and Indian race groups within the tricameral Parliament required an extensive restructuring of administrative agencies to give their leaders some control over their groups' "own affairs". This will mean, in future, a growing autonomy for Coloured and Indian Management Committees at the local level.

The distinction between "own" and "general" affairs has become the cornerstone of government policy and

administrative organisation (29). It has been given expression in the following ways:

a) The Department of Constitutional Development and Planning

This department has assumed overall responsibility for administrative re-organisation in South Africa. It is, therefore, considered to be a "general affairs institution". It determines and supervises broad policy for all other tiers of government. The most fundamental local government issues, such as the racial structure of local government, the regional services councils, group areas, the grading of municipalities, and the redefinition of the remuneration packages for town clerks and councillors all emanate from this Department.

The planning arm of the Department is staffed by graduates in administration and the social sciences. Many of them tend to be quite progressive in their ultimate goals, and claim to regard the present system of racial administration as one step in a process of removing apartheid. Whatever their personal goals are, however, they have to operate within the constraints of National Party policy.

The implementation arm, in contrast, consists of officials transferred after the demise of the Department of Co-operation and Development. They seem to be less open to change towards non-racialism, as they believe that urban black communities will experience greater political and infrastructural development if they are not merged with powerful white municipalities. For example, the introduction of RSCs, which are based on segregated local governments, took place regardless an immense opposition from local governments and from private pressure groups,

b) The "own affairs" departments

The philosophy of "own" and "general" affairs is an intrinsic part of the government's devolution policy. "Devolution" seems to be interpreted in two distinct senses: the devolution of power to the leaders of each

29. The following discussion is based on numerous interviews with central, provincial and local personnel, conducted from October 1986 to February 1988.

population group; and the devolution of power to lower-level tiers of authority. The two meanings of devolution can be made compatible only if the most basic units of government are structured on a racial basis. This implies that power will be successively devolved, initially from first to second tier government, and then from the provinces to racially-segregated local authorities.

Each racial group (excluding blacks) now have a set of "own affairs" departments, catering for education and culture, agriculture and land affairs, health and local government. As far as the local government system is concerned, all higher institutions will either be racially segregated (the three "own affairs" Departments of Local Government, Housing and Works), or will be composites of the racial units (such as regional services councils, and the Co-ordinating Council, which will be discussed below). The provincial level, which will be multi-racial, will only supervise whatever "general affairs" the segregated units have in common, and will in fact be expected to strengthen the segregated local authorities by means of financial assistance and training.

Other than the Departments of Education and Culture, the various "own affairs" departments have generally not yet started functioning properly. This is partly due to the difficulty in disentangling "own" from "general" affairs. In the case of health matters, for example, many hospitals cater for patients of all race groups. This has resulted in hospitals still being administered by provincial administrations, albeit on an agency basis on behalf of the "own affairs" departments. The division of existing museums into different "group" segments has also become a daunting task.

In the case of local government, it has also been difficult to isolate functions to be classified as "own affairs". Even the reticulation of services (such as water and electricity) within a municipality's boundaries often has to be done within the constraints of metropolitan service provision networks. It has been argued that only the most miniscule of municipal services can unambiguously be classified as "own affairs". If all potential regional functions are transferred to the regional services councils, most of the remaining local authority functions will be of the "grass verge and

pothole" variety ⁽³⁰⁾. Other local government functions, such as the allocation of sites and the establishment of facilities for business centres, often have to be done in consultation with other race groups in each urban area, to prevent duplication or contradictory planning.

At present, there is a great deal of confusion regarding who is actually performing certain functions, and who will be responsible for them in future. This often causes severe delays, especially in getting approval for projects. The provincial administrations are still fulfilling their traditional functions, such as the administration of roads, traffic control, public works, and nature conservation. They are now also responsible for assisting and developing black local authorities. This huge new burden has placed severe strain on the provincial authorities' financial and manpower resources.

There also seems to be a reluctance on the part of provincial officials to give up their traditional functions and powers to the new "own affairs" departments. This is understandable, as they are aware of all the administrative and financial implications of certain functions, and doubt the ability of the new "own affairs" agencies to cope with them.

The "own affairs" Departments of Local Government are, at present, mainly dealing with housing issues. One member of the Co-ordinating Council mentioned that these departments are keen to extend their powers, but "are battling to find things to do". It is not clear whether these departments will ever really become fully operational, but their existence is a severe handicap when reformers contemplate the establishment of institutions to cross the racial divide.

The implementation of the "own affairs" principle in the local government sphere has proven to be very difficult and costly. There is a severe lack of trained manpower for the "own affairs" departments and for more autonomous management committees. The granting of autonomy to management committees will inevitably mean the duplication of administrative functions at the local level. Furthermore, black, "coloured" and Indian "own" areas usually do not have a sufficient revenue-base to run autonomous local authorities. To remedy this,

30. R. Cameron, "The Institutional Parameters of Local Government", in C.S. Heymans and G. Totemeyer, Government by the People? (Cape Town: Juta, 1988), p. 61.

central business districts may have to be developed in those areas, or existing CBD's may have to be "redistributed" to other local authorities.

Finally, the development of "own" local governments, each jealous of its own status and autonomy, will probably retard the development of city-wide loyalties and priorities, and create a competitive zero-sum attitude to city development. These were some of the factors motivating the white initiatives documented in this report, because local authority personnel appreciated the practical difficulties of implementing government policy at the local level.

c) The Provincial Administrations

The functions of the provincial administrations have been changed extensively since 1986. After the abolition of Development Boards, the administration of urban blacks was transferred to the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning. These functions have now been devolved to provincial level. This has also meant an influx of ex-Development Board personnel, to staff the "community services divisions" of the provincial administrations. They are responsible for establishing and promoting black local government and infrastructural development.

The provinces have been drastically restructured since 1986 to accommodate the "own" and "general" affairs distinction. The old all-white, elected provincial councils were abolished, to be replaced by multi-racial, appointed executive committees (Exco's). This represents a trade-off between white representative and multi-racial executive government, as the government clearly believed that no white electorate would allow their representative institutions to become multi-racial.

The only representative component in the new provincial system is the four parliamentary committees, consisting of members of parliament, who supervise the Exco's. Much criticism has been directed at these committees, because they reflect the political profile of parliament, instead of that of the various provinces. All political parties have proportional representation on these committees, so that the standing committee for the Orange Free State has five Indian MPs, and there are several CP members on the Natal committee. Furthermore, because blacks have no parliamentary representation, there are no black representatives on these committees, even though the provincial administrations are the main agencies which

administer black people.

The structure of the committees (invariably National-Party dominated), and the fact that the Exco's are appointed by the State President, has evoked the criticism that the new system enables the government to impose its will on the provinces. While it is true that the central government is devolving powers to the provincial authorities, the centrally appointed Exco's imply that no significant deviation from government policy can be expected at this level. Regular meetings between the various provincial Administrators, provincial secretaries, and the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, are held to ensure a fairly uniform application of government policy throughout the country. Numerous interviews at provincial level have indicated that provincial officials are being swamped with so many functions that they have difficulty in administering them, and they have received little real power to make policy.

The provincial administrations play crucial role in implementing government policy at present. They are responsible for the actual implementation of development policies and for the creation and promotion of local government. Yet this entails giving up many of their traditional functions, whether to "own affairs" departments or to segregated local authorities. With the tradition of close supervision of local authorities, it will be difficult for provinces to reduce their control over local government. Since many officials are also aware of the impracticality of the "own" and "general" affairs distinction, they have an additional motive to be reluctant to apply government policy.

d) Regional Services Councils

Regional services councils (RSCs) fulfill a key role in the unfolding government institutional network. They are "general affairs institutions", and are intended to strengthen segregated local institutions in several ways. Firstly, they take care of the functions which require metropolitan or regional organisation, so that the local authorities themselves would be responsible for "own affairs" only. Secondly, by creating infrastructure in deprived areas (mainly black townships), they relieve the financial burdens of local authorities, and may potentially increase the popularity of those local authorities.

At present, RSCs seem to be concentrating on

infrastructure provision, instead of bulk service provision. The former is easier, because it usually involves once-off donations, and RSCs often engage local authorities or other agencies to implement the schemes. The provision of services in bulk is much more difficult, because there is usually a complex infrastructure in existence. Local authorities who provide these services at present are also often reluctant to give up control.

In sum, the RSCs do have some potential for strengthening racially segregated local authorities, whether financially, administratively and arguably, politically. However, it will take a long time before RSCs really become strong enough to challenge local authorities' service provision role. As with the "own affairs" departments, the RSCs may have an inhibiting effect with regard to local government reform, because they entrench the idea of segregation.

e) The Co-ordinating Council for Local Government Affairs

The government is not only restructuring local government institutions, but also the way in which local authorities function as a pressure group. White racially-defined municipal associations (one for each province, and an over-arching United Municipal Executive) have existed since the previous century. They have always served as the voice of white local authorities when lobbying the provincial administrations.

Since the 1970's, similar organisations catering for other race groups have emerged. The Urban Councils Association of South Africa (UCASA), and the United Municipalities of South Africa (UMSA) are organisations for BLAs. Coloured and Indian management committees and local affairs committees (in Natal) are members of the Association of Management Committees (ASSOMAC).

By means of the Promotion of Local Government Affairs Amendment Act of 1984, a forum has been established to represent these organisations at central government level. This is called the Council for the Co-ordination of Local Government Affairs. In addition to representatives from each municipal association, there are also representatives from professional institutes, such as the Institutes of Town Clerks, Town Treasurers and City Engineers. The Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, and the Department of Finance, are also represented. Provincial administrators also sit

on this Council.

The Council has been responsible for initiating some of the most important legislation in the local government field during the last four years. The RSCs, the issues of remuneration of municipal councillors and personnel, the training of local government civil servants, and the grading of local authorities, have all originated from this Council. As in the case of the RSCs, the Council provides some contact between different race groups, but only within the parameters of segregated primary units.

The Council offers some scope for local government pressure and lobbying in central government. The Department of Constitutional Development and Planning seems very open to suggestions emanating from the Council. Also, Department officials have insisted that they like to achieve consensus on the Council. This may be significant in future, if ASSOMAC and UCASA maintain their demand for non-racial local authorities. Furthermore, the Cape Province Municipal Association took a stand favouring "single local authorities" in their submission to the President's Council in 1982. Although it has been quiescent on this issue since then, the sentiment still exists in the Association, especially among the larger cities. The Council may, therefore, offer a forum for innovation and pressure.

However, three characteristics of the Council will inhibit real pressure for change. Firstly, Council meetings are chaired by the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, whose powerful personality apparently inhibits participation by the members of the Council (³¹). The growing membership of the Council (about 80 delegates at present) also reduces opportunity for serious debate.

A second difficulty is the racially divided nature of municipal representation on the Council. Not only does this tend to entrench "group" interests and patterns of thinking, but the white United Municipal Executive now has to compete with the other municipal organisations for influence. Since the UME is now regarded as speaking for only white municipalities, it has lost its standing as the only voice of local authorities. This would dilute the impact if the UME were to take a strong stand on

31. Interview, town clerk and member of the Co-ordinating Council, 9 September 1987.

reform (32).

A third set of difficulties are entailed by the structure of the UME itself. The UME insists on getting consensus amongst the four provincial associations, before it makes representations to the government. The large difference in political outlooks between the different provinces means that the UME cannot adopt a strongly reformist position.

The constituent provincial associations are also weak instruments for political change. The white associations are large, unwieldy, and generally conservative, because the voice of small local authorities is given equal representation to that of the cities. The associations therefore tend to be internally divided where contentious issues are concerned. They are generally apolitical, and have historically confined themselves to the practical details of local government. The executive committee of the Cape Province Municipal Association is also rather centralised. These factors will make it difficult for reform-minded local governments to use the municipal associations as an avenue for pressure.

2.4 Conclusion

The division of cities on a racial basis, which began during the last century, has systematically been formalised in separate administrative and representative institutions. The watershed year was 1971, when Administration Boards removed black urban areas from the jurisdiction of the white municipalities. Since 1983, an elaborate network of racially based institutions has been created at central, provincial and local level.

The challenge which certain white local authorities posed against racially-based cities must be seen in this context. Not only has segregation historically promoted the interests of urban whites, but a vast array of legal and administrative barriers has entrenched segregation in the cities. What is interesting about the 1985-8 white local authority initiatives, therefore, is that the perceived interests of white urban elites changed, which then forced them to confront segregationist legislation. But whereas urban segregation was originally introduced

32. Interview, City Councillor and member of the Coordinating Council, 24 August 1987.

by local authorities in the previous century, local authorities are no longer in the position to remove it. Over the last eighty years, the right to make policy on racial affairs has shifted decisively towards the central government, making the local authorities prisoners of their own designs. Whereas segregation was originally a matter of local white convenience, it has now become the cornerstone of the entire constitutional structure.

This historical survey has highlighted several aspects of South African urban heritage, which hamper local initiatives for racial accommodation:

a) The entrenchment of administrative separation along racial lines. This implies the existence of different sets of personnel, and different institutional ethos and experiences.

b) Financial separation of local communities, thus preventing any tradition of subsidisation of blacks by whites at the local level.

c) The principle of financial self-sufficiency (maintained until the early 1980s) kept black living standards low, and reinforced class divisions between black and white. This is accentuated by spatial separation.

d) The systematic removal of urban blacks from white municipalities' sphere of authority has inhibited a sense of responsibility for black residents on the part of white Councillors and voters. This is worsened by the backlog of services and infrastructure in black townships, which makes white residents reluctant to shoulder any of the responsibility for upgrading.

e) The long experience of local powerlessness and financial frailty has set severe constraints on any political initiatives which would really challenge government policy. There is very little conception at the local level that local decision-makers have the right to define a city's political and administrative form.

f) The long tradition of control over black people has created a basic conception on the part of whites, of blacks as subjects of control within a white-defined framework, instead of initiators of their own future.

g) Segregation at local level has been reinforced by a complex set of regional, provincial and central institutions. Challenging the principle of "own" and "general" affairs in one locality will necessitate far-

reaching institutional adjustments. Not only are decision-makers at higher levels relatively impervious to local preferences and pressures, but the entire institutional framework entrenches racial compartmentalisation.

The idea of equal representation on a single Council has become virtually unthinkable amongst most whites. In the words of Dr. Verwoerd, "It is not and cannot be permissible that Natives should serve in the name of those areas on a mixed municipal council, i.e. that they should have access to membership of what are now European municipal councils. It is not even necessary to expatiate on this" (33). The local initiatives documented in this report are significant, because they a remarkable re-evaluation by whites of their interests, due to changed economic and political circumstances. They also reveal the extreme centralisation in policy-making, to the extent that white local elites cannot decide on the structure and membership of their local authority.

33. Verwoerd 1956, p. 19.

3. THE DURBAN CITY COUNCIL INITIATIVE: EXPLORING INSTITUTIONAL DESIGNS

3.1 Introduction

In Durban, Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg, City Councils have attempted to discuss the political and administrative difficulties of racially-defined local authorities. This section outlines the Durban initiative, and the next two sections are devoted to the Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg cases. Yet there are distinct similarities in their approaches.

Firstly, each Council addressed the problem on the institutional level. Each similar sorts of questions, for example, "What kind of local authority institutions will overcome the problems of racially-defined municipalities?" and "What should the racial ratio be on a single council?" Issues of participatory planning, political negotiations and financial redistribution received less attention.

Secondly, these initiatives were largely in-house proceedings. The issue was discussed among Councillors and (in the case of Durban and Pietermaritzburg), with members of the Coloured and Indian Local Affairs Committees. The formal institutions and procedures provided the forum for discussion. The participation of the Local Affairs Committees prevented a thorough reconsideration of their raison d'être.

The third characteristic follows from this one: the broader political spectrum and business community were not really involved, either because of Council confidentiality, or because some political organisations were reluctant to be associated with Council initiatives. The conventional boundary between the Councils and the broader society was not questioned or altered. No new alliances were made, and the political and functional role of local authorities was not challenged.

Fourthly, the issue was dealt with in conventionally accepted ways. Subcommittees were appointed to discuss the issue, and then to submit a report to the full Council. These procedures were time-consuming and rather leisurely. The initiatives did not take place because of a palpable sense of crisis, but because of certain Councillors' long-standing dissatisfaction with racial local authority structures.

Finally, the lack of a sense of crisis prevented the

transcending of party political divisions within the Councils. This was especially notable in Durban and Cape Town. Therefore, the role of the reformers within these Councils was controversial, and they had to keep looking over their shoulder at their more reluctant colleagues. This ultimately constrained the number and scale of alternatives considered by these Councils, as well as the innovativeness of their modus operandi.

3.2 Background to the Durban initiative: The Local Affairs Committee system

The Durban City Council has, for many years, been a PFP-dominated Council, and has adopted definite standpoints on a number of contentious political issues. For example, it has taken an interest in recreation facilities in nearby black townships, since the issue affects overcrowding on beaches ⁽¹⁾; it voted for the opening of the central business district ⁽²⁾; and it has taken a strong interest in the Indaba ⁽³⁾. It has also expressed criticism of the proposed RSC system. RSCs were criticised on the grounds that they make no provision for representation of coloured, Indian or informal black settlement areas which do not have Local Affairs Committees or Black Local Authorities; RSCs do not appoint their own chairmen; and the requirement that RSCs submit budgets to the Minister of Finance represents unacceptable state control over local affairs ⁽⁴⁾. The City Council was very aware that it needs to protect its autonomy against possible central government encroachment.

Durban's experience with the Local Affairs Committee system has apparently been very unsatisfactory. There has been tension between the Council, on the one hand, and the Northern Durban Indian LAC, the Southern Durban Indian LAC, the Grey Street Indian LAC, and the Coloured LAC on the other. The fact that LAC chairmen are represented at City Council meetings, but do not have the vote, is a great source of frustration ⁽⁵⁾.

1. Daily News, 8 February 1985.
2. Daily News, 19 March 1985.
3. Interview, Councillor, 7 March 1988.
4. Daily News, 4 June 1985.
5. Interview, Councillor, 7 March 1988.

Furthermore, LACs do not have financial and budgeting responsibility for their communities. As a result, the LACs often demand facilities which the City Council maintains are unrealistic and too expensive. On the other hand, the LACs argue that their communities have been historically deprived, and therefore need additional expenditure.

Because of the powerlessness of LACs, certain councillors believe that there is a general reluctance on the part of the most talented people to participate. Popular interest in LACs is low, and the last elections were boycotted by the Natal Indian Congress. Their legitimacy is questioned, and the opinion has been expressed that the payment of allowances to members is one reason for their preparedness to serve on LACs ⁽⁶⁾.

3.3 The search for more appropriate local government structures

In September 1985, the media reported that the Management Committee (Manco) of the Durban City Council intended to investigate the possibility of a multi-racial Council. The Southern Durban ILAC had asked for full representation on all committees, and for full voting rights. At this point, the Council felt that it could not do anything about the situation, because national laws would have to be changed. The Council advised the ILAC to make representations to the House of Delegates, which could then approach the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning ⁽⁷⁾.

This outcome did not satisfy the ILAC, who wanted a more concrete approach by the City Council. It regarded the decision by Manco to form a subcommittee to look into the matter, as a delaying tactic ⁽⁸⁾. Tension between the Council and the LACs grew.

During 1986, there were several reports that the Council was considering alternatives to the LAC system. One of the most immediate causes of this action was information from the Provincial Secretary, that a committee had been appointed by the Exco to investigate the devolution of

6. Interviews, Councillors, 7-9 March 1988.

7. Daily News, 25 September 1985.

8. Daily News, 29 September 1985.

powers to LACs. The committee was concerned with the implementation of regulations governing the improvement of communication between local authorities and LACs. The Durban LACs expressed their opposition to devolution of powers to them. The Council also stated that it did not support the concept of separate local authorities for different population groups, and favoured a common voters' roll for all groups. Manco was asked to recommend to Council what action was required to investigate alternatives to the LAC system, which would cater for all residents of Durban. A subcommittee, consisting of Manco, LAC members and relevant officials, was appointed in October 1986 to do this ⁽⁹⁾.

When this committee began functioning in November, Mr. Peter Mansfield was elected chairman. However, the National Party Councillors on Manco refused to participate, because they maintained that it was not the purpose of the Council to consider alternatives to government policy. They saw it as a PFP attempt to force their ideas on residents of Durban ⁽¹⁰⁾. However, a month later, four "moderates" were included in the subcommittee, although they were not very enthusiastic about the proceedings ⁽¹¹⁾.

One of the first proposals of the subcommittee was for a press advertisement, to canvass the opinion of the whole community. A circular was also sent to Councillors, LAC members, ratepayers' associations, and bodies representing commerce and industry. Several letters of support were received, most significantly from the Durban Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, who expressed support for direct representation of Indians and coloureds on the Council ⁽¹²⁾.

One of the most difficult tasks for an innovating body is to define its own role. The Durban subcommittee had to decide whether it should try to formulate alternatives, or whether it should open itself wider, as a mini-Indaba. The subcommittee decided tentatively that it should formulate and investigate possible options; select a short-list of possible options; embark on a period of informal consultation; obtain from Council a decision on

9. Council minutes, 19 August 1986 and 30 September 1986.

10. Daily News, 3 December 1986.

11. Interview, Councillor, 8 March 1988.

12. Council minutes, 20 February 1987.

which proposals to submit for a test of public opinion; and, finally, a public opinion test would be conducted. The favoured proposal would be submitted to the Provincial Administration and to the central government for approval (13).

One of the subcommittee members drafted a very useful memorandum on possible features of an alternative system, the essential features of which were the following:

- 1) Voting powers: Possible options are:
 - a) One per person
 - b) Two per person: one for a ward representative and one for city-wide representatives;
 - c) One vote per household;
 - d) Multiple voting (the voter casts as many votes as he/she wishes, up to the full number of candidates);
 - e) Additional votes for registered companies.
- 2) The voting system: Possible options are:
 - a) Existing winner-take-all system, with one or two councillors being elected per ward;
 - b) Winner-take-all, in a city-wide election;
 - c) Ward voting, with city-wide proportional representation;
 - d) A city-wide proportional representation system (this would require the involvement of political parties or other civic organisations).
 - e) Seats in the Council can be set aside for the "best losers" in an election.
- 3) The number of Councillors
The crucial question here is the size of wards, or voters per councillor.
- 4) Minority protection: Possible options are:
 - a) None
 - b) Defining areas, and extra councillors given to specific areas according to financial criteria (e.g. the consumption of services);
 - c) All voters can retain their racial categorisation, and each race group will get a certain number of councillors in a city-wide election;
 - d) Ward boundaries drawn to reflect a clear racial majority in each ward. Each ward is then allocated a number of councillors, with

- extra weight given to racial minorities;
- e) As in (d), but with no extra weighting. But there would be a requirement that a majority of each racial group of councillors approves each major decision;
- f) Ward boundaries drawn to encourage the perception of common interests, not common ethnic identities, so as to promote a candidate's appeal to more than one ethnic group;
- g) Separate ethnically drawn autonomous municipalities.

Two broad constitutional alternatives were suggested:

a) An adult vote and a property vote in 50 wards (one councillor per ward), with a proportional representation system. Each ward should have roughly equal numbers of voters; candidates must represent a party or civic association; the candidate with the highest number of votes wins; and if a party gets at least 20 percent of votes throughout the entire city, it would get 10 seats on the Council. In other words, if only 9 candidates from one political party win, the party will receive an additional councillor. The total number of councillors will, therefore, increase. This will be a safety mechanism for large minority parties.

b) A system consisting of 50 wards, with 50 councillors. Each ward would have roughly an equal number of voters. Each ward would get a racial tag, for example, 17 white wards, 31 Indian, 7 black and 5 coloured. On all major decisions affecting a race group, there must be a majority of councillors from each race group. However, the candidate in a ward need not be of that race group.

Members of the subcommittee made the following suggestions for alternative local government structures:

a) The ideal option: 30 wards, with the candidate who wins the most votes in each ward being elected. The "best losers" (i.e. candidates who get more than the average vote of the successful candidates) are also elected as councillors. There would also be a city-wide election, where voters use a second vote. The thirty candidates with the most votes get elected.

b) "Indicative vote system": Involves an informal "convention", depending on the approval of higher tiers

of government. But it will allow a serious Indian, coloured and black input into the decision-making process. It would also be an incentive for all residents to participate in elections. There would be 15 white wards, and the 15 candidates with the highest votes elected. The "best losers" in this election will also be elected (an indeterminate number). There would also be a second, city-wide election, whereby each person has 10 votes, and the 15 candidates getting the highest votes would be elected.

Under this system, the LACs would be elected normally. The 20 LAC candidates getting the highest number of votes would be treated as city councillors. A black advisory council of 20 members would also be created. The 10 members getting the highest number of votes would be treated as councillors.

All "councillors" would have full participation rights in debates. They would cast an "indicative", which would automatically be supported by the white councillors in formal votes.

c) "All-Durban council system": An interim solution, whereby an "all-Durban" council would represent the views of all Durban's residents. In terms of the law, final decisions would still be made by the white city council. But the all-Durban council and the Durban City Council would meet in a joint, public session, prior to formal City Council meetings. The City Council must support the decisions of the joint sittings, or decisions may be referred back to the joint sitting. Voting for the "all-Durban" council should not be racially or geographically compartmentalised so that voters can choose the best candidates. The Durban City Council can distribute a booklet of information on all the candidates (14).

The subcommittee then suggested to Manco that elections could be held in 1988 for an interim "All-Durban Council". A possible structure was the division of the city into thirty white wards, each electing one Councillor for a five-year term. LAC members would be elected for 27 wards (10 for the Coloured LAC and 17 for the Indian LACs). The Town Clerk was asked to prepare appropriate amendments to the Local Authorities Ordinance of 1975, and the Durban Extended Powers Consolidated Ordinance of 1976. He would also investigate the regulations pertaining to LACs, to give effect the above proposal. Significantly, the Town Clerk would seek legal

advice on whether these proposals were possible within existing legislation ⁽¹⁵⁾. The Council was careful to remain within the limits of legislation and proper procedures.

In August 1987, the Town Clerk reported to the subcommittee that it would not be possible to bind the council to decisions made by a separate body which was not constituted in terms of the Local Authority Ordinance, or the Durban Extended Powers Consolidated Ordinance ⁽¹⁶⁾.

The subcommittee felt that blacks should be included on any advisory committee. However, it was felt that the lack of binding powers of this body may cause public disinterest. The subcommittee eventually accepted, in principle, the concept of a multiracial consultative committee, but its modus operandi still had to be discussed ⁽¹⁷⁾.

It also became evident that the LACs rejected the idea of an "advisory" committee. The LACs believed that the decisions of such a committee should be binding on the Council. However, since it would be difficult to amend existing legislation, the subcommittee should try to devise an acceptable system whereby the recommendations of the LACs would be upheld when submitted to the City Council for approval. Furthermore, the Durban City Council should undertake extensive consultation of all groups of the community on various issues ⁽¹⁸⁾.

It is clear, therefore, that the desire of the Council to remain within the ambit of the law, together with the inclusion of the LACs in the deliberations, meant that the existence of the LACs was accepted as a fait accompli, at least in the short term. The need for a non-racial body was clearly recognised by the LACs, but until such a solution was legally possible, the LACs regarded a more powerful position for themselves as an acceptable second-best option.

15. Minutes, 28 April 1987).

16. Minutes, 10 August 1987).

17. Minutes, 10 August 1987.

18. Minutes, 3 February 1988.

3.4 The outcome of the committee's deliberations

Finally, the subcommittee presented its findings to Manco. No changes to the existing system would be entertained by the government before the October 1988 elections. Any decisions regarding a new system would have to be dealt with by a new City Council, and hence the subcommittee recommended that it disband. It urged the Council and Manco to treat the matter with urgency, because the existing system of advisory LACs and no black representation is discriminatory and unviable ⁽¹⁹⁾.

It also urged the Council to make representations to the Natal Municipal Association Political Committee to the effect that:

- the present system of local government is impractical and undesirable, because local conditions vary, and it is unwise to proceed at the pace of the slowest, smallest, or even the average local authority;
- the maximum devolution of power and responsibility (not simply administration) to local authorities is desirable, although this is incompatible with uniformity;
- the participation of all adults of all races should be achieved, in such a way that no sectional interest group can dominate other groups. This should be done by negotiation, and by tests of public acceptance ⁽²⁰⁾.

Nothing came of this proposal. The NMA's Political Committee never really began functioning ...

