"THIS IS PEOPLE'S WATER!": WATER SERVICES STRUGGLES AND THE NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN MPUMALANGA, DURBAN; 1998 – 2005

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract iv

Acknowledgements v

Glossary vii

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

I. Background 1
II. Key Ideas and Concepts 4
Ill. Questions / Enquiries 7
IV. Research 'Biography' 20
V. Research Methods 29
VI. Chapters Breakdown 40

CHAPTER 2: Mpumalanga, Locality and Social Differentiation

I. Introduction 47
II. Mpumalanga Township: Contemporary Political History 50
lll. Mpumalanga: Social Differentiation and Cost Recovery 55
IV. Mpumalanga in Durban: Socio-Spatial Differentiation 64
V. Conclusion 70

CHAPTER 3: "Rhetoric is dropped, reality prevails...": The ANC in the South African Economy, 1990s – 2002

I. Introduction 72
II. The ANC and the Restructuring of the South African Economy
(a) Background 74
(b) The Battle for Influence: The Macro-Economic Research Group MERG 81
(c) The Battle for Influence: The South African Foundation (SAF) and the South African Labour Movement (SALM) 85
(d) Enter the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Policy 92
III. Conclusion 96

CHAPTER 4: Water: Policies, Politics and Delivery

I. Introduction 99
II. Water Delivery Problems
(a) Water Delivery Problems: An International Perspective 100
(b) The Water Crisis: South Africa 102
III. Water Delivery Policies in South Africa
(a) The Structure of Water Delivery Services 107
(b) Financing Water Delivery 115
(c) Financing Water Delivery: Public-Private Partnerships and Privatisation 120
IV. Conclusion 130

CHAPTER 5: Social Citizenship and the Emergence of the New Social Movements

I. Introduction 133
II. The Breakdown of Social Citizenship 134
III. The Emergence of the New Social Movements in South Africa, 1998 –2005 142
IV. Continuities within Discontinuities?: Contentious Politics and Political Repression 152
V. Conclusion 167

CHAPTER 6: "This is People's Water!": Water Services Struggles in the Mpumalanga Township, 1998 – 2002

I. Introduction 172
II. The Mpumalanga Township: Demography and Water Bill 175
III. Public-Private Partnerships, 1990 – 2002
(a) International Water Companies 190
(b) Constraints and Opposition 192
IV. Water Disconnections in Mpumalanga, 2000 – 2002 200
V. Poverty and Politics 205
VI. Conclusion 211

CHAPTER 7: Crowd Renting or Struggling from Below?: The Concerned Citizens' Forum (CCF) in the Mpumalanga Township, 1999 – 2005

I. Introduction 213
II. The Birth of the CCF and Politics in Durban, 1999 – 2002 216
III. CCF, Leadership Crises and Mpumalanga Community Politics 229
IV. The CCF and Community/Neighbourhood Politics in Mpumalanga, 1998 – 2005 243
V. Conclusion 256

CHAPTER 8: Conclusion 260

Appendices

Appendix 1: Mpumalanga Township Survey 278
Appendix 2: Mpumalanga in the Outer West Region 281
Appendix 3: Mpumalanga and the Surrounding Areas 282
Appendix 4: Street Map of Mpumalanga 283

Bibliography 284

Abstract

This thesis forms part of the emerging studies on the backlogs in municipal services delivery and the attendant emergence of the new social movements in post-apartheid South Africa. It examines four areas. These are: the backlogs in water services delivery; the consequent politicisation of the water services struggles; the breakdown of social citizenship; and the nature, forms and the repertoire of the collective action of the new social movements.

The thesis is based on fieldwork research I undertook in 2002 on the water services struggles in Mpumalanga, an African township located outside the small town of Hammarsdale in Durban. The fieldwork research results reveal the demographic characteristics of Mpumalanga and, more crucially, the extent of the water services crisis. The results evaluate the nature and the gravity of the water services delivery backlogs. More importantly, they gauge the depth of their involvement in the water services struggles in Mpumalanga and the extent of their success. These are weighed against the reports of the new social movements' involvement in the township by the leftist-cum-intellectual activists in Durban and by the leftist and mainstream media reports.

They also revealed a detailed picture of the state of collective action in Durban, unearthing the nature and functioning of the Concerned Citizens' Forum (CCF), an umbrella-body of Durban-based social movements. The study questions the hallowed standing of the CCF, by claiming, through detailed study and fieldwork observation, that the CCF is given to 'crowd renting', lack of transparency, disorderly decision-making, racial and leadership crises. The thesis also contextualises the collective action programmes of the CCF by situating them in Mpumalanga's neighbourhood politics. By doing so, the reader encounters ruling party local councillors, opposition party local councillors, CCF leaders and intellectual-cum-activists, youth activists and local council officials and bureaucrats. The collusion and conflicts between these parties and stakeholders bring into the equation political opportunism, careerism, and the ruthless pursuit of financial gains. All these parties and variables reveal a complex and ever-shifting picture of collective action and the contentious politics of the new social movements in Mpumalanga and Durban, amidst the looming crisis of the breakdown of social citizenship, cost recovery and the water services struggles.

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This thesis is dedicated to the three women in my life: my dearly departed grandmother, Nomalinge Siwisa; my mother, Lulu Siwisa-Pemba; and my lovely, stubborn and feisty daughter, Sintu.

Glossary

AIDC ---- Alternative Information and Development Centre.
ANC ---- African National Congress.
ANC NEC ---- African National Congress National Executive Committee.
ANC NWC ---- African National Congress National Working Committee.
ANCYL ---- African National Congress Youth League.
APF ---- Anti-Privatisation Forum.
ARP ---- Alexandra Renewal Project.
AVCC ---- Alexandra Vukuzenzele Crisis Committee.
AZANLA ---- Azanian National Liberation Army.
AZAPO ---- Azanian People's Organisation.
BCM ---- Black Consciousness Movement.
BEE ---- Black Economic Empowerment.
BFRA ---- Bayview Flats Residents Association.
BOT ---- Build-operate-transfer.
BPD ---- Business Partners for Development.
CBD ---- Central Business District.
CCEPAWU ---- Chemical, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union.
CCF ---- Concerned Citizens Forum.
CCG ---- Concerned Citizens' Group.
CCG-CCF ---- Concerned Citizens Group – Concerned Citizens Forum.
CCS ---- Centre for Civil Society.
CEAS ---- Central Economic Advisory Service.
COSATU ---- Congress of South African Unions.
DA ---- Democratic Alliance.
DBSA ---- Development Bank of Southern Africa.
DFR ---- Durban Functional Region.
DIT ---- Durban Institute of Technology.
DMA ---- Durban Metropolitan Area.
DMWS ---- Durban Metropolitan Water Services.
DP ---- Democratic Party.
DTI ---- Department of Trade and Industry.
DWAF ---- Department of Water Affairs and Forestry.
EMA ---- eThekwini Municipal Area.
FOSATU ---- Federation of South African Trade Unions.
GATT ---- General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.
GDP ---- Gross Domestic Product.
GEAR ---- Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy.
GGP ---- Gross Geographic Product.
GIWUSA ---- General Industrial Workers' Union.
GNU ---- Government of National Unity.
GNUC ---- Greater Nelspruit Utilities Company.
IBR ---- Institute for Black Research.
IEC ---- Independent Electoral Commission.
IFC ---- International Fiscal Commission.
IFP ---- Inkatha Freedom Party.
ILRIG ---- International Labour Resource and Information Grup.
IMATU ---- Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union

IMF ---- International Monetary Fund.
JDA ---- Johannesburg Development Agency.
JPC ---- Johannesburg Property Company.
JSE ---- Johannesburg Stock Exchange.
JW ---- Johannesburg Water.
KCDF ---- Kanana Community Development Forum.
KCR ---- Kathlehong Concerned Residents.
LPM ---- Landless People's Movement.
MDM ---- Mass Democratic Movement.
MERG ---- Macro-Economic Research Group.
MF ---- Minority Front.
MK ---- uMkhonto weSizwe.
Mpura ---- Mpumalanga Residents' Association.
MSP ---- Municipal Services Project.
MSS ----Metropolitan Sub-Structure.
MWP ---- Mass Workers Party.
Nedlac ---- National Economic Development and Labour Council.
NEHAWU ---- National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union.
NGC (UDF) ---- National General Council.
NGO ---- Non-Government Organisation.
NIA ---- National Intelligence Agency.
NIC ---- Newly Industrialising Countries.
NIEP ---- National Institute for Economic Planning.
NLC ---- National Land Committee.
NNP --- New National Party.
NP ---- National Party.
NRF ---- National Restructuring Fund.
NUTW ---- National Union of Textile Workers.
OFWCC ---- Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee.
P & DM ---- Graduate School of Public and Development Management.
POPCRU ---- Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union.
PPPs --- Public-Private Partnerships.
RDP ---- Reconstruction and Development Programme.
RGC (UDF) ---- Regional General Council.
RGCNEC (UDF) ---- Regional General Council National Executive Committee.
ROT ---- Rehabilitate-operate-transfer.
SACP ---- South African Communist Party.
SACTWU ---- South African Congress of Clothing and Textile Workers' Union.
SAF ---- South African Foundation.
SAIRR ---- South African Institute of Race Relations.
SALM ---- South African Labour Movement.
SAMWU ---- South African Municipal Workers Union.
SANCO ---- South African National Civics Organisation.
SAPS ---- South African Police Services.
SARB ---- South African Reserve Bank.
SARS ---- South African Revenue Services.
SASCO ---- South African Students Congress.
SCDF ---- Soshanguve Community Development Forum.
SECC ---- Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee.
SG ---- Socialist Group.

SMI ---- Social Movements *Indaba*.
SMMEs ---- Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises.
SOAS ---- School of Oriental and African Studies.
SRC ---- Students Representative Council.
SSA --- Statistics South Africa.
SSM ---- Socialist Students' Movement.
UCT ---- University of Cape Town.
UDF ---- United Democratic Front.
UDW ---- University of Durban-Westville.
VAT ---- Value Added Tax.
WCAR ---- World Conference Against Racism.
WLAs ---- White Local Authorities.
WRC ---- South African Water Research Commission.
WSA ---- Water Services Authority.
WSP ---- Water Services Provider.
WSSD ---- World Summit on Sustainable Development.
WTO ---- World Trade Organisation.
YFW ---- Youth for Work.
ZAPU ---- Zimbabwean African Peoples Union.
ZIPRA ---- Zimbabwean Peoples Revolutionary Army.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

I. Background

South Africa's transition to democracy did not only bring about the attainment of political opportunities to the previously disenfranchised black majority, but also brought forth a range of development difficulties that the African National Congress (ANC) Government had to grapple with. The legislature and the judiciary have churned out various laws and programmes that have facilitated democratisation. The drawing and the eventual adoption of the constitution and, most importantly, the Bill of Rights, point to the success of this endeavour. It enshrined the socio-economic or the second-generation constitutional rights. These are the human, health, education, security and environmental rights captured in the Bill of Rights. It ensures that all South Africans have access to these rights. It also seeks to aid citizens in combating any forms of discrimination and other difficulties that they might encounter in gaining access to these rights. Consequently, the South African constitution has proved to be the envy of many countries in its liberal espousals.

The major problem that the government has encountered is the facilitation of the delivery of public goods and services. These difficulties centre on the delivery of public goods and services at affordable levels for the majority of the low income-

earning urban and rural communities. Water, electricity, sanitation and sewerage are the delivery services areas acutely affected. The difficulties encountered by the state in delivering affordable municipal amenities have led to their politicisation. This problem has been sparked off by a myriad of factors. These range from the sheer enormity of the historically disadvantages faced by those of the population who have to be connected to hygienic and running water, more especially in the rural areas; inefficient and ineffective management of the municipal services delivery machinery; outdated and irrelevant accounting principles and human resources strategies; budgetary and other logistical constraints; difficulties experienced in installing new engineering inputs, pipe works and other technical details; and the massive municipal deficits inherited from the outgoing Nationalist Party (NP) Government.[1]

Further worsening the situation was the geo-political restructuring process of the local and provincial governments and structures that the ANC Government inherited from the outgoing government, such as the former homelands and Bantustan structures and personnel. The state had to reconfigure these against the background of budgetary constraints and pressures from domestic and international capital to implement austerity economic programmes. In the process, the new government was also vexed by the recalcitrant behaviour of the former homelands and Bantustans, which harboured 'reactionary' political allegiances inherited from the apartheid past. Also, there were the former White Local Authorities (WLAs) who opposed the local government restructuring process, fearing the devaluation of their property rates, the heightened crime rate spilling into the former white suburbs, and the cross-

[1] See, Gelb, S. **An Overview of the South African Economy**, in, Daniel, J., Habib, A. & Southall, R. (eds.) (2004) **State of the Nation 2004 – 2005**, (HSRC Press, Cape Town); Marais, H. (2001) (2nd ed.) **South Africa: Limits to Change: The Political Economy of Transition**, (Zed Books Ltd., London); Michie, J. & Padayachee, V. (eds.) (1997) **The Political Economy of Transition: Policy Perspectives in the Late 1990s**, (Dryden Press, London).

subsidisation of municipal rates. Local government exercised a certain degree of autonomy from the central government. Kieron Walsh pointed out that, "...the local authority is not only a separate administrative or managerial institution, it is also a government in its own right."[2]

From the late 1990s, municipal services delivery backlogs provided a sustained drama across the country. The subject of the drama was the fight of the impoverished urban communities against water and electricity disconnections and the consequent evictions from their houses for inability to pay the bills. During the apartheid era, many townships were charged flat rates for the basic municipal amenities. With the advent of the restructuring of the local government system, there emerged a new phenomenon mostly affecting the townships: the commodification of water and electricity services. The abrupt eradication of flat rates caused confusion in these areas, and further served to politicise the issue. The consequent introduction of the volumetric charging of water and electricity through the block tariff system has been one of the core issues that have led to confusion among the residents of the Mpumalanga Township, and consequently its politicisation.

Mpumalanga was among many townships in many municipalities across the country that was affected by this problem. Fort Beaufort, Queenstown, Stutterheim, Cape Town (Khayelitsha, Gugulethu), are some of the other townships whose residents are reeling under this confusion. David A. McDonald also pointed out from the results of a sampled national survey carried out in 2001 on water and electricity cut-offs that, "Some households have expressed confusion over the introduction of

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[2] Walsh, K. (1986) **The Relationship Between Central and Local Government**, (Report No. 4, Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham), (p. 43).

volumetric charges for electricity (flat-rate systems were in place for decades), and have trouble understanding the structure of their bills..."[3]

Concomitant with these changes was the restructuring of the public sector. It is gradually being outsourced to the private sector. This has led to the retrenchment of thousands of workers. Those who remained in the employ of the public services sector after the restructuring processes have to contend with the overhaul of employment benefits and schemes, such as medical aid and pension schemes.

II. Key Ideas and Concepts

As pointed out earlier on, the thesis examines four broad areas. These are the backlogs in water services delivery; the consequent politicisation of the water services struggles; the crisis in or the breakdown of social citizenship; and the nature, forms and the repertoire of the collective action campaigns of the new social movements.

The breakdown of social citizenship is the major catalyst of the emergence of the new social movements. There is a clear distinction between social citizenship and citizenship. Despite the fundamental difference between them, both concepts share two crucial characteristics: the inclusion / or the exclusion of a state's citizens in the institutions, laws and market of the state. Referring to social citizenship, David

[3] McDonald, D.A., Pape, J. (eds.) (2002) **Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Service Delivery in South Africa**, (HSRC, Cape Town & Zed Books Ltd., London), (p. 168).

Hemson and Kwame Owusu-Ampomah emphasise the sense of 'social inclusion,' where the state ensures a "'social contract' with the people."[4]

Citizenship refers to a sense of social contract binding the citizens of a country to its laws and institutions, and, in return that the laws and the institutions shall serve and protect the citizens. The people are protected by the laws of the country, and are bound by the spirit of the laws and the political and legal institutions of the country. They have recourse to the laws and to the legal and political institutions that implement such laws.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (Act 108 of 1996), enshrines the first-generation constitutional rights that essentially define citizenship. Chapters One and Two of the constitution cover these rights. Chapter One covers the founding provisions of the constitution. These are premised on the values of human dignity, equality, the advancement of human rights and freedoms, non-racialism and non-sexism, universal suffrage based on a common voters' roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government.[5] Chapter Two, the Bill of Rights, then explains in detail the provisions of equality; human dignity; right to life; freedom and security of the person; provision against slavery, servitude and forced labour; privacy; freedom of religion, belief and opinion; freedom of expression; provision on assembly, demonstration, picket and petition; freedom of association; political rights; freedom of movement and residence; freedom of trade, occupation and profession;

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[4] Hemson, D. & Owusu-Ampomah, K. **A better life for all? Service delivery and poverty alleviation**, in, Daniel, J. Habib, A. & Southall, R. (eds.) (2004) **State of the Nation 2004 – 2005**, (HSRC Press, Cape Town), (pp. 512 – 13).

[5] **The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa**, (Act 108 of 1996), (Chapter 1, section 1(a) – (d), (p. 3).

labour relations; environment and property.[6] These are the first-generation constitutional rights. The denial or the breakdown of citizenship occurs when the people or a section of the people are excluded from the enjoyment and / or protection of these first-generation constitutional rights.

Social citizenship, manifested in the second-generation constitutional rights or socio-economic rights, is enshrined in the Bill of Rights. The state is responsible for the provision of housing, health care, sufficient food, water, social security and education.[7] The breakdown of social citizenship occurs when private capital compromises the provision and the delivery of public goods and services in the interests of the accumulation of profit. It occurs when private capital takes over the responsibility from the state of providing its citizens these public goods and services to the extent that they are rendered unaffordable because their prices are too high.

With the end of the Cold War and the advent of neo-liberalism, the nation-state has seen its role minimised in economic intervention. Private capital is taking more responsibilities in the provision of health services, water, electricity, sewerage services, sanitation and the cleaning of public spaces. These responsibilities are being outsourced to the private sector. The first element of the breakdown of social citizenship is the affordability of public goods and services. The second element is the decentralisation of local government and governance. Jo Beall defined governance as two-pronged.[8] On the one hand, it refers to the efficient administration and

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[6] Ibid, (pp. 6 – 12).
[7] Ibid, (pp. 12 – 13).
[8] Beall, J. (2004) **Decentralisation and Engendering Democracy: Lessons from Local Government Reform in South Africa**, (Crisis States Programme, Crisis Research Centre, LSE), (Working Paper No. 54).

management of public resources. On the other hand, governance is concerned with democratic politics in the relationship between the state and civil society.

The decentralisation of local government has brought on board the public-private partnership (PPPs) programmes in the provision and delivery of public goods and services. PPPs purport to assist municipalities in the delivery of public goods and services. They do so by purportedly bringing in the expertise and the finance of the private sector. They assist with the administration, finance and the technical expertise municipalities lack. PPPs come in the form of lease management, lease contracts, build-operate-transfer (BOT) and rehabilitate-operate-transfer (ROT) mechanisms.

With the decentralisation of the local government and the involvement of the private sector, the politicisation of the provision and delivery of public goods and services increased. This has in turn inevitably resulted in the breakdown of social citizenship. This situation has fuelled the emergence of a wave of protests led by the new social movements in a way that the ANC Government has never seen before. These are the central concepts and sites that are examined and interrogated in this thesis.

III. Questions / Enquiries

I was drawn into these struggles, and I am exposed to the commodification of water and electricity services as a black township resident. This process has exposed the precarious socio-economic conditions of township residents and the high

unemployment rate. The introduction of the rising block tariff system in water and electricity leaves a stigma, particularly on the middle-class neighbourhoods in the townships, as residents are forced to purchase more credit for water and electricity from the nearby corner grocer shops when they run out. This was shown by the survey I carried out in Mpumalanga in 2002. But this trend manifests itself nationally, as McDonald, Pape and their team pointed out in the sampled national survey they carried out in 2001.

What further drew me into these struggles was the emergence of the new grassroots social movements that began to tackle these issues. I came of age in the early 1980s. I remember clearly when the United Democratic Front (UDF) was founded in late 1983. It was characterised by the exuberant mood in the townships of Port Elizabeth. From the time I became conscious of my surroundings, life was all about tear-gas and the inability to avoid it; boycotts; stay-aways; necklacing; stray bullets; endless detentions and the mysterious disappearances of activists; infamous black security agents; deadly skirmishes between the UDF vs. the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) ;[9] the UDF's ubiquitous yellow T-shirts, propaganda pamphlets and magazines; comrade-*tsotsis*[10] in their *pantsula*[11] attires jumping over

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[9] The street and private battles between the UDF and AZAPO appear to have been more prevalent in the Eastern Cape, in the townships of Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, for instance, than in any other province. There were skirmishes also between two or more factions of the same organisations. For instance, there were the conflicts between the different UDF branches in the township of eMdanstane, outside East London in the 1980s. For a thorough and dramatic narrative on the UDF and ZAPO conflicts in the Eastern Cape in the 1980s, by Mono Badela, a former Charterist journalist resident in Port Elizabeth, see, Lodge, T. & Nasson, B. (1992) **All, Here and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s**, (Hurst & Co. Ltd., London).

[10] A colloquial term referring to township thugs. The term is originally Shona, bearing the same meaning in that language. However, it is more popular in South Africa than in Zimbabwe now.

[11] This refers to a way of life of the *tsotsi*, or the township thug, encompassing the dress code, etiquette, dance and music. The term *pantsula* invokes a callous, survivalist and yet stylish and elegant way of street life. A *tsotsi* who adheres to this way of life is referred to as *ipantsula*. The *pantsula* way of life became very popular in the townships in the 1980s, and also became commercialised by the media and the music industry. A *tsotsi* is a township thug, but is not invariably a *pantsula*, and a pantsula is not necessarily a tsotsi.

the fence of your house, running away from the police and grabbing whatever wet cloth was on the washing line (mostly expensive clothing items) to cover their faces so as to reduce the effects of the tear-gas on their faces, and not returning them. The mere emergence of the new grassroots social movements in the post-apartheid era naturally captured my attention.

The question that came to loom large on my mind was whether these movements held any clear and coherent ideological stance, or whether they only engaged in short-term collective consumption campaigns. There is an extensive literature on this question on the apartheid social movements and other social movements beyond South Africa. The majority of these new movements seem to have consciously adopted the political and cultural forms of struggles and symbolisms of the 1980s township movements. They have staged known forms of collective action: *toyi-toyis*[12], mass meetings, rallies and violent confrontations with the local police and municipal security authorities. It is not surprising that they appropriated the discourse or 'the repertoire of collective consumption'[13] of the struggles of the past, as the majority of the leaders and the intellectual guides of these movements are former members of the ANC, the UDF, SACP, Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) of Azania and AZAPO. On the other hand, they consciously replaced some of these struggle and

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[12] *Toyi-toyi* refers to the protest way of marching and singing of the followers of the anti-apartheid political movements in the townships of South Africa. It expresses the political aspirations and the mood of the township residents, usually accompanied by chantings and sloganeering extolling the leadership of the anti-apartheid movements, and cursing the apartheid regime and its leadership. *Toyi-toyis* became popular in the townships in the 1980s. Originating from the amaNdebele warriors in Matabeleland in the aftermath of the Mfecane wars, this form of military marching and dancing was devised as a way of galvanising the fighting spirits of Ndebele soldiers. It was appropriated by the Zimbabwean People's Revolutionary Army (Zipra), the military wing of the Zimbabwean African People's Union (Zapu), led by Joshua Nkomo, in Matabeleland. It then passed down to South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle circles through Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), who had trained with and fought alongside Zipra forces in Matabeleland in the 1970s. *Toyi-toyis* are more popular in South Africa now than in Zimbabwe, and this tradition is now assumed to have been South African-born.

[13] Tarrow, S. (1998) **Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics**, (Cambridge University Press).

cultural symbolisms with new ones. For instance, the leaders of the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) and its followers jettisoned the term 'comrade' as a form of reference to each other, preferring to use *makhelwane* (isiZulu for 'neighbour')[14]. They have consciously devised new liberation songs with new lyrics relevant to the present struggles, although they are stylistically framed in the mould of the old liberation songs.[15] This was a clear recognition on their part for the separation of the 'oppressed' from the 'new oppressors' of the 'New South Africa' who still employed terminologies and symbolism from the anti-apartheid struggles.

The appropriation of the term *makhelwane* might reflect recognition of the locality and the immediacy of collective consumption bargaining with the local authority on these issues. It can also be argued that it represented the notion that the local movement held more sway in the management and the reconfiguration of the household. This, for instance, is clearly visible with Operation *Khanyisa* (Light Up)

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[14] I personally observed these new 'repertoires of collective action' not only in Durban, but also in Johannesburg during the Social Movements *Indaba* (SMI) held in protest of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in August 2002. The SECC and the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) were more vibrant and creative in the reconfiguration of their new forms of political and cultural forms of struggle symbolisms. The term *makhelwane* had apparently been coined by the SECC leadership and its followers, and was further confirmed in the Social Movements *Indaba* by some of its leaders, most prominent among them was Virginia Setshedi. In Durban, Heinrich Bohmke, CCF's legal advisor and one of its prominent organisers, also attested to this need for new references within the leadership and the broader membership of the new anti-neoliberal social movements. In the interview and informal conversations I have had with him, he maintained that this need was informed by class-based inequalities, which have been deepened by the ANC Government's neo-liberal economic policies. These new forms of references then would serve to separate South Africa's new social movements with radical leftist leanings from the from the former struggle references of the erstwhile Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), which has slid to the right of the political fulcrum. However, I also realised that there was a lack of consistency in following up some of these new linguistic and cultural symbolisms, especially with the term *makhelwane*. 'Comrade' still seems to be more favoured by the leadership and the followers of the new social movements not just in Johannesburg, but all over South Africa.

[15] There exists fluidity, stylistically, in the use of *toyi-toyi* songs between the ANC, PAC and AZAPO. The lyrics tended to be different though, each movement expressing its own political beliefs, political history and extolling its leadership. A more interesting case is that which exists between the ANC and the IFP in KwaZulu-Natal. Both parties have borrowed from each other's *toyi-toyi* oeuvres, stylistically, in designing and performing their *toyi-toyi* songs. This is even apparent in the manner in which mass meetings are addressed by the leadership of these two organisations. The ANC and its aligned movements in KwaZulu-Natal chant and use forms of singing that are traditionally IFP's. The latter also does the same with the ANC's. This therefore helps to explain the new social movements' appropriation of the Mass Democratic Movement's (MDM) cultural symbolisms. They do so within the context of a rich tradition of the exchange of the repertoire of collective action campaigns.

executed by the SECC, and Operation *Vulamanzi* (Open up the Water) managed under the auspices of the Concerned Citizens' Forum (CCF) in Durban.

The other question that captured my attention was the relationship between the new social movements and the township residents they purportedly served. Put in another way: **to what extent are these movements 'grassroots'?** That in turn unwrapped questions of leadership; the construction of ideologies by the leadership of the new social movements; the nature and forms of their organisational structures; and the structure of decision-making and the implementation of policies and decisions. The question of the structure of decision-making has been rarely questioned in the mainstream media and other intellectual circles. The leaders of the new social movements have been more concerned with issues of strategies, the relationship with the state and configuring the movements' ideological direction.

Perhaps it has proved too early to raise the question of the structure of decision-making within the new social movements.[16] That notwithstanding, it has stood out as a particularly thorny issue. The reasons that account for the sensitivity of this issue are race and class. The concern of class as divisive is intertwined with the tendency of the intellectual-cum-activists (predominantly, though not exclusively

[16] It has only been recently (early 2004) that there has been a debate in the *Mail & Guardian* on social movements, race, class and the domination of black followers by the predominantly white and male leaders. Andile Mngxitama, a prominent leader of the Landless People's Movement (LPM), has questioned the issue of the dominance of the black urban social movements by the white intellectuals. See, Mngxitama, A. **Let black voices speak for the voiceless**, *Mail & Guardian*, 22 June, 2004. He raised the concern of ideology and strategy dichotomies between the leftist white intellectuals and the black urban masses. He pointed out that the leftist intellectuals superimpose their leftist vanguardist ideas and political strategies, over those of the urban black residents who prefer practical or reformist strategies in resolving municipal services delivery backlogs. Drew Forrest, the political correspondent for the *Mail & Guardian*, also criticised the disorganised relationship between the CCF and its members. Suren Pillay, a sociologist based at the University of Cape Town (UCT), took to task the vanguardist stance of the intellectual-cum-activist leadership of the new social movements as out of sync with the aspirations of the urban black masses it purports to lead. He pointed out that left in South Africa is stale and rigid, posing old questions in an attempt to interrogate new problems manufactured by neo-liberalism.

white and male and in the case of the CCF white or Indian and male) that dominate the organisational and the decision-making aspects of the new social movements. Race and class therefore talk to each other in this case.

During the week-long Social Movements *Indaba* (SMI) held in Johannesburg, I participated in a day-long workshop on the strategies that the new social movements and trade unions should undertake in anti-neoliberal collective action campaigns. The majority of the organisers and speakers in the workshop were the intellectuals and the intellectual-cum-activists such as Patrick Bond from the USA, Mark Swilling, Trevor Ngwane, Franco Barchiesi from Italy, John Bellamy Foster from the Monthly Review Press in New York, various intellectuals from the Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC) based in Cape Town, shop stewards and some students. What was also noticeable was a mass of black people, and nearly all of them clad in new and red-Anti-Privatisation (APF) T-shirts. The majority of them were men, a mixture of the young and middle-aged. There was a sprinkling of women, and almost all of them were young, and discernibly single. It was not a secret that the black attendants in the workshop had been bussed in from a couple of townships located just outside Johannesburg, to the Graduate School of Public and Development Management (P & DM) at the University of the Witwatersrand, where this workshop was held.

The discussions were intellectual and abstract. They revolved around the necessity for the establishment of a mass workers struggle modelled along the Marxist-Leninist model. A few in the group such as Ngwane stressed the need for the formation of a mass workers party as soon as it was feasible. What was clearly

noticeable was that the majority of the black attendants, apart from the shop stewards and the Zimbabwean trade unionists, did not participate in the discussions and seemed befuddled by the proceedings. The entire lexicon of the discussions pivoted around classical Marxist debates on the confrontation of the working class with capital.

I raised a question, which fundamentally begged for the return of the discussions to the specific problems on the backlogs of the delivery of basic municipal amenities in the townships, and the practicalities of collective action campaigns that would be shaped by these realities. It was then that a few of the black attendants from the townships raised their hands and voiced their concerns for the need to discuss the problems pertaining to the delivery of water, electricity and sanitation services in the townships. They did not make any references to any urgent need for a socialist revolution, the formation of a mass workers' party, nor the uprooting of the ANC Government. All the black township residents who spoke in the meeting raised concerns concerning the need to improve basic municipal services. Despite that, the speakers and the rest of the intellectuals and activists in the workshops shifted back to their Marxist and communist debates.

We had supper after that. The black attendants from the townships did not pay for the supper. After that, they all left clandestinely back to the townships. Only a few, probably less than five percent of the original number returned to the lecture theatre to attend the last leg of the workshop. I heard Patrick Bond in the lecture theatre enquiring from us all just before we resumed the last session, "If anyone sees any of the comrades in the red T-shirts, can you please tell them to come back inside?" The workshop resumed and the bulk of the black attendants had all gone

back to the townships. This anecdote illustrates the divisiveness of race and class in the leadership of the new social movements. It goes to show that there is a concern about who leads the struggles of the new social movements, and with what motives. I raise and thoroughly discuss this issue in Chapter 6 and, more pertinently to the Mpumalanga case, in Chapter 7.

This concern has manifested itself in other social movements in other parts of the world. Manuel Castells drew out a typology where he analysed how and why social movements in the *favelas* of Latin America have failed. In it, he argued that grassroots social movements in such areas have failed due to the involvement of the students and intellectuals in their leadership structures. He maintained that their involvement increased the prospects of the state reaching the social movements, thus compromising them through co-option and other weakening strategies.[17] These questions are universal, and they have been interrogated throughout the history of the social movements in the twentieth century. Oberschall observed that:

> The existence of solidarity networks calls once again into question the hypothesis which was, at the time, widespread, namely, that movement recruits are mainly isolated and rootless individuals who seek to immerse themselves in the mass as a surrogate for their social marginalization...On the basis of a wide range of empirical research, one can therefore foresee that 'participants' in popular disturbances and activists in opposition organizations will be recruited primarily from previously active and relatively well-integrated individuals within the collectivity, whereas socially isolated, atomized, and uprooted individuals will be underrepresented until the movement has become substantial.[18]

Oberschall's observation truly reflects the nature and the form of the leadership of the new social movements in post-apartheid South Africa. The bulk of the national leadership and decision-making structures of the new social movements

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[17] See, Castells, M. (1978) **City, Class and Power**, (St. Martin's Press, New York).
[18] Cited in, Della Porta, D. & Diani, M. (1999) **Social Movements: An Introduction**, (Blackwell Publishers, Oxford), (pp. 8 – 9).

are held by the former leaders and activists of the erstwhile MDM. The APF leadership is dominated by former trade unionists allied to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), such as John Appolis (formerly of CCEPAWU, the Chemical, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union; Trevor Ngwane, a former ANC activist and Johannesburg councillor; Dale McKinley, a political scientist and a former member of the SACP[19]; Patrick Bond, a former ANC policy advisor in the early 1990s.

I realised from the beginning of the fieldwork research that the answers to the questions of the problems of leadership and its structures, decision-making and the relationship between the new social movements and the urban black masses, hinged on the differences among the areas affected by the cost recovery mechanisms. They were informed by their varied historical and political legacies, and their differentiated social and economic geographies. This is an international trend, emanating from the destruction of the city as a seat of political power and administration, to the one that we are familiar with now ---- the city as an economic unit.[20] As Ceri Peach, a social geographer, noted, "The greater the degree of difference between the spatial distributions of groups within an urban area, the greater their social distance from each other."[21] These forms of differentiation then inform the agenda-setting processes of different social movements in different areas, distinctly marking them from one another, as well as marking their political futures and courses from each other. That is

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[19] Dale McKinley was expelled from the SACP in the late 1990s for his anti-neoliberal views. He postulated these in his book, **The ANC and the Liberation Struggle: A Critical Political Biography** (1997), (Pluto Press, London).

[20] For a classical explanation of the construction of the city as an economic unit, see, Park, R.E.; Burgess, E.W. & McKenzie, R.D. (1925) **The City: Suggestions for Investigations on Human Behaviour in the Urban Environment**, (University of Chicago Press). See also, Weber, M. (1958) **The City**, (The Free Press, New York). A critical appraisal of the configuration of the city is offered in Chapter 2.

[21] Cited in, Power, D. (1998) **The Alienation of the Public in the City of London**, (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, Wadham College), (p. 33).

why social movements in certain areas would react either more vigorously or in a lukewarm manner compared to another social movement of another area in the same city, despite the fact that the local government has uniformly applied the policy more or less at the same time. The varying economic-geographic make-ups of these areas that differentiate them from each other in significant ways shape their differing reactions to policies instituted by the local government.

The location of an area is crucial in understanding its social movements' collective action campaigns and the attendant agenda-making processes. The location of an area, in turn, brings forth into the equation other equally important variables that have gone into making the location of area an important factor in the first place. These variables are the socio-economic and the economic-geographic make-up of the area, as well as the neighbourhood or local politics, and the legacies of local politics.

These are critical aspects to grasp when examining the water services struggles and the new social movements' campaigns in Mpumalanga. This township was one of the first areas in Durban to mount visible and vibrant collective action campaigns against cost recovery policy mechanisms on water services. Why did Mpumalanga (and Chatsworth's) new social movements become so much more active than in other parts of Durban, despite the fact that the Durban local government uniformly implemented the cost recovery policy? These variables outlined above that highlight the significance of the location of the area help us in answering that question.

Mpumalanga is a township located in the Outer-West local sub-structure of Durban. This sub-structure, despite its enormous size compared to the other five sub-structures, is economically disadvantaged. Secondly, Mpumalanga, a predominantly African area, located outside the town of Hammarsdale, has been adversely affected by the liberalisation of the South African economy post-1994, along with Chatsworth, a predominantly Indian township[22].

Hammarsdale was one of the towns in KwaZulu-Natal on the border of the KwaZulu Bantustan, targeted by the apartheid government for import-substitution, with plants mainly producing clothing, textile, chemicals, plastic and engineering products. In the 1980s, at the height of the implementation of the import-substitution policy, nearly ever second person in Mpumalanga was employed in these factories in Hammarsdale.[23] With the closing down of many of these factories in the late 1990s following the government's embracing of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) trade liberalisation policies, thousands of Mpumalanga residents lost their jobs. In 1999, 180 000 workers lost their jobs nationwide. Since 1994, it has been estimated that about 500 000 jobs were lost in South Africa because of factory closures. In 1998, in Durban alone, it was estimated that 23 per cent of the manufacturing jobs had been lost.[24]

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[23] Mosoetsa, S. (2004) **The Legacies of Apartheid and Implications of Economic Liberalisation: A Post-Apartheid Township**, (Crisis States Programme, Development Research Centre, LSE), (Working Paper No. 49). See, www.crisisstates.com).

[24] Ibid. See also, Mosoetsa, S. **Compromised Communities and Re-Emerging Civic Engagement in Mpumalanga Township, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal**, *Journal of Southern African Studies,* December 2005; Bonnin, D. (2000) **Claiming Spaces, Changing Places: Political Violence and Women's Protests in KwaZulu-Natal**, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2; Bonnin, D. (2004) **Understanding the Legacies of Political Violence: An Examination of Political Conflict in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**, (Crisis States Programme, Development Research Centre, LSE), (Working Paper No. 44), (See, www.crisisstates.com. For an analysis of similar impacts on the undoing of import-substitution factories in the townships located in Ladysmith and Newcastle in KwaZulu-Natal, see, Hart, G. (2002) **Disabling Globalization: Places of Power in**

Thirdly, there is the legacy of political violence that in turn has immensely influenced the dynamics of local politics in Mpumalanga. All these variables, in combination, serve to highlight Mpumalanga and other areas similar to it from the rest of the other areas in KwaZulu-Natal. In these circumstances, the implementation of cost recovery policy mechanisms on water services delivery amplified any political occurrences in Mpumalanga. The economic-geography and the socio-economic picture of Mpumalanga are painted in more detail in Chapter 2. On this note, Debbie Bonnin considered all these variables that defined Mpumalanga and aptly observed that:

> As a result of political violence residents had lost jobs, schooling had been severely disrupted, ensuring youngsters little hope of entering the labour market, informal activities had collapsed and household resources were minimal. When the impact of trade liberalisation is overlaid on such an already grim social and economic situation, the effects are all the more devastating.[25]

The emergence of the new grassroots social movements elicited aggressive responses of the state to their collective action campaigns. I began to ask myself whether there were any continuities in discontinuities that were unfolding in the state's relationships with the new social movements and the township residents. What was clearly recognisable from the onset was that the ANC Government was appropriating and reconstructing the apartheid regime's strategies of the containment of the new social movements. This pattern of repression occurs in the pretext of maintaining law and order.

Post-Apartheid South Africa, (University of California Press, Berkeley & University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg).

[25] Bonnin, D. (2004) **Understanding the Legacies**, (p. 16).Mosoetsa provides a detailed picture of the pressures on household finances and the economic welfare in post-violence Mpumalanga in her paper, **Compromised Communities**.

There is a gradually growing litany of cases instituted by the state against the new social movements' activists affiliated with the APF. The most publicised of these was the year-long Kensington 87 trial. The Johannesburg local government laid charges of malicious damage to property and public violence against the eighty-seven members of the SECC in April 2002. Soweto residents had marched peacefully to the suburb of Kensington in Johannesburg to protest against electricity cut-offs to the Mayor of Johannesburg, Amos Masondo. Without provocation from the crowd, the mayor's security guard released live rounds of bullets from the roof of his employer's house, injuring several people. In the predominantly Indian township of Chatsworth located just outside Durban, incidents were reported of the assault of residents protesting against high water bills and evictions from their homes, including an assault of a pregnant woman who later miscarried as a direct consequence of the assault.[26]

The Democracy 52 trial was another prominent case laid by the state against a new social movement in 2003. The trial of the fifty-two members of Gauteng's Landless People's Movement (LPM) began on 22 July. The fifty-two were accused of violating Section 108 (a) of the Electoral Act, which prohibited assemblies on election day. They testified that members of the South African Police Services (SAPS) assaulted them. The list of the repression of the social movements goes on.

What also drew me into this research were the intricate relationships between the state, both the central and the local tiers, the ruling party, the leaders of the national umbrella of grassroots social movements (the APF), the local leadership of

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[26] See, Desai, A. (2002) **We are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa**, (Monthly Review Press, New York).

the grassroots social movements, and the domestic and international capital. I realised initially that the state and the intellectual leadership desks of the various grassroots social movements tended to depict a simple and linear relationship between these various stakeholders. To them, the state was a representative of capital, and it therefore had to guard against any threats made against it by certain elements of civil society in their quest of achieving profits. My fieldwork research would show that these relationships are far more complex.

IV. Research 'Biography'

Perhaps a 'biographical' account of the fieldwork, which gave rise to the central arguments of my thesis, would be helpful in explaining how I began to ask particular questions and then, *in the light of my fieldwork experience*, to turn to new issues and to ask questions which were different from those that I began with. It provides a way of unpacking and laying the grounds for the critique of the research methods employed here. It also amplifies the arguments contained in the thesis. Before I left for my fieldwork in June 2002, the aim of my research was: **to trace the impacts of public-private partnerships on water services delivery in Durban, and, consequently, the emergence and mobilisation of the new grassroots social movements opposing these initiatives.**

Despite the fact that my home(s) are located in the Eastern Cape, and that I grew up and schooled in Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth, Alice and Bisho until I matriculated from high school, I chose Durban as my case study. There were various

reasons which informed this decision ---- personal, academic, political and logistic. I had spent my late adolescence and early adulthood in Durban. I had acquired my three degrees, B.A., B.A. (Hons) and M.A. at the University of Natal, now known as the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I spent the greater part of each year from 1994 to 2000 in Durban, and on numerous occasions also spent my vacations there. As a student, I had got to know the city more than just as my *alma mater,* but as a place whose social, political and historical aspects I familiarised myself with and formally studied. This I cannot say for any of the Eastern Cape towns and cities where I had grown up and gone to school.

Secondly, at the time of going to carry out my fieldwork, Durban was one of the cities in which people had noticeably been mobilising against the cost recovery policy mechanisms. Thirdly, I was familiar with the Durban municipality and had been there on many occasions to attend meetings, research at its libraries, and interview its officials for various research projects in which I had been involved. Fourthly, I had established contacts at the university and outside of it, and this afforded me an added advantage in conducting my fieldwork research.

The fieldwork research was scheduled to last for six months, from June to December 2002. I structured it into three areas. The first area was concerned with making contact with the leadership of the CCF and the Mpumalanga-based activists. I planned to gain information from them through interviews, and from studying other CCF documents, such as the minutes of their meetings, official documents, and so forth. In Mpumalanga, I devised to gather information through interviews with the activists. I also planned to draw up questionnaires with the aim of capturing the socio-

economic data on Mpumalanga and the form and extent of the water services delivery crisis there.

The second area of the fieldwork research aimed at attaining information from the official perspective. I intended to do this through contacting the various local government officials and local government councillors. I planned to gather information through more or less similar means as I had planned to do with the CCF and the Mpumalanga activists. The third area of the fieldwork research focused on gathering general information on the historical development of the historical grassroots social movements in Durban from as early as the 1920s. The objective behind this exercise was to attempt to visualise the perception of the grassroots social movements of Durban in the past. Most importantly, it was to identify any legacies in the post-apartheid grassroots social movements that might explain the manner in which they currently perceive themselves, and the manner in which they relate to the state.

While I was conducting general archival research work, I set out to make the first contacts with the CCF leadership. The first person I managed to get in touch with was Heinrich Bohmke, an attorney working for a law firm specialising in labour law at the Salmon Grove Chambers in Durban. He was one of the leading members of the CCF, and was also one of the organisation's legal representatives and advisors. He was articulate, engaging, full of energy and generally enthusiastic about the work that the CCF was doing. He first asked me a number of questions regarding my research intentions, my whereabouts and my contacts in Durban. He then proceeded to briefly probe into my political credentials. I dithered about to the effect that I had next to none. He then swiftly moved on to discuss with me the recent anti-neoliberal

mobilisation developments in Durban, municipality politics and their personalities. Sensing that I was knowledgeable about these matters, and that I was as indignant as he was on these issues, he eased up. He later explained that initially, he had to be careful with me, lest I turned out to be some kind of a state or municipality agent bent on infiltrating the CCF. Although not displaying it, I was more amused than taken aback by this revelation. On that day, he offered me some official CCF documents ---- its constitution, court affidavits and newspaper clippings. He promised me a formal recorded interview.

The next CCF leader I contacted was Fazel Khan. At that time, he was a politics lecturer at the former University of Durban-Westville (UDW). Khan had then just introduced *Globalisation Studies* at the undergraduate level in the Politics Department. The course proved to be immensely popular with the students, as it introduced them to the discourses of globalisation and the anti-globalisation struggles worldwide. More significantly, it gave the students a radical perspective on the nascent global anti-neoliberal struggles.

Khan had made headlines a couple of years earlier by clashing with the former Vice-Chancellor of UDW, Prof. Mamphele Ramashala. The dispute centred on the pay rise for academic staff and, more contentiously, on the lifting of the ban of a student political movement on campus called the Socialist Students' Movement (SSM), which opposed the ANC's student wing, the South African Students' Congress (SASCO), which dominated the campus Students' Representative Council (SRC). Khan gave me a warm and enthusiastic welcome. We discussed generally the activities of the CCF and the state of the anti-neoliberal struggles in Durban and

across the country. He also promised me a formal recorded interview. Unlike Bohmke, he never raised any suspicions about my political credentials.

The most prominent members of the CCF were Prof. Fatima Meer and Dr. Ashwin Desai. Prof. Meer is a veteran ANC activist, sociologist, writer and feminist. She is renowned for her earlier biography of Nelson Mandela. She is also known for having inadvertently founded the CCF in Chatsworth. The CCF originated as the Concerned Citizens Group (CCG) in 1999. The CCG-CCF turned from being an ANC election lobby in the Indian townships of Durban to being an anti-neoliberal 'grassroots social movement.' At the founding of the CCG, Meer was elected chairperson. However, it is not clear to me by who, by how many, when and how she was elected into that position. It is also not clear to me how the next chairperson of the CCF, Dr. Desai, was elected, or the other portfolio holders of the CCF leadership. I was not offered any CCF documents outlining their meetings. Dr. Desai is a sociologist and a journalist. At the time that I was carrying out my fieldwork research, he was lecturing in journalism at the Durban Institute of Technology (DIT), formerly known as the Natal Technikon. He is internationally renowned for his book, *We are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2001).

I thought it best to approach Desai formally, with a list of interview questions, as he seemed a busy activist, teacher and writer. And so I simultaneously e-mailed and faxed him my request for a formal interview, along with questions for the interview I had drawn up. By that time, I had already had a further informal discussion with Bohmke, and he had commented to me about the criticisms of the CCF that I made in our discussions. I then proceeded to telephone Desai. On 24

October 2002, the day that I was supposed to meet with Desai, I had just completed a recorded interview session with Bohmke at the Salmon Grove Chambers in Durban. Desai and I had arranged to meet for a formal recorded interview some weeks before that. I telephoned Desai to remind him of the arrangement we had made after I had had my interview with Bohmke, and he said that he would meet up with me at the Institute for Black Research (IBR) located at the University of Natal. He said that then he could not talk as he was trying to find a parking space. I reached the IBR about thirty minutes before the time we had agreed upon, and waited for him. He did not materialise. I telephoned him on many occasions during and after the allotted time for the interview, and all the time I only managed to reach his voicemail. He did not return any of my calls.

Shortly after that, I made another attempt to contact him. I managed to secure a date for an interview with him at the Centre for Civil Society (CCS) at the University of Natal. Again, he did not turn up. After realising that I had tried to secure an interview with him on a number of occasions, and he had failed to honour the arrangements, nor explained why he could not turn up for the interview sessions, I gave up. I also experienced similar problems with securing further interview arrangements with Fazel Khan. He always turned down the arrangements at the eleventh hour, when I called him a day or a couple of days before the interview.

The narrative of my engagements with the CCF core leadership might seem personal, trivial and even tangential. However, that is not the case. It reveals the nature and the form of the so-called 'grassroots social movement' that is the CCF. Firstly, it raises a question about the transparency of decision-making and leadership

in the CCF. The term 'grassroots' means an organisation or a movement that mobilises on the ground. It invokes a closer association with the people in the concerned neighbourhood, who are intimately affected by the issues on which the organisation or movement mobilises. It involves a sense of 'door-to-door' organisation, the sourcing out of problems on the ground, and a sense of a two-way political education or conscientisation between the local people and the organisation or movement in question. My own engagements with the CCF and the Mpumalanga youth activists affiliated to the CCF seem to point to a much more complicated relationship between the CCF core leadership, the Mpumalanga youth activists, and the residents of Mpumalanga.

The thesis came to be a critique of the leadership of the new grassroots social movements. It does not profess to claim the case study of Mpumalanga as a microcosm of the nature and the form of the new grassroots social movements nationally.

The other fundamental concern here is how community or neighbourhood politics fit into the equation. Mpumalanga, like other black townships that were under the jurisdiction of the IFP-controlled KwaZulu Government, was plagued with political violence. That was a result of the IFP's determination to attain political dominance in the township ever since it established its first branch there in 1975.[27] These attempts were made in a township that was highly divided politically and, like many other townships throughout the country during that era, highly receptive to the Congress movements' and the Black Consciousness Movements' politics and

[27] Bonnin, D. (2004) **Understanding the Legacies**.

ideologies. Although the political situation has quietened down, that era has left a political legacy that continues to shape community politics in Mpumalanga. More significantly, that legacy continues to inform the types and the nature of political alliances and networking. Civic groups and social movements have always been part of this network in Mpumalanga, either as active participants seeking the fulfilment of their own agendas, or as the exploited or the exploiters.

The entrance of the CCF into the local politics of Mpumalanga has not left it untainted with this legacy. Its mobilisation in Mpumalanga has been shaped by the dynamics of the township's three decades-old dynamics of community politics. Furthermore, the CCF has been left vulnerable to other interests of political personalities that are intertwined with community politics, and it has not come out of it as a mere hapless and helpless victim of the situation.

Mosoetsa[28] revealed how agents of political parties and community welfare agents interacted in post-apartheid and post-violence Mpumalanga. She observed that political party agents at local government level are regaining influence as the "only source of information around welfare issues" due to the mistrust the residents of Mpumalanga have of political parties at the national level. This is a clear legacy of the local politics of the township. On the other hand, Bonnin rightly observed how certain neighbourhood units of Mpumalanga in the past were carved up as strongholds of different political parties and movements.[29]

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[28] Mosoetsa, S. (2004) **Compromised Communities.**
[29] Bonnin, D. (2004) **Understanding the Legacies.**

Two crucial aspects should be pointed out with regards to Bonnin's and Mosoetsa's observations on community politics in Mpumalanga and their legacies. Firstly, the carving out of power territories in Mpumalanga's neighbourhood units in the 1980s has reverberations in the present. Despite the fact that the ANC has won Mpumalanga over in the last local government elections in 2000, consultations over welfare issues in the townships involves unelected local political agents. Residents in particular neighbourhood units find themselves forced to consult with unelected local political agents who are traditionally influential in the neighbourhood unit. Political methods from the past, such as the use of threat of violence upon those with political sympathies of a rival political party in a neighbourhood unit, are still in use. This is further discussed in Chapters 5 and 7.

The second crucial aspect, raised by Mosoetsa, concerns the interaction between political party agents and community welfare agents. Mosoetsa has simplified this form of interaction, and does not bring out their complex and convoluted nature. The residents of Mpumalanga do not mistrust political parties. What is palpable is that political party agents, especially those who are not elected and those who have lost seats in the local government council collaborate with and use community organisations and social movements to raise community welfare issues. In doing so, they raise the profile of their political parties and of their own political profiles within their political parties and in Mpumalanga. Leaders of community organisations and social movements who have been marginalised in the political scene also gain from the collaboration with the equally marginalised local political party agents. They manage to raise their profiles as influential political agents within their own organisations, and also within the broader national fraternity

of community organisations. This is further discussed in Chapter 7. These considerations paint a more nuanced picture of the relationship between neo-liberalism and anti-neoliberal mobilisation, contentious politics, the legacy of community politics and the new grassroots social movements.

Community or neighbourhood politics in the other regions have assumed a different form. That is also the result of the political legacies of these regions. In the provinces of Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and the Western Cape, the virtual absence historically of violently domineering political parties such as the IFP in KwaZulu-Natal have shaped community politics in other ways. In these areas, the ANC, the SACP, and COSATU have always been dominant, even over the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and AZAPO. In some of these townships, especially in Gauteng, the ANC and COSATU branches have carved for themselves a domineering role, for instance in Kanana in the Vaal Region, as pointed out in Chapter 5. In these townships, the ANC has violently opposed the mobilisation and the collective action campaigns of the APF and its affiliates, revealing political intolerance by the ANC. The police, intelligence and other security agents at the municipal level have colluded with these acts of political intolerance, by ignoring any pleas to solve incidents of violent political intolerance through judicial means.

V. Research Methods

The research methods that I employed combined quantitative and qualitative research tools. I drew up a questionnaire and divided it into various sections for the

purpose of gathering the various strands of information regarding the research question. I settled for a sample of five percent. A household, within the context of this research, is defined as a family unit living in a formal dwelling or house, and whose financial and welfare needs are defined by the breadwinner or head of the household, who is either formally or informally employed. The majority of the houses in Mpumalanga, with the exception of those located in Unit Six, are four-room houses. A number of these houses have been extended, as in many other formal townships countrywide. The extensions usually provide extra bedrooms, bathrooms and toilets. All of these houses, again as in the majority of the formally constructed townships, are provided with yard taps. The extensions of these houses are usually for the use of family members or relatives. There are virtually no backyard rooms rented out to tenants who are not family members.

The calculation of the finances of the household took into consideration the salaries and the wages of the heads of the households. Therefore, the financial standing of the household is measured using the salaries or wages of the heads of the households. In my calculations, I did not consider the number of people in the township, but the number of formal dwellings or households. That is so because the questionnaire's objective was to reveal the wages or salaries of the individual households, the sexes and ages of the heads of the households, the numbers of dependants in the households, the relations between the dependants in the households, and, most importantly, the extent of the water cut-offs and the resolutions that the heads of the households took in dealing with these problems.

It was important that I established the extent and the gravity of the water crisis in Mpumalanga, since the CCF and the other Durban-based new social movements had not conducted any detailed and empirical research on the water crisis in this township. Much of their writings on these problems and on cost recovery mechanisms, mostly by such figures as Desai, Bohmke, Meer, Khan, and Richard Pithouse, were journalistic and rhetorical.

I then distributed the surveys equally among the six sections of the township. I did not include the informal settlements and the peri-urban areas surrounding Mpumalanga in the Outer West Local Council. These areas had different water delivery and service problems, and were therefore not affected by water cut-offs and cost recovery, since most of the households in these areas relied on community water taps. Also, a number of these areas had to contend with the elemental problem of the lack of access to running and hygienic water, rather than cost recovery itself.

The first four sections of the township (Sections 1 and 1 North, 1 South, Sections 2, 3 and 4) are predominantly working class neighbourhoods. The majority of the active and employed labour force living in those sections is employed either in the Hammarsdale industrial complex, or in Durban. The last two sections primarily consist of the middle-class, and the professionals constitute about 20 per cent of the sampled heads of households.[30] The survey revealed that the middle-class residents were employed in the teaching (44 per cent), nursing (17 per cent), administration (13

[30] Siwisa, B. (2002) **Categorisation of the Sampled Mpumalanga Township Heads of Households.**

per cent), police and armed forces (13 per cent), engineering (10 per cent) and law (3 per cent) professions.[31]

The line of separation between the self-employed and the unemployed is blurred. Many of the heads of households indicated in the surveys that they were self-employed. By its nature, the latter group's forms of employment are uncertain. At the same time, many of the self-employed who regarded themselves as earning meagre incomes within a precarious profession or trade indicated in the surveys that they were unemployed. There were therefore various conceptions of what employment meant, and the dominant strain swayed towards the conception of a unionised labourer safely employed in a factory, working fixed hours, with medical and pension benefits.