3.5 Defining "Durban"

As a typical South African city, one of the most problematic issues in the Durban context is the definition of "Durban" itself. At present, "Durban" includes only the white, coloured and Indian areas. However, there are three other areas which form part of the Durban metropolis, and should, arguably, become part of Durban itself. These are the Ningizimu Black Local Authority; the large black towns situated within Kwazulu, viz. KwaMashu and Umlazi; and finally, the vast and growing squatter settlements on the fringes of the "official" townships.

The majority on the Durban City Council clearly

19. Minutes, 15 February 1988.

20. Minutes, 15 February 1988.

recognised the need for the regional provision of services. This would inevitably have to include Kwamashu and Umlazi, and necessitate some agreement with the Kwazulu authorities (21).

The Council was also very concerned with the squatter issue. It accepted their permanence, and wanted to assist in a policy of improving their quality of life, e.g. by providing rudimentary services, housing and security of tenure. It envisaged facilitating self-help housing in these areas, and the involvement of the community in the formulation and implementation of policies (22).

These issues will affect both the functioning of the municipal departments, as well as the ultimate form of the Council itself. Depending on the areas regarded as part of "Durban", the Council may have an Indian or a black majority (assuming that ethnic groups vote strictly for candidates of their own group). It would, therefore, also affect the issues taken up, and the Council's spending policy. However, there is no doubt that the growing squatter pressure on Durban has made local government in this area a particularly urgent matter. At present, the fragmentation of authority between the Durban City Council, the Black Local Authority, the Natal Provincial Administration, the Department of Development Aid, and the Kwa-Zulu government seems to be an obstacle to dealing effectively with the squatter problem. It also means that any extension to Durban's sphere of authority will be very complicated indeed.

It is not clear why the Durban City Council is so keen to extend its authority to these areas. Two possible reasons have been suggested (23). Firstly, by including the squatter areas under Durban's authority, Durban will ensure that these areas fall within the boundaries of the regional services council. In this way, the RSC may assume at least some of the financial burdens for the very urgent task of upgrading the informal settlement areas. A second possible reason is that the Council recognises that a single local authority will simply be more streamlined and practical than working through a multiplicity of racially-defined local authorities. It must be remembered that the needs of the residents of the

21. Council minutes, 5 October 1987.

22. Council minutes, 2 June 1987.

23. In discussion with Mr U Pillay, 13 March 1989

informal settlements impinge directly onto the people of Durban, because the new immigrants desperately need employment and social services.

3.6 Gradual change: Advantages and disadvantages

In Durban, the opening of beaches, libraries, buses, parks and toilets took many years to resolve. There is not really a great sense of urgency in the City Council, and it is accepted that "things take time" ⁽²⁴⁾. The Council is also characterised by a fairly even PFP-NP balance of power. This indicates that the white population of Durban will be cautious in their attitude to institutional experimenting at the local level.

Reformers on the City Council realise that they would need an institutional alternative which is saleable to the white public. Furthermore, if a proposal is too "radical", the government will not accept it. Only if it is supported by the public, e.g. in a referendum, can it be taken to higher authorities for approval ⁽²⁵⁾.

One implication of this cautious, gradualist approach is that the LACs must be included in negotiations. Otherwise there is very little chance indeed that an alternative proposal would be considered sympathetically by the authorities. However, their participation may be the greatest obstacle to the inclusion of more critical community organisations in the negotiation process. Negotiations will become even more difficult, once KwaZulu becomes a participant. The same divisions that undermined the Indaba may become evident in the Durban situation as well.

From the Durban experience, it is evident that the City Council will have to make difficult choices regarding its negotiation partners, if it wants to resuscitate its initiative. It may be necessary to consider finding another forum for negotiations, within which the Council would be only one of the parties. This would prevent disaffected organisations from criticising the Council itself for choosing the participants. A great deal of quiet canvassing would have to be done first, to establish an acceptable forum, and to assure all parties of an equal hearing.

24. Interview, Councillor, 8 March 1988.

25. Interview, Councillor, 8 March 1988.

4. CAPE TOWN: FROM INSTITUTIONAL REFORM TO ACCOUNTABLE PLANNING

The Cape Town City Council has a long history of support for a non-racial local authority (1). It opposed the removal of Coloureds from the municipal voters' role in 1974, and has continually reasserted their viewpoint since then.

Cape Town City Council's ongoing attempts to reunite the city have taken place in two distinct phases. The first phase focussed on pressurising central government to allow Cape Town's population to be represented on and administered by one Council. This phase was characterised by the features discussed in Section 3. Because their attempts failed, the Council has, since 1985, tried more unorthodox and informal ways to engage public discussion on the issue, and to achieve public participation of all constituencies in municipal planning procedures.

4.1 Phase 1: Appeals to central government

a) Report to the Theron Commission, 1974

In 1974, the Council submitted a lengthy and detailed report to the Theron Commission, which was appointed to consider the social and political position of "coloured" people in South Africa.

The Council's report first considered problems in local government. It stated that the City Council was fundamentally opposed to the separation of Local Government on racial grounds. The report mentioned a practical reason for this opposition: racially segregated local government causes unnecessary multiplication of administration and expenses. It also mentioned moral and political reasons: it resulted in racial disharmony, and was unjust to coloured areas, which could not afford the new services and amenities. It was also unjust to local authorities who had to bear

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1. It has also consistently opposed the application of the Group Areas Act to Cape Town. The Council refused to co-operate with the Group Areas Board, and delayed the first group areas proclamations for seven years (J. Western, Outcast Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, Cape Town, 1981, p.121-2).

the cost of such services and amenities (2).

Coloureds who are forced to move, direct their hostility towards the City Council, as the immediate agent of government. The disruption of coloured communities causes mistrust of whites. White communities had not been disrupted, and the coloureds had made all the sacrifices. The coloureds who were moved from the city to the Cape Flats suffered severe material disadvantages: in terms of their accommodation, surroundings, amenities, and higher rents. House prices were very high in coloured areas, and people owning small houses in white areas could not afford new houses in the new coloured housing estates. Former house-owners were now paying rent, and this made them very resentful. The spatial implications of the "apartheid city" (outlined in Section 2) caused long and expensive journeys from the housing estates to places of employment (3).

High rents caused rent arrears, and coloureds resented paying rent, because they maintained that they never wanted to be there in the first place. The new housing estates were built in desolate surroundings, and people had to live among strangers. They lost nearly all their amenities, because schools, shops, and churches were only built later (4). Segregation of cities therefore had extensive social and personal costs.

Dissatisfaction among the coloured people had caused the development of "black power", directed at all white authorities, but especially at the City Council (5).

Another source of concern mentioned in the report was the establishment of Coloured Management Committees. There were three management committees in Cape Town: Athlone, Kensington, and Wittebome/Wynberg. Communication between the City Council and the management committees was usually by correspondence, which often took a month, and the delays caused a great deal of frustration (6).

2. City of Cape Town, Report to the Commission of Enquiry into matters relating to the Coloured Population Group, February 1974, p. 27.

3. City of Cape Town, Ibid., p. 29.

4. City of Cape Town, Ibid., p. 29.

5. City of Cape Town, Ibid., p. 30.

6. City of Cape Town, Ibid., p. 30-1.

Council officials were often required to explain issues to Management Committee members, and this time-consuming task was often necessary to convince members to take certain courses of action.

The City Council was reluctant to delegate powers to the committees, because of their lack of experience and administrative background; and because the committees were not financially responsible to either the Cape Town rate-payers or the provincial auditor. In effect, Cape Town City Council employees served two masters, and experienced divided loyalties between the committees and the Council. The committees would need large numbers of trained personnel ⁽⁷⁾.

There was also resistance to the committees from the coloured people, because they were entirely nominated, and were identified with the denial of civic rights. They were especially rejected by the more intellectual coloureds, and the 'coloured ratepayers' association still dealt directly with the Cape Town City Council ⁽⁸⁾.

Due to the shortage of skilled coloureds in local government, autonomous committees would need white professionals in the early stages. Even if the committees were mainly dormitory local authorities, concerned with housing, services and amenities, and could operate independently, they would need some form of liaison committee with white local authorities to deal with regional functions. The committees would only derive finances from low-cost housing, and there was very little industry; hence, the rate and tariff income would probably not be enough. However, there had been an increase in the demand for services, and so autonomous committees would need substantial grants, loans and subsidies ⁽⁹⁾.

Housing was also seen as a serious problem. The Cape Town City Council was the major housing authority in the western Cape. In 1965, a Council report ("Broader Horizons") indicated that no provision had been made for expansion of the coloured population. Only in 1971 did the government proclaim some land for coloured housing; but there was a six year delay, with very serious consequences. Delays had been worsened by the Group

7. City of Cape Town, Ibid, p. 32.

8. City of Cape Town, Ibid., p. 33.

9. City of Cape Town, Ibid, p. 40.

Areas Act, since land vacated was fully serviced, and new areas required completely new services ⁽¹⁰⁾.

In the preparation of land for development, owners were reluctant to sell, and this often caused delays of up to 18 months. The squatter problem also had to be attended to. Land set aside for coloureds was often very unsuitable for housing, and this caused engineering difficulties. The Council also encouraged home ownership for coloureds, which would lead to a more responsible attitude by occupiers. It pleaded for government financial contributions towards the cost of dwellings, by means of special loans at low interest; as well as funding for capital investment in roads, stormwater drainage, sewerage, medical and welfare facilities, and landscaping ⁽¹¹⁾.

The Council further suggested that a section of District Six, and the adjoining areas of Woodstock, be made available for a redevelopment project for the upper socio-economic Coloured community. On 31 July 1973, the Council voted to request the Minister of Community Development to reinstate District Six as an undefined area, and it maintained that the Department should suspend its policy of evacuating Coloured people from their present accommodation ⁽¹²⁾.

On the issue of community development, the report based its comments on the criteria laid down by the Department of Community Development itself. For example, according to the Department of Community Development, a group area had to be planned as a co-ordinated whole, and its relation to any regional planning or adjacent town planning had to be considered. This had not happened in Cape Town; no structure plan was developed for co-ordinated growth. Consultation between the many bodies responsible for work, housing, services and transport was ineffective ⁽¹³⁾.

The Department also wanted to establish and preserve the rights of occupation and ownership of land for each particular racial group. The report maintained that this objective was clearly designed to introduce stability

10. City of Cape Town, Ibid., p. 42-3.

11. City of Cape Town, Ibid., p. 42-4.

12. City of Cape Town, Ibid., p. 5.

13. City of Cape Town, Ibid., p. 60-1.

into the lives of residents. Yet in Cape Town, Group Areas removals undermined stability, and the continual threat of removal under the Group Areas Act caused uncertainties, both in planning terms and in human terms. This eventually caused anti-social behaviour (¹⁴).

The report listed five hindrances to effective community development. Firstly, there was a lack of co-ordination in the regional planning of group areas. Secondly, there was a lack of co-ordination within a group area, with regard to the provision of job opportunities, transport facilities, social services and housing. Thirdly, a lack of stability in group areas was caused by low levels of ownership and the recent uprooting of the population. Fourth, there was a lack of facilities for coloureds in their areas of work outside the group areas. Finally, the large distances between work and home caused higher transport costs and social problems (¹⁵).

b) The Bloomberg Committee

In 1981, the Council appointed a subcommittee to consider the policy of the Council on the municipal franchise. The report, completed in July 1981, referred to Cape Town's proud tradition of "government by those directly affected without discrimination on the basis of race", which had existed since 1840 and lasted until 1972, when only white South Africans could vote.

The report described the Council's ongoing opposition to the removal from its "non-white" citizens of the right to enrolment on the municipal voters' roll, and to election as Councillors. Special meetings were convened with the Administrator in 1958 and with the Prime Minister in 1970. On each occasion, public meetings convened by the Mayor endorsed the Council's views. In 1970, the Council refused to nominate persons to, or fix dates for, enrolment of voters and elections for Management Committees. Since then, it has always refused to nominate persons for appointment to these Committees.

A Provincial Ordinance of 1971 prohibited persons other than whites from being elected to the City Council. The Council made a final plea to the Administrator to provide for the representation of all ratepayers on the municipal voters' roll and on the Council. This plea also failed.

14. City of Cape Town, Ibid, p. 61.

15. City of Cape Town, Ibid, p. 65.

On 31 August 1972, coloured Councillors attended their last Council meeting. There were 6 coloured Councillors. Councillors generally felt that the system had worked harmoniously, with feelings of amity among all citizens, and there was a high standard of Councillors (16).

The first three management committees were established in April 1965 (they were nominated, became partially elected in November 1972, and have been fully elected since September 1977) (17).

The Bloomberg Committee did not advocate a return to the situation before 1972, because the franchise had since been extended to owners of immovable property, the spouses of occupiers, and the minimum valuation requirement had been deleted. It simply suggested the removal of the racial qualification. It claimed that it was the right of any person who contributed to the finances and development of the city through ownership or occupation of property to have full say in its government (18).

The Committee recommended that certain changes be made to the Municipal Ordinance no. 20 of 1974. For example, the words "who qualifies to be registered as a voter, in terms of the Electoral Act" could be deleted. The Local Authorities (Development According to Community) Ordinance, no. 6 of 1963, should also be repealed, to disestablish management committees. However, since the Committee felt that it would be presumptuous to dictate to other municipalities, it simply advised that the municipal area of Cape Town be excluded from the disqualification of certain categories of property owners and occupiers. Wards would then have to be delimited (19).

It is important to note the attitude of the Committee to consultation with community leaders. The committee maintained that the Council had regularly made its standpoint known, and community leaders had frequently supported these changes. There was therefore no need to

16. Bloomberg Committee, Ibid., p. 5-6.

17. Bloomberg Committee, City of Cape Town, The Municipal Franchise, July 1981, p. 1-2.

18. Bloomberg Committee, Ibid., p. 9-10.

19. Bloomberg Committee, Ibid., p. 10-11.

hear evidence from them again (20). Since extensive mass mobilisation in black and coloured communities had not yet taken place, nor were there yet demands for a thorough devolution of local government power to allow for participatory planning, the Committee's recommendation remained limited to removing racial qualifications on existing laws. The Committee's approach fitted all the characteristics outlined in the previous section: it was an in-house affair, without the real participation of interest groups and political leaders, and the Committee simply addressed the racial aspects of existing structures. Local government was not seen as a structure to be fundamentally re-negotiated.

c) The Municipal Franchise: Memorandum by the Council to the President's Council, 1981

When the President's Council began its task of formulating recommendations for a new constitutional dispensation for whites, coloureds and Indians, it had to reconsider "the extension of local and regional management systems". After an invitation by the Economic Affairs and Constitutional Committees of the President's Council for evidence, the Council decided to prolong the life of the Ad Hoc Committee (21).

The Council did not favour an additional tier of government, or an independent metropolitan authority. It would be a costly bureaucracy and would erode local autonomy. Devising a just system of representation and allocation of resources would be very difficult and would cause conflict. It would also add another rating system; skilled staff would be in short supply, and functions would be duplicated between local authorities and the new council. It would also take a long time to function smoothly, and so disrupt planning. The Council maintained that there were no major weaknesses in present system (22).

The Council suggested that the present de facto situation should be expanded, whereby Cape Town, with its

20. Bloomberg Committee, Ibid, p. 12.

21. Ad Hoc Committee, A Memorandum presented by the Council of the City of Cape town to the Economic Affairs and Constitutional Committees of the President's Council, August 1981.

22. Council, Memorandum, p. 7-10.

experience, resources and personnel, acted as core city, and provided services for its neighbours by arrangement. For example, it already provided civil defence, ambulance, electricity, water, housing, recreation, arts, and produce markets. Cape Town was the core city of the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Board, and participated with other local authorities in the Cape Metropolitan Planning Committee. It co-operated with other local authorities in the provision of sewerage, refuse disposal, stormwater and fire services (23).

The management committee system caused duplication of explanation, motivation and debate; and caused delays, which could be costly. With four management committees to be considered, it was not always possible for the same officials to attend all meetings, and insufficient briefing could lead to misunderstandings and conflict. Coloured people were dissatisfied with the existing system, and wanted direct representation in the decision-making process (24). The Council, therefore, criticised fragmentation from the perspective of proper planning and administration, as opposed to the more moral and political views outlined in the previous report.

A further report emanating from this subcommittee reiterated the Council's opposition to segregated local authorities, as well as a new metropolitan tier of government. The report raised a third issue: its support for the principle of maximum devolution of power. A local authority should have the power to do anything that it was not expressly precluded from doing, in contrast with the existing system in which a local authority may only do that which it is expressly empowered to do. Especially the larger cities, which had the necessary skills and expertise, could govern themselves with the minimum of central administrative control (25).

However, the Council rejected any possible linkage of the concept of devolution of power to the idea of "homogeneous communities" and "the ethnic character of local authority". The report maintained that "racial

23. Council, Memorandum, p. 11-13.

24. Council, Memorandum, p. 14-15.

25. City of Cape Town, Interim report of the ad hoc committee appointed to study the proposals of the President's Council insofar as they affect local government in Cape Town, September 1982, p. 5-6.

heterogeneity does not necessarily make a community less homogeneous and cited Cape Town as an example of a very homogeneous community notwithstanding its composition".

4.2: Phase 2: New directions in Council thinking

a) The "Call for Dialogue"

As a result of the widespread unrest in the Cape Peninsula during 1985, the Council resolved at a special meeting on 2 September 1985 that the mayor and the chairman of the Executive Committee should initiate suitable dialogue with civic and other organised community groups. They should try to elicit, co-ordinate and evaluate their views on an appropriate system of local government for the area. In due course, they should submit a report on the dialogue to Council and, if approved, the report would be forwarded to the Administrator.

The committee contacted the public by placing advertisement in leading newspapers in the municipal area. It also sent out about 130 circular letters to selected organisations and individuals. Several interviews and meetings were held by the Dialogue Committee with various organisations, bodies and interested individuals. Some people responded by expressing their views to Council officials telephonically, others submitted written representations, and the remainder were interviewed personally. A total of 65 comments were received ⁽²⁶⁾. This represented a cross section of the community, including township residents, ratepayers' associations, commercial and other organisations, private individuals from all race groups, community councillors, and academics ⁽²⁷⁾. Attention was given to the following topics:

i. The municipal franchise: There was general support for the re-introduction of a common voters roll, although there was some disagreement on whether lodgers or boarders should be enfranchised. No support whatever was found for the existing system of racially-based

26. "Council's call for dialogue", Report by His Worship the Mayor and the Chairman of the Executive Committee, May 1986, p. 2.

27. Ibid., p. 3.

whatever was found for the existing system of racially-based franchise. It was considered that there was no justification for applying voters' qualifications at central government level to local government level. This coincided broadly with the Council's stated policy.

ii. Regional services councils: In general, the public felt that they had not been consulted or kept informed about the proposals for regional services councils. Most respondents felt that the concept of metropolitanisation and the provision of bulk services on a regional basis did have some merit. The racial basis of RSCs and the introduction of further levies during a recession were generally rejected. Fears were expressed about possible inflation and unemployment consequences. Businessmen felt that they would contribute the bulk of the levies, but RSCs would not be answerable to them. Respondents also criticised the transfer to local government level of the responsibility for urban transport subsidisation, because the housing of poorer workers long distances away from their places of employment, had been a political decision taken at central government level; central government was therefore morally obligated to subsidise the additional transport costs.

The Council generally accepted these criticisms of RSCs, and felt that the direct representation of all races on an open Cape Town City Council, which would then nominate representatives to the RSC, would have been more acceptable.

iii. The most appropriate system of local government for the Cape Peninsula: There was almost unanimous support for the Council's stand in respect of a local option for Cape Town. This implied a return to an open Council, the abolition of group areas. It was pointed out that for blacks to benefit from such a policy, it would be necessary to extend the area of jurisdiction of the Cape Town City Council to incorporate nearby black areas. This may necessitate central government subsidisation. If RSCs were based on such a local dispensation, they could play an extremely useful role in the region.

The Council agreed with these comments. It felt that there is a tremendous support amongst local inhabitants for an open society in Cape Town, and that nothing short of a mixed local authority would satisfy the aspirations

of black and coloured people (28).

The report also analysed the main causes of the unrest, as presented by the respondents. The need for direct, non-racial representation in all levels of government, dissatisfaction with the education system, the arrest and detention of responsible community leaders, the negative image of the South African Police, the economic recession were generally cited as causes of the spate of unrest in 1985-6 (29)

Although the ultimate solutions would have to found at central government level, respondents felt that a return to an open council would contribute to removing the frustrations of those who have for so long been excluded from the governing process. The Council was perceived as being in a unique position to play a vital role in defusing the tense situation. However, there was a divided opinion amongst respondents as to whether the Council should act as a mediator between the government and representatives of the black and coloured communities, or whether it should simply negotiate with the latter parties for fear of losing its credibility by having contact with the government. Yet there was general agreement that the Council should actively involve itself in formulating proposals to put to the parties concerned as a starting point for discussion (30).

It was also felt that, if the government would not agree to an open Council, the establishment of an informal Council or Assembly should be considered. Such an Assembly would consist of members of all races elected from a common voters roll, under an election financed by commerce and industry. The official Council would then simply give effect to decisions taken by the unofficial Assembly.

The Council was also urged to establish a commission to investigate other problem areas, such as the revision of the education system, the encouragement of home ownership, training for the unemployed, the encouragement of social contact between the various groups and the elimination of discrimination.

28. Ibid., p. 3-8.

29. Ibid., p. 14-6.

30. Ibid., p. 17-9.

The final report was submitted to the Council on 29 May 1986. A copy was sent to the Administrator.

The "Call for Dialogue" can be evaluated in many ways. Firstly, it was an attempt to bridge the gap between the Council and the disenfranchised parts of the Cape Town population. Secondly, it was pro-active, since the Council took the initiative to open lines of communication. However, these positive aspects are balanced by more negative features. It appears that more conservative white groups, including the National Party, did not respond to the "Call for Dialogue". This may have been due to the fact that such groups knew intuitively that nothing would come of it. They may have felt that the government would not contemplate an alternative political order in Cape Town. However, there is an even more serious possibility: the perception that the Council had already made up its mind on the desirability of non-racial local government, and that more conservative groups would not get a fair hearing. Such a perception would undermine any mediating role the Council may wish to play in future.

The fact that the Council did not succeed in bringing more conservative groups into its initiative points to a fundamental problem in a very polarised community. If the Council had been more lenient towards conservative groups, it may well have lost sympathy amongst black and coloured community groups. The extent of polarisation can hardly be exaggerated. This is evident in the fact that, although community groups apparently supported the idea of "local option" in 1986, by 1988 that idea had already been rejected as co-optation or as diversion from the real problem, viz. the structure of central government (³¹). Community groups are also very suspicious even of the idea of "participatory planning", as anything that smacks of possible "participation in the system" has been decisively rejected.

These difficulties indicate that, in Cape Town at least, any suggestion for a top-level negotiation event, such as an "indaba" or a "peace conference", has become entirely unrealistic. Community groups are not prepared to negotiate on government structures in the present repressive political climate. The rest of this section demonstrates this proposition, by analysing the failure to launch a "peace conference", as well as the tentative gains that have been made in establishing grass-roots

31. Interview, community researcher, 15 December 1988.

channels of communication to deal with social and practical problems.

b) The "Peace Conference" and the "Open Woodstock Campaign"

Due to the worsening unrest situation, the Council decided on 31 October 1985 that there was a need for leaders of all sections of the community to meet to resolve the crisis. It resolved that the Council's Constitutional Committee should convene a Cape Metropolitan Peace Conference in order to draw up a manifesto for non-racial democratic local government, and to use all means to propagate and implement that manifesto. The Committee consulted various academics and other persons to advise on the best method of achieving these aims.

On 26 June 1986, the Council ratified the appointment of Dr. Van Zyl Slabbert as "Process Facilitator" to bring disparate groups together with the ultimate goal of evolving a blue-print for non-racial democratic local government, which would then be submitted to the government.

However, after a few exploratory meetings with leaders of certain political and community groups, Dr. Slabbert informed the council on 12 December 1986 that he wished to relinquish his position in view of the unfavourable political climate. He would resume his function once circumstances had improved.

Another indication of the Council's more populist approach to promoting its non-racial standpoint, was the involvement of the Council in the "Open Woodstock Campaign", launched on 17 October 1986. This campaign was a response to a Department of Constitutional Development and Planning notice calling for representation by persons who have an interest in the investigation into declaring a part of Woodstock a "coloured" area. At the launching meeting, representatives were elected to a committee. The campaign was headed by Councillor Peter Parkin, and involved mainly Woodstock residents. Signatures were collected and sent to the Department of Constitutional Development, as well as the Group Areas Board. Since



then, the government seems to have dropped the matter ⁽³²⁾.

c) Accountable planning

The Cape Town City Council is at present engaged in an initiative to increase public accountability in urban planning. Significantly, it originated in the City Planner's Department, and indicates a realisation that technical issues transcend racial boundaries. It is also realised that "technical" problems must usually be judged in terms of communities' own priorities. A planning process has been established, which would be accountable to all the inhabitants of Cape Town. The City Council recognises Cape Town's entire population as stake-holders in the city's future.

A group of researchers continually canvass a wide spectrum of community organisations, to test local constituencies' response to the concept of participatory planning. Comments and queries from these respondents are taken back to the Council, while the communities themselves can discuss such issues further in their own organisations. This low-key discussion process is directed solely at practical planning issues, such as the use of community halls and housing. It is not aimed at establishing appropriate local government constitutional options. In a previous research project, respondents explicitly rejected the idea of "local option", because governmental issues will have to be addressed at the national level. Yet the participatory processes by which technical issues are resolved may gradually form a grid of social interaction which could eventually be formalised, if this is what respondents desire ⁽³³⁾.

4.3 Conclusion

The Cape Town City Council's approach to the establishment of a non-racial authority was originally limited to in-house investigations, which were then communicated to central government bodies through official channels. Yet, after ten years of reiteration of its standpoints, little progress has yet been made in achieving central government acceptance of its

32. Jayne Garside, "Open areas in Cape Town - The struggle for their identity", Regional Topic Paper (Cape Town: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1987).

33. Interview, local researcher, 15 December 1988.

standpoint. In fact, segregation has been entrenched and extended, despite Council protests.

1986 was a turning point. The Council realised that a great deal of negotiation on the structure of Cape Town's local government must first take place between the Council and the broader Cape Town community. Only once this was achieved, could popular support can be mobilised to strengthen the Council's demands.

The final initiative went one step further: the issue of appropriate institutions has been deliberately postponed. It is seen as too divisive; the opposition movements in the townships insist on resolving the constitutional impasse at central government first; and it has become evident that the government will not allow institutional experimentation at the local level for the foreseeable future. Instead of dealing with institutional issues, the Council and community groups are taking up urban issues which directly affect the lives of Cape Town residents. Practical and technical problems, instead of institutional speculation, have become the focus of attention. The Council has finally realised that institutions are the products of prior systems of social interaction, as communities go about the task of improving their everyday circumstances.

5. PIETERMARITZBURG: PROPOSALS FOR ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Pietermaritzburg City Council has never fully accepted the idea of separate, racially-defined local authorities. It opposed the Group Areas Act in the 1950s; it removed racial signs from parks in 1959; it desegregated buses in the early 1960s; and opened the Natal Society Libraries to all races in 1974. The Council also protested vehemently when the government attempted to remove Sobantu (the local black township) from the City Council's jurisdiction, to place it under the Port Natal Administration Board. Sobantu is still part of the borough of Pietermaritzburg, although Sobantu Village today has its own black local authority ⁽¹⁾.

Since 1986, the Pietermaritzburg City Council has explored several suggestions for alternative forms of local government.

5.1. A non-racial local authority: The Haswell initiative

At a Council meeting on 29 May 1986, Councillor R.F. Haswell presented the following motion: "That the City Council rejects the notion of a divided City and accepts the ideal of a multi-racial City Council, the Town Clerk to be asked to report, as soon as is practical, to an informal Council meeting on how Council can move towards the stated ideal" ⁽²⁾.

In speaking to his motion, Clr. Haswell said that it was not possible to divide Pietermaritzburg into four separate group areas. He referred to the impossible task of trying to divide the central area. He asked what would happen if the Group Areas Act was repealed, and urged that the City Council should make its views on this matter known. He believed that white South Africans were prepared to accept the establishment of a multi-racial City Council, and considered that it was time to build a new South Africa and a new City.

The motion was supported by Clr. Reid, who, quoting Edmund Burke, said: "The only thing necessary for the

1. Interview, Councillor, 11 March 1988.

2. Council minutes. researcher, 15 December 1988.

triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing". During the discussion, reference was made to the explicitness of government laws on the inadmissability of a single local authority. With the substitution of the word "non-racial" for "multi-racial" in the above motion, it was carried by 14 votes to 1.

On 16 October 1986, the Town Clerk presented a memorandum to an informal meeting of Council and LAC members. He produced an extract from the Local Government Affairs Act of 1983, regulations made under its authority, and the Local Government Bodies Franchise Act. Further legislation was also being prepared on local government elections. All this legislation would entrench the system of separate voters lists for various race groups even further, and did not provide for non-racial councils (3).

He maintained that the Council faced the following alternatives:

- a) To seek an amendment to the Promotion of Local Government Affairs Act, to allow an agreed number of representatives from the LACs to vote at Committee and Council meetings. This need not be applied to all local authorities in the province, and the regulations could be amended so that an Administrator could give special dispensation to certain local authorities only;
- b) To seek an amendment to the franchise and election legislation to enable the coloured and Indian group areas to be regarded as wards, and for the election of a designated number of persons directly onto the City Council;
- c) To consider an adaptation of the RSC Act to constitute a Council; based on the formula contained in the Act, but providing that all local government matters shall be dealt with by such a body (and not merely the specific items listed in the Act). The members of such a "mini-RSC" would still be Council and LAC members.
- d) The alternatives listed above did not necessarily make provision for the inclusion of blacks, which must not be overlooked.

On 17 October 1986, the Natal Witness reported that the

3. Council minutes.

City Councillors and the LACs had agreed, in principle, to a non-racial Council. During the discussion, the mayor maintained that he had been assured by the Administrator that the Provincial Administration would seriously consider any proposals.

It appeared that, although the long-term aim of some Councillors may have been for a completely non-racial Council, the general consensus was to find an interim form of local government. It was felt that it was more likely that the authorities would approve this. Much clarity was still needed on the implications of these options. For example, would a mini-RSC be a local authority in terms of the Local Authorities Ordinance? Would decisions have to be taken by a two-thirds majority, as determined in the RSC Act? Would the mini-RSC have its own mayor? A committee, consisting of three representatives of the Council, the CLAC and the ILAC respectively, was appointed to consider these matters further.

At a meeting of the ad hoc Committee on 19 February 1987, the following views were expressed on the future forms of local government in Pietermaritzburg:

- alternative (b) (a non-racial city council was favoured in preference to alternative (a) (representation of LACs on the council)).
- in proposals for a non-racial local authority, ward boundaries had been demarcated mainly along geographical features. Yet both alternatives (a) and (b) could be said to lean towards a multi-racial rather than non-racial character. This was one of the effects of the Group Areas Act and relaxation of the Act could result in greater mixing of groups within a ward; as has in fact occurred in Ward 1 which contained a free trade area. The Council's ideal must remain that of a non-racial City Council as accepted by resolution of 29 May 1986. In a mixed ward, it would be important for a councillor to be responsive to all the communities within that Ward;
- an eligible candidate from any race group should be entitled to stand for election in any Ward;
- consideration should be given to the possibility of requiring a special majority (e.g. two - thirds) for major decisions to be passed;
- although the Council's ideal may conflict with existing legislation, including the Constitution, the

Council should request the Administrator for the opportunity to present its proposals to the provincial administration and to the government, bearing in mind the need to change existing legislation if this ideal was to be implemented;

- provision had to be made for the inclusion of Sobantu Village in the City, with full Councillor representation. An amplification of alternative (b) would allow for two Councillors from Sobantu, making a 23 member Council. However, the Sobantu Village issue should not delay the implementation of the proposals for the remainder of the City; but for the ultimate implementation of the proposals, Sobantu Village must be included.

On the 20th March 1987, the Estates Manager supplied relevant statistics for the Ad hoc committee. It examined the information provided by Councillor Haswell together with other statistics at its disposal, which would affect a council consisting of 18 or 21 Councillors, possibly split into 6 wards. The report maintained that draft legislation regarding Council composition appeared to favour one Councillor per ward.

The report stated that the Medical Officer of Health provided the following population statistics:

White	60 168
Coloured	15 107
Indian	71 171
Black	25 700
	<hr/>
	172 146

Estimates for potential voters, based on the Valuation Roll statistics for dwellings and flats in the Coloured and Indian areas, were the following:

White	36 875
Coloured	6 267
Indian	30 615
Black	6 000
	<hr/>
	79 757

The current voters roll consisted of the following:

White	27 350
Coloured	406
Indian	2 351
Black	NIL
	<hr/>
	30 107

After further discussions, it was decided to exclude the black population from the exercise for the time being, as it was unlikely that government would agree to include them. Instead, it was decided to concentrate on the potential white, Indian and Coloured voters on the basis of either 18 or 21 councillors, with one Councillor per ward in line with draft government legislation; or, alternately, 18 or 21 Councillors representing 6 or 7 wards with 3 Councillors per ward. It was calculated that either scheme could, very likely, result in the following format: 11 white, 8 Indian and 2 Coloured Councillors.

In the delimitation of ward boundaries, the report took proposed central government legislation into account insofar as it laid down one Councillor per ward, with a minimum of 2 500 voters per ward. It also took major roads, rivers or streams, and definite geographical features into account.

5.2. The interim solution: "Consensus government"

As an interim measure, the Council had begun to investigate the feasibility of option (a), outlined above (representation of LAC members on the Council). This was a response to a motion by Councillor Bennett, who advocated full speaking and voting rights and equal pay for Indian and Coloured LAC members. The City Council rejected this ⁽⁴⁾. The LAC members responded angrily, calling the Council "totally hypocritical".

On 16 October 1986, when the Council first discussed the various available options, the suggestion that members of the LACs should be present with voting rights at Council meetings, was once again considered. Under such a system, LACs would nominate representatives to the standing committees, who would have a vote on a consensus basis. An "indicative vote" would be taken before the actual vote, in which all present would be eligible to participate. Note would be taken of the Councillors' votes, but the Councillors would abide by a "gentlemen's agreement" to abide by the overall vote.

This option faced certain difficulties. It would not

4. Natal Witness, 1 October 1986.

always be possible to achieve consensus, and it would be vital for members to accept the final decisions of the Council in the spirit of goodwill. "Consensus government" would be in evidence if an unpopular amendment, carried on a whites-only vote, was withdrawn; or if a whites-only vote was tied, and the mayor used his casting vote in favour of the overall majority; or if LAC requests were approved during the capital estimates (5). Ultimately, it was the vote of the white Councillors which counted: there would still have to be a majority of white Councillors in favour of a motion to enable it to be passed. It was expected that the white Councillors would usually abide by the outcome of the indicative vote.

In addition, the election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and any suspension of the Council's Standing Rules and Orders, would have to be determined by the Councillors only. It also had to be determined whether the Council could bind itself to decisions of persons not formally elected to it.

This scheme was approved by the Council. Although the long-term aim of some Councillors was still a non-racial Council, the general consensus appeared to be to move towards some other form of representation as an interim measure. This would be more likely to be approved by the authorities, rather than a scheme which was at complete variance with government policy (6).

Once the Council approved of this proposal, it was submitted to the LACs for their approval. This was achieved by January 1987, and it began functioning on 14 April 1987.

Attitudes to the success of the system have been mixed. It seems that many white Councillors were somewhat frustrated with the mediocre and half-hearted contributions made by some LAC members. Some Councillors believed that these "teething problems" would gradually disappear over time. However, others believed that the system of LACs was fundamentally flawed, because the most talented leaders refused to participate in an apartheid structure (7). LAC members were not very sophisticated,

5. Natal Witness, 30 April 1987.

6. Town Clerk's minute to Council, 17 October 1986.

7. Interviews, 11 January 1988.

and often not familiar with technical and financial matters, or with the procedural rules of the council. (Of course, there is no guarantee that more populist leaders would be more proficient in this regard). Furthermore, LAC members were mostly working people, and therefore could not attend all the Council and committee meetings ⁽⁸⁾.

Yet the system did overcome the distinction between own and general affairs. All matters of the municipality were decided jointly. LACs, therefore, did not ask for extra decision-making powers. The system has also provided greater contact between the different communities ⁽⁹⁾.

5.3. "Mini-RSCs" : The Cornell initiative

On 24 September 1987, the mayor, Mark Cornell, sent a letter to the Town Clerk, suggesting an interim solution, although he did not wish to detract from Council's "long-term proposal", or criticise the "short-term strategies". He suggested a multi-racial Council, which would be similar to a mini-Regional Services Council. This had been his original proposal, but the town clerk had felt that the RSC Act could not readily be adapted. However, the mayor believed that, while the government insisted on its "own" and "general" affairs policy, it could be accommodated within a single municipality.

He listed the advantages of such a solution as follows:

- it would elevate the status and standing of the LAC members and their chairman;
- it would provide a meaningful and direct vote on affairs which directly affect their communities (own affairs);
- it would help the members to assume responsibility (i.e. they would be financially responsible under Sec 17 (B) of the Promotion of Local Government Affairs Act);
- it would solve a great many of the tensions which prevailed under the consensus voting system;

8. Personal communication by R. Cameron, based on interviews in the Pietermaritzburg area.

9. Personal communication by Robert Cameron.

- it would allow for promotion of officials within the different groups (i.e. town clerks, housing officials);
- it would solve the problem of income and expenditure in various areas;
- it would not divide the city into three or four separate local authorities.

The following disadvantages were recorded:

- it would not meet the ideal of a non-racial society;
- it would not save any money - in fact, it would probably be more expensive;
- it would possibly not cement the relationship between the groups;
- it would not reduce parochial attitudes.

The suggestion was, therefore, for three or four "own affairs councils" and a Greater Pietermaritzburg General Council. The nature of representation would still have to be worked out.

At the time, the Mayor maintained that "If this idea meets with any consensus, I will formulate further proposals. I put this forward as a thought only at this point and would request you to submit it to Management Committee; in the first instance, on the broad principle, when I will elaborate hereon. It should, thereafter, also go to the Local Affairs Committee with an input from Heads of Departments as may be necessary". With the launching of the consensus voting system, however, this idea was not developed further.

Two further comments can be made in this regard. Firstly, the consensus voting system, whatever its merits, still excluded the black community of Sobantu Village. While consensus voting could be regarded as a more unitary system than RSCs, because the former was not based on separate autonomous local authorities, the consensus system could make provision for black communities. The black/non-black division in local government was, therefore, not ameliorated.

Secondly, the government had accepted the principle of mini-RSCs for Natal. These RSCs would be town-based, in the sense that each urban area would have its own mini-RSC. Large rural and farming areas were thereby excluded. The Mayor was, therefore, correct in his judgement that, of all the alternatives discussed by his Council, the mini-RSC idea would be most acceptable to the government.

5.4. The government's response to the three proposals

On 2 April 1987, the Town Clerk informed the Provincial Secretary of the "consensus government" decision made by the Council. He drew the Secretary's attention to the fact that the members of these Committees would have an "indicative" vote, but the vote of the City Councillors will be the final determining factor. "The Council is aware of the fact that it cannot commit itself in advance to abiding by any consensus or indicative decision. It must, in many cases, make up its own mind in accordance with the powers entrusted to it ... I trust this information will be of interest to you, and will clarify the position now prevailing".

The Town Clerk outlined the Council's ideal non-racial solution. After a full exposition of decisions taken by the Council, he concluded: "Notwithstanding that the Council's ideal may conflict with existing legislation, including the Constitution of the Republic, it is a 'local option' and the Council desires, having determined its ideal, the opportunity to present its proposals to the Administrator and Executive Committee; and, thereafter, to the central government, bearing in mind the need to change existing legislation if this ideal is to be implemented".

A week later, the Exco praised the non-racial plan, but urged the Council to consider also the merits of RSCs. In fact, Peter Miller (MEC) maintained that Pietermaritzburg can have an all-race metropolitan government in a matter of months, but it would have to be based on the RSC concept⁽¹⁰⁾. The City's plan would require changing the RSC constitution. (It is interesting to note that the mayor had emphasised that the non-racial proposals were compatible with the RSC scheme).

The MEC, Peter Miller, also maintained that the Council must submit its plan to the central government; and he agreed that LACs were outdated. The Exco was working to remedy this by giving them more power "over matters of intimate parochial interest and establishing an RSC". (The government indeed agrees with the criticisms of the Coloured and Indian LACs and Management Committee systems; however, by insisting on enlarging LAC powers, government policy prescribed precisely the opposite solution to that envisaged by Councils such as Pietermaritzburg and Cape Town).

On 1 July 1987, the Exco suddenly withdrew its support for the Pietermaritzburg plan. The Natal Mercury reported that Val Volker (MEC) had said that the Exco could not attend to the Council's plan, because it would require changes in central legislation. Exco had advised the Council to seek support through channels such as the Natal Municipal Association and the national Coordinating Council for Local Government Affairs. On 2 July 1987, the Natal Witness reported that Miller had said at a Press Conference that the Council's plan was a "red herring" and had little chance of success. It would take years, and a vast deal of persuasion of the government. Sandton and Cape Town had put forward similar plans, which were "stillborn". Miller said: "We can't continue ducking the issue and creating expectations which cannot realistically be fulfilled".

On 1 August 1987, the Natal Witness reported that the Mayor and the Deputy Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Mr. Stoffel van der Merwe, would discuss the plan in the State President's office in October. This meeting never materialised, as the Deputy Minister first postponed and then cancelled the meeting.

The Pietermaritzburg City Council is also unlikely to get significant support from the Natal Municipal Association. The Council had attempted in 1986 to get NMA support for voting rights for LAC members on white councils. The NMA rejected the Pietermaritzburg motion. The reason may have been the NMA's experience in 1985, when the NMA did support LAC voting rights. The United Municipal Executive (the umbrella body representing the municipal associations of all four province) had then rejected the NMA stand, on the grounds that local government is an own affair and can therefore not include all races. The municipal associations are generally not very powerful and politically confident bodies, and it is unlikely that they will become significant avenues for political pressure, especially on the constitutional future of local government (11).

5.5 Conclusion: Differentiating the attainable and the ideal

The Pietermaritzburg Council's approach is characterised

11. Natal Witness, 17 July 1986.

by several unique features. Firstly, it is the only Council that has actually attempted to implement a multi-racial order. Its experiment with the consensus voting system is still very recent, but will be significant in future. The system will determine the limits of the LAC system. If the consensus voting system does capture the imagination of those communities, more popular leaders may be compelled to use the LAC system to articulate their political power. This would be a vindication of the Council's attempts to establish a partially integrated and equal local government system.

On the other hand, by including LAC members as much as possible in decision-making, the quality of LAC members' as local leaders and decision-makers be will tested fully. If the LACs' contribution does not ultimately live up to expectations, the need to involve the more popular (and populist) leaders in those communities will be highlighted. Although certain white Councillors already appreciate this need, it will strengthen their case for a non-racial local authority.

Yet the imperfections of consensus voting may be interpreted by the central authorities as proof that LACs should actually become more autonomous. At present, the Natal Provincial Administration is simply tolerating the Pietermaritzburg experiment. Since the government is clinging to the policy of municipal autonomy for coloured and Indian people, the most that the Pietermaritzburg Council will be able to do, will be to persevere with the consensus voting system. In this endeavour, the Council is also supported by the LACs.

However, the results of the October 1988 municipal election may place the consensus system in jeopardy. The National Party, together with relatively conservative "independents" have taken control of the Pietermaritzburg Council. The Council refused to allow LAC members to participate in the election of the mayor and deputy mayor. At present, the Council is becoming more rigidly divided along party lines. The tradition of relative absence of party politics on the Council may be coming to an end, and this will undermine Council unity on issues of local government reform.

A second interesting feature of the Pietermaritzburg case is its pragmatic openness to various degrees of local government restructuring. The Council was aware of the possibility of government opposition. While it clearly stated its long-term ideals, it was prepared to settle for an interim solution. This approach has advantages and disadvantages. According to one central government

official, a "consensus" system is a significant way in which local authorities can strengthen the case for reform, because the real locus of power could shift to the multi-racial Council, with the statutory white Council playing a gradually decreasing role (12). The system also offers valuable practical experience for LAC members, and more political experience for white Councillors. However, the lack of legitimacy of the LACs may discredit all future Council attempts to initiate local government experiments. The system may also strengthen LAC members' claim to leadership in the community, because of the prestige gained from the system, as well as the financial benefits they may deliver to their communities.

A third aspect is the effect which the LAC presence in the voting system may have on white Council politics. If the LACs remain committed to a single non-racial local authority, they may team up with progressive white Councillors. Unlike the tricameral parliament, which fragments liberal opposition to government policies, the consensus vote system may enable united opposition. However, since the consensus vote system is simply based on a "gentlemen's agreement", a more conservative white majority on the Council would have no difficulty in abolishing the system.

The future of the consensus voting system will depend greatly on the attitude of NP councillors. If they can be persuaded that this system is superior to the ordinary advisory LAC system, as well as to municipal autonomy for coloured and Indian communities, they will keep it in place. On the other hand, they may only continue the system if LAC members do not make too many contentious demands. The future of the system may, therefore, depend on the "tame" behaviour of LAC members, and the subsequent discrediting of the LAC system even further in the eyes of their constituencies.

Finally, the Pietermaritzburg case is remarkable for not only stating its preference for a non-racial local authority, but for its detailed suggestions in this regard. The fact that even the franchise and ward system was outlined suggests that the Council was prepared to accept that whites could be outvoted if the black, coloured and Indian votes were united. The Council also accepted that the councillors for each ward could stand regardless of their race. This is the most progressive proposal to have emanated from a white Council.

12. Interview, 7 February 1989.

However, two important criticisms can be made. The Council's proposal was based on the Pietermaritzburg "borough", which excludes the vast black residential areas. The racial ratio of a fully inclusive Pietermaritzburg Council would be much more unfavourable to whites.

Secondly, Pietermaritzburg's approach has the same "pre-packaged" quality which characterised the Durban and earlier Cape Town attempts to approach the problem. It was purely an in-house Council affair. No attempt was made to involve other interest groups and the larger community in discussions on the matter. The Council's definition of the problem prevailed, and broader issues of the nature of political participation and financial responsibilities were not addressed. The following two case studies, Port Alfred and East London, document two attempts to involve non-statutory community groups in negotiations on the structure of local government.

6. PORT ALFRED: FOUR-CORNERED NEGOTIATIONS, 1985-6

6.1 Background

The Port Alfred black township has existed since 1927. Over the years, it became very overcrowded. Services in the township are extremely rudimentary. According to a consultant's report in October 1985, there was no refuse collection, electricity, or sanitation in the township. There were 70 water taps, shared by about 11 000 people. A community council was established after 1978, but it soon resigned due to popular disinterest and opposition.

Administration of the township was transferred from the Port Alfred Town Council to the Eastern Cape Administration Board in 1974. Development in the township was retarded, at least partly because there was always a possibility that the township would be relocated entirely to a nearby site. There was a great deal of resistance to this, and the Development Board never succeeded in getting the plan implemented. There was a great deal of resentment to the Development Board, which could never show visible improvements in the township.

6.2 The white response: The role of the Employers' Federation and the Chamber of Commerce

The first consumer boycott was launched in 1985, after a process of community mobilisation around local grievances, and subsequent ill-timed detentions of leaders. By this time, the white community had already discussed appropriate responses to possible organised expression of grievances by the township. On 20 November 1984, Mr. David Hanson addressed the Rotary Club of Port Alfred on the impact of the new labour relations dispensation on political change in South Africa. He related the potential conflict in labour relations to the question of providing some form of political enfranchisement for urban black people. He predicted that, because Port Alfred does not have any large single employer (based on employee numbers), Port Alfred could be confronted with a community-based labour movement at any time.

Mr. Hanson suggested that the white community prepare itself for such an eventuality. He proposed the establishment of a formal structure, headed by a new body, the Port Alfred Employers' Federation (EF). The EF would be linked to the Chamber of Commerce, and would be the negotiating body to deal with conflict situations.

It would co-ordinate the business interests and labour relations issues of its members. It would also prepare for, and co-ordinate, dealings in matters such as work stoppages and consumer boycotts.

The EF co-ordinated seven constituencies, viz. the Master Builders Association, the Municipality, the retailers, the motor trade, the Commercial Fishermen's Association, the hotel and accommodation sector, and the employers of domestic servants ⁽¹⁾.

The consumer boycott and violence of 1984 caused the EF to be activated. Each sector of the business community was represented on it, and it was chaired by Mr. Dave Hanson. After the EF had overcome some reluctance from the white community, it managed to get a mandate from the business community to negotiate.

Although the EF was not clear on the actual political situation or the identity of leaders in the township, they called a meeting on 19 June 1985. Any individuals interested in negotiations were invited. There was no single chairman, and the delegation leaders faced each other on either side of the table. The Port Alfred Residents' Civic Organisation (PARCO) was led by Mr. Gugile Nkwinti, a very popular and charismatic leader in the township. PARCO was assisted by members from the Pensioners Group, Port Alfred Workers' Union, the Municipal Black Workers Association, the Students Organisation, the farm workers and the domestic workers' organisations. The EF delegation consisted of representatives from the various business sectors, with Mr. Hanson and Mr. De Bruin representing the Chamber of Commerce. An interpreter, acceptable to both parties, was appointed ⁽²⁾.

At the meeting, the function of the EF was explained, and the two parties accepted each other's bona fides. An ongoing liaison was then established with concerned individuals from the township.

At the meeting, the EF offered to act as a non-political conduit to take up the grievances of township residents. Certain issues were raised immediately, such as the beer hall (which encouraged alcoholism), the lack of housing, and rentals. Most demands were bread-and-butter issues,

1. Information supplied by Clr. Hanson, 30 October 1988. This sub-section also contains information supplied by Mr. Roland White.

2. EF Report to members of the J.M.C., 10 September, 1985.

although the township delegation also expressed their dissatisfaction with the Development Board administration of the township.

The meeting was considered a success by the EF delegation. The necessary credibility was established on both sides early on in the discussions. Furthermore, the meeting "did not break up in disorder as highly charged meetings of this kind usually do"; a future agenda for discussions was drawn up; a basic statement of intent was formulated by both parties jointly; and times and dates were set for a future meeting. Finally, while the boycott was not officially lifted at this meeting, the township delegation assured the EF that boycotts would not be called while talks were in progress. In fact, the boycott was actually lifted within 48 hours of that meeting ⁽³⁾.

It is interesting to consider how each party saw its own role in the resolution of the conflict. The EF intended to "facilitate ongoing discussions on a variety of topics", and to work in close association with the Chamber of Commerce and other bodies in the community. It also regarded itself as a source of information to organised business, local and central government, as well as security bodies. Significantly, it did not define itself in opposition to government and security agencies. It also aimed at establishing "commercial, and particularly 'white' credibility in times of conflict" ⁽⁴⁾.

The Chamber of Commerce also outlined its position at the first meeting. The Chamber, which had recently affiliated to Assocom, not only intended to assist businesses with their problems, but also to submit the views of private enterprise to local government. The Chamber also endeavoured to "share in the planning and the development of our town and its service aspects". While neither the Chamber nor Assocom were regarded by the Chamber as "politically motivated", it felt they could supply guidance to the authorities.

The Chamber based its involvement in the Port Alfred negotiations on two important, albeit implicit arguments. Firstly, it referred to Assocom's discussions in 1984 with Minister Chris Heunis, and to the State President's appeals for co-operation from the private sector to

3. E.F. Report to the J.M.C., 10 September 1985.

4. E.F. Report to J.M.C., 10 September 1985.

ensure peaceful change in South Africa. Subsequently, Assocom presented a report to the government, which stated that Assocom supported the need to formulate principles to facilitate negotiations for black participation in the political system, and that the business sector had a vital stake in the successful outcome of such negotiations. Assocom maintained that any future political system should provide for checks and balances, the safeguarding of human rights, and the protection of minority groups against domination.

Secondly, Assocom preferred a free, private and competitive enterprise economy, which the government had explicitly endorsed. Yet, according to the Port Alfred Chamber of Commerce, blacks in South Africa experience the very antithesis of a free, private enterprise economy.

The Chamber felt that, although it was not qualified to discuss political alternatives at central government level, it could comment on local problems. It also offered, "without restraint, our experience, sincerity and the many channels which we have available to us", to find solutions to local problems. At the first negotiation meeting in June, the Chamber expressed its desire to work with the township delegates to draft an agenda for negotiation, in a spirit of shared concern for the area, and with the hope of joint successes ⁽⁵⁾.

The EF tried to keep the negotiations out of the political arena, but it soon became evident that PARCO's desire was to have a single Port Alfred municipality. The EF and the committee met periodically to discuss the situation.

6.3 The role of the black community leaders

The first organisation to be established in the Port Alfred township was the Nonzamo Student Guardian Association (NOSGA), which began, in 1983, to address specific problems at the local high school. A school boycott was called, which caused certain grievances to be resolved. An information centre was also established, to provide advice on pensions, unemployment payments and pass law problems. Out of this centre, the Port Alfred Workers' Association was formed. The Port Alfred Youth Congress (PAYCO) was established in 1985, and the Port

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5. Statement by Chamber of Commerce to first negotiation meeting, 19 June 1985.

Alfred Women's Organisation in 1986.

The different organisations were co-ordinated by a central committee of the Port Alfred Residents' Civic Organisation. This organisation made decisions on various issues confronting the community as a whole, and established street and area committees ⁽⁶⁾ to keep contact with the population. The organisation also established a creche and a pre-primary school. The first expression of mobilised political activity was the school boycott in 1984, followed by a boycott of the beerhall. The community felt that the beerhall could be better used as a creche and handicraft centre ⁽⁷⁾.

During the June 1985 consumer boycott, the black leaders issued a statement on their commitment to negotiations. Although filled with political rhetoric, the document deserves to be quoted extensively: "We emphasise our desire to make Port Alfred a pleasant place to live, for its own sake, and as an example to the rest of the country - after all, Jesus Christ wasn't born in the biggest city of Israel. This committee will always act responsibly in its dealings with its 'counterpart' in the white section of our community. It is our greatest wish that this community will, in the very near future, be able to look back at these troubled times and see them as a good omen rather than the opposite... The call of this committee is a simple one: We want a single non-racial local authority for Port Alfred. We are not blind nor wilfully deaf to the Government's new deal; we do not doubt the Government's good faith in seeking to resolve the political problems of our country. What we are doing is trying to contribute, in a positive way, to the search for solutions. We are well aware of the fact that our white 'counterparts' have no direct powers to control what the Government does. However, we appeal to the white community as a whole to support this initiative, if only for the future of this particular area and, who knows, for South Africa as a whole."

6. "Area committees" and their constituent "street committees" have been an important part of the mobilisation strategy of the United Democratic Front. Organised in opposition to the state-introduced Black Local Authorities, the street committees took up local grievances, but also discussed broader political principles and strategies.

7. M. de Villiers, "Detaining the peacemakers", Sash, August 1987.

The Resident's Association document raised four main issues:

1. **Rental and service charges:** The community stated that it did not wish to call for the lowering of service charges, since funds were needed to improve the conditions of the township. But, since there was no community council, the committee wanted the money budgeted for it to be allocated to community-oriented projects, such as improved roads, lighting and a community hall.
2. **Reduction in size of erven:** A plan which accommodated population pressure by reducing the size of erven was not considered to be a long-term solution to the housing shortage. However, lack of technical skills regarding planning made it difficult for the committee to articulate avenues for improvement.
3. **Overall control and government in the township:** There was an urgent 'control vacuum' in the township. Because of this, the PARCO felt that the Port Alfred Town Council ought to govern the township for all purposes.
4. **Regional Services Councils:** The multi-racial rather than non-racial character of RSCs was politically unacceptable, and the committee believed that "there is little likelihood of the Councils having any measure of success in this rural and mainly illiterate community. It may well be that some people may feel honoured by being members of these Councils. But the question arises: How much of that sense of honour is based on ignorance of the real challenges for good government which lie ahead?"

The document proposed that the matter of government of the township be taken up by both communities as a joint project, and then the relevant authorities can be approached. The document concluded "by reiterating our commitment to working, to the best of our abilities, for the betterment of our town".

6.4 The role of the Town Council

During July 1985, the Council became responsible for the spending of the unemployment relief funds allocated to Port Alfred as part of the Department of Manpower campaign. The application of this money was discussed by

the EF, the Council and the black civic organisation. Some of the money was spent in the white area, but much of it was spent on clearing stormwater drains in the coloured and black residential areas, improving roads and pedestrian pathways in the township, and clearing black cemeteries and football fields. About 800 workers were employed for six months on these tasks (8).