Self-employment activities or trades are often regarded as occupations that often help to make ends meet in times of hiatus between loss of a secure job and actively searching for new and secure employment opportunities. The employed in the townships usually have some form of minor trade or occupation, usually carried out in the households during spare times that help to make ends meet. So, self-employment tends to be ubiquitous in all the classes or occupational groups, despite the fact that it is often not conceptualised as a respectable form of occupation.

Other occupations that have been indicated in the surveys were domestic services (3 per cent), and factory workers (30 per cent). Pensioners constituted the

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[31] Siwisa, B. (2002) **Types of Employment Among Professionals Heads of Households.**

largest group, about 34 per cent.[32] Even among these groups, there is substantial criss-crossing of occupations, with mainly self-employment again making itself visible in almost every occupational group. Among these occupations listed here, self-employment is more visible in the domestic services and among the pensioners groups.

Self-employment is largely under-recognised, and is difficult to quantify, as it is precarious and informal. There is vast literature on this subject, and it is not my intention to further dwell on it. The point here is to emphasise the pervasiveness of self-employment in Mpumalanga, and how the reader should approach and analyse the results of the surveys with that concern in mind.

The first section of the survey gathered the demographic data of the townships (see the **Mpumalanga Township Survey,** Appendix 1). Focusing on the heads of households, I enquired about the sex, age, type of employment, and income of the heads of households, the number of dependants, the relationships of the dependants to the heads of the households, and the ages of the dependants. The participants in the survey were asked to circle various possible answers in some of the columns. In the age of the household column, the ages were grouped as: 20 – 30 to 90 – 100. In the column enquiring about the incomes of the heads of households, the participants were asked to circle the following brackets of incomes in which they fitted (gross per month): R300 – 501 to R5 001 – R5 500, and then from R6 00 – R7 000, and carrying along in that pattern of single thousand rand gaps until R20 000. In the column enquiring about the relationships of the dependants to the heads of the households

[32] Siwisa, B. (2002) (a).

living with them in their houses, options availed to the participants as answers in the survey were: sons, daughters, grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, uncle, aunt, grandsons (how many), granddaughters (how many), nephews, nieces, others.

The second section of the survey dealt with the water problems that the Mpumalanga residents encountered between 2000 and 2002. This section was also directed to the heads of households. The columns were divided into: type of water meter; number of times you have been disconnected; resolutions you took; amounts of water bills you have received in the last two years; and how many times have you had a device (eg. water trickler) removed? Under the average amount of water bills received in the last two years per month, the options that the participant were asked to choose from ranged from the amount of R300 to R20 000 and beyond.

The last question was geared towards gaining a quantitative rate of success of Operation *Vulamanzi* undertaken by the Mpumalanga youth activists. Under the 'Resolutions you took' column, I offered various options to the participants. These were: paid the water bill; approached the Durban Metro Water Services (DMWS) for advice / assistance; approached lawyers; approached the CCF; approached the bank; asked for a bank loan; asked for a loan from some other institution; asked for a loan from a relative; asked for a loan from a *stokvel* (savings circle); or asked for a loan from a friend; other. These questions also sought to gauge the relationship between the CCF and the Mpumalanga residents. Its aim was to measure the depth of the CCF's engagement with the community in solving or alleviating the water services delivery crisis.

A group of three Mpumalanga youth activists assisted me in carrying out the survey. They went door-to-door and street to street filling out the questionnaires. Various factors persuaded me to carry out the survey in that manner. Firstly, it stood to benefit them in that the exercise was a way for them of gaining a deeper understanding of the water delivery situation in the township. I had realised that the CCF and the youth activists had never carried out any thorough research on the water crisis in the township. They had perceived the presence and the gravity of the water problems through informal and infrequent talks with various small groups of people. They had never undertaken any workshops nor community outreach programmes to gauge the gravity of the problem and underline the particular problems that the residents of Mpumalanga experienced. During the course of the fieldwork in Mpumalanga, they expressed gratitude in the way in which the questionnaires helped them to gain a deeper understanding of the water delivery problems in Mpumalanga. The CCF or its leadership was physically available only in times of crises, and they could not be located anywhere. As Mosoetsa also observed, the CCF, "...once the immediate crisis was over, this hopeful initiative fizzled out and failed to concretize its efforts."[33]

The only time that any form of research had been carried out in any of the Durban townships they were mobilising in from the time of their emergence in 1999 to 2002 was the fieldwork survey that Professor Fatima Meer carried out on behalf of the ANC. I considered the participation of the youth activists in my research as a mechanism of mobilising in the township, as the CCF had not laid down any

[33] Mosoetsa, S. (2005) **Compromised Communities**, (p. 18).

mechanisms set for communicating with the people apart from organising them into marches and rallies when crises loomed.

It was risky for me to undertake the surveys alone in Mpumalanga, going door to door. I had experienced problems during my Honours year in 1997 in the township of KwaMashu, when I carried out fieldwork research on the small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs). The research subjects were the KwaMashu entrepreneurs, housed in a complex especially built for them. Although I was accompanied by a local, and was fluent in isiZulu (although with an isiXhosa accent), I was physically threatened by one of the respondents on the grounds of my Xhosa ethnicity. However, in Mpumalanga I had never experienced any problems moving around the township. There is a clear distinction though between casually moving around a township and formally conducting fieldwork research in it, going door to door. The political atmosphere was still relatively tense and the people were indignant at the installation of pre-paid water meters by the eThekwini municipality the previous year. It was quite interesting to learn that the people channelled their anger and frustrations to the local municipality. They tended to blame the local government and their officials as the instigators of the problem, and not particularly the ruling party in the eThekwini municipality, the ANC. There is therefore a perception among the township residents of the separation of the municipality and its bureaucracy from the ruling party. The cost recovery policy tends to be associated more with the local government and its bureaucracy rather than the ruling party, the ANC.

As an isiXhosa-speaking, bespectacled and educated young man, I therefore perfectly fitted the stereotypical description of a city council official carrying out

research studies with the aim of facilitating the implementation of the cost recovery policy mechanisms on water delivery services. One of the three Mpumalanga youth activists who carried out the surveys in the township, Thando Mchunu, was chased out of a house by a slightly inebriated male member of one household wielding a bread knife for asking questions, which he thought were meant to assist the eThekwini municipality in implementing the cost recovery mechanisms on water. He and the other members of that house insisted that Thando was an employee of the eThekwini municipality.

In Mpumalanga we had to make ourselves known (especially in Section 1 North) to the IFP members. Despite the fact that the ANC controlled the Mpumalanga constituency, areas such as Section 1 North had been dominated in the past by the IFP, by force. IFP members still regarded such sections as their territories, and they wielded influence over matters of social welfare in those areas. On the other hand, the ANC in Mpumalanga did not hinder us in any way from carrying out the research, nor did I have to solicit for their approval, nor announce my research intentions and goals. In fact, the ANC councillors in Mpumalanga and in the surrounding areas in the Outer West Local Council were willing and co-operative with my research. They were enthusiastic in engaging in dialogue with me. The ANC only assumed a bullying stance towards the CCF leaders and activists when they mounted or supported aggressive and violent collective action campaigns.

In many townships all over the country severely affected by the water cost recovery policy, the affected residents tend to be suspicious of researchers. Township residents tend to assume that they are employed by the municipalities, and that the

municipal authorities are seeking other ways to further entrench cost recovery mechanisms on water services delivery. This reaction has been played out in municipal constituencies, which have dissimilar political legacies to KwaZulu-Natal's.

One of the examples that clearly illustrated this problem occurred in Cape Town. Mthetho Xali, an experienced researcher on public-private partnerships and cost recovery who was employed by the International Labour Resource and Information Group (ILRIG), which is affiliated to the Sociology Department of the University of Cape Town (UCT), encountered similar problems in 2001. Xali was part of a national team of researchers with David A. McDonald, John Pape and others, which conducted research on cost recovery policy and mechanisms. They conducted research mainly in the Eastern Cape (Fort Beaufort, Queenstown and Stutterheim), Gauteng (Soweto), KwaZulu-Natal (cholera outbreak in Madlebe), Western Cape (Khayelitsha) and in the Northern Cape. Xali undertook research on water and electricity cost recovery in Makhaza, a section in the Khayelitsha Township.

Makhaza came into existence in the early 1990s. Like many other townships, it has tarred roads, a combination of brick houses and shacks, and serviced sites. It is comprised of about 16 000 households. Xali worked with ten researchers who were also residents in Makhaza in carrying out 63 fieldwork research surveys. He noted the wariness of the respondents to their research:

> A major problem the research assistants experienced was the suspicion of the respondents that the survey was being administered by the council. In most cases the research assistants were able to deal with these fears by ensuring people that the outcome of the research would assist the community in formulating responses to its problems of service delivery. On a few occasions, the research assistants were not successful in convincing people that the

> research had nothing to do with the council. In those instances other respondents had to be found.[34]

Apart from these potential dangers, the survey we carried out in Mpumalanga went smoothly. There was only one instance where we encountered a problem of suspicion harboured by the respondents towards the researchers that manifested itself in attempted assault on one research assistant. In our studies, the research assistants complained that they had to ensure the respondents that they were neither collaborating with nor working for the eThekwini Municipality.

The qualitative section of the research mainly involved interviews, which provided substantive information on the water services delivery problem in Mpumalanga and in Durban generally. I interviewed council officials in the DMWS and council officials representing Mpumalanga and the surrounding areas in the Outer West Local Council. I did not encounter any problems in securing the interviews with these two groups of people. However, as I have explained earlier on, I only managed to interview one of the less than five core intellectual-cum-activists / leaders of the CCF. To obtain 'insider' views of the CCF, I utilised secondary materials I obtained from the press, press interviews with the CCF leadership, and material that was availed to me by Bohmke (court affidavits, CCF constitution and CCF legal correspondence). These sources circumscribed my research analysis in ways that I could have done nothing about. I have also taken advantage of the associations I made throughout the fieldwork research, and the informal discussions I have had with the Mpumalanga-based activists, CCF sympathisers and other activists, local council

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[34] Xali, M. **"They are Killing us Alive": A Case Study of the Impact of Cost Recovery on Service Provision in Makhaza Section, Khayelitsha**, in, McDonald, D.A. & Pape, J. (eds.) (2002) **Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Service Delivery in South Africa**, (Human Sciences Research Council Publishers, Cape Town; Zed Books Ltd., London), (p. 102).

officials and the politically appointed local councillors have also informed my research findings.

The information gathered from the interviews also authenticated or disproved some theories and claims that have been spread about some issues on water services delivery in Durban. Also, the interviews provided me with some 'off the record' information on the leadership and the decision-making dynamics of the CCF that I could not have recorded nor transcribed. This is not a history, nor a political history thesis, but a politics thesis dealing with subjects and people that are alive and still active in politics and in the civil services. Therefore, I had to be careful with how I have treated some of the confidential information that was availed to me.

VI. Chapters Breakdown

Chapter 2, *Mpumalanga, Locality and Social Differentiation*, introduces social differentiation and locality, as it lends itself to socio-spatial differentiation. Social differentiation means that different classes or occupational groups in Mpumalanga have different abilities to pay their water services bills. As a result, their attitudes towards the water services struggles are varied, and cannot be pigeonholed into the 'poor people vs. state / local state / ruling party' theorem, as the CCF leadership would have us believe, as well as many other leftist intellectuals and leaders of the South African new social movements. Social differentiation in Mpumalanga has also indicated that people of different classes' relationships with the DMWS is varied and complex, and that it is dictated by the levels of the prices they can afford.

On the other hand, locality proves its political significance, in that it lends itself to socio-spatial differentiation, in the context of Mpumalanga within the eThekwini Municipality. Mpumalanga occupies a disadvantaged location in the eThekwini Municipality, compared to many other townships located in Durban's five other local sub-structures. Mpumalanga's disadvantaged economic and social features, part of the landscape of the Outer West Local Council, have further unmasked the township residents' precarious employment and living conditions. The implementation of cost recovery on water services delivery worsened the disadvantaged socio-economic state of Mpumalanga residents. These have all contributed to the explosion of the township's collective action campaigns against water services delivery crisis.

Chapter 3, *"Rhetoric is Dropped, reality prevails...": The ANC in the South African Economy, 1990s – 2002*, helps us to understand two things. Firstly, it lays a context for understanding how neo-liberalism in the public services delivery has developed. The macro-economic context 'necessitated' the implementation of cost recovery policy mechanisms. Secondly, and of more immediate importance, it establishes a foundation for understanding how local development at the municipal level has been reconfigured to accommodate these neo-liberal developments. As political economists and social geographers such as Freund and Padayachee[35], Swyngedouw and David Harvey have observed, the city in the era of globalisation has become the point where the dynamics of speculative investment by the international

[35] See, Freund, B. & Padayachee, V. (eds.) (2002) **'D'Urban Vortex: South African City in Transition**, (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg).

water companies manifest themselves. The effects of their investment strategies appear most noticeably at the municipal level. Bond put it that:

> ...cities and regions are also increasingly caught up in the vortex of the international law of value, as more direct ---- often municipal-level strategies of restructuring production and reproduction are brought into play, often at the behest of global financiers and agencies.[36]

This chapter begins by unpacking the state of the South African economy in the late 1980s. It moves on to analyse the development of the South African economy up until the early 1990s. This period is crucial, because that is when the ANC was preparing to assume power. It is at this time that the ANC deliberated about the macro-economic and industrial policies that ought to be instituted once it took over the government. Of particular importance as a source of pressure on the ANC's thinking on the restructuring of the South African economy are the drastic changes in international relations evident after the demise of the Cold War era.

The narrative moves on to examine the 'Great Economic Debate' that spanned the mid and the beginning of the late 1990s. It traces how domestic capital and the tripartite alliance of the ANC, COSATU and the SACP waged a battle to influence the restructuring of the South African economy. It begins when the ANC-affiliated Macro-Economic Research Group (MERG) submitted its proposals in 1994 embodied in the document, *Making Democracy* Work. The research group's proposals drew on neo-Keynesian principles. The analysis then moves on to discuss the South African Foundation's (SAF) macro-economic proposals, contained in the *Growth for All: An Economic Strategy for South Africa* document. Its business-oriented macro-economic strategy eclipsed the MERG analysis, although the South African Labour Movement

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[36] Bond, P. (2000) **Cities of Gold, Townships of Coal: Essays on South Africa's New Urban Crisis**, (Africa World Press, Inc., New Jersey & Asmara), (p. 29).

(SALM), constituted of the COSATU-affiliated trade unions, attacked the SAF through its document, *Social Equity and Job Creation: The Key to a Stable Future*. The economic debate paints the mood of the post-apartheid South African political economy and how it came to be.

The first three chapters provide the background for understanding the gist of the thesis. Firstly, they furnish us with a background for the analysis of cost recovery policy mechanisms on water services delivery. Secondly, they offer a framework for an insight into the form, the nature, the legacies and the dynamics of the new grassroots social movements.

Chapter 4, *Water: Policies, Politics and Delivery*, provides an architectural framework of the water crisis in both the national and the international contexts. It looks at the environmental problems that have accompanied the delivery of water services in South Africa, Africa and the world. Water is situated in its social, environmental and political contexts. The second part unpacks the policies and bills that have been passed by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) from the mid-1990s. By analysing the government policies on water services, delivery and pricing, we are able to articulate the government's stance on these issues. At the same time, we demystify many of the arguments on government policies on water services delivery that have been bandied about in the popular and the social movements' press. This chapter is also crucial in that it explores the technical details on the delivery of water services, and especially the technicalities on the funding and the costs involved in the delivery of water services.

Chapter 5, *Social Citizenship and the Emergence of the New Social Movements, 1998 – 2005* goes to the root of the problem that led to the emergence of the new social movements in the late 1990s: the breakdown of social citizenship. Firstly, it examines social citizenship and its breakdown. It then traces the crisis of the abrogation of social citizenship experienced by the poor communities in the townships. Secondly, it analyses the mechanisms that have been put in place by the municipalities, the international water companies and the various NGOs in partnering the municipalities with the private sector in infrastructure development and the delivery of water services. These mechanisms have come in the forms of public-private partnerships, ranging from lease management, lease contracts, to full privatisation. Thirdly, it delves into the debates on public-private partnerships and privatisation, scrutinising the performances and the problems that the municipalities have experienced in driving the public-private partnership programmes.

Fourthly, the chapter moves on to explore the emergence of the new social movements. It looks at how the affected communities throughout South Africa have mobilised and instituted collective action campaigns against these public-private partnership initiatives. I have drawn up a contemporary political history of the new social movements from 1998 to 2005. Within that vein, I have examined the concept of contentious politics. I further explore the ideologies and the strategies that the new social movements in the various parts of the country have employed in furthering their collective action campaigns. I also analyse the various leadership problems that they have experienced.

Chapter 6, *"This is People's Water!": Water Services Struggles in the Mpumalanga Township, 1998 – 2002*, directly follows the preceding chapter, in that the assertions made by the different parties in Mpumalanga are judged against the background of the clearly articulated government policies. This chapter sets out the results of the fieldwork surveys that I undertook in 2002. It unearths the demography of Mpumalanga by examining the classes or occupational groups, the wages and salaries of the sampled heads of households, the numbers of the dependants in the households, the relationships of the dependants with the sampled heads of households. From then, it examines the nature and the gravity of the water services delivery problems in the township.

I have done this by gauging through the fieldwork research surveys the amounts of the water bills received per month from 2000 to 2002 and the frequency of the water cut-offs. I have attempted to establish the reach of the CCF in the township, and the nature and the depth of the relationship between the Mpumalanga residents and the eThekwini Municipality by looking into what forms of resolutions the affected sampled heads of households have taken in dealing with either high water bills or / and water cut-offs. In that way, I have also tried to establish the mechanisms that the local municipality have put in place in dealing with these problems, and how effective they have been.

Chapter 7, *Crowd Renting or Struggling from Below?: The Concerned Citizens Forum (CCF) in the Mpumalanga Township, 1999 – 2005*, traces the contemporary political history of Mpumalanga. It then balances out the views of the CCF and its leadership with those of the Mpumalanga youth activists. Through the

interactions between the latter and the core CCF leadership, the dynamics of the nature and the form of political mobilisation and strategies that the CCF carried out in the township are decked out. Firstly, there is the debate that has ensued on the nature of the leadership, its structure and decision-making. That inevitably leads to the enquiry about whether these struggles have been concerted with local activists, or whether they have been instituted in a top-down mode.

This chapter also highlights the legacy of the community struggles in the township that have shaped, and continue to determine the trajectory of the anti-neoliberal struggles in the township. The insertion of community politics in the equation confounds the desired notions and results of the CCF struggles in the township. At the same time, there is the realisation that the CCF is not a product of community politics in the township. Its entrance in Mpumalanga's struggles is intimately shaped, in both positive and negative ways, by the legacy of community politics and by its relationships with the other parties, stakeholders and political personalities active in the township. The CCF, its core leadership and the Mpumalanga youth activists, on the other hand, are willing participants and are also pro-active in exploiting and redirecting the winds of the legacies of community politics for their own benefits in the grand scheme of things.

CHAPTER 2

Mpumalanga, Locality and Social Differentiation

I. Introduction

Mpumalanga Township has enjoyed a short and an intense attention in the midst of the drama of the anti-cost recovery collective action campaigns between 1999 and 2003 in KwaZulu-Natal. It was one of the first and most vibrant sites of the water services struggles in KwaZulu-Natal that were sparked by the implementation of the cost recovery mechanisms. For a while, Mpumalanga and the Chatsworth townships in Durban were beacons of the anti-neoliberal struggles. Collective action campaigns there focused on the exorbitant water bills of the township residents caused by the implementation of the high block tariff system on water services delivery; the increase of municipal services rates; water disconnections; and the irregularities and inefficiencies in water billing on the part of the DMWS.

Durban's new social movements took the campaigns of Mpumalanga's residents to the eThekwini Municipality. They also campaigned on their behalf in the international fora. The CCF publicised the anti-neoliberal struggles of Mpumalanga as a microcosm of the anti-neoliberal sentiment in South Africa's townships. The intense and aggressive response of the residents of Mpumalanga who participated in the campaigns were interpreted by the CCF leadership as indicative of anti-neoliberal

mood in Durban and nationally. This mood was described by the CCF leadership in a linear way, as a 'poor people vs. state / ruling party' relationship. This is an untenable perception that does not take into cognisance two essential variables: the significance of locality that lends itself to socio-spatial differentiation, and the implications of social differentiation within Mpumalanga and among its residents.

This then brings us to the importance of specificities and particularities of locality in our endeavour to clearly understand the dynamics of the new social movements in the post-apartheid dispensation. These considerations fly against the rhetoric on the new social movements' collective action campaigns that can only becloud and mystify the predicament faced by Mpumalanga residents.

This chapter emphasises the importance of case studies, and how we can draw a clearer understanding of the political significance of locality and social differentiation from the empirical evidence extracted from them. Case studies help us to understand the agenda-making processes of the collective action of different social movements in different localities. Agenda-making on collective action hinges on locality, whose economic and social features inform the needs and wants of its residents. Case studies also aid us in making sense of the paths that social movements embark on in combating neo-liberalism. Political economists such as Patrick Bond warned against the rhetorical understanding of neo-liberalism, emphasizing that particularities should be stressed and appreciated. He cautioned thus, "To begin systematically to tackle neo-liberalism requires moving through rhetoric about the

nationalist 'sell-out', to documenting what precisely is wrong (defined as unjust, inappropriate, unworkable, untenable) with the ANC's rightward trajectory.[1]

The rhetorical or blanket treatment of the crisis of neo-liberalism also manifests itself in the ways the leftist social movements and their leaders tackle the crisis. The post-apartheid South African left has fallen into an analytical pit, treating the problem as an 'either / or' predicament. Many South African leftists regard the relationship between the state and the poor people subjected to neo-liberal policies as simple and linear. To them, the state is oppressing the people, and consequently poor people must be collectively mobilised against the state. Suren Pillay, a sociologist based at the University of Cape Town (UCT), aptly summarised the predicament of the post-apartheid South African left thus:

> One could suggest that the left is caught between two laments: firstly, good old Tina ---- there is no alternative; globalisation is imperialism, it is total control, pass my McBurger. The second lament is split as follows: if Stalin failed / if Trotsky won / if Maoism was dominant, we would have had a revolution. Alternatively, if the ANC's working class interests had won, we would have had a revolution. Neither of this happened.
> ...
>
> One wonders whether the left in South Africa needs these twin laments in order to continue to hold on to a left identity. Is this sado-masochism meets Marx? Is the left's identity going to continue to be established by what did not happen? In the past tense?[2]

Pillay emphasized the importance of understanding political and economic particularities. His main point of focus is how the left in post-apartheid South Africa misunderstands or underestimates the complexity of neo-liberalism as it adapts to the new post-Cold War political economic environment.

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[1] Bond, P. (2000) **Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa**, (Pluto Press, London), (p. 3).
[2] Pillay, S. **Let us liberate the revolution**, *Mail & Guardian*, 17 March, 2000.

This chapter lays out the current economic and political geography of Durban. This helps us to perceive better the background of the forces that ignited the emergence of the new social movements in Durban's townships, and why reactions to water services delivery backlogs and the increase of the basic municipal services rates are more intense and aggressive compared to the other townships. In some of Durban's townships, such as Chatsworth and Mpumalanga, the reactions against cost-recovery policy mechanisms and house evictions have been more belligerent than in the other townships. The examination of the specific economic and political geographies guides us in understanding why uprisings are more vibrant in certain townships than in the others, when cost recovery policy mechanisms on water services delivery and basic municipal services rates have been uniformly applied, and their impacts have been felt throughout the city.

II. Mpumalanga Township: Contemporary Political History

The contemporary political history of Mpumalanga explains the peculiarity of the township in the context of the recent anti-cost recovery uprisings. Mpumalanga has its own political dynamics, informed by its political history, which have continued to define and reconfigure it as a peculiar political and social site. Its dynamics are shaped by its political legacies that have, in turn, sculptured the contours of the township's neighbourhood or community politics.

The township was established in the late 1960s. From the mid-1970s, it fell under the jurisdiction and political control of the KwaZulu Government, when the

Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) established its branch there in 1975.[3] The IFP's influence and its presence extended beyond politics. It was viewed as a Zulu cultural presence on the one hand. It was also perceived as being at the centre of the provision of housing and other municipal services. The IFP's political rivals in Mpumalanga, such as the Mpumalanga Residents' Association (Mpura), the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and the UDF contested political and social issues with the IFP.

By the 1980s, the four political movements active in Mpumalanga represented different political, social and cultural ideologies. The IFP was in control of the KwaZulu Government, and was adamant in maintaining its political hegemony through various political and social means. It set up *ooQonda*, which were vigilante street committees bent on curtailing petty criminal activities in the township. At the same time, *ooQonda* were means of maintaining control over the townships' households in accordance with Zulu customs as set up by the IFP. This was challenged by Mpura, a civic organisation mainly organised and led by local businessmen, which sought to challenge the IFP at the local government level, as well as challenging the sway of its traditional Zulu customs. Contesting *ooQonda*'s Zulu

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[3] Bonnin, D. (2001) **Local Politics in Mpumalanga: Resisting an Ethic Politics of Identity, 1980 – 1987**, (Unpublished paper delivered at the History Seminars, Department of History, University of Natal, Durban); Bonnin, D. (2000) **Claiming Spaces, Changing Places: Political Violence and Women's Protests in KwaZulu-Natal**, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2; Bonnin, D. (2004) **Understanding the Legacies of Political Violence: An Examination of Political Conflict in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**, (Crisis States Programme, Development Research Centre, LSE), (Working Paper No. 44), (See, www.crisisstates.com); Bonnin, D., *et al*, **The Struggle for Natal and KwaZulu: Workers, Township Dwellers and Inkatha, 1972 – 1985**, in, Morrell, R. (ed.) (1986) **Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives**, (Indicator Press, Durban). See also Sarah Mosoetsa's works on Mpumalanga; Mosoetsa, S. (2004) **The Legacies of Apartheid and Implications of Economic Liberalisation: A Post-Apartheid Township**, (Crisis States Programme, Development Research Centre, LSE), (Working Paper No. 49), (See, www.crisisstates.com); Mosoetsa, S. (2005) **Compromised Communities and Re-emerging Civic Engagement in Mpumalanga Township, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal**, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, December.

customs was also a way of making inroads into the IFP's hegemony over the social lives of the township's residents. The UDF and AZAPO were political movements that perceived the IFP as an ally of the apartheid regime in the 1980s, and sought to challenge its political authority.

The activities of these four political movements in Mpumalanga shaped the state of community or neighbourhood politics in Mpumalanga, whose legacy is currently evident. In the 1980s, Mpumalanga was plagued by political violence between the IFP, the UDF and AZAPO. Political violence represented a vehicle for the IFP to maintain its hegemony in the township, which was challenged by the political mobilisation of the UDF and AZAPO, and by Mpura at the municipal and local government electoral level. There was also a strong tradition of trade union activism as a result of the industrial complex in Hammarsdale, where the majority of workers were employed. Due to the predominance of the textile plants in Hammarsdale, the largest trade union active in Hammarsdale / Mpumalanga was the National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW), which was an affiliate of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU).

Political activities in Mpumalanga from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s, and the political violence that became pronounced from 1987 until the early 1990s, left its own legacy. The status of the social / civic movements depended on which political party was in power, and in which political climate. In the 1980s, Mpura challenged the IFP at the local government level, and won some seats. When the ANC took over the DMA in 1995, the political fulcrum in Mpumalanga local politics changed drastically. The ANC is now in power and the IFP is an opposition party. The CCF

Mpumalanga youth activists have found allies in the IFP in local political mobilisation against water services delivery backlogs and the increase of municipal service rates. However, the IFP's political tactics of forcefully attaining and sustaining control over its constituents linger on in Mpumalanga. For instance, despite the fact that the ANC won the local elections in the Outer West Local Council area and in Mpumalanga, in Mpumalanga's neighbourhood units such as Section 1 North, where the IFP has always had a visible presence, the CCF Mpumalanga youth activists found it difficult to organise and mobilise there because civic politics have historically been perceived as the terrain of the ANC and those organisations and movements that are pro-ANC.[4]

Bonnin argued that political identity of individual and households became synonymous with the area in which they were located.[5] Unit 1 North and sections of Unit 4 and 6, along with the Woody Glen area, were regarded as IFP areas, with all those who lived in these areas regarded as loyal to the IFP. Unit 1 South, Unit 2 South, Unit 3, sections of Unit 4 and Unit 6, along with Georgedale, were under the influence of the UDF. Bonnin observed that, "...the geographical area in which the individual lived, determined the political identity and, in a situation where the residential areas were being divided up between the parties, it was impossible to avoid being aligned with one or other political group."[6] In the 1980s, neighbourhood politics of many townships throughout South Africa were drawn along political movements' patronage and ideological alliances. The nature of these territorial power contestations varied in forms and in the degrees of violence that were used to exert conformation.

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[4] For discussion on the creation of political power blocs in Mpumalanga's neighbourhood among the various political parties and movements in the 1980s, see, Bonnin, D. (2004) **Understanding the Legacies. of Political Violence: An Examination of Political Conflict in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**, (Crisis States Programme, Development Research Centre, LSE), (Working Paper No. 44), (See, www.crisisstates.com).

[5] Bonnin, D. (2004) **Understanding the Legacies**.

[6] Ibid, (p. 13).

Currently, in many townships in KwaZulu-Natal, some of these traditional alliances to political parties and movements forged in the 1980s have disappeared, while in the other townships they linger on.

Mobilisation against the increase of water services delivery prices and the increase of municipal service rates has also been sparked by the lack of the provision of inadequate and incorrect information by the Durban local government on the issue of the transition from the payment of minimum water and municipal service rates (about ten rand in the 1980s) to the increase of municipal services rates. Despite different political allegiances, Mpumalanga residents have protested in unison against this. At the same time, the IFP took the opportunity to support the CCF in mobilising against the increase of these municipal services, as it perceives it as a way of weakening the ANC's control and administration in the township.

The conflict over the rates of municipal services rates Mpumalanga residents were supposed to pay is also a direct result of the confounding of the governance of such townships following the collapse of the apartheid local government system. Townships such as Mpumalanga fell under the jurisdiction of the KwaZulu Government, and were therefore subject to the local government system of its government. The disintegration of the local government system in former homeland and Bantustan areas resulted in confusion in the municipal services delivery system that petered into the post-apartheid dispensation. In post-violence (post-1987) Mpumalanga, township "...management disappeared along with the rule of law."[7] The Township Council no longer met, administrative responsibilities fell under the

[7] Ibid.

township superintendents who pursued the politics of the unit in which they resided. This is one the reasons there was confusion over the municipal rates services that Mpumalanga residents were supposed to pay, as many residents were convinced that the ten rand municipal services rates were in effect then.[8]

This sets out Mpumalanga's background in understanding the upheavals on municipal services delivery. We are then able to pick separately the different strands of the crises in our endeavour to grasp fully the gravity and the shape of the crises. We conclude that the increase of municipal services rates is partly the result of the processes of local government restructuring put into shape by the ANC Government in an effort to achieve alignment.

III. Mpumalanga: Social Differentiation and Cost Recovery

There are two fundamental aspects that have to taken into account in our endeavour to understand the emergence of the new social movements in Mpumalanga, and the dynamics of contentious politics sparked by the implementation of cost recovery. These are **social differentiation** in Mpumalanga, and **socio-spatial differentiation** within the context of Mpumalanga's location in the eThekwini Municipality. Both these considerations debunk the notion of the homogenised anti-neoliberal sentiment in South Africa's townships that simplifies contentious politics into a poor people vs. state conflict-ridden relationship. By exploring social and socio-spatial differentiation, we are able to explain Mpumalanga's explosive water services

[8] **Interview with Fanie Moyo**, (13 December, 2002), (Hammarsdale, Durban).

struggles, on the one hand. On the other hand, we are able to demystify that poor people vs. state linear relationship that Mpumalanga's anti-cost recovery struggles have been pigeonholed into by the rhetoric of the CCF leadership.

Social differentiation refers to differentiation among people within a certain area or conurbation along wages, salary, property, assets, race, class, sex, sexuality, gender and religion. South Africa is intensely characterised by these interacting forms of differentiation as a result of its diversity and its history. Most importantly, it was race that the apartheid regime made the axis of differentiation. Racial differentiation in the past has left a legacy of social differentiation premised on wages, property and assets. This is all the more evident among black people.

The implementation of cost recovery has rendered social differentiation more visible, unmasking differentiation among South Africa's different races and classes along wages and other material factors. This is because cost recovery rests on the affordability of municipal services and amenities. David A. McDonald defined cost recovery as, "the recovery of all, or most, of the cost associated with providing a particular service by a service provider."[9] He further went on to identify that for publicly owned services providers, this may or may not incorporate a surplus beyond the cost of production. For private sector providers, it does include a surplus. In both scenarios, the main aim is to recoup the full cost of production.

Ben Cashdan pointed out that with regards to cost recovery, "People are only to receive services that they can afford. They must pay the full cost, in direct

[9] McDonald, D.A. & Pape, J. (eds.) (2002) **Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Service Delivery in South Africa**, (HSRC Press, Cape Town). (p. 18).

proportion to the amount they consume."[10] This has also been outlined in the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework (MIIF). According to the finance section of the White Paper on Local Government, each sector must be financially sustainable. By that, it is meant that municipal services rendered should ensure reasonable surplus in the case of services performed by the municipality itself. For municipal services rendered by private sector providers, reasonable profits should be ensured.

The implementation of cost recovery on water, electricity and sanitation provision has unmasked social differentiation within townships. This has changed the discourse on urban governance in post-apartheid South African cities. Social justice, the affordability of municipal services, the relationship between residents and local government authorities, and on governance and social exclusion, have emerged as pivotal themes. Writing about governance and social exclusion in post-apartheid Johannesburg, Jo Beall, *et al* aptly observed that:

> The impact of privatization on the poor of Johannesburg and issues of conditions of employment, affordability for residents and overall social justice are emerging as central challenges to democratic urban governance... Whether read from the macro, meso or micro scales, cities are not only sites of economic development, vibrant centres of social and cultural creativity, or sites of political innovation. They are also places of disadvantage and division and can be divided along a range of axes, including class, race, ethnicity, gender, generation and length of urban residence.[11]

Social differentiation manifests itself in differential access to municipal services. The implementation of cost recovery has reduced, "...citizens to *individual*

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[10] Cashdan, B. **Local Government and Poverty in South Africa**, in, Parnell, S., Pieterse, E., Swilling, M. & Wooldridge, D. (eds.) (2002) **Democratising Local Government: The South African Experiment**, (University of Cape Town Press), (p. 164).
[11] Beall, J., Crankshaw, O. & Parnell, S. (2002) **Uniting a Divided City: Governance and Social Exclusion in Johannesburg**, (Earthscan Publications Ltd., London), (pp. 8-9).

consumers with income streams and preferences."[12] Differential access to services in Mpumalanga is acutely evident. This is reflected by the township's different classes' varied affordability levels. It is testified to by the different resolutions taken by the residents when confronted by their water bills. This is despite the fact that cost recovery on water has been uniformly implemented throughout Mpumalanga, and throughout the six sub-structures of the eThekwini Municipality. Social differentiation in Mpumalanga is also noticeable in the varied degrees and frequency of water cut-offs experienced by the township residents' different occupational groups in its various neighbourhood units.

Social differentiation has its limits in explaining Mpumalanga residents' attitudes towards exorbitant water bills, and their attitudes towards the eThekwini Municipality, and the DMWS in particular. Other factors, such as the extent of family responsibility and the degree of people's political conscientisation have to be factored in. This then gives us a more complete and a rather complex picture of the township residents' reactions to the current state of the municipal services delivery crisis. It also offers us a clearer picture of people's attitudes towards municipal services, and their relationship with the eThekwini Municipality and the DMWS, in particular, as a water services provider. It also provides us with a clear understanding of the position of the CCF in Mpumalanga, and the township residents' *actual* relationship with it.

Observing from the fieldwork research survey results, Mpumalanga residents who occupy the lower income bracket, mainly pensioners who are heads of households, have dutifully paid their water bills. Pensioners who are heads of

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[12] Parnell, S., *et al* (eds.) (2002) **Democratising Local Government**, (p. 165).

households tended to regularly to seek advice from the DMWS in their bid to solve their water services delivery crises, rather than seeking the advice of the CCF. Their resolutions are more or less the same compared to the domestic workers, the unemployed and the self-employed who occupy a more or less similar income bracket.

These attitudes of Mpumalanga residents' towards the servicing of their water bills, and their relationship with the eThekwini Municipality and the DMWS prove that they cannot be explained exclusively by social differentiation. Levels and forms of political conscientisaion and levels of family responsibility also have to be taken into consideration. All these differences debunk the notion of the 'poors' defined as a homogenised grouping, as Ashwin Desai would have it in his works. Given these differences, Mpumalanga residents could be hardly expected to react to their water services struggles in one manner or wave. As we shall see, the fieldwork research survey debunks the exaggerated notion of the reach that the CCF in Mpumalanga claims for itself. Figures 1 to 8 below verify these explanations on the limits of social differentiation in understanding the reactions of Mpumalanga residents to the water services crises, and their relationship with the CCF, the DMWS and the eThekwini Municipality as municipal services providers.

Figure 1:

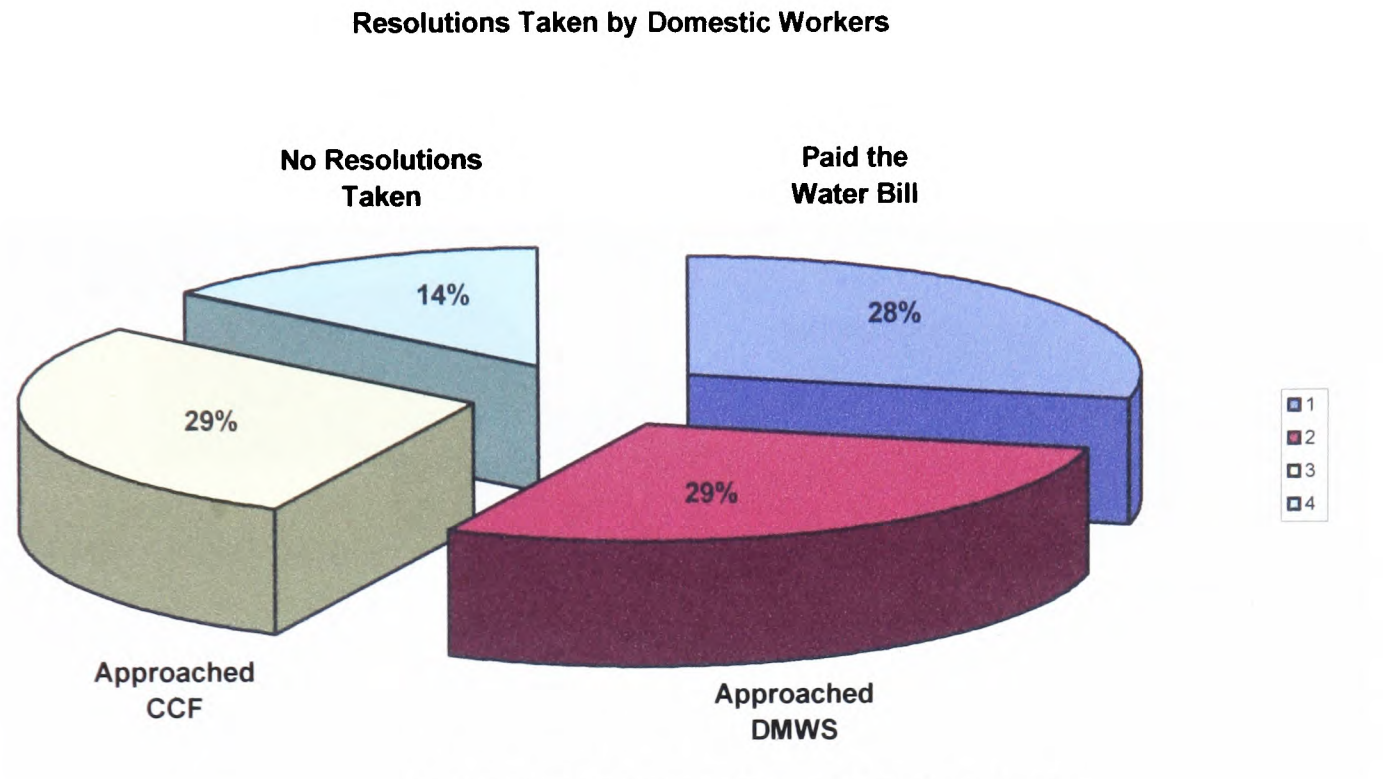


Figure 2:

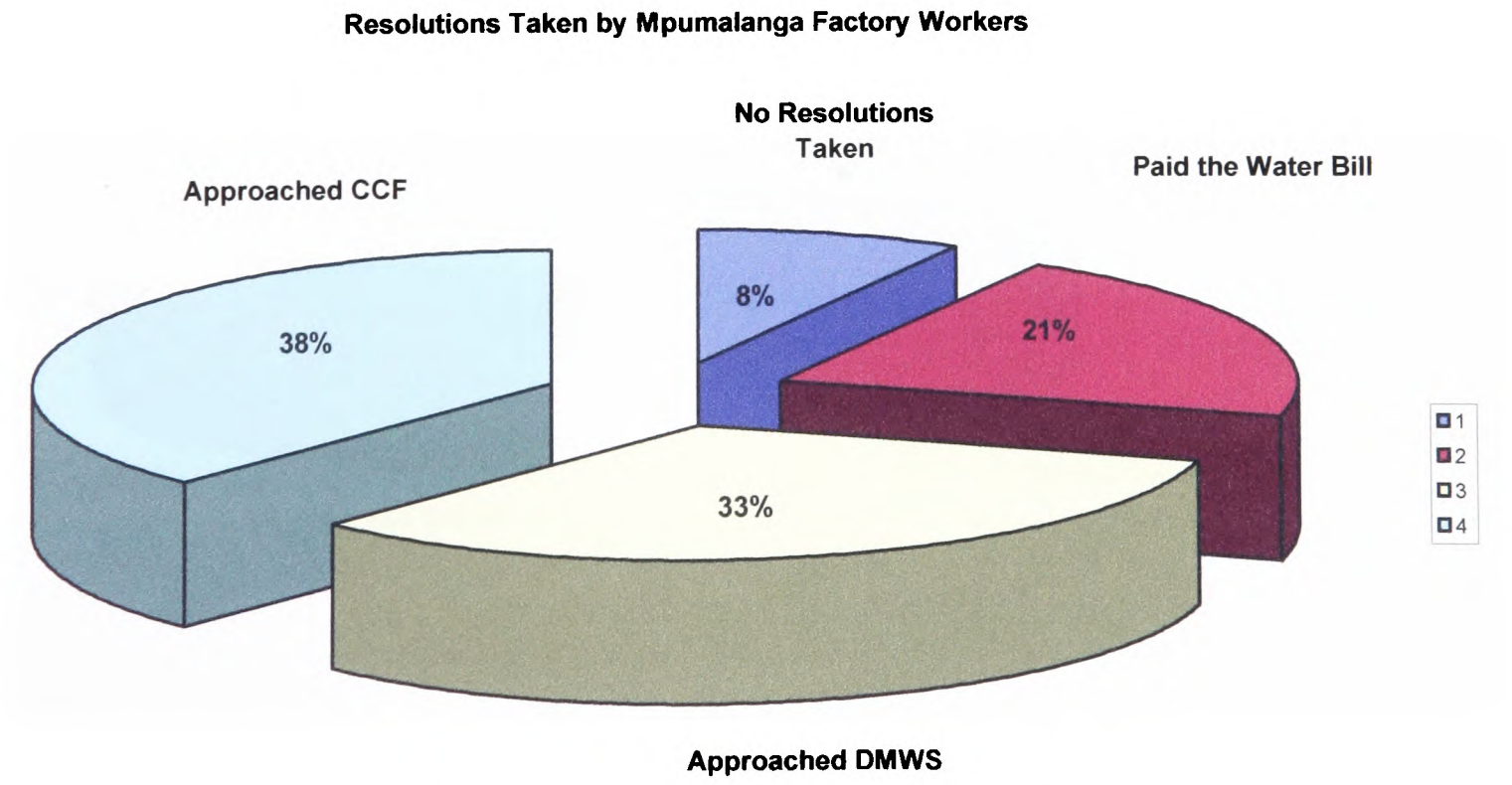
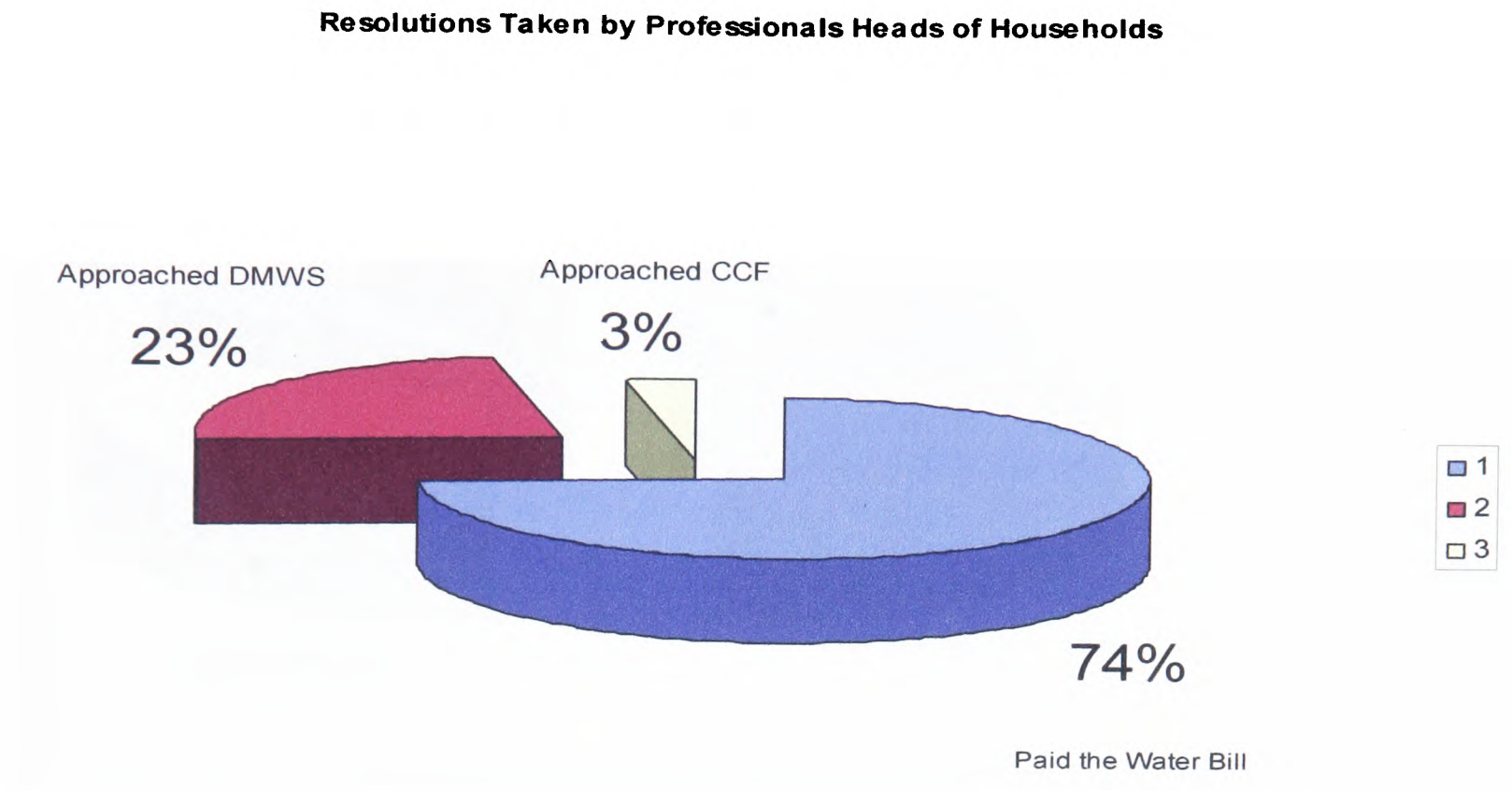
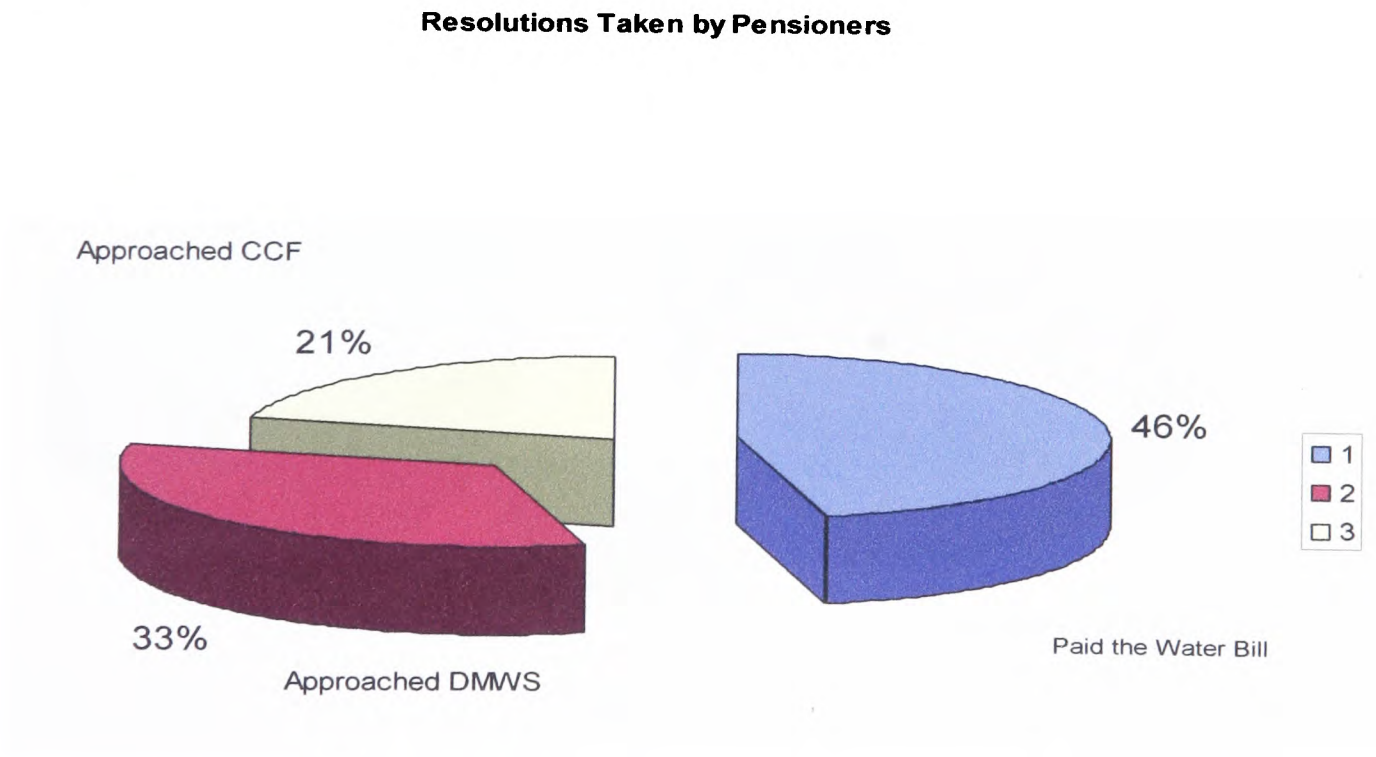


Figure 3:



Mpumalanga Township Survey 2002, Buntu Siwisa

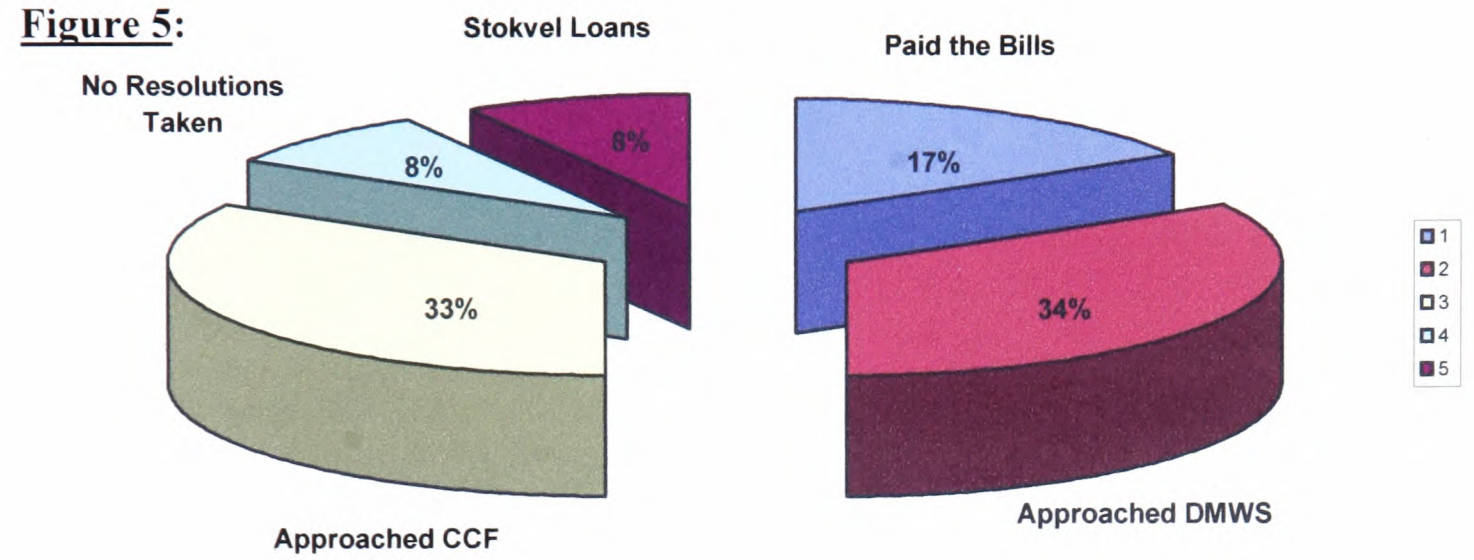
Figure 4:



Mpumalanga Township Survey 2002, Buntu Siwisa

Resolutions Taken by the Self-Employed

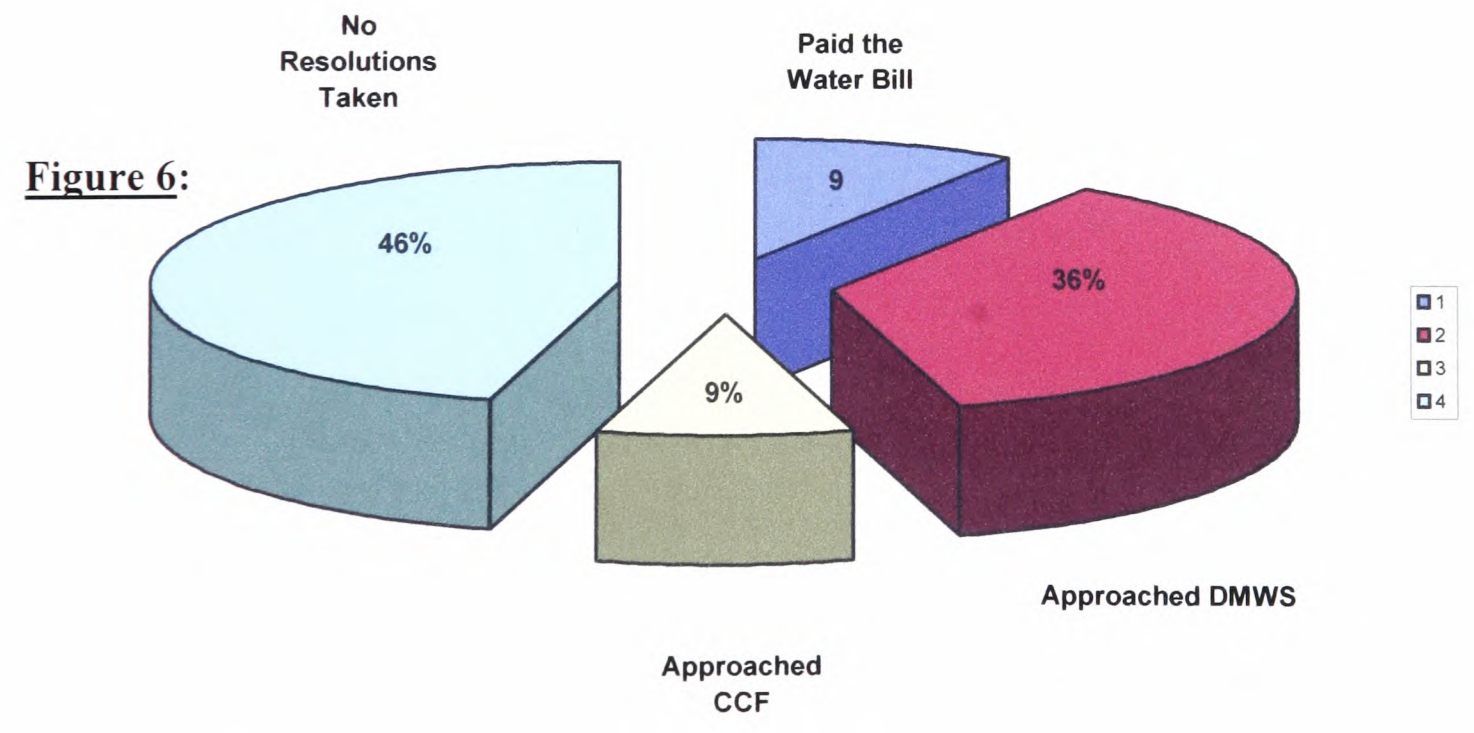
Figure 5:



Mpumalanga Township Survey 2002, Buntu Siwisa

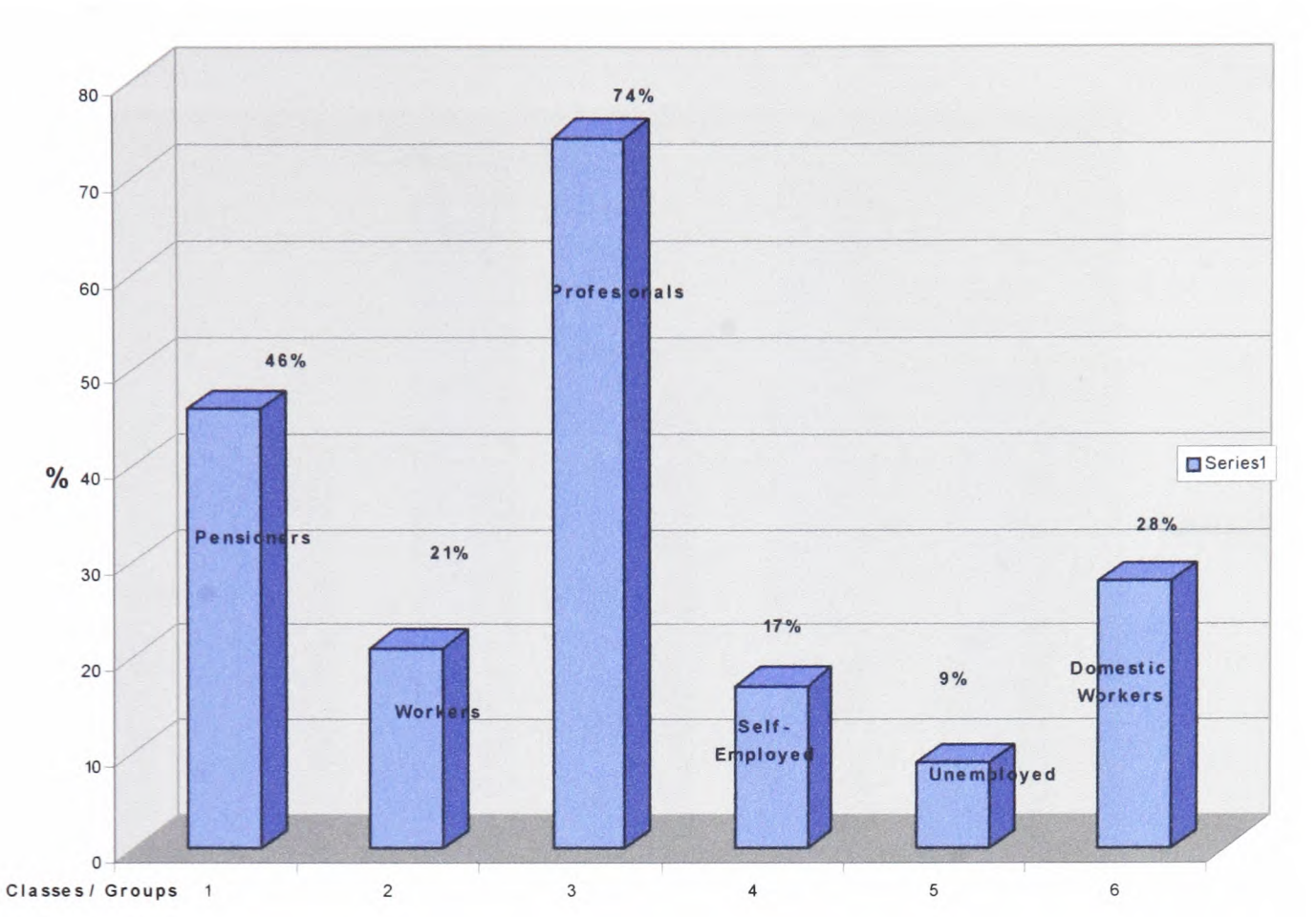
Resolutions Taken by the Unemployed

Figure 6:



Mpumalanga Township Survey 2002, Buntu Siwisa

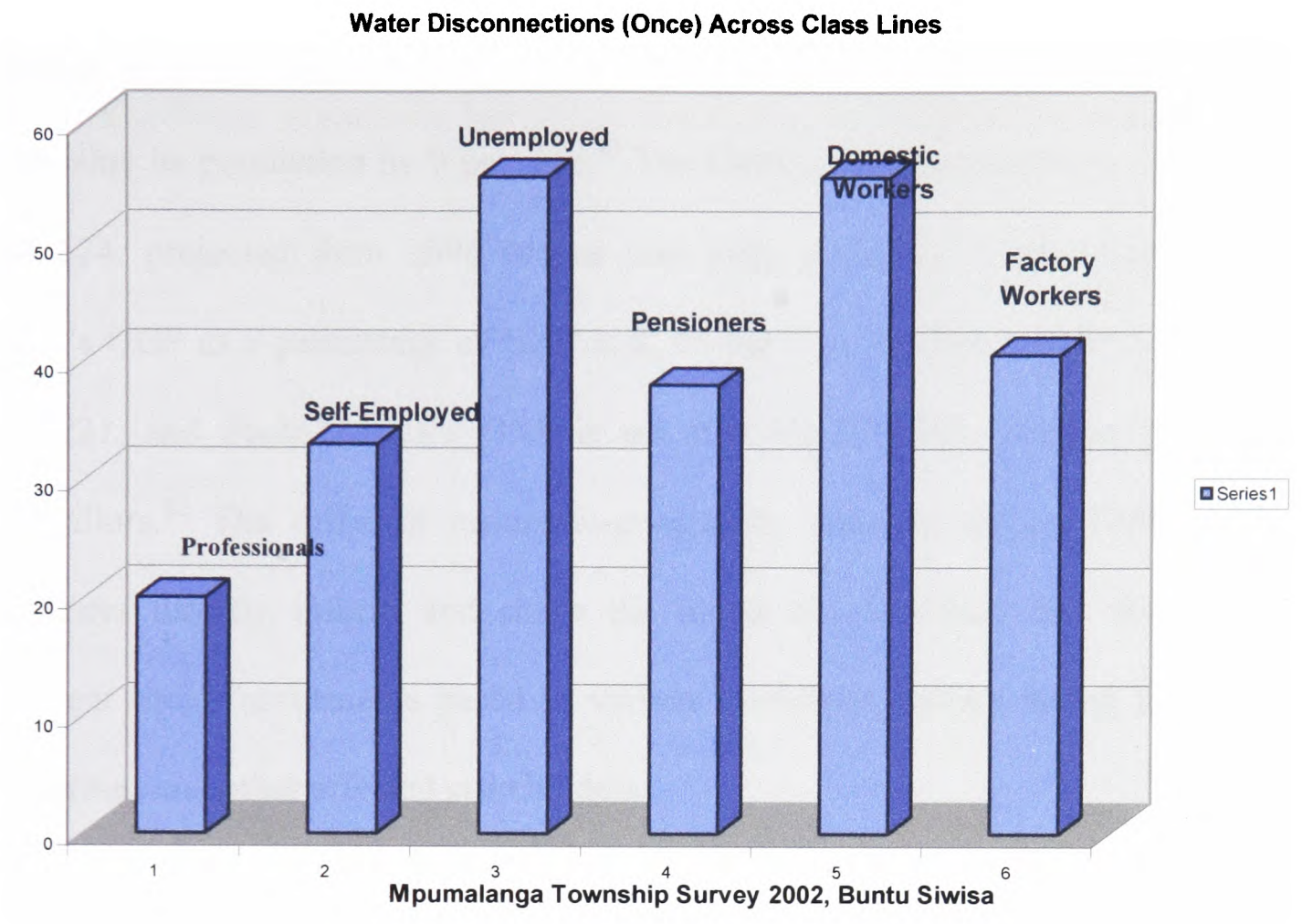
Paid the Water Bill



Mpumalanga Township Survey 2002, Buntu Siwisa

Figure 7:

Figure 8:



IV. Mpumalanga in Durban: Socio-Spatial Differentiation

The location of Mpumalanga in the eThekwini Municipality is of enormous social and economic significance to people's water bills. It affects the social and economic characteristics of the township. That in turn foregrounds its politics, and, inevitably, the contentious politics of the new social movements informed by the pressures of cost recovery. The eThekwini Municipal Area (EMA) is made up of six local sub-structures. Each of these has distinctive natural, social and economic features. When Durban municipality was restructured in 2002, it was renamed the eThekwini Municipal Area (EMA).

The EMA constitutes 1, 4 per cent of the total area of KwaZulu-Natal, and 60 per cent of its economic activities. The EMA expanded previous DMA by 68 per cent, increasing its population by 9 per cent.[13] The EMA's total population in 2002 was 3, 064 624, projected from 1996 census and using a middle AIDS scenario.[14] The EMA's GGP as a percentage of GNP is 8, 03 per cent. Durban's GGP is set at R47 751 221, and South Africa's GNP is set at R594 836 595. Durban 200 elected councillors.[15] The different economic-geographic make-up among Durban's sub-structures directly inform and shape the issues of contention that residents and different social movements based in various townships end up taking to the local authorities and other affected stakeholders.

The EMA is characterised by a T-shape spatial configuration, which effectively defines the layout of its economic activities. It has two major national freeways which form the main elements of its geographic character. The N2 runs parallel to the coast. As a result, it links the EMA with the northern parts of KwaZulu-Natal. It also links it with the Cape region in the south. The N3 links the EMA with Gauteng. This has naturally created a pattern of spatial differentiation in the EMA, inevitably widening socio-spatial differentiation. As the *eThekwini Municipal Area: Integrated Development Plan, 2003 – 2007* pointed out:

> Areas closer to these national roads tend to be well provided with physical infrastructure and social amenities, while areas on the periphery tend to be poorly resourced. Most of the historically black formal residential areas, as

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[13] **eThekwini Municipal Area: Integrated Development Plan, 2003 – 2007**, (2003 June), (eThekwini Municipality, Durban).
[14] **eThekwini Municipality (Durban)**, (South African Cities Network), (See, http://www.sacities.net/cities/ethekwini.stm), or, (http://www.durban.gov.za).
[15] Ibid.

> well as informal and peri-urban areas, are located on the outer periphery. This spatial configuration has resulted in a distinct pattern of inequity and inefficiencies across the EMA.[16]

The EMA is made up of six local councils, viz. the South, South Central, North, North Central, Inner and Outer West Local Councils. The six local councils were put into place in 1996 after the Local Government Transition Act came into effect, replacing the previous apartheid demarcation structure of Durban. They are starkly different from each other in terms of their economic structures, shares of economic activities, population density, land use and the availability of public and social facilities. The Outer West Local Council area, where the Mpumalanga Township is located, stands out as the most disadvantaged compared to the other five sub-structures. According to statistics compiled in 1998[17], the Outer West Local Council had an unemployment rate of 24 per cent, the highest compared to all the other sub-structures. The level of unemployment in the urban areas of the Outer West, especially in the small industrial town of Hammarsdale and the nearby township of Mpumalanga, reached its peak in 2000 as a result of the closure of the mainly textile, clothing, chemical and engineering factories located in and around the Hammarsdale industrial complex.

In 2000, Durban had an estimated population of 2.2 million people.[18] Nearly two-thirds of the people in the EMA resided in the two central metropolitan substructure council areas, viz., the North Central and the South Central sub-structures. Appendix 2 displays the location of the DMA's sub-structures. Appendix 3

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[16] **eThekwini Municipal Area: Integrated Development Plan, 2003 – 2007**, (2003 June), (eThekwini Municipality, Durban), (p. 2).
[17] These are the most recent statistics availed by the EMA on its six local sub-structures, and on Mpumalanga.
[18] Ibid.

outlines the 1995 population estimates for the DMA and the Metropolitan Sub-Structures (MSS).

The North Central and the South Central local council areas dominate the economic activities of the EMA. These two sub-structures account for approximately three-quarters of the output, two thirds of the employment and nearly half the industrial land in the EMA. The Inner West is mainly comprised of industrial and commercial activities, with the Pinetown CBD, Southmead and New Germany standing out as the major industrial and commercial centres in the sub-structure.

The Inner West has an 11, 6 per cent share of output, a 17 per cent share of employment and 19, 9 per cent share of industrial land in the metropolitan area. On the other hand, the North local sub-structure's commercial development is spread between the towns of Umhlanga, Verulam and Tongaat. Industrial development occurs primarily at Glen Anil, Mt. Edgecombe and Canelands. The North accounts for 3, 6 per cent of output, 4 per cent of employment, and 6, 7 per cent of industrial land in the metropolitan area. The South local sub-structure's commercial development is primarily centred on the town centres of Isipingo and Amanzimtoti, while industrial development is predominant at Prospecton and Umbongintwini. The South accounts for 9 per cent of employment and 16, 8 per cent of industrial land in Durban. The Outer West local sub-structure's commercial and industrial vibrancy revolves around Hillcrest's town centre, Hammarsdale and the Harrison Flats. The Outer West contributes 5, 2 per cent of output, 4 per cent of employment, and 9, 2 per cent of industrial land to the eThekwini Municipality.

According to 1998 statistics, the Outer West Local Council had the lowest average annual household income of R1 710. It also had the lowest level of literacy compared to the other five sub-structures, with only 53 per cent of its population classified as literate. According to the Reconstruction and Development (RDP) Urban Renewal Report released in 1998, the Outer West Local Council contributed only 3 per cent to the total DMA Gross Geographic Product (GGP),[19] although it is the largest sub-structure by area in the EMA, occupying 451 square kilometers, compared to the North sub-structure (209 square kilometers), the North Central (210 square kilometers), the South (89 square kilometers), the South Central (204 square kilometers), and the Inner West (203 square kilometers).[20] The Outer West Local Council also has the highest number of informal settlements (18 per cent) compared to the other five sub-structures.

These disparities in the socio-economic make-up of Durban's sub-structures have not only informed the varied collective consumption bargaining agendas in these areas, but have also informed the different locations' varied degrees of hostilities towards the Durban Municipality. After the installation of pre-paid water metres in Durban in 2000, riots flared up in Chatsworth and in the Outer-West local sub-structure, especially in the Mpumalanga Township.[21] Despite the fact that the DMWS had installed pre-paid water meters more or less at the same time throughout the DMA, hostility towards the state was more intense in the Outer-West local sub-structure townships such as Mpumalanga, compared to other townships such as

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[19] RDP Urban Renewal Report (1998).
[20] DMA Spatial Development Plan (1998), Volume One, (p. 15). This excludes hostels, institutions and outbuildings, estimated at 12 800.
[21] See, Desai, A. (2002) **We are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa**, (New York University Press, New York).

KwaMashu and Umlazi (located in the South Central local sub-structure), for instance.

Various reasons could account for this. Employment in the Outer-West urban areas is precarious. A large number of Mpumalanga residents are employed in the industrial complex plant located in Hammarsdale, where there is a concentration of manufacturing industries, producing engineering materials, plastic, paint, foods, textiles and chemicals products. These have been the main sources of labour absorption in these areas ever since the apartheid government instituted import-substitution strategies as a way of counteracting economic sanctions. From the late 1990s, many of these plants either shut down or relocated as a strategy aimed at cutting down on production costs, as South Africa from the mid-1990s entered the global economy and had to comply with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) regulations on lowering trade barriers. In the face of stiff global economic competition without recourse to state intervention, many of these manufacturing firms shut down or relocated, in order to cut down production costs, resulting in massive retrenchments.

The installation of pre-paid water meters, leading to the charging of high prices for water, revealed the insecure socio-economic conditions of the majority of residents of Mpumalanga. In KwaMashu and Umlazi, although they had long-standing legacies of progressive political mobilisation, the response to water services delivery backlogs was less aggressive and much calmer. There is a sense of job security in these areas, as they are closer to the Durban CBD and other more permanent industrial and commercial centres around the CBD.

V. Conclusion

The thrust of this chapter has been to seek to find a starting point from which to explain why there was an explosion of collective action campaigns targeted at the water services delivery backlogs in Mpuamalanga, unlike in other Durban sub-structures. It sought to explain this question that the Executive Director of DMWS, Neil McLeod, thought the question to be a non-starter, as he explained convincingly to me that Mpumalanga was not markedly different from other Durban townships. He argued that, "From my understanding of economics, if you look at the demographics, Mpumalanga is no worse off than the other poor communities that we serve, in terms of unemployment and that kind of thing… I don't know what makes Mpumalanga so different."[22] McLeod said this in the context of the protests in Mpumalanga targeted at the water services struggles. These protests were led by the CCF. He further went on to state that Mpumalanga was atypical in that its residents had refused to pay for their electricity bills, and that the township did not want to be part of the restructured Durban municipality in the first place. It has been shown here that Mpumalanga is disadvantaged due to its location within the EMA, which has naturally resulted in socio-spatial differentiation.

The location of Mpumalanga in the EMA has given it its distinct economic and social features. The economic and geographic characteristics have brought about the precarious employment and standard of living conditions of its residents. These have in turn further heightened the feelings of social injustice in Mpumalanga, compared to the other townships in Durban that have experienced similar effects of

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[22] **Interview with Neil McLeod**, (28 November 2002, Durban Metro Water Services), (p. 7).

cost recovery implementation on water, sanitation, sewerage and electricity delivery services.

Despite the importance of social differentiation, it has its limitations in explaining poor people's attitudes towards water services struggles, and their relationships with the municipal services authorities. The fieldwork research survey results illustrate how the various classes or occupational groups resident in Mpumalanga have a complex relationship with the DMWS that social differentiation does not fully explain. Again, the fieldwork research survey results contradicted the representation of a simple and direct of 'poor people vs. local state / state / ruling party' relationship theorem. Varied degrees of family responsibilities and different degrees of political conscientisation have to be brought into the equation in order to story a complete picture of poor and not so poor people's relationships with their municipal services providers.

CHAPTER 3

"Rhetoric is dropped, reality prevails..."[1]: The ANC in the South African Economy, 1990s - 2002

I. Introduction

This chapter lays out the development trajectory of the thinking and involvement of the ANC in the South African economy during and immediately after the transition to democracy. It outlines the various positions it took on economic policies and strategies, and the reasons that shaped its thinking.

The chapter provides a brief overview of the 'great economic debate' that concerned itself with the restructuring of the South African economy around the time of the country's transition to democracy. It centred on the macro-economic and industrial policies that the ANC ought to implement. The debate was contested by two camps: the 'supply-side' and the 'demand-led' groups. The supply-side was mainly comprised of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) and the Central Economic Advisory Service (CEAS). On the other hand, the demand-led group was mainly made up of the Macro-Economic Research Group (MERG) and the National Institute for Economic Policy (NIEP).[2] Although the debate was highly divisive, nonetheless, the two camps agreed that the dynamics of the transition to democracy

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[1] From Clem Sunter of Anglo-American Corporation in 1987, cited from Marais, H. (2nd ed.) (2001) **South Africa: Limits to Change: The Political Economy of Transition**, (Zed Books Ltd., London), (p. 123). The full quote is, "Negotiation works. Rhetoric is dropped, reality prevails and in the end the companies go on producing minerals, goods and services."

[2] Adelzadeh, A. & Padayachee, V. (1994) **The RDP White Paper: Reconstruction of a Development Vision?**, *Transformation*, 25.

were under immense pressures from both the domestic and the international financial institutions and Western governments. These pressures illuminated what the South African economy was going to look like as a result of the transition. As Jonathan Michie and Vishnu Padayachee poignantly pointed out, the nature of the transition to democracy were "...compounded by the state of the global economy."[3] From the mid-1990s, the position of the ANC on the state of the transformation of the South African economy shifted from a vague and a blatant leftist position, to uncertainty and, finally, towards embracing a market-oriented position. Eventually, by the mid-1990s, the watchwords in the policy-related processes of the transition to democracy were "...trade-offs, compromises and pragmatic decisions."[4]

This chapter provides a basis for the appreciation of the environment that shaped policy-making on the restructuring and functioning of the public services delivery sector, which is the main focus of the thesis. The chapter provides an understanding of the political and economic forces that influenced the thinking that went into policy-making on the public services delivery sector, especially the delivery of water services.

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[3] Michie, J. & Padayachee, V. **South Africa's Transition: The Policy Agenda**, in, Michie, J. & Padayachee, V. (eds.) (1997) **The Political Economy of South Africa's Transition: Policy Perspectives in the Late 1990s**, (Dryden Press, London), (p. 9).
[4] Munck, R. (1994) **South Africa: 'The Great Economic Debate'**, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 2, (p. 209).

II. The ANC and the Restructuring of the South African Economy

(a) Background

In the early 1990s, the ANC argued in favour of welfare-oriented economic policies with strong state intervention. One of the most controversial policies that the ANC adhered to then (though briefly) was the nationalisation of the major economic resources. Mandela was confident that the ANC would adhere to the nationalisation policy as a matter of a political principle underpinned by the equitable redistribution of economic resources. In 1990, he declared, using the words of the 1955 Freedom Charter, that, "The nationalization of the mines, banks and monopoly industry is the policy of the ANC and a change or modification of our views in this regard is inconceivable."[5] He further justified his statement by emphasizing that, "Nationalization is a demand which is reasonable from our point of view. Where do we get the capital and resources to tackle the national issues facing us?"[6]

The pro-nationalisation stance of the ANC caused great concern to the domestic and international business communities, and exacerbated the destabilisation of the rand and the foreign exchange. Domestic and international capital had been growing agitated over the ANC's thinking on macro-economic policies. The ongoing flight of capital from the country further exacerbated South Africa's economic problems.

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[5] Cited in, Nattrass, N. (1994) **Politics and Economics**, (p. 344). See also, Marais, H. **South Africa: Limits to Change**, (2nd ed.) (2001), (p. 122).
[6] Ibid, (p. 345).

The ANC yielded to the pressures exerted on it by the domestic and international capital. Between 1990 and 1992, its economic thinking exhibited early signs of a shift from a welfare-oriented approach to a pro-market stance. It changed its approach of increasing government expenditure on welfare and public services delivery as a means of promoting economic growth in favour of fiscal discipline and sustainable redistribution.[7] The party's political mantra of 'growth through redistribution' and the promises of massive government expenditure on welfare "...had quietly disappeared."[8]

In its 1992 National Conference, the ANC produced its *Policy Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa*. It proposed the restructuring of the public services sector. It voiced its acknowledgement of the need for joint ventures with the private sector. The need to involve the private sector to bolster the public sector's infrastructure and public services delivery was later emphasized by Thabo Mbeki in the mid-1990s.[9] He urged the private sector to join the government on account of the ailing public services sector, and to deal with the indebtedness of the local governments, partly as a result of the debts run by the outgoing apartheid government. Secondly, it proposed to reduce the size of the private sector in ways that would maximise its efficiency, while ensuring the protection of the consumer and the rights and employment of workers.[10] Ronald Munck regarded that move more as a way of recognising and embracing economic pragmatism, which in itself was a result of the recognition by the ANC of the new global economic conditions. Munck observed that:

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[7] Nattrass, N. (1994) **Economic Restructuring in South Africa: The Debate Continues**, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 20, No.4, December.
[8] Ibid, (p. 518).
[9] See, Mbeki, T. (1998) **Africa: The Time Has Come: Selected Speeches**, (Tafelberg Publishers Ltd., Cape Town & Mafube Publishing (Pty) Ltd., Johannesburg), (pp. 133 – 67).
[10] Munck, R. (1994) **South Africa**.

> What we have is pragmatic attitude towards nationalisation which sees it as a possible tool of development policy, but not as a principle and, certainly, as a panacea. In this move away from a commandist or statist conception of the transition to the democracy process, we see both local and international influences.[11]

Hein Marais and Stephen Gelb viewed this shift more as the result of the thinning out of policy options availed to the ANC. Marais pointed out that:

> ...the ANC has, like other social-democratic parties worldwide, become acutely sensitive to the shrunken horizon of economic options available in an era of globalisation marked by the ascendancy of neo-liberalism. A party whose notions of economic transformation had hinged on a powerful state was soon left woozy by its awakening in a world in which the state's role in the economy seemed to have been drastically revised.[12]

Gelb's argument was that the transformation of the South African economy in the 1990s had reached a point whereby it was acknowledged by the major actors and stakeholders in the transformation process that capitalism will remain entrenched. The question was, rather, what form and shape such a capitalist economy would assume. He observed that:

> The real issue of the day, is what form South African capitalism will take in the next round, what the bourgeoisie and the working class will look like, and what the nature of their reactions will be. That is what the "great economic debate" is about in the end...[13]

When Alec Erwin in 1999, then the Minister of Trade and Industry, was asked why rapid industrialisation through strong state intervention was impossible in South Africa, he alluded to the pressures exerted on the state by the international financial institutions. He explained that the South African state had been hindered in implementing pro-state interventionist economic measures by the World Trade

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[11] Ibid, (p. 208).
[12] Marais, H. **The Logic of Expediency: Post-Apartheid Shifts in Macroeconomic Policy**, in, Jacobs, S. & Calland, R. (eds.) (2002) **Thabo Mbeki's World: The Politics and Ideology of the South African President**, (University of Natal Press. Pietermaritzburg; Zed Books Ltd., London), (p. 84).
[13] Cited in, Munck, R., (p. 209).

Organisation (WTO) rules. As a result, the state was compelled to implement policy packages that were similar to those of the developed countries.[14] Erwin's statement was premised on the ANC's inevitable acceptance of the post-Cold War political economic environment, which favoured liberalisation, deregulation and less state intervention. South Africa's transition to democracy coincided with this globally prevailing political economic mood.

The RDP White Paper promised to abide by the GATT regulations. However, by the time that it was drafted and later adopted, the ANC had not yet put in place any clear and effective industrial policies. This therefore spelt South Africa's exposure to deregulation and privatisation. Adezaldeh and Padayachee argued that the implementation of pro-GATT regulations redefined the relationship between the state and civil society. It also weakened government intervention at all levels and led to an economic programme of privatisation and deregulation in place of policies aimed at achieving full employment. They also maintained that the implementation of pro-GATT policies also weakened interventionist domestic laws and regulations; promoted regressive restructuring; weakened workers' rights and trade unions; and compromised the provision of the public services sector and infrastructure.

Later on, Gelb pointed out that the RDP "...was itself formulated at the same time as policies for international openness."[15] He reasoned that the international economic atmosphere in the early to mid-1990s favoured international economic openness. On the one hand, South Africa's economy was ailing in the early to mid-1990s. By the end of 1994, inflation had been dragged down to single digits, fiscal

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[14] Ibid.
[15] Gelb, S. **An overview of the South African economy**, in, Daniel, J., Habib, A. & Southall, R. (eds.) (2004) **State of the Nation 2004 – 2005**, (HSRC Press, Cape Town), (p.369).

deficit targeting had been adopted, GATT commitments on trade liberalisation had been formally adopted, legislation opening the banking system and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) to participation in the international economy had been passed, and the plan for the gradual relaxation of capital control had been designed. On the other hand, the ANC, domestic and international economic stakeholders had realised in the early 1990s that there was a need for an increase in exports and capital inflows. There was also a need for policies to address production costs and international competitiveness of South Africa's manufacturing sector. That is why industries in the erstwhile import-export substitution areas, such as Hammarsdale, Newcastle and Ladysmith closed down. These reasons also account for the closing down of clothing and textile factories in Chatsworth. Gelb conclusively argued that:

> Thus the debates which took place in the early 1990s about economic models for the 'new South Africa'--- the basic needs model usually identified with the RDP, and the export-led manufacturing model usually identified with neo-liberalism --- took place *within the framework* of this accommodation…[16]

The RDP White Paper was vague in spelling out its plans for the provision of welfare and other public services, and silent on the schedules and timeframes for the achievement of its stated goals. Adezaldeh and Padayachee identified that spotted that, "There are simply no numbers here (how many jobs, houses, schools, etc.), no priorities set out; no targets established; no timeframe or schedules."[17]

Another highly noticeable indicator of the shift towards a more market-oriented approach in the RDP White Paper was its sudden embrace of privatisation. Ben Fine defined privatisation as "…the selling-off of state-owned assets to the private sector or the withdrawal of the state from certain areas of economic activity to

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[16] Ibid, (emphasis in original).
[17] Adezaldeh, A. & Padayachee, V. (1994) **The RDP White Paper**, (p. 4).

allow the private sector to take them over."[18] David Hemson defined privatisation as "...the process of 'rolling back the state', of passing over state assets into private hands."[19] Privatisation involves a range of policies, ranging from the sales or divestiture of public assets such as publicly-owned firms, utilities and property; contracting-out, the withdrawal of public provisions and its replacement by private services; the transfer of public responsibilities to private bodies; private sector planning, financing and operation of major infrastructure projects; to deregulation.[20] It involves, for instance, the selling of shares in a state-owned company, or the entire company; or the ending of state provision services such as education, health, cleaning and catering.

The pro-privatisation lobby has argued in favour of privatisation for various reasons. Privatisation would lead to the reduction of costs, improved delivery, and better stimulus to the private sector that would deliver better managerial practices which are associated with the private sector. It argued that the public sector was imbued with an inherent inability to produce and deliver goods and services. The public sector had difficulties with the production costs, efficiency, labour and capital costs, consumer input, innovation and flexibility, decision-making, poor conditions of equipment, interruption of services and the lack of responsiveness to costs control.

Fine pointed out that there were several pressures on the ANC to favour a pro-privatisation stance. The previously developed patterns of public and private ownership across the sectors of the economy may be rendered inappropriate by

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[18] Fine, B. (1995) **Privatisation and the RDP: A Critical Assessment**, *Transformation*, 27, (pp. 1-2).
[19] Hemson, D. (1998) **Privatisation, Public-Private Partnerships and Outsourcing: The Challenge to Local Governance**, *Transformation*, 37, (p. 4).
[20] Ibid.

changes in technology. The shift in economic ownership may both reflect and further the exercise of economic and political power. Privatisation shifts the conditions under which capital operates, and is open to economic and political conflict. Privatisation also involves a re-organisation of the state's finances, which may potentially relieve pressures on the state's budget deficit in the short term.[21]

What materialised in the case of water delivery in South Africa is the confluence of private international capital (eg. international water companies) and domestic companies. Adam Habib likened this phenomenon in post-apartheid South Africa with what happened in Latin American societies under military regimes. In the South African case, he maintained that, "What is likely is increasing penetration of the economy by foreign capital through joint ventures and investment, so that a close symbiotic relationship emerges between indigenous and foreign entrepreneurs."[22]

Habib's argument identifies how national capital, in the form of international water companies in this instance, interact with local economic and social agents, thus opening an arena for the involvement of local firms and civil society. As is pointed out in Chapter 6, international water companies such as Biwater, Vivendi and Lyonnaise des Eaux, have set up consortia in different towns and cities, inviting various South African companies on board to buy stakes in the local consortia and participate in their running. The overall ownership of such consortia tends to remain in the hands of the international water companies. The latter tend to buy huge quantities of shares or stakes in the newly created consortia, which are usually subsidiaries of the international water company. In Durban, Vivendi has partnered

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[21] Fine, B. (1995) **Privatisation.**
[22] Habib, A. (1995) **The Transition to Democracy in South Africa: Developing a Dynamic Model,** *Transformation*, 27, (p. 51).

itself with law, engineering companies and NGOs. Similar partnerships have been set up in KwaZulu-Natal. In the Mpumalanga province, the British water company, Biwater, forged a consortium in Nelspruit with predominantly black local companies to form a consortium called Sivukile Holdings (see Chapter 6 for details).

It might be argued that these international water companies are attempting to legitimise their operations and presence in South Africa by inviting local economic and social agents to participate in their consortia. An alternative argument is that this is their strategy of keeping in contact with the vicissitudes of the local social, political and economic environments through networking with influential local agents. The most important aspect to grasp here is that neo-liberalism adapts to changing environments.

(b) The Battle for Influence: The Macro-Economic Research Group (MERG)

The ANC founded the Macro-Economic Research Group (MERG) in 1991 with the purpose of setting up a new macro-economic model for South Africa. MERG was staffed by Marxist and other left-wing economists aligned with the ANC exile group. A number of MERG's economists were part of London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). MERG was intended to train new black economists, and to help build capacity for COSATU and its affiliates on economic policy analysis and drafting. MERG later became the National Institute for Economic Policy (NIEP).

MERG eventually published *Making Democracy Work* in 1993. The document essentially took a Keynesian approach, and argued for an industrial policy with strong state intervention. The document proposed that South Africa's industrial policy should feature differential taxation, tariffs, subsidies, accelerated depreciation allowances and other special allowances such as the training of workers. These policies revolved around restructuring the ways conglomerate firms made investment decisions, and these involved:

- The regulation of the housing and building supplies market.
- State intervention in output and pricing decisions in the minerals sector.
- The tightening and the extension of controls on mergers and acquisitions.
- Monitoring the behaviour of participants in oligopolistic markets.
- Creating supervisory boards, consisting of banks, trade unions and other represented interests.

MERG also argued that the economy could be restructured through the labour market, mainly through improved training, education, skills-building and the introduction of higher wages. The underlying contention was that a strong state interventionist approach was required in order to address the socio-economic imbalances. MERG argued for the introduction of a national minimum wage to be set at approximately two-thirds of the minimum living level for a household of five people. It maintained that economic growth and job creation should be developed in a synchronised manner, projecting the creation of 300 000 jobs a year.

The MERG report fundamentally rested on its proposal of a ten-year plan consisting of two phases or a two-stage plan. The first plan was called the 'initial public-investment-led phase', which was set to be instituted between 1993 and 1999. Its second leg was the sustained growth phase plan, which was supposed to be implemented between 1999 and 2004. These two legs revolved around state investment in social and physical infrastructure, especially on housing, rural water supply, road development, schooling, health services and electrification. These were regarded as pillars that would bring about a major impetus for economic growth, especially in the first leg.

MERG proposed a housing programme that would see to the building of 350 000 houses per year, with special attention paid to the rural areas. It also suggested a water supply programme that was projected to cost R1 billion per year, with recurrent expenditure rising to R600 million within ten years. On the development of the roads and the accompanying infrastructure, it proposed the construction of a feeder road-building programme projected to cost R3, 2 billion per year. It suggested a programme that would see at least 400 000 new electrical connections per year. It estimated that the government would spend about R17 million a year in the provision of universal education through a ten years period. It also recommended a health programme which was set to fund 200 clinics at a capital cost of R300 million, and a recurrent cost of R1, 5 million per year.[23]

MERG's *Making Democracy Work* document came under heavy criticism from the mainstream economists and the media. Nattrass maintained that the

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[23] Michie, J. & Padayachee, V. (1997) **The Political Economy**.

document was "uneven and schizophrenic." It combined "...good and accessible analysis, such as that on macroeconomic balance and the exchange rate policy, with unconvincing and scary arguments (particularly prevalent in sections on the labour market)."[24] She also criticised the report's phasing of its proposals, arguing that although the ten-year plan contained sound ideas, the timing to achieve all of these made their estimations over-optimistic.

Her two major criticisms revolved around the drowning of business confidence and the reality of the introduction of minimum higher wages against the realities of the conditions of the various South African economic sectors. She pointed out that the plan to introduce higher minimum wages ran the risk of workers losing their jobs in labour-intensive industries, as the employers would retrench many workers in an attempt to cut back on production costs. She specifically referred to the introduction of higher minimum wages in the agricultural sector as unworkable, as the agricultural sector was labour-intensive. Nattrass further maintained that the introduction of higher minimum wages could only work in economies with skilled labour forces, such as Singapore. Her other major argument was that these policy proposals on the introduction of higher minimum wages and strong state intervention would undermine business confidence.

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[24] Nattrass, N. (1994) **South Africa**, (p. 220).

(c) The Battle for Influence: The South African Foundation (SAF) and the South African Labour Movement (SALM)

The pro-market forces further exerted pressures on the ANC in February 1996 when the South African Foundation (SAF), a consortium of the country's fifty most powerful companies, published its macroeconomic blueprint, *Growth for All: An Economic Strategy for South Africa.* The South African Foundation claimed that this document was conceived and drawn as a response to Mandela's challenging call on the occasion of the opening of parliament in February 1996. Mandela had called on the private sector to work closely with the public sector in job creation and in strengthening the economy. He was now adamant that the public and private sectors should work together in order to boost job creation, showing how far he had drastically moved from his earlier pro-nationalisation stance. He pointed out that despite the generous rate of growth South Africa was enjoying at that time, few jobs were created, and that the country was at the risk of facing accelerated unemployment and poverty if the two sectors did not work closely together. He concluded that, "We need a national vision to lift us out of this quagmire."[25]

Growth for All rested on five pillars. The first pillar centred on the development of a solid legal framework with secure property rights accompanied by an effective police and criminal justice system. The second pillar called for a sound macro-economic system made up of low inflation, effective control over money supply, low fiscal deficits, positive real interest rates, a well-managed currency, certainty about finance costs and lower interest rates that would stimulate domestic savings and make

[25] Cited in, **Growth for All: An Economic Strategy for South Africa: Overview**, (Prepared by the South African Foundation, Johannesburg), (1996, February), (p. 1). See also, http://www.safoundation.org.za/documents).

investments more attractive. The third pillar laid emphasis on an efficient government which laid stress on lower taxes and investments in people through education and health. The fourth pillar focused on the market competitiveness of the economy and private ownership, as well as encouraging more flexible labour markets. The fifth pillar pivoted on outward orientation, whereby an environment appropriate for exports and to more open competition in the global economy would be cultivated. This included the introduction of lower trade barriers, a strengthened focus on export markets (particularly on non-traditional exports), and an appropriately valued currency.

Expanding on the fourth and the fifth pillars, the SAF rationalised that South Africa needed to strengthen its performance in the global economy since the country's position in it was extremely weak. Assessed on 'world competitiveness', the *World Economic Forum* ranked South Africa 42nd out of 48 countries. In its survey on the prospects for long-term economic success in 57 developing countries, South Africa was labelled a 'disaster area', below Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. In the global economy, South Africa's contribution constituted less than one percent of world trade. Furthermore, the SAF criticised the government's performance in global economic policy-making as incoherent. It pointed out that, "*...no credible, comprehensive policy framework exists at present ---- only a loose conglomeration of plans and objectives.*"[26]

The SAF reasoned that an effective way for the government to enhance its role and performance in the global economy was through intensifying fixed investments in

[26] Ibid, (p. 10), (emphasis in original).

plant and machinery. It argued that the government's fixed investments went towards replacing worn-out buildings and machinery. Fixed investments reached 16 per cent of the GDP in 1993 and only went up to 17 per cent the following year. The SAF suggested that the government needed to cut its budget deficit, thus freeing up resources that would go towards fixed investments. This would improve South Africa's performance in the global economy. It also maintained that cutting down the budget deficit through lowering its expenditure on social welfare programmes would lead to the redirection of government funds towards fixed investments.

The SAF pointed out that the government's stance on social welfare expenditure was seriously distorted because of the high unemployment rate and the extreme levels of poverty among black South Africans. It stated that two in five South Africans, constituting approximately 17 million people, were living in poverty. It further argued that social welfare programmes are normally paid for by productive workers. However, in South Africa, according to the SAF, there were ten times more people in poverty per employed worker.[27] Therefore, it maintained that the economy would not be able to support such a welfare load unless economic growth and job creation were speeded up in a synchronised manner. Its major concern was that increased government expenditure on social welfare would have an adverse effect on fiscal discipline, and that in turn would have a negative effect on fixed investments. Thus, the country's performance in the global economy would suffer. It bluntly pointed out that:

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[27] The SAF's conceptualisation of employment dynamics in South Africa excludes the informal economy, which has proved to be crucial in labour absorption and poverty amelioration. The document also ignores the complex interplay between the formal and the informal sectors, and how that relationship between the two sectors impacts on the functioning of the poor black households, especially in the urban areas. This is a point that the South African Labour Movement's (SALM) document, *Social Equity and Job Creation: The Key to a Stable Future* makes as a response to *Growth for All.*

> This state of affairs is morally repugnant and is a profoundly destabilising force in society. The one-half of African voters who are members of poor households rely on government for one quarter of their total income. If the job market cannot absorb them, they will take their distress to the ballot box to demand larger social programmes than the state has budgeted for, undermining the fiscal rectitude that is the bulwark of the government's economic policy. Were that to give way, the consequences for inflation and future growth would be dire.[28]

Although the ANC was steering towards a pro-market approach by the mid-1990s, its public response to the SAF's proposals pointed in the opposite direction. In public, the ANC reiterated its commitment to a pro-welfare and state interventionist stance in the economy. On 12 March 1996, the ANC's Department of Information and Publicity released a critical response to the SAF's proposals. It commented that the SAF, "...runs the risk of pushing our country backwards in a number of respects and the policy proposals contained therein could be a recipe for disaster if they were ever to be adopted by any South African government."[29] The ANC criticised the SAF's fiscal policy proposals, arguing that they would lead to "major social dislocation" which could "...not assist at all the processes of poverty elimination."[30] It attacked the SAF's proposals for budget cuts by 2 per cent, and for an increase of the Value Added Tax (VAT) and the reduction of direct taxes. The ANC also opposed the SAF's proposal for a "brisk privatisation programme"[31] that it urged the GNU to undertake.

The ANC only issued short and poorly-detailed responses to the domestic capital pressure groups, thus giving credence to the criticisms levelled against it by the SAF and the other groups, political economists and policy analysts, that it had not yet thoroughly thought through a cohesive and comprehensive economic policy. From the

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[28] Ibid, (pp. 4-5).
[29] **SA Foundation Document: Growth for All**, (Issued by African National Congress), (12 March 1996), (See, http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr1996/pr0309.html).
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

tripartite alliance, only the South African Labour Movement (SALM), mainly made up of COSATU and its affiliates, produced a detailed, and ambitious, if somewhat ill-argued response to the SAF's proposals.

The SALM produced its document, *Social Equity and Job Creation: The Key to a Stable Future* in 1996, as an attack on the *Growth for All* document. The document was founded on six pillars. These were job creation; redistributive fiscal policies; breaking the stranglehold of big business in the economy; improving worker rights; industrial democracy; and championing economic development and worker rights internationally.[32] It proposed that the reduction of economic and social inequalities should entail substantial redistribution of wealth, the eradication of poverty, the promotion of worker rights, increased employment, the development of the full human potential of South Africa's poor people, and the provision of basic infrastructure and services to all the country's citizens.

The SALM proposed eleven measures that would assist in job creation, and these were:

(i) Public works and mass housing programmes.

(ii) Modernising the industrial base.

(iii) Job sharing arrangements.

(iv) Pragmatic trade and tariff policies.

(v) Expanding domestic demand and local purchasing policies.

(vi) Training and retraining the workforce.

(vii) Productivity increases in the workforce.

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[32] **Social Equity and Job Creation: The Key to a Stable Future**, (1996, Johannesburg).

(viii) Creating jobs in labour intensive processes.

(ix) Stopping retrenchments in the economy.

(x) Programmes of land reforms.

(xi) The stimulation of economic activity.

Social Equity and job Creation had fundamental weaknesses. It is weak on its own as a proposal for strengthening the economy, and also as a response to the SAF's proposals.

The first measure proposed the immediate provision of public housing on a rental and purchase. It suggested that at least 300 000 housing units should be built every year over the next three years from 1996. It reasoned that such a programme would also create approximately 150 000 to 220 000 employment opportunities in the construction sectors. Further 200 000 to 330 000 jobs would be indirectly created through the construction materials sector (eg. in brick making, cement, timber, steel, painting and glazing), and from the home furnishing industry (eg. furniture, appliances, home textiles). The SALM projected that the public works programme would cost about R30 billion over a three year period.

The SALM proposed to set up the National Restructuring Fund (NRF) to finance the introduction of new technology and work organisation in instances where companies were able to show expanded output and the creation of new jobs. It suggested that the NRF should have a board directing its activities, with guidelines worked out by the Trade and Industry Chamber of Nedlac. In that way, the board would be nominated by the labour, government and business communities.

These two major weakness would not put forward novel ways of thinking about job creation through the public works programmes. The RDP had already laid out, in some details, its goals and objectives on housing, which would be effected through the public works programmes. That, in turn, was projected to positively affect job creation. For instance, sections 2.3.8 and 2.3.9 of the RDP were similar to the measure proposed by the *Social Equity* document to enhance job creation. They stated that:

> 2.3.8. The public works programme must coordinate with and link to other job creation and labour-intensive construction initiatives. A community development fund could be set up within the context of a national public works programme to make resources available to communities. Care must be taken to ensure that disbursements from such a fund are carefully controlled and relate to local and regional development plans.
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> 2.3.9. A national coordinating agency located in the implementing office of the RDP must ensure that the public works programme is based on the capital programmes at central, provincial and local level, give priority to job creation and training, target the most marginalised sectors of society...[33]

COSATU, as the major constituent of the SALM, deliberately forwarded these arguments which had been crushed in MERG's *Making Democracy Work* document. Marais argued that these proposals, originally part of MERG's proposals, were "...exhumed in COSATU's *Social Equity and Job Creation* document two years later."[34]

The SALM's job sharing programme proposed that overtime work should be shared, given to unemployed or retrenched workers. But the group itself also acknowledged that the high levels of poverty, worsened by the high numbers of dependents (and unemployed dependents) in households headed by employed workers in black urban areas might hinder the job sharing programme from even taking off the

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[33] **The Reconstruction and Development Programme** (1994). See also, http://www.polity.org.za/html/govdocs/rdp/rdp2.html.
[34] Marais, H. (2001) **South Africa**, (p. 138).

ground. The other difficulty that the *Job Creation* document acknowledged was that overtime work was "...systematically built into the shift pattern and the payment system."[35]

The *Job Creation* document reiterated some of the proposals that originated in the *Growth for All* document. The plan to maximise job creation by modernising the industrial base was one of the core proposals of the SAF, which was intertwined with the lowering of government expenditure on social welfare programmes, so that the government could focus on redirecting its expenditure on fixed investments.

(d) Enter the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Policy

The Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy was announced in June 1996 as the official macro-economic policy of the government, at a time of disarray within the ANC. There was incomplete consultation within the ANC on the construction of GEAR and its maturity to official status. Key ANC figures, such as its former Secretary-General, Cyril Ramaphosa, and even Nelson Mandela, confessed that they were unaware of the complete development trajectory of GEAR. Behind the construction of GEAR was Thabo Mbeki, then South Africa's First Deputy President.

The lack of consultation on the development of GEAR points to the continuities behind the ANC's thinking on South Africa's macro-economic policy. The most common understanding of the emergence and maturity of GEAR is steadfastly attached to the notion of the RDP / strong state intervention ear, breaking

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[35] **Social Equity**, (p. 24).

up and giving in to the GEAR / pro-market dispensation. Bond, Marais and Gelb have argued convincingly for the continuity of the of ANC thinking on economic development. They have maintained that from the early 1990s, the ANC has been developing towards embracing a pro-market, neo-liberal macro-economic policy.

The reasons behind this development process are varied. Firstly, when the negotiations began in the early 1990s, the world was enveloped in a post-Cold War international economic order characterised by economic liberalisation, deregulation, the flexibility of labour regimes, wage restraint and the emasculation of trade unions, and minimal state intervention. Secondly, both the ANC and domestic capital were forced to restructure the post-apartheid state within the framework of a South African economy that desperately needed to expand and fortify itself. By the early 1990s, South Africa's conglomerates, especially those active in the financial and mining sectors, pressed for economic liberalisation because they needed to expand from, "...a national economy that afforded little hope for sustained expansion."[36]

On the other hand, the ANC realised that economic liberalisation might help South African capital in boosting its productivity and profitability, as that might in turn help the state in improving the living conditions of the African majority. The ANC also viewed economic liberalisation as an effective way to begin to move black entrepreneurs into the mainstream economy. Economic liberalisation would result in the lifting of capital controls, the approval of offshore listings that would promote

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[36] Marais, H. **The logic of expediency: Post-apartheid shifts in macroeconomic policy**, in, Jacobs, S. & Calland, R. (eds.) (2002) **Thabo Mbeki's World: The Politics and Ideology of the South African President**, (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg & Zed Books Ltd., London), (p. 95).

unbundling in the corporate sector as globalising firms would sell off non-core assets in order to raise capital and streamline their operations.[37]

Gelb maintained that GEAR aimed to build mutual trust between old South African business and black entrepreneurs, while promoting macro-economic stability, thus, "...creating an environment for generalised gains through rising fixed investment and sustained growth, and reinforcing the alliance between them."[38]

GEAR aimed to:

- Reverse South African and international capital so as to secure support for the stability of the democratic transition;
- Improve the social and economic living conditions of the impoverished African majority;
- Reverse economic stagnation by aligning economic policies to the internationally dominant economic ideology;
- Aid the emergence of the African bourgeoisie, as well as to assist the state in its efforts to improve the lives of the African majority.[39]

GEAR failed to achieve its targets between the late 1990s and the dawn of the twenty-first century. It had set to create 1, 35 million new jobs by 2000. Out of that, 833 000 were to be created through GEAR adjustments; 308 000 through higher economic growth; 325 000 through changes in the flexibility of labour markets; and

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Gelb, S. **An overview**, (p. 370).
[39] Marais, H. **The logic of expediency**.

200 000 jobs were to be created through government-induced employment, mainly infrastructural development and public works programmes.[40]

On the contrary, a number of economic sectors experienced retrenchments during that period. According to COSATU's document, *Public Response by COSATU to the 2000 / 1 budget* (2000), gold mining accounted for 40 per cent of all formal job losses between June 1996 and March 1999. The manufacturing sector accounted for 36 per cent of job losses in that period. More than half a million jobs were lost in the non-agricultural sector between 1994 and 2000, as a result of labour-saving technologies, increased outsourcing, and the casualisation and contractualisation of labour. According to Statistics South Africa (SSA), the unemployment rate in the non-agricultural sector stood at 22, 9 per cent in 1999.[41]

GEAR's fiscal policy fared well. Since 1999, fiscal deficit has been kept below 3 per cent of GDP. The levels of public debts have also been drastically reduced. Between 1999 and 2000, they fell from close to 50 per cent of the GDP, to below 40 per cent. The reduction of public debts also brought down interest expenditure. Capital expenditure by government was cut down, so as to make space within the budget for increased social spending. The latter was increased by 23, 8 per cent in real terms between 1993 and 1997. Allocations to social security and welfare were increased but at the expense of housing.[42]

GEAR's fiscal policy has become stronger and better-managed. According to the Finance Minister Trevor Manuel's *Medium Term Budget Policy Statement*

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[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Gelb, S. **An overview.**

released in later October 2005, fiscal deficit has been adjusted to 1 per cent of GDP. This, apparently, represents potential additional spending of R30 billion. The Finance Minister announced an additional R78 billion to be used on social spending between 2005 and 2008. About R31 billion of this amount is going to be spent on public infrastructure development, which is indicated as one of the ways to effect economic growth beyond 6 per cent. Housing and municipal infrastructure will receive an additional R20 billion. Hospital revitalisation and education will receive R12 billion.[43]

GEAR has also improved its tax revenue collection front. Tax revenue had declined as a share of GDP during the early 1990s, reaching 22, 6 per cent in 1995 – 96. It the increased, and has been maintained just below the GEAR target of 25 per cent in 2003 – 04. The collection of tax revenue improved as a result of giving autonomy to the South African Revenue Services (SARS) from the Department of National Treasury. In March 1998, the tax revenue backlog was 49 per cent of the 4, 69 million returns. By March 2003, the backlog was only 5, 4 per cent.[44]

III. Conclusion

This chapter laid out the historical development of the South African economy from the early 1990s. It has not been its aim to offer a thorough and critical exposition of the enormous literature on the dynamics of the development of South Africa's economy during the transition phase. Rather, it is more concerned with providing a

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[43] Mabanga, T. **A capital conundrum**, *Mail & Guardian*, (October 29 to November 3, 2005).
[44] Gelb, S. **An overview.**

base for understanding the thinking that underpinned the policy-making environment on the development of the public services delivery sector in the post-apartheid era.

The ANC's role and policy stances in the restructuring of the South African economy have been convoluted. Initially, in the early 1990s, it was firmly leftist, graduating to a more eclectic stance, and eventually adopting a more market-centred approach, in line with the policies promoted by the international financial agencies. In 1993, in preparation for the elections of 1994, the ANC set out its policies for restructuring the economy in the RDP, which was founded on the promise to implement social welfare programmes with strong state intervention. The ANC took an unequivocal stance on the nationalisation of the state's major economic resources. The ANC also planned to implement strong programmes that supported the delivery of public services at affordable levels for the impoverished majority. Support for the delivery of these second-generation constitutional rights was later enshrined in the constitution's Bill of Rights in 1996. The timing of the ANC's plan to implement these programmes proved daunting. The transition to democracy took place in a post-Cold War era that embraces economic liberalisation and minimal state intervention.

Economic liberalisation has sought to open new spaces for the involvement of the private sector in the development of the public services delivery sector. The World Bank, the IMF and its corporate / financial arm, the International Fiscal Commission (IFC), have been integral to the restructuring processes of South Africa's socio-economic programmes since the beginning of the 1990s through their country assistance programmes.

What the debates on the restructuring of the economy during South Africa's transition addressed were the technicalities of adequately servicing the historically disadvantaged. The debates were necessitated not by prior ideological allegiances, but by practical matters concerning the development of the economy, and how to avoid crises in the public services delivery sector.

CHAPTER 4

Water: Policies, Politics and Delivery

I. Introduction

This chapter delves into the technical details of the policies and problems of water services delivery in post-apartheid South Africa. It sheds light on the intricacies and complexities of water services that have been misunderstood, buried for social scientist in unfathomable engineering texts, or just taken for granted. It gives detailed information on the state of water as a natural resource in South Africa and internationally. Secondly, it makes available information on the trajectory of policy making in the delivery of water services in the post –apartheid era. It is important to outline a clear government perspective on water services delivery, as government policy on water services delivery, however controversial and unpopular, have been consistently mystified and misrepresented in both leftist texts and in the new social movements campaigns. This chapter, therefore, partly serves to straighten out these inconsistencies.