By October 1985, the entire future of the township was on the agenda. The Council took the initiative, and commissioned a town planning consultants' firm to investigate the merits of relocating the township, versus the upgrading alternative. The consultants found that the advantages of relocation were a better living environment, better topography, integrated facilities, and a hinterland for future expansion. The disadvantages were social upheaval, community resistance, the distance from the CBD, and the land proposed for the new township was owned, and hence the authorities would have to purchase it.

The advantages of upgrading were that land was registered in favour of the Port Alfred municipality, so that residents would not have to buy land. This would also be less time-consuming. There would be less impact on social relationships, community participation would avoid the pitfalls of imposing inappropriate and non-affordable development, and people would live close to the CBD and jobs. The disadvantages were the restriction of hinterland for future extension, the high cost of installing infrastructure, and possible resistance by residents, since some may have to move their dwellings from slopes.

It is significant that the Council informed the consultants at this stage that it favoured the relocation of the township. This preference was later changed, as a result of negotiations with the black community.

The Council also wanted to apply for more unemployment assistance, but intended spending this money in ways for the lasting benefit of the township. The construction of self-help housing was envisaged. Furthermore, the Council wanted to renovate a disused local airfield, in which it could establish premises for small business and industries, as well as an in-service training centre (9). The Council wanted the consultants to consider the

8. Chamber of Commerce report, 18 November 1985.

9. Letter to consultants, 5 November 1985.

feasibility of all these projects.

The Council's proposals entailed a severe jurisdictional problem. The Council's rather cavalier involvement in the affairs of the township was not welcomed by the local Development Board officials, who felt that they had been very insensitively treated by the Council. They maintained that the Council did not consult local officials when the Council sent teams of black workers into the township to carry out their duties under the employment creation scheme. The Board officials also suspected the Council's motives for the relocation of the township, because it would release potentially high-rateable land next to the river which could be developed as a white residential area. Furthermore, the Council and the Board officials were not able to proceed with the renovation of the airfield scheme, because they could not agree on the price. The Council's appointment of the consultants was also regarded as unwarranted interference, especially because the Development Board had already designed its own structure plans (10).

This underlying tension may have contributed to the failure of the negotiation process. If so, the ideological issues of segregated local administration and the participation of the black civic association were not the only sensitive issues during the negotiations; there was a backdrop of institutional rivalry between the municipality and the Development Board which exacerbated mutual suspicions. Since the Board's institutional linkages with the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning were much closer than those of the Council, it is likely that the Department's interpretation of the negotiation process was significantly coloured by the views of the Development Board. If the government saw the Port Alfred Town Council as troublemakers, undermining the policies of the state (11), this may have prejudiced the government's ultimate unwillingness to tolerate the Port Alfred negotiations.

Yet the key members of the Development Board were not hostile to the negotiations. In fact, the Development Board showed no reluctance to enter the four-cornered negotiations. It readily made information available to the participants, and even offered to provide funding for an upgrading effort administered by the Port Alfred

10. Interview, Development Board official, 1 December 1987.

11. Interview, Development Board official, 1 December 1987.

Municipality. It is possible that the Port Alfred municipality's already-existing reputation for unorthodoxy (¹²) may have contributed to the Department's unwillingness to take its initiative seriously, despite the Development Board's positive attitude towards the negotiations.

An interesting interpretation of white local authority initiatives, such as the Port Alfred one, has been expressed by various provincial and central government officials. In terms of the local government grading system, a white local authority which extends its control over the local black population, and the financial responsibility accompanying it, would receive a higher grading. This would translate into greater prestige, but also higher salaries for municipal officials. This argument, based on the putative self-interest of municipal officials, is often accompanied by the claim that only separate local authorities for black people would protect them from the neglect they would suffer at the hands of powerful white local elites.

Given the recent neo-Marxist literature on power relationships in European and Marxist cities (¹³), this argument becomes very important. Left to the mercy of confident and powerful white municipalities, often working in close collaboration with local capitalist elites, there is no guarantee that the voice of predominantly working-class black communities would be heard.

One possible counter-argument is that the tradition of collective resistance among black communities is much stronger than that of the European urban poor, and black majorities on non-racial local Councils in South Africa would protect blacks against minority domination. This debate is a long and complicated one, but will have to be addressed in future. At present, it is important to note that provincial and central government officials see segregation not as a way of dominating black communities, but as a protective mechanism.

It is possible that the reason for the failure of either academics or officials in South Africa to address this debate is because both parties have been captivated by a limited set of alternative scenarios. Officials see

12. Interviews with officials of the Development Board and the Department of Constitutional Development, 1987-9.

13. See, for example, c Cockburn, The Local State, Pluto Press, London, 1977.

three possible scenarios: (1) segregation enabling the protection of the various groups; (2) white local authority administration and hence domination of black townships; and (3) racial integration causing black domination of whites. Liberal academics contemplate the same three scenarios, except that (1) is described as domination of blacks by whites; (2) is considered to be more egalitarian, because apartheid barriers are somewhat softened; and (3) will produce a non-racial democracy.

At the centre of the dispute are many fundamental confusions about the nature of domination, power, freedom and protection. What is urgently needed is the development of empirically based and theoretically sophisticated evaluations of each of these options, to assess the nature, degree and mix of domination and freedom which each option would entail. (The recent Cape Town proposals for enhancing local accountability go some way towards recognising the informal relations of domination, and the mechanisms of popular empowerment needed to overcome them. However, this initiative has deliberately avoided any consideration of the implications for power, domination and freedom in local governmental structures, possibly because proponents believe that a non-racial South Africa would naturally produce desirable local institutions).

It is crucial in any analysis of a complicated set of events, such as the Port Alfred negotiations, to recognise the philosophical assumptions of each of the parties concerned. This would prevent observers from prematurely attributing blame and innocence to the parties concerned. It also highlights the need for trained facilitators in such circumstances, who could interpret the various parties' positions to each other.

6.5 The Chamber of Commerce: Development of a new vision

At this point, it is useful to take stock of the stimulating and rejuvenating effect of the negotiations on the Chamber of Commerce. Initially, the Chamber and the Council supported the relocation of the entire township. The Chamber also wanted the Council to be responsible for implementing this. It supported an "owner-builder" scheme.

For its part, the Chamber wanted to begin constructing the industrial park on the premises of the old airfield immediately. The Chamber envisaged that it would actively

consider concessions and other means to create jobs by stimulating businesses and industries in the area. In a memorandum, the Chamber maintained that the successful negotiations, in the wake of the consumer boycott, had created further expectations of movements towards a more acceptable socio-political-economic system for the area. The Chamber, therefore, decided that it should explore this field to see what further contribution it could make.

The Chamber also wanted to protect norms such as personal freedom, freedom of property, and personal culpability. It recognised that "no real progress in stabilising and normalising relations between the different peoples can be made unless discrimination, both politically and in other fields, is removed. This will allow equal rights of economic choice and political citizenship in the RSA. The political economy of our country is a coherent system - albeit a complex rather than a simple system. The economy cannot be rigidly isolated from the functioning of its political institutions. Nor can we rigidly separate the economic and political processes from the social institutions and processes of our country. Freedom, therefore, is basically not a completely divisible value which can legitimately be granted in some processes of the system, but permanently withheld in others. In the field of private institutions, our suggestions deal with institutions of basic importance to our "economy", such as the law pertaining to property, contract, culpability and means of payment. In the field of public institutions, our suggestions mainly concern people's rights with regard to economic affairs, such as collective services and taxes, especially on the level of local authority" (14). The Chamber began to regard itself as a catalyst in the process of improving social and political relations in Port Alfred.

The Chamber also paid attention to housing, education and employment. Some of their proposals were the following: the provision of the necessary capital for housing in the area will ultimately provide badly needed employment; serious consideration should be given to the establishment of a new township, but only after consultation with the township leadership; an "own" system of management should be evolved locally, taking into consideration the various representative bodies, and ownership of property should be a priority. Because of

14. Chamber of Commerce memorandum, October 1985. This sub-section contains information from research conducted by Mr. Roland White.

the low income ceiling in the area, consideration should be given to rents becoming rates and capital accumulation ultimately becoming a reality; the prospective "home owner" should become involved in the planning and actual building of his future home.

In the field of education, adult education should take place on various levels on an ongoing basis. Involvement in community matters, through joint committees should be encouraged. In the employment areas, opportunity for education should also be provided through a training centre and on-the-job training. Where an adult is self-employed, facilities for training in management and marketing should be available. In formal education, closer ties with white schoolchildren should be established, and regular meetings between members of parents associations, teaching staff and school committees could be arranged. This should allow for a healthy interchange and knowledge of each other's problems.

As regards employment, all avenues should be investigated without delay. The industrial park scheme was a top priority, and the Chamber hoped that all administrative delays, and any unnecessary red tape and regulations, could be removed or eliminated in the shortest possible time. A marketing or sales strategy for that area should be developed without delay in conjunction with the Municipality. All the available benefits such as decentralisation and financial benefits should be pursued. An employment strategy for the whole area should be discussed and formulated. Higher training and employment on a higher level of education should be considered and developed in the Port Alfred area.

The Chamber also envisaged the development of an "open" market area, which would absorb the hawkers of the town. It would also provide a "selling place" for locally manufactured articles and produce, and provide employment. The design of such a facility would be "Third World" and practical - a structure that could be erected "without fuss" and in as short a time as possible with the minimum amount of official red tape.

The Chamber decided that an urgent meeting with Council should be requested to draft a joint "statement of intent". This document could then be presented to ministers and appropriate heads of State Departments and other officials ⁽¹⁵⁾.

15. Minutes, Chamber of Commerce extraordinary meeting, 2 October 1985.

The Chamber also made suggestions regarding the application of unemployment relief funds. Areas recommended for investigation were owner-builder house projects, development of State ground (for example, for food supply), and facilities for the informal sector. Other suggestions were the provision of high-mast lighting in the black township; sport and recreation facilities in the black township; and beach facilities for black and coloured people. The Chamber also recommended that the black community be consulted on this matter (16).

The ongoing negotiations had stimulated the Chamber to reconsider the whole economic future of Port Alfred. In 18 November 1985, the Chamber issued the following report:

- Tourism is Port Alfred's only industry. Port Alfred relies on the annual influx of holidaymakers, and owners of holiday cottages for its revenue. Port Alfred has had no benefit from the national promotion which other areas enjoy, because it lies between the "Wild Coast" and the "Garden Route".
- Port Alfred has no industries of any significance. There are only 80 fishermen and 70 black women involved in tapestry works.
- The Chamber feels a definite economic strategy is long overdue to increase tourism and informal industries; to create a stable workforce with skills; to integrate the large and wealthy farming community; to establish co-operation between the Chamber and the Council, on certain matters (deregulation, revision of general standards for the local area, revision of licensing standards, decreasing administrative delays which hamper business, employment strategies for the area, future economic strategies, opening of the CBD, produce joint requests for decentralisation and financial benefits).
- Housing for blacks: local township conditions were appalling. Upgrading would cost too much, because of its geographic situation, and therefore a new township was needed.

16. Statement by the Chamber of Commerce, "R600 million Relief Scheme: Its possible application locally", 14 October 1985.

"It is possible that our municipality can once again become involved in general administration and supply of essential services to the township. This will be welcomed by the Black Civic Organisation. It will also mean that the Eastern Cape Administration Board can gradually be phased out, and the black community will then become directly involved in the running of their own affairs. A similar system is apparently operating in Oudtshoorn, and is being watched with keen interest".

The Chamber also urgently recommended to the Council that the state of emergency in the Bathurst managerial district be lifted (¹⁷).

In summary, the negotiations had provided a boost for the Chamber's confidence, morale and imagination. The Chamber was entering new terrain: it was moving beyond the narrow interests of the business community to consider the interests of Port Alfred in a holistic way; it was claiming a right to participate in political problem-solving; it explicitly defended certain political principles; it was defending Port Alfred's right to find its own solutions; and it was even venturing suggestions regarding security matters. As in the case of the Council, the boycott and subsequent negotiations caused old patterns of actions and relationships to be questioned. However, in this process, certain competing interpretations and interests were inevitably threatened.

6.6 Four-cornered negotiations

After the first meeting with PARCO in June 1985, the EF arranged an open meeting of members of the business community to inform them of what had transpired. The black civic organisation also held a report-back meeting in the township, and attendance was estimated to be about 6 500 people.

On 26 June 1985, the EF achieved its first success in its role as conduit (¹⁸). It arranged a meeting between the EF, the Chamber of Commerce, the black civic organisation, the Eastern Cape Development Board, the Department of Co-operation and the Urban Foundation. The

17. Coastal News, 26 November 1985.

18. The following description is based on an EF report to the J.M.C., 10 September 1985, and on the Council's minutes of the meeting.

National Party MPC, Mr. van der Vyver, also attended. The black representatives were given the opportunity to express their grievances. Briefly, they were the following:

- 1) The beer hall: The community believed that the beer hall was directly responsible for the resignation of the previous community council chairman; social problems in township (drunk children and husbands); and the collapse of morals. The beerhall had been sold to a white person, who negotiated with the community about providing various aid schemes for them. This was acceptable, until he began to negotiate with the community council. The residents found this unacceptable, and began to boycott his beerhall. Mr. Nkwinti was arrested soon after. The black community had also decided that they would like to close the beerhall entirely, and use the premises for a creche, handicraft centre, offices for the civic organisation, and stalls to sell products.
- 2) Finances: The black representatives wanted information on the revenue and expenses of the township.
- 3) Housing: The black representatives wanted all arrears in rental to be scrapped, and the monthly rental of certain groups, such as pensioners, to be reduced.

All these points were replied to by the Development Board representatives. Certain problems were outlined: the beerhall in effect subsidised housing rentals; the beerhall had been privatised, which meant that the Board had no more responsibility for it; and information on finances could only be made available in a few months. Yet the meeting ended on an optimistic note. The Board was aware of the problems of rent and arrears, but the Board also had its own "bottom line", beyond which point they could not negotiate. It was, therefore, important that all negotiations take place with people who were willing to accept legal responsibility for the execution of decisions. (It is not clear what the Board meant by this, and whether they envisaged the civic association being reconstructed into a new community council).

In fact, the Board maintained that it could assist the black community to enter into legal agreement with the municipality to participate on various development projects. The Board agreed to supply the structure plans for the upgrading of the township, to the black leaders

for their comment.

The innovative nature of this meeting cannot be overestimated. It began a year-long negotiation process between all parties interested in the dispute: white business, the white Town Council, the Development Board, and the black civic organisation. Such inclusive negotiations are virtually unparalleled in similar conflict situations in recent South African history.

Two days after, on 28 June 1985, the EF met with the President of Assocom and with members of the Chambers of Commerce from Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, Grahamstown and Kenton-on-Sea.

A second meeting took place on 1 July, between the EF, the black leaders, Mr. Koch of the Development Board, the Chief Commissioner of the Eastern Cape (Department of Co-operation and Development), a Department of Education and Training official, and the local MPC. From this time onwards, the agendas were drawn up by Mr. Hanson and Mr. Nkwinti before each meeting (19). At the meeting, the black leaders again enunciated their grievances, and requested time to normalise matters in the township before another meeting with the Board. The DET announced that a new primary school would be built, and requested an assurance of safety for the surveyors.

At a follow-up meeting between the black leaders and the EF, the two sides took stock of the situation. The black leaders were satisfied with the atmosphere of the discussions, but worried about sporadic violence in the township. One of the black leaders' house had been petrol-bombed. The leaders reiterated that they would not organise boycotts in the foreseeable future.

Various other grievances were mentioned, such as dismissals of staff by certain shops, the importance of a students representative council in the school, and access to beaches. Certain local grievances concerning petty apartheid had already been resolved. The black leaders also mentioned the desirability of a single education department, and their dissatisfaction with the methods of the South African Police in the township.

It is clear that the attitude of the black leaders was not confrontational. When certain shops were boycotted and their customers intimidated, the black leaders urgently discussed the matter with the EF. They

19. Interview with Mr. Hanson (conducted by R. White), 8 April 1986.

confirmed that it was not an "official" boycott, and requested a police presence at the shops. This was arranged, and the incident died down.

During this period, the EF saw themselves acting as "little messenger boys" between the black leaders and the Development Board. The Board's structure plans were given to the community leaders, who sent the EF back to the Board with their response. (It was found, for example, that housing, which was listed by the Board as the top priority, was considered less important than water, roads and lighting by the black community). The interviewee from the EF describes their messenger role as "rather embarrassing" ⁽²⁰⁾, which shows a lack of appreciation for the crucial facilitating role they were playing. (In the latest Cape Town initiative, for example, facilitators playing a similar messenger role form the backbone of negotiations on urban issues).

The next achievement was the joint discussions between the black leaders, the Chamber and the municipality on the proposed unemployment projects. A joint committee, comprising representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, EF, black leaders, and the Port Alfred Town Council identified 12 projects to provide employment opportunities for six months. It was estimated that 853 individuals would earn about R100 per month, while 24% of the funds would be used for administration, supervision, tools, transport and raw materials. The committee decided on various projects, such as river bank maintenance, clearing sidewalks, maintenance of parks and gardens, and the development of the old airfield ⁽²¹⁾.

On 12 November 1985, the Eastern Province Herald reported that the unemployment project in Port Alfred was to be extended and plans were being finalised for improvements in the township itself. This represented a change in the orientation of the committee towards meeting the needs of the black community in the application of the funds. It was reported that the scheme would assist with the upgrading of facilities in the township once reports on what should be done for better living conditions have been completed. Talks between the Council and community leaders continued to find out the township residents'

20. Interview with Mr. Hanson (conducted by R. White), 8 April 1986.

21. Letter from the Deputy Town Clerk to the Regional Development Advisory Committee, Port Elizabeth, 15 July 1985.

priorities. The town clerk maintained that the function of upgrading the area was a municipal responsibility and had already been in the pipeline for some years. He insisted that the improvement of the quality of life in the township was of prime importance to the Council.

It was reported in December that the discussions of the joint committee were still continuing (22), and the Chamber was preparing new applications for further funds. The projects were only implemented after scrutiny by the black leaders.

The negotiations about the unemployment relief scheme highlighted some of the underlying dynamics of the entire negotiation process. Firstly, it consolidated the relationship of trust between the black leaders, the EF, the Chamber, and the white municipality. Secondly, the innovative and concerned attitude of the municipality must have appeared in stark contrast to the historic inertia and caution displayed by the Development Board. This may have strengthened the black leaders' desire to be administered by the municipality, instead of the Board. Thirdly, the municipality's role in the unemployment scheme increased the inherited tension between it and the Board officials. Local township officials did not welcome the municipality's rather overhasty intrusion into the jurisdiction of the Board, especially since the local officials were not consulted about it. The issue was only discussed with the Board in early November. The unemployment relief scheme can be viewed as a honeymoon phase, which may have caused the municipality and the EF to overestimate their potential powers and rights.

By 7 November 1985, the Eastern Province Herald reported on the possibility of the municipality taking control of the entire administration of the township. It would be discussed with black leaders as soon as possible. According to the town clerk, the Council had been approached on the issue by a committee of seven self-identified black community leaders.

On 18 November, the Town Council met a delegation from the civic organisation. They took several crucial decisions. Firstly, a working committee comprising the mayor, deputy mayor, and two councillors would be formed to discuss the future planning of the township with four members of the civic association (who still had to be chosen at the public meeting on 24 November). Secondly,

22. Coastal News, 2 December 1985.

the town clerk would arrange the necessary permit to legalise the public meeting. Thirdly, the town clerk would arrange a meeting with the Development Board to discuss their future involvement in the township. Fourth, an application would be made for a maximum grant from the state in the event of the municipality becoming intimately involved in the future development of the township (23).

The town council was formally informed of the decision of the community not to be relocated. The township wanted upgrading, regardless of the costs.

In the meantime, the Town Council accepted the consultants' report regarding the planning of a new township, and the conversion of the old airfield to an industrial park. It decided to discuss both reports with the Development Board and black leaders. The Minister of Trade and Industry, and the Cape Provincial Administration, would also be notified of the industrial park scheme, to expedite the project. The Board had apparently agreed to lease the old airfield to the Council, and the Council now offered to purchase the airfield, to develop it as an industrial area, employment centre and a site for the informal sector (24), although the price asked by the Board was considered too high by the municipality (25).

The Board was also informed that the township preferred not to move to a new site, but that future development would take place on the new site. The Council urged the Board to proceed with the survey of the existing township as soon as possible, and make the plans available to the municipality. The Council also intended purchasing the old airfield from the Board, to establish the industrial park and employment centre (26).

The Council also informed the Board that it had decided to inform the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning of the black community's wish, and the town council's willingness to take over the administration of the township. This could, however, only be contemplated if adequate funding was provided.

23. Council minutes, 10 December 1985.

24. Council minutes, 26 November 1985.

25. Information supplied by Mr. Hanson, 30 October 1988.

26. Town Clerk' letter to Mr. Koch, ECDB, 26 November 1985.

On 4 December 1985, a tripartite meeting between the Board, black leaders and the Town Council took place. The mayor told the Board that the municipality would only take over the township if financial assistance was available. The Board delegates agreed, because the Board was dependent on state financing in any case. One of the crucial issues raised by the Board was whether the black community would be prepared to pay for improvements. According to the black leaders, their community would pay, if the employment situation improved. According to the Board, one of the problems in providing infrastructure was the physical safety of the workers, which the black leaders undertook to guarantee. Finally, it was reported that the meeting had decided that the survey of the township, the planning of services and the identification of future land requirements would be finalised by the Board, in conjunction with the community leaders, and the municipality. The black leaders again asked for the municipality to take over the township. However, the Town Clerk suggested the formation of a working committee of all three bodies, which would, among others, make representation to government departments to keep money in reserve for the upgrading of the township (27).

Two months later, three members of the civic association were delegated to serve on this committee, on condition that progress was made as soon as possible (28). This committee would discuss priorities regarding upgrading. The civic association saw this as a compromise situation, because it still rejected the jurisdiction of the Development Board. The aim of the civic association was a single town council for the whole of Port Alfred (29). The civic association was also frustrated that the creation of job opportunities was being delayed, since the Board had not yet approved the sale of the old airfield to the municipality. The black leaders had stated at the meeting of 10 December 1985, that the black township was prepared to pay for upgrading and developments, provided employment was created.

At this point in the negotiations, the next step was to obtain official approval for the Town Council's

27. Coastal News, 7 December 1985.

28. Letter from Mr. Nkwinti to the Town Clerk, 3 February 1986.

29. Eastern Province Herald, 14 February 1986.

involvement in the Port Alfred township. However, while the negotiation process was continuing, another set of actors were attempting to deal with the situation in a totally different way.

6.7 The response of the security forces

Mr. Nkwinti, the leader of the black civic association, was first arrested during the boycott of the beer hall, which had been bought by a partnership which included a former policeman. The community felt that the beerhall could be better used as a community centre, a creche and a handicraft centre. The beerhall owners asked Nkwinti to help them arrange negotiations with the community to resolve the boycott, but before the issue could be resolved, Nkwinti was arrested. However, the charge of 'intimidation' was withdrawn after one of the beerhall owners confirmed that Nkwinti had in fact been constructively attempting to defuse the situation (30).

Nkwinti was detained again in June 1985 for 14 days, for launching a community project to clean the old cemetery. Police apparently believed the gathering was a mass meeting, and dispersed the crowd with teargas and rubber bullets (31).

It was actually this project that launched the consumer boycott in 1985. The community was greatly motivated by the cemetery project, and collected about R1 200 to erect a single tombstone for everyone buried there. They also persuaded the Administration Board to erect a fence around the cemetery to keep the area tidy. A huge church service was held for the unveiling ceremony. Nkwinti's detention sparked off the worst unrest in the history of Port Alfred, as well as a two-week consumer boycott. The boycott was ceremoniously called off at a community meeting, as soon as the EF entered into negotiations with the black leaders (32).

Initially the inter-racial tensions were eased by the negotiations. Segregated shop entrances disappeared, and a new school was completed. The police and army were withdrawn from the township, and detainees released on

30. M. de Villiers, "Detaining the peacemakers", Sash, August 1987, p. 40.

31. M. de Villiers, ibid.

32. M. de Villiers, Ibid., p. 41.

bail. Nkwinti was also involved in negotiations to end a school boycott during this period.

On 20 July 1985, however, the state of emergency was announced. Two days later Mr. Nkwinti and Mr. Njibana were detained for six days. The students immediately resumed their school boycott. In September 1985, the Port Alfred Women's Organisation called for a stayaway by the women of the township, most of whom are domestic workers. Although the stayaway was called off when some white women met with the Women's Organisation to discuss the women's grievances, Mr. and Mrs Nkwinti were then detained for six weeks. This sparked off another consumer boycott. The Nkwinti's were eventually released, but due to continued police harrassment, they went into hiding in the township (³³).

The state of emergency necessarily affected the relationship of trust which had developed between the EF and the black leaders. When Nkwinti was released after six days, negotiations began again.

It is interesting to speculate on the reason for these detentions. According to Andrew Savage, Eastern Cape Development Board officials had been instructed by the Minister of Defence (General Magnus Malan) the the Minister of Law and Order (Mr. Louis Le Grange) not to discuss problems with the "real leaders" of the townships, such as the various boycott committees. He had apparently been told this by the director and senior officials of the Board, at a briefing attended by about 50 mayors, town clerks and public representatives (³⁴). In contrast with the most senior officials of the Development Board, some officials shared the perception that black civic leaders were subversive communists. They believed that these leaders intimidated their followers. According to one Board official, it is a common strategy of "international communism" to exploit negotiations, while the "comrades" divide into small groups to disperse and distract the security forces (³⁵).

The decision to detain the black leaders must have been taken within the ranks of the security police themselves. This decision was greatly out of step with the perceptions of local businessmen as well as the local

33. M. de Villiers, *Ibid*, p. 41.

34. Eastern Province Herald.

35. Interview, Administration Board official, October 1986.

authority. However, they were compatible with both the perceptions and the interests of some Development Board officials. Since the negotiations directly conflicted with government policy, these officials could have had a strong case for the suppression of negotiations. According to one official, both the Department of Constitutional Development and the Development Board saw the Port Alfred municipality as troublemakers, stepping beyond their sphere of jurisdiction. This is why the government ultimately did not respond to the request of the Port Alfred Council to take over the administration of the township. The decision of the municipality to spend the unemployment relief funds in the township itself apparently caused an explicit confrontation between senior Development Board officials and the Port Alfred municipality (36). However, the fact that both sides were prepared to participate in the negotiations for longer than six months, does testify to a willingness to address the future of the township, despite a legacy of mutual irritation.

The mini-Joint Management Centre in Port Alfred was functioning during this period. The Chamber of Commerce had requested it to draft proposals for the use of unemployment fund money (37), and the EF had duly submitted a report to the mini-JMC on the negotiation process (38). The mini-JMC was, therefore, exposed to the Chamber and Council's perceptions of the negotiations, especially because businessmen and local authority representatives were members of the mini-JMC. Ultimately, it appears that it was the very fact of the participation of the mass-based, mobilisatory civic organisation which made the negotiations unacceptable to the government (39).

The EF did its best to mend the damage caused by the tense security force reaction. It had an urgent meeting with members of the security police on the day after the announcement of the state of emergency, and another

36. Interview, Development Board official, 1 December 1987.

37. Chamber of Commerce report, 14 October 1985.

38. Report, 10 September 1985.

39. Interview, official of the Department of Constitutional Development, 7 February 1989;
CPA official, 16 February 1989. This should be contrasted with the developments in Oudtshoorn (see Section 6.10)

meeting immediately after the detention of Mr. Nkwinti (40). Yet, as mentioned above, the detention and harrassment of leaders continued throughout 1985.

6.8 Contacting the authorities

In January, the Town Council notified the regional representative of the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning that the Town Council had for some time been involved in dialogue with community leaders, initially to end the consumer boycotts, and then concerning the development and upgrading of the township. Black leaders in Port Alfred no longer accepted the Development Board, or the Community Council system. They wanted the municipality to assume control over administration and development of the township, and that both the Council and the Chamber of Commerce supported this. The matter had already been discussed with an official of the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning.

The Council asked for a firm directive by DCDP, regarding the administrative future of the township. They also wanted to know which government agency would be in charge of black areas once the Boards were abolished, and whether the municipality could take over the township. Such information would enable the municipality to participate in future discussions with black leaders (41).

After two further letters to the Department, which received no reply (42), the Department wrote that the government acknowledges that the community council Act of 1977 no longer adequately caters to the needs of urban blacks. Hence, fully autonomous Black Local Authorities would be established. Envisaged legislation would provide for automatic change of status to Black Local Authorities, and hence black communities will administer

40. EF report to JMC, 10 September 1985.

41. Town Clerk's letter to the regional representative of the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, 23 January 1986.

42. 7 March and 2 April 1986.

their own affairs (43).

After further correspondence, the Department wrote to the Council again in June 1986. It maintained that Black Local Authorities would, like their white counterparts, be controlled by Provincial Authorities. Their development would be dependent largely on regional services councils. If the Port Alfred Town Council wanted to take over the administration of the black area, it would have to submit a formal application to the Department.

At this point, the Council ceased its correspondence with the Department, because it felt it was making no headway. However, it is significant that the Council's letters only reached the regional office of the DCDP. It is an open question whether it may have encountered a more nuanced response from senior decision-makers in the Department.

6.9 The end to negotiations

During 1985, the civic association was very active in the township. An information centre was started, which housed a creche and a pre-school play centre.

In February 1986, the first warning of difficulties in the negotiation process was a statement by the town clerk that it was not legally possible at that time for the Council to take over the administration of the township. The Chief Director of the Development Board also declined to comment on the possibility of a transfer of control. He maintained that the matter was not within his jurisdiction, and would have to be addressed by the central government (44). Significantly, the official mentioned that the Board had allocated about R416 000 for the development of the township. This indicated that the Board had no intention of abandoning its developmental role in the township, although it may have considered the possibility of using the municipality as agent.

The Joint Working Committee again met in March 1986. At the meeting, the mayor reported back on his meeting with the Development Board on 28 February 1986. There were

43. Letter to Town Clerk from the regional representative of the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, 28 April 1986.

44. Eastern Province Herald, 14 February 1986.

signs of progress: upgrading, housing, surveying, the development of the airfield, the development of sportsfields, and the future of the bottle store had been discussed. Yet it seems that the Board had insisted on participating in upgrading. The Board had notified the mayor that the money allocated to the municipality for the upliftment of the township would be pooled with that of the Board's funds (⁴⁵).

The extent of polarisation now became evident. The black leaders refused to allow the Board to spend money in the township. They refused to deal further with the Board, saying that the Board had the power to build infrastructure in the township without consulting the residents.

For its part, the Council maintained that its role as messenger was becoming increasingly untenable, as the township is still legally outside its jurisdiction. The municipality was in no position to negotiate with the Development Board on behalf of the township, as this was outside their terms of reference as a white authority. The municipality maintained that the only body authorised, able and willing to uplift the township was the Development Board, and dialogue with them would be the only practical way of doing this. If the black leaders rejected the Board entirely, they would be on their own. The municipality could not take the place of the Board.

The township delegates were very frustrated. They threatened to leave, and stated that if the Board wanted to move in and upgrade the township, they could do it without having to consult the civic association. The leaders clearly refused to deal with the Board, possibly as a weapon with the long-run aim of integrating with the municipality. For example, the leaders rejected the name "Nkwenkwezi" for the township, which had been devised by the Board. They insisted on calling it the "Port Alfred township" (⁴⁶).

No further meetings were held, due to the stalemate concerning the involvement of the Development Board in the upgrading of the township. The civic organisation was also experiencing pressure from similar organisations in the Eastern Cape to modify its conciliatory attitude

45. Agenda for meeting of joint working committee, 13 March 1986.

46. Minutes, Joint Working Committee, 13 March 1986.

to white institutions, and instead join the general consumer boycott drive. In June 1986, the second state of emergency was declared, and almost all black leaders were detained for lengthy periods. Since then, no civic organisation has been revived. However, opposition to the black local authority system is still very strong.

It appears that R7,8 million has recently been allocated to the township by the Algoa Regional Services Council. An "advisory committee" has been established to guide the planners on the priorities of the township. Apparently, this committee has had some success, although the township is still being administered by a township manager (47).

As yet little has come of the plan to convert the airfield into an industrial park, because the Board and the municipality could never agree on the terms of the deal. The Kowie Foundation, formed in August 1986, is actively pursuing this matter. It has already had some success, since a satellite of the East Cape Training Centre has been set up and a "hive of industries" is being established by the Small Business Development Corporation. Most of the buildings at the airfield have been purchased for the operation of a privately owned Flying Training School.

6.10 Conclusion

A striking characteristic of the Port Alfred negotiations was the innovative role of the Employers' Federation and the Chamber of Commerce. Their involvement, especially in the application of employment funds, probably gave an added impetus to the idea of the white community becoming involved in the development of the township. During 1985, the white community was caught up in a general excitement about the future of the town as a whole. There was a new recognition of the interdependence of the various communities. Since the authority of the Board was so decisively rejected by the black community, the municipality seemed the obvious vehicle to direct a co-ordinated development strategy for the whole of Port Alfred.

The negotiations foundered, however, because of the conflicts between the agendas of different governmental institutions. It appears that the Port Alfred negotiations took place just before the institutional

47. Interview, township manager, 1 December 1987.

future of the black townships was finally decided upon; this may account for the Department's lengthy silence before it responded to the negotiations. During 1985, the government was already becoming committed to the establishment of regional services councils, which would be based on separate racially-defined local authorities. The RSCs would take over the developmental role of the Development Boards, which would be abolished. By 1986, however, the government's determination to keep local authorities separate; and, in fact, to make this separateness viable through RSC support, was revealed by the Department's determination to keep the administration of the township out of the hands of the white municipality. Yet it was evident that the government did not intend to leave the Board's modus operandi unaltered, and financing upgrading became a much higher priority than under the Board's regime.

The goals of the Port Alfred Town Council directly conflicted with this Department of Constitutional Development and Planning agenda. The inclusion of the township under the jurisdiction of the municipality would undermine the whole pseudo-consociational logic of the RSCs. It seems that the municipality was not only uninformed about the logic of government thinking, but did not realise how much it had irritated Board officials by its intervention in the affairs of the township. This hostile response may have influenced the final outcome, because the Town Council was seen as irresponsible and an ideological opponent of the government.

The Port Alfred events can usefully be compared with those in Oudtshoorn, where the white municipality achieved precisely what Port Alfred wanted to do: the administration of the nearby black township. The Oudtshoorn municipality, however, is largely Nationalist, and could therefore be entrusted with such a sensitive task, without the risk that it could be used for political advantage against the government. A second factor was that the township organisation was not involved in negotiations at all, and the Oudtshoorn experiment was not therefore seen by security agencies as a breach in security.

Thirdly, the powerful town clerk of Oudtshoorn, reputed to have close connections with provincial and central government officials, as well as the National Party, played a key role in persuading the government to accept municipal control of the township. Finally, the Member of Parliament for Oudtshoorn, Mr. Piet Badenhorst, was Deputy Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning at the time. Oudtshoorn's voice could therefore

be heard at key places in government agencies. There is an important lacuna in local government research in South Africa, since the role of informal lobbying and interest group tactics at local government level have hardly been explored.

In the Port Alfred, a third perspective was that of the security forces. It is unlikely that the mini-JMC played much of a role in determining their repressive response to negotiations. It seems that the security forces had always interpreted the activities of the black civic association as subversive, although this may have been strengthened by certain Development Board officials' disapproval of the negotiations.

The Port Alfred negotiations were unusual, because they lasted so long. Negotiations in the Port Alfred case went much further than in the Duncan Village situation in East London. One reason for this was the absence of a community council in Port Alfred; and, therefore, the town council could offer to become the legitimate and legal authority. Another reason was the initially more forthcoming attitude of the Development Board during 1985 (both Duncan Village and Port Alfred fell under the jurisdiction of the same Board). Perhaps this was because the Port Alfred events took place a year earlier, before the security situation had worsened further.

Ultimately, the Port Alfred negotiations took place at an interesting moment in history, when the government was moving from one institutional dispensation for urban blacks, to an entirely new one. The local actors interpreted the government's initial indecisiveness as potential approval of their actions, and subsequently found that they had been eclipsed by a new enthusiasm and assertiveness in the Department's approach to segregated local government.

7. EAST LONDON: NEGOTIATING UNDER PRESSURE

7.1 Background: Duncan Village

Duncan Village was formed during the 1870's. It soon became overcrowded, but despite the worsening conditions, people continued to settle there. People owned their own houses, but the township became earmarked for resettlement to the neighbouring Ciskeian bantustan after the 1950's ⁽¹⁾.

Repeated attempts at resettlement failed, due to the determined resistance of the residents. Over the years, only the diehards remained, as well as the very poor, who could not afford to live far away from their work. The community has a history of militancy, kept alive in folk memory ⁽²⁾.

During the late 1970's, the Administration Board established a community council. For several years, the residents attempted to use this channel to resolve grievances, get information and pass on ideas. However, because of the poor quality of the councillors, the residents eventually lost patience with them. The public announcement that Mr. Eddie Makeba had become mayor alienated the community even further, because he had never been elected.

According to the Development Board, the reason for the delays in upgrading and the provision of housing was that the Board lacked the necessary funds. The upgrading was subject to investigation by Mr. Louis Rive, "who had been appointed at the recommendation of these community councillors". The community councillors had also for long been raising the grievances of the Duncan Village residents ⁽³⁾.

After 1983, UDF-oriented ideas became popular in the community. Street and area committees were formed, and

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1. T. J. Gordon, "Mdantsane: The evolution of a dependency", in G. Cook and J. Opland (eds), Mdantsane: Transitional City, ISER, Grahamstown, 1980, p. 2-5.
 2. Interview, community worker, 10 February 1988.
 3. Interview with the Chief Director of ECAB, Daily Dispatch, 31 October 1985.

they addressed basic living issues, such as roads, housing, sanitation and schools. A forerunner to the Duncan Village Residents' Association (DVRA) was established in mid-1985. It attempted to pressure the community council, but to no avail. Initially, it did not try to undermine the council, and councillors were invited to DVRA meetings. There was very little response from the councillors. During 1985, a rent boycott was initiated.

During August 1985, severe violence broke out in the township. For three weeks, no police foot-patrols could enter the township. Youngsters formed guerilla gangs, who attacked physical property which they considered symbols of white authority, such as schools and beerhalls. The houses of councillors were destroyed, although no councillors were killed. The Duncan Village Residents' Association was formed as a response to the violence by the youth. It believed that the lack of facilities had to be addressed, as the angry youth destroyed all symbols of white authority ⁽⁴⁾. The elders believed that the youth had to be brought under control.

For a few weeks, the DVRA ruled the township. The police eventually restored order by conducting mass arrests and detaining leaders. The community council never disbanded, but the councillors continued to conduct their business from an office in the East London city centre ⁽⁵⁾.

It was then announced that an East London businessman had designed a new building method. Buildings would be erected by a new expedited and labour-intensive method. They would be used as classrooms, to facilitate the return to classes by pupils in January 1986. The buildings would later be used as housing units ⁽⁶⁾. The Duncan Village Corporation (DUVCOR), a non-profit utility organisation, would build these houses. It was chaired by Allistair Lightbody, a businessman, and Peet de Pontes, the National Party MP for East London ⁽⁷⁾.

4. Interview, DVRA member, 10 February 1988.

5. This background information was given by a community worker in Duncan Village, 10 February 1988.

6. Daily Dispatch, 12 December 1985.

7. In March 1989, it was announced that the government would conduct an inquiry into DUVCOR. Almost R2 million was allocated by the Department of Manpower to

There had initially been negotiations in good faith between DUVCOR and the DVRA, on the building of the housing units. The DVRA leaders had approved of the temporary houses which would be used as schools in the interim. The community council had not been party to these discussions (8). Apparently DUVCOR initially had great credibility in the township (9).

However, on 12 December 1985, the first instalment of funds for job creation and upgrading was handed in public to the chairman of the community council, Mr. Makeba (10). When the press announced that the chairman of the community council had officially received the upgrading funds, the DVRA withdrew from negotiations. They accused Mr. De Pontes of having dealt with the community council all along in secret, to get approval for the allocation of land for the housing project. They maintained that the DVRA had been kept in the dark about this contact, and refused to have any further dealings with DUVCOR, Mr. de Pontes, and the community council again. They then turned to the East London City Council for assistance (11).

For its part, DUVCOR repeatedly denied that it had any links with the community council, and said that it was prepared to appoint DVRA members and student

DUVCOR, to run the Duncan Village housing project. The allocation was paid out even before DUVCOR was registered. There were also claims that school buildings constructed in 1986 for over R30 000 per unit could be built today for under R10 000 each (Sunday Times, 19 March 1989). These corruption charges need not affect the analysis of the East London negotiations unduly. However, a few senior members of the East London City Council (all with links to the National Party) served on the board of DUVCOR; with their interest in DUVCOR, they could have influenced the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning against the Duncan Village negotiations.

8. Interview, DVRA official, 10 February 1988.

9. Interview, Duncan Village community worker, 10 February 1988.

10. Daily Dispatch.

11. Interview, DVRA leader, 10 February 1988.

representatives to the board of DUVCOR (12). Furthermore, DUVCOR also repeatedly invited the DVRA to resume talks. It appears that DUVCOR actually sent an invitation to the DVRA to negotiate, but due to an internal division within the Residents Association at the time, the letter never reached the rest of the DVRA leadership. They therefore never responded (13).

In the interim, a very low-key liaison committee of businessmen and clergy was formed to investigate the reasons for the violence and boycotts in the township. They wanted to serve as an impartial channel for communication between all relevant leaders in the township, and government institutions (14). This committee gradually developed the perception that the community council had a credibility problem in the township (15), and that the residents resented the upgrading money being given to the community council. The community felt that it was their burning of the schools, and the school boycott, which resulted in the grant, and nothing the community council had done (16). They realised that the community council's involvement in the school building programme caused the entire scheme to be discredited.

When the academic year began in January 1986, the East London Students Council (ELSCO) announced that the students of Duncan Village would have boycott the new classrooms, because of the involvement of the community council. Instead, the students would use church halls and other venues arranged by the community as temporary classrooms. The ELSCO statement coincided with the transferring of teachers away from Duncan Village, as well as the banning of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) (17). The students' response was, therefore, part of a broader climate of resentment against repressive government actions. Although the violence had ended, the general polarisation and anger

12. Daily Dispatch, 5 March 1986.

13. Interview, East London community worker, 10 February 1988.

14. Daily Dispatch, 27 September 1985.

15. Minutes of committee, 25 September 1985.

16. Interview, East London councillor, 10 February 1988.

17. Daily Dispatch, 12 February 1986.

was still very evident in the township, when the East London City Council decided to intervene.

7.2 The response of the East London City Council

By the end of 1985, several Councillors became so concerned at the situation in Duncan Village, that they decided to intervene. At the suggestion of Councillor Donald Card, the Council organised a public meeting on 1 December 1985, to which they invited all township leaders to discuss their grievances. The meeting, which was chaired by the mayor, was difficult, because of the very polarised conditions.

However, certain resolutions were taken by the end of the meeting: all three tiers of government were urged to scrap apartheid; Duncan Village community councillors should consult residents with regard to upgrading; the East London City Council should undertake upgrading because it had the experience and skill to do so; the City Council should govern the entire city; the City Council should request the Defence Force to leave the township; and all City Council facilities should be open to all races ⁽¹⁸⁾.

The City Council later held another mass meeting, but this time the DVRA refused to attend. It maintained that the meeting should not discuss such general issues, but more specific ones such as houses, streets and recreation. Yet the mayor reiterated that the DVRA was welcome to discuss their problems with the Council ⁽¹⁹⁾.

In February 1986, the DVRA contacted the Council, stating that it wanted to enter into discussions. Apparently the DVRA felt that the Council was the only sympathetic and appropriate body, because the last improvements to Duncan Village had taken place twenty years earlier, when the township was still under the administration of the Council ⁽²⁰⁾. The DVRA was also under pressure from the radical youth, and had to make progress to keep its mandate as leaders. Its appeal to the Council was,

18. Daily Dispatch, 22 January 1986.

19. Daily Dispatch, 25 January 1986.

20. Interview, DVRA member, 10 February 1988; Weekly Mail, 29 November 1986.

therefore, a rather desperate move ⁽²¹⁾. It insisted, however, that if any member of the DVRA was detained or harrassed, it would end negotiations immediately. The Council accepted this condition ⁽²²⁾. The presence on the Council of some of the business liaison committee, mentioned earlier, may have promoted this response.

Negotiations between the DVRA and the Council began in late February 1986. Their meetings were attended by several Councillors, municipal officials, and DVRA representatives. The Council was internally divided on their response to the DVRA. Certain councillors felt that the community council, which still existed, should be regarded as the representative of the community. The DVRA rejected this argument, since none of the community councillors were still resident in the township.

The negotiating committee effectively agreed that the community council was not representative of the residents, and the DVRA was, therefore, accepted as legitimate negotiating partners. It appears that the DVRA had held a mass meeting in late 1985, where its leaders received a popular mandate.

The DVRA refused to negotiate with the Board, because they claimed that the Board had done nothing to assist residents in their housing problems. A rent boycott was currently in progress. The City Council, therefore, took on a mediating role, as it agreed to represent the DVRA grievances to the Chief Director of the Administration Board.

The main issues at stake were the following:

- 1) The DVRA maintained that DUVCOR had given them the assurance that the community council was not involved in DUVCOR. The DVRA then discovered that the community council had been consulted by DUVCOR, and hence DUVCOR's activities in the township were illegitimate and unacceptable. The DVRA felt betrayed. In the interim, Duncan Village residents were boycotting the classrooms. The DVRA was only prepared to become involved in the project if the two present chairmen of DUVCOR resigned, and the City Council and DVRA jointly administered the project.

21. Interview, Councillor, 10 February 1988.

22. Interview, Councillor, 9 February 1988.

- 2) The DVRA wanted to be recognised as the real leaders of Duncan Village.
- 3) DVRA wanted Duncan Village to become part of the East London municipality.
- 4) The DVRA wanted the Ziphunzana bypass issue to be resolved. This bypass was being built in Duncan Village, and would require the removal of about 30 families, who had no place to move to. The DVRA wanted the Council to take responsibility for building alternative houses, and for the broader upgrading of Duncan Village. The DVRA offered to take responsibility for the safety of Council workers in the area, during the building process.
- 5) The expulsion and transfer of teachers (23).

The City Council was in a difficult position. It was being asked to intervene in an area where it had no jurisdiction, and where land was owned by the Development Board. There was, effectively, a stalemate in Duncan Village: neither the Development Board nor the DVRA was strong enough to assert undisputed authority over the area. Any planning initiative that remotely involved the Board or the community council was doomed to popular rejection; yet the DVRA did not have the legal position nor the organisational means to undertake any upgrading itself. The only party which had some image of neutrality, was the City Council.

The Council was also developing an interest in the future of Duncan Village, because the violence and the consumer boycott harmed the interest of the city as a whole. Furthermore, the idea of the township being incorporated into the rest of the city made practical sense to some of the Councillors, because Duncan Village was too small and poor to sustain an independent municipality (24). The East London municipality supplies water, electricity and health services to Duncan Village (25).

The City Council agreed to discuss these matters with the Development Board. However, the Chief Director of the Board could not discuss these matters with the Council at

23. Interview, Council official, 10 February 1988.

24. Interview, Councillor, 9 February 1988.

25. Interview, Councillor, 10 February 1988.

that time, because the Board had to be consulted. In general, the Chief Director of the Board seemed reluctant to discuss grievances with the Council.

In the interim, the Council suggested a temporary form of government for Duncan Village. Based on a proposal by Clr. Bassingthwaite, the Council suggested that one person should take over the total responsibility of the development of Duncan Village, until an appropriate representative body could be elected. This would help to overcome the vicious circle of bureaucratic delays, inaction, and suspicion which caused more exorbitant demands to be made. The "administrator" should be able to deal with all bodies in a neutral, unbiased, unemotional and rapid manner. He should also understand the nature and urgency of the crisis. He should not be seen purely as a government appointee, but be chosen through negotiations between the City Council, DVRA and the MP (Mr. Peet de Pontes). He should be responsible to the State President in the first instance, and to the Council and DVRA in the second instance. He would be appointed over, and thereby effectively ignore, the community council.

This proposal, however, was not acceptable to the DVRA. Instead, the DVRA was prepared to consider holding an election in Duncan Village, to give a stronger mandate to the negotiating leaders. However, it felt that its present system was adequate: the township was divided into several geographical areas, each electing its own executive committee at a general meeting. The DVRA general council consisted of two members of each executive committee, and the central executive committee was elected at a mass meeting. The DVRA did not see any real need to change this system, or to accept an outsider as "administrator".

The Council was also divided on its future course of action. More conservative councillors felt that the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning ought to be contacted before any further discussions were held with the DVRA. However, the majority of the councillors on the action committee felt that such discussions had to take place first, so that definite proposals could be put to the Minister. A special subcommittee was established to negotiate with the DVRA on the DUVCOR issue. The Council would propose that the structure of DUVCOR be so altered to include the Council, the DVRA, and the Students' Representative Council. The Council would also ask the security forces to allow a public meeting in Duncan Village, to enable the DVRA to get a

mandate to participate in the activities of DUVCOR (26).

The Council then notified the Minister as well as DUVCOR that the Council wanted to propose an altered structure for DUVCOR, which would include the DVRA. In fact, the DVRA was not prepared to meet with DUVCOR at all, even when the Council offered to be present to act as mediator. The DVRA was not prepared to accept a modified DUVCOR structure, and wanted the City Council itself to take over the DUVCOR project as well as the general upgrading.

The hostility of the DVRA towards DUVCOR was largely due to DUVCOR's dealings with the community council, after it had allegedly promised that it would not do so. But the DUVCOR aroused suspicions for other reasons too. The co-director of DUVCOR was apparently disliked in the township, because he had testified for the state against trade union leaders in a trial in Pietermaritzburg in 1985 (27). Furthermore, DUVCOR was linked to the Greater East London Co-ordinating Committee (GELCC), which in turn was rumoured to have been started by "Group 8", a SADF unit in East London. The aim of GELCC was to co-ordinate development between East London, Ciskei and southern Transkei. GELCC was started about November 1985, in response to the violence in Duncan Village. It included government officials, SADF officers, and local businessmen (28).

The refusal by the DVRA to deal with DUVCOR forced the Council to look beyond the DUVCOR project, to the general lack of development in Duncan Village. The Council realised that they knew nothing about the Board's plans for the township. They also felt that the DVRA should be consulted on development plans generally. The Council wanted to convey this belief to the Minister as soon as possible. When the Council again met with the DVRA, the latter insisted that nothing less than a take-over of the township by the City Council was acceptable. They wanted this demand to be conveyed to the Minister.

By June, the Council had agreed with the DVRA that it would act as the agent for the construction of about 150 houses to replace those lost due to the Ziphumsana bypass. (Such involvement was still subject to

26. Interview with City Councillor, 10 February 1988.

27. Interview, Councillor, 9 February 1988.

28. Interview, Councillor, 9 February 1988.

government permission). The Council would use the Mdantsane Special Organisation, as it had long experience in constructing houses. The DVRA undertook to protect workers, and it would be consulted on the designs for houses. The DVRA saw this as a way to end unilateral action by the Board, but it still believed that the Development Board would finance the project.

The Council became involved in the DVRA grievances in several ways. For example, the DVRA complained about the quality of the houses being built by DUVCOR, and the Council agreed to investigate the matter. The Council also agreed to meet with the local SADF authorities to discuss the behaviour of army troops in the township, who were accused of indiscriminate assaults on residents. The Council was investigating the transfer of Duncan Village teachers, as well as the effect of the new Ziphunzana bypass on a local cemetery. The Council, therefore, became involved in many issues in which it had no experience. This is a significant indicator of the degree of institutional segregation that had taken place.

During these months, the situation in Duncan Village was very tense. There was continued unrest, as youth gangs roamed the area and attacked people and property. The DVRA expressed its concern at the uncontrollable behaviour of the children. In addition, a consumer boycott was organised in East London; this gave the gangs an excuse to rob and terrorise residents returning to their homes ⁽²⁹⁾. The student organisation also held a public protest against the transferral of six teachers from Duncan Village. Pupils still refused to use the DUVCOR temporary schools, "until the community council stops their involvement in the project", and demanded that the Department of Education and Training recognise the present arrangement whereby teaching took place in church halls instead of the DUVCOR-built classrooms ⁽³⁰⁾. In April, DUVCOR ceased its activities, and withdrew its R2 million project ⁽³¹⁾. Several of the DVRA leaders had also been detained, which placed pressure on their talks with the City Council.

In this complex and tense situation, it was difficult for the City Council to remain cohesive on the matter. The

29. Daily Dispatch, 7 March 1986.

30. Daily Dispatch, 8 March 1986.

31. Daily Dispatch, 23 April 1986.

withdrawal of DUVCOR led some liberal Councillors to express exasperation with the "petty bickering and political point scoring" in Duncan Village. They felt that the DVRA was going too far in their total refusal to deal with DUVCOR, to the detriment of the community, and appealed to all community leaders to accept each other's bona fides (³²). They believed that, if only leaders of all sectors of the community could negotiate honestly and present a joint proposal on the institutional future of East London, the government would be sympathetic. "The Government has reacted to the Kwazulu and Natal initiative and said it would welcome proposals from other communities in terms of its decentralisation policy". The community council should be dissolved, and an election held to establish the true leaders of Duncan Village (³³).

This standpoint, which underestimated the symbolic significance of the DVRA's refusal to deal with the community council, and hence the DVRA, was an understandable response to the lack of progress. The Council, in general, also overestimated the government's approval of local initiatives. They did not realise that the existence of community councils (soon to become black local authorities) was non-negotiable as far as the government was concerned. In this situation, the DVRA

faced the risk of losing the patience and goodwill of even their most sympathetic forum, the City Council. When they initiated negotiations, the Council had not really appreciated the enormous political sensitivities of the various actors, as well as the government's intransigent political agenda.

The East London negotiations may have developed further if experienced negotiators had been available, who could have acted as a communication channel between the various parties. In addition to the already complex situation, the Council did not appreciate the annoyance with which the government viewed their actions. The fundamental prerequisite to effective mediation, the real understanding of the political position in which the different parties found themselves, was lacking. This not only indicates the degree of polarisation in South Africa, but also the fact that authoritative mediators,

32. Daily Dispatch, 23 April 1986.

33. Daily Dispatch, 26 April 1986.

with the required skills, experience, sensitivities and impartiality, are not available at present in South Africa.

7.3 Contacting the authorities

As in the case of Port Alfred, the process of negotiation stimulated an excitement and confidence on the part of the Council. On 4 March 1986, a slim majority on the Council voted for open residential areas. This was publicly supported by the Chamber of Commerce ⁽³⁴⁾. However, the decision immediately antagonised the authorities, especially because the the PFP promptly praised the East London initiative. The Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning insisted that no local authority had the right to designate residential areas, or declare them open, or even make a statement concerning them. Furthermore, the MP for East London North, Mr. H.S. Coetzer, had recommended to the government that the East London City Council be bypassed on any decisions concerning the upgrading of Duncan Village and surrounding areas ⁽³⁵⁾. The Amalinda Ratepayers' Association (Amalinda is a white residential area) was also represented at this meeting, and this indicates that the Council's actions faced significant opposition within the white community.

On 29 July 1986, a delegation from the City Council met Mr. Heunis in Cape Town. The meeting did not go well. Mr. Heunis severely criticised the City Council for their involvement in the Duncan Village situation, and maintained that the community councils were the elected leaders. Any negotiation regarding the upgrading of Duncan Village should, therefore, be held with the community council, if it is at all necessary.

There seem to have been several reasons for Mr. Heunis's negative response. It has been suggested that in 1986, the government still felt that Duncan Village should be resettled in the Ciskei ⁽³⁶⁾. Furthermore, Mr. Heunis could have seen the City Council plan as a party-political PFP scheme, although the City Council insisted

34. Daily Dispatch, 4 April 1986.

35. Daily Dispatch, 8 March 1986.

36. Interview, Urban Foundation official, 3 February 1988.

that it did not want to undermine government policy (37). The Council believed that, if it administered the township, it would be an interim measure until the political situation had been sorted out. But Mr. Heunis accused the Council of undermining his constitutional model.

There was also disagreement between Mr. Heunis and the Council on the purpose of the talks. The Council's mission to the minister was to discuss the basis of new elections in the township, not the merits of the DVRA. Yet the Minister may have been influenced by the Development Board's perception, that the DVRA was a UDF-controlled organisation, which aimed at intimidating people and subverting law and order (38). Apparently the Minister was accompanied by senior members of the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, to whom the Development Board reported (39). As in Port Alfred, the participation of a UDF affiliate was not welcomed, as it is generally accepted that a non-racial local authority would be but one step towards a fully non-racial political order. This, of course, fundamentally contradicted government policy, but may explain why the seemingly innocuous request by the East London City Council simply to administer a nearby township, was met with such a blank refusal. The Minister may also have been influenced by East London members of the National Party, who served on the board of DUVCOR.