The first part unpacks the state of water as a natural resource from an international perspective. This section dispels some of the popularly held notions on the state of the delivery of safe drinking water. That gives an insight into the recent and acute politicisation of water services delivery in South Africa and throughout the

developing economies. The second section moves on to outline the state of water as a natural resource in South Africa. It examines the sources of water supply, their conditions and other environmental concerns in the Southern African region. The architecture of water sourcing and supply in the region also informs the direction of the politicisation of water services delivery.

The analysis then moves on to provide an account of water services delivery policies. Firstly, it unpacks the structure of water delivery services, outlining the various government institutions that are central in the process, and then locates their positions in the hierarchical order. These range from the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) to the various water boards and municipalities. Secondly, it explores the financial aspects entailed in the process of water services delivery. This necessarily involves an examination of the various legislations and other government policy documents that have given direction to the functioning and the management of these processes.

II. Water Delivery Problems

(a) The Water Crisis: An International Perspective

Contrary to popular assumption, fresh drinking water is not an infinite resource. Less than one per cent of the world's total water stock is available fresh water for drinking and for other domestic purposes. Although two-thirds of the planet

is made up of water, there still remains an acute shortage of fresh drinking water.[1] The rest of available water is sea water, or water that cannot be accessed in ice caps, groundwater and soil.[2] Further exacerbating the problem is the increase of the world's population of approximately 85 million people per year, putting pressure on the only renewable source of water, continental rainfall, which generates a more or less constant world's supply of 40 000 to 45 000 cubic km. of water per year.[3] South Africa, which is a semi-arid country, has an unevenly distributed rainfall. It is estimated that 45 per cent of its rain falls on 13 per cent of the land.[4] Its average rainfall is a little more than half of the world's average. However, potential evaporation is higher than rainfall across most of the country.[5]

The implication is that fresh water is scarce and the availability of water per head is declining. It is claimed that water consumption is doubling every twenty years on a worldwide scale. Calculations point out that the water consumptions levels are more than twice the rate of the increase in human population.[6] The African population is fast approaching 700 million, and is expected to keep growing despite the impact of HIV / AIDS.[7] With the attendant problems of urbanisation, poor land use, and unregulated waste disposal, water resources in Africa are expected to decrease rapidly.

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[1] Shiva, V. (2002) **Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution and Profit**, (Pluto Press, London).
[2] Barlow, M. (1999) **Blue Gold: The Global Water Crisis and the Commodification of the World's Water Supply**, (International Forum on Globalisation (IFG)), (p. 5).
[3] Ibid.
[4] Abrams, L.J. (1996) **Policy Development in the Water Sector: The South African Experience**, (Prepared for the Cranfield International Water Policy Conference, Cranfield University, Bedford; see also www.waterpage.com), (p. 2).
[5] **Proposed First Edition: National Water Resources Strategy**, (2002) (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, South Africa), (p. 2).
[6] Barlow, M. (1999) **Blue Gold**, (p. 5).
[7] Salman, S.M.A. (2002) **The Abuja Ministerial Declaration on Water: *A Milestone or Just Another Statement?***, (Water International, Vol. 27, No. 3), p. 1). I doubt that these forecasts took into consideration the impact of HIV/AIDS on the African population, despite the fact that these statistics were published in 2002.

A mixture of these pressures has had a devastating impact on people's access to fresh water for domestic use and consumption on a worldwide scale. Currently, according to Wouter, Salman and Jones, approximately 450 million people in 29 countries face water shortages. The number of people without access to adequate fresh water globally is expected to increase to 2.5 billion people by the year 2050.[8] Salman states that in Africa, at least 38 per cent of the population does not have access to safe water supply.[9]

(b) The Water Crisis: South Africa

The *Draft White Paper on Water Services* pointed out that in South Africa alone, "...inequality in access to basic services was, and still is, a stark reality, in spite of South Africa being a middle income country."[10] Around 1994, South Africa had about 12 million people without access to adequate potable water, and approximately 20 million people without access to basic sanitation services.[11]

The examination of water delivery services and its attendant problems in South Africa necessitates probing into the nature and the state of the sources of water the country has at its disposal. A country's or region's water endowment depends on

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[8] Wouters, P.; Salman, S.M.A. & Jones, P. (2000) **The Legal Response to the World's Water Crisis: What Legacy from the Hague? What Future in Kyoto?**, (Prepared for the World Water Forum, Hague, March 17 – 22, 2000), (p. 1).
[9] Salman, S.M.A. (2002) **The Abuja Ministerial Declaration on Water**, (p. 1).
[10] **Draft White Paper on Water Services: Draft for Public Comment** (2002) (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, South Africa), (p. 1).
[11] Ibid.

its climate, physiographic, vegetation and geological make-up.[12] These are the rivers, the dams and the lakes flowing in and through the country, and those that South Africa shares with neighbouring countries. The *Proposed First Edition National Water Resources Strategy* released by DWAF cautioned that although South Africa has enough water to meet the population's basic needs:

> ...we need to use that water sparingly... We need to be conscious of the fact that we are a water scarce country. We are not on the point of running out of water, but we need to use our limited water supplies more efficiently and effectively.[13]

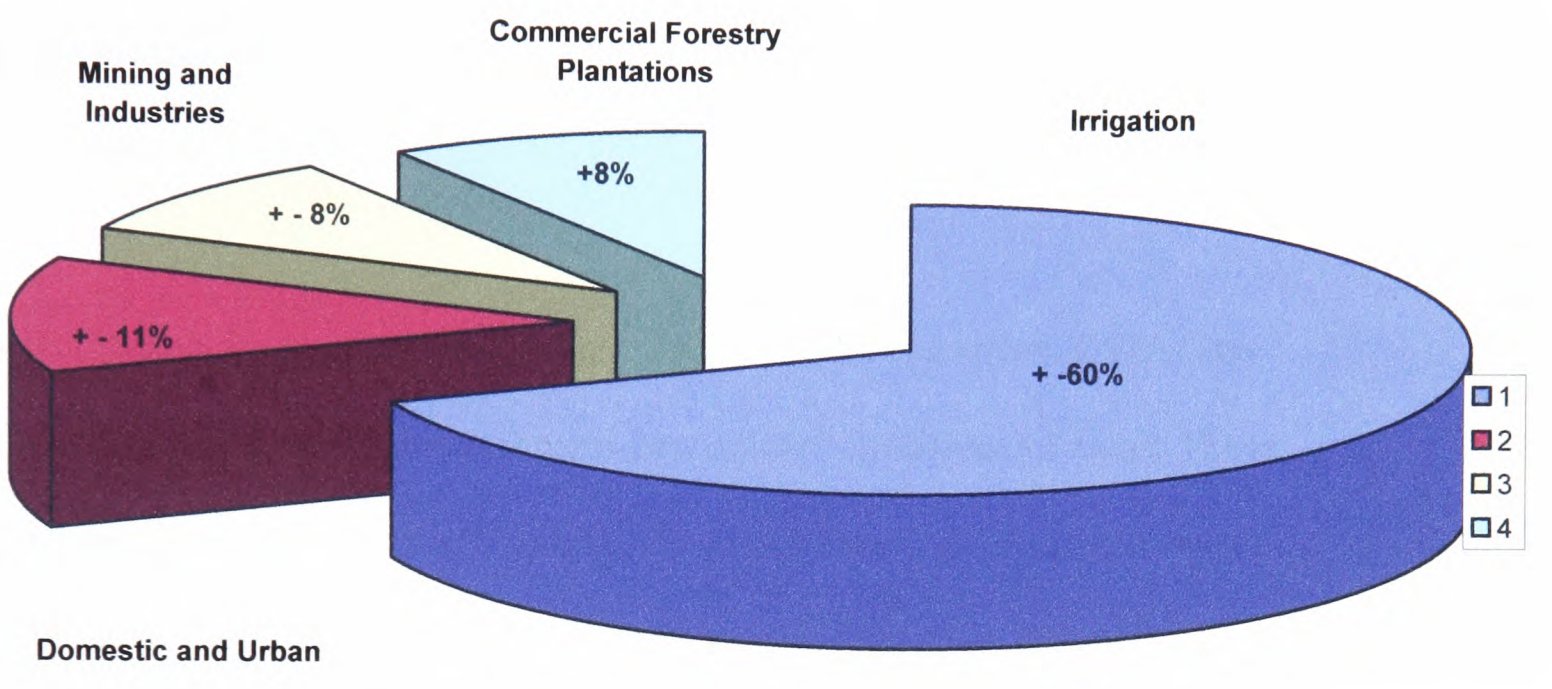
Table 1: Current and Projected Demand in South Africa by Sector

	Demand (x 10^6 m^3)	
Sector	1993	2010
Domestic	1516	3000
Industry	1031	2500
Municipal use	90	200
Urban losses	280	500
Power generation	224	400[a]
Mining	466	600
Irrigation	8254	11500
Stock watering	264	350
Forestry	1284	1700
Nature conservation	2994	5000
[a]Losses to evaporation in cooling systems, plus water used in ash-disposal systems.		

Source: http://www.idrc.ca/acb/showdetl.cfm

[12] Shiva, V. (2002) **Water Wars**.
[13] **Proposed First Edition National Water Resources Strategy** (2002), (p. 3).

Figure 1: Water Use in South Africa



Source: National Water Resource Strategy, Proposed First Edition, August 2002

It is argued that South Africa's rivers are small compared to other countries'. The Orange River carries about 10 per cent of the water volume flowing from the Zambezi River. South Africa's water volume is approximately one per cent of the water flows from the Congo River.[14] South Africa shares four rivers with its neighbouring countries. These are the Limpopo, Inkomati, Pongola (Maputo) and Orange (Senqu) Rivers. The Orange-Senqu rivers are shared with Namibia. The Limpopo River is shared with Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The Inkomati River is shared with Swaziland and Mozambique. The Usutu / Pongola River are

[14] Ibid.

shared with Mozambique and Swaziland.[15] Altogether, these four rivers drain about 60 per cent of the land area, contributing over 30 per cent of the country's total surface river flow or runoff. About 70 per cent of South Africa's GDP, and about the same percentage of the country's population, are supported by water supplied by these rivers.[16] It is estimated that approximately 240 of the world's water basins are divided among two or more countries.[17]

In facilitating the management of the country's water resources, DWAF has divided up the rivers into nineteen catchment-based water management areas. These are the Limpopo, Luvuvhu / Letaba, Crocodile West & Marico, Olifants, Inkomati, Usutu to Mhlatuze, Thukela, Upper Vaal, Middle Vaal, Lower Vaal, Mvoti to Umzimkhulu, Mzimvubu to Keiskamma, Upper Orange, Lower Orange, Fish to Tsitsikama, Gouritz, Olifants / Doring, Breede and the Berg catchment-based water management areas. Figure 2 below outlines the environmental conditions of South Africa's rivers.

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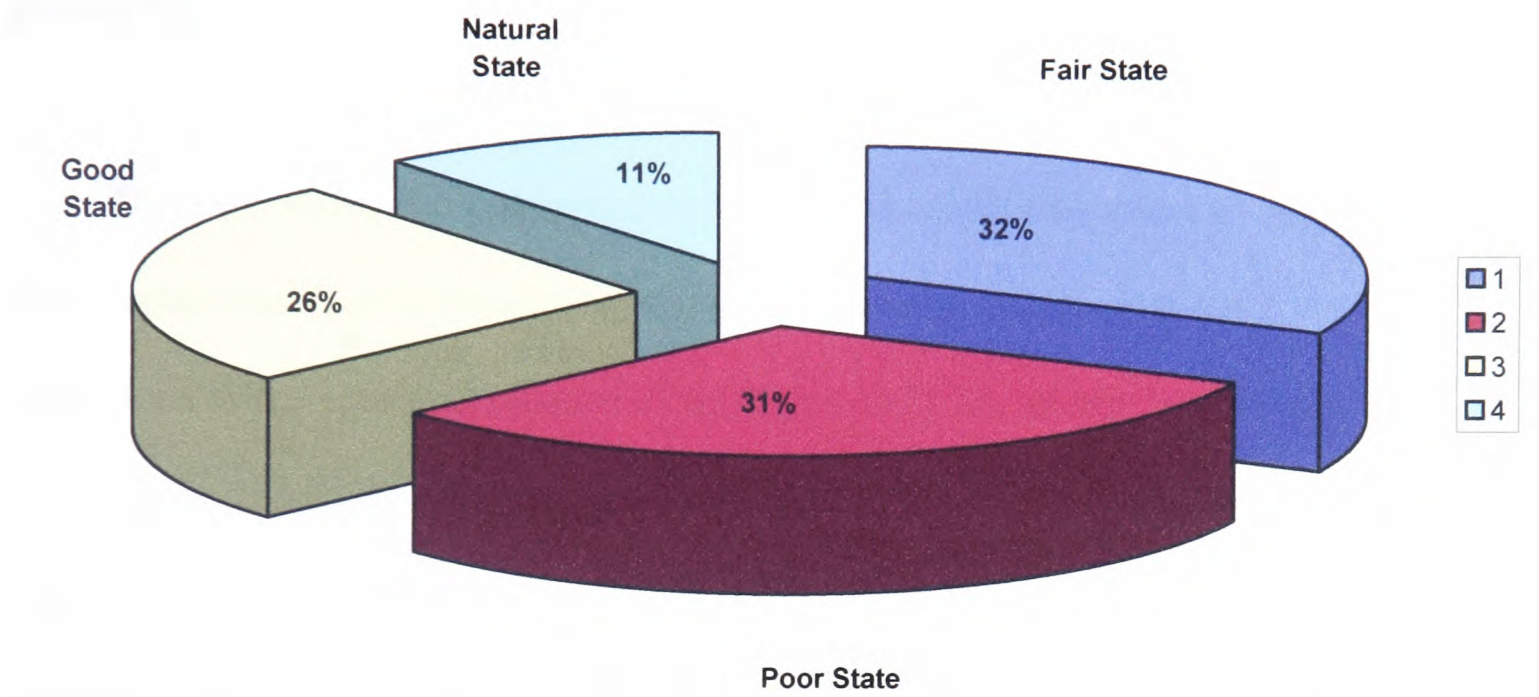
[15] Ibid, (p. 5).
[16] Ibid.
[17] Petrella, R. (2001) **The Water Manifesto**.

Figure 2: Environmental Conditions of South Africa's Water Resources



Source: Proposed First Edition National Water Resources Strategy

The environmental conditions of South Africa's water resources are compromised by salinity, eutrophication, bacteriological contamination and other forms of contamination.[18] Salinity is basically the amount of dissolved salts in the water. It is mainly mining and irrigation activities that cause salinity. Eutrophication is the addition of nutrients in water, such as phosphates and nitrates. The concentration of such nutrients, combined with temperature and light, results in the growth of algae. The major sources of these nutrients are fertilizers, mainly used in agricultural irrigation, and the sanitation systems. It is the poor maintenance of the sanitation systems that causes eutrophication. The rivers and dams affected by

[18] Ibid.

eutrophication are the Middle Vaal River, Hartbeespoort Dam, Inanda Dam, Laing and Bridlesdrift Dam. Eutrophication bears economically adverse consequences, as it increases the costs of water purification. It also poses a physical threat to water delivery, as the algae clogs filters and pumps. This reduces the carrying capacity of pipelines and canals.

The other factor that compromises the environmental conditions of South Africa's water resources is bacteriological contamination. This is mainly a consequence of the poor maintenance of sanitation facilities. Water bacteriological contamination is also caused by animals defecating into rivers and streams. This also increases the costs of water purification. Other forms of contamination range from inorganic to bio-degradable organic and metal compounds.[19]

III. Water Delivery Policies in South Africa

(a) The Structure of Water Delivery Services

DWAF's vision, mainly derived from the Constitution and the broadly defined development-oriented policies of the government, states that:

> All people living in South Africa have access to an adequate, safe and affordable supply of potable water, live in a healthy environment with safe and acceptable sanitation, are able to engage in sustainable livelihoods, are economically empowered and are able to participate actively in a vigorous and healthy civil society. All people are knowledgeable about healthy living practices and use water wisely. There is adequate water available for economic development. Water supply and sanitation services are sustainable and are

[19] Ibid.

> provided by efficient and effective service providers who are accountable and responsive to the customers they serve.[20]

It is necessary to understand what is meant by water services provision in government and legislative terms. The provision of water is domestic, commercial and industrial consumers is a lengthy process. It encompasses the processing of water and sanitation. Financial and environmental factors are also integral to the water delivery process. DWAF defines water services as follows:

> ...the development of water resources, abstraction of water from the resource, its treatment, storage and conveyance to the point where it is delivered to consumers, where such consumers include households and commercial, industrial, and institutional bodies, as well as the collection and disposal of human waste, grey water and other wastewater. It includes all the organisational arrangements needed to run the service effectively, *inter alia* consumer services, metering, billing and collection.[21]

Hierarchically, DWAF is the custodian of the country's water resources. It stands at the top of the water services delivery structure. The department is responsible for regulating the water services policies. It currently operates water resources infrastructure such as dams and bulk water supply schemes. It directly provides water services to some consumers, taking over as a water services authority and as a water services provider only in cases where there are no local government-related institutions to carry out these services. Its role, as prescribed in the 1994 White Paper on Water, has shifted from its apartheid era prescribed role of being the provider of water services, to being a leader in the regulation of policies and guidelines. Its overall responsibility is for:

> ...sector leadership, promotion of good practice, development and revision of national policies, oversight of all legislation impacting on the water sector, co-ordination with other national departments on policy, legislation and other

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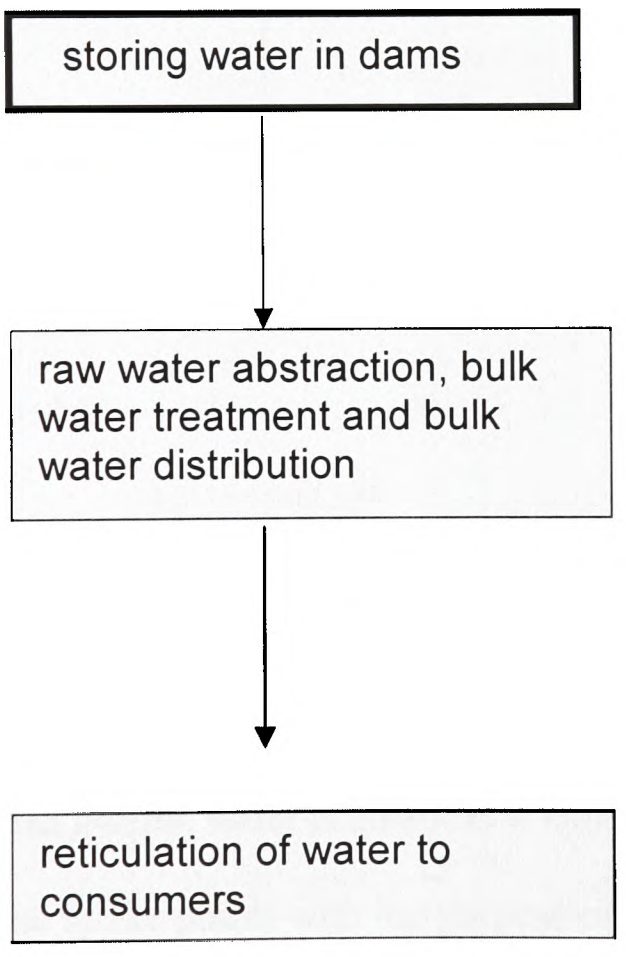
[20] **Towards a Water Services White Paper** (2002), (Government Notice No. 23377, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, South Africa), (p. 10).
[21] Ibid, (p. 9).

sector issues, national communications, and the development of strategies to achieve water sector goals.[22]

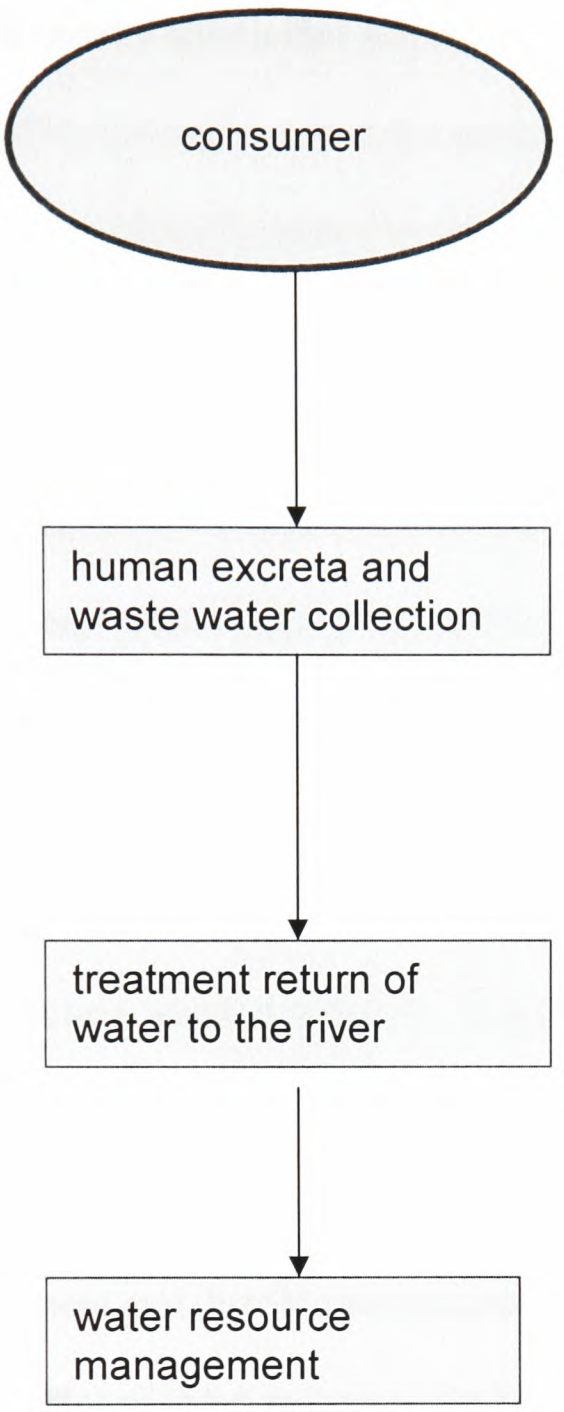
DWAF is estimated to have assets approximating R40 billion in value. Its investment portfolio per annum is about R1.2 billion, and has an annual turnover of R1.7 billion. It employs approximately 21 700 people. Nationally, the water boards are estimated to have assets of up to R11.2 billion, with about R1 billion investment per annum, and a turnover of approximately R3.5 billion annually. It is staffed by about 8 000 employees.[23] Figure 3 below outlines the process of water services in its schematic order.

Figure 3: Structure of Water Delivery



[22] **Draft White Paper on Water Services: Draft for Public Comment** (2002), (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, South Africa), (p. 15).

[23] Ibid.



To take Umgeni Water Board's (KwaZulu-Natal's water board) water treatment process as an example. Firstly, water is taken from dams or rivers, where it goes through wire screens at the intake points with the purpose of removing any solid objects. The second phase of the process involves the pre-treatment of water, whereby water is pre-treated with chlorine so as to render any pathogens that might cause diseases ineffective and to activate carbon so as to remove tastes and odours. The third level of the process is the mixing, coagulation and flocculation. At this level, a

chemical coagulant, which is usually aluminium sulphate or polyelectrolyte, is mixed with the water. This then enables the microscopic dirt particles to coagulate into bigger 'flocs', which should be sufficiently heavy to sink to the bottom of the sedimentation tank. The fourth part of the process is sedimentation and filtration. The flocculated water is passed to a sedimentation tank where the flocs are settled and removed from the bottom. Clean water is then decanted from the top of the sedimentation tank. Water is then passed through larger filters made of sand and gravel that remove all suspended matter. The fifth stage of the process is disinfection. Here, chlorine is added to kill any remaining germs. Samples of the treated water are then tested so as to ensure that the water is safe for drinking. The sixth leg of the process is distribution, where clean water is stored in a reservoir tank. From there, it is transferred to a network of pipes.[24]

The entire water treatment and distribution processes are capital-intensive and the organisation and management of these processes are highly technical. The costs accumulated that are partly borne by the consumer emanate from the expertise, plant, power, equipment and chemicals required to protect, extract, store, transport, treat and distribute water to the consumer.[25]

Just below DWAF in the schematic order are the water boards. They are under the control of the government through DWAF. The Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry has the power vested in him / her to establish and disestablish water boards. The ministry is responsible for their regulation, including the economic and financial regulation in terms of the Public Finance Management Act. According to the Water

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[24] www.umgeni.co.za/divisions/watertreatment/into.htm.
[25] Ibid.

Services Act, water boards are required to enter into contracts with water services authorities and other water services providers to whom they provide water services. Water boards, as bulk water suppliers, supply water to water services providers at the local level, whether the water services providers (WSPs) are municipalities, municipality-controlled, privately-controlled or are community-based organisations (CBOs).

KwaZulu-Natal's water board, Umgeni Water Board, was set up on 30 June 1974, with Msinsi Holdings (Pty) Ltd. as its subsidiary. Its bulk water purchases were made up of 59 per cent of the total operating costs in 2000 / 01. Umgeni Water Board supplies about 790 Ml per day of water, with a small proportion of 23 Ml per day coming from internal wastewater recycling.[26] It serves about 22 000 customers, and employs six general managers who head the following areas: Izintaba, Ulwandle, Africa / South Africa regions, operations support, corporate and finance services.[27] The board raises finance through the sale of potable water and through tariffs charged for the treatment of wastewater. It also raises capital through the issue of stock on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

Umgeni has an Accumulated Revenue Fund which is used to finance capital development, including major renewal expenditure. In doing so, it reduces the need for external borrowing. The board claims that it does not receive funding from the government.[28] This customer base is staggering taking into consideration that it

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[26] **Free Basic Water Implementation Strategy, Case Study: Durban Uni-City** (2001), (Prepared by Palmer Development Group, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Republic of South Africa). Also view the document in, http://www.dwaf.gov.za/FreeBasicWater/Docs/Casestud%20%Study%20Durban.pdf.
[27] http://www.umgeni.co.za/company/companyphilosophy/intro.htm#managementstructure.
[28] Ibid.

directly serves a number of communities where there are no effective local government authorities in place to serve either as water services authorities or as water services providers. It is also a tall order when taking into consideration the fact that the DMA's boundary was extended in 2001, and incorporated the Umkomaas Transitional Local Council, as well as areas from Ugu, iLembe and Indlovu Regional Councils. In terms of water services provision, this meant the incorporation of about 230 000 people, or 36 500 households into the jurisdiction of the DMA.[29] The latter is the major client of the Umgeni Water Board. In the 2002/03 financial year, Umgeni had an annual turnover of R826. 5 million, and the value of its assets under its Chief Executive Officer was estimated at R3 to 6 billion.[30] It employs 833 people, [31] and the value of its assets under the control of its CEO is between R3 to R6 billion.[32]

Water boards were initially set up to supply bulk water services to municipalities and other large water users. The advantage of that institutional arrangement was firstly that there were evident economies of scale. Also, water boards provided better co-ordination of schemes, especially where there were apparent complex integrated schemes, which supplied water to various municipalities and other large water consumers.

The *Draft White Paper on Water Services* outlines seven policy objectives that water boards seek to achieve. These are to:

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[29] **Free Basic Water Policy and Water Services Development Plan**, see, http://www.dwaf.gov.za/FreeBasicWater/Defaulthome.asp
[30] www.engineeringnews.co.za/eng/news/business/?show=30537
[31] www.kzntopbusiness.co.za/Public_Services/Umgeni_Water.htm.
[32] www.engineeringnews.co.za/eng/news/business/?show=30537.

(i) Ensure equity by providing water services to poor people, especially where their local water services providers are either ineffective or absent, due to the incapacity of local government;

(ii) Improve accountability by clarifying accountability arrangements;

(iii) Improve economic regulation by defining and clarifying the framework or pricing and the level of debt, and by monitoring the impact of secondary activities on the finances and risk of the profile of water boards;

(iv) Provide a common vision for the future of water boards as bulk utilities and / or regional sources to tap services providers;

(v) Provide flexibility as water boards differ from area to area, each area with its own institutional history, economic context and social challenges. As a result, it may be inappropriate to impose one national institutional model on water boards;

(vi) Ensure the financial viability of all water boards. This accrues from that water boards will derive all their future revenues from the sale of water and the provision of water services to other water institutions;

(vii) Create regional entities through the promotion of operational efficiencies, economies of scale and by maximising existing capacity through rationalisation.[33]

In sum, with regards to the provision and delivery of water services in metropolitan areas run by metropolitan councils, water boards have a direct relationship with the metropolitan councils. The water provision and delivery organs of the metropolitan councils buy water from the water boards. In the case

[33] Ibid.

of Durban, the Durban Metropolitan Water Services (DMWS) buys water from Umgeni Water Board. DMWS is then responsible for delivering and billing water to the townships, such as Mpumalanga. DMWS is also responsible for any losses in the distribution and the billing of water in Durban. It is also responsible for the repair and maintenance of the water provision infrastructure. The particularities relating to that hinge on the provisions of the specific contracts that DMWS has entered into with private water providers at a particular time. In cases where there are no metropolitan council organs providing water or other effective municipal water providing organs, water boards take the responsibility of directly providing the residents of that specific municipality or municipalities.

(b) Financing Water Delivery

The introduction of the free basic water policy is a universal novelty. Around the time of the inauguration of the *Free Basic Water Policy* in September 2000, the former Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Ronnie Kasrils, remarked that:

> As a country we must stand tall and be proud of the remarkable achievement that we have made in implementing the Free Basic water policy that has been widely criticised in the universal water sector. The status of the implementation of Free Basic Water by local authorities on 1 July 2001 revealed that approximately 23 million people were being served with Free Basic Water, is an historical milestone for our nation. Local government must be commended for the role that it is playing in this regard. This commendation comes with the realisation that this sphere of government which has changed ten-fold since 6 December 2000 and which has an expanded terms of reference is working full steam in addressing the needs of the poor.[34]

[34] **Free Basic Water Policy**, see, www.dwaf.gov.za/FreeBasicWater/Defaulthome.asp.

Towards the end of 2001, DWAF reported that it had managed to institute the Free Basic Water Policy in about 160 out of 242 local authorities. This represented 61 per cent of local authorities and 55 per cent of the population. Reasons accounting for the 39 per cent of local authorities lagging behind were that some municipalities were still in the process of implementing the Free Basic Water Policy. Other municipalities were building up the capacity to manage the water services, while others were unable to budget in accordance to the time schedule. Many of the municipalities that had not yet implemented the policy towards the end of 2001 did not at that time have adequate infrastructure.[35]

The policy has increasingly been subjected to vehement criticism from the anti-neoliberal front. Firstly, critics maintain that 6 kilolitres of free water per month per household is hardly sufficient. Although the figure may sound generous, it translates to 25 litres of water per person per day in a household, which is not sufficient for the healthy and sustainable the maintenance of a person. In the Durban region over the last five years, the average domestic consumption of water has declined from 36 kilolitres per month to 26.6 kilolitres per month.[36] This is mainly a consequence of the Durban local government's drive to recover some of the costs of supplying water by the rising block tariff charges for water above the free provision, mainly instituted in the black townships, where apparently 36 per cent of black households earn a monthly income of R1 000 per month, which is below the poverty line.[37]

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[35] **Free Water for 55% of South Africa**, *Daily Dispatch,* 6 November, 2001. See, www.queensu.ca/msp/pages/In_The_News/2001/November/55.htm.
[36] **Free Basic Water Implementation Strategy**.
[37] Ibid.

DWAF conceded that, "Consumers have probably been reducing consumption in response to increased water prices over that period, as well as in response to water conservation messages from the Council."[38] This then means that consumers move from the high to the low tariff blocks. DWAF was wary of introducing the policy within the context of the rising block tariffs. Commenting on the downward water consumption spiral in Durban since the implementation of the policy, it noted that:

> The introduction and use of rising block tariffs must take into account the fact that consumers will tend to adjust their consumption downwards in response to a rise in water prices. This may cause some consumers to move from higher to lower tariff blocks and reduce the income received by the Council. Because of the moves between tariff blocks the decrease in income received is likely to be proportionately greater than the decrease in water sold.[39]

In the same document, DWAF proposed that a fixed charge for consumers be raised beyond the 6 kilolitres per household per month. The reduction in demand for water in the DMA has resulted in financial strains for the Umgeni Water Board, as the DMA constitutes about 85 per cent of water sales from Umgeni.[40] The document further pointed out that as a result of the drop in water sales, any infrastructure costs incurred by Umgeni would have to be paid off through income received from water sales to Durban consumers. Perhaps that is the reason why the DMWS is in debt, owing Umgeni about R250 million.[41] It warned that, "If consumption drops in Durban the only way that costs can be recovered by Umgeni are through higher water prices."[42]

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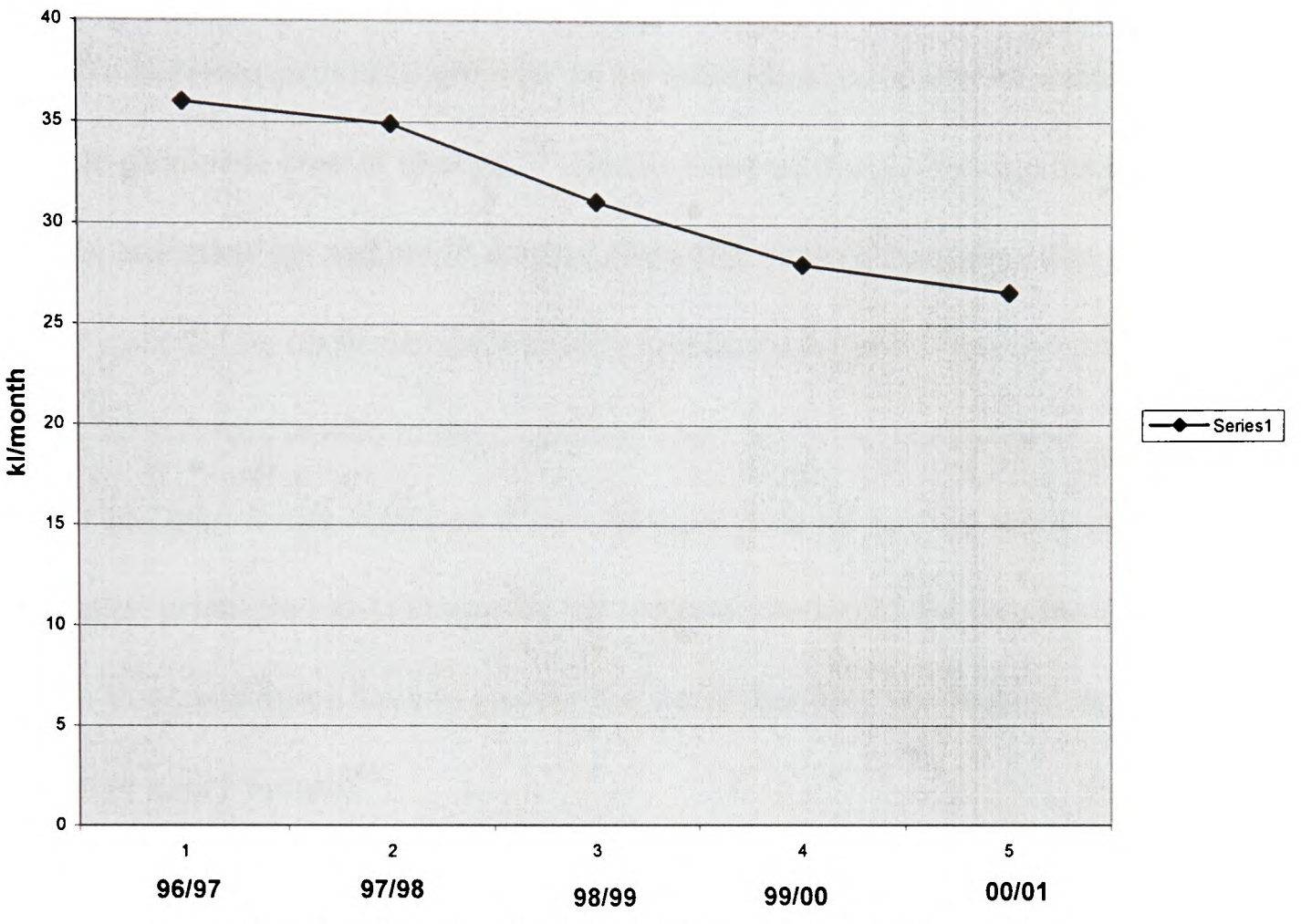
[38] Ibid.

[39] **Free Basic Water Policy and Water Services Development Plan**, (p. 8).
[40] Ibid.
[41] **Interview with Neil McLeod**.
[42] Ibid, (p. 7).

Figure 4: Average Consumption for Domestic Consumers in Durban (kl/month)



Source: DWAF Free Basic Water Implementation Strategy: Durban Case

As poor water consumers move towards the lower tariff charges, health risks increase proportionately. This will also have adverse effects on the health of the affected residents, and especially infants and children who require massive and frequent amounts of water for cleaning, feeding and extra maintenance of clothing to avoid the accumulation of germs and bacteria, etc. The consumption of water beyond the six thousand litres of water per household per month requires payment. Government policy states that the implementation of the free basic water policy is accompanied by the responsibility to pay for water services delivery and usage beyond the free amount of water per month.[43]

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[43] **Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework** (2000), (p. i) (emphasis in original).

The *Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework* (MIIF) further emphasises the obligation for consumers to pay for their water and sanitation services. It states that, "**No services provided directly to an individual property or dwelling should be made available free of charge**."[44] On the issue of people's obligation to pay for services, enforcement and credit control, the MIIF further maintains that, "A consistent policy should be implemented whereby continued failure to pay (correctly) billed amounts for services results in the consumer's service being restricted or suspended."[45] The *Draft White Paper on Water Services* goes on further, maintaining that the 'user pays' principle exists alongside the implementation of the free basic water policy, in that consumers have to pay for the water that they use beyond the free water they receive every month.[46]

Policy documents have also introduced credit control, law enforcement against consumers unable or 'unwilling' to pay for their water services beyond the free water distributed monthly. On credit control and enforcement, DWAF categorically provided that:

> The Water Services Act states that no person may be disconnected if he / she has proven to the municipality that he / she is unable to pay for water services, that is, that he / she is indigent. However, recent judgements in both the High Courts and the Constitutional Court have supported the right of municipalities to disconnect individual consumers where provision has been made for free basic services and where the right has been abused. If legislation (both national legislation municipal bylaws) provides for adequate notice of possible disconnection, and if administrative justice is served, then it is possible to argue that no legal impediment to disconnection exists. It is important to note that the financial viability and sustainability of service providers are threatened where the provision of a restricted supply of free basic supply of water is not yet feasible and where disconnection is not possible. Notwithstanding the above, the disconnection of water services to any

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[44] Ibid, (emphasis in original), (p. 18).
[45] Ibid.
[46] **Draft White Paper on Water Services** (2002), (p. 33).

consumer is a typically controversial and highly political matter. Health considerations also impact on the disconnection debate.[47]

Various questions stem from the free basic water policy. Firstly, to what extent is the standard free basic water per household per month indicative of the basic water needs of an average black township household? This question directly relates to the criteria the government applies in quantitatively defining a household. The second question relates to the politicisation of the provision of water services in black townships. That issue ties in with the newly emerging problem of the breakdown of social citizenship and the black townships residents' relationship with both the municipal authorities and the social and civic movements. The third question deals with the nature of the municipal authorities' relationship with the private sector, and how that has impacted on the provision for water services to black townships. The fourth question is concerned with the nature of disconnections, the billing and the credit control systems.

(c) Financing Water Delivery: Public-Private Partnerships and Privatisation

The provision of municipal services, and the manner in which such goods and services are delivered, depends on the size and the categorisation of the municipality in question. The Municipal Structures Act outlines the different categories of municipalities. There are three categories of municipality, A, B and C. Category A is a municipality that has exclusive municipal executive and legislative powers. Category B refers to municipalities that share municipal executive and legislative

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[47] **Towards a Water Services White Paper: Issues and Options Discussions Paper** (2002), (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Government Gazette No. 23377), (p. 41).

powers with a Category C municipality within whose area it falls. Category C refers to a municipality that has municipal executive and legislative authorities shared with other municipalities in an area that includes more than one municipalities. These are smaller peri-urban and rural municipal areas with inadequate municipal resources.

Government policy draws a distinction between the ownership of public services infrastructure, and that of the water services providers. At the local level, water authorities are predominantly municipal authorities. The latter in many cases are supplied by the water boards. Metropolitan councils usually assume the role of water authorities and water providers at the same time. Municipal authorities usually buy their water supplies from the water boards. For instance, Umgeni Water Board directly sells water to the Ethekwini Municipal Area through the DMWS. Water is then supplied to Durban residents by the DMWS. The latter acts as a retail water and sanitation services provider. This means that the DMWS takes full responsibility for the provision of water and sanitation services, and accepts risks on the income collected.[48]

In the case of Johannesburg, Rand Water acts as a bulk Water Services Provider (WSP). Cape Town is an exception in that it acts as a bulk WSP as well as a retail water and sanitation WSP. This means that it acts as a retail WSP in Cape Town, as well as providing bulk water services to the other WSPs in the Western Cape, whether they are municipality-controlled or privately-owned.[49]

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[48] **Draft White Paper on Water Services** (2002), (p. 20).
[49] Ibid.

Government policy maintains that the public sector is the preferred water services provider. It further points out that the primary responsibility for providing water services rests with the local government. DWAF emphasized that, "Local government has the primary responsibility to provide basic water and sanitation services to people living within its boundary."[50] It further pointed out that, "Water services for domestic use are a public good, therefore democratic local government is in the best position to make accountable decisions related to how services are provided, taking into account the social aspects of water services."[51] It stressed that:

> Water is an important social good ("Water is life") and hence water assets that serve the public should be owned by the public, that is, by the water services provider that is responsible for the provision of water services to the citizens in its area or government...There shall be no sale or divestiture of water infrastructure assets by the public sector to the private sector. Water services assets will be owned by water services authorities except where these are owned by national government (for example, through a national water entity or water board.[52]

These declarations notwithstanding, government policy also views water as an economic good. It argues that water should be managed in accordance with business principles, reasoning that:

> Failure to do this will substantially increase the risk of the services not being sustainable. Sound business principles include sound accounting, adequate provisions for depreciation, adequate spending on maintenance and replacement of assets, effective and efficient use of resources, and income (including subsidies) which cover expenses.[53]

On the involvement of the private sector in public services delivery, the government objects to the use of the term 'privatisation.' It rejects it on the ground that despite the fact that the private sector consultants and contractors in South Africa

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[50] **Towards a Water Services White Paper** (2002), (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Government Gazette No. 23377, Vol. 443, No. 538), (p. 14).
[51] **Draft White Paper on Water Services** (2002), (p. 13).
[52] Ibid, (p. 31).
[53] Ibid, (p. 11).

have played a significantly visible role in the water sector, their involvement in water delivery and the improvement and management of infrastructure should not be equated with privatisation. The *Draft White Paper on Water Services* defined privatisation as, "the permanent sale of fixed assets (that is, divestiture) by the public sector to the private sector, and / or private investment and perpetual ownership of assets."[54] It further went on to define 'private operation' as the operation of water assets by the private sector. This is done on behalf of government, and could be done through a management agreement, a lease contract, a concession contract or a build-operate-transfer (BOT) contract.

A lease agreement, or an affermage, is said to be operative when a private company operates and maintains a state-owned asset for a specified period of time. The public sector retains the responsibility for financing the investments in fixed assets. A concession, on the other hand, is said to be operative when a private company is responsible for developing or rehabilitating and operating a state-owned asset or service for the amount of time specified in the contract. They include agreements such as BOT (build-operate-transfer), or rehabilitate-operate-transfer ROT (rehabilitate-operate-transfer) schemes. A management agreement is defined as the operation and maintenance of services contracted out to a private company or consortium for a specific period of time. The private company or consortium in question does not finance the assets. The public sector finances the fixed assets and the working capital. These agreements are different from privatisation, where state assets are sold to a private company or consortium, and after that these assets are owned and managed by the private company or consortium in question. Government

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[54] Ibid, (p. 22).

does not consider these operations as privatisation because the ownership of the water infrastructure assets remains in public hands.[55]

Bond, McDonald and Ruiters regard the lease agreements, concessions and management contacts as varying forms or degrees of privatisation. They claim that these forms of contracts include private sector involvement in financing, operating and, in some cases, ownership of the water services delivery machinery.[56] They further maintain that the extent of private sector involvement stretches from the contracting out of services to the private sector, to reducing or discontinuing the provision of a service by government, and introducing commercial or market principles. If the term 'privatisation' is limited to the actual sale to the private sector of infrastructure and fixed assets which were owned by the public sector so that in providing municipal services, the private sector becomes the new owner of the public infrastructure and the fixed assets, only four out of the two hundred and eighty-four municipalities in South Africa have been privatised.

The private sector will always be involved in the provision of basic municipal services in many ways, at least in their technical aspects, such as engineering, consulting and human resources. Therefore, to regard all forms and degrees of private sector involvement as tantamount to privatisation provides an unrealistic and unworkable conception of the workings of municipal services delivery. The involvement of the private sector has been crucial in the installation of piping and other technical and engineering works in the rural, per-urban and informal settlement

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Bond, P. McDonald, D. & Ruiters, G. (2001) **Water privatisation in Southern Africa: The state of the debate**, (http://www.communitylawcentre.org.za/ser/esr2003/2003nov_water.php).

areas. Len Abrams, a researcher with Water International, aptly summarised this problem thus:

> One thing is certain - providing sustainable water services at local level is a complex process whether you are working in a developing country with a GNP of a few hundred dollars a year or in an industrialised country with a GNP of several thousand dollars a year.
>
> The other undeniable reality is that the private sector will always be involved, whether the anti-private sector lobby likes it or not. At the very least the private sector will be involved as consultants, contractors, the suppliers of materials, the manufacturers of pumps etc..
>
> The debate is not whether or not the private sector will be involved, it is to what extent will they be involved as the actual providers of services. There are several degrees of engagement of the private sector as service providers and investors in infrastructure.[57]

In choosing water services providers, government states that the public sector is the first choice. The major reason for this rationale is that the concern for the profit motive "...will result in unaffordable services and lack of focus on servicing people without access to basic services."[58] The other concern is that private sector participation, if unregulated, could result in the loss of jobs in the public sector. According to government policy, the overall policy of private sector participation in the water sector is premised on the principle that when the public sector is unable to afford the resources, the capacity or the expertise to deliver water effectively, then the private sector will be invited to participate. On this point, the *Draft White Paper on Water Services* conclusively pointed out that:

> It is important to bear in mind that the protection of the public interest should be the primary consideration when selecting a water services provider and that consumer and other interests need to be balanced. In a context of resource and capacity constraints, it may be that the involvement of the private sector in the provision of water services could result in the more effective and efficient provision of water services and that this would promote the public interest more effectively than a service provided wholly by the public sector which is

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[57] Abrams, L. **Private Sector Engagement**, (http://www.thewaterpage.com/ppp_debate.htm).
[58] **Draft White Paper,** (p. 22).

> inefficient and /or ineffective. The ultimate test is the protection and promotion of the public interest. *For this reason, there is scope for private sector participation in the provision of water services notwithstanding the government's stated preference for public sector provision.*[59]

Government policy states that when a municipality chooses a private water services provider, the water services authority must apply a competitive tendering process. The water services authority should also show that the contract will provide value for money, be affordable and should also transfer the appropriate technical, operational and financial risks to the private party. Private sector involvement tends to be preferred in, but not limited to, support services (consulting services, outsourcing of various activities such as meter reading, cleaning, maintenance, security, training, etc.), contracting (construction, operations, management), the management of operations (ie. private operations), financing (bank loans, bonds, equity), engineering services (eg. design), construction (eg. contractors), investment, etc.

Water authorities may enter into contracts with various types of water services providers. The first type of water services providers are municipalities which can assume both roles of a Water Services Authority (WSA) and a Water Services Provider (WSP). The second type of water services providers are municipal entities. These are municipal-owned and controlled public providers that can be set up in terms of either a by-law or the Companies Act. Thirdly, there are the water boards. Then there are the community-based organisations (CBOs), which are non-profit organisations. The fifth are the private operators. These vary from the small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs), to the more established larger private operators. They could be locally or foreign-owned, including multi-national corporations. Other types of WSPs are water user associations, industries and mines that provide water

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[59] Ibid, (emphasis in original).

services to or provide water services directly on behalf of municipalities, not as intermediaries. In such cases, these organisations are WSPs even though the provision of water services might not be the main business interests of the organisations. Here, the provision of water services is undertaken for the purposes of assisting municipalities who have limited alternatives. The relationship between a WSA and this type of a WSP is defined in terms of an appropriate contract.

It is primarily the MIIF that lays out groundwork government policy on the financing of water delivery and infrastructure. The objectives of the MIIF are:

(i) Ensure that local authorities are able to deliver the level of service needed for health and safety;

(ii) Enable local authorities to improve upon these services;

(iii) Suggest how local authorities might structure infrastructural investment in a way that promotes economic development;

(iv) Encourage local authorities to locate investment in infrastructure in ways that promote the integration of previously divided cities, towns and rural areas.

The MIIF covers the following financing and capacity-building activities of local authorities:

(i) The extension of internal bulk and connector services for water supply, sanitation, roads, stormwater, energy and solid-waste disposal;

(ii) The upgrading of areas without adequate services by introducing new services or rehabilitating existing services that are not functioning;

(iii) The installation of services for new residential developments. The installation of services in rural areas;

(iv) The provision of services to farm workers on commercial farms.[60]

The financing of municipal infrastructure and the basic public services mainly accrues through *capital* and *recurrent* costs. Capital costs are divided into internal connector and bulk infrastructure costs. The internal infrastructure costs include the costs of reticulation within the townships' boundaries. The internal connector costs include the costs incurred in connecting the main pipelines, reservoirs, sewers and distribution roads which connect the internal service to the bulk service. The bulk infrastructure costs are incurred by the municipality in constructing, repairing or maintaining major roads, treated water supply, outfall sewers and waste-water treatment works. A clear differentiation is made between internal and external bulk infrastructure. Municipal authorities are primarily responsible for internal bulk infrastructure costs. However, these costs may exclude the provision for bulk water and electricity. In such cases, these services are provided by external bodies, and are thus referred to as 'external' bulk infrastructure costs.[61] That is where the space for the participation of the private sector in infrastructure development and public service delivery is opened up.

There are five sources of capital finance available to local authorities. These are the local government's own resources; capital grants; borrowing from parastatal

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[60] **Municiapal Infrastructure Investment Framework** (2002).
[61] Ibid.

intermediaries; borrowing privately; and equity investment in public-private partnerships. Where local government does not exist or is inefficient, provincial and central governments directly provide local government services.

Capital costs for installing services vary from one area to another due to a number of factors. The most important factor is the level of services provided. The higher the level of services provided, the higher the costs incurred by the municipalities. This then implies that the tariff or the service charge that the consumer will be liable to pay will be higher as well. For example, the installation of communal standpipes requires less pipework and also pipes of smaller sizes. Also, people apparently use less potable water in areas with communal standpipes. This then implies that there will be fewer costs incurred by the local authorities, and subsequently less tariff or service charges that the consumer is liable to pay. The MIIF maintains that as the consumption of water increases, the bulk and connector costs subsequently increase. Other factors which influence costs are the plot size, which is directly related to the density of the settlement. Soil conditions, topographic features, existing infrastructure in the area, distance from the source of supply, labour and material costs, are some of the other factors that influence costs.

On the other hand, recurrent costs are mainly operations and maintenance costs, bulk purchase costs and debt servicing. The operations and maintenance costs are determined by a variety of factors. The first factor is the level of service, which has already been discussed. The second one is the volume of the service used. This mainly applies to the delivery of water and electricity, where the higher usage requires greater resource costs, transmission costs and treatment costs. The third factor is the

size of the infrastructure system. The fourth one is the age of the infrastructure, where the older the infrastructure system, the more maintenance is needed. The fifth one relates to organisational efficiency. Here it is argued that efficient organisations can perform the same tasks at substantially lower costs than inefficient organisations.[62]

IV. Conclusion

Arguments expounded here have laid the basis for the appraisal of the government's policies on water services delivery. The critical reviews of these policies, against the backdrop of the fieldwork studies carried out in Durban, are pursued in chapters 6 and 7. The section on the international environmental state of available water for human consumption has illuminated the precariousness of water services delivery. Indeed, water is fast becoming a site of heightened political contestation in the twenty-first century. Regional conflicts spurred on by shared water resources have occurred throughout our history. They are not a novelty. They are likely to continue as a result of the worldwide human population increasing more rapidly than the water availability fit for human consumption. What will further fasten the pace and the gravity of these regional conflicts is the worsening state of environmental phenomena such as industrial pollution and global warming.

Particularly noticeable today are conflicts on water of another nature. These conflicts occur mainly in the developing countries, and they take place within nation-

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[62] Ibid.

states. Parties in these conflicts are the state, international and domestic private capital on the one hand, and the marginalised majority of black urban residents on the other hand.

Government policies on water services delivery, especially on its financing, have pointed to the critical balancing exercise between sustaining economic growth on the one hand, and making inroads in redressing the socio-economic balances of the past. It is a difficult exercise, taking into consideration the precarious financial positions of the municipalities that the ANC Government inherited from the past. This has necessitated the involvement of the private sector, despite vehement protests from COSATU and more importantly, from the anti-neoliberal new social movements. However, the new anti-neoliberal social movements have failed to grasp the intricacies of financing and delivering water services, nor have they come up with coherent alternative policy suggestions. They object to the involvement of the private sector in the development of the water infrastructure and services delivery, without even grasping particularly how, and where the private sector is involved.

The procurement of the services of the international water companies sparked a crisis first between the municipalities and the international water companies. The municipalities that contracted the services of these water companies were confronted with problems of under-revenue collection. The majority of the municipalities that have entered into contracts where the private water companies have taken over the delivery of water services are C category municipalities. These are predominantly peri-urban informal settlement constituencies. It follows from the type of municipalities in question that they have a small tax base, and their residents occupy

the lower income brackets. In metropolitan municipalities (such as in Durban), the cost recovery mechanisms have not been as difficult to implement as in the category C municipalities, where the management and lease contracts have broken down as a result of the incapacities of the local municipalities to collect their revenues. The new social movements tend to present a picture of blanket privatisation of water services, despite the unacknowledged (or unknown to them) fact that only four municipalities' water services delivery machinery out of a total of two hundred and eighty-four municipalities throughout the country have been privatised.

The anti-neoliberal camp has jettisoned the idea of the participation of the private sector in the delivery of public goods and services. The government points to the need to involve the private sector, as a result of the logistical incapacity of the local government to shoulder on its own the financing of the delivery of public goods and services. The anti-neoliberal camp has allowed very little room for compromise, nor for any eclectic stances in the debates over water policies. What this camp fails to understand is that the involvement of the private sector in public services delivery is inevitable, especially in technical, engineering and consultative areas. The question rather is to what extent, and in which areas, should the private sector participate.

CHAPTER 5

Social Citizenship and the Emergence of the New Social Movements

I. Introduction

This chapter opens up space for an analysis of the emergence of the new anti-neoliberal social movements in post-apartheid South Africa. It examines the political and the socio-economic environments that have led to the formation of the new social movements: the breakdown of social citizenship. Firstly, it defines social citizenship. The definition pursued here is removed from the theoretical and classical debates on social citizenship, and more focused on the particular constitutional and political features of the breakdown of social citizenship. This gives the reader an appreciation of the gravity of the situation that led to the birth of the new social movements in South Africa in the late 1990s.