Negotiations collapsed after the meeting with Minister Heunis, because there seemed no prospect of the Council retaining its role in Duncan Village. Apparently, the DVRA was not very surprised by the Minister's reaction, because it was quite cynical about the government's intentions (40).

The Council continued with its scheme to build about 150 houses to replace those demolished for the bypass. However, the official position of the community council was consolidated during this period. The regional

37. Interview, Councillor, 10 February 1986.

38. Interview, ECDB member, 10 February 1988. However, it is not clear that all ECDB officials shared this perception.

39. Interview, Councillor, 9 February 1988.

40. Interview, Councillor, 10 February 1988.

representative of the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning insisted that the remaining former members of the community council were still officially in charge of the township. The community council was now called a "town committee", and had the same status as white local authorities. The government would finance upgrading in the township, on request of the town committee (41). The "Gompo Town Committee", as it was now known, still had six members, with Mr. Makeba as mayor. The community councillors had not lived in Duncan Village for over a year (42).

Furthermore, as the Board's plans for the upgrading of Duncan Village were announced, it became clear that about 3 000 families would be moved during the process of upgrading. Although the CPA, who now took responsibility for the project, maintained that alternative land would be found for these people, the community felt threatened by the prospect. They especially feared that they would be moved to the Ciskei, and would lose their South African citizenship. The community also feared that rents would be increased after the upgrading. The DVRA insisted that the government consult the community before proceeding with the implementation of the plan. With many of the DVRA leaders in detention by this time, the DVRA suspected that the upgrading programme was an attempt to give credibility to the Gompo Town Committee. The upgrading itself, therefore, assumed a political aspect (43).

There was an attempt to discuss the upgrading issue at a public meeting in Duncan Village. The meeting was called by the town committee, and was intended to be an informative one. At the meeting, the two totally disparate perceptions of the upgrading scheme became evident. The Black Sash and black community leaders called for the release of DVRA leaders, so that they could negotiate the upgrading process. On the other hand, the MP (Mr. de Pontes), the MEC (Mr. Koos Theron), Mr. Makeba and more conservative City Councillors maintained that the town committee were the only democratically elected leaders. According to Mr. Theron, the Cape Provincial Administration considered the town committee to be an independent local authority, and the

41. Daily Dispatch, 27 August 1986.

42. Weekly Mail, 29 August 1986.

43. Daily Dispatch, 7 November 1986; Weekly Mail, 29 November 1986.

DVRA could only play a role if it participated in an election for a new town committee (⁴⁴).

The upgrading programme proceeded; and, According to the MP for East London City, Mr. de Pontes, it would cause the relocation of about 12 000 people, for whom the government planned alternative accommodation in a new township outside the Ciskei. The population of Duncan Village would be reduced from between 40 000 and 60 000 to about 25 000 (⁴⁵).

The City Council's last involvement in Duncan Village was the building of houses to replace those demolished for the new bypass. The Town Committee is in control of Duncan Village. The DVRA is at present inactive, partly because of the large number of detentions, and because the state of emergency prevents political organisation. The Council's plea for incorporation of Duncan Village into East London was ignored by the government, and the two communities are as institutionally divided as ever.

The Council's intervention in Duncan Village was a desperate response to a crisis. The situation had caught them unprepared, and they had to "think on their feet" as they went along. They were not prepared to deal with the intense institutional cleavages (DUVCOR, the Development Board, community council, DVRA, and the security forces) which caused extreme polarisation. This institutional separation of population groups in South Africa tends to cause different perceptions, interests and "organisational cultures" to emerge.

7.4 The politics of negotiation: Some benefits

Negotiations succeeded in neither Port Alfred nor East London; and, in both cases, resulted in radicalisation and demoralisation amongst the black community. Yet the negotiation option has several benefits (⁴⁶). It forces white authorities to deal with the most popular leaders in the townships and to address the issues which township organisations consider to be the most important. It is, therefore, an intensive learning experience for white

44. Daily Dispatch, 7 November 1986.

45. Daily Dispatch, 1 December 1986.

46. Atkinson, D: "Shaping a Post-Apartheid City", in Indicator South Africa, Spring 1988, p. 11-13.

for black leaders, who have to deal with white city
governors and white institutional structures for the
first time.

Even if negotiations ultimately fail, white councils stand to gain from the goodwill created during the process. Negotiations are invariably affected by the political culture of a locality, and future negotiations will be based on the memory of past experiences. Past agreements and understandings may also lay the foundation for bargaining in future.

8. PIETERMARITZBURG 2000

8.1 Historical overview

Pietermaritzburg municipality has a history of innovative planning for its own future. In January 1974, a firm of town and regional planning consultants ⁽¹⁾ submitted a report, concerning future population growth, developments in the CBD, industrial growth, residential requirements, recreation, conservation and education, to the City Council.

One of its most important recommendations was the pedestrianisation of the CBD, "to stimulate both business and individual convenience (by reintroducing) the dimension of social enjoyment to the act of shopping, thus safeguarding the continuation of the dominant merchandising role of the CBD in the future" ⁽²⁾. The theme of central area revitalisation became the springboard from which the vast PMB 2000 exercise was eventually launched.

On 5 November 1982, the Natal Witness reported that Graham Atkinson, the City Engineer, had compiled a study of Pietermaritzburg's growth, needs and problems until the year 2 000. He found that the population of the borough would increase from 150 000 to about 250 000, and that of the metropolitan area (including Edendale) would increase from 350 000 to about 850 000. The city transport system would have to cater for about 100 000 commuters per day; the Group Areas Act would probably no longer be in operation; and unemployment would be a major social problem. He recommended that sufficient land be made available in good time for residential and industrial purposes, and that a detailed report should be prepared on the expansion of transport.

On 30 April 1984, the Pietermaritzburg City Council resolved, on the advice of the City Engineer to appoint consultants to advise in the setting up of a Project Team Structure and Operational Framework for the proposed Church Street pedestrianisation project. This team would

1. Thorrrington-Smith, Rosenberg and McCrystal, Pietermaritzburg 1990, 1974.

2. Ibid, p. 84.

co-ordinate the various planning, architectural and economic inputs, and systematically evaluate alternative proposals. After a brief visit to Pietermaritzburg, the consultant submitted a report on 2 May 1984.

The report specified the various disciplines to be utilised during the various phases of the project, from master plan stage, through the conceptual design and financial planning stages, to eventual construction. The existing staff of the Pietermaritzburg Council would not be able to supply all these skills, nor were the urban planning and urban design skills available locally. Hence, the proposals should be discussed and commented on from local viewpoints before they went to Council for final approval.

The consultant recommended that a Technical Committee be established to review the proposals of the Working Group before they were submitted to the Council. The planning process would include four levels: individual disciplines, meeting frequently between themselves to solve specific problems and to generate proposals; a Working Group, to generate multidisciplinary proposals; a Technical Committee, to review alternatives and recommend one proposal to the Council; and the Council itself, to review and approve the recommended proposal. In principle, the City Council should approve major (i.e. policy) decisions, and where possible, delegate the approval of technical decisions to the Technical Committee or even the Working group. The City Engineer should chair the Technical Committee, and the Assistant City Engineer (Planning) should chair the Working Group (3).

To facilitate co-ordination between the Working Group, Technical Committee and the Council, some overlapping membership would be necessary. Two members of the Chamber of Commerce should be members of the Working Group and the Technical Committee simultaneously, and two Councillors would bridge the gap between the Technical Committee and the City Council. The Working Group would meet twice a month, and the Technical Committee every two months. The report also emphasised that the acceptability for the public of the pedestrianisation concept, as well as the proposed design, should be tested

3. Ketelbey Associates, "Pietermaritzburg Central Area Pedestrianisation Management: Consultant's Report to the City Engineer on the Master Plan and Urban Design Stages", May 1984.

before the Master Plan was finally approved by the City Council. This would lead to greater commitment to the plan by the public when it was implemented. Significantly, the report proposed that growth and change patterns need to be identified at the metropolitan level as well as the central city level.

At a Council meeting on 6 August 1984, the City Engineer formally proposed, and the Council accepted, the updating of Pietermaritzburg 1990 and the principle of pedestrianisation. The City Engineer estimated that the preparation of the master plan stage (to last until early 1985) of the project would cost about R100 000; and funding for the urban design stage could be motivated in January 1985.

This proposal was duly accepted by the Council on 15 August 1984, and a professional consultant team was appointed (4). The Council decided that close liaison would be maintained with all municipal departments and the Chamber of Commerce. In due course, a management team representing various local interests would be established to 'sell' the mall scheme and to maintain the mall. The involvement of the private sector would be necessary as early as possible in the scheme, to ensure that large financial generators are developed in the mall precincts (5).

8.2 The concept of "strategic planning"

The concept "strategic planning" was introduced by the consulting Project Team Leader. This concept was popularised in the City Engineer's Department, and adopted by the City Council.

According to a memorandum prepared by the consultants, strategic planning is based on two phenomena which characterise modern cities: the fact of rapid change, and the need to manage resources carefully. "Strategic planning is a creative process for identifying and

4. The consultants were Stanway Edwards Associates (consulting transportation and traffic engineers) as leaders; with Reg Pheiffer and Partners (town planners and urban designers), M.J. Rosenberg (town planner). Other Pietermaritzburg consultants could also be asked to join, if the need arose.

5. Council minutes.

accomplishing the most important actions in view of strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities". It considers major events and changes occurring outside the agent's area of influence, and is action-orientated, with a strong emphasis on practical results. Other characteristics of strategic planning are:

- a) Local governments must look beyond their own powers and resources, and develop a meaningful partnership with private agencies. It can also co-ordinate action within a community, by enabling many different groups and programmes to act on the same information, conclusions and "shared vision". The "private sector" would include business, community organisations, and non-profit institutions such as universities.
- b) The process helps a community to identify its advantages in relation to the external environment - its region, province, nation and the world. It, therefore, emphasises external factors, which are often overlooked in traditional planning.
- c) The process broadens people's understanding of the available resources. It stimulates fresh thinking. "Resources" can include expertise, authority, political clout, historic character, civic spirit and many other intangibles.
- d) By focussing on critical issues, the process provides an opportunity to look beyond day-to-day and year-to-year issues. It helps to distinguish the truly important decisions from those with temporary impact. Yet, in contrast with traditional long-range planning, it can have immediate benefits, depending on the specific objectives chosen.
- e) It allows a city to improve its competitive position in relation to other cities.
- f) Strategic planning does not replace other kinds of planning and related activities, such as budgeting. Instead, it can help to integrate activities, according to a common purpose.

The strategic planning process consists of the following basic steps:

- a) Scan the environment for key factors and trends important for the future;

- b) Select key issues, for which successful resolution is critical;
- c) Set mission statements or broad goals;
- d) Conduct external and internal analyses, to consider outside forces affecting achievement of the goals, while strengths and weaknesses along with availability of resources are identified;
- e) Develop goals, objectives and strategies;
- f) Develop implementation plans;
- g) Monitor implementation, updating and scanning, in a cyclical process.

In a report to the Council in October 1986, the City Engineer defended the application of strategic planning principles to the Pietermaritzburg situation. The rapid recent expansion of Pietermaritzburg, and its position as a core city in a defined metropolitan area, implied that issues could no longer be treated on an ad hoc basis. They needed to be addressed in a holistic manner, having an impact on the entire metropolitan area. However, because there was no complete planning authority, planning activities had to include many divergent agencies and authorities, such as local and provincial authorities, the Kwazulu planning authorities, and the envisaged regional councils. These often had widely divergent policies and priorities.

Strategic planning would enable comprehensive, co-ordinated planning. It would also imply a move away from the current preoccupation with the production of a detailed physical plan, such as a master plan or town planning scheme, and concentrate more on understanding the urban system and its current and possible future problems. Detailed planning exercises would then be carried out for specific areas as and when required. For the City Engineer's Department (CED), 'development' should be regarded in a holistic way, to include three major components: physical (infrastructure), economic (employment, city finance) and social development (the environment, human relations and education) (6).

According to another memorandum by the City Engineer (7), the central area planning process was envisaged as fitting in with the preparation of a metropolitan structure plan. He maintained that the two processes should be followed simultaneously, with the information,

6. Address, James Radford, to SA Town and Regional Planners Development Conference, 14 April 1987.

7. 29 October 1984.

goals and strategies of the metropolitan structure plan forming the major inputs into the central area planning process. Both would use strategic planning principles. The metropolitan strategic planning process became the main forum for public involvement. A member of the CED maintained that a consultative structure, such as Pietermaritzburg 2000, would not only allow private groups to provide timely inputs in planning, but would ensure that unpleasant corrective reaction was reasonably accepted by the community.

The strategic planning process also met the demand of the Natal Provincial Administration (NPA) demand for a "package of plans". According to the Town Planning Amendment Ordinance of 1985, a town planning scheme can be enlarged into a "package of plans" by including a 'structure plan' and a 'development plan'. If approved by the Administrator, power could be devolved entirely to the local authority to implement them. The strategic planning exercise produced the third of these plans, the 'development plan' (8).

8.3 Strategic planning in action

The first step was the setting up of the Technical Committee. It held its first meeting on 22 November 1984. The following organisations were represented: the City Engineer's Department, the Council, the various consultants, the Pietermaritzburg Society, the Sakekame, Chamber of Commerce, the South African Property Owners' Association, the Natal Provincial Town and Regional Planning Commission, the Institute of Architects, and the Department of Geography at the University of Natal (9).

By January 1985, the City Council had accepted the 1990 plan to upgrade the city centre to counter the drift to the suburbs. The City Engineer then argued that the updating of the plan should include consideration of the peripheral areas. He estimated that the planning process would cost R550 000, and the total project could cost about R100 million. This was a matter of urgency, because of the demand for low income housing. This was

8. Interview, Mr. Proctor (RDAV), 8 January 1988.

9. Minutes of Technical Committee, 22 January 1984.

approved by the council in February 1985 ⁽¹⁰⁾.

By July 1985, the Assistant City Engineer reported to the Working Committee on the work done to date. Basic information had been collected and analysed on the topography, soils, geology, existing development, population estimates, business and industrial land use, and land and building values in the central area. It was also reported to Council that questionnaires had been sent to businesses to determine their needs, to establish an information bank to assist both public and private sectors, to give an understanding of the economic base, especially the interrelationship between business and industry, to investigate the employment structure, and to assist metropolitan transport planning. In September 1985, it was arranged that a consulting firm would do a literature search, and contact other cities and towns where malls had been constructed, to ascertain how various services were dealt with.

At this stage, public involvement was rather slight. Two seminars were arranged during August and September 1985, where the City Engineer's Department and the consultants would speak on proposals for the metropolitan and central areas, and proposals for the conservation and development of Pietermaritzburg.

In September, the consultants reported to the City Engineers Department that the scope of the strategic planning was outstripping financial and manpower resources. There were actually three processes taking place simultaneously: a central area planning process, a borough strategic planning process, and a metropolitan strategic planning process. The working group and the technical committee had to take on a more constructive participatory role, while the project team should simply guide the process.

The consultancy firm then suggested the formation of "action groups" to participate in strategic planning. They would cover certain fields, such as residential policies, commercial and industrial policies, cultural and recreational requirements, municipal services and finances, communication and technology. These action groups would, in effect, be sub-committees of the technical committee, and would be co-ordinated at project team level. In effect, this proposal meant that the input from local organisations would increase from merely

10. The rest of this section is derived from Council and CED minutes.

commenting on and approving suggestions emanating from the working group, to participating in the development of those suggestions.

On 17 October 1985, an employee of the Arthur Anderson firm of accountants, Mr. Jim Hudak of San Francisco, was invited to give a public seminar. The occasion would launch the involvement of key decision-makers of the public and private sector in the "option-generating stage" of the strategic planning process. Invitations were sent to the Chambers of Commerce and Industries, Rotary, the Department of Education, the Director of Local Government in the NPA, the Provincial Secretary, the Departments of Local Government of the own-affairs Houses of Parliament, the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, the University of Natal, the Institutes of Town and Regional Planners, Estate Agents, Land Surveyors, Civil Engineers and Architects, SATS, the Post Office, Local Affairs Committees, the Sobantu Committee of Twelve, the Kwazulu government, and newspapers.

At the seminar, the participants were divided into groups (chaired by Arthur Anderson employees) to consider the most important issues facing Pietermaritzburg. The numerous suggestions were then reduced and consolidated, leaving five main issue areas, viz. residential accommodation, employment, city finances, quality of life, and human relations/political change. Between October and December, the CED invited members of the private sector to become involved in one of the "action groups" that would deal with these critical issues. About 140 people joined the exercise.

Soon after, the Durban branch of Arthur Anderson offered to work with Hudak. Whereas Hudak had public sector experience, Terry Rosenberg of Arthur Anderson had extensive private sector strategic planning experience. Arthur Anderson became a part of the planning team, collecting data on Pietermaritzburg's historical revenue and expenditure patterns, and developing a micro-computer based five-year projection model. The firm also assisted with issue identification and action group selection, the training of participants in external and internal analysis, in goal-setting and strategy-alternative analysis. It helped to develop implementation plans, and keep them realistic. It also trained the chairmen of the action groups, and they in turn could train their group members in these skills.

The CED had an important guidance role in the establishment and subsequent functioning of the action

groups. While the action groups were being established, the CED was preparing a dossier on basic information to distribute to participants. This dossier covered information such as population projections, socio-economic characteristics of the city, housing demand, school population, land availability, government policy, infrastructural costs and demand, employment, key industries, the informal sector, labour unrest, and facts about the world economy. It also gave some background about city finances, such as capital finance, income, staff salaries, and the possible impact of RSCs. The CED also drew up a provisional schedule of dates for future action group activities. The CED envisaged the action groups to function for several years, although their membership may change over time.

The CED appointed the Assistant City Engineer, Mr. James Radford, to be in charge of the whole project. The working group functioned as an advisory body to the action groups, and the CED gave technical input. Mr. Radford and the consultants' representative, Mr. Ian Scott, met regularly to get the action groups on their way. In effect, because the CED was responsible for inviting people to join the action groups, it selected the action group members and chairmen. Because the CED believed that the action groups needed strong leadership, it also briefed the chairmen on their role. CED officials reviewed each member selected for an action group, to assess their particular skills. Ian Scott was present on each action group as co-ordinator.

In their composition of the action groups, the CED had to submit the membership of the groups for ratification by the City Council. The action groups were, therefore, not completely voluntary, and were given a semi-official status. Councillors and local authority members were invited to join any action group of their choice. The City Council also suggested that the deputy town clerk join the recreational action group, the assistant deputy town clerk join the residential housing action group, and the personnel officer join the employment action group. During the next two years, the CED helped to increase contact between the Council and the action groups by organising regular report-backs as well as informal meetings.

The inaugural meeting of the action groups was held in the CED board room on 12 December 1985 to discuss the programme of action. The action groups then met separately for the first time.

On 5 May 1986, the Pietermaritzburg 2000 project was officially launched at a cocktail party. Over 300 people were invited to attend. According to the Natal Witness, Pietermaritzburg's elite attended: businessmen, academics, industrialists, councillors, municipal and provincial officials, bankers and quasi-governmental organisations. Jim Hudak led the discussion on Pietermaritzburg's future. During the discussion, the issues of apartheid and preferable forms of political representation were raised strongly. These issues were eventually taken up by the Human Relations/Political Change action group.

8.4 Reaching the public

In addition the action group initiative, the CED knew that the broader public had to be kept informed, to ensure their support of any planning schemes.

Already in February 1985, the City Engineer had motivated for the appointment of a Director of Commercial and Industrial Promotions to promote the concept of pedestrianisation among traders in the affected area. The director would liaise with government departments, the private sector and the Chamber of Commerce in the design, construction and maintenance of the mall. He suggested Rob Findlay, previous manager of the Chamber of Commerce, as a suitable candidate. The City Council accepted this proposal.

In late 1985, the CED and the consultants began to address the public information issue. In addition to the direct involvement of groups in the planning process, substantial "passive communication" was necessary to reach the public through the use of the media. Feedback channels also had to be created. They felt that the Pietermaritzburg 2000 initiative needed a co-ordinated approach to avoid contradictory information being given out by subgroups. Various groups had to be reached: the authorities; statutory boards and committees (such as the LACs, the Sobantu Committee of Twelve, and the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Board); community groups and ratepayers associations; professional, business and other interest groups; and influential individuals. In consequence, a public relations consultant was appointed to direct a continuous low-key public awareness strategy.

8.5 Costs and Controversy

One of the first considerations of any municipality when

considering a new style of operating, is "How much will it cost?" The proponents of strategic planning in Pietermaritzburg, had to persuade the City Council that this form of planning would be beneficial, and that the benefits would outweigh the costs. The ensuing debate revolved partly around the fundamental issue of what was in the interests of the town: to continue with prudent budgeting based on a narrow ratepayer base, or to launch into a risky planning exercise with uncertain prospects of success. At stake, was an entire approach to city management: a cautious, reactive style, done by a small corps of experienced officials; versus a bold, innovative approach which brought untrained lay people into the heart of the planning process.

One of the claims made by the proponents of strategic planning was that their approach would anticipate external threats and internal hindrances to the economic well-being of the community. By considering the entire metropolitan area as an interlinked urban system, the existing limited resources could be applied to a set of critical issue-areas. The crucial question was whether the resultant growth and development would yield sufficient municipal and private income to cover the costs of the strategic planning exercise. In other words, was the pay-off large enough to warrant the initial expense?

Between 1984 and 1988, the strategic planning exercise consumed ever-larger amounts of Council money. Because it was so novel and untried in South Africa, and because the process was an open-ended and decentralised one, it seemed that the CED could not estimate the costs accurately in advance.

By February 1987, the following amounts had been spent on the Pietermaritzburg 2000 exercise:

a) Central Area Master Plan: Town planning phase	R544 000
b) Structure plan: Data base	167 000
c) Strategic planning:	
Action Group support:	
= co-ordination and administration	85 000
= consultants	40 000
= computerised financial model for municipality	56 000
Public participation: communication strategy:	
= consultants and disbursements	85 000
	<hr/> 977 000

In a context of increasing transport deficits, essential salary and wage increases, and rising electricity and water charges, the City Treasurer's Department questioned the desirability of the immediate implementation of the central master plan, and proposed its postponement for about three years.

Three years later, in April 1987, the Council's Management and Financial Committee eventually recommended that the matter be referred to the action group on human relations and political change, to establish the extent of the contribution which the private sector can make towards these costs. However, it appears that the private sector's general point of view was that they make their time and expertise available, free of charge, and that this matches the financial contribution made by the Council. It is clear, therefore, that the debate about who should fit the bill has not yet been finally resolved.

This is not surprising, because strategic planning is a novel approach to the style of functioning of local authorities in South Africa. It alters the relations between 'white' cities and their environment, as well as the relations between local government and local pressure groups. For example, should white local authorities take on the responsibility of planning for neighbouring black, 'coloured' and Indian areas? What should the relationship be between the white local authority and the agencies at present administering these areas? If local authorities do take on this role, how would the growing influence of local businessmen in local government affect the future of non-'white' areas? Would the muscle of the business sector crowd out the potential influence of other interest groups, such as environmental, philanthropic and community organisations? Could the profit imperatives of the business community be diluted, when necessary? Who should decide when this should be done? Could a powerful alliance between black and white businessmen be established at a local level, possibly at the expense of workers of all racial groups? What should the role of professional consultants be at the local level, and how can the perspectives of non-professional (often non-literate) pressure groups be incorporated into local decision-making?

These questions, in turn, raise the fundamental issues of the rights and obligations of the various parties involved, the benefits they can expect to receive, and ultimately, about the issue of what should count as being in the interests of the town itself. If businessmen expect to benefit from greater influence in local

government, should they foot the financial bill to keep the entire process of strategic planning process alive? What would their obligations be if the process throws up perspectives that run counter to business interests? Should white rate-payers pay for an expensive planning process, which must invariably lead to the urgent needs of poverty-stricken informal settlements making further demands on the white community? Should provincial and central government agencies help to pay for a planning process which could dilute their own power over local planning and administration? Can newly-established black local authorities be expected to trim their sails, and give up some of their hard-won powers, to enter a planning process which could be dominated by white business elites, white professional consultants, and white municipal officials?

There are no easy answers to these questions. Arguably, there are no answers at all, and solutions may have to depend on tentative and temporary compromises. What can be done, however, is to establish arenas where the burgeoning processes of strategic planning can be discussed and evaluated. As discussed later in this section, it may be impossible to restructure local institutions immediately; South Africans may first have to learn the skills of negotiating about negotiations.

8.6 The master plan

The final draft of the proposed goals and objectives of the central area masterplan were approved by the Pietermaritzburg 2000 liaison committee in July 1986. It was submitted for finalisation to the professional team, the working group and the technical committee in August. It was then submitted to a special meeting of Councillors, local affairs committee members, heads of departments, and action group convenors.

After the goals and objectives were approved in this forum, the professional team prepared alternative town planning options, and four final alternatives for the pedestrianisation of the central area were submitted to the working group, the technical committee and in December 1986, to the Council. It was decided that all four alternatives should be evaluated by the professional team; and, especially, by the transportation engineers, to deal with the traffic problem. At this meeting, the city engineer proposed that the technical committee embark on phase 2 of the masterplan, which would be the urban design of the area.

He also recommended that the Council should aim to complete the implementation of the mall in time for the 150th anniversary celebrations to be held at the end of 1988. This was approved, and it was decided to implement the plan in eight phases over 10 or 12 years. It was estimated that the central retail areas would be enlarged by 60% by the year 2 000 to cope with the increased population ⁽¹¹⁾. The Chamber of Commerce and the CBD Association welcomed these decisions, and urged that they be implemented soon ⁽¹²⁾. This enthusiastic commitment to the scheme can be regarded as one of the fruits of participatory planning.

In September 1986, the consultants Bradford, Conning and Partners submitted their first report on engineering services and geotechnical investigation. The implementation of the pedestrianisation scheme began in early 1988.

8.7 Metropolitan strategic planning: The action groups

The action groups arose out of a public seminar, where a set of critical issues were defined. The CED then invited a wide range of prominent individuals and representatives of organisations to join one of five action groups. Each group eventually had between 20 and 30 members. They set about their task in the "strategic planning" mode outlined earlier; viz., environmental scan, mission statement, external analysis and forecast, internal analysis, and finally, goal, objective and strategy development.

In January 1987, each group produced a progress report. This section briefly outlines their activities and results.

a) Action Group 1: Residential Accommodation

This group split into four sub-groups to collect information about the various aspects of residential accommodation; viz., people and environment; land, services and environment; dwelling units and

11. Natal Witness, 11 December 1986.

12. Natal Witness, 12 December 1986.

environment; and finance (13).

The action group then developed their overall mission statement: "To create the mechanics which will positively result in the availability of sufficient, affordable and reasonably comfortable accommodation for all the citizens of Pietermaritzburg".

The following factors were considered the most important external influences on accommodation:

- finance: cost of infrastructure, construction, and land; interest rates, and individual income;
- availability of land;
- building regulations;
- group areas regulations, which affect residential areas, public amenities and community facilities;
- community needs and preferences, socio-economic profile, culture, transport, urban environment.

The group confined itself to the Borough of Pietermaritzburg, so that the only significant area warranting attention was the low-income housing of the Indian community. The group, therefore, excluded the black communities of Sobantu, Edendale and Imbali.

The group identified five areas of focus:

- land acquisition: the constraining effect of the Group Areas Act on Indian low-income land availability; the new "own affairs" dispensation which caused different housing policies for the racial groups; the shift of responsibility for housing from the City Council to the "own affairs" departments; and increasing use of public/private partnerships in providing low-income housing.
- land management: according to the report, the transfer of housing responsibility to the Houses of Representatives and Delegates had speeded up the provision of housing, as well as reducing costs (due to the exclusion of the local authority as third party in a transaction involving a government department and the individual). Subsidies were seen as an undesirable method of financing housing, and there was a preference for an economic mix of housing so that the expensive land of upper-income groups, in effect, subsidised the lower-income groups. Management of housing should be analysed, in future,

13. "First report of Strategic Planning Action Group 1: Residential Accommodation", January 1987.

in terms of planning management, development management (implementation) and maintenance management.