The second section unpacks the concept of the new social movements. It unearths the debates on the definition of the new social movements and social protests. It moves on to dissect the concepts of contentious politics and the exploitation of changing political opportunities, which are central to the understanding of the dynamics of collective action campaigns of the new social

movements. The third section then examines the contemporary history of the new social movements in South Africa from the late 1990s.

Various aspects of the evolution of South Africa's new social movements are explored. They concern the manner in which these social movements view themselves. They also refer to the ways in which they relate, or seek to relate to the state. More importantly, they analyse the political strategies, manoeuvres, crises in leadership and decision-making within the new social movements. This is further explored in Chapter 7, with particular reference to the Mpumalanga case study.

The last section reveals the cycles of political oppression that the new social movements have been subjected to by the state, and how they have responded to these. These are linked to how they have sought to open up spaces of political opportunities to further their own agendas.

II. The Breakdown of Social Citizenship

Social citizenship is the provision of socio-economic or second-generation constitutional rights to a nation-state's citizens and peoples[1] in a manner that guards against the erosion of their delivery by the profit-driven principles of private capital and the market.[2] At the core of social citizenship is the claim that the state is primarily responsible for the provision of public services delivery, and that these should not be

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[1] According the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), 'peoples', who bear various forms of status other than citizenship, are under the protection of the laws of the country, and have full access to the country's resources and aid as long as they reside in the country.

[2] Heater, D. (1999) **What is Citizenship?** (Polity Press, Cambridge & Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford).

undermined or overtaken by market priorities premised on the accumulation of wealth and financial speculation.

In South Africa, second-generation constitutional rights are enshrined in the Bill of Rights in the constitution, adopted in 1996. The crisis in social citizenship arises when there are problems that ensue in the control or regulation of the market by the state and the delivery and consumption of the goods and services to which these rights confer entitlement. The provision of public goods by private capital can lead to higher prices for the health, education, security, a clean environment and other public services. Access to them is constrained, as people struggle to afford them. Furthermore, the deeper penetration of private capital in the delivery and the consumption of these public goods tend to reduce citizens to consumers, customers, or clients.

Section 27 (1) (b) of the Bill of Rights states that, "(1) (a) Everyone has the right to have access to --- (b) sufficient food and water."[3] Section 27 (2) maintains that, "The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, *within its available resources,* to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights."[4] That ties the state's responsibility to the delivery of second-generation constitutional rights to the availability of public resources at the state's disposal. Affordability has then come under scrutiny as a 'highly contentious rider'[5] in the state's guarantees of delivering adequate amenities. McDonald pointed out that:

> This has subsequently been used as a constitutional justification for failure to provide access to certain rights. As a result, citizens' rights are linked to the

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[3] **The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996,** (Act 108 of 1996), (p. 13).
[4] Ibid (emphasis added).
[5] McDonald, D.A. & Pape, J. (2002) **Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Service Delivery in South Africa**, (HSRC Publishers, Cape Town; Zed Books Ltd., London), (p. 4).

> law of the market and cost recovery has sunk its claws deep into the Bill of Rights. From 1996 onwards, local government development paradigms shifted steadily from the redistributive state to the neoliberal "enabling" or "facilitating" state. At the level of finance, this meant moving from notions of redress and (cross-) subsidisation to full cost recovery.[6]

The involvement of the private sector in the public services delivery sector has led to a dramatic increase of prices of electricity, water and other municipal services. For instance, in Soweto in 1999, electricity prices rose by 47 per cent. Approximately 60 per cent of households in Soweto had their electricity disconnected by the Johannesburg City Council in 2002.[7]

The government has argued in favour of its shift from the welfare-based RDP policy on basic public service delivery, to the 'growth through development' platform, where the private sector has been allocated a significant stake in infrastructure development and the delivery of public goods and services. It has increasingly favoured the pro-growth or the pro-market approach to economic development, rather than the pro-poor or market-critical approach. The pro-growth approach puts stress on market competitiveness and investment attraction. On the other hand, the pro-poor approach puts emphasis on issues of empowerment, popular participation in the decision-making processes, and on community development issues that include all stakeholders in decision-making.[8] The First Deputy President of the Government of National Unity (GNU), Thabo Mbeki, spoke at a conference on infrastructure investment held in Cape Town between 28 to 29 March, 1996, which

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[6] Ibid.
[7] Cited in, **Trevor Ngwane: Sparks in the Township** (An Interview with Trevor Ngwane) (2003) **New Left Review**, (July- August, 2003), (p. 3).
[8] Nel, E., Hill, T. & Maharaj, B. **Durban's Pursuit of Economic Development in the Post-Apartheid Era**, *Urban Forum*, Vol. 14, No. 2-3, April – September 2003.

the government, labour, business, NGOs and community organisations attended and contributed:

> But the central component of the relationship between government and the private sector has remained vague, ill-defined...How do we use our collective resources in ways which can deliver basic services to all our people, create jobs and growth in the economy? ... For instance, the private sector has a significant capacity in the field of project management and infrastructure maintenance ---- there are new ways of delivering and managing infrastructure more effectively, based on international best practice. We are working with local authorities and government parastatals to find new ways of organising projects, so that the private sector can have a role in the different stages of planning, implementation, financing and management... Let me take this opportunity to invite the private sector to join us in investing in the necessary infrastructure provision as one of the key pillars for meeting basic needs and economic growth.[9]

Mbeki further pointed out that to deliver municipal services to everyone within an urban local authority at an affordable level would cost the government around R61 billion over the next ten years.[10] He further stressed that the combined resources of national and provincial government would not be sufficient to cover more than half of the stipulated capital costs. Mike Muller, the Director-General of DWAF, preferred to nuance the state's predicament. He pointed out that, "A better characterisation might be of a well-meaning state struggling to manage rapidly expanding services, constrained by limited management capacity and resources."[11]

The backlogs in public services delivery have led to a renewed spate of organised and, at times, impromptu episodes of unrest in the townships in many parts of the country. "The politics of the poor is emerging,"[12] claimed Charlene Smith. Eddie Webster argued that these are forms of struggles where the working urban poor

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[9] Mbeki, T. (1999) **Africa ---- The Time Has Come: Selected Speeches**, (Tafelberg Publishers Ltd., Cape Town; Mafube Publishers (Pty) Ltd., Johannesburg), (pp. 133 – 36).
[10] Ibid, (p. 134).
[11] Muller, M. **Keeping the taps on**, *Mail & Guardian*, (30 June, 2004), (http://www.archove.mg.co.za/FrameSet.asp?xhitlist_q=social+movements).
[12] Smith, C. **Caught in a Rut,** (Africa Today, November / December 2002), (p. 16).

"...have political power without social citizenship."[13] Webster's emphasis on social citizenship tallies well with Holston's and Appadurai's[14] argument on the meaning and significance of social citizenship paralleling the spatial reconfiguration of the post-colonial cities that find themselves surviving under pressures of neo-liberalism. They maintained that, "What it means to be a member of society in many areas of the world came to be understood, to a significant degree, in terms of what it means to be a rights-bearing citizen of a territorial nation-state."[15] The source of contention, therefore, in these struggles is the fight to guarantee the delivery of second-generation constitutional rights against the encroachment of the market. On the other hand, it centres on the state's struggle to maintain its credibility and relevance to its constituency as a protector and supplier of these services and public goods.

Pallo Jordan, the current Minister of Arts and Culture and a member of the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC), pointed out that the ANC has had to adapt to and remain relevant to fundamental political and economic changes in the twentieth-century that have affected Africa and the rest of the world:

> The 1990s required of the ANC that it transform itself again into a party of government able to administer Africa's wealthiest economy but also one of its most diverse societies. To arrive at that point, the ANC underwent repeated redefinition and a profound metamorphosis.[16]

Thabo Mbeki argued that South Africa's economic and political development should be in accordance with the 'world development' trends. In his article, *The State and Social Transformation* (1996), he maintained that:

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[13] Ibid.
[14] In, Holston, J. (ed.) (1999) **Cities and Citizenship**, (Duke University Press, London).
[15] Ibid, (p. 1).
[16] Jordan, P. (2004) **The African National Congress: From Illegality to the Corridors of Power**, *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 100, (p. 206).

> The democratic movement must resist the illusion that a democratic South Africa can be insulated from the processes which characterise world development. It must resist the thinking that gives South Africa a possibility to elaborate solutions which are in discord with the rest of the world, but which can be sustained by virtue of a voluntarist South African experiment of a special type, a world of anti-apartheid campaigners, who, out of loyalty to us, would support and sustain such voluntarism.[17]

Patrick Bond situated Mbeki's insistence on the ANC's toeing the line with the 'world development' trends in crises of over-accumulation and declining profitability. He argued that declining profitability has been a feature of the most developed economies over the last twenty-five years, and that declining profitability has intensified globalisation in the last quarter of the twentieth-century. It has spurred on the increased dominance and exponential growth of speculative finance capital. This has manifested itself in the growth of transnational corporations and their projects (public-private partnerships, leases, management contracts) with the developing states. Bond concluded that this has resulted in "...speculative finance capital, raging uncontrolled over the globe in pursuit of higher returns."[18]

Bond's argument is not only simplistic and homogenising, but he has laboured it to death.[19] It assumes that developing states are either non-existent as regulatory, political and judicial institutions; or that they are too weak to control and regulate international (and even domestic) speculative finance capital. The South

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[17] Cited in, Johnson, K., **State and Civil Society in Contemporary South Africa: Redefining the Rules of the Game**, in, Jacobs, S. & Calland, R. (eds.) (2002) **Thabo Mbeki's World: The Politics and Ideology of the South African President**, (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg; Zed Books, Ltd., London), (p. 229).

[18] Bond, P. (2000) **Cities of Gold, Townships of Coal: Essays on South Africa's New Urban Crisis**, (Africa World Press, Inc., Trenton, New Jersey & Asmara), (p. 23). See also, Bond, P. (2000) **Elite Transition**. See also, Bond, P. (2003) **Against Global Apartheid: South Africa Meets the World Bank, IMF and International Finance**, (University of Cape Town Press; Zed Books Ltd., London).

[19] Bond, P. (2000) **Cities of Gold, Townships of Coal: Essays on South Africa's New Urban Crisis**, (Africa World Press, Inc., Trenton, New Jersey; Asmara, Eritrea).

African state is strong and centralised and has the capacity to regulate financial capital.

International water companies, as they have done in many other developing countries, have broken themselves up and formed local water companies in South Africa. They have then offered stakes in the control and decision-making of their local companies to various local companies. The forms and types of these companies, both black and white owned, range across the spectrum ---- from engineering, construction, law firms to NGOs (these arguments are elaborated on in Chapter 6). This can partly be attributed to the size of the transnational firm, its scope and spread of operations. Saskia Sassen maintained that the more dispersed a transnational firm across different countries, the more complex and strategic its functions and operations are rendered. Consequently, these transnational firms find it necessary to recruit various specialised services in the countries they operate in, ranging from legal, accounting, public relations, programming and telecommunications services. She further rationalised that:

> The complexity of the services they need to produce, the uncertainty of the markets they are involved with, either directly or through the headquarters for which they are producing the services, and the growing importance of speed in all these transactions, is a mix of conditions that constitutes a new agglomeration dynamic. The combination of firms, talents, and expertise from a broad range of specialized fields makes a certain type of urban environment function as an information center. Being in a city becomes synonymous with being in an extremely intense and dense information loop. This is a type of information loop that as of now still cannot be replicated fully in electronic space, and has as one of its value-added features the fact of unforeseen and unplanned mixes of information.[20]

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[20] Sassen, S. **Global Cities and Global City-Regions: a Comparison**, in, Scott, A.J. (ed.) (2001) **Global City-Regions: Trends, Theory, Policy**, (Oxford University Press, Oxford).

Therefore, the relations of capitalists with the state and the economy they invest in cannot be reduced to the logic of 'speculative finance capital.' Perhaps that is why Mark Swilling *et al* warned that, "Not many still take seriously the simplistic notion ---- panacea even ---- that globalisation is merely the realisation on a world scale of an integrated capitalist system that binds the world together into an agreed competitive market."[21] There is therefore a need to acknowledge the complexity of the functioning and application of political and economic institutions rather than singularly relying on magnificent theories, such as overaccumulation, that fail to attend to the particular manner in which international companies invest in different countries, and in different sectors.

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[21] Swilling, M., Simone, A. & Khan, F. **'My Soul I Can See': The Limits of Governing African Cities in a Context of Globalisation and Complexity**, in, Parnell, S., Pieterse, E., Swilling, M. & Wooldridge, D. (2002) **Democratising Local Government: The South African Experiment**, (University of Cape Town Press), (p. 306).

III. The Emergence of the New Social Movements in South Africa, 1998 - 2005

Figure 1: Identification and Characterisation of the New Social Movements

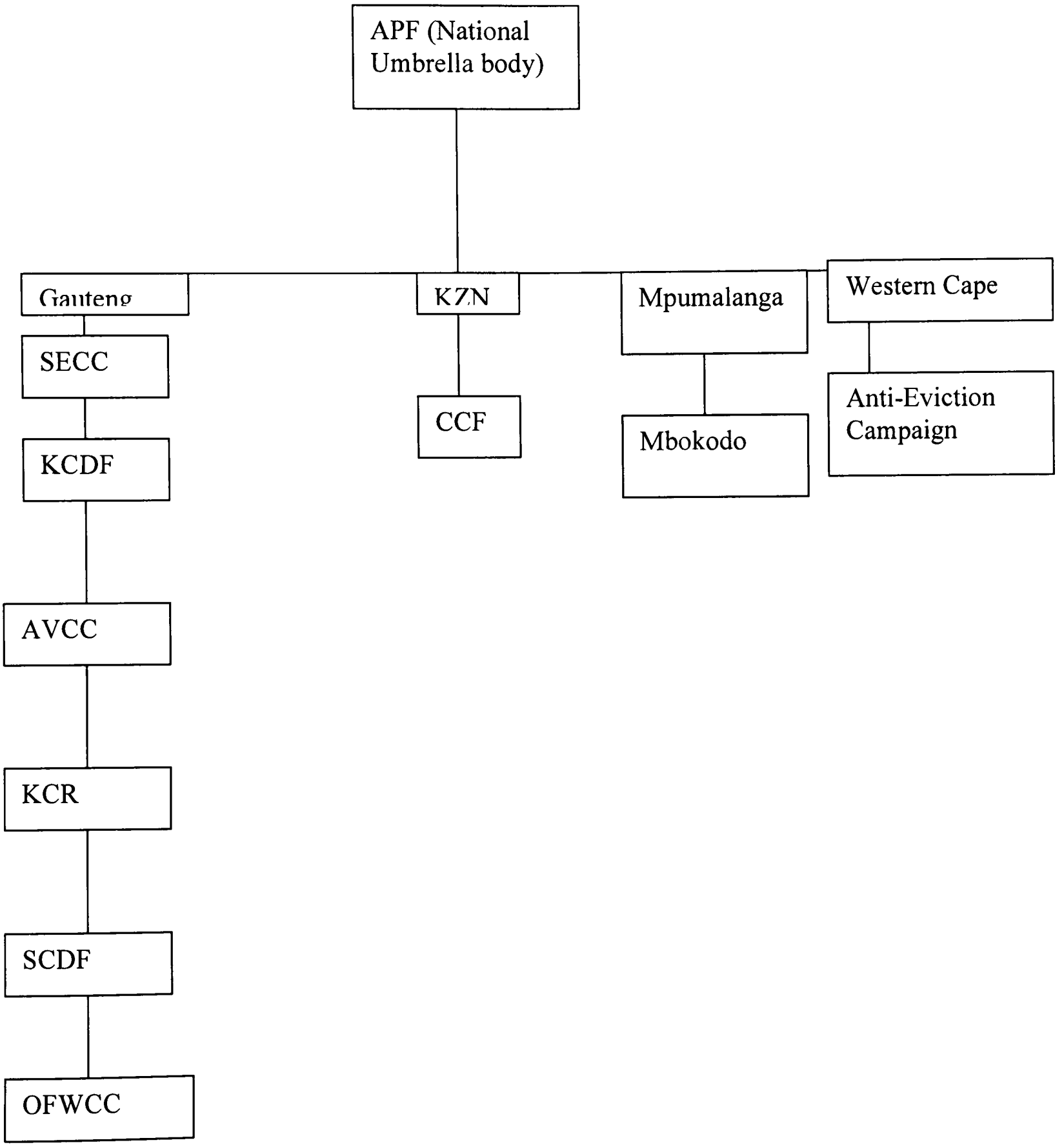
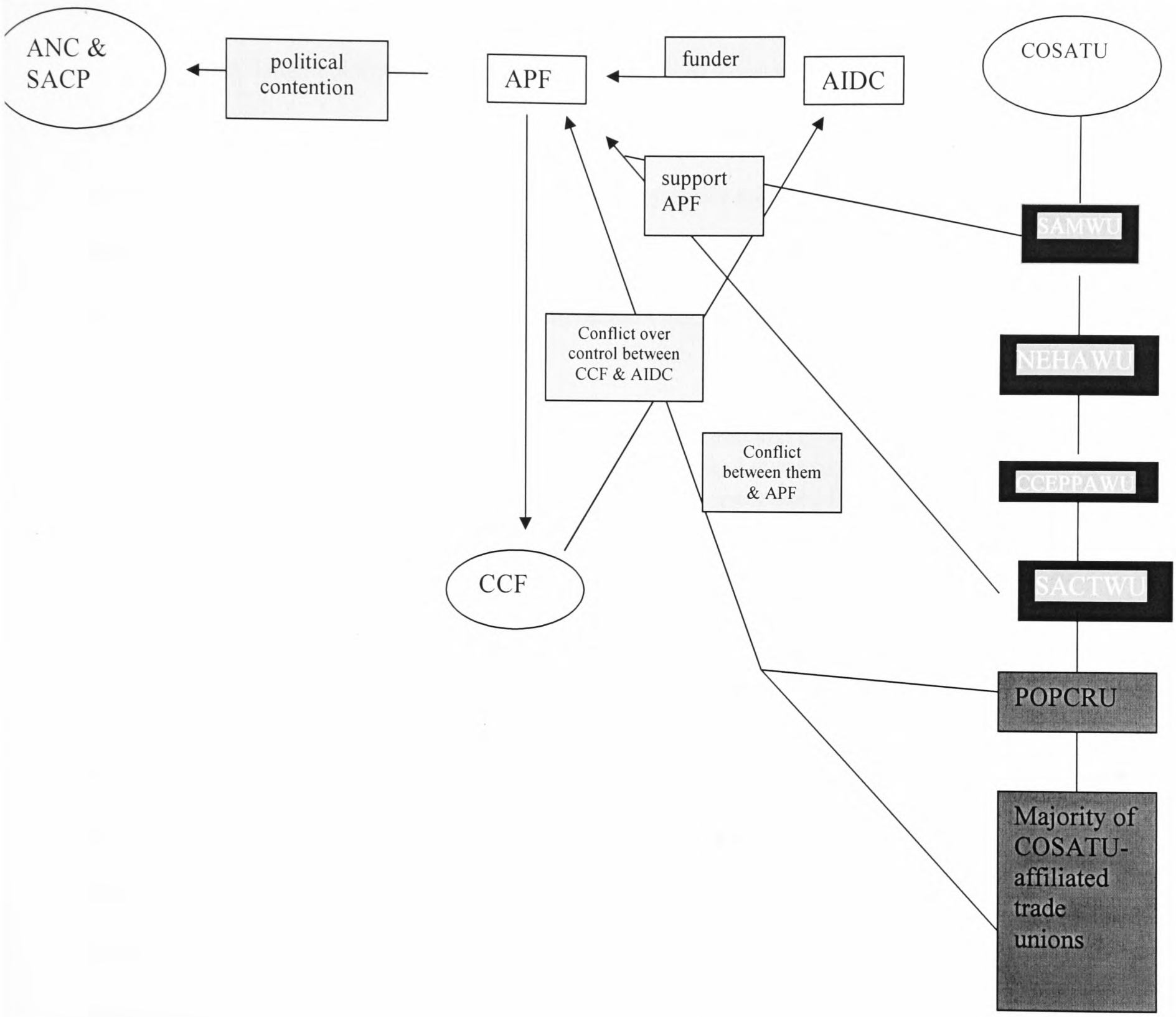


Figure 2: Map of Contentious Politics



Figures 1 and 2 clearly outline political opportunity structures that South Africa's new social movements exploit in contentious politics. They also broadly map out the relationship between the state, the new social movements, and other key political structures and agents in the country. These two figures are central in

explaining the positioning of the new social movement in South Africa's politics, and are reference points in further discussions on contentious politics and political opportunity structures that the new social movements use.

Sidney Tarrow defined social movements in connection with contentious politics. He argued that contentious politics emerge as a form of response to changes in political opportunities. Participants in contentious politics respond to a variety of material, ideological, partisan and group-based incentives. People who participate in contentious politics then build on these opportunities, and they utilise known repertoires of action. He concluded that:

> When their actions are based on dense social networks and connective structures and draw on consensual and action-oriented cultural frames, they can sustain these actions in conflict with powerful opponents. In such cases ---- and *only* in such cases ---- we are in the presence of a social movement...[22]

Donatella della Porta and Diani Mario also argued that social movements emerge when there is a pervasive mood of dissatisfaction among poor people, and the formal institutions of governance are 'insufficiently flexible' to respond to their problems.[23] Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward tended to lean more towards the behavioural forms of collective action in the definition of a social movement or 'social protest.' They maintained that the emergence of a 'protest movement' necessarily required the transformation of consciousness and behaviour. These in turn called for the satisfaction of certain elements. Firstly, the people had to realise that the formal institutional organs of authority had no legitimacy over them. Secondly, the

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[22] Tarrow, S. (1998) (2nd. ed.) **Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics**, (University of Cambridge Press), (emphasis in original), (p. 10).
[23] della Porta, D. & Diani, M. (1999) **Social Movements: An Introduction**, (Blackwell Publishers, Oxford).

affected people who have come to believe that they are helpless have to inculcate into their consciousness the capacity to transform their dispensation.

Piven and Cloward were at pains to point out that protest movements do not necessarily have to be systematic and formally organised, with clear and hierarchical structures of leadership and forms of decision-making. They accommodated individual or episodic forms of transgressing the law or authority as forms that needed to be classified as protest movements, or social movements. They maintained that:

> Whatever the intellectual sources of error, the effect of equating movements with movement organizations ---- and thus requiring that protests have a leader, a constitution, a legislative program, or at least a banner before they are recognised as such ---- is to divert attention from many forms of political unrest and to consign them by definition to the more shadowy realms of social problems and deviant behavior. As a result such events as massive school truancy or rising worker absenteeism or mounting applications for public welfare or spreading rent defaults rarely attract the attention of political analysts. Having decided by definitional fiat that nothing political has occurred, nothing has to be explained, at least not in the terms of political protest. And having contrived in this way, not to recognize protest or to study it, we cannot ask certain obvious and important questions about it.[24]

The other side of the debate holds that a social movement engages in systematic collective action which should bear long-term repercussions. Tarrow, in opposition to Fox and Piven, stressed that, "Mobs, riots, and spontaneous assemblies are more an indication that a movement is in the process of formation than movements themselves."[25] Perhaps this fits the CCF, in that it has successfully mobilised in reaction to crises, in episodic forms, rather than consciously constructing a social movement that engages in coherent and systematic collective action. As one of the CCF's prominent members, Heinrich Bohmke, observed; the CCF has been 'amoebic,' contracting and expanding in reaction to changing political opportunities.

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[24] Piven, F.F. & Cloward, R.A. (1977) **Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail**, (Pantheon Books, New York), (p. 5).
[25] Tarrow, S. **Power in Movement**, (p. 6).

Outlining what should be the goals and strategies of South Africa's new anti-neoliberal social movements, Bond stressed that, "What becomes important is reconstructing the politics of social and community movements in response to the strains that globalization visits, so that we transcend both anarchic "IMF Riots" and tame urban reformism."[26]

The behavioural school maintains that episodic forms of protest should be studied seriously and be recognised as forms of social protest. On the other hand, the systematic collective action school only acknowledges formally structured organisations with coherent programmes for collective action as legitimate social movements. For the latter, episodic forms of protests are only signs of the emergence of social movements. The flaw in the latter argument is to downplay a form of collective consumption bargaining that is only restricted to one issue, and also constrained within a short period of time, that being the time it takes to solve the problem.

There are myriad strikes and other forms of collective action that are vigorous, but short-term and only constrained to solving one issue. Once these are solved, many of these organisations tend to either dissolve or be rendered redundant or revert, in the case of trade unions, to their routine activities rather than going on to challenge the political order. It would be an error to consider every form of social mobilisation as either a social protest, or as a sign of the forthcoming birth of a social movement. They may be mere collective consumption bargaining, organised under the banners of

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[26] Bond, P. **Cities of Gold**, (p. 23).

civic movements, and not the social movements that some of the organisers envision. These forms of protests can involve massive collective action campaigns, and at times can be violent. That depends on the intensity or gravity of the issue at hand, and the flexibility and capacity of the political authority that is challenged. Those notwithstanding, they should be regarded as civic organisations concerned with collective consumption bargaining.

Tarrow argued that contentious politics occur when ordinary people, acting with the support of influential citizens, confront the elites, authorities and opponents who held power. He maintained that:

> ...contentious politics is triggered when changing political opportunities and constraints create incentives for social actors who lack resources on their own. They contend through known repertoires of action and expand them by creating innovations at their margins. When backed by dense social networks and galvanised by culturally resonant, action-oriented symbols, contentious politics leads to sustained interaction with opponents.[27]

The central themes in contentious politics are changing political opportunities and partnerships with 'influential citizens.' The forms of collective action they take are brief or sustained, institutionalised or disruptive, humdrum or dramatic.[28] Collective action also entails building organisations, elaborating ideologies, socialising and mobilising constituencies. It also means that their members engage in self-development and the construction of collective identities.

Contentious politics and changing political opportunities cannot be interpreted in a linear way. Changing political opportunities do not always refer to the revelation of adverse conditions that militate against the poor people represented by the social

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[27] Tarrow, S. **Power in Movement**, (p. 2).
[28] Ibid.

movements. Political opportunities also change in the manner in which social movements and the state relate to each other, thus creating a space for a "...duet of strategy and counterstrategy between movement activists and power holders."[29]

The relationship between the state and social movements is also not always that of strategy and counterstrategy. It should be appreciated that the state emanates from civil society, and in South Africa that the ruling party originates from civil society.[30] At the same time, the state "organizes domination"[31] over civil society and extends patronage to it and even to a ruling party. Therefore, relationships between social movements, the state and the ruling party in post-colonial Africa are complex and convoluted. Changing political opportunities also open up avenues for a movement-state relationship that can be non-threatening and facilitate dialogue. On other occasions, they open up space as social movements are drawn towards institutionalised forms of bargaining and collective action with the state. This might be short of co-opting social movements into mainstream politics, with the aim of compromising the strengths of the social movements. On the other hand, social movements are not entirely helpless victims in this process. They sometimes deliberately open up these spaces in order to render their collective action campaigns more effective. As they reach the state in their institutionalised terrain, the more successful they are. Many social movements regard reaching and engaging in dialogue with the state as close in attaining their victory.

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[29] Ibid, (p. 3).

[30] See, Mamdani, M. & Wamba-dia-Wamba, E. (eds.) (1995) **African Studies in Social Movements and Democracy**, (CODESRIA, Dakar). See also, Sachikonye, L. Sachikonye, L. (1995) (ed.) **Democracy, Civil Society and the State: Social Movements in Southern Africa**, (SAPES Books Trust, Harare).

[31] Weber, M. **Politics as a Vocation**, in, Gerth, H.H. & Wright-Mills, C. (eds.) (1998) **Max Weber: Essays in Sociology**, (Oxford University Press, New York), (p. 82).

This trend is clearly discernible in the manner in which some of the Durban-based social movements affiliated to the CCF seized the opportunity in 2002 to protest Engen's industrial pollution in a predominantly Coloured township with DWAF. The latter has been the main focus of the CCF's protest agenda in collective action, as it is responsible for the implementation of cost recovery policy on water services delivery. The APF and its affiliates have been consistently attempting to consolidate ties with COSATU, despite the fact that it is part of the tripartite alliance with the ruling ANC and the SACP. COSATU has at times protected the policies of the state and of the ruling party, and has been persistently hostile to the APF.

Both the APF and COSATU have been strategic in their approaches and objectives for seeking to strengthen their ties, question and weaken them on other occasions. The APF and its allies are convinced that it is strategically important to combine the rank and support of the social movements with the unionised working class. They consider the latter as the pillar for the launch of a telling revolution against neo-liberalism. On the other hand, COSATU, in alliance with the ANC, regard it as important to pursue reforms that will tone down the radicalism of the APF and its affiliates, especially reforms on worker democracy called by the anti-neoliberal COSATU-affiliated trade unions that have cultivated close ties with the APF. On many occasions, COSATU has been hostile and destructive to the anti-neo-liberal social movements and to some of its trade unions that stray away from its mandate. In that manner, social movements, the state, the ruling party, the opposition parties, and other stakeholders close to the state exploit the changes in political opportunities and the openings it avails to each of them.

The CCF was one of the earliest civic organisations or social movements that emerged in the late 1990s. Its birth was prompted by South Africa's second elections in 1999. As will be explained in detail in Chapters 6 and 7, it was born in the predominantly Indian township of Chatsworth in Durban. The three most telling revolts associated with the CCF between 1998 and 2001 were the Aunties' Revolt in Chatsworth, the Christina Manqele constitutional test case, and Mpumalanga's resistance to the installation of pre-paid water metres.

One of the most effective and powerful new social movements to emerge in the country is the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC). It has a long-term collective action programme, with set ideologies and a clear and transparent hierarchy of leadership and decision-making structures. The SECC was established in June 2000, after several workshops on the energy crisis conducted by the Municipal Services Project (MSP). The MSP is based at the University of the Witwatersrand, and is predominantly staffed by leftist South African and international political economists. It functions in partnership with Queens University in Kingston, Ontario.

The MSP carried out a survey on the energy crisis in Soweto and produced a report, *Energy Crisis in Soweto,* authored by Patrick Bond and Maj Fiil-Flynn. It revealed that 81 per cent of residents in Soweto were in electricity arrears, and that 61 per cent had had their power cut-off.[32] In 2004, it was also revealed that out of the 30 per cent of Johannesburg's 3, 2 million population who lived in informal settlements, 65 per cent used communal standpipes; 20 per cent utilised small amounts from water tankers (the other 15 per cent used outdoor yard taps); 52 per cent had dug pit latrines

[32] Ngwane, T. **Sparks in the Township**, (Interview with Trevor Ngwane, Chairperson of the SECC and the APF), *New Left Review,* 22, July – August 2003, (http://www.newleftreview.com/NLR25603.shtml).

themselves; 45 per cent relied on chemical toilets, 2 per cent had communal flush toilets; and that only 1 per cent used ablution blocks.[33]

The SECC has twenty-two branches in Soweto, each with its own organising committee. In 2003, it boasted approximately 1, 700 members. Card-carrying members are expected to pay a subscription fee of ten rand a year. However, that is not compulsory, as Soweto residents are allowed to be non-card-carrying members. The SECC holds committee meetings of the twenty-two branch representatives every Tuesday, comprising of about sixty people. The movement has received funding from War on Want, and in 2003 secured funding from the US Public Welfare Foundation.[34] The SECC is one of the many affiliates of the APF in Gauteng. Other affiliates in Gauteng are the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OFWCC), the Kathlehong Concerned Residents (KCR), the Alexandra Vukuzenzele Crisis Committee (AVCC), and the Soshanguve Community Development Forum (SCDF).

The OFWCC was established in 2002 in the midst of the crisis sparked by the installation of pre-paid water metres by Johannesburg Water (JW). The KCR was set up in late 2003. The AVCC was founded in February 1999 as a response to water and electricity cut-offs and house evictions. Their central complaint was the fight for the ownership of an area of abandoned flats in Alexandra. The SCDF was formed in May 2003. It was, like many other social movements in the region, founded against the backdrop of water and electricity cut-offs and house evictions.[35]

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[33] **Statement on Increase in Water Tariffs**, (Tuesday, 29th June 2004), (http://www.apf.org.za/article.php3?id_article=73).
[34] Ibid.
[35] http://www.apf.org.za/article.php3?id_article=82; http://www.apf.org.za/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=21;

Other movements and civic organisations mobilising under the umbrella banner of the APF are the Landless People's Movement (LPM), the National Land Committee (NLC), the Anti-Eviction Campaign (Western Cape), and the Socialist Group, a small intellectual circle. The APF was established in July 2000 by activists who mobilised against iGoli 2000 and Wits 2001, which were initiatives set up by the Johannesburg City Council, in collaboration with the private sector to transfer public services sector to the private sector in the city and at the University of the Witwatersrand. The APF's collective action campaign involved contributions from trade unions such as the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), the second largest trade union affiliated to COSATU, and the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU).

IV. Continuities within Discontinuities?: Contentious Politics and Political Repression

A strong faction within the APF, led by leftist ideologues such as Trevor Ngwane, strongly believes that the ultimate goal of the new social movements should be the construction of a socialist dispensation. It is convinced that this could be realised through the formation of a Mass Workers Party (MWP). In canvassing for a need for an MWP, Ngwane argued that:

> There are comrades who say that we don't need political parties because we are not fighting for state power. We have to tell them: capitalists use state power against the working class. We have to challenge and destroy the power of the bosses. We have to destroy the bosses' state. We have our trade unions which defend us at work, we have our civic and social movements which build

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http://www.apf.org.za/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=30;
http://www.apf.org.za/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=32.

> the struggles in defence of our needs, we need a mass workers party to fight for the overthrow of the power of the bosses and put into power the working class and its allies.[36]

He further dwelled on the seven strategies that are crucial in the formation of an MWP. Firstly, workers needed to be involved at all points in mobilisation. Secondly, social movements and civic organisations needed to connect and co-ordinate their struggles and programmes of action, build and support each other on the ground. Thirdly, forces on the left needed to co-operate. Fourthly, every opportunity to promulgate propaganda must be seized. Fifthly, propaganda and agitation needed to be loud and clear. Sixthly, the MWP has to come under the leadership of the working class. Lastly, that it is imperative that class lines be clear, or the mass workers struggle will not succeed.

This faction's call for the creation of an MWP has reverberated in the parts of the country where the new anti-neoliberal social movements have been set up. This line of argument is mainly propagated by an elite group of intellectuals (mainly but not exclusively white, male and middle-class) and trade union shop stewards. They have canvassed for the need to set up a nation-wide MWP in meetings mainly attended by a mixture of masses of unemployed, self-employed, employed and unionised workers. Although this argument has been well-propagated within the leadership circles of the new social movements and in some anti-neoliberal trade unions affiliated to COSATU, they have received little support from the masses of township residents.

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[36] Trevor, **Build a Movement Towards a Mass Workers Party in South Africa**, (Thursday, 13th January, 2005), (http://www.apf.org.za/article.php3?id_article=70).

This issue collides with the problem of the intellectual-cum-activists perceived as dictating the imperatives of the struggle on the masses of township residents affected by cost recovery policy mechanisms. The majority of township residents often see the solution in dialogue with the municipalities, and not staging any 'revolutionary' campaigns bent on unseating the ANC Government. As a result, there is a clear schism in political perception between black township residents and the intellectual-cum-activists. Andile Mngxitama, a seasoned activist and the Co-ordinator of the NLC in Gauteng, as well as a leader in the LPM, observed this tendency and expressed that:

> To date, what has often happened in these social movements in South Africa is that historically dominant voices ---- primarily white left-intellectuals ---- have been the main mediators of the identity and aspirations of the poor of the country...It would seem that excluded black masses, brutalised by apartheid, terrorised by neo-liberalism, and lied to by politicians have a rather "realistic" vision ---- a life that is not controlled by leaders (revolutionary or reactionary), advisers or politicians. As a Landless People's Movement (LPM) leader explained recently to the disappointment and chagrin of the "revolutionary left": "We want the government to listen to us." When the same LPM leader called for no land, no vote, the left jumped up: "Aha! They want a true party to run their lives."[37]

Ngwane also argued that the existing social movements needed to be forced to submit to a socialist vision. According to him and this faction, the realisation of an MWP is underpinned by the support of COSATU, its affiliated trade unions and other trade unions. They believe that the latter are central in their struggle for the formation of an MWP despite their admission that they had encountered difficulties in getting trade unions and social movements to co-operate.[38]

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[37] Mngxitama, A. **Let black voices speak for the voiceless**, *Mail & Guardian*, (22 June, 2004).
[38] Trevor, **Organisational Report of the APF for the Year 2003**, (Friday, 10th September, 2004), (http://www.apf.org.za/article.php3?id_article=47).

The flaw in this argument is that it does not reflect the actual socio-economic and the class make-up of the majority of South Africa's black townships. The intellectual-cum-activists display a lack of understanding of the nature and the functioning of urban black societies. They seek to impose a vision of a socialist future taken from Marxist rhetoric and imposed on urban black societies that reflect little resemblance to the conditions ripe for a socialist revolution. This reflects the general ineffectiveness of the left in South Africa. Marais reflected sadly that, "The traditional left, meanwhile, is deemed to be an anachronism. According to dominant diagnosis, it is stricken with a lamentable lack of realism, and an inability to offer alternatives."[39]

The unemployed and the self-employed head the majority of township households that have had their water cut-off. The majority of the skilled and unskilled workers deal with cost recovery by limiting their water usage. Secondly, and most importantly, the line between the working class and other classes is blurred. With the extension of the rolling back of the public sector to the private sector, which has led to massive retrenchments, COSATU membership fallen from about 1, 8 million to approximately 1, 6 million. This faction does not seem to accommodate the interests of the masses of the unemployed and the self-employed, nor to appreciate their potential to contribute to a putative MWP.

Mobilising the masses of unemployed and self-employed urban black people has been a major problem with many movements and even with the state-sanctioned urban community groups such as the native advisory boards and the community councils. It was mainly in the 1980s that the telling mass insurrections were instituted

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[39] Marais, H. **The logic of expediency**, (p. 99).

in the townships when civic organisations under the banner of the UDF began seriously to accommodate the unemployed.

In its call for a workers revolution through the establishment of an MWP, the APF is wary though of allying itself with the SACP. It argues that the latter has supported the ANC throughout the implementation of its neo-liberal programmes. Ngwane, writing to the members of the APF on the stance of the SACP in their struggle, maintained that:

> Your job [the SACP] is to silence anyone who speaks with a clear alternative voice. All your life you supported the leadership of the ANC, even when it fought left wing alternatives inside the ANC. Each time the capitalists attack workers using the ANC government your response is to safeguard the continuation of the Alliance where workers are junior partners to capitalist interests. Your job is to supply the capitalist state with top comrades to make it attack workers through policies and the police.[40]

Ngwane's positioning of the SACP in the tripartite alliance and in the workers struggle is flawed on various counts. Firstly, it is correct that the SACP is biased in favour of maintaining the alliance. However, that does not necessarily rule out the absence of friction between the SACP and the ANC. The relationship between the ANC and the SACP has been tempestuous on many occasions. COSATU and spokesmen for the SACP have been on the opposite side of the ANC in the drawing up of the country's macro-economic policy. The centre-right faction within the alliance eventually gained an upper hand. The SACP and COSATU took to the streets in 2000 and 2001 to protest against the transfer of public services and public sector institutions, which led to the massive retrenchment of workers. The SACP, along with COSATU, also fought against the abrogation of the medical aid and pension benefits of those workers who remained in the employ of the public sector services that had

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[40] Trevor [Ngwane], **Build a Movement**.

been transferred to the private sector. In 2003, the SACP launched 'Red October,' a campaign which fought against the discrimination of black workers by the banks, life insurance companies and other financial institutions in their request to obtain mortgages, insurances, and other financial policies for their spouses and children. The SACP has voiced its dismay at the high water bills, the irregularity of the billing system, and the cutting off of the indigent people in the townships from their water and electricity supplies. However, it has never given any support to the aggressive campaign tactics of the APF and its affiliates, such as Operation *Khanyisa* and Operation *Vulamanzi*.

What can rather be argued is that the SACP is not breaking from the alliance for fear of its own survival. The SACP membership is miniscule compared to that of COSATU and the ANC. It cannot thrive on its own as it does as part of the tripartite alliance. The SACP has, most of the time, been treated by the ANC and COSATU as their valuable intellectual desk with formidable organisational skills. In that way, the SACP is indispensable to the ANC and COSATU. A break away of the SACP from the alliance will stultify it, leading to its confusion, due to the pervasive cross-membership between the ANC, SACP and COSATU. Mbeki has deftly compromised the independence of the SACP by deploying its high-ranking cadres to parliament, the cabinet and other high-ranking government posts on ANC tickets.[41] The SACP has been aligned with the ANC and compromised to sustain that alliance. But it has not been obsequious to the ANC, as Ngwane would rather have it.

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[41] For instance, the Deputy Secretary-General of the SACP, Jeremy Cronin, is also an ANC MP now. Mbazima "Sam" Shilowa, the former leader of COSATU, is now the Premier of Gauteng. Charles Nqakula, a high-ranking SACP, was Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, and is now Minister of Safety and Security.

Despite the APF's reliance on COSATU and its affiliated trade unions for the realisation of the mass workers revolution, it has often been rejected by the latter. COSATU has acted with hostility towards the APF and its affiliates, as it regards them as a threat towards the ANC and the alliance. This was clearly illustrated in the assault of John Appolis in July 2003. At that time, Appolis was the Chairperson of the APF. Before that, he was Chairperson of the Chemical, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union (CCEPPAWU) of the Wits Region. He was expelled from CCEPPAWU for espousing pro-poor politics, worker democracy, freedom of expression, and for standing against privatisation and the public-private partnerships in municipal services delivery. He later co-founded the General Industrial and Workers' Union of South Africa (GIWUSA), an independent trade union.

Appolis was assaulted by a large crowd of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU), a trade union established in the mid-1990s and now affiliated to COSATU. He was assaulted while distributing APF pamphlets outside a building where POPCRU members were holding a meeting. As Appolis was distributing the pamphlets, the Regional Deputy Chairperson of COSATU had announced to the POPCRU crowd when he got to the podium, "there are reactionaries outside." That was clearly an incitement for the POPCRU members to harass Appolis. They rushed out of the building, grabbed him, pushed him to the ground, and hit him over the head with a bottle. They also poured soft drink on his face.[42]

The state's repression of the new social movements, their leaders and their activists, has been mounting since the late 1990s. The state's indiscriminate brutality

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[42] **APF Chairperson (and former CCEPPAWU Official) John Appolis, Assaulted by POPCRU Members Outside Regional COSATU Congress in Johannesburg**, Monday, 28th July 2003, (http://www.apf.org.za/article.php3?id_article=28).

against ordinary township residents has intensified without the government either taking any responsibility nor apologising for the brutal police methods. The post-apartheid state has come to resemble the former apartheid state in the manner in which it has suppressed and continues to suppress ordinary township residents and the leaders and activists of the new social movements.

Firstly, it is akin to the apartheid state in its sheer physical brutality. Secondly, the state continued to use apartheid-era legislation in the suppression of the new social movements' leaders and activists (eg. constraining bail conditions, virtual house arrests, illegal gathering clauses, etc.). Thirdly, the state has also put to its own use the intelligence gathering and sabotage tactics used by the former apartheid state. These range from the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) operatives visiting individual activists and leaders in their homes and intimidating them; to sowing discontent within the leadership of the new social movements by spreading rumours or allegations about the activities of fellow activists and leaders in the different parts of the country.

One of the most recent acts of political repression mounted by the ANC and the state machinery against the new social movements occurred around the 2004 general election time. The incident occurred in Kanana, a township settlement located in the Vaal region, on 12 April 2004. On that day, the Kanana Community Development Forum (KCDF), an APF affiliate, was conducting a political community outreach campaign. The preparations for the outreach campaign involved the distribution of pamphlets. The KCDF activists also went around in their vehicle, announcing through a loudspeaker their intention of holding a mass meeting in

Kanana later that afternoon. The KCDF is not a political party, but a civic organisation concerning itself with the backlogs in municipal services delivery and other development issues in Kanana.

As the KCDF activists were making rounds in their vehicle, they were stopped apparently by some sixty ANC members, who then assaulted the Chairperson of the KCDF, Themba Mbele and two other activists. The attack was allegedly led by a Mr. Maduna, a prominent ANC ward committee member in Kanana. They seized their pamphlets, the loud-speaker, the money they had, their camera, and they ripped apart their film. They then allegedly threatened to stab the two KCDF activists. Mr. Maduna apparently warned them that, "it is only the ANC that is allowed to hold such meetings."

Mbele then reported the incident to the Small Farm Evaton police station, and there laid charges of attempted murder, robbery and assault. He then accompanied the police to Maduna's house, where they seized all the stolen goods, with the exception of the film that had been destroyed by the ANC members. Despite the clear proof of robbery that Mbele and his fellow activists had, the Police Superintendent, a Mr. Serkott, refused to arrest Mr. Maduna.

The KCDF went ahead with their mass meeting later in the afternoon, which was apparently attended by hundreds of people. However, two Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) agents who were accompanied by the police stopped the meeting. They claimed that the KCDF could not hold such a meeting close to the time of the elections. The activists argued that the KCDF was not a registered political party, and

therefore did not fall under the mandate of the IEC. They also argued that there was no law that prohibited them from holding meetings and political community outreach campaigns during elections.[43] On this, the APF commented:

> As the APF has previously indicated this is not the first time that the ANC in various communities around Johannesburg have physically attacked, assaulted and harassed APF activists, alongside inaction by the police against the perpetrators while victimising the APF for simply exercising the right to political expression and activity. Not once has the ANC national or provincial leadership publicly denounced or disowned these acts of political intolerance and thuggery carried out in the name of the ANC, nor taken any visible action to prevent such from happening.[44]

In September 2003, the Johannesburg City Council and Johannesburg Water (JW) initiated litigation against sixteen Soweto activists affiliated to the APF. The sixteen were part of a peaceful collective action campaign to stop the installation of pre-paid water metres in Phiri, Soweto. The litigation was initiated in a week which came to be called by the state and the press the 'Hammer Week'. The APF dubbed the litigation the 'Water Warriors Cases.' The sixteen accused and the dates of the trials were:

(i) State vs. Nthabiseng Monamati, 3 November, 2003.

(ii) State vs. Trevor Ngwane and Jerry Mphotho, 4 November, 2003.

(iii) State vs. Mildred Mathobela and four others, 6 November, 2003.

(iv) State vs. Thabo Madisane and Tshepo Mkwanazi, 11 November, 2003.

(v) State vs. Derek Maredi and thee others, 13 November, 2003.[45]

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[43] **ANC Members Engage in Another Round of Violent and Criminal Acts of Thuggery and Political Intolerance Against APF in Run-Up to Election**, (Tuesday, 13th April 2004), (http://www.apf.org.za/article.php3?id_article=43).

[44] Ibid.

[45] **Hammer Week for Phiri Community Activists**, (November 2003), (http://www.apf.org.za/article.php3?id_article=34).

The post-apartheid state has consistently conducted surveillance over and has harassed, interrogated and tortured the leaders and activists of the Landless People's Movement (LPM) and the National Land Committee (NLC). In April 2004, sixty-two members of the LPM were arrested, harassed and tortured by the Police Crime Intelligence Unit for allegedly violating the Electoral Act. They were campaigning for the rights of the landless people under their on-going collective action programme, *No Land! No Vote!*[46] Their bails were posted at R300 each, amounting to R18 000 for all of them. The sixty-two were subjected to physical and psychological torture.

The Police Crime Intelligence Unit focused particularly on the three women activists, Maureen Mnisi, Samantha Hargreaves and Ann Eveleth. The three were apparently taken separately to an interrogation room, where they were subjected to physical and psychological abuse. The APF conclusively commented that, "This is an absolute outrage and represents, yet again, a sinister return to the repressive and politically motivated police tactics of the old apartheid days under the guise of 'law and order.'" The APF has also noted that, "Surveillance, harassment, interrogation, wrongful arrests, and police brutality and torture are realities for activists from our movements resisting evictions, cut-offs or forced removals. But these numerous acts go uncovered by the mainstream media."[47]

The suppression has often gone beyond the individual activists and leaders, to attempts made at quashing institutions that support the new social movements, their ideologies, capacities and resources. The APF interpreted the Johannesburg City

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[46] **Stop the Torture and End Detainment of LPM Activists**, (7 May, 2004), (http://www.landaction.org/display.php?article=217); **LPM Activists Tortured and Detained**, (29 April, 2004), (http://www.landaction.org/display.php?article=213).

[47] **The 'New Left' has Provided Space for Different Groups Affected by Neo-liberalism**, *Mail & Guardian*, (25 June, 2004), (http://www.queensu.ca/msp/pages/Projects_Publications/News/new1.htm).

Council's attempts to close down Khanya College and the Workers Library as an act of political suppression directed at the new social movements and the trade unions that were closer to the APF and its affiliates. The APF reported that in June 2004, the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) and the Johannesburg Property Company (JPC), both corporate agencies established by the ANC-dominated Johannesburg City Council, attempted to evict Khanya College and the Workers Library from their premises. The APF did not give any explicit reasons as to why the Johannesburg City Council chose to evict them. It was difficult to establish the Johannesburg City Council's perspectives since the majority of the cases on the suppression of the anti-neoliberal social movements and civic organisations are rarely covered by the mainstream media. The APF went on to conclude that:

> It is crystal clear to the APF that the JDA & JPC have been given the green light by the ANC politicians and officials who run our city, to evict the Workers Library and Khanya College precisely because they have supported the very community organisations, social movements and organised working class formations who have been at the forefront of fighting the City Council's neoliberal corporate development agenda since the introduction of iGoli 2002. They have done so despite repeated attempts at engaging the City Council and its agencies in dialogue.[48]

Some of the incidents of political suppression have manifested themselves in the rival fights between factions of certain COSATU-affiliated trade unions, those that are pro-worker democracy and anti-neoliberal, and those that are pro-alliance and *status quo*. An instance illustrating this was the burglary at the Workers' College around October 2002. The Workers College, located in the Durban city centre, has close ties with SACTWU (South African Congress of Clothing and Textile Workers' Union). The college had been running workshops and educational programmes for trade union shop stewards. These programmes focused on workplace restructuring, computer

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[48] **Statement on Attempts to Evict the Workers Library & Khanya College**, (30th June, 2004), (http://www.apf.org.za/article.php3?id_article=74).

literacy, quantitative and qualitative social science research methods, and an introductory course in macro-economics for shop stewards. The Workers College was entered into one night in October 2002, and the burglars only took away the computer hard drives and floppy disks from the office of one of the head researchers and organisers, Mike Koen.[49]

The Workers' College in Durban was in many ways similar to the Workers' Library and Khanya College in Johannesburg. The Durban Workers' College espoused workerism in its workshops. Furthermore, it encouraged shop stewards and other members of the trade unions to think freely and outside of the confines of the 'vanguardism' of COSATU and of the tripartite alliance. In doing so, it introduced workers to anti-neoliberalism and to literature that criticised the government's stance on industrial and economic policies. It was suspected that the assailants hailed from the pro-alliance faction. It therefore was no surprise that the assailants only took the computer hard drives from one office, indicating their fear for the rivalry of knowledge among the workers, which eventually translates to hegemony over the working class.

Such incidents of the indirect suppression of these anti-neoliberal formations also tend to emanate not just from the state or the ANC-controlled municipalities and its agencies, but also from other trade unions affiliated with COSATU that clash with the pro-workerist anti-neoliberal trade unions affiliated to it and the social movements.

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[49] During that time, I had worked for the Workers College as a research assistant and lecturer in research methodologies and introduction to macro-economics. I had also co-authored the manual with Mike Koen on workplace restructuring, which was used for a three days workshop with the shop stewards. The burglary took place in about a month after I had stopped working there.

Richard Sandbrook and Robin Cohen observed this trend in the 1970s. They noted that:

> Governments in post-colonial Africa of all political persuasions tend to regard trade unions as junior partners in the process of economic development. Where unions have refused to accept such a status, governmental suspicion and hostility have increased in the belief that unions would provide a focus for political opposition or that unrestricted unions would adversely affect economic growth and the expansion of employment.[50]

The rebel trade unions or factions within trade unions espouse radical worker democracy, which often does not tally well with the bureaucratic and hierarchical COSATU, thus provoking cries of lack of transparency and worker democracy. These forms of clashes within trade unions are not a novelty in the history of trade union mobilisation in South Africa. In the 1970s, there were similar clashes between the communist trade unions allied with the SACP and those that committed themselves to a more directly accountable 'workerist' strategy.

Mamdani and Samir Amin have attempted to explain the persistence of the suppression of social movements in post-colonial Africa through the notions of 'received pluralism' and the dominance of the nationalist discourse. Mamdani maintained that in the post-World War II era, Africa accepted the Western notions of pluralism. However, as pluralism developed in Africa within the environment of nationalism and the consolidation of a decolonised nation-state, it encouraged the recognition of the existence of political movements over the social or civic movements. The nationalist discourse and its agencies came to dominate, and it was accepted that African social and civic movements should naturally espouse and thrive within the nationalist discourse, as decolonisation was dispensable to them. He

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[50] Sandbrook, R. & Cohen, R. (eds.) (1975) **The Development of an African Working Class**, (Longman Group Ltd., London).

concluded that, "Only an understanding of pluralism that incorporates its social and ideological moments alongside its political moment can check this tendency."[51]

In South Africa, this was not the case. The UDF, which disbanded in August 1991 and reconstituted itself as the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO) was excluded by the ANC in the processes of state formation at local and central state tiers. SANCO, the national umbrella body of civic movements, was incorporated into the ruling alliance. It was depleted of financial and intellectual resources to lead and to conduct research on transformation in local government. The ANC was wary of competition with the popular local leaders, hence it dismissed SANCO's notions of forming people's assemblies at local levels, so as to further ground genuine democratic decision-making. Amin explained that:

> In Africa and Asia, the history of the past century had been that of the polarization of the social movements around the struggle for national independence. Here the model was that of the unifying party, setting itself the objective of bringing together social classes and various communities in a vast movement that was disciplined (often behind more or less charismatic leaders) and effective in its action towards a single goal. The government that emerged after independence became broadly fixed in this heritage...deriving its legitimacy from the achievement of the goal of national independence.[52]

Social movements during the anti-colonial struggles were in many cases part of the nationalist movement. They were subsumed into the nationalist discourse, and were seen as subservient to it. They were generally marginalised in the post-colonia dispensation. During the early to mid-1990s, SANCO experienced difficulties in

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[51] Mamdani, M. **Africa: Democratic Theory and Democratic Struggles**, in, Mohanty, M., Mukherji, P., with, Törnquist, O. (1998) **People's Rights: Social Movements and the State in the Third World**, (Sage Publications, New Delhi; Thousand Oaks, London), (p. 85).
[52] Amin, S. **Social Movements at the Periphery**, in, Wignaraja, P. (ed.) (1993) **New Social Movements in the South: Empowering the People**, (Zed Books Ltd., London), (p. 72).

entering mainstream politics, because they were deemed to receive instructions from the mother nationalist body, the ANC.

V. Conclusion

The crisis of social citizenship was enhanced by the advent of the post-Cold War political economic environment which favoured minimalist government intervention. As Pallo Jordan had pointed out, state intervention became demonised in the post-Cold War era.[53] This then gave some leeway for international capital to engage in investment projects in infrastructure development and the provision of basic municipal amenities. When South Africa entered into the post-Cold War environment as a democratic nation-state, it found itself pressured to accept the terms of economic governance already promoted by neo-liberalism.

The crisis in social citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa, which has led to the emergence of the new social movements, broke out against the background of severe municipal financial, management and human resources constraints. These were inevitable in the reconfiguration of the local government system during the transition era, and also against the backdrop of the inherited indebtedness of many municipalities, a legacy inherited from the outgoing apartheid government. The new social movements have protested against the installation of cost recovery policy mechanisms on water and electricity, which have led to water and electricity cut-offs,

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[53] Jordan, P. (2004) **The African National Congress: From Illegality to the Corridors of Power**, *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 100.

and consequently to evictions for those who could not afford to pay the exorbitant bills. That inevitably has led to the lowering of living standards for the majority of the affected townships residents.