- standard of services: housing in Pietermaritzburg should be built on surveyed sites, and be supplied with water, reticulated water-borne sewerage, and electricity.
- accommodation: house ownership should be encouraged, and profits from sales should be used to facilitate the progression from rented accommodation and controlled squatting to home ownership.
- finances: the CED convened a discussion group comprising representatives from other departments to assess the order of magnitude of costs of land and infrastructure associated with the provision of housing.

Finally, the action group developed two objectives, and appropriate strategies to meet them:

- Objective 1: To ensure the adequate provision of residential land in the Pietermaritzburg Metropolitan area.

= Strategy: To actively promote the development of a co-ordinated structure and development plan for the metropolitan area. This would enable the siting of future low-income Indian housing outside the borough. A qualified and funded Metropolitan Planning Unit should be established, which would liaise with provincial and state authorities. This would ensure the adequate and timeous reservation of land for housing, and the co-ordinated planning and development of major services. It would also reduce bureaucratic procedures.

= Strategy: To ensure the acquisition of land identified for residential development. This would include land for rented accommodation, low-income Indian housing, black areas, and controlled squatting. The role of governing bodies appertaining to the acquisition of land, must be reconsidered.

- Objective 2: To promote the development of residential land and accommodation by both the private and public sectors.

= Strategy: To minimise regulations for housing schemes. Appropriate technology, which would encourage

informal sector activities, should be encouraged. Loans from financial institutions should be made available for such housing. Approval procedures should also be streamlined.

= Strategy: To review the standards for the provision of infrastructure, in order to reduce costs. Electricity, piped water and water-borne sewerage must be provided.

= Strategy: To encourage self-help housing, which would enable wider property ownership. This would require surveying of sites. Some ideas were: exhibitions of show shouses could be arranged; self-help housing liaison officers and finance assistance officers could be appointed to provide technical advice; bulk purchasing organisations, self-help training centres and equipment hire centres could be established.

= Strategy: to establish a single unit to facilitate marketing and approval procedures.

= Strategy: To encourage effective administration, managerial and technical training towards achieving an effective housing programme.

b) Action Group 2: Employment

This group's mission statement was: "To provide the maximum number of jobs which are compatible with and sensitive to the image and environment of Pietermaritzburg" (14).

It identified the following external influences on the issue of employment: the economic situation; the high cost of venture capital, especially prohibitive for the informal sector; the Natal-Kwazulu initiatives which would affect political, social, regulatory and legislative issues; labour unrest which disrupted productivity; and the increase in population.

Employment in Pietermaritzburg was threatened by the limits on industrial land; high rates and electricity tariffs; the distance from major markets; and the possible withdrawal of concessions causing the relocation of industry.

14. "First report of Strategic Planning Action Group 2: Employment", January 1987.

Internal factors affecting employment in Pietermaritzburg were analysed: the successful industrial promotion campaign; industrial concessions; the agricultural and the informal sectors; the industrial and commercial sectors; and education.

The group developed the following objectives and strategies:

- Objective 1: To promote the development of an agricultural employment sector in the Pietermaritzburg area.

= Strategy: To establish a co-ordinated agricultural development programme, to produce food, provide employment and ensure efficient resource utilisation. Some ideas in this regard were: equipment pooling, skills workshops, appropriate technology, marketing and irrigation schemes.

- Objective 2: To encourage the informal sector.

= Strategy: to develop programmes and facilities to promote informal employment, through basic skills workshops, finding appropriate markets, organising a central bulk purchasing centre, providing market centres, etc.

= Strategy: To make adequate finance available.

- Objective 3: To strengthen the industrial base in the Pietermaritzburg area.

= Strategy: To provide well-located and serviced industrial land. This would entail a consideration of forward planning, appropriate industry, pollution, conservation, the nature of the labour force, etc.

= Strategy: To develop industrial strength sectors.

= Strategy: To introduce technical subjects into various education curricula. This would entail liaison with education departments and co-ordination among the various authorities.

c) Action Group 3: City Finances

The group's mission statement was: "To provide an indication of the sources and applications of funds of the City, the restrictions anticipated, and to endeavour to influence and assist the City Council to meet the

objectives by the turn of the century" (15).

The group first delineated certain external influences, such as inflation, exchange rates, interest rates, sanctions, population growth rates, mechanisation, RSCs and taxable incomes. Internal factors were listed as the city's limited rates base, the availability of industrial land, the income-loss from trading services, the availability and cost of skilled labour, and the impact of unemployment.

A financial model was developed, to predict various scenarios for the future of city finances. Based on predicted inflation rates, population growth rates, increases in rateable property, electricity sales, and wage increases, the model produced two scenarios:

- a best scenario: breakeven, whereby the transport deficit is eliminated by significant increases in income, central government support for the black transport service, and increases in revenue to match inflation.
- a worst (and expected) scenario, whereby the City faces a R70 million deficit by 1995.

The group produced the following objectives and strategies:

- Objective 1: To improve operational efficiencies and minimise costs to the consumer of trading services and the supply of water.

= Strategies: To maximise the life expectancy of the quarry, which was profitable; to investigate the operational efficiencies of the municipal produce market; to investigate leasing the forestry undertaking to private enterprise to increase profitability; to encourage the greater use of water, as its cost will become less in real terms.

- Objective 2: To maintain a core transport service at minimum cost to the ratepayer.

= Strategies: The black bus service to be taken over on a contract basis by the government or by private enterprise; to investigate the operating efficiencies of this department.

- Objective 3: Rates and general services: To achieve

15. "First Report of Strategic Planning Action Group 3: City Finances", January 1987.

parity in the valuation of all properties in all areas and to recover the cost of services provided.

= Strategies: To ensure that all ratepayers pay according to the true value of their property; to ensure that the shortfall in rates payable on government properties are covered by additional sewerage and refuse charges; to increase sewerage and refuse charges to cover costs.

- Objective 4: Electricity: The elimination of cross subsidisation of the rates account by the electricity department, and its adverse effect on industrial development.
- Objective 5: To identify alternative sources for capital and operating finances for the future growth of the Pietermaritzburg Metropolitan area. Inter alia, the formation of a local development bank should be considered.
- Objective 6: To set up an effective capital and operating budgeting and reporting procedure to facilitate long-term planning and effective utilisation of resources.
- Objective 7: The development of the City's management structure to maximise resources available and improve productivity.

= Strategies: to reorganise the management structure in line with private enterprise concepts whereby Councillors set policy and the Executive performs the operational function. The Chief Executive Officer (Town Clerk) should not have line responsibility. Levels of delegation should be clearly defined.

d) Action Group 4: Quality of Life

The group's mission statement read as follows: "To influence the future planning of Pietermaritzburg in such a way that the quality of life of all communities is enriched by a secure aesthetically attractive environment; enhancing the existing character and heritage of the City; providing adequate leisure time activities and facilities; and being sensitive to the ecological needs of the area" (16).

16. "First report of Strategic Action Group 4: Quality of Life", January 1987.

The following objectives were identified:

- to strengthen Pietermaritzburg's status as the capital city of Natal/Kwazulu;
- To promote the character and heritage of Pietermaritzburg, using museums, restoration, and educational programmes;
- to strengthen the cultural base within the city, by the co-ordination of museums;
- to develop and promote accessible cultural facilities, such as museums, art galleries and theatres;
- to promote the development of non-racial sport in Pietermaritzburg, by providing more facilities and co-ordinating sports in Pietermaritzburg;
- to promote further conservation areas in the greater Pietermaritzburg area;
- to encourage the creative and sensitive use of open space for the benefit of all communities;
- to promote a cleaner Pietermaritzburg.

e) Action Group 5: Human Relations/Political change

The group defined their mission statement as follows: "Our purpose is to take the lead in involving all groups and communities in developing a spirit of Pietermaritzburg, in order to identify opportunities and threats in the area of Human Relations, so that the general Quality of Life may rest on a platform from which general health, contentment and acceptable living is fostered and, through sound planning, optimise these advantages and negate these threats" (17).

The group produced a long list of external factors which impinge on human relations: rapid urbanisation; a regulated economic system; the Indaba and the Joint Executive Authority; an unpopular education system; an unsatisfactory central and local government system; high unemployment; deteriorating labour relations; lack of improvement in the average disposable income of blacks; insufficient opportunity for communication; unequal income distribution; unrest, and politically motivated boycotts.

Internal factors, which can be addressed by the group, were listed as appropriate representation on local authority structures; job creation; race relations;

17. "First Report of Strategic Planning Action Group 5: Human Relations/Political Change", January 1987.

education; pressure to bear on Group Areas; communication channels; and deregulation at local authority level.

Its ultimate objectives and proposed strategies were the following:

- Objective 1: To promote appropriate representation on local government structures in the Pietermaritzburg area.

= strategy: to reach consensus regarding the formulation of proposals, e.g. by establishing a forum to facilitate discussion on relations; by establishing a non-statutory alternative Council, and by establishing an informal group or council based on wards.

- Objective 2: To promote and encourage effective education for all people in the Pietermaritzburg area.

= Strategy: To provide all people with opportunities for self-realisation; for example, by non-racial education parks, play centres, resource centres, and business school.

= Strategy: To establish strong formal education co-ordination, e.g. by effective utilisation of formal education resources (staff or facilities); diverting surplus education resources to upgrading of black community teaching resources; and development of co-ordinated educational institutions.

= Strategy: To introduce effective informal education programmes and facilities, such as adult education, play centres, youth and sports organisation, and a Junior Council.

- Objective 3: To encourage respect and understanding amongst all communities.

= Strategy: To introduce organised non-racial activities, such as informal theatre, pre-primary schools, festivals, and sport.

= Strategy: To improve human relations amongst all communities, e.g. by adopting a "Sullivan" code for Pietermaritzburg, positive media reporting, inclusion of all communities in the decision-making process, the City Council taking the lead in non-racial initiatives,

elimination of petty apartheid, and supporting property ownership by all.

In February 1987, the Human Relations Action Group suggested a Greater Pietermaritzburg Conference (18). The objective of the conference would be to reach a degree of consensus on a single metropolitan council to administer the Greater Pietermaritzburg Metropolitan area. The conference would be multiracial and as widely representative as possible, and have an open agenda. It was envisaged that the City Council would take the lead in identifying leaders who would then plan the conference. The conference itself could last for over a year. Any proposals emerging from that conference would be tested, for example, by referendum, after the conference.

The Action Group had already requested Prof. Irvine of the University of Pietermaritzburg to do preliminary research on the feasibility of such a conference. His preliminary survey indicated a remarkable degree of support for the proposal across a wide spectrum of interests and political positions; including members of the City Council, the LACs, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Industries, the Sakekame, and among leading figures in the community council, Inkatha, UDF, Natal Indian Congress, and the Indian and Coloured Ratepayers and Residents Associations (19). There was widespread recognition of the contradictions between economic integration and the existing incoherence of local governmental structures.

The conference itself never materialised. The United Democratic Front's stance was conditional: although it supported the idea in principle, it listed some preconditions for approval of the conference. Most significant of these was that detainees had to be released so that the UDF could participate fully, and all restrictions on the UDF's ability to operate openly had to be lifted (20). The state of emergency precluded these conditions being met. There was also some confusion on the actual and desirable relation between Pietermaritzburg 2 000 and the Conference (see below).

18. Natal Witness, 11 February 1987.

19. Address, Prof. Irvine, Centre for Policy Studies seminar, 8 July 1988.

20. Natal Witness, 11 February 1987.

Furthermore, the Council had accepted the Irvine report, but failed to distribute it prior to the Pietermaritzburg 2 000 presentation to the Council which occurred in a blaze of publicity in February 1987. The conference outcome was reported in the media virtually as a fait accompli and the initiative was then rejected by UDF leaders (21).

Further difficulties were the general election, which intensified party-political polarisation, and the National Party victories signalled a conservative turn in the white electorate. The final problem was the violence in the Pietermaritzburg townships, which totally eliminated any prospects of Inkatha-UDF co-operation in the foreseeable future.

The conference also faced other stumbling blocks. The numerous fears and suspicions on all sides were never dealt with. The NP feared a PFP ploy; the LACs feared a threat to their vested interests and their incorporation into the City Council; the UDF/Natal Indian Congress were suspicious of the Council as an arm of the South African state, and of its links with Pietermaritzburg 2 000; there was suspicion of links with the Provincial Administration through Pietermaritzburg 2 000's links with the Regional Development Advisory Committee; whites feared an Indian majority in a non-racial city council; and whites and Indians feared black domination (22).

Another initiative by this Action Group was its proposal for a citizen's association to advise and support local officials, to develop strategic plans, and to collect and disseminate information. The group proposed a "metropolitan citizen executive" to determine priorities and assist in the implementation of issues that are the concern of the private sector, through a series of permanent action groups (23). This would enable more bottom-up planning, and would also transform the conflict-based Westminster system to a more co-operative form of decision-making. Instead of defining citizenship according to "rights", this system would rather base citizenship on individuals' involvement in, and commitment to, community life. By organising involvement

21. Address by Prof. Irvine, Seminar of the Centre for Policy Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, 8 July 1988.

22. Ibid.

23. Natal Witness, 6 March 1987.

according to issue areas individuals' expertise could also be utilised. This idea could determine the future of the Pietermaritzburg 2 000 initiative.

8.8 Defining limits: The exclusion of the left

From its inception, the Pietermaritzburg 2000 initiative was received rather sceptically in certain crucial political sectors. When the action groups were formed, the CED invited a large number of leaders from all communities in Pietermaritzburg. However, the proponents' conception of "strategic planning", probably because of its American origins, had a built-in bias from the start. The inclusion of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Sakekamer, the Property Owner's Association and, later, the CBD Association into the Technical Committee showed the extent to which the strategic and central area master plans were tailored to business needs. This is not surprising, since their expectation had been that the promotion of commerce and industry would ultimately translate into more jobs and housing, a more secure municipal financial base, and, ultimately, into better civic amenities.

However, unlike the successful experiments in strategic planning in the United States, the South African city contains a huge majority of unenfranchised, materially deprived people, who are officially excluded from normal civic participation although they make an enormous contribution to the economic life of the community. These groups of people have recently grown militant in their demand for recognition and rights.

Furthermore, the very existence of a capitalist sector has become controversial in South Africa. The co-existence of business enterprises and apartheid designs over the last century has left the entire principle of private enterprise severely discredited amongst black workers. There is a deep scepticism regarding the legitimacy of business interests and profit-making. It was, therefore, inevitable that the inclusion of business groups, even before the formation of action groups, would have political costs for Pietermaritzburg 2000.

This selective inclusion also left a mark on the actual performance of the technical committee and the working group. A few examples will suffice. Firstly, the appointment of an Industrial Promotions Officer to "sell" the mall scheme to traders in the area, meant that business priorities would be pre-eminent in the rationale

for and development of the mall. It is unlikely that the idea of the mall would have been considered in the same light by township residents. A second example of this business-oriented *modus operandi* was the mayor's invitation to businesses to contribute to a tabloid in the Natal Witness, to publicise the Pietermaritzburg 2000 initiative. This provided an advertising opportunity to businesses. These activities would not enhance the initiative's credibility in the eyes of township opposition groups. Thirdly, one of the most important contributions of the City Finance Action Group was the proposal to reorganise the municipality's structure in line with private enterprise concepts.

When the Hudak seminar was held in October 1985, all sectors of the community were invited to attend. However, the actual action groups were created by invitations from the City Engineer's Department. It is unlikely that this department was familiar with the townships' political complexities and dynamics; and, therefore, the CED directed its attention to the more prominent and established private and business institutions. One consideration was that action group members would need to commit a lot of time to the project, hence senior people in organisations would be most appropriate, as they would have the infrastructure available to release them from their duties. The result was that all action groups had a majority of white members, although some of the issues they were confronting directly affected township residents.

This bias worried participants in the action groups. Some made special attempts to contact prominent individuals in the other communities. However, this landed them in another of the many pitfalls which characterise contemporary opposition politics. The most accessible leaders were usually members of the Local Affairs Committees, which promptly discredited the whole initiative in the eyes of civic organisations in the townships. (The APDUSA document of April 1987 explicitly described these LAC members as "sell-outs").

Because of the deep cleavages between South Africa's various political arenas, there was evidently a vast difference in people's understanding of political issues. Only in April 1987, did it become apparent to Pietermaritzburg 2000 participants that numerous organisations were hostile to the initiative. One reason for this was a fundamental difference in people's definition of "politics": for the participants, the initiative was "non-political", because it was an all-inclusive attempt to genuinely promote the prosperity of

ALL citizens. It was not "political", because it did not aim at "taking power", in the way political parties do. However, it became clear that township organisations regarded virtually any facet of society as "political", because the whole society is permeated with inequality and oppression.

This fundamental difference in perception also influenced their respective perceptions on appropriate strategies. According to APDUSA, "The problems of human relations cannot be solved over cups of tea. The problem is a national one and has to be resolved through political struggle which has to be fought and won. Human pride and dignity, the only basis of human relations, has to be attained through struggle. It cannot be given as a gift".

In April 1987, the extent of political cleavages really became evident. The African People's Democratic Union of South Africa explicitly rejected Pietermaritzburg 2000, as it was a "fraud of regional solutions to national oppression and exploitation". According to its pamphlet, the selection and handling of issues reflect only the experience and interests of whites, and will do little to rectify a century of severe social inequality. The proponents of Pietermaritzburg 2000 "are talking on a wave length which is poles apart from that used by the oppressed"; this is very evident, especially, in their understanding of "the quality of life", "human relations" and the city's financial crisis. The initiative is largely run by whites, who "have always taken it for granted that they know what is best for the blacks ... it is part of the herrenvolk mentality". Ultimately, the proponents of Pietermaritzburg 2000 are businessmen, who want a stable business climate, and better investment prospects. It is also impossible to invite organisations from all sides of the political spectrum, when the political and security situations give some organisations a definite advantage over others. The leftist critics believed that, at best, the Pietermaritzburg 2000 initiative is a naive attempt to gloss over the fundamentally exploitative nature of South African society; and, at worst, it is an attempt to bribe the oppressed classes into silence and obedience.

In April 1987, 31 community organisations announced that they would not participate in Pietermaritzburg 2000, till the state of emergency is lifted. Also, they felt that the broader community was only involved after action groups had devised plans and strategy. This was unacceptable.

There was, therefore, a feeling that the whole process had to be started from scratch. This also influenced their response to the Greater Pietermaritzburg Conference: the Combined Residents' and Ratepayers' Association wanted the conference to be the basis of Pietermaritzburg 2000, with the latter virtually an arm of the former. The Conference would, therefore, address the basic problem of producing acceptable institutions, before any substantive planning on other issues took place. This logic seemed contrary to the Pietermaritzburg 2000 participants' conception of the order of pre-eminence, for they saw the Conference as only one of the many proposals emerging from the lengthy activities of the action groups.

Some tentative negotiations did take place between representatives of Pietermaritzburg 2000 and the CRRA. However, the township violence soon erupted and ended any possibilities of reconciliation.

8.9 The future of Pietermaritzburg 2 000

Once the action groups had completed their analysis and specification of objectives and strategies, the question of the appropriate vehicle to continue these initiatives, arose. The Council had already approved the appointment of a co-ordinator for the action groups. In time, the convenors hoped to have an independent directorate with its own administrative staff. Simultaneously, the CED withdrew from its guiding role, and the City Engineer was replaced by a private individual as convenor of Pietermaritzburg 2000.

One of the crucial questions was how to accommodate the critical township groups. Should Pietermaritzburg 2000 simply try to draw them into the existing action group structures, or should it disband and reconvene as a "political" body? However, this may alienate some of the other participants.

Another problem is that of financing. The City Council had been shouldering an enormous financial burden over four years, and it is questionable whether it would be prepared to continue to do this. If strategic planning becomes financed by private enterprise, however, this may frighten off township organisations. On the other hand, private enterprise may only be prepared to make large financial contributions if there are fairly immediate and material pay-offs. However, political negotiations are

usually difficult, protracted and very vulnerable to external factors. Also, the demand for such pay-offs will directly contradict the basic philosophy of township groups. The issue of financing, and the accompanying philosophical questions, was discussed more fully in section 8.5.

In effect, the Pietermaritzburg 2000 experience has now reached the real frontier of South African politics. The most pressing question seems not to be "How can we improve social relations?" or "What is the most desirable political order?" Rather, the real question is "How can we find a mediating device, which can establish an acceptable forum, where we can discuss the establishment of appropriate institutional structures, within which the questions of social inequality can be addressed?"

In any participatory planning process, structures must be set up with due regard to the political sensitivities of all political groups. This may require a long period of prior negotiation, to enable all political groups to state their preconditions for involvement, and to develop sufficient organisational and leadership skills to participate effectively. A great deal will be demanded from the convenors of such an initiative to motivate all political groups to participate. Mutual trust will have to be built up over years, and visible signs of success provided. The Grahamstown experience, documented in the next chapter, offers some progress towards this ideal.

Yet, even though the Pietermaritzburg experience did not succeed in involving all the communities, the concept of participatory planning offers exciting possibilities (24). First, it brings public involvement into the very heart of decision-making, which often tends to take place only within administrative departments. Secondly, it exposes administrators directly to the opinions and experiences of sectors of the community which have remained isolated and disenfranchised for many years. The likelihood of inappropriate policies is reduced thereby.

Thirdly, municipal officials at present do have practical administrative reasons for planning for an entire metropolitan area. Planning along racial lines is often fragmented, cumbersome, time-consuming and expensive. In other words, groups with the political desire to overcome racial barriers can work with officials who agree on the

24. See Atkinson, D. "Shaping a Post-Apartheid City", Indicator South Africa, Spring 1988, p. 11-13.

need for integrated planning.

Involvement in planning can be an important educational experience for all political leaders and activists. A knowledge of practical constraints and possibilities would not only result in more realistic demands being made, but would strengthen the impact of political leaders when they make political and practical demands on governmental bodies. It will also enable business and political groups to get to know each other's perspectives, constraints and interests.

Participatory planning will be an important investment in a post-apartheid society, because the immense problems of urbanisation and development impose tremendous demands on decision-makers. There is no room for misguided planning and administrative waste. Democratic planning is not simply a political luxury; it is a crucial component of effective planning.

9. THE GRAHAMSTOWN INITIATIVE: PUBLIC ACTION OUTSTRIPPING MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP

9.1 Background

Grahamstown, like other eastern Cape towns, has experienced several years of intense political activity. The roots of the UDF-oriented mobilisation of the 1980's can be traced back to the previous decade, when the residents of Fingo Village successfully fought off government plans to remove them to the Ciskei. However, until 1988, political activism had never led to successful and sustained negotiations between the white and black communities. One main reason for this failure was the lack of an assertive umbrella agency, which could bridge the intense political divisions.

Political mobilisation in the township peaked during 1985 and 1986, with three consumer boycotts, township and security force violence, and regular mass-supported funerals. A wide variety of grievances were raised, ranging from local socio-economic issues and rejection of the local black local authority, to national demands for the ending of police repression and the abolition of apartheid.

The white community was divided in their response to this situation. Because the Rini Town Council in the township was never unseated, the Grahamstown City Council felt unwilling to circumvent the Rini Council's authority by negotiating with the UDF-affiliated Grahamstown Burial Action Committee (GBAC). The Grahamstown Chamber of Commerce and Industry did initiate negotiations with the civic association, but its attitude towards negotiations remained ambiguous. Although the Chamber was anxious to deal with some of the socio-economic demands, it seemed to distrust the motives and actions of the GBAC, and also claimed that negotiations could not really begin until the central government responded to the GBAC's non-negotiable demands (¹). The Chamber tried to project a neutral image, and attempted to play the role of communication channel between the GBAC and the authorities, but its failure to take a strong stand against apartheid and in favour of the GBAC, caused it to

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1. These demands were: the unbanning of meetings, the release of leaders, the lifting of the state of emergency, and an end to the harassment of organisations. See A. Roux and K. Helliker, Voices from Rini, ISER Working Paper no. 23, 1986.

lose credibility in the township. The Chamber, representing a large number of small and politically diverse local businessmen, was also internally divided.

The activities in the townships raised the question of the appropriate response by sympathetic whites. Many whites were concerned about the grievances which GBAC raised. An informal white group called Grahamstown Talks, tried to establish contact with township leaders, and bring the grievances of the township to the attention of the authorities. Another kind of response emerged from UDF-affiliated progressives in the white community. They even organised a symbolic consumer boycott amongst whites, in order to show sympathy with black opposition activities, and to interpret and defend the demands and grievances of the township within the white community. Because of their links with black civic organisations, sympathetic white organisations also suffered bannings and detentions in 1985 and 1986. Despite these sacrifices, progressive whites never succeeded in bringing township organisations and local white elites together, in a sustained negotiation process. In fact, the white boycott became very controversial in the white community: "Many whites argued against the boycott strategy per se, whilst others conceded that the strategy was legitimate and potentially effective to some extent, but argued against direct participation by whites in it. The first grouping of whites went out of their way to indicate, through the press, that the boycott was grounded on intimidation, basing this claim on conversations with employees, especially domestic workers. The second grouping suggested alternative avenues that whites could explore to deal with the boycott demands" (2).

In the highly-charged atmosphere of the consumer boycott of 1986, negotiations were undermined by several factors: detention of black leaders; a marked absence of involvement by the City Council; internal divisions within the black community; and national political demands by black organisations, which left the business community feeling powerless and defeatist. No organisation or agency existed which could credibly serve as mediator.

It was only after the first state of emergency that a tenuous bridge between liberal whites, progressive whites and township organisations was formed. In April 1986, the members of "Grahamstown Talks", and the UDF-oriented

2. A. Roux and K. Helliker, *Ibid*, p. 86.

white organisation, the Grahamstown Action Group (GAG), began working together for the first time. Each group could provide something which the other lacked: "Grahamstown Talks" could provide some access to the more apolitical and conservative sectors of the white community, while GAG could provide contact with the popular leaders in the township. By June 1986, the joint venture had provided a forum for discussions with township leaders on the education boycott, the consumer boycott, and the ongoing clashes between residents and security forces in the township.

This process was interrupted by the second state of emergency, when large numbers of township activists were detained. Most of the white leaders of the Grahamstown Action Group were detained for long periods. Until 1988, there has been very little scope for white involvement in the crisis in Grahamstown, because the disarray in township organisations left concerned white people with no-one in the townships with whom they could liaise. For two years, an atmosphere of helpless passivity prevailed amongst whites, despite broad concern for political and economic conditions in the townships.

9.2 The Grahamstown Initiative

The "Grahamstown Initiative" ⁽³⁾ began in early 1988, when a group of concerned white Grahamstonians met to discuss the severe social and economic problems of the town. Most of the participants were not activists from the 1984-6 period, and presented a new wave of awareness and concern in the white community. The first meeting was attended by people from a wide political and professional spectrum.

At the meeting, the participants expressed concern about poor health conditions, the serious unemployment problem, the lack of communication between the various communities, and the segregated structure of local government. They felt that reconciliation within the town was an important priority. Gradually, the need to launch a "Grahamstown - One City" campaign was perceived. It was decided that the group should work towards a conference, where problems of health, economics, unemployment, town planning, church matters, education and recreation could be addressed. This conference would

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3. Information for this section was obtained from interviews with participants in the Initiative, and from personal observation.

be a launching pad for practical programmes to be implemented.

The organisation gradually evolved into a steering committee, elected by interested citizens, and consisting of five well-chosen representatives of different sectors of the community. Several sub-groups were organised around each of the issue areas delineated at the first few meetings. The task of the sub-groups was the compiling of a programme for the full "Grahamstown Initiative Conference", to be held in September 1988. The 1820 Foundation supplied the venue for all meetings.

The steering committee reported to a broader policy committee, consisting of about 30 people. Membership of this committee was open to anyone interested in attending, but at its core was a definite membership, consisting of two representatives from each subgroup together with eight hand-picked members, usually chosen at the initiative of the steering committee. They were drawn from as many divergent sectors of the community as possible, and were usually recognised in their individual capacity. The policy committee provided a sounding-board for new ideas.

During the months before the conference, each sub-group tried to involve new people in its activities. This was fraught with difficulties, as newcomers often had very little experience of the deep political and social cleavages within the society. The Recreation Committee almost foundered on the unwillingness of SACOS sports groups to participate, and only survived by planning an open discussion at the conference. White and black sports bodies, including SACOS-oriented individuals, participated in this discussion. The policy committee found that, because of the deep political divisions in sport circles, it was impossible to have sport as part of the initiative, but a tentative tolerance was achieved at the conference. It was decided at the conference that both SACOS and non-SACOS organisations would attempt to improve sports facilities in Grahamstown.