What is of critical importance here, while recognising the adverse effects of the cost recovery on the worse off, is how the new social movements have confronted these policies without having undertaken proper studies of them. Nor have they evaluated or recognised the efforts that the local and national governments have taken to deal with this crisis. Many of the social protests, in Durban for instance, have been taken up and led by the intellectual-cum-activists without fully informing township residents of the government policies on the provision and delivery of water, electricity, and other basic municipal amenities.

The new social movements have ignored DWAF's research results. DWAF's research results indicated that 63 per cent of households have not experienced the interruption of water supply for longer than a day in 2003. 16 per cent had their water supply interrupted once or twice, and that 15 per cent had their water supply interrupted on several occasions. The highest rates of water supply interruption in 2003 occurred in the provinces of Limpopo (38 per cent) and Mpumalanga (27 per cent). These are provinces with high concentrations of informal settlements and rural areas. Also, as in the Eastern Cape, they had to undergo difficult processes of incorporating the former homelands and Bantustan governments into coherent provincial governments. Thirdly, these two provinces have a high number of Category C municipalities. According to DWAF's 2003 nationwide research on water services; 78 per cent of households surveyed did not know why they had their water supplies

interrupted; 39 per cent responded that their households were undergoing pipe repairs; and 7, 5 per cent replied that their water supplies were interrupted as a result of non-payment of water bills.[54]

DWAF's research methods might be subject to scrutiny. They are not faultless. The point here is that the new social movements chose not to divulge them and other government policies on water to their constituencies. Ferial Haffajee, the editor of the *Mail & Guardian* in her paper, *Fact, Fiction and the New Left*, which was delivered in June 2004 at the Centre for Civil Society (CCS) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, as part of the Harold Wolpe Lecture series, critically noted that:

> But I no longer pen this narrative [sell-out theory], because it is too easy a way out of our interminable interregnum ---- because it doesn't require grappling with the difficulties of transition; with the nuts and bolts of local government finance; with the technicalities and policies required to extend a water connection and keep it running.[55]

Haffajee's and similar critiques have led to accusations of political opportunism against many of the leftist intellectual-cum-activists of the new social movements. ANC local government councillors have accused new social movement leaders in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, for instance, of deliberately distorting their policies (see Chapter 7). During my fieldwork, certain local government officials confidentially made similar accusations of political opportunism in the water struggles.

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[54] Muller, M. **Keeping the taps on**, *Mail & Guardian*, (30 June, 2004). The author of this article, Mike Muller, is the Director-General of DWAF. He wrote the article in response as a contribution to the debate in mid-2004 that was sparked off by the editor of the Mail & Guardian, Ferial Haffajee, when she delivered her paper, *Fact, Fiction and the New Left* in June 2004 at the Centre for Civil Society at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban as part of the Harold Wolpe Lecture series.
[55] Haffajee, F. **Fact, Fiction and the New Left**, *Mail &* Guardian, 14 June, 2004, (http://www.archive.mg.co.za/FrameSet.aps?xhitlist_q=social+movements).

Such political opportunism has emanated from two sources. The first source concerns the leaders of the opposition parties in KwaZulu-Natal, who have exploited the new struggles for their own political career gains. Competition for water tender contracts has featured in these new struggles. The second comes from the leaders of the new social movements. A number of them were members of the MDM in the 1980s. Some of them have been expelled from the ANC and other alliance partners: Trevor Ngwane from the ANC, as a councillor in the Johannesburg City Council, Dale McKinley, an American and one of the prominent members of the APF, and the author of *The ANC and the Liberation Struggle: A Critical Political Biography* (1997) from the SACP, John Appolis from COSATU. Heinrich Bohmke was formerly a member of the ANC and a former MK inside operative. Others used to work in high policy-making positions within the ANC, or like Patrick Bond, in institutions associated with the ANC and the alliance. These movements are led by politically marginalized leaders. It might be argued therefore that the anti-neoliberal struggles, however genuine they are, can be used as a terrain to gain some form of political leverage they once attained, or that they are used as an alternative source of political muscle by its leaders to claw back to the mainstream waves of South African politics.

These criticisms are further supported by the new authoritarian tendencies imposed by the new social movements' activists and leaders themselves over the ordinary members of the new social movements. Recently, there have been complaints about black leaders and activists within the APF who lord over the decision-making and collective action campaigns that are supposed to be directly mandated by the ordinary members of the new social movements. Ngwane complaining about some leading activists in the APF, pointed out that:

> The activists of the SECC and of the APF and other social movements are organising in this situation where the masses have lost confidence in themselves...These activists start to believe in their own power as activists and militants. They start to do things for the masses and not with and through the masses. They start to think that they should do things which should be done by the masses. They start to think that it is their struggle and that they are responsible for its success and not the masses. They start to think that they the activists know politics and the masses know nothing. Then they think that they are heroes and the masses are not. They think that they are brave and the masses are cowards. They say they are the ones facing the police and getting arrested and the masses are doing nothing. In short, the activists of the SECC and of [the] APF and other movements start to substitute themselves for the masses.[56]

Political repression has been directed against the new social movements by the ANC and the state machinery. The state has used various forms of political repression that resemble the methods employed by the apartheid state. The crisis in social citizenship has been severe. There has been extensive opposition to government policies, especially in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Western Cape and Mpumalanga. Much of the repression was unwarranted. At the same time, some instances of political repression noted here seemed to have been provoked, or at least anticipated. Political workshops and other collective action campaigns have been held in either close proximity to those of the rival party's, or during the time of the national elections. It could therefore be argued that perhaps the leaders and activists of the new social movements were seeking to open up spaces for political opportunities by assisting in the creation of the environment of political repression against them.

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[56] **Power Belongs to the Working Class not the Activists: Why We Should Respect the Working Class When It Seems Defeated**, Trevor, 20th January, 2005, (http://www.apf.org.za/article.php3?id_article=82).

CHAPTER 6

"This is People's Water!": Water Services Struggles in the Mpumalanga Township, 1998 - 2002

I. Introduction

The chapter takes to task the assertion made by the CCF, Durban-based civic movements and other new social movements and leftist civic organisations based elsewhere in the country, and the pro-new social movements media; that the Mpumalanga Township was an important site of the new anti-neoliberal community struggles.[1] This assertion claims that the Mpumalanga struggles against the cost recovery policy on water was one of the first and telling struggles in the KwaZulu-Natal region and in the rest of South Africa. The status of Mpumalanga as an important site of the new anti-neoliberal struggles has been heightened by the media, narrating dramatic events. I shall show that despite the grave demographic conditions in Mpumalanga, these reports were exaggerated. Claims concerning the disenchantment of the Mpumalanga residents levelled by the leaders of the CCF and other leftist intellectuals were not backed by any research, qualitative nor quantitative. This chapter consequently seeks to question the legitimacy of this claim through the results of the fieldwork

[1] See, for instance, Desai, A. (2002) **We are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa**, (Monthly Review Press, New York).

research I carried out with some Mpumalanga-based and CCF-aligned youth activists carried out in October - December 2002.

The fieldwork research results exposed the gravity of the cost recovery policy and implementation mechanisms on water in Mpumalanga. There has been no quantitative nor qualitative research particularly on the water crisis in Mpumlanga, save for the research that broadly accommodates all the sub-structures of Durban. Much of that research had been carried out by the Ethekwini municipality and Umgeni Water Board.

The ensuing sections explore the investment trajectories of the international water companies in Durban, and in South Africa broadly. They lay out the extent and the nature of these investments. More important is how international capital interacts with domestic capital and some elements of local civil society in the face of concerns to accommodate a wide range of crucial political and social stakeholders. Political transition has necessitated that a closer attention be paid to the role of local government, as the local state became the crucial site for the interplay between political, global and local economic forces in the rush to embrace the neo-liberal order. It is at the local tier of the state that complex dynamics of neoliberalism are exposed.

In this chapter, I examine the performance of the interaction between the local state and private water companies in the delivery of water services through the public-private partnerships. It is here that the specific functioning of the neo-liberal order is revealed with all its complexities, thus revealing how global capital survives and strives to thrive in a nation-state. As Gillian Hart aptly pointed out in her analysis of how the areas of Ladysmith-Ezakheni, Newcastle-Madadeni co-operated or rebelled against the new

economic order post-apartheid South Africa mired herself into, "...the so-called 'developmental local state' has become a key locus of contradictions of the post-apartheid order, helping to expose the vulnerable underbelly of neoliberal capitalism."[2]

More important to my argument is the critique levelled against the concept of the rise of the 'poors,' championed by the sociologist Ashwin Desai. In his book, *"We are the Poors"! Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, he narrates the various struggles against the implementation and the effects of the cost recovery policy on water and electricity. He pointed out that these were, indeed, the first struggles against the neo-liberal order in post-apartheid South Africa. The significance of Desai's book is that it is one of the first narratives on the post-apartheid anti-neoliberal community struggles. His book has been received with critical acclaim in South Africa and abroad, with left intellectuals, new social movements activists and leaders widely quoting and referring to it. It has received such a status despite the fact that it is a result of a journalistic enterprise without any credible form of research. It often sensationalises the new community struggles, romanticising the first and few collective action campaigns as traits pointing to sustained working class or popular leftist struggles bent on overthrowing the ANC Government. The fieldwork survey results make some efforts to put the validity of these claims into question.

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[2] Hart, G. (2002) **Disabling Globalization: Places of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa**, (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg), (p. 12).

II. The Mpumalanga Township: Demography and Water Bills

TABLE 1: Mpumalanga Township

PLACE NAME	CLUSTER	UNITS	PEOPLE
Mpumalanga A	Mpumalanga Complex	2 051	10 766
Mpumalanga B	Mpumalanga Complex	2 100	10 897
Mpumalanga C	Mpumalanga Complex	1 995	10 508
Mpumalanga D	Mpumalanga Complex	1 414	7 547
Mpumalanga E	Mpumalanga Complex	2 462	13 383
Mpumalanga F	Mpumalanga Complex	6	32
Mpumalanga G	Mpumalanga Complex	8	36
Mpumalanga H	Mpumalanga Complex	1 043	5 617
Mpumalanga No Name	Mpumalanga Complex	286	1 610
TOTAL		**11 365**	**60 396**

(Population and Housing in the Durban Metropolitan Area, 1995)

Mpumalanga A to E is mainly inhabited by low-income, unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled people, including the self-employed and the unemployed. The Mpumalanga F to Mpumalanga 'No Name' areas are primarily inhabited by professionals.

This section, based on a survey of Mpumalanga carried out between October and December 2002, examines the social composition of the township. It also lay out the nature and the extent of the problems of water bills experienced by the community. Firstly, the results are used here to draw attention to socio-economic differentiation in this area, and to

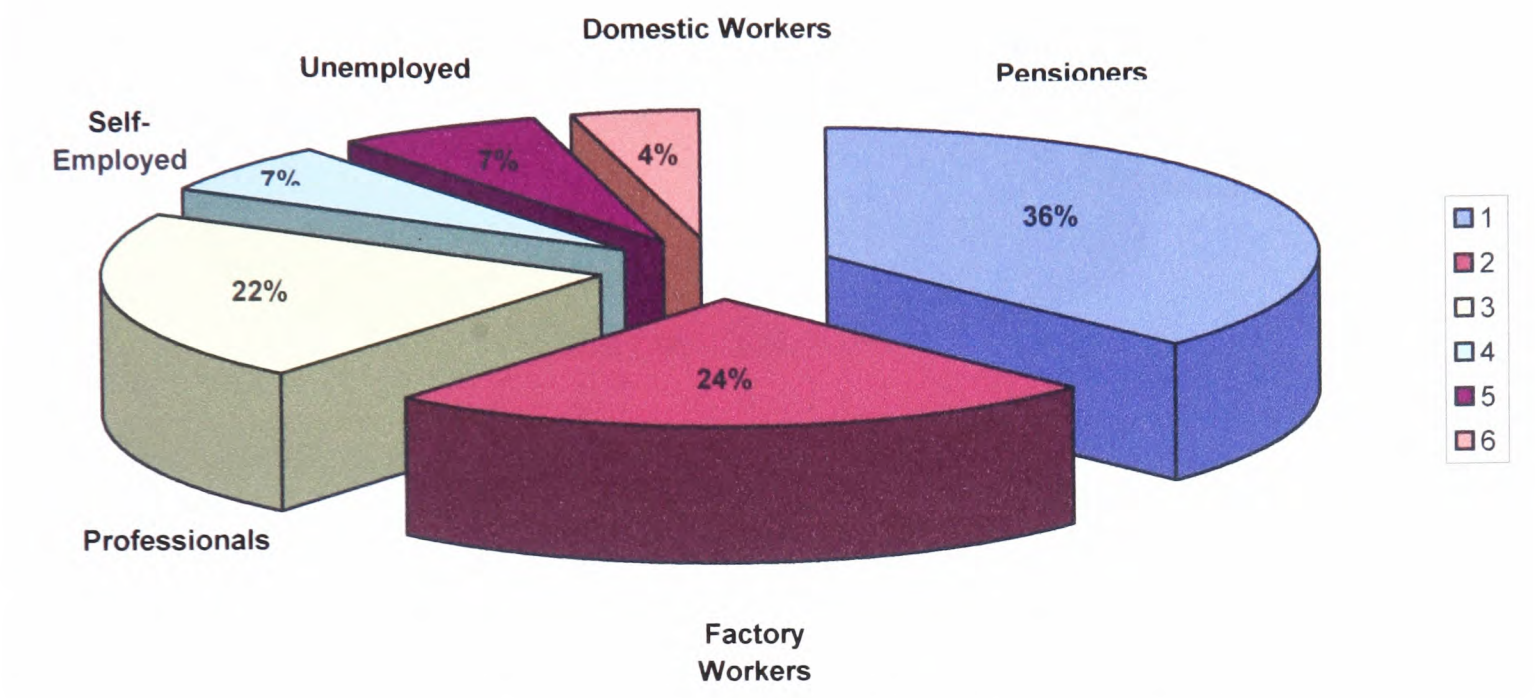
challenge the idea that it is useful to describe the population as a whole as poor, or the 'poors,' as Desai defined them. Secondly, through demonstrating the socio-economic differentiation in this community, we will be able to ascertain whether Mpumalanga is, indeed, a beacon of anti-neoliberal community struggles compared to the other townships in Durban; or whether there are other explanations behind the upsurges of collective action campaigns in the townships between 2000 and 2002.

Thirdly, the fieldwork research reveals the nature and the depth of the cost recovery policy and its attendant implementation mechanism on water in Mpumalanga. From that, we will be able to determine whether the picture that has been painted by some leftist intellectuals and some of the leading figures in the new social movements adequately represents the actual gravity of the water problems in Mpumalanga. Fourthly, the fieldwork research results will also expose the extent of the popularity or acceptance of the CCF in Mpumalanga as representative of the alternative notions of governance emanating from Mpumalanga that some leaders of the CCF have claimed to be the case. This chapter will present mainly the results of the quantitative fieldwork. Chapter 7 presents the results of the qualitative research fieldwork. It tackles the issues of the relevance, popularity and acceptance of the CCF as a social movement representing the residents of Mpumalanga. It also examines the community's reliance on the local government as a service provider, thus challenging the notion that the CCF has successfully challenged the hegemony of the Durban local government in Mpumalanga.

The following figures present the sampled demographic make-up of Mpumalanga between the period 2000 and 2002. The figures on the water bills, they reflect the amounts of water bills that Mpumalanga residents reported themselves to have received on a

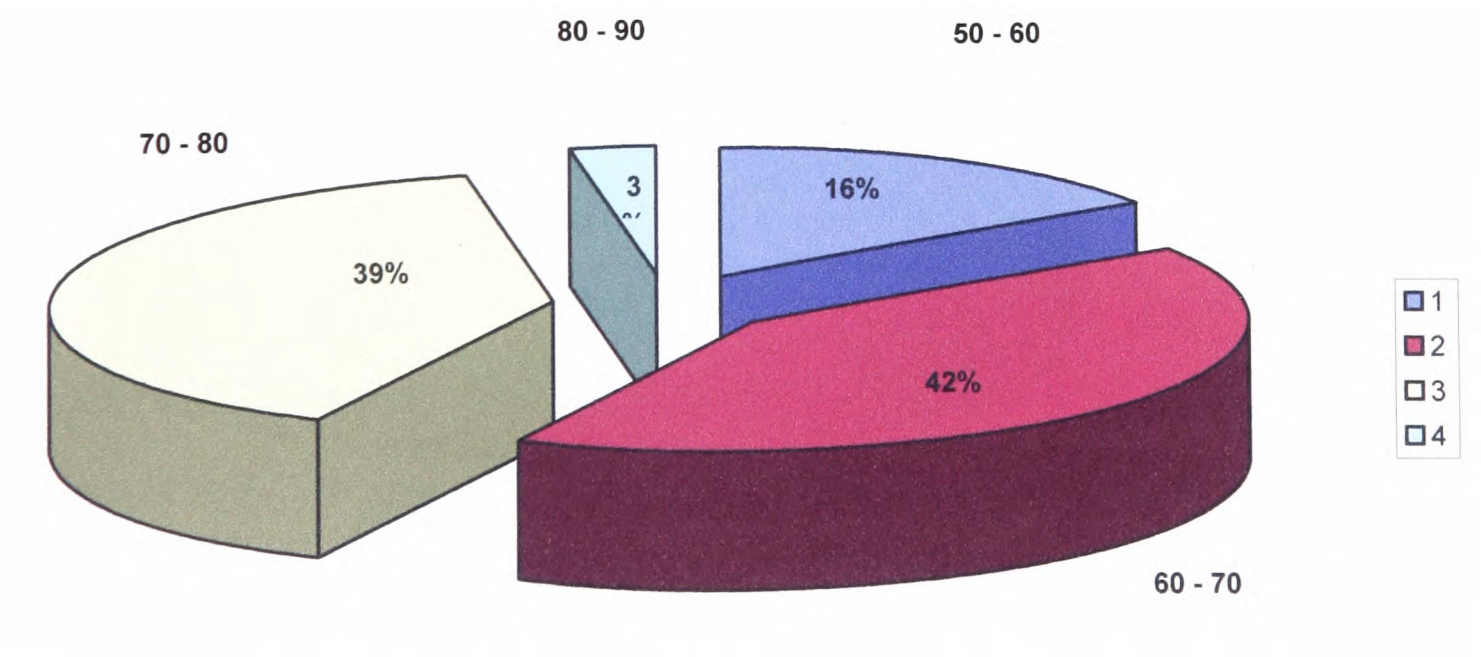
monthly basis between 2000 and 2002. A similar method was used for the presentation of the incomes of the various groups or occupational categories of Mpumalanga residents.

Figure 1: Categorisation of the Sampled Mpumalanga Township



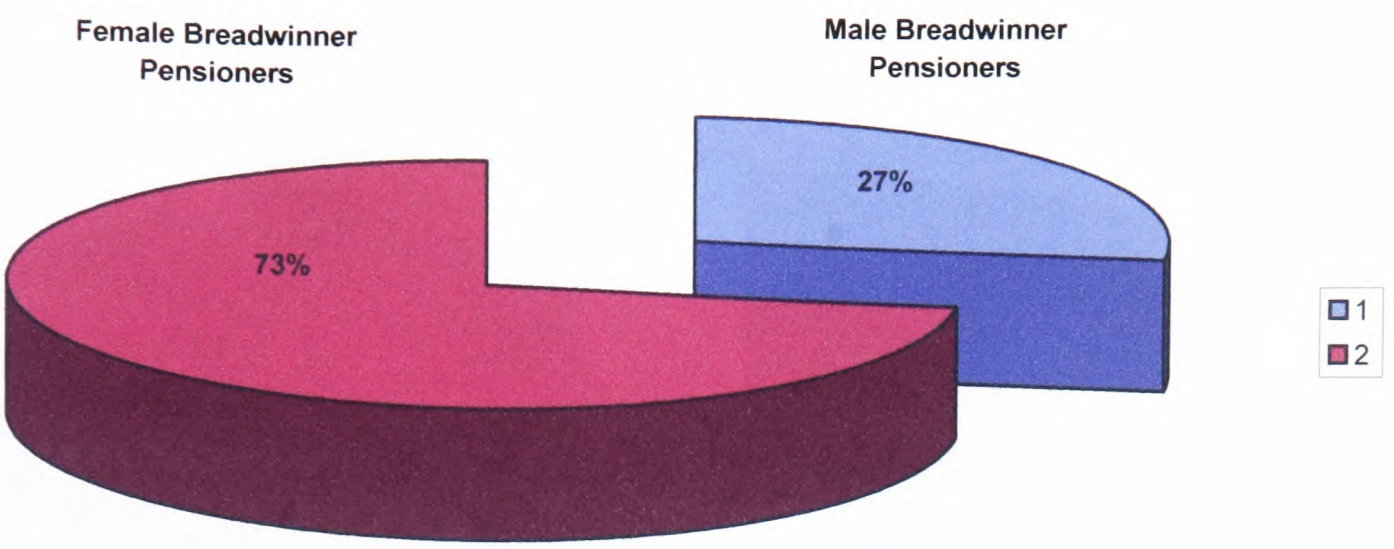
2002 Mpumalanga Township Survey, Buntu Siwisa

Figure 2: Age Groups of Sampled Pensioners



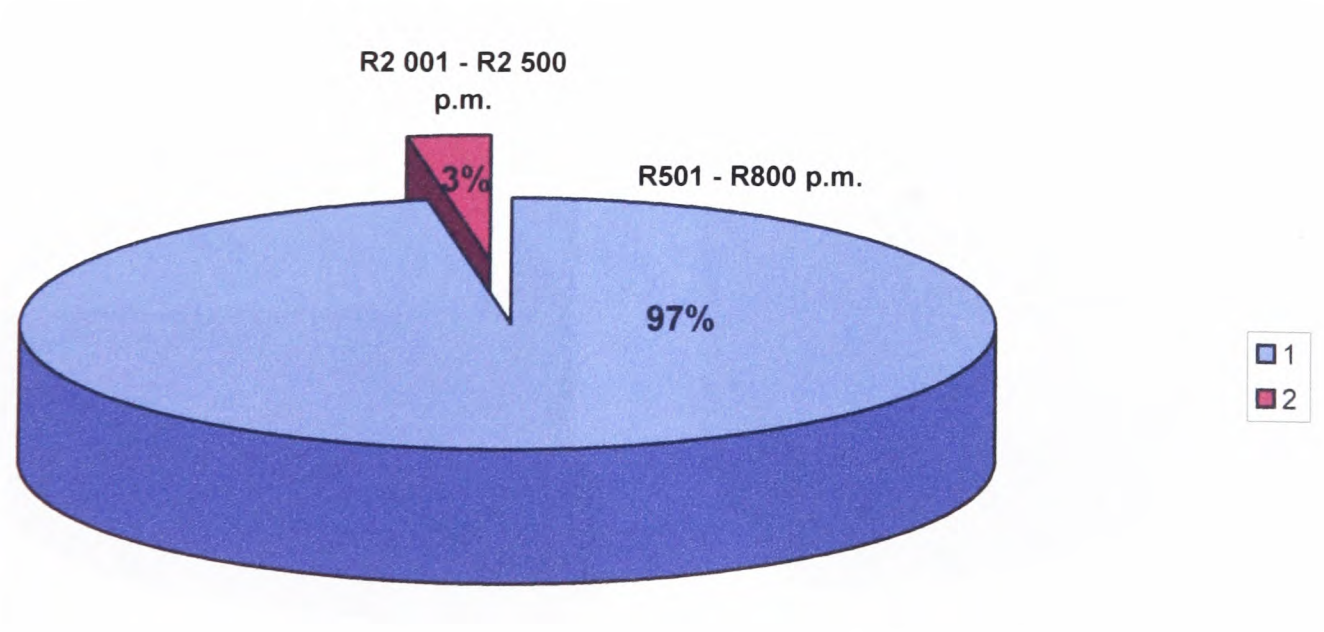
2002 Mpumalanga Township Survey, Buntu Siwisa

Figure 3: Male vs. Female Breadwinner Among the Sampled Pensioners



2002 Mpumalanga Township Survey, Buntu Siwisa

Figure 4: Income Groups Among Sampled Pensioners



2002 Mpumalanga Township Survey, Buntu Siwisa

Figure 5: Sampled Pensioners' Water Bills

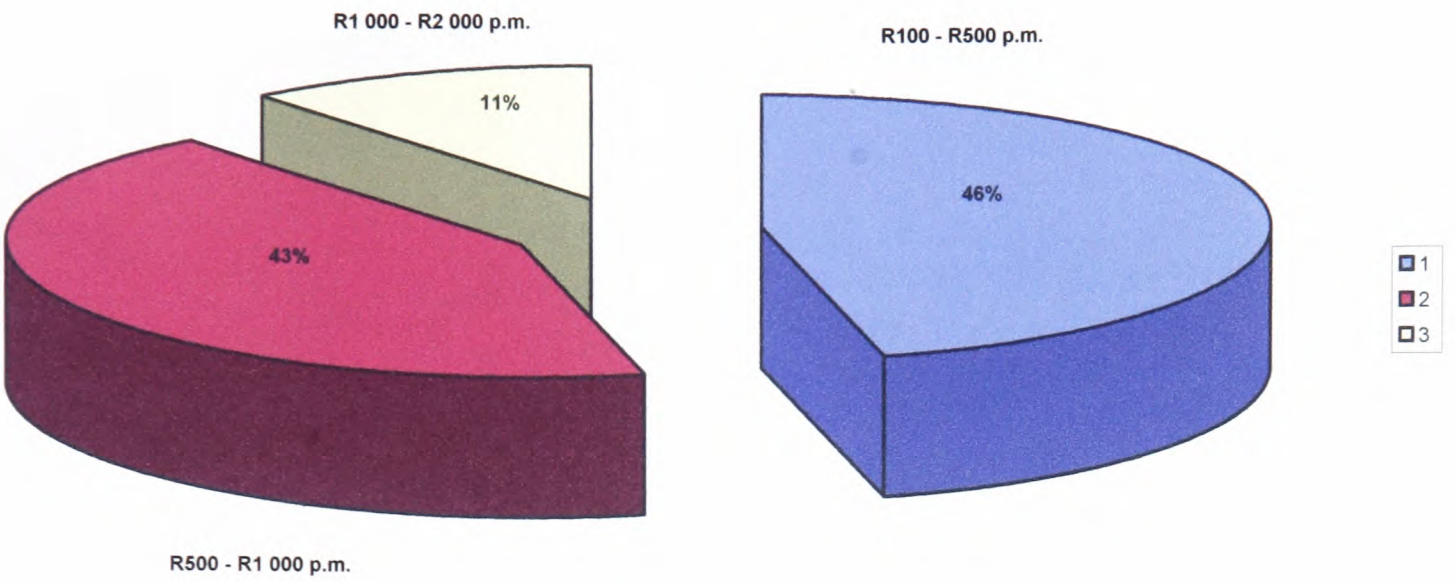


Figure 6: Age Groups Among Sampled Factory Workers Heads of Households

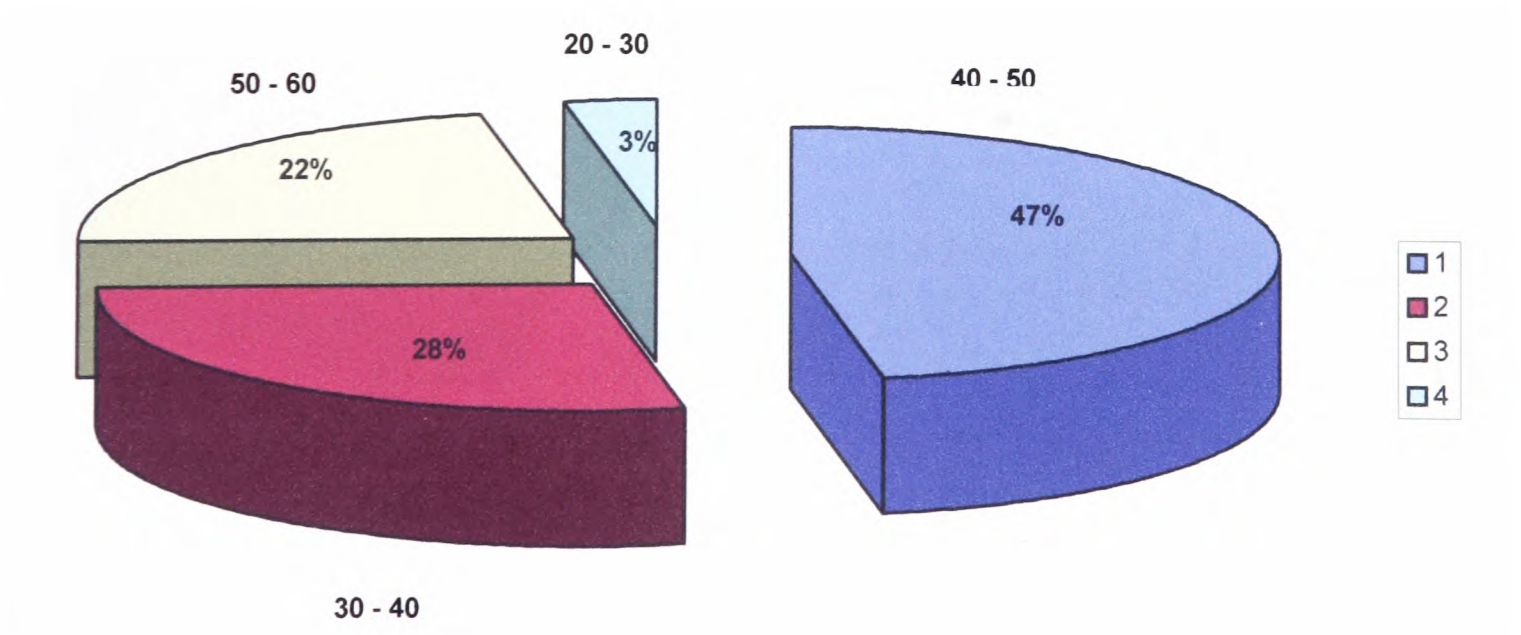


Figure 7: Male vs. Female Factory Workers Sampled Heads of Households

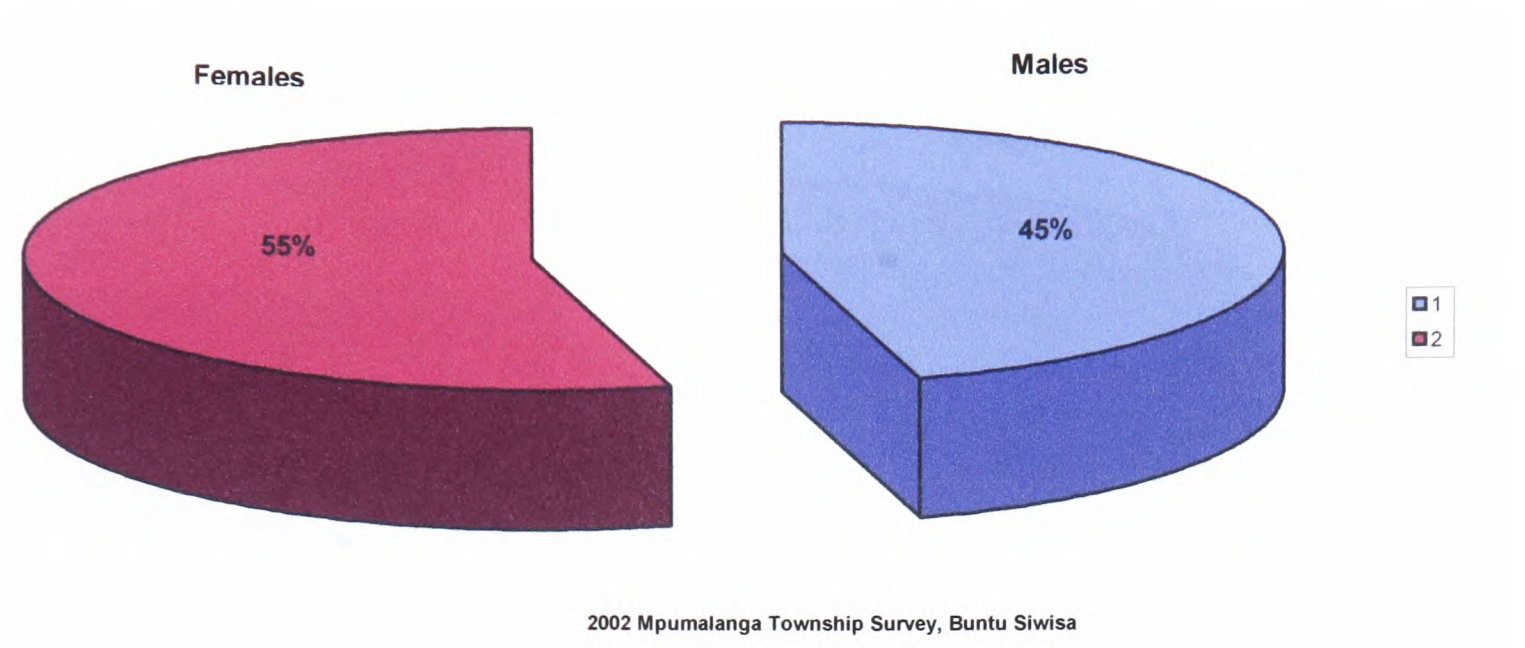


Figure 8: Income Groups Among Sampled Factory Workers Heads of Households

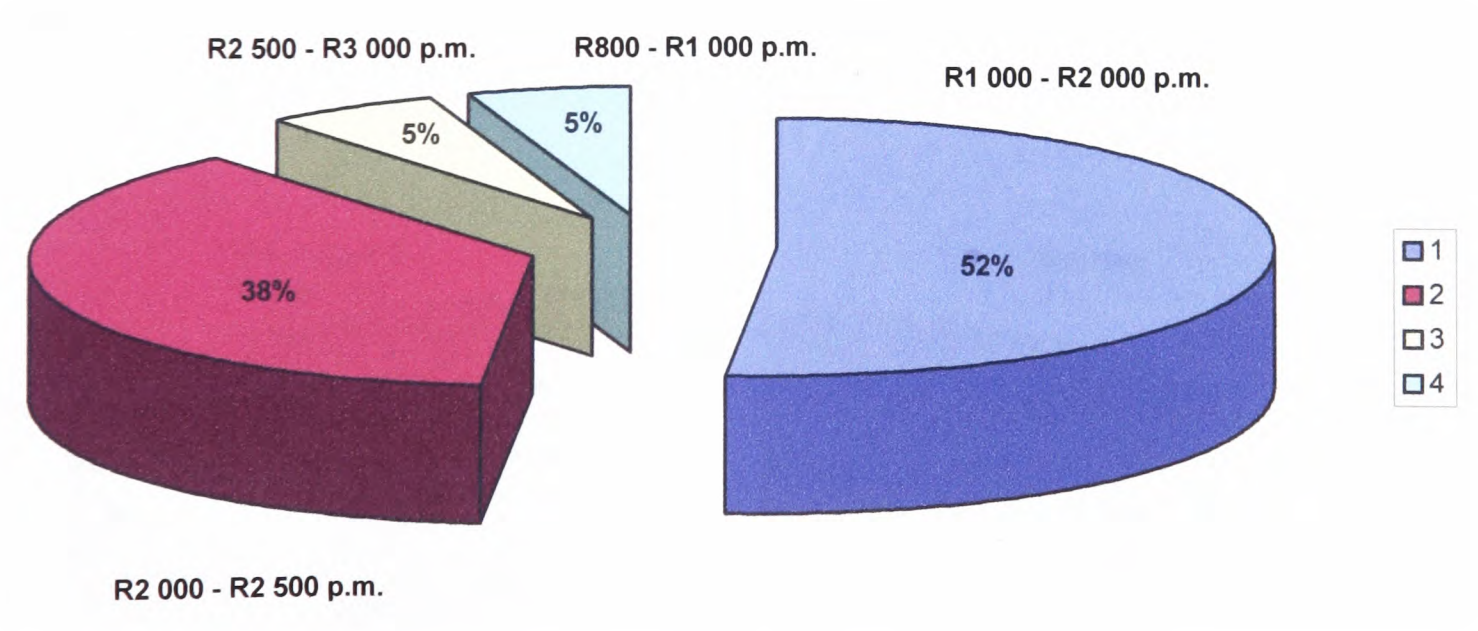
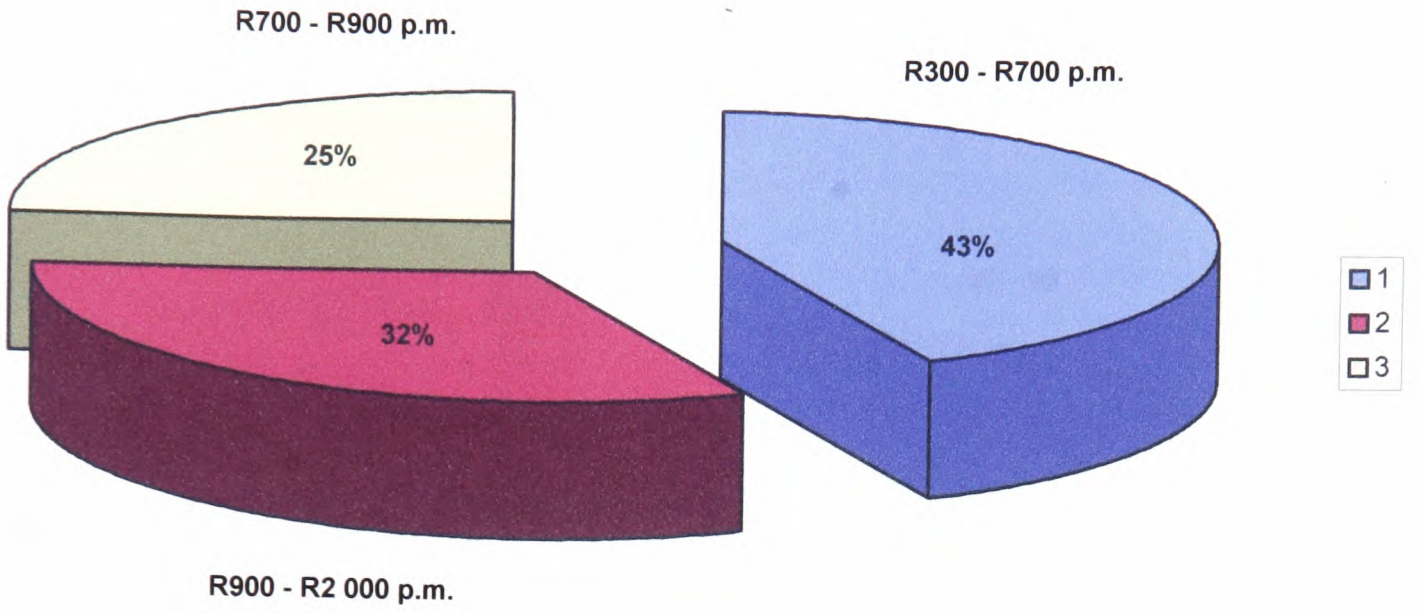
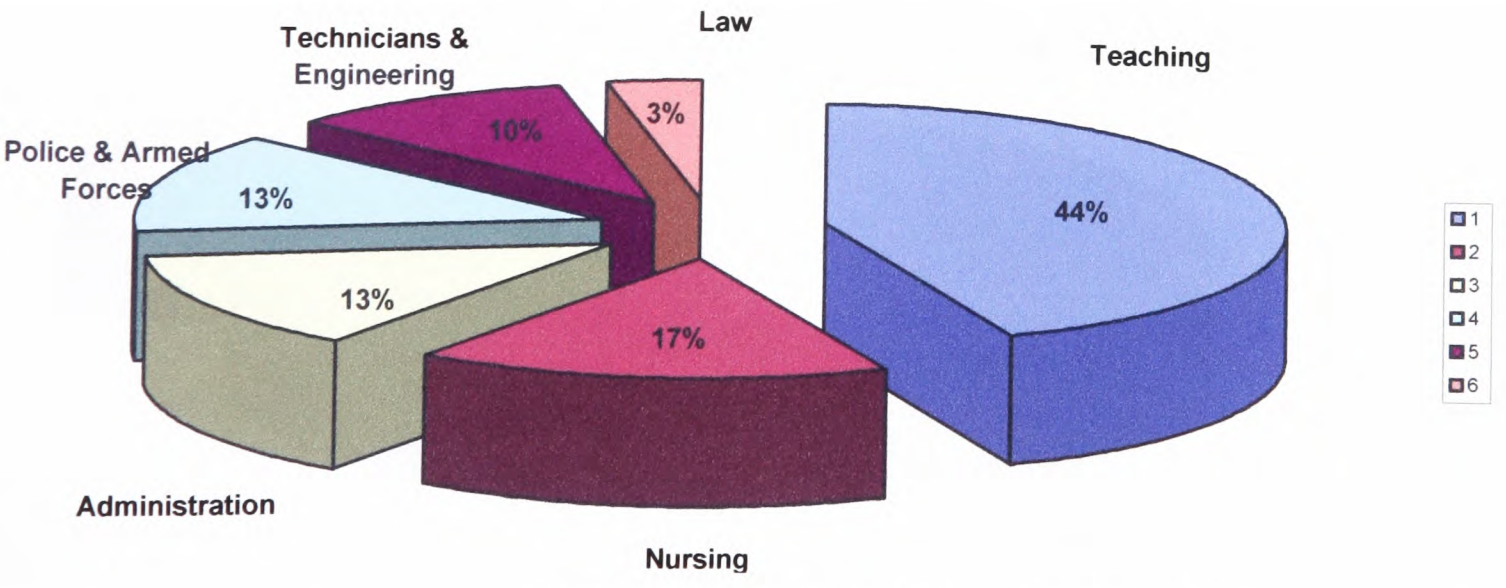


Figure 9: Sampled Factory Workers' Water Bills



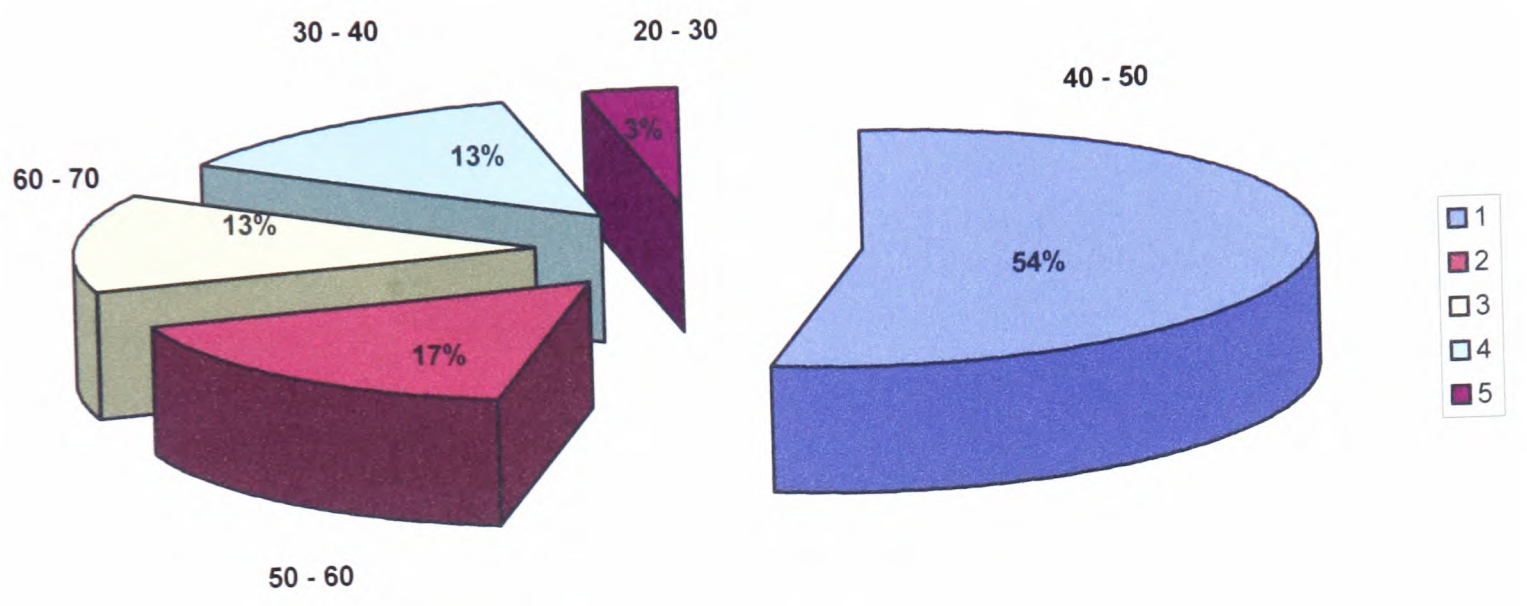
2002 Mpumalanga Township Survey, Buntu Siwisa

Figure 10: Types of Employment Among Sampled Professional Heads of Households



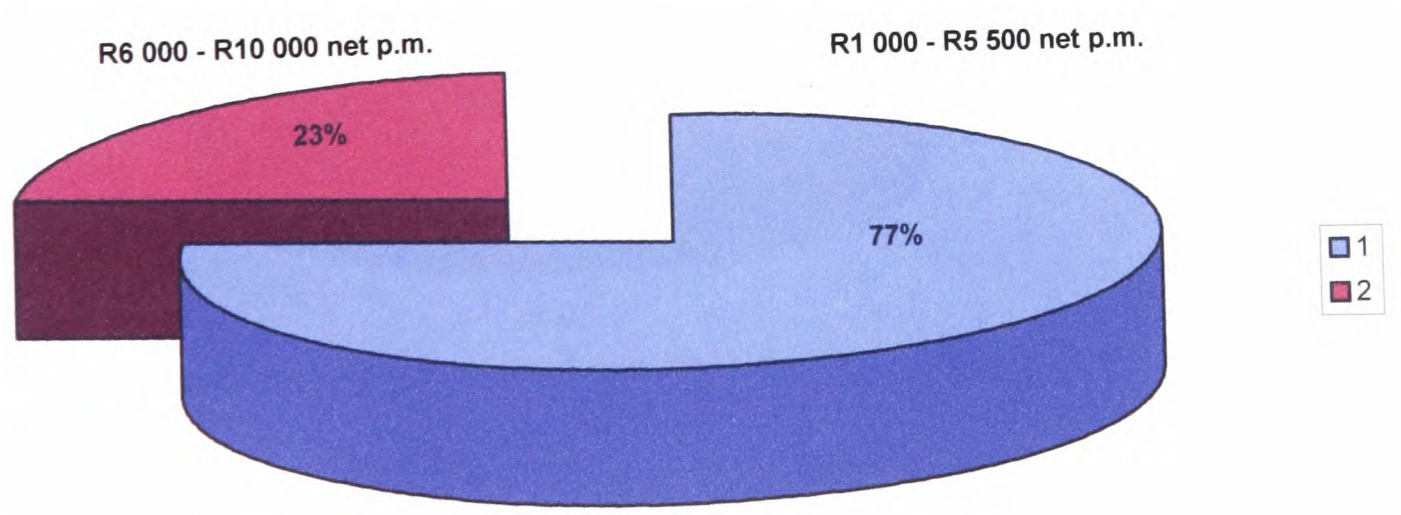
2002 Mpumalanga Township Survey, Buntu Siwisa

Figure 11: Age Groups Among Sampled Professional Heads of Households



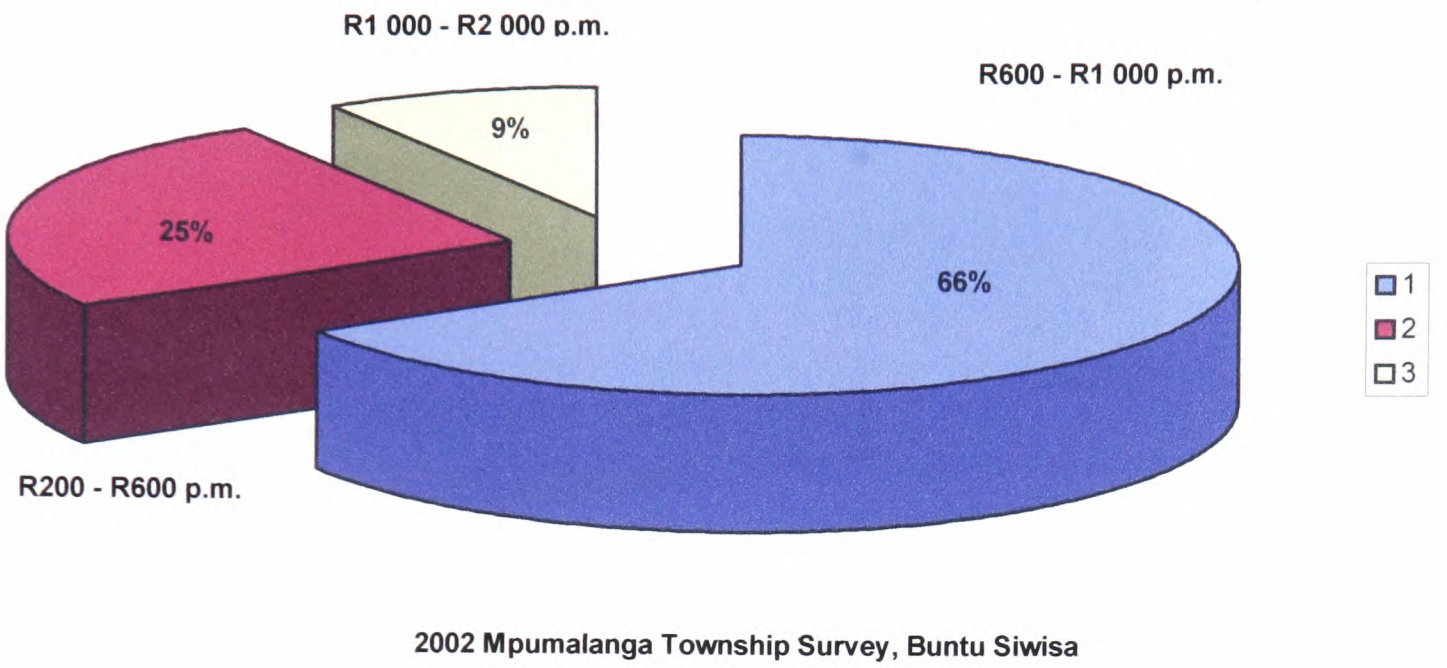
2002 Mpumalanga Township Survey, Buntu Siwisa