The Education Committee also experienced difficulties in the months before the conference. The members of that committee felt unwilling to include more conservative (especially Afrikaans) educationalists on their committee. When the steering committee emphasised the need to establish reconciliation in Grahamstown, the committee felt compromised, and resigned. At the conference, no programme was drawn up for education, although an open discussion was held, involving both

progressive and more conservative educationalists.

The other groups were much more successful. The Church, Arts, Health, Economics and Town Planning Committees all planned presentations and discussions at the conference.

The conference itself, held in early September, was attended by about 200 people. All Grahamstonians were invited, although the majority of those present were whites. The conference lasted for two days, and most of the actual work was done in the meetings planned by the sub-groups. In addition, a social gathering and an inter-denominational church service were held. The latter included a performance by the local NG church choir.

At the final plenary, each group reported on its progress. The following suggestions were presented:

i) The Church Group

This group planned to establish a soup kitchen, and investigate the problem of beggars. It also planned to form a Lay Persons Fraternal, to stimulate dialogue and communication between the various churches. By the end of 1988, this Fraternal had been established, and included all English churches, as well as the Order of Ethiopia and the NG Church.

ii) The Arts/Culture Group

This group had been established on the initiative of a group of artists, after the controversy in June 1988 on the extent of township involvement in the annual Grahamstown Festival of the Arts.

This group planned to establish a committee, which would assist existing arts and performance groups in becoming financially viable. It would provide training, and help to share resources and facilities.

Its immediate goal was the establishment of an arts centre, which would be accessible to township art groups. Other ideas were publicity concerts for the Grahamstown Initiative, exhibitions of arts and crafts, and talent competitions.

By late 1988, this group was the most vibrant of all the groups. It had already held an open-air non-racial jamboree on Church Square in Grahamstown. The Rhodes University Speech and Drama Department provided

facilities and infrastructure. The group is also investigating a scheme to lend artists money to set up shows.

iii) The Health Group

This group drew attention to the fragmented nature of health services, and the need to rationalise. It would also investigate voluntary geriatric services, to enable the "young old" (60-70 year-old people) to care for the "old old" (which usually included the infirm). Play centres at the hospital were needed, as well as feeding schemes. These feeding schemes were, by the end of 1988, the main activity of the group. The group also considered a public education campaign on health issues, and the need for research on the relation between living conditions (such as space, running water, and upgrading) on health.

iv) The Economics Group

This group based its activities on a "SWOT" (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of the economy of Grahamstown. They found that the education sector is an important strength of Grahamstown, and it should be developed. They felt that a training centre, to teach basic skills, and a hotel school, could be established. The clay deposits could also be exploited. An investigation into the clay industry has already started. The City Council should appoint a Development Officer, to attract investment. Tourism could be promoted; the possibilities of promoting co-operatives could be investigated; and assistance given to small businesses.

v) Town Planning

This group found that the racial separation of local government negatively affected planning processes, because they become very costly and time-consuming. The obstacles to the widening of public participation in local decision-making should be investigated, and the group suggested the formation of a non-racial ratepayers association. In general, it was felt that the public should be much more involved in planning and municipal decision-making, than is the case at present. However, the group also experienced a sense of helplessness in the face of government policy, especially regarding group areas and separate local authorities.

9.3 Assessment of the Grahamstown Initiative

After the conference, the main activities were continued by the groups themselves, with the steering committee fulfilling a co-ordinating role. Each group is responsible for attracting suitable and enthusiastic members, and to plan and implement proposals.

After the conference, the organisers felt that the major achievement of the initiative was the involvement of a wide range of people from a wide spectrum of society. The policy committee and sub-groups includes businessmen, an NG dominee and other church leaders, progressive educationalists, community leaders from both conservative and progressive backgrounds and experts in health and economics. One problem, however, has been the low level of participation by municipal officials.

This inclusiveness was achieved by steering clear of formal institutions. Organisers invited people in their individual capacities, and not as representatives of organisations. This helped to avoid long-standing tensions between these organisations.

The organisers also took care to accommodate various social and political sensitivities. While attempting to address technical and social problems, the organisers remained sensitive to the political factors which affect these issues. No one political standpoint was regarded as the only correct one, and no anxieties were treated as illegitimate ⁽⁴⁾.

The decentralised structure of the entire Initiative is also a source of strength. The difficulties experienced by one group do not threaten the existence of the other groups. Each group can also determine its own style of operating, and take care of its own recruitment needs. The decentralised structure also provides many possibilities for multiple middle-level leadership, based on different spheres of expertise. Participants are not expected to venture into issue areas beyond their professional or personal experience. This allows participants to feel comfortable and useful within the small sub-groups.

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4. Address by Grahamstown Initiative convenor, Mr. Chris Heymans, at a seminar of the Centre for Policy Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, 8 July 1988.

The lack of involvement of the City Council is both a weakness and a strength. It deprives the Initiative of the reassurance that decisions will be implemented with the backing and resources of the Council, and therefore leaves it open to the charge of being a "talk-shop", without any real prospect of achieving anything. However, the absence of the Council means that opposition groups' inevitable political sensitivities regarding the nature and interests of a white governmental institution are not aggravated. Furthermore, given many organisations' reluctance or refusal to deal with black local authorities, it also means that the Initiative does not face the contradiction of dealing with a white Council while avoiding the black local authority nearby. At present, the Initiative is presenting itself as a body of concerned private citizens, without significant links to any local authority.

Under conditions of a state of emergency, it is difficult to judge the real legitimacy of the Initiative, especially in the black community. Since there are hardly any popular organisations in the townships, and most leaders are detained or restricted, the extent of the Initiative's impact on the consciousness of ordinary people is difficult to judge. At present, the Initiative has attracted several talented black people, with some organisational experience. However, the Initiative runs the risk of becoming a meeting-place for white and black political elites, without significant mass political participation. Yet this may be desirable as long as the state of emergency lasts, for a mass organisation may well be suppressed by the security forces. In comparison with Pietermaritzburg 2 000, more black people are involved, and they also have closer links with the ordinary residents of the townships. However, the decimation of black community organisations by the state of emergency has prevented the establishment of consistent and regular procedures to ensure accountability. In comparison with the recent Cape Town experience, therefore, the Grahamstown Initiative has not really penetrated to black working people and non-professionals.

However, the involvement of professional elites may also be quite useful in dealing with social problems, if these problems are defined in a rather technicist way. The experience of involving different racial and political elites in problem-solving may also have an integrating effect on the community in the long run, as trust between previously isolated groups develops. A few municipal officials did attend the conference. They can become

involved in the initiative, thus making their skills available, while avoiding the political sensitivities surrounding the City Council itself.

As far as the involvement of the white community is concerned, the processes of recruitment to the Initiative also suffers from a political bias. The local newspaper, which supports the Initiative, has a liberal profile. It does not really reach working people in the townships, or the more conservative white people. Sub-group members usually become involved after being approached personally by steering committee members.

Another weakness in the Initiative is the unenthusiastic involvement of the business community. The conference was largely sponsored by the national office of a building society. There is no local financial base for the activities of the Initiative.

Yet the Initiative does include a significant spectrum of professionals, academics, clergy and other interested individuals. It is a new form of interaction within the Grahamstown community, and has appealed to individuals and groups which have not been organisationally involved before.

Furthermore, the Initiative has been modest in its aims, and has not indulged in plans to drastically reshape the local order. This has prevented too many political sensitivities from being outraged. In general, the Initiative is a low-key and long-term attempt to cement social relations in Grahamstown, by involving concerned individuals in addressing pressing socio-economic problems. The Initiative may develop into a valuable integrative network, which could facilitate the mediation and resolution of political crises in future.

10. SWELLENDAM AND PACALTSDORP: POSSIBILITIES FOR CHANGE IN THE SOUTHERN CAPE

10.1 Swellendam

At the Cape Province Municipal Association Congress in 1985, Swellendam produced the following motion:

" Dat vertoe tot die Staat gerig word vir die skep van die nodige wetgewing sodat die Kleurlinggroep binne 'n munisipale gebied proporsioneel in verhouding tot hul finansiële bydrae tot die instandhouding en ontwikkeling van die dorp in die munisipale raad van die munisipaliteit verteenwoordig kan word" ⁽¹⁾.

This motion was accepted unanimously by the Swellendam Town Council. The Council felt that the coloured area of Swellendam could never qualify as financially viable, nor would they have the availability of councillors and personnel to establish their own municipality ⁽²⁾.

The Council regarded the management committee system as unsuccessful, because it is simply advisory, and this results in extreme frustration. It is also time-consuming, because officials have to explain all the issues to the committee members. The latter usually are not familiar with the particulars of any issue.

Councillors felt that the town cannot be divided into separate municipalities, because all the infrastructure forms one integrated system. Separate budgeting for the two areas is cumbersome and artificial ⁽³⁾.

There has never been a management committee election, because there are never more candidates than vacancies. This either means that the residents are satisfied, or are not interested in the management committee system.

1. CPMA minutes, 1985. English translation: "That the government be requested to create the required legislation to enable the Coloured group within a municipal area be represented in the municipality, in relation to their financial contribution to the maintenance and development of the town."

2. Interview, municipal official, Swellendam.

3. Interview, Councillor, 11 May 1988.

At the Congress of the Cape Province Municipal Association in 1985, the motion was postponed to the next year's Congress. No vote was taken. It was brought to the Congress again in 1986, and there seemed to be much support for it from the bigger cities. However, the motion did not get very far. One reason was that the Swellendam delegate was not very favourable to the motion himself, and did not defend it very enthusiastically. A motion by Mr. Aggenbach of the Cape Divisional Council, that the Congress does not consider the Swellendam motion, was then accepted ⁽⁴⁾. Another reason was that key proponents of single local authorities and non-racial residential areas, were called away by the Minister of Constitutional Development during the CPMA congress. They were told that legislation does not make provision for such innovations. The CPMA members were persuaded to accept RSCs as an interim measure. When they returned to the Congress, they proposed this solution, and it was accepted. In this way, the question of "coloured" representation on white Councils was side-lined ⁽⁵⁾.

It appears that the provincial municipal associations is not a very conducive avenue for political reform. In these associations, each town has an equal vote. This creates a powerful conservative bloc, based on the small platteland towns. Voting is not secret, and this constrains representatives from breaking with precedent and with party and ideological affiliations. Furthermore, the Cape Province Municipal Association has never really dealt with contentious political issues. It spends most of its time taking up the practical problems which municipalities face, and it strives to achieve a fair degree of consensus on these issues.

The CPMA also does not have an ethic of challenging government policy in fundamental ways. It strives to maintain good working relations with the Provincial Administration, whose officials always attend CPMA Congresses, and are given prominent speaking rights. This does not mean that the CPMA is a handmaiden of government, and municipal delegates often speak out on government decisions which trouble them. However, the basic framework of government policy is usually taken as a given, and debate centres on the practical implications of these policies for municipalities.

4. Interview, municipal official, 31 March 1988.

5. Interview, CPMA official, 24 August 1987.

Even if the CPMA had to take a strong stand on a political matter (in 1982, for example, it submitted a memorandum to the Schlebusch commission advocating the establishment of single local authorities), various institutional structures tend to limit its influence. The CPMA, together with other provincial associations, form the United Municipal Executive (UME), which has to accommodate the more conservative municipal associations of the Transvaal and Free State. The UME's influence at the prestigious Council for the Co-ordination of Local Government Affairs is also exercised within significant constraints. As described above (see section 2), the Council is chaired by the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, and his officials play a powerful role behind the scenes. The very structure of the Council, based on racially separated municipal associations, also tends to work against the discussion of fundamental changes in the local political order.

This does not mean that the CPMA, UME and Co-ordinating Council offer no opportunity for local restructuring at all. However, a large reformist groundswell will be needed for local authorities' opinions to be stated strongly at the Council, and for it to be taken seriously by the Department.

10.2 PACALTSDORP: THE FIRST NON-RACIAL LOCAL AUTHORITY IN SOUTH AFRICA?

Pacaltsdorp is the only independent "coloured" local authority in the country. It did not arrive there via the management committee route. It enjoyed management board status from 1884 until 1974, when a Cape Provincial Ordinance conferred municipal status on all towns which were being run by village management boards.

For several years, Pacaltsdorp was plagued with financial problems, due to low-income and low-rateable property, little commerce and industry, unwise development contracts with private consultants, and overpaid staff. After 1979, when the Provincial Authority stepped in, the town's financial position improved considerably. In 1982, a special provincial committee was set up to promote Pacaltsdorp on two fronts - as an attractive residential town and as an industrial centre ⁽⁶⁾. There is, at present, a great deal of housing and infrastructural development in the town, despite

6. Personal communication, R. Cameron, UCT.

bureaucratic delays in the second tier and own affairs departments.

The town's legal position is somewhat peculiar. It is basically regarded as a "coloured" town, but is based on the same ordinance as governs white local authorities. Furthermore, because the relevant section of the ordinance states that voters for the Town Council do not have to qualify as voters for the House of Assembly, it implies that a person of any race can vote in a Pacaltsdorp municipal election. This does, conceivably, include white landowners in the industrial area, the few Indian residents in the town, and a black person who has recently been given a permit to live in the area. (There are, in effect, no group areas restrictions on Pacaltsdorp) (7).

Pacaltsdorp, like white municipalities, is almost in toto responsible to the CPA. The own affairs departments are now gradually asserting their role, but this only affects education and housing at present.

There is apparently a great deal of public interest in civic affairs in Pacaltsdorp. Elections are competitive, and councillors are called upon to solve many civic issues.

Pacaltsdorp's legal position is an anachronism, but the town may offer a possible legal model for a non-racial local authority. Its present dynamic municipal leadership, intent on promoting infrastructural development, as well as the racially tolerant ethos of Pacaltsdorp, may help to popularise the ideal of a non-racial local authority in future.

7. Interview, municipal official, 10 May 1988.

11. CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

When comparing all these initiatives taken by white political and economic leaders in various localities, one is struck by the diversity of situations, actions and outcomes. In some cases, they were responses to overt crises; in other cases, long-standing principles and ideologies played an important role; in yet other situations, financial and technical imperatives were predominant. These initiatives were based on complex and often conflicting notions of what local government is about, what the relationship between citizens and their government should be, and about appropriate forms of political action. (The fact that these questions form such an uncharted and unexplored terrain testifies to the extraordinary way in which the racial issue has retarded serious political debate about local government in South Africa). It is, therefore, somewhat misleading to group these local experiences together under the bland category of "white local initiatives for change", as the label may conceal more than it reveals.

Yet there are significant similarities between them. Firstly, certain common political values were reflected in these initiatives. In one way or another, democracy, legitimacy, equality, liberty and administrative efficiency were striven for, although these values were interpreted in different ways (

¹). At a more overt level, all these initiatives suggested ways of redefining the racial order in South Africa. These suggestions can be categorised according to the degree of deviance from the current system of promoting racially segregated municipalities.

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1. Compare, for example, the sophisticated strategic planning ideas which emerged from Pietermaritzburg 2 000, with Port Alfred's very simple suggestion of administering a city in a unified way. Similarly, the notions of democratic participation vary between Durban's traditional institutional perspective, Cape Town's most recent attempts to develop low-key procedures of accountability to the most grass-roots level, and Port Alfred's vision of democratic processes based on inclusive, populist and overtly political community organisations.

11.1 Possible options on the road to non-racial local government

i) Co-ordinating committees

This system still recognises the existence of separate local authorities, and is at present being promoted by the government, especially in the Transvaal. These committees could work together to iron out the practical problems caused by segregating local authorities in the first place. Because of its racial basis, the system is very likely to be rejected by opposition groups in South Africa, although municipal personnel may welcome it as one way of carrying out municipal functions within a highly impractical, fragmented system. A final disadvantage would be the entrenchment of the principle of "own" and "general" affairs. This would require separate sets of officials for each municipality to be maintained. It should be noted that the development of bureaucracies is a costly and dangerous exercise, because it becomes virtually impossible to dismantle them once they are established.

ii) Mini-RSCs

This system is also based on separate local authorities, and the government has decided to introduce it in Natal. One proposal emanating from Pietermaritzburg suggested the introduction of mini-RSCs, as an interim measure until a proper non-racial local authority can be introduced.

Unlike "normal" RSCs, mini-RSCs are town-based, and exclude the farming community. They are therefore much more likely to produce a sense of identity, across racial boundaries, within a town. The advantages of mini-RSCs are the following: they are formalised and officially sanctioned; they cater for the raising and distribution of funds; and they enable joint planning and administration of the "general affairs" of a particular town. Most importantly, they do allow sustained contact between the different race groups, and may even lead to a shared identity and sense of destiny.

However, they suffer from the same disadvantages as normal RSCs. The black local authorities and coloured or Indian management committees, on which RSCs are based, will also be the constituent parts of mini-RSCs. These bodies generally suffer from a lack of legitimacy, and in the case of "coloured" local government, the Labour Party is reluctant to accept municipal autonomy in the first

place. A second problem would be that representation would presumably take place according to the consumption of services by each participating municipality, and this would ensure a white majority in most towns. This system of representation is hardly likely to appeal to black, coloured and Indian councillors, and would discredit the system in the eyes of opposition movements. Furthermore, as in the case of co-ordinating committees, the "own" and "general affairs" principle is ideologically unacceptable to many political groups.

iii. A single municipality with separate councils

None of the case studies contained in this report explicitly considered this option, although it can be argued that Pietermaritzburg 2 000 may utilise the idea of enhancing co-operation amongst the officials of various municipalities, en route to a more inclusive local government system. In this option, a single set of municipal officials would serve as functionaries for three or more Town Councils. The officials would, in effect, develop a certain degree of autonomy, and would almost resemble a utility company, which provides services and expertise on demand. This system would begin to blur the distinction between "own" and "general" affairs, because even the implementation of "own" affairs would be carried out by shared officials. Another practical advantage would be the greater co-ordination between the provision of services for the different racial communities.

Apart from the political problems attached to the maintenance of separate racial councils, administrative difficulties may also arise. Firstly, it is not clear who would actually employ these officials, and pay their salaries. Secondly, it is not clear what would happen if different councils make contradictory demands on these officials. Finally, the practical planning imperatives may well lead to officials becoming a power unto themselves, manipulating weak, divided and inexperienced councillors. This would be quite understandable, as the practical necessity of planning for a whole metropolitan area would require officials to shape the wants and desires of the various sets of councillors.

iv. Consensus decision-making

Pietermaritzburg has experimented with this option. It is based on an informal "gentleman's agreement", whereby white, coloured and Indian councillors agree to abide by

majority decisions. The white council, which is officially the decision-making body, simply ratifies decisions. This idea is based on the distinction between real and formal power: while established institutions would still formally go through established procedures, the real locus of power would have shifted to another forum.

The advantage of this system is that it is the most attainable, as it does not depend on the lengthy process of altering legislation. It also enables real bargaining between the representatives of the various racial groups.

There are several disadvantages. Firstly, it is still based on the discredited management committee system. Secondly, there is always a temptation for groups to opt out of joint decision-making, especially when they disagree with the majority decision. Whites may be tempted to overrule majority decisions, and this has happened on occasion in Pietermaritzburg ⁽²⁾. This is especially likely if management committees do not attract the best possible local representatives, and this results in inferior levels of debate, or irrelevant issues being raised. The white representatives may wish to return to the formal (white-dominated) locus of power, because they may feel that management committee members are not the "real" leaders of their communities, and so lengthy debates with them will not ensure that the real wishes of their communities will be reflected and carried out.

v. Participatory planning

This option entails the opening up of the municipal bureaucratic structure to extensive inputs by pressure groups, through the formation of issue-oriented "action groups". This option can also help to overcome the impasse of racial segregation, if it can open decision-

2. When the Pietermaritzburg City Council was deciding on whether or not to lease its Transport Services to the Kwazulu Transport Services Corporation, white Councillors approved the lease by 10 votes to 4. However, when both the LAC members and the councillors voted on the issue, the combined "consensus vote" went 11 votes to 10 against the lease. The Council decided to disregard the vote and went ahead with the lease. The Natal Witness, 22 October 1987, quoted in M. Francis, Public Policy and Bus Passenger Transport in the Pietermaritzburg Area: A Political Case-study, M.A. Thesis, 1989.

making institutions to pressure and input from recognised community leaders. In other words, instead of township organisations dealing with black local authorities, which they usually refuse to do, they could make an input into the decision-making of white local authorities. The latter do not have the stigma which is attached to their black counterparts, and white municipalities supply important services to central business districts and even to black residential areas. White local authorities are also influential bodies in metropolitan planning, because of their expertise.

As the practical contradictions of the policy of own and general affairs become more evident, more local officials may wish to institute some form of inclusive planning. This impulse should be encouraged and accommodated, because it could be the first step towards reuniting our cities. It can also be argued that officials would benefit greatly from exposure to genuine community leaders and community issues, through a rational process of strategic planning.

However, there are again disadvantages to strategic planning in the current South African context. Such a planning exercise would need credibility in all communities, amongst recognised leaders. They would have to feel that their participation would actually yield fruit, especially in the struggle to overcome racial institutions. This may be difficult to achieve, because any such guarantee given by the organisers could alienate more conservative sectors of the white community. The basic issue-oriented nature (focussing, for example, on health, education and town planning) of the exercise could be lost, and strategic planning could be seen as yet another political ploy.

Secondly, it would be difficult for popular leaders to achieve equality with businessmen and municipal officials, as the latter could use their power, based on finance and expertise, to dominate debates. However, this problem can be overcome, by means of sensitive negotiations on procedure, and by a proper appreciation of the inputs which township representatives can offer. It can also be argued that community leaders' exposure to the nuts and bolts of technical decision-making would be an important learning experience, and could facilitate their exercise of power in future.

As mentioned in Section 8, participatory planning could be a useful investment in a post-Apartheid South Africa, because the procedures of articulating community needs should be fine-tuned, to avoid misguided planning and

administrative waste. Realistically, however, it cannot be expected to function effortlessly in the current polarised and fragmented political situation. It may require several local experiments in strategic planning to teach us how to overcome some of the political divisions, and avoid some of the pitfalls. As towns accumulate experience in such exercises (East London, for example, has started a programme of strategic planning), findings could be researched and disseminated throughout the country.

vi. Multiracial Councils

A multiracial council would administer an entire town, but representation would take place on a racial basis. If a ward system was used, representation of race groups could be allocated according to population (usually leading to a white minority), according to financial contribution (usually causing a white majority), or on an equal basis (which would, in effect, mean that whites are over-represented). A multiracial council could also be elected on a list system.

Although multiracialism would lack political credibility amongst certain opposition groups, it may be acceptable as a transition mechanism towards full non-racialism. It may also appease white fears until a new city identity is forged. In many of the initiatives discussed in this report, the option of multiracialism was not fully spelt out; yet it could have been at the back of the minds of those whites involved. For example, in the negotiations which took place in Port Alfred and East London, it was never spelt out what political system would evolve after the white municipality had taken over the administration of the nearby township. It is unlikely that the white electorate of either Port Alfred or East London would have accepted a non-racial municipality straight away, and hence it seems possible that a multiracial local authority would have been the logical alternative. Of course, it is unclear whether black community organisations would have settled for this option.

vii. An informal all-city council

This proposal emanated strongly from the Durban deliberations. As in the "consensus vote" system, this option is based on the distinction between real and formal power. In this case, however, real power would be located with a forum popularly elected for that purpose. It would not be based on the management committee system.

Of course, a great deal of sensitive negotiation would be necessary regarding the structure of such an informal council, and this may well be the most important part of the entire exercise.

The decisions of the all-city council would automatically be ratified by all participating municipalities. However, the town clerk of Durban raised a possible legal snag: In terms of the Local Authority Ordinance, or the Durban Extended Powers Consolidated Ordinance, it would not be possible to bind the council to decisions made by a separate body. This difficulty would have to be investigated and overcome.

viii. A non-racial council

As the name suggests, such a council would not be based on any considerations of race. Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg have explicitly advocated this option. At present, this is a very ambitious goal, because it confronts government policy head-on, and because it would be very difficult to convince white communities to accept it. Section 11.2 explores some of the issues which this option would entail.

11.2 Non-racialism and beyond: Towards a new political agenda

It is a sobering thought that non-racial local government, which at present seems so much beyond our reach, would only be the starting point of a long process of exploring the important local issues. It is only at this point that the normative values of democracy, participation, legitimacy, liberty and equality will be explored.

The ways in which these ideals eventually become realised will, of course, be influenced greatly by the very processes of achieving non-racialism. Cape Town's attempts to achieve genuine grass-roots accountability could become part of a political culture which could eventually blossom into a strong form of participatory democracy. Port Alfred and East London's experiences of negotiation under extreme pressure could help to forge strong links between the leaders of the various racial

groups, and produce a more consociational order ⁽³⁾. The Pietermaritzburg 2 000 experience could ultimately produce a more open local administrative system, and provide democratic access for a wide variety of issue-oriented pressure groups.

The political agenda of the future will have to look beyond the relationship between the races. It is interesting, in this context, to examine the objection which government officials raised against the attempts by the Port Alfred and East London white local authorities to take over the administration of black townships. Officials claim that this would simply be another form of white domination of black people, because the latter lack the expertise, experience and financial muscle to challenge local white elites effectively. It is precisely this possibility which must be examined, and if possible, avoided.

To do this, it is necessary to discover ways in which the rights of individuals, and especially the working poor, can be protected and enhanced. It will be necessary to evolve forms of participation which could give these people an adequate voice, often in competition with the voice of huge private corporations and powerful interest groups. It will entail a long and searching debate about the redistribution of wealth, the obligations of the rich towards the poor, and the reconciliation between the demands of distributive justice and the imperatives of feasible and cost-effective planning. It is utopian to believe that a post-apartheid society will entail limitless liberty; in fact, all kinds of new constraints will be developed, in an attempt to achieve desirable social goals.

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3. I use the word "consociational" in its original sense, meaning accommodation of genuine leaders of voluntarily-defined groups within a broader community. The role of leaders in such a system is very important, as this form of democracy entails negotiation amongst popular and legitimate elites. The constituent groups remain fairly insulated from each other. It is likely that the historic fragmentation of South African cities would make genuine consociational democracy the most feasible, at least until a stronger sense of city-wide solidarity has developed. (Note that I do not mean "consociational" in the government-defined sense of enforced racial segregation, and co-optation of unrepresentative elites).

In these debates, the very nature of local government will have to be examined. Is a local authority ultimately a service-provision and planning agency, or a negotiation forum between constituent community interests, or a profit-making utility corporation, or primarily a way of developing community solidarity and commitment? Should it be based on an individualistic political order, or a consociational one, or an inclusive community solidarity? Should a unique local spirit be cultivated, or should local government rather be a tool of the national government to consolidate a national political order?

Each of the initiatives described in this report gave a different set of implicit answers to these questions. In the Grahamstown Initiative, for example, the role of local professional elites is enhanced, thus simultaneously emphasising the importance of technicist issues, as well as enhancing the contribution of non-Councillors towards community decision-making. In Durban, by contrast, the structure of the Council was perceived as the central issue. In Pietermaritzburg 2 000, the service-provision and planning functions of local government were emphasised, while in Port Alfred, practical planning imperatives were somewhat eclipsed by the need to symbolically reunite the community.

11.3 Conclusion

Even though most of these initiatives never achieved what they set out to do, their importance in other respects can hardly be exaggerated. It is rare that white elites in South Africa feel sufficiently motivated to challenge the racial order at local level, from which they have benefited for so long. In the process, they have opened a Pandora's box of political, administrative and normative issues, which have for many decades been artificially obscured from view by the racial conflict.

As this wave of local assertiveness spreads, the debates about the issues will become even more interesting and penetrating. It is hoped that this report will make a contribution to this process of rethinking the local political order.

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH

The concept of development has two distinct faces. It refers to man's continual attempts to gain more control over his environment: by mining, by farming, or by flying jet aircraft, for example. Development also refers to a process of emancipation, a process whereby groups of people as well as individuals gain the freedom to decide together on their futures. These two faces of development merge in certain cases. The provision of sufficient food and shelter leaves time for other things, for choices. On the other hand, development often appears Janus-faces: emancipatory ideologies and activities seeming to stunt economic growth.

In Southern Africa today, development strategies reflect such strains and ambiguities. In the Eastern Cape/Ciskei region in particular, political and economic boundaries cut across one another, and complicate strategies aimed at improving the life chances and living conditions of all South Africans. This series of working papers is issued in the hope that more research into development problems will make some contribution to a better understanding of these problems, and to a more effective strategy in tackling them.

The Stella and Paul Loewenstein Charitable and Education Trust established a Chair of Development Studies in the Institute of Social and Economic Research. As a result, a number of research projects related to developmental issues have been launched since 1979. Project results will be reported in these working papers.

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