Figure 12: Income Groups Among Sampled Professional Heads of Households



2002 Mpumalanga Township Survey, Buntu Siwisa

ure 13: Water Bills of Households Headed by Sampled Professionals



igure 14: Age Groups Among Sampled Domestic Workers

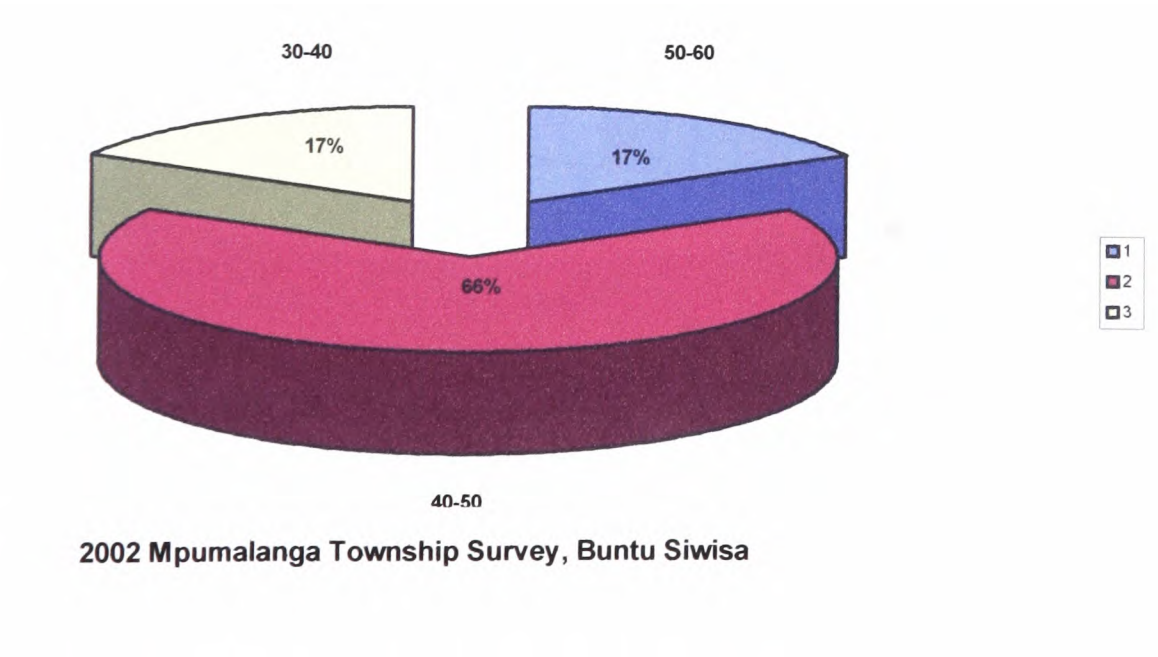


Figure 15: Income Groups Among Domestic Workers

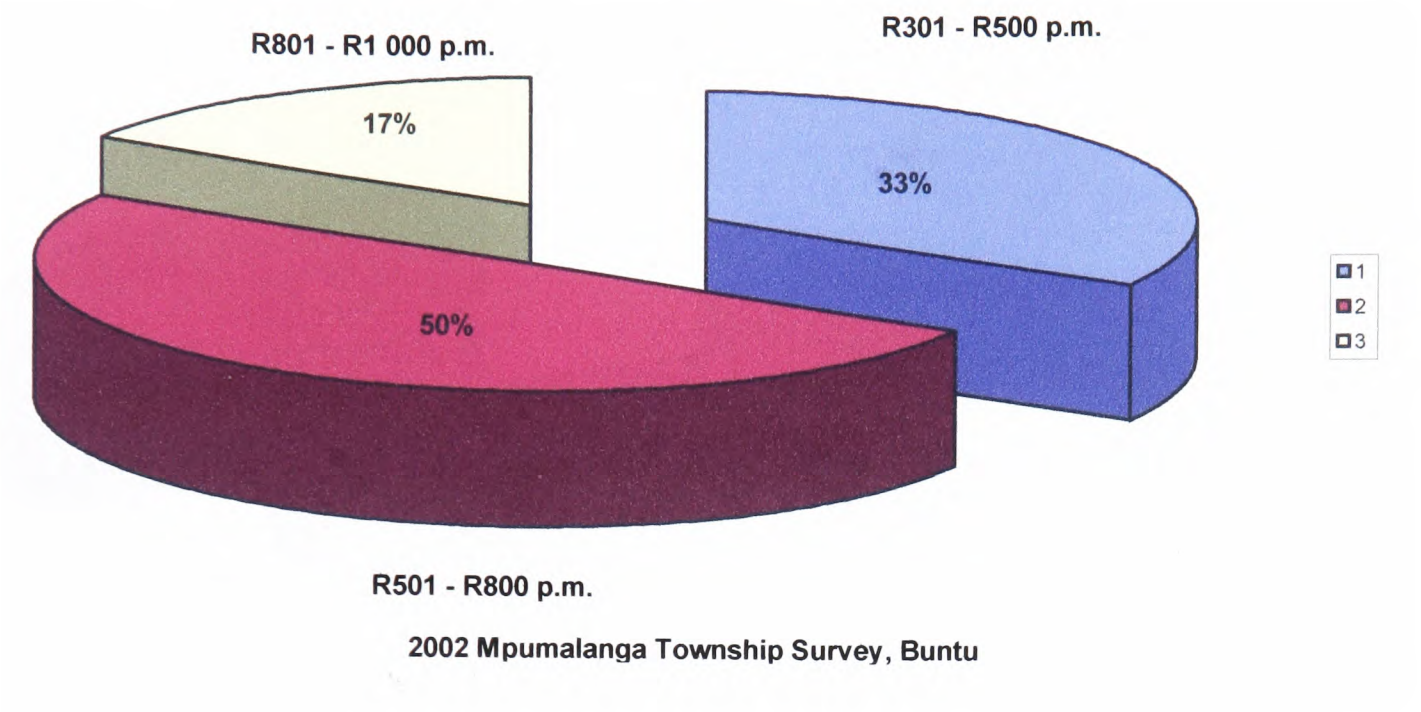


Figure 16: Numbers of Dependants in Sampled Domestic Workers' Households

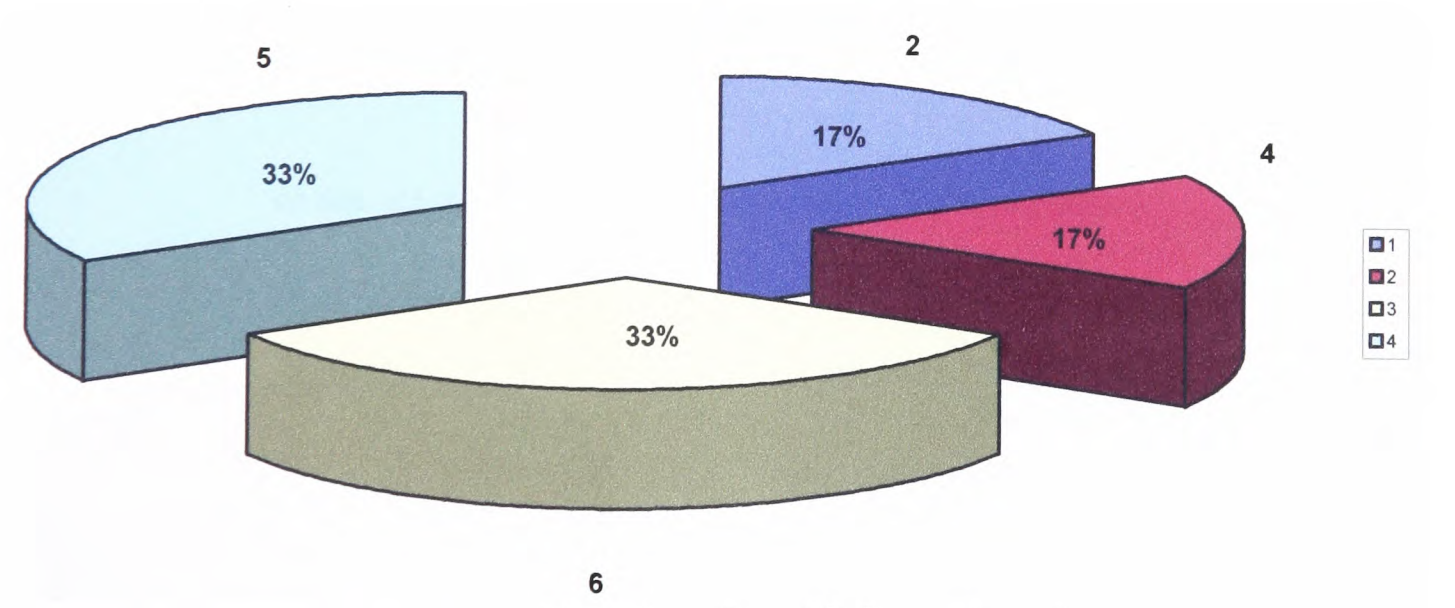


Figure 17: Sex Ratio Among the Sampled Unemployed

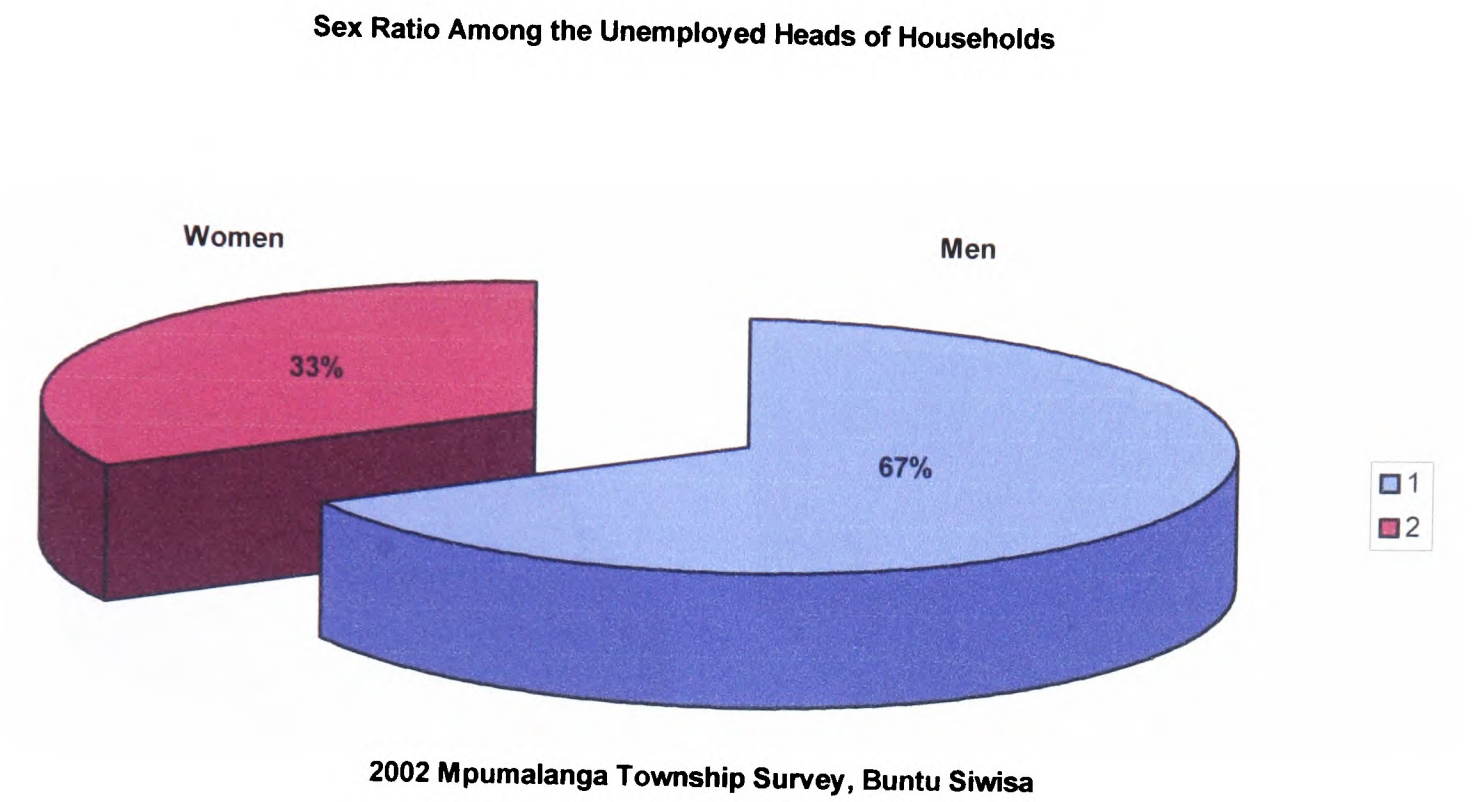


Figure 18: Water Bills of Households Headed by the Sampled Unemployed

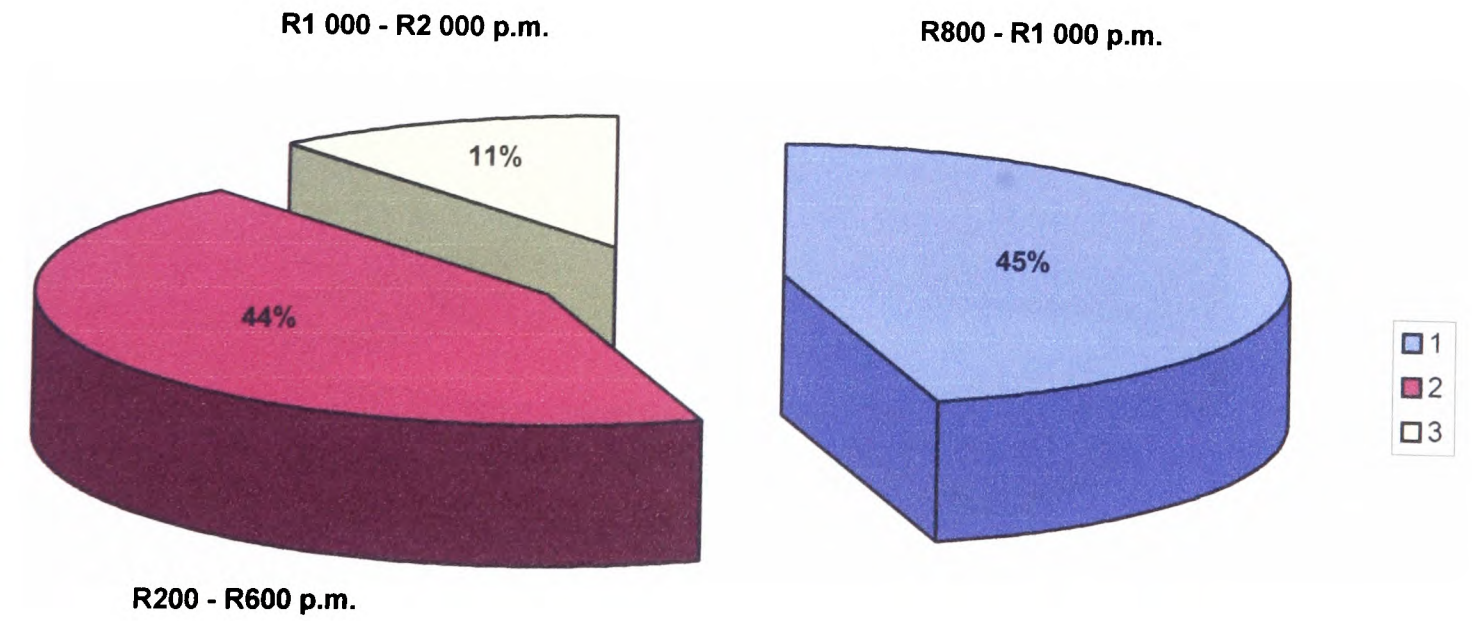


Figure 19: Resolutions Taken by Sampled Pensioners

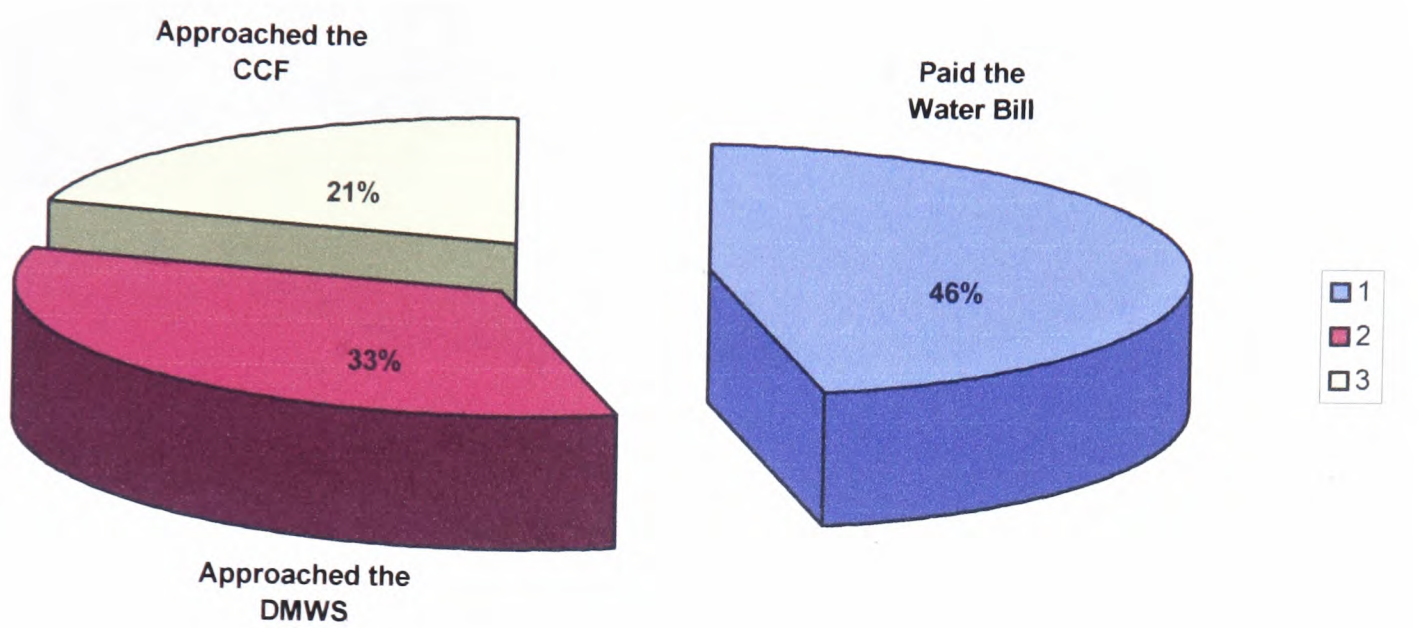


Figure 20: Resolutions Taken by Sampled Factory Workers

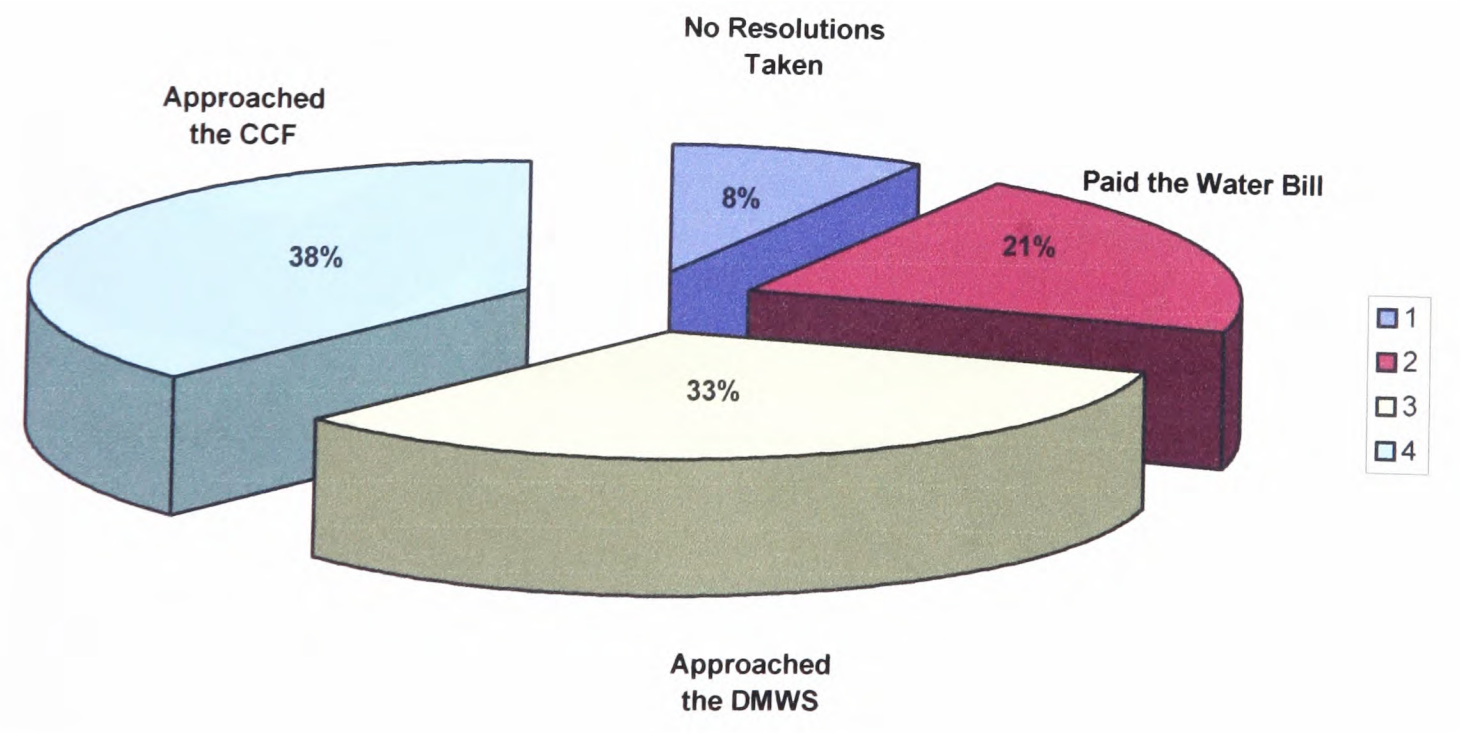


Figure 21: Resolutions Taken by the Sampled Professionals

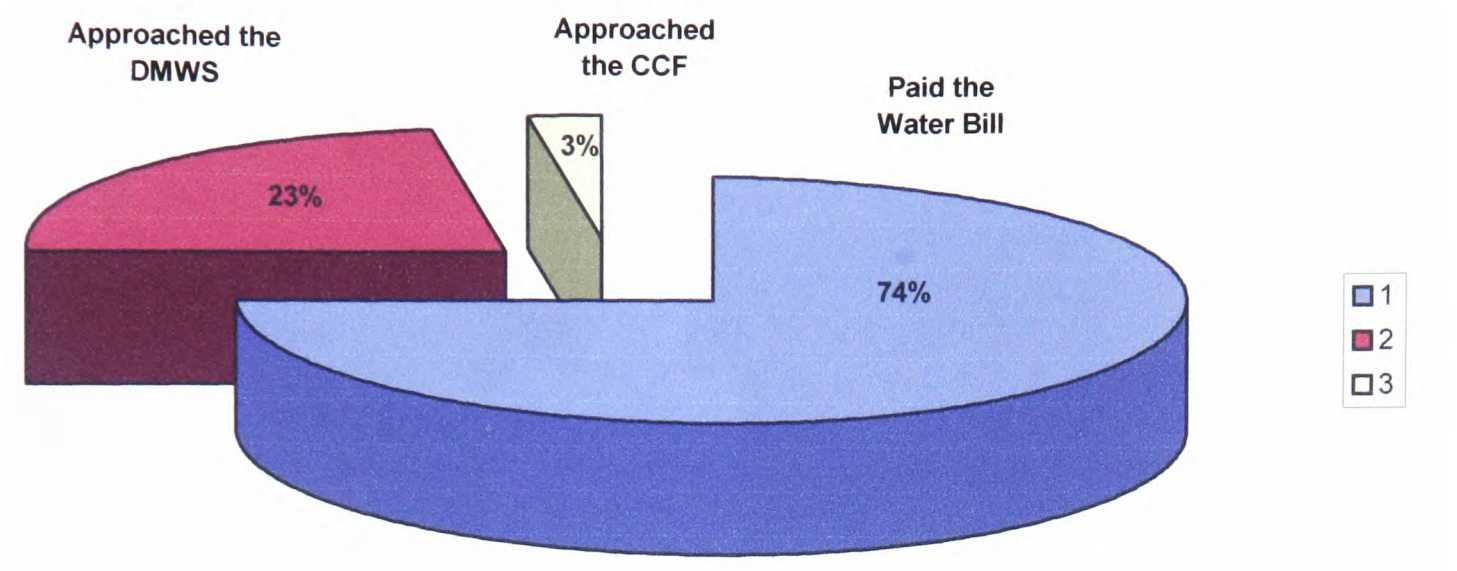


Figure 22: Resolutions Taken by the Sampled Domestic Workers

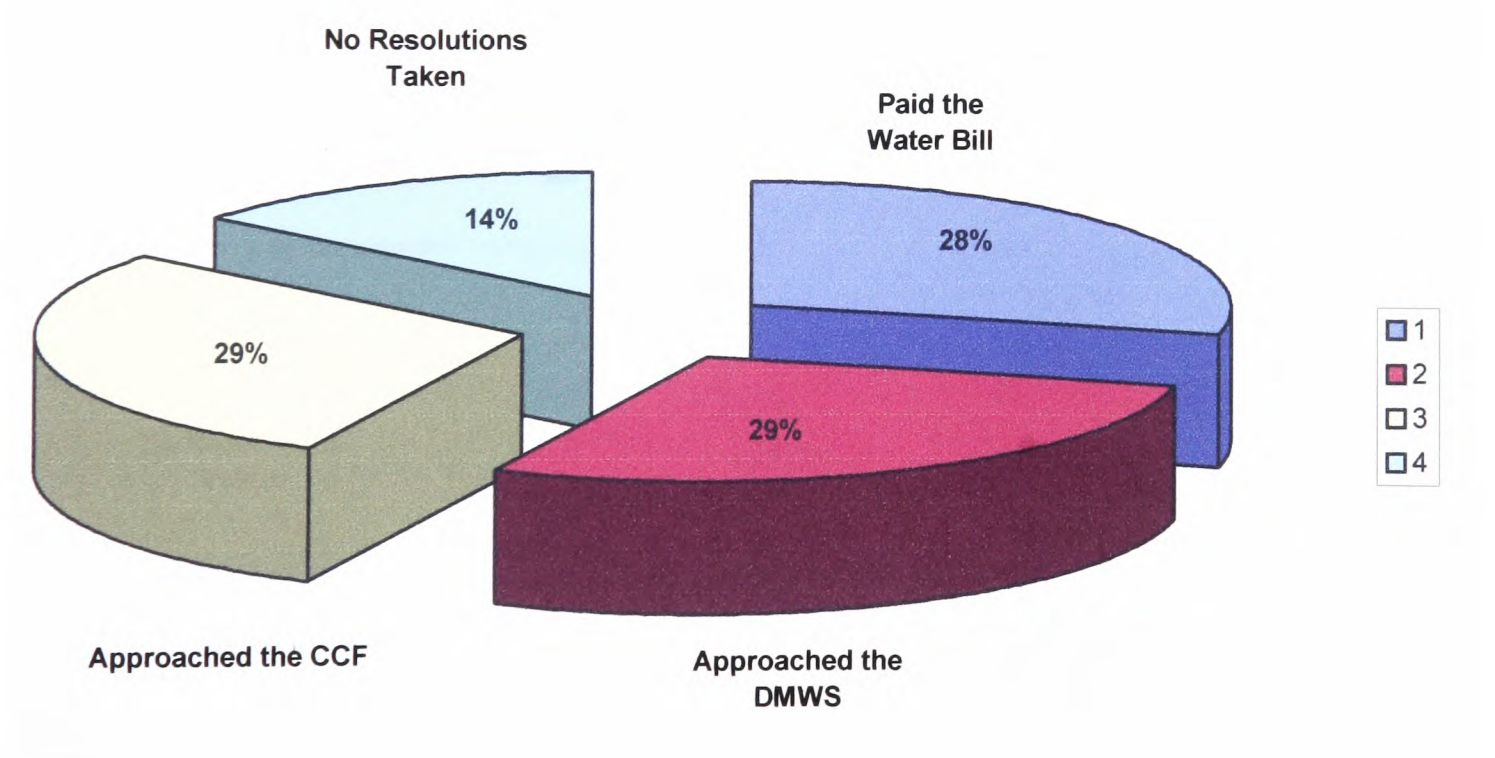


Figure 23: Resolutions Taken by the Sampled Self-Employed

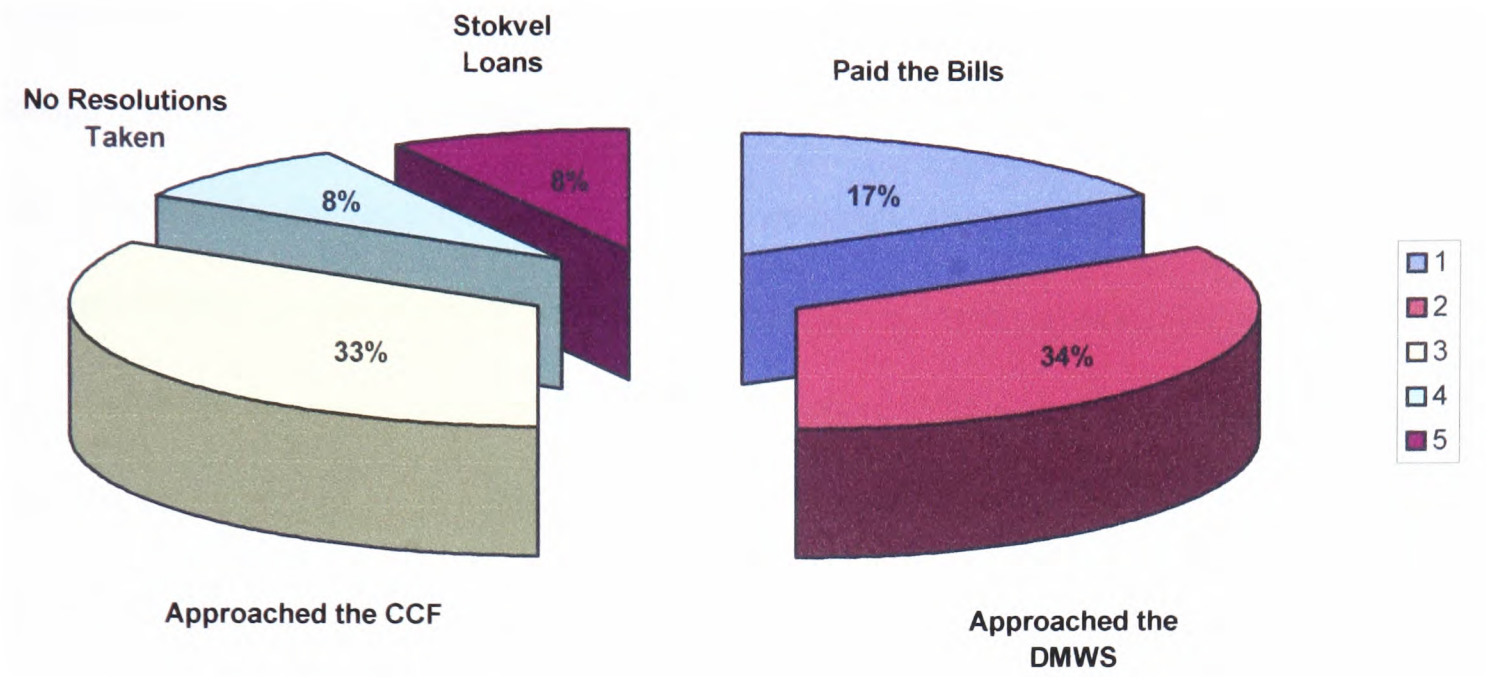
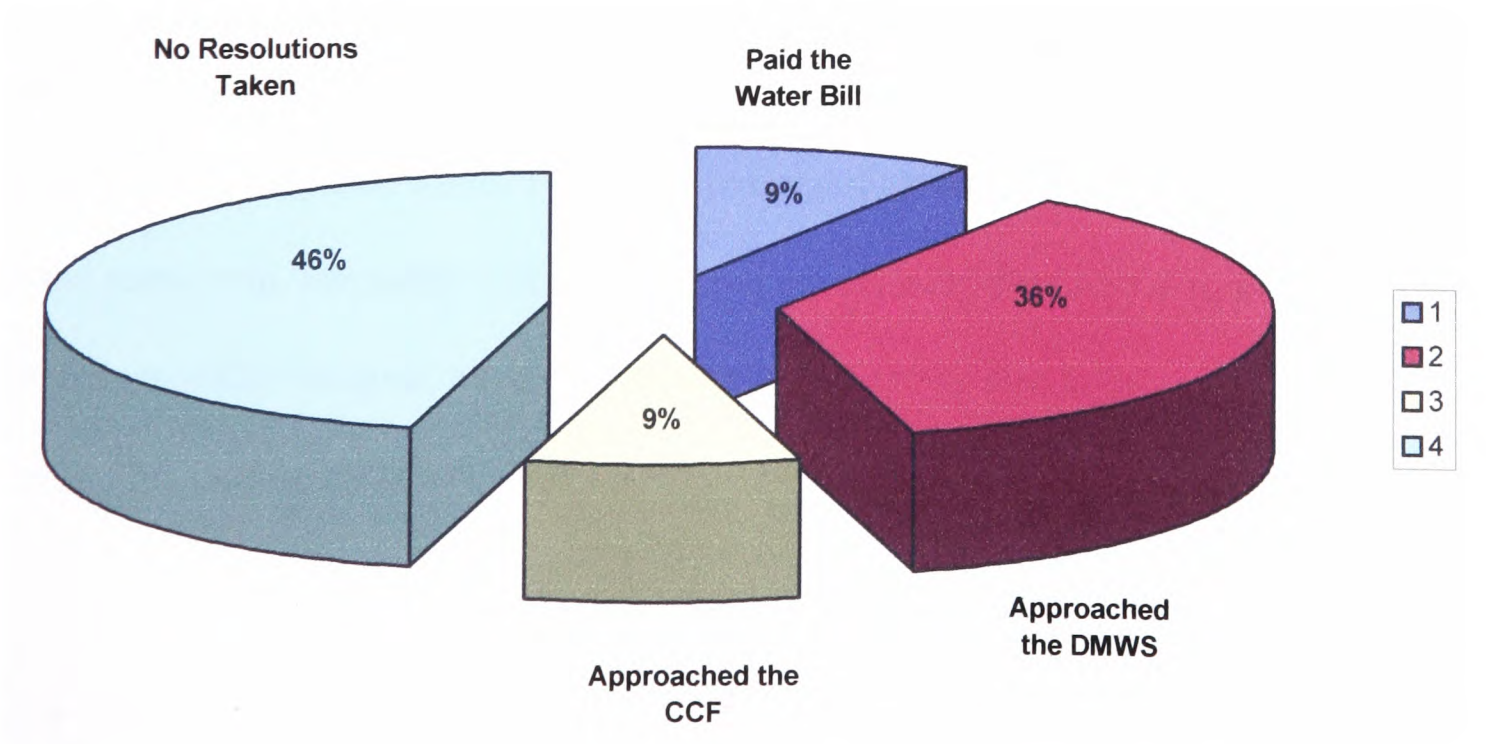


Figure 24: Resolutions Taken by the Sampled Unemployed



That Mpumalanga is located in one of the most disadvantaged sub-structures in Durban does not necessarily render its social composition starkly different from the other black townships. It shares numerous social demographic characteristics with other townships. Pensioners in Mpumalanga constitute the largest section (+- 36 per cent) of our sample, followed by the factory workers (+- 24 per cent). As was pointed out in the research methodology section of Chapter 1, the categories of the unemployed, the self-employed and the domestic workers proved to be elusive. There is fluidity and transposition between the three groups at any time. Consequently, it is difficult to determine with certainty their different states at any one time.

With regard to water bills, a similar pattern is noticeable among the various occupational groups. In each group, the percentage of water bills brackets steadily goes up, reaching R1 000 per month, before it drastically goes down as the water bills accumulate to R2 000. This occurred before the recent trend observed by the Umgeni Water Board in Durban of residents restricting themselves to the six kilolitres of free water per month. Explaining this trajectory is the DMWS' policy of consultation with residents once the water bills have gone up to high proportions. The DMWS is concerned because, as McLeod pointed out earlier on, it owes Umgeni Water Board more than four million rands after the Ethekwini Municipality intensified its cost recovery policy on water services delivery. Within the same vein, township residents are concerned about the rising water bills, as they eat into their monthly budgets, adversely affecting their living standards.

III. Public-Private Partnerships, 1990 - 2002

(a) International Water Companies

The major international water companies that have invested in water infrastructure and services delivery in South Africa are Lyonnaise des Eaux, Vivendi Water (with Vivendi Water Southern Africa as its subsidiary), the Bouygues Group and Biwater. Lyonnaise des Eaux began its investment programmes in the early 1990s, when it bought interests in South Africa's largest construction company and pipe manufacturer. It then placed all of its South African interests under the Water and Sanitation Services Southern Africa, which became known as WSSA.[3] The latter, previously known as Aqua-Gold (AG), was initially a French-South African company. It was formed in 1986 as a subsidiary of the Goldstein Group, and was based in the former Natal. Later on, Aqua-Gold built its service constituency to include other former homeland governments, particularly in Bophuthatswana and KaNgwane, and various other mining companies. It was awarded its first contracts in the former KwaZulu Government.[4]

After Aqua-Gold had changed its name to WSSA (Pty) Ltd., then a wholly-owned subsidiary of Lyonnaise Water Southern Africa, linked to the French Lyonnaise des Eaux, it was awarded management contracts in Queenstown, Fort Beaufort and Stutterheim between 1992 and 1995. By 2001, it serviced three million consumers in Johannesburg. It boasted

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[3] See, www.publicintegrity.org/water/report.aspx?!sID=ch&rID=49daID=49. See also, Ruiters, G., **Debt, Disconnection and Privatisation: The Case of Fort Beaufort, Queenstown and Stutterheim,** in, **McDonald**, D.A. & Pape, J. (eds.) (2002) **Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Cost Recovery in South Africa**, (HSRC Publishers, Cape Town; Zed Books Ltd., London).

[4] Ruiters, G. (2002) **Debt, Disconnection and Privatisation**.

half a million connections, water and wastewater networks of about 8 000 kilometres, and had about 1 500 workers.[5]

Another international private water company investing in South Africa is the Bouygues Group. It was established in France in 1952. It invested in what became regarded as the first water privatisation attempt in KwaZulu-Natal, in the Dolphin Coast. It acquired the SAUR Group in 1984, the third-largest water supplier in France, and became its sole proprietor in 2001. Bouygues Group provides 36 million people all over the world with water and wastewater services, and has a workforce of 125 000 people. It accumulated revenue of about $18 billion in 2001.[6]

The SAUR was awarded a 30 year concession in 1999 to provide water and purification services in the township of Nkobongo, just outside Nelspruit, servicing a population of about 40 000 people. It formed a local company with four South African companies which came to be called the Siza Water Company, and the SAUR remained the major shareholder.

Biwater, a UK-based water company, is one of the three major international water companies operating in South Africa. Worldwide, the company employs over 1 100 people. In Africa, Biwater also operates in Mauritius, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Angola, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Seychelles, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, The Gambia, Senegal, Algeria, Libya and Egypt.[7] In South Africa, Biwater operates in Nelspruit, the capital of the Mpumalanga province, forming a consortium with a local black economic empowerment company called Sivukile Holdings. It was awarded a 30-year

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[5] Ibid.
[6] www.publicintegrity.org/water.aspx?!sID=db&par=7.
[7] www.publicintegrity.org/water.

concession to provide the Greater Nelspruit Utility Company (GNUC) water and sanitation services to a population of about 240 000 people.[8]

(b) Constraints and Opposition

Difficulties regarding the sustainability of the water management contracts soon surfaced in the municipalities where they had been initiated. In the Eastern Cape, the WSSA endeavoured to effectively handle the "highly politicised relationship with "customers" and unions," and implement effective customer management by ensuring that the user pays policy was effected, while "maximising revenue collection."[9] In January 2001, the former Acting Municipal Manager of Queenstown noted that, "If people do not pay rates and services accounts, there will be no option than to reduce services. The extreme would be to cut salaries of councillors and municipal employees."[10]

Greg Ruiters argued that, in Fort Beaufort, the WSSA used various strategies to convince the municipality of the benefits of water privatisation. The first strategy was the "panic strategy".[11] This contained three elements. Firstly, the WSSA made the assertion that there loomed large a health crisis which was apparently a result of the lack of adequate household connections to the water supply. It pointed out to the Fort Beaufort municipality that, "all local authorities face demanding consumers…", and that, "…municipal officials face an increasing workload."[12] The second and the third panic strategies were the

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[8] Ibid.
[9] Ruiters, G. (p. 42).
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid, (pp. 43-4).
[12] Ibid, p. 43).

payments crisis and the "militant unions"[13] that were opposed to the initiation of the management contracts.

The other approach that the WSSA used to sell this PPP initiative was the sustainability strategy. The company planned to make water affordable to poor black urban consumers, while addressing the problem of the willingness to pay, a problem that had become chronic in the black townships in the 1980s, as a result of the UDF-led boycotts against the apartheid regime. WSSA pledged to implement, "an integrated approach to addressing the *predicament facing Local Councils throughout South Africa* of meeting the expectation of the consumer in respect of provision of affordable and acceptable standards versus the ability and willingness to pay."[14] This was the beginning of the implementation of the 'user-pays' principle, which by the mid-1990s found itself approved of and entrenched in various policy documents, such as the *White Paper on Water* and the MIIF.

The user-pays principle was entrenched in various government policies on the restructuring of municipal services, especially in the MIIF. By the mid-1990s, the government had been urging black township residents to break down the 'culture of non-payment' through such projects as *Masakhane*. However, the MIIF and other municipal policy documents also stressed that public services were the fundamental rights of the people. They emphasized that under no circumstances would they be cut down.

However, criticism regarding the pro-privatisation external influences of the drafting of the MIIF have been levelled against the government. It is reported that the World Bank staff, led by its deputy representative, Junaid Ahmed, drafted the main sections of the MIIF. The final draft is allegedly reported to have been issued four months later,

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[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid (emphasis in original).

under the auspices of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Development.[15] Pamela Cox, the World Bank director for South Africa, in the introduction to *South Africa Country Assistance Strategy*, a World Bank report, pointed out that:

> The Bank has provided technical assistance and policy advice in virtually all sectors of the economy, including trade policy, macroeconomic management, medium-term expenditure, housing policy, urban finance, land reform, health and education expenditure, and poverty analysis.[16]

The report further remarked that the Bank's International Financial Corporation (IFC) played "an active role in the further development of infrastructure in South Africa and promote the increased participation of the private sector in this area."[17] Despite stating that one of the Bank's core areas of engagement with the South African policy making environment is that it is "...driven by South African *priorities*, with South African *ownership*...", the Bank's report also later explicitly stated that one of the IFC's main areas of focus over the next three years from 1999 was on the restructuring of the municipal infrastructure and privatisation.[18]

One of the major difficulties with effecting the water and sanitation concessions in the targeted municipalities lay in the conflict between the private water and sanitation companies and the municipal councils. The Fort Beaufort municipality was paying US$40 000 per month to WSSA for service charges. The problem was that the Fort Beaufort municipality experienced under-collection of revenue from the service charges, and therefore the management contract proved unsustainable. By February 2000, Fort Beaufort's mainly African water consumers owed the municipality R13 million. By June

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[15] www.publicintegrity.org/water.
[16] **South Africa Country Assistance Strategy: Building a Knowledge Partnership** (May 1999), (Report 19665), (p. ii). See, www-wds.worldbank.org/servelet.
[17] www.publicintegrity.org/water.
[18] **South Africa Country Assistance Strategy** (emphasis in original).

that year, the water services debts were R15 million. Within a single month after that, the debt apparently increased to R17 million.[19]

The Nelspruit municipality felt compelled to privatise its water supply because it required US$38 million to bring water and sewerage networks to its predominantly African townships. Since then, the GNUC has laid out 90 kilometres of new water pipelines and 17 kilometres of sewerage pipelines. It has installed 7 240 new water meters, and implemented 5 000 new water connections.[20] The GNUC has experienced similar problems that other international water companies and municipalities in Fort Beaufort, Queenstown and Stutterheim had to grapple with. In the Nelspruit township of Kanyamazane, it cost the Sivukile holdings US$111 000 a month to supply the township with clean water. However, that hardly augured well with the revenue they collected, which was in the region of US$5 584 per month. Only about 20 per cent of the township residents paid their water bills.[21]

The other major difficulty has been the drastic hike in service charges that accompany cost recovery policy mechanisms. At the time of privatisation in October 1995, township residents of Fort Beaufort were accustomed to paying R10 per month for the emptying of sanitary bails once a week. Later, that increased to R19 per month. Between 1997 – 98, township residents had to pay R22 for the emptying of a "…poorly-run 19th-century bucket system."[22] By December 1995, the Fort Beaufort Municipality had collected 10.3 per cent on monthly bills of R28, based on the new instituted flat rate (R25 288 out of R241 469).[23]

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[19] Ruiters, G.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ruiters, G. (p. 45).
[23] Ibid.

In the Nelspruit townships, before the implementation of its PPP on water and sewerage, the residents were accustomed to paying a flat municipal services rate of about R49 per month. After the privatisation initiative, they had to pay an average of R132 of individual water bills.[24] Unlike the Nelspruit, Fort Beaufort, Queenstown and Stutterheim municipalities, the then DMA opted for the public-private partnership regime on water and sewerage municipal services. In March 1999, the DMWS entered into the 'tri-sector partnership' with Vivendi Water, Mvula Trust and the DMWS, with the objective of carrying out a project whose aim was to provide "...improved services to previously underprivileged communities in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg areas."[25]

The project, coined the Business Partners for Development (BPD), was initiated when Vivendi Water contacted Umgeni Water Board, KwaZulu-Natal's bulk water supplier, to institute a BPD project in the Pietermaritzburg Transitional Local Council. When the latter agreed, the DMWS Executive Director requested Vivendi Water to extend the BPD to Durban. That agreed upon, the project became known as the 'KwaZulu-Natal Project.'

Around the time of the implementation of the KwaZulu-Natal Project, the DMWS supplied water, sanitation and solid waste services to approximately 360 000 metered people. About 155 000 people lacked household connections. It was estimated that approximately 10 000 to 20 000 people in the then DMA were illegally connected to the piped water system. The calculated daily consumption in each household in the area was about 700 litres.[26] The KwaZulu-Natal Project used a similar 'panic strategy', pointing out that the Durban municipality faced an increasing demand for water consumption and the

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[24] www.publicintegrity.org/water.
[25] **Durban Metro Water: Private Sector Partnerships to Serve the Poor**, (Prepared by Clarissa Brocklehurst. The paper was part of a research and dissemination initiative of the *Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP)*.
[26] Ibid.

provision of connections to previously unconnected households (mainly in the peri-urban communities and townships). The Durban Metropolitan Council was itself aware of the acute gap of water payments. This is a problem that worsened even after the implementation of the cost recovery policy on water in Durban. McLeod warily pointed out that Durban residents owed the DMWS R250 million of water that they had not paid for.[27] It was also reported that in the late 1990s, South Africa's 300 local councils were owed US$670 million in outstanding water payments.

Other stakeholders involved in the tri-sector partnership are Umgeni Water Board and the South African Water Research Commission (WRC). The KwaZulu-Natal Project endeavoured to "...demonstrate the role that tri-sector partnerships, bringing together the private sector, NGO and government, can have in addressing development problems."[28] The total budget for the KwaZulu-Natal Project was R15, 4 million. Vivendi Water provided R4, 5 million, split between Pietermaritzburg and Durban. The DMWS contributed R3, 2 million, while the South African Water Research Commission ploughed in R880 000.

The different partners in the project had different assignments. The DMWS was the main supplier of water services, while Vivendi Water was tasked with project management. Vivendi was considered ideal for such an assignment due to its experience in water supply internationally, and especially its expertise in the GIS system and sewerage system. Mvula Trust bore responsibility for community liaison, which involved consultation with the affected residents, using existing community structures, workshops to educate people about the project, and capacity-building within the communities and the local government agencies. Further commenting on community liaison on the KwaZulu-Natal Project,

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[27] **Interview with Neil McLeod**, (28 November 2002, Durban Metro Water Services, Durban), (Interview conducted by Buntu Siwisa).
[28] Ibid, (p. 5).

McLeod argued that one of its features is improved customer management, including the tariff policy, billing systems and cost recovery procedures. He pointed out that:

> Another [whole] project that we have is the community or customer management approach, where we're looking at people that are not paying, finding out why they are not paying, what the issues are, whether they don't like the metro, why they don't like it, you know what I'm saying? It's a whole initiative to look at different ways of working with customers, using local people to take the message, using contractors, using NGOs. So it's a kind of a research collaboration. Obviously we'll gain because we'll learn things. The private sector will gain because they'll learn things that they can use in other projects.[29]

However, there is considerable contention as to whether there were any attempts at community liaison, or any commitments to forging contacts with the communities in some of the townships and peri-urban areas where the project was implemented. Youth activists attached with the CCF in Mpumalanga argued that there was no contact between the residents of Mpumalanga and the then Durban Metro with regards to the project and the installation of water meters. Brian Ngwenya of the Mpumalanga CCF maintained that, "They didn't even come and introduce themselves to us, because we were not even aware what is Durban Metro, what is the pre-paid meter."[30] Ngwenya further went on:

> The only thing we understand about the privatisation of water is that *sizakukhoka* (we now have to pay). *Besingekho kwelo hlelo lo khoka* (We were not in the habit of paying for water). *Besingazi ukuthi amanzi ayakhokelwa* (We did not know that water is supposed to be paid for). So if *sekuqhamuka izinto* like water privatisation which *ama*residents *sekufanele akhoke, ngekhe ukuthi umuntu ungamuchazeli ngokubaluleka kokukhokelwa kwamanzi, uvele uthi makakhoke amanzi* (So if all of a sudden projects like water privatisation spring up, where the residents have to pay for water, you cannot go about expecting people to pay for water without explaining to a person about the importance of paying for water, and then you just say he /she has to pay for water).[31]

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[29] **Interview with McLeod**, (28 November 2002, Durban Metropolitan Water Services, Durban), (Interviewed by Buntu Siwisa), (p. 4).
[30] **Interview with Mpumalanga CCF Activists**, (02 December 2002, Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale, Durban), (p. 2).
[31] Ibid, (pp. 10 – 11).

This is a trend that has played itself out in townships such as Orange Farm in Gauteng. When Johannesburg Water came over to Orange Farm to install pre-paid water meters in 2000, it convinced residents of the need to inspect the technical viability of their water pipes. It was only later after the residents realised that they had been lied to. This attests to the prevalence of the lack of the so-called 'community liaison.'

Fanie Moyo, one of the ANC councillors in the Outer-West Local Council areas, conceded to some of the problems regarding the lack of adequate communication with communities on the implementation of new public services delivery policies. Moyo remarked that:

> The authority, the Ethekwini Municipality Department of Water is responsible for this thing. But... if we have sufficient staff, we would not have experienced these kinds of things. We are relying on the consultants, because this thing of facilitation was outsourced. We requested what you call Nantsindlela to do [facilitate] on our behalf. This facilitation is very important. You must spend a lot of time in facilitation, then implementation is going to be easy. But now, what is happening now, the people now are not going in large numbers to attend their meetings.[32]

However, the KwaZulu-Natal Project was careful not to get into the management contracts that the WSSA in Queenstown, Fort Beaufort and Stutterheim had embroiled themselves into. The first reason for avoiding them was that the Durban local government was restructuring from a metropolitan council into a Unicity. Secondly, the partners were wary of the expected opposition from the labour movement. The report on the KwaZulu-Natal Project maintained that, "There has been strenuous labor opposition to concessions in other cities in South Africa, leading to long delays."[33]

Although the KwaZulu-Natal Project was wary of labour opposition, much of the challenge to municipal water concessions and leases emanated from civic groups and social

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[32] **Interview with Fanie Moyo**, (13 December 2002, Hammarsdale, Durban), (Interviewed by Buntu Siwisa), (p. 3).
[33] **Durban Metro Water**, (p. 4).

movements. In the Nelspruit township of Nkobongo, a community social movement called Mbombela, an affiliation of the APF, was formed in the late 1990s in opposition to the GNUC and Sivukile Holdings. Foremost in the leadership of Mbombela was Henry Nkuna, a former guerrilla in the Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA) the former military wing of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) of Azania. One of the major problems that erupted in Nelspruit's Kanyamazane Township was the GNUC's decision to increase the flat municipal services rate. Mbombela demanded a flat municipal rate of R19. The average annual income of a household in Nelspruit's township was approximately R650 per month, compared to the average annual income of white households in Nelspruit of approximately R84 000.[34] There was noticeable a thread of a similar demand for the return to the previous municipalities' flat rates in other municipalities across the country where the cost recovery policy had been implemented. A similar problem had occurred in Fort Beaufort townships, as outlined above.

IV. Water Disconnections in Mpumalanga, 2000 - 2002

It is palpable that there are water delivery problems in Mpumalanga affecting everyone and cutting across its various classes and occupational groups. The water bills that the residents of Mpumalanga have generated between 2000 and 2002 are inordinate, pointing to the acceleration of the implementation of the cost recovery policy. Moyo and Shabalala, the ANC local councillors in the Outer-West Local Council area, have clearly been vexed by these problems. The situation is further exacerbated by the irregularity and the inefficiency of the water billing system. Residents in municipalities where water and

[34] www.publicintegrity.org/water.

electricity have been corporatised have voiced out complaints regarding the irregularity and the inefficiency of the water and electricity billing system. The water and electricity bills at times have been higher even after residents have had their supplies reduced through various technological means, such as the installation of the water tricklers and the fallometers. On the question of the high water bills in Mpumalanga, Moyo was of the opinion that it was indeed a critical problem, and pointed out that the council had suggested a more people-driven policy on water meter reading and bill issuing. He revealed that there was a suggestion to delegate the task of the posting of the water bills by the township residents themselves. He remarked that:

> That thing, the council is in the process of sorting it out. What is going to happen in future is that we are going to use the local people to issue the bills, and also to do meter readings, because you cannot allow a situation where a resident is going to show you a bill of R150 000 of water or R8 000 of water, which is unfair, because to the people it is not clear why they are getting this whilst the 6 kilolitres of water is free. But another thing on the council policy is that even if that person failed to pay a certain amount, there's no way of switching off his tap because we are violating one of his basic rights. They have a right to clean water.[35]

By the time that the fieldwork research was carried out, the so-called 'people-driven' process of water meter reading and billing had not been implemented, nor had there been any community structures set up to facilitate that process. Shabalala as well acceded to this problem, as he pointed out that:

> Here we've got a terrible situation in terms of water...We've elected the people into new positions, from Neil McLeod's point of view to downwards...Those people that have been appointed to those positions have been appointed into probational processes, because how we are going to work is that the first six months must show improvement. If not, those people are going to be terminated. That's what we are saying. Because we had this problem for quite a long time, where you find that the people receive water, but within three months, a person needs to pay huge amounts of money. Then when you take the statement back to them, you find that it is a

[35] **Interview with Fanie Moyo**, (p. 3).

> mistake. So we are saying now those things are going to end, since we've appointed the people to those new positions, starting from Neil McLeod downwards.[36]

McLeod opposed Shabalala's and Moyo's accounts. He pointed out that the DMWS had instituted a correctional system for customers whose water bills have run beyond R10 000 in a month. He argued that the Durban municipality has implemented a policy where it rigorously examined the crisis of consumers' water bills that exceeded R10 000 a month. As a result, McLeod maintained that by 2002, there could be no claim from a township customer that they have not been billed for water that they did not use. He insisted that:

> So, if your bill was R10 000 last month, and now it's R10 250 this month, we send someone to your house to check what the cause of the problem is. So every bill in a poor community, and any bill in any community over a thousand rands per month, we visit the house and check before we send the bill out. So we are now very sure that the bills that go out are right. And it's very rare to find a bill where a person can actually prove that it's not what they actually used.[37]

McLeod blamed the water billing crisis on two factors. The first was the accumulation of debt for more than two years before the implementation of the cost recovery policy on water. Secondly, he attributed the problem to the township residents' 'habit' of water wastage. On how township consumers end up running high water bills, he argued that:

> Very easily. We are too kind to the customers. Many of these people have a debt which is two or three years old, and we didn't disconnect them as soon as they went into debt. We didn't limit their flow. In those days we were trying to encourage people to pay, trying to be supportive and caring. So you had two things happening. One is that the habits of people didn't change. And then in my house for example, you never find a tap running for more than what it's needed to do what it has to do. If there is a leak I fix it immediately, read my meter and check. That's how I've grown up. If you've never had to worry about water, whether the tap ran all day, or there was a leak and you didn't fix it or the toilet [ran all up], you just left it. So you've had people using...if you do the sums. A meter delivers 3 000 litres ---- 3

[36] **Interview with Judah Shabalala**, (p. 2).
[37] **Interview with Neil McLeod**, (p. 6).

> kilolitres an hour. Okay, so in a day you can use 72 000 litres of water, easily. Okay, so in a month, that's 2 160 cubic meters. If you times that at R4, 50, that's a bill of R9 700. So if you have a leak and you do nothing about it, you can run a bill of R9 700 a month, easily. So you can get a bill of R9 000 very easily in a month. That's if you pay R4, 00. But remember anything out of 30 kilolitres you pay R9, 00. It could be about R12 000. That's why I said that R9 000 is easy to get. You combine that so you've got people who habitually have not internalised the need to be very careful about the need to manage their water, and then you couple that with people, like I've said whose cases have been going on for two to three years and have not paid one cent for their water bill.[38]

The inconsistency in McLeod's argument is that many of the townships located in municipalities where the leases, concessions and management contracts with international private water companies were initiated were not metered. McLeod himself conceded that the major reason that led to the riot in Mpumalanga in 2001 was the installation of the water meters.[39] McLeod also reasoned that the cause of the 2001 riot was that the council went in there to install water meters that had not yet been installed in many parts of Mpumalanga. He remarked that, "All we did was go and put meters there and started sending people bills, and ask them to act responsibly and pay for what they use beyond their free water."[40]

In Mpumalanga, water supplied in households through yard taps was not metered, and the residents had to pay a flat rate of R10 a month[41] for a combination of municipal services rates along with the water bill. This flat rate had been levied especially in townships that were under the jurisdiction of former homeland or Bantustan governments. Therefore, the debt on water could only have accumulated after 2001.

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[38] Ibid, (p. 5).
[39] For an account of the riot, see for instance, Mhlanga, E. **Durban to Crack Down on Water-Borne Violence**, *The Mercury*, (2001, 11 April). See, www.queensu.ca/msp/pages/In_The_News/2001/April/Crack.htm.
[40] **Interview with McLeod**, (p. 7).
[41] However, Moyo's account is that the flat municipal services rate in the 1980s was R5 per month. It is possible that Moyo was referring to some other peri-urban areas that are under the jurisdiction of the Outer-West Local Council area. Moyo's constituency runs from Eshongweni, Berksfarm, Ntabentengayo, Cliffdale, Summerveld, Alverstone, Mpumalanga and KwaNdeni, which is part of Mpumalanga.

McLeod also argued that water bills are excessively high because of the township residents' habit of water wastage. This is illogical, considering the nature and the make-up of the majority of houses in the black townships. The majority of township houses use movable baths for both bathing and for washing clothes. The same applies for domestic chores such as washing dishes. Also, the majority of township houses' yards are very small to cater for the huge water consumption required for vegetable and/or flower gardening. They do not have water taps installed inside their houses. Therefore, it is not possible that water wastage could have taken place in households where capacities for water usage are limited. However, it is correct that in some townships, the water infrastructure and the piping system is rusty and inefficient. Again, it is mainly in the townships that were under the jurisdiction of the former homelands or Bantustan governments where such water infrastructure could be found running. It is likely that the major wastage resulted from inadequate and faulty infrastructure rather than overuse.

The rates and the levels of water disconnections experienced by the various class groups in the township vary, due to the different groups' levels of affordability, as well as their varying attitudes to and perceptions of municipal authorities.

Figure 25: Water Disconnections (Once) Across Among the Sampled Occupational / Class Groups

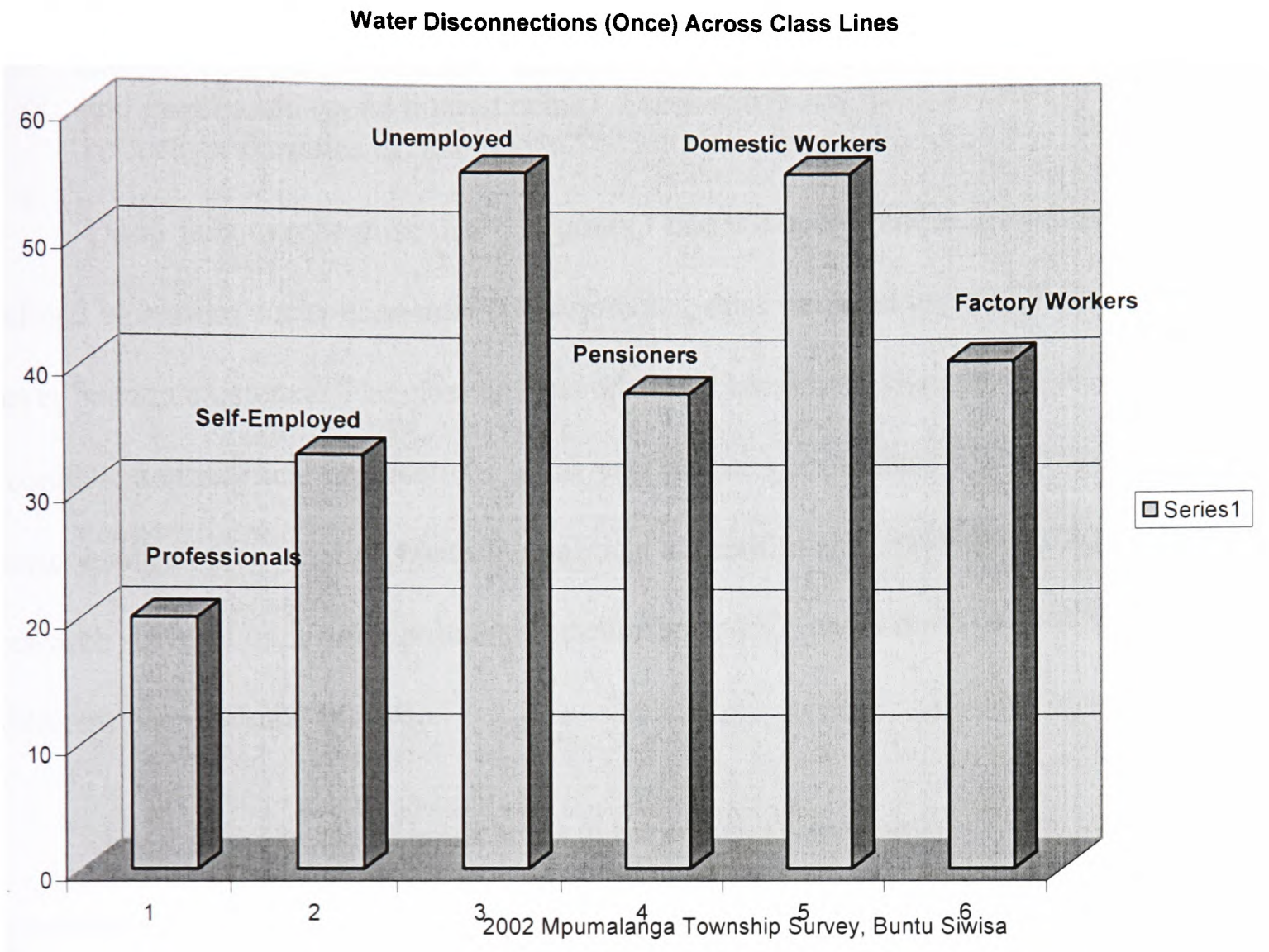

Figure 1 above compares the disconnections between households headed by professionals, the self-employed, the unemployed, pensioners, domestic workers and factory workers. The figure above clearly shows how the factor of affordability directly informs the rate of the water disconnections across the various class and occupational groups.

V. Poverty and Politics

Desai has homogenised the classes and the social citizenship crises of township residents in Durban into a lump group of the "the poors." He pointed out that in townships such as Chatsworth:

> Race and class, the old chestnuts, still loom large. But new political variants have emerged, happily immune to infection by Robben Islanders, exiles, and ethnic entrepreneurs; the ruling post-apartheid political faction. Unemployed, single mother, community defender, neighbor, factory worker, popular criminal, rap artist and *genuine ou* (good human being). These constructs have all come to make up the collective identities of "the poors."[42]

Desai fails to recognise that the 'poors,' that is a homogenous grouping of people defined by similar socio-economic characteristics, does not exist in South Africa, and has never been in existence. The class and occupational barriers in townships both have socio-economic and political implications in the way people view themselves as members of society, and in their relations with the political authorities and institutions. The fieldwork research survey I undertook points to the enormous differences in wage rates between different occupational groups.

Most of the heads of households in the Mpumalanga sample (36 per cent) are pensioners (Figure 1). The majority of the sampled pensioners, 73 per cent, are females. Their median earnings are between R501 – R800 per month, with an average of five dependants per household headed by a pensioner. Yet this group has contacted the CCF the least when confronted with water billing irregularity problems, and has preferred to consult with the DMWS. This is also found among the domestic workers and the professionals. These patterns, among the better and the worst off households, might be due to the age and gender of breadwinners which inform the extent of their family responsibilities and, consequently, their avoidance of any disruptions in the maintenance of their household.

Most pensioners sampled are between the ages of 50 – 60, followed by the ages 60 – 70. Needless to say, all the domestic workers are females, and the majority of them are between the ages of 40 – 50. Firstly, the generation gap might explain their reverence for

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[42] Desai, A. (2002) **"We are the Poors": Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa,** (Monthly Review Press, New York).

political authorities and institutions. The need to maintain order and continuity in the household might explain the preference for seeking advice from the DMWS rather than from the CCF, despite the fact that the DMWS is popularly seen as the foremost perpetrator of cost-recovery policy. Secondly, that they are heads of households with an average of five dependants per household might explain the fear for taking the risk attached with being perceived to be aligned or sympathising with anti-state social movements.

The group among the sample that has contacted the CCF the most are the factory workers. At the same time, it is crucial to note that the survey did not go into the details of the nature of the contacts, and how elaborate the contacts and relationships of Mpumalanga residents were with the CCF. The CCF at the time of the fieldwork research survey did not have any facilities, offices, contact details (except through certain leaders), nor were there any leaders and activists made available to the public for consultations. It therefore cannot be determined from the survey how the Mpumalanga residents who elected to contact the CCF instead of the DMWS did so, and what help they received from it. It is likely from fieldwork observations that most contacts with the CCF mentioned here were informal contacts, and that by 'contacting' the CCF, the sampled Mpumalanga residents referred to relating their water bills problems to the CCF-aligned youth activists in the township on a loose, infrequent and informal basis. At the same time, many sampled factory workers, and indeed other residents belonging to other class or income groups, indicated that they contacted both the CCF and the DMWS.

There is no homogenous group called 'the poors. Rather, there is a mixture of classes and income groups, whose living standards, economic and social roles they occupy overlap. Mzwanele Mayekiso, a former SANCO leader from Alexandra Township, aptly noted that:

> Can, for example, township civics represent poor and working people and the small but important black middle class at the same time? Can we represent people with homes as well as the homeless? Can we confront the diverse issues that divide people and that cross-cut our various identities? (No one, after all, is simply and solely a proletarian, a mother, a township resident, a young person, a black South African. We are often many of these, and this fact shapes the way we think, act, speak, and relate to others). Can we overcome leadership styles that are sometimes not as conducive to democratic practice as we might want, and as our movement requires?[43]

Desai further argued that there was a re-conceptualisation of identities reflected in the new post-apartheid community struggles. These new socio-economic identities have surpassed racial identities, and the struggling communities now regard themselves homogenously as the 'poors.' Writing about how the Indian community of Chatsworth struggles spread to the Durban African townships as a result of the prevalent existence of the 'poors', Desai observed that:

> These hidden struggles have been epic, because they have taken guts and imagination. Above all, before a new basis of solidarity could emerge, the ethnic handicap had to be overcome. Chatsworth itself was created as a dumping ground for people classified as Indian by the apartheid system, and most of the people who live there are Indian. This made participants vulnerable to race baiting. They were Indians dissatisfied with an African government. As events have unfolded, it has become apparent that this ethnic dimension has been a blessing. It bestowed upon people crude accusations from desperate politicians. These accusations, the people considered and then rejected with the formulation of counter-identities. As these upsurges have spread to African communities like Mpumalanga, coloured communities like Wentworth and Tafelsig, so these new identities have been strengthened and attempts to divide-and-rule are met more with laughter than concern.[44]

In 2000, in one of these land eviction incidents, in which the riot police were involved, it turned violent and led to may residents sustaining serious injuries.[45] Women who were also heads of households mainly led the anti-eviction campaigns in Chatsworth. This was because as heads of households, they were particularly affected by the land eviction campaigns. Also, they were acutely affected by the closing down of the clothing

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[43] Mayekiso, M. (1996) **Township Politics: Civic Struggles for a New South Africa**, (Monthly Review Press, New York), (p. 13).
[44] Ibid.
[45] Desai has documented a number of these incidents in his book, *We are the Poors.*.

and textile factories in Chatsworth from the early 1990s, which employed women predominantly. The grassroots social mobilisation in Chatsworth mainly affected the Bayview area, where council housing is predominant and poverty and unemployment are most acute. Class factors clearly shape agenda-making for the grassroots social movements.

The CCF, with some leaders from Chatsworth, linked up with the Mpumalanga-based youth activists, who were active within a structure called Youth for Work (YFW), which was an initiative of the Alternative and Information Development Centre (AIDC) based in Cape Town. Indian plumbers retrenched from the public services sector lent their skills in illegally reconnecting residents to the water supply, and were thus dubbed 'struggle plumbers.' The origin of the term remains unclear. It made its published debut in Desai's book. The tactics that the struggle plumbers use to illegally reconnect residents disconnected from their water supply grid were influenced by the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC)'s *Operation Khanyisa*'s technique of illegally reconnecting residents back to the electricity grid. The SECC is the first social movement to institute the illegal reconnection of power, a technique which has now been adopted by many social movements. Furthermore, the term *Operation Vulamanzi* is borrowed from *Operation Khanyisa*, although the latter is more efficiently and effectively organised than the former. The former in Soweto is operated through a clear command structure of the SECC, and there is a clear communication line. In Durban, in both Chatsworth and Mpumalanga, the 'struggle plumbers' are more independent, and operate at the request of the disconnected residents, with very little or no command from the township's social movement.

Despite these connections the legacy of race remains an influential force in determining the agenda(s) of social movements. Most importantly, as highlighted in the

Mpumalanga case, it influences the leadership of the social movements in the townships. Desai argued that there emerged a new community of 'the poors' whose identification is informed by shared socio-economic crises, rendering obsolete the criterion of race as a major force in collective action. As will be illustrated in the next chapter, the troubled relationship between the CCF and the Mpumalanga youth activists affiliated to the CCF further buttresses the notion that grassroots social movements are influenced by race and the spaces in which different racial groups organise. These political geographies fracture organisation. Zakhele Hlongwane, one of the Mpumalanga youth activists, warily pointed out that:[46]

> ...but the struggle *esikusona angifuni ukuthi abantu* one day *bapushe i*mission *abangayazi ukuthi* is driven *ngubani* (but the struggle we are in, I don't want one day people not knowing as to who's driving the mission). The problem *esinayo* is who's going to drive the poors. (The problem I have is who is going to drive the poors?) I don't want *abantu abamnyama* (black people) because they are in the majority, *abantu abangama* victims *e*poverty (people who are victims of poverty) . Although there are Indians, but *i*national majority are blacks (although there are Indians, but the national majority is black). We can fight until we die if *ama*blacks *azophinde futhi aphinde enzeinto eyenzeka ngo* 1994, *avotele ukuthi ahlutshekiswe, uyangiandastenda* (We can fight until we die if black people are going to repeat what they did in 1994, to vote to be impoverished, do you understand me)? Although there was a liberation struggle against apartheid, but this time we don't want *ukuthi kuphinde kwenzeke ukuthi abantu abamnyama bapushe inkqwelo e*wrong *abangayi drayvi bona* as blacks, *abayidrayvelwayo futhi* (we do not want to find that again black people push a wrong vehicle that they are not driving themselves as blacks, a vehicle that they are driven for). Although you can be black, *bayidrayvelwa ngumuntu oyiqhuba nge* agenda *yakhe* (they are being driven for by someone who is driving it with his own agenda).[47]

Issues highlighted here suggest that the legacy of race, and linked economic disparities, has influenced the agendas of social movements. Race and its legacy have been fundamental in the shaping of the economic geographies of different areas, and social

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[46] **Interview with Mpumalanga Youth Activists**, (pp. 9 – 10).
[47] Ibid.

movements structures rooted in those spaces. There is a clear demand for social movements to reflect the racial composition of the areas they operate in. Most importantly, as is pointed out in the following chapter, there is a growing demand from the township residents for the leadership of the social movements to racially mirror the communities they are mobilising in.

VI. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the variables that went into making up the political and social atmosphere that gave birth to collective action mobilisation against the cost recovery policy on water in Mpumalanga. It examined the origins of the initiation of the public-private partnerships, the awarding of leases, concessions and management contracts to various international private water companies in different municipalities across South Africa. It is important to understand the nature and the make-up of particular relationships between private international water and municipalities, in particular areas, as these relationships give rise to different atmospheres for social movements' mobilisation.

The 20 to 30 year concessions awarded to the municipalities of Fort Beaufort, Queenstown and Stutterheim, not only proved oppressive to the communities in those areas, but proved unsustainable for the municipalities as well. The municipalities of these three Eastern Cape towns were unable to collect the increased municipal services rates charges. At the same time, the municipalities also failed to pay the WSSA the service charges, because they (the municipalities) under-collected the revenue that accrued from the

municipal services charges. Of more importance in these developments is not necessarily the failure of these initiatives, but the relationship between international capital, domestic capital, and the local state. The complexities of these relationships paint a more nuanced picture of how globalisation is not necessarily all that powerful, but is compromised, undercut and diluted by forces from various elements of civil society and domestic capital at the local level.

Following from this experience, Durban avoided taking this route, and opted for the 'tri-sector partnership.' It might be argued that the differences between Durban's tri-sector partnership and the leases, concessions and managements contracts experimented with in other municipalities are marginal and superficial. The leases, concessions and management contracts on water awarded to the private water companies sold the corporatisation of water services delivery through warnings about the projected mounting of water consumption, opposition by 'militant' trade unions, and the promise to integrate water affordability with the willingness and ability to pay. The KwaZulu-Natal Project levelled similar arguments as well. The consequences of the implementation of the KwaZulu-Natal Project were similar. The DMWS is also experiencing problems with the collection of revenue accruing from the municipal services charges and the water bills.

This particular route that Durban took is deliberately not acknowledged by the new social movements in their bid to draw a false picture of blanket privatisation of municipal services delivery. They have painted a picture of the Durban municipality having completely privatised the water services delivery machinery. Perhaps this is their political strategy which serves to make more visible their presence and heighten their prominence in the country's political landscape.

CHAPTER 7

Crowd Renting or Struggling from Below?: The Concerned Citizens' Forum (CCF) in the Mpumalanga Township, 1999 - 2005

I. Introduction

This chapter rests on two fundamental issues. Firstly, it investigates the origins and the nature of the CCF in an attempt to gain a full understanding of the movement. There has been little published research on the anti-neoliberal social movements in the post-apartheid era. Also, social movements that have sprung up from the late 1990s are in the process of defining themselves, politically and culturally. The new movements are themselves ambivalent in reference to their relationship and interaction with the state. This is partly due to the history of social movements in South Africa stretching back to the 1980s, and the multiple functions they had to fulfil in varying political atmospheres. In the 1980s, South African social movements played out the roles of anti-apartheid insurgent movements and community arbitrators. Increasingly, from the early 1990s they occupied a strategic role in the negotiations for local government restructuring, land reform and similar quasi-local government functions. Steinberg aptly captures the conundrum that had faced the South African social movements in the post-apartheid South African dispensation:

> In this context, the question 'what are the civics?' is no existential indulgence. To travel the path from organ of resistance, to quasi-local government, to

> voluntary association in the space of four years is the stuff of an identity crisis. It unearths what is always a very fragile and difficult question: what is representation, and more
> particularly, what does it entail at the institutional level?[1]

It is crucial to understand where and how the new social movements are positioned in the current South African political map. This chapter suggests that the CCF is not like the majority of the organisations that are part of the anti-neoliberal social movements, especially when taking into consideration the nature of the leadership crises it has undergone. It is not suggested here that the CCF is a microcosm of the national condition of the anti-neoliberal new social movements in South Africa, nor that there is in fact 'a national condition' of the anti-neoliberal new social movements. The CCF has proved to be eclectic. From the time it was founded in 1999, it has on some occasions regarded itself as fundamentally anti-state ideologically, while on others it has been more concerned with the immediate and short-term collective consumption bargaining. It has vacillated between being a civic movement at one point, and then defining itself more like an anti-neoliberal social movement at other times, depending on the political atmosphere prevalent at the particular moment.

The chapter then moves on to unpack the leadership and organisational conflicts within the CCF. It covers conflicts its core leadership experienced with other activists and other organisations in and outside Durban. More particularly, there is a closer investigation of the CCF's conflicts with the activists mobilising in Mpumalanga. It has tackled extraordinary battles on water disconnections and council

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[1] Steinberg, J. **A Place for Civics in a Liberal Democratic Polity? The Fate of Local Institutions of Resistance after Apartheid**, in, Adler, G. & Steinberg, J. (eds.) (2000) **From Comrades to Citizens: The South African Civics Movement and the Transition to Democracy**, (pp. 175 – 6), (McMillan Press Ltd., London).

flat evictions in Chatsworth. Mounting its battles mainly using legal, constitutional and mass campaign tactics, the CCF won great acclaim as a new movement in the new anti-neoliberal terrain of struggles. It played a critical role in the Manqele constitutional test case on water disconnections and evictions in Chatsworth, and that catapulted it to great heights within a short time of its establishment. Against that background, it is intriguing to study the relative decline of the CCF and its substantively chequered activism between 1999 and 2002.

The conflicts that have belaboured the CCF from around 2000 have been associated with various logistical political difficulties. These have ranged from the alleged lack of organisational transparency; lack of a proper and consistent perception of how the organisation functions; allegations about the centralisation of decision-making; and the allegedly patronising attitude of the CCF intellectual-cum-activist core leadership towards the black youth activists of Mpumalanga. Difficulties attributed to the lack of proper groundwork mobilisation have led to disorganised mass campaigns and culminated into accusations of 'crowd renting' from the CCF-aligned Mpumalanga youth activists against the core CCF leadership. The latter allege that the CCF intellectual-cum-activists have sought to improve their political *curricula vitae*. This chapter then examines the critique levelled at the CCF and its leadership in Mpumalanga from 1999 to 2002.

One other significant issue explored here is the concept of 'community' within the realm of the dynamics of community or neighbourhood politics. Social movements are based in communities, and the hegemony that they hold or claim to hold over their communities has always been a terrain of contestation for power and

control. This discourse has plagued South African history since the beginnings of the anti-colonial movements and mobilisation. The question of what constitutes a political community became intensified and more visible in the course of the development of movements, state-created (e.g. native advisory boards) or created outside the realms of the control of the apartheid state from the 1940s to the 1980s. Contestations on the political community are explored in this chapter through an analysis of the Mpumalanga political community, and how the politics of the community continue to influence the trajectory of the mobilisation of the CCF in Mpumalanga.

II. The Birth of the CCF and Politics in Durban, 1999 – 2002

CCF emerged as the Concerned Citizens' Group (CCG) in mid-1999. Figures such as Prof. Fatima Meer, biographer of Nelson Mandela and a veteran ANC activist, sociologist and writer, and another sociologist and journalist, Dr. Ashwin Desai, and some other former ANC and former MDM activists, played a prominent role in its formation. Prof. Meer was commissioned by the ANC to lobby the Durban Indian population to vote for the ANC in the 1999 elections. It emerged in the anti-eviction and water disconnection struggles of Chatsworth, a predominantly Indian township in Durban.

Chatsworth had been planned from 1960, and was officially set up under the Group Areas Act in 1964. By 1980, it had eleven neighbourhood units consisting of 7,

000 sub-economic and 14, 000 economic areas.[2] Chatsworth intended to house 165, 000 people, but was reported to have held about 250, 000 people in peak periods. According to a 1974 survey, it had low levels of unemployment.[3] During the early phase of the setting up of the township, rented accommodation was fairly cheap. By 1995, Chatsworth had 26, 151 dwellings, with about a total of 115, 720 people.[4]

Chatsworth is located in the South Central Local Council area. The major heavy industrial economic activities in the area centre on the petro-chemicals, pulp, industrial chemicals and heavy engineering. The major light industry economic activities are clothing, chemicals, paper products, engineering, food products and beverages. Other economic activities are wholesale, retail, finance, transport and the service industry.[5]

When Prof. Fatima Meer was commissioned by the ANC to campaign in the Indian townships of Durban, she and the CCG came into an area that was belaboured by economic difficulties. The major sources of employment in Chatsworth were the clothing and the textile industries. In the DMA, the major economic activity that contributed the most to its total Gross Geographic Product (GGP) was the manufacturing industry. In 1991, the manufacturing sector contributed 32, 5 per cent to the DMA's total GGP. In 1988, the clothing industry ranked fifth in terms of output to the DMA's GGP. The textiles and clothing manufacturing sectors contributed 9, 2 pre cent and 5, 6 per cent respectively to the DMA's GGP in the last decade. The

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[2] Freund, B. (1995) **Insiders and Outsiders: The Indian Working Class of Durban, 1910 – 1990**, (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg; Heinemann, London; James Curry Ltd., London).
[3] Ibid.
[4] **Population and Housing in the Durban Metropolitan Area** (1995), (Urban Strategy Corporate Services, Durban).
[5] **The Durban Metropolitan Area Investment Profile** (1995), (Economic Unit, Urban Strategy Department, Durban Metro Council).

clothing industry ranked first in terms of employment absorption, taking in 18, 2 per cent. The clothing industry had as well the largest number of firms in the DMA, numbering 433.[6]

From the early 1990s, the manufacturing sector's share in the DMA declined due to the national economic recession. From the early to the late 1990s, it had declined in absolute terms at a greater rate than the national average.[7] This hugely affected areas such as Chatsworth, whose major sources of employment have been the clothing and the textile industries. As the *Economic Development* report pointed out:

> Some manufacturing sub-sectors suffered heavily in the recession and have been unable to face up to the growing international competition. The most notable of these have been textiles and clothing where many firms have ceased operating and job losses have occurred in the tens of thousands.[8]

In 1980, Chatsworth's economic contribution to the DMA's GGP was 5, 3 per cent. It declined to no more than 1 per cent in 1991.[9] Richard Pithouse observed that in 1995, Chatsworth still had 435 employers. However, by 1999, that number had declined to a mere 166.[10] He pointed out that, "The ANC moved quickly to lower tariffs on imported clothes with the result that the local industry was decimated and tens of thousands of jobs lost."[11]

When the CCG came to Chatsworth in 1999, the socio-economic insecurities that the lower working class Indian population felt were exacerbated by the perceived

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[6] Cited in, **Economic Development Department: Corporate Services**, (Urban Strategy Corporate Services, Durban). Statistics compiled by the Centre for Statistical Services, 1988).
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid, (p. 11).
[9] Ibid.
[10] Pithouse, R. (2000) **South Africa's undeclared war on the poor**, (Green Left Weekly). See also http: www. Greenleft.org.au/back/2000/429p28.htm
[11] Ibid, (p. 1).

threats of affirmative action. On the other hand, the Indian middle class fared well with the new ANC-led dispensation. Their economic position did not make them vulnerable to economic insecurities that the Indian working class found itself exposed to.

Low-income earning Indians faced increasing council housing rent and evictions, which occurred in areas of Chatsworth and Bayview. The heightened unemployment rate in Chatsworth unmasked frustrations with water and electricity rates increases and disconnections. Council housing tenants who could not afford to pay their water and electricity bills were often given notices of eviction by the Durban council. If they further failed to pay their bills, the Durban council and its security forces then moved in to physically evict the residents.

The low income-earning Indian population confronted directly a crisis of social citizenship. Therefore, the CCG-CCF entered the politics of consumption bargaining in Chatsworth at a crossroads with political, geographical, economic and social factors that disenchanted the Indian population of Durban with the ANC. The CCG-CCF translated their frustrations as anti-state, and assumed that they affected all the urban poor. The CCG-CCF exploited these conditions in a township that had a traditionally thin ANC support base for the legitimisation of the launch of their own 'social movement.'

At the time that Prof. Meer went to Chatsworth, the ANC, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the Democratic Alliance (DA) -- the result of an amalgamation between the Democratic Party (DP) and the National Party (NP) -- and the Indian Minority Front (MF), were all competing to capture the Indian vote. Post-apartheid

political trends in KwaZulu-Natal highlighted the Indian vote as of strategic political importance for all the major political parties. Of the one million or so people of Indian origin in South Africa, between 600, 000 and 700, 000 are based in KwaZulu-Natal.[12]

The Indian population in 1999 constituted about 27 per cent of the population in the DMA, while the African population was about 56 per cent; the white 10 per cent and the Coloured population approximately 3 per cent. Although the ANC had the support of the majority of African votes in the urban areas, the IFP had a comfortable majority in the rural areas. Indian votes could be and were crucial in gaining the majority of the province's legislature seats and the premiership. Amichand Rajbansi, the leader of the MF, emphasised in 1999 that the Indian vote "...has never been so important in South Africa since apartheid ended."[13]

In 1999, the ANC was in control of the DMA, but the provincial premiership was under the IFP, which was in coalition with the DA (Coalition for Change). The ANC intended to win the KwaZulu-Natal province. In 1999, the ANC's voter campaign efforts "...overshadowed those of its political opponents."[14] It was "planning to win the Indian vote which research shows could give it a majority over the IFP which now holds power in the province."[15]

According to the Helen Suzman Foundation research survey results in 1999, 67 per cent of Indians in Durban did not consider changing the party they had voted for in 1994. Approximately 42 per cent of Durban Indians intended to vote for the

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[12] Govender, P. **Nats get Indian backing**, *Sunday Times*, 21 February 1999.
[13] **S. African parties lobby for Indian votes** (http: www. headlines.sify.com/3107news3.html).
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.

NNP in 1999, while 28 per cent showed preference for the then DP, and only 23 per cent aligned themselves with the ANC.[16] In 1999 it was predicted that, "The New National Party is set to capture the bulk of the Indian vote in this year's general elections..."[17] The NNP had a firm hold of the Indian townships in Durban, with the DP, especially in Phoenix, the second largest Indian township in Durban after Chatsworth, following behind.

The survey that Prof. Meer conducted revealed that about 70 per cent of Chatsworth residents were unemployed, and that approximately 40 per cent were in arrears of municipal services rates.[18] The survey results also revealed that the marginalized Indian working class was "not concerned about their former oppressors but were angry at their present oppressors".[19] On the transformation of the CCG from an ANC lobby group to a grassroots social movement, Heinrich Bohmke recalled that:

> So Fatima Meer at that stage formed an organisation called the Concerned Citizens' Group (CCG), and it was meant to go into Indian areas and dissuade voters from voting for white parties, which really meant that they should vote for the ANC. But that wasn't said openly because people were so antagonistic towards the ANC. What then happened is in meetings with people, Fatima Meer became greatly convinced that the criticisms [against] the government were correct, in essence. And people's alienation from the government and the electoral process was correct. And she did a survey to put to the ANC, to show them why these guys were disaffected. And the survey results were really horrifying.[20]

Prof. Meer submitted her report to the ANC. Durban ANC local councillors rejected the results. They revealed that the economic difficulties in Bayview,

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[16] Govender, P., *Sunday Times*.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Pithouse, R.
[19] Ibid.
[20] **Interview with Heinrich Bohmke**, (24 October 2002), (Interviewed by Buntu Siwisa), (pp. 1-2).

Chatsworth, were worsened by the increase of council housing rent. Bohmke further recalled that while Prof. Meer was in Chatsworth:

> ...land evictions and water disconnections started happening. She then had first hand knowledge of the fact that people could not pay. She put this information before the ANC at the local level. They fobbed her off, and they insisted on cost recovery mechanisms which were the general policies that came from above...With that kind of Damascus Road turn that Fatima Meer had, and that coterie of activists around her, then the CCG started to concern itself not with the electoral process anymore, not with trying to persuade who to vote [for], but to actually then respond to the little old lady who was getting evicted on Block 75G in Bayview, or the homeless people in Weelbedacht, and so on. So, it started in Chatsworth, and it gradually started growing. People started realising that these problems were common to all townships. So that's the history, and it's really just acted out that history from then on.[21]

There are conflicting views on how the CCF 'gradually started growing', as Bohmke was given to describe its growth and development, and moved on to mobilise in the predominantly Coloured and African townships such as Mpumalanga. There is the perception held by the CCF's core intellectual-cum-activist leadership that the CCF progressively grew and moved onto the African and Coloured townships. This perception maintains that the CCF, due to its successful mobilisation and progressive image, moved on to the African townships.

The Mpumalanga youth activists maintained that before the CCF moved on to Mpumalanga, and before they became aligned to the CCF, they we were organised under the auspices of the Youth for Work (YFW), which is a nation-wide initiative directed by the Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC), an NGO based in Cape Town. They further maintained that after realising the positive effects

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[21] Ibid.

of collective mobilisation, they reasoned that it would be to the township's advantage to join up with the CCF. Hlongwane pointed out that:

> So as Mpumalanga we formed CCG, although there was an old organisation, which was Youth for Work. But the CCF, our position in CCF was to organise other organisations to make and to come out with some strategies to fight the water problem. We found out that the water problems are not like we have to fight the water problem, because we see that it's because of privatisation. Although we are fighting for water, but we know that there are people who are fighting for electricity, because in Mpumalanga there is pre-paid electricity. So it's where we began to fight...So fighting a municipal [authority], you cannot fight it as one township, which Mpumalanga is the smallest township... So we decided that we must go to other [movements / townships], we are not going back, we must work together like the other townships. Big townships like uMlazi, KwaMashu, and then we engaged with them. We go there, and comrades were having problems, others they don't know how to fight those problems. I think it's where we get the position to work with the CCF.[22]

Ngwenya as well vouched for Hlongwane's position, as he maintained that:

> My position in the Mpumalanga CCF, it started out when I was a member of Youth for Work, and Youth for Work was an organisation which was fighting for socio-economic justice. We were working closely with the CCG of Mpumalanga and the CCG of Mpumalanga was operating under the banner of CCF. And it's where as a youth I joined the CCF, and CCF was one of the organisations which I thought [it] will serve the needs of the poor... So CCF was the only organisation which was available at that time. They introduced themselves, and they also gave us a clear direction of what is it this Metro stands for, how did they come about here in Mpumalanga and say... It's where we get the direction, and now we are aware *ukuthi umaspala lo elok'shini* is coming with services of which *azoding' imali* (that the municipality here in the township is coming with services that are going to require money).[23]

On the same issue, Mchunu commented that:

> The reason why I joined the struggle, I suspect, I don't suspect but I feel something. I mean what they are doing to poor people... who am I talking about? *I*government
> [the government] of course. So that's how I joined the struggle. And I work with Youth for Work. So that's how I ended up working with CCF. That's how I became an activist.[24]

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[22] **Interview with Mpumalanga CCFActivists**, (p. 1).
[23] Ibid, (p. 2).
[24] Ibid, (p. 1).

The three Mpumalanga youth activists, Hlongwane, Ngwenya and Mchunu, all pointed to their involvement as activists within the YFM, in the process realising the positive effects of collective mobilisation through linking up and engaging with other activists in other movements in Durban. Through realising that the cost recovery policies on water and electricity, the hiking of municipal services rates and evictions had been implemented city-wide and were thus affecting virtually all the townships in Durban, they joined the CCF.

The CCF was one of the movements that was organised under the banner of the APF. On the other hand, the AIDC is an NGO which was responsible for financing and assisting with the provision of resources for some of the social movements affiliated to the APF. Before the Mpumalanga youth activists actively became involved in the CCF, they had been mainly involved in workshops, educational and other anti-neoliberal alternative media initiatives, such as making documentaries. \

There is a connecting thread between all these movements and organisations. Despite that, there are subtly simmering disputes among them, mainly on contentions of power, influence and control. These contentions are mainly played out at the local level (Durban) between the CCF intellectual-cum-activists and the Mpumalanga youth activists; and at the national level, that is, between the CCF intellectual-cum-activists and the APF's core leadership. There were concerns from the CCF core leadership regarding the leadership style and tactics of the APF leadership, and the manner in which they directed the social movements affiliated to them. These reservations centred on the strict ideologies and behaviour, allegedly framed by the APF

leadership, to which social movements were supposed to adhere. Bohmke made note of this conflict through his observation of a march which was mobilised during the running of the UN-sponsored World Conference Against Racism (WCAR),[25] which was held in Durban between 31 August and 7 September 2001. Bohmke recalled that:

> Those kinds of paleo-Marxist types [APF leaders], they take all the joy and all the marrow out of life. They don't connect to desires at all. They are party-poopers in many ways. In the WCAR march here earlier in Durban, when people decided amongst themselves that they are going to be a bit more militant, to taunt the cops a bit, these same Trots and whatever, were chief marshals. They were the ones pushing the people back trying to stop people, and actually assaulting people, pushing them on the chest, you know, because they had this greater idea that we must have this big march, but the march is a symbolic event, and that's all. We've got enough rituals. We've got enough ritual events. It might be uncomfortable. It might lead to here and there a couple of arrests, but we have to allow people to express themselves, to constitute themselves as a power.[26]

Through another anecdote regarding the time of the Social Movements' *Indaba* (SMI), which ran at the same time as the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and was organised in opposition to it, Bohmke recalled his reservations about the APF's mobilisation and organisation tactics. On discussions regarding the Gold Reef City, that is, plans concerned with what was to happen to it, he recalled how the Mpumalanga youth activists were marginalised in the APF's organised forum in Johannesburg:

> And I think that an event which I found fantastic at the SMI (Social Movements *Indaba*) is there was a pre-figuration of what that could be at Gold Reef City, whatever were these giant curvaceous falls which are not being used anymore. People were having debates in corners, there were fires burning, there was a lecture going on in another area, there were videos being shown, book launches. But at the same time, there were people, amongst themselves wrapped in blankets talking late into the night, fighting, 'who's

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[25] The World Conference Against Racism (WCAR), sponsored by the United Nations, was open to all the UN member-states, and all the regional organisations and commissions that were involved in the preparation of regional meetings. It was also open to representatives of organisations that received standing invitations from the UN General Assembly to participate as observers. UN specialised mechanisms in the field of human rights, specialised UN agencies and interested NGOs were invited to participate as observers in the conference.

[26] **Interview with Bohmke,** (p. 7).

> gonna be in this delegate, who's gonna be in that?' The guys from Mpumalanga, they started drinking the whole night. I mean that was also fine. The next day they were ready for a scrap. But we couldn't impose on them the exact way to challenge the system. And I think that that is what this Marxist system is about. It's about wanting to impose a certain way of expressing your subjectivity, which is fundamentally foreign to where people are at. And I think it may always have been foreign.[27]

Apparently, from the reports that emanated from the CCF core leadership and the Mpumalanga youth activists, the latter were reprimanded by some APF leaders for consuming alcohol that whole evening.[28] This was taken by the APF leaders as a form of behaviour that indicated lack of seriousness on the part of some of the Durban delegation in the SMI. As a result, there has emerged a perception from the Durban side that their social movements possess a distinct nature and culture of social protest. However, there is no documentation to support this belief. Bohmke again described the manner in which the CCF held meetings and general annual meetings in a loose and more life-celebratory way, than the usual serious political discussions. He described it thus:

> This new politics that is coming up cannot be boring. One of the good things about the CCF is that in our annual general rally, we didn't have an annual general meeting, but in our annual general rally there was one political speech, and the rest was dancing, and hip-hop, and we had a pop group there, and it was just fun. There was no bored person inside that hall. It's about living and celebrating life, not only struggling for the bare necessities of life. It's also about valuing life form. And I think that that's the real criticism that I have about the form of organisation [relating to the APF's form of organisation].[29]

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[27] Ibid, (p. 8).
[28] **Interview with Heinrich Bohmke**. This did not particularly emanate from the recorded formal interview I had with Bohmke, but from the informal discussions I had with him before and after the interview.
[29] Ibid, (p. 7).

Political analysts and other leftists have criticised the CCF for its lack of leadership structures, clear ideological and strategy stances. Drew Forrest noted that the CCF:

> ...has no formal structure, preferring a loose association with leaders rooted in communities. Its community meetings are often boisterous, with much music and dancing. It is criticised by some on the left for lacking ideological coherence ---- its T-shirts carry slogans like "Smash GEAR ---- Celebrate Life."[30]

The Mpumalanga youth activists were aware of the advantages of linking up and engaging with the CCF. At the same time, they expressed complaints that the CCF core leadership did not allow them to make adequate contacts and initiate working relations with the APF and other international social movements.[31]

What should be noted here are the recurring themes of contentions over power and influences between social movements, civics and organisation at the local and regional level from the 1980s. The legacy of these conflicts and contentions could be traced back to the 1980s. When the UDF was founded in August 1983, it did not have a constitution, but a Declaration and Working Principles document which was "vaguely worded"[32]. As a result, "This meant that the Front could be almost whatever its leaders wanted it to be."[33] This did not mean that the UDF was loosely structured, or that its decision-making bodies were organised in an arbitrary manner. The UDF had a coherent and consistent decision-making hierarchical structure. At the helm of it was the National General Council (NGC), which was elected by the National

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[30] Forrest, D. **Social Movements: 'Ultra-Left' or 'Global Citizens'**, *Mail & Guardian*, (4 February, 2003), (http://www.queensu.ca/msp/pages/In_The_News/2003/Feb/3.htm).
[31] These comments were repeated in several discussions I had with the Mpumalanga youth activists in late 2002.
[32] Seekings, J. (2000) **The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983 – 1991**, (David Philip Publishers, Cape Town; James Curry, Oxford; Ohio University Press, Athens), (p. 16).
[33] Ibid.

Executive Committee (NEC), which was elected by the Regional General Council (RGC), which in turn was elected by the Regional General Council National Executive Committee (RGCNEC). The UDF's Declaration and Working Principles Document emphasised that affiliate organisations, civics and social movements remained autonomous from the UDF.[34] This had created an image of social movements strong at the central or national level, but disparate and conflict-ridden at the regional and local levels.

Even with the dissolution of the UDF and the subsequent formation of the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO) in March 1992, these disparities between social movements affiliated to SANCO lingered on. SANCO pushed for a central role in the negotiations for the restructuring of local government between 1992 and 93, especially on issues regarding the restructuring of municipal services and housing. Civics constituted the non-statutory delegation in the National Local Government Negotiating Forum (NLGNF), which was established in March 1993. Although the ANC initially gave accredited civics roles in community development and representation, it later developed reservations regarding SANCO's breadth of representativity and strength at grassroots local level. The ANC marginalised SANCO in decision-making during the process of the negotiations for the transition of local government. SANCO was also belaboured with financial and organisational difficulties. It was also marginalized because of its lack of coherence at the local levels. As Seekings explained, there was "...growing scepticism on the part of the ANC and others as to the breadth of civics' support. SANCO had no rivals at

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[34] See also, Van Kessel, I. (2000) **"Beyond Our Wildest Dreams": The United Democratic Front and the Transformation of South Africa**, (The University Press of Virginia, Virgnia).

the national level, but at the local level was often just one civic grouping among several."[35]

There has emerged a legacy of conflicts for the hegemony of constituencies between the umbrella movements, the regional and local affiliates. The conflict between the APF national leadership and the CCF core leadership might not necessarily be centred on the effectiveness of various mobilisation strategies. The CCF core leadership might be more concerned with the wrestling for power, influence and resources with the APF leadership. The CCF-aligned Mpumalanga youth activists, being heavily dependent on the CCF core leadership, might be expressing these limitations that they feel are imposed upon them as a result of them being caught up in the crossfire between the APF and the CCF leadership conflicts.

III. CCF, Leadership Crises and Mpumalanga Community Politics

According to the Constitution of the Concerned Citizens' Group (CCG), now the Concerned Citizens' Forum (CCF); CCG-CCF is "...a non-profit, non-government organisation seeking to protect and advance the rights and interests of people in accordance with democratic principles of non-sexism, non-racism, and non-discrimination within South Africa."[36] The CCG-CCF espouses the following aims and objectives:

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[35] Seekings, J. **After Apartheid: Civic Organizations in the 'New' South Africa**, in, Adler, G. & Steinberg, J. (eds.) (2000) **From Comrades to Citizens: The South African Civics Movement and the Transition to Democracy,** (McMillan Press Ltd., London), (p. 209).
[36] **Constitution of the Concerned Citizens' Group [CCG]**, (p. 1).

(i) To assist in the improvement in quality of life of the poorest and least able citizens of South Africa, by empowering them within the framework already laid down in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

(ii) To assist in the mobilisation of communities to become actively involved in their own governance.

(iii) To unite and assist communities in their resolve to realising their constitutional rights.

(iv) To actively monitor and ensure the government's implementation of its right and responsibilities to the people she serves.

(v) To design, develop and implement anti-poverty programmes and other mechanisms to safeguard communities from poverty traps.[37]

The elected positions in the executive committee of the CCF are the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. The Executive Committee may also co-opt additional members at its own discretion. There are nine portfolio positions, and these are Law and Human Rights; Media; Public Relations; Economic Development; Fundraising; Communities and Environment; Education and Technology; Health and Welfare; and Project Co-ordination.[38]

However, problems have surfaced regarding its lack of organisational visibility. This has resulted in a clear schism in the CCF between the intellectual-cum-leadership, which is mainly white and Indian and holds all the executive offices, and the youth activists in African townships, who are mainly responsible for groundwork activist work, and who have no positions in the CCF leadership. The

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

three main Mpumalanga CCF youth activists, who are the main anchor between Mpumalanga and the CCF, have criticised the CCF of the lack of visibility at the organisational level.

The youth activists are the core of the CCF-aligned Mpumalanga-based activists. They are not necessarily representative of the active youth activists, who constitute a very low number of about less than ten. However, they are the most active in Mpumalanga. Brian Ngwenya argued that:

> CCF is an organisation but there is no formal structure... *So bona labantu bangama*leaders *e*CCF, *angazi futhi ukuthi i*leadership *ikhethwe nini, abenzi lutho* in co-ordinating *izinto ezenzeka lapha* on the ground level. (And these people who are leaders of the CCF, and I don't even know when its leadership was elected, they are not doing anything to co-ordinate the events that occur at the ground level). So I think if *kuqala i*CCF *izi*arrange *yona ibe ne*formal structure, *ngicabanga ukuthi ezinye izinto zingaqonda* (So I think if the CCF can arrange itself and have a formal structure, then other things can sort themselves out well).[39]

The lack of organisational visibility trickles down to the question of the organisational relationship between the Mpumalanga youth activists and the CCF intellectual-cum-activists. The youth activists have condemned the CCF intellectual-cum-activists of using them to organise people for marches and other activities without any proper and thorough political education of the township residents, nor without properly informing the township residents of the purpose behind the marches. Ngwenya pointed out that:

> But they [CCF core leadership] come up to us, *asivelanga sathi sifun' usizo* (we didn't come up to them and say that we needed their help), to be honest as uZakhele (as Zakhele), because *bafika bathi thina masifak' abantu emateksini* (they just came here and said that we must get people into taxis), like organise buses. It's hard to organise *i*bus, *uoganayze abantu abayi 20 000*

[39] **Interview with Mpumalanga**, (pp. 3- 4).

eMpumalanga bengazi ukuthi bay' emashini yani, uyangi undastenda (it's hard to organise a bus for 20 000 people in Mpumalanga when the people don't even know why they have to march, do you understand me*?)* Like with the ten rands campaign, people had to understand the ten rand campaign.[40]

Hlongwane and Mchunu further emphasised the plight of 'crowd renting':

B.S: Buntu Siwisa (Interviewer)
Z.H: Zakhele Hlongwane (Interviewee)
T.M: Thando Mchunu (Interviewee)

Z.H: We want to know and be involved. *Ma uyi* ally, *uyabona i*CCF *iba nama* allies (if you are an ally, you see, the CCF has allies). *Ama* allies *kufuneka abe involved kwama* particular activities *azakwenzeka* (allies have to be involved in particular activities that are going to take place). But Ashwin Desai won't involve [us], and Heinrich Bohmke won't involve [us]. They'll come up with a plan, and then they'll need the support of the masses. They even call us troops.

B.S: Call you what?

Z.H: Troops. I'm telling you! They even say that we have to organise troops. And then Ashwin Desai even said that Stalin was accusing, I don't know what's the name, saying, 'why you are inviting [ ]? Do you have troops? If you don't have troops, you can't say you're in the struggle.' They even call us troops. That is why we are having a conflict with them, Buntu. That's a true story.

T.M: We are troops of monkeys.

B.S: Troops of what?

T.M: Troops of monkeys.[41]

Z.H: Baboons. How can they call us comrades troops?

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[40] Ibid, (p. 2).
[41] Reference to the 'troops of monkeys' or 'troops of baboons' made by the youth activists is a misinterpretation of the context of what Desai was referring to by troops. Desai was possibly referring to the conflicts between Stalin and Trotsky. Desai's reference to Stalin was presumably to his (Stalin's) alleged question, 'How many divisions has the Pope?' Desai's alleged comments were open to misinterpretation by the Mpumalanga-based youth activists who were possibly unfamiliar with the conflicts between Stalin and Trotsky. Whatever the nature of the misunderstanding, the revealing use of the term 'troops' suggests that 'troops' are to take directions from officers or political or military commissars.

The problem of 'crowd renting' and the allegations of exploitation levelled by them against the CCF core leadership is inextricably intertwined with various factors that point to the lack of resources, the socio-economic gap between the CCF core leadership and the Mpumalanga youth activists, the lack of organisational capacity in Mpumalanga, and the legacy of the 1980s' exploitative use of township youths for 'militant' groundwork mobilisation.

Firstly, there is a vast socio-economic gap between the CCF core leadership and the Mpumalanga youth activists. Members of the CCF core leadership were mainly leftist university educated intellectuals with professional and secure employment positions. Most of them had connections with the former University of Natal in Durban and the former University of Durban-Westville, as well as with the student movements there, especially with the socialist student movement at the former University of Durban-Westville. The leader of the CCF, Ashwin Desai, was a lecturer in journalism at the former Natal Technikon in Durban, and was also connected to the IBR on the campus of the University of Natal. Fazel Khan, one of the CCF organisers, was a lecturer of the recently introduced undergraduate Globalisation Studies course at the former University of Durban-Westville. Prof. Fatima Meer, the core founder of the CCF, was also a significant presence in the founding of the IBR.

The centralisation of decision-making might be attributable to this class and generational chasm between the CCF core leadership and the Mpumalanga youth activists. The core of the Mpumalanga youth activists were between the ages of 20 to 28 years of age. They were mainly unemployed and had dropped out of high school. Out of the three leading activists, only Brian Ngwenya was a student. He was enrolled

at the Natal Technikon. Unlike the other two, he resided with his family in Mpumalanga. Zakhele Hlongwane was involved with Indymedia, an alternative media initiative programme initiated by the AIDC. He had been involved in documenting the struggles over water, like the short documentary on Operation *Vulamanzi* that was shown at the Social Movements *Indaba* at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg with Naomi Klein in it. Thando Mchunu was also unemployed, and was also part of Indymedia and other workshops on anti-neoliberal propaganda.

Ngwenya voiced their concern of the distance between them and the CCF core leadership, as he questioned:

> ...*bona i*leadership *oo*Heinrich Bohmke *njengoba bekhokile la na ngingakwazi ukuzikhokela le zinto*(...they as the leadership, like Heinrich Bohmke and the rest, as they have paid where I have not been able to pay for these things). So *i*question *engifuna engizibuza yona* as *i*leader *yase*Mpumalanga, as *i*leader *kwi*youth; these people *ngoba* they can pay, *ba ena amasalari banemisebenzi yabo,* why? (So, the question I ask myself as a leader of Mpumalanga, as a youth leader; these people, as they can afford to pay, they are earning salaries and they have jobs, why?) I feel like they want to benefit something from the community, like other political parties *ababhenefithile, abahleli kamnandi la, uyabo abadla kamnandi epalamente* (who had benefited, and now they are living comfortably, you see, they are well-fed in parliament).[42]

They found that they were used to do preparatory work for marches and other mass campaigns without being properly informed about the nature of the campaign they were going to get the Mpumalanga residents involved in.

This is also the 1980s' legacy of the township youths' involvement in township mass mobilisation. In the 1980s, the UDF and other social movements relied on the youth, popularly known as the 'Young Lions,' as Oliver Tambo in a radio

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[42] Ibid.

broadcast in January 1985[43] called them. They were favoured by the ANC underground and exiled leadership for militant or radical community groundwork mobilisation. Seekings, explaining this phenomenon of them as youth activists being used as 'troops'[44] in Mpumalanga, maintained that:

> Young black South Africans were the so-called 'shock troops' or 'foot soldiers' in the struggle for political change. They boycotted school classes, demonstrated, built barricades and fought street battles against the state's security forces, and took action against alleged collaborators. The comrades rendered whole areas 'ungovernable' and helped to build structures of 'people's power.'[45]

This meant that the majority of the youths in the 1980s' black townships were only familiar with the intricate politics of the struggle only up to the point of popular anti-apartheid rhetoric. That is why the ANC felt that in the early 1990s, the 'Young Lions'' energies had to be channelled properly, so as not to mar the ANC's negotiations for constitutional changes. In Mpumalanga, the youth activists voiced concerns regarding despondency and their lack of understanding of the anti-neoliberal politics beyond the organisation of marches against the Ethekwini Municipality. They were uninformed about the processes of mobilisation in-between the long periods of crises and marches. Hlongwane pointed out that, "We're just fighting, fighting through marches, going to the streets in August. Like August, September we are not doing anything. Ashwin Desai will call us, not knowing why."[46] There was no or very little attempt to involve the youth activists in the processes and debates on the intricacies and the processes of struggle politics. This as well can be interpreted as the legacy of the 1980s, where the youth as 'foot soldiers' were not

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[43] Cited in, Seekings, J. (1996) **The 'Lost Generation': South Africa's 'Youth Problem' in the Early – 1990s**, *Transformation*, no. 29.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid, (p. 104).
[46] **Interview with Mpumalanga**, (p. 3).

considered by the 'political commissars' and the political leadership as equals in the processes of planning and debates.

As a result, there was a lack of congruency between political planning by the leaders, and political action on the ground. Murphy Morobe, a veteran of the 1976 Soweto Uprisings and one of the founder members of the UDF remarked that:

> For many of the youth, the struggle has meant simply to shoot your way to Pretoria... We acknowledge that the degree of political education has not been commensurate with the degree and extent of political mobilisation that we have been able to generate. And that brings to the fore an important and serious contradiction. You draw in to the movement battalions and battalions of your lions, hearts in the right place, determined to become part of the struggle, but often they don't understand the basic political positions of the movement.[47]

However, the argument of the legacy of the 1980s' involvement of the youth in the struggle, and how it has trickled down to or has been appropriated in the post-apartheid anti-neoliberal struggle has to be nuanced, for it is not that simple a picture. The Mpumalanga youth activists want to be involved in the processes of the debate and the planning of the struggles, and feel left out of it, partly because of the spatial and socio-economic distances that are apparent between them and the core CCF leadership. They expressed their concern about the lack of reach of the CCF in Mpumalanga. Ngwenya expressly pointed out that "...some of the people [of Mpumalanga] are not even aware *ngale oganizeyshini* (about this organisation), what is CCF."[48]

The lack of congruency between the political mobilisation and planning seems to be attributable to the lack of resources. The CCF, perhaps because it was set up

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[47] Cited in, Seekings, J. (1996) **The 'Lost Generation'**, (p. 106).
[48] **Interview with Mpumalanga**, (p. 5).

only three years before, lacks the human and material resources for mobilisation and for other groundwork preparatory initiatives and political education. Bohmke was blunt in admitting to this, and pointed out that the core leadership of the CCF lacked the time and resources to engage in such work.[49] Commenting on the division between the CCF core leadership and the township residents and youth activists, as well as the gap between political education and mobilisation, he blatantly noted that:

> There isn't a connection between the city-based people, the so-called 'professionals' and people on the ground. But that's natural because those are not our own constituencies. We are not social workers either. We don't have networks where we connect with people to provide some kind of a service. We don't have an identity politics where we say those are our people, those are our blacks, those are our single women, those are our comrades, *amaqabane*, that those are our, you know, brothers of Africa or whatever. There's no identity which can put in between the crises the so-called professionals, the city-based people in contact with the township people.[50]

Bohmke pointed out that the CFF in Mpumalanga is less effective, because it is not well known in some areas, precisely as a consequence of the fact that there are few activists available in the township to carry out the desired fieldwork, political education, workshops and other forms of mobilisation. The same argument can be extended to the CCF leadership as well, as there are very few CCF leaders, and most of them have ill-defined positions in the organisation and in the executive committee. However, it is difficult to measure the human, intellectual, financial and other type of resources available at the disposal of the CCF core leadership, as the organisation has not availed its resources and capacity to the public. They may give the impression that the CCF has their own reasons for limiting their miniscule leadership.

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[49] **Interview with Bohmke**.
[50] Ibid, (p. 4).

There is also a question of the depth of seriousness of the Mpumalanga-based youth activists and their political commitment in the struggle. This does not mean that as residents of Mpumalanga, they do not feel the adverse effects of the cost recovery policy on water services delivery. The behaviour of the activists at the SMI partly pointed to a lack of primary commitment to the political struggles. The depth of the Mpumalanga-based youth activists' political commitment is related also to their precarious socio-economic status. These are youths who roam the streets of the township when they are not under the political direction of the CCF core leadership, or not pre-occupied with other personal and family concerns. They constantly complain about unemployment and the inabilities to assist their parents in making ends meet. This suggests that they can be absorbed by the very political, economic and social agents they have declared as their enemy if only they can provide them with employment opportunities or other means of tackling their socio-economic plight.

The schism between the CCF intellectual-cum-activists and the local youth activists also manifests itself in the limitations imposed upon the activists in establishing relationships with other social movements from the other townships of Durban on their own, and on their own terms. Hlongwane expressed this sentiment thus:

B.S: Buntu Siwisa (Interviewer)
Z.H: Zakhele Hlongwane (Interviewee)

B.S: ***Banilimitha kanjani (how do they limit you)?***

Z.H: *Basilimitha ngokuthi* (they limit us in this way), first of all, *basilimitha ngokuthi thina sizwane namanye amaoganizeyshini* (they set limitations on who and why we should establish connections with other organisations).

B.S: Like which ones?

Z.H: Like AIDC, you see. As *ama*activists *elokishini, siphum' elokishini, besingekho aware because u*Brian *ukushilo ukuthi* (as activists who come from the township, we were not aware, as Brian said) we are new, you see Buntu. *Besingekho* aware *ukuthi thina zenzeka kanjani izinto* (We were not aware how things operate). Like *e*Johannesburg *kune*APF *khona* (Like in Johannesburg there is the APF there). *Masisuka sihambe siyekwi*conference *lapho, i*MSP conference (when we move to Johannesburg to attend the MSP conference), Ashwin Desai won't allow us to speak, but Ashwin Desai n*guyena ozokhuluma* (he is the one who will speak) on behalf of us. *Masithi thina as i*Mpumalanga *sifuna ukuthola i*connection direct as *i*Mpumalanga besides *i*CCF, *angekhe asivumele thina* because *benza* sure *ukuthi thina kufuneka sibe ne*network through *bona* (When we said that we as the Mpumalanga branch want to establish a direct connection with other movements without the help of the CCF, he [Ashwin Desai] did not allow us to do that, because we had to establish our network with other movements through him). We have to have a network through Ashwin Desai, *uyangiandastenda* (do you understand me)*?* Because even Naomi Klein, you know Naomi Klein, *lo ubhala izincwadi* (the one who writes books)*? Besinako ukuthi simthole uNaomi Klein la eMpumalanga* (we were able to get Naomi Klein here in Mpumalanga), but Aswhin Desai *wenze* sure *ukuthi uNaomi Klein kufanele ukuthi simthole* through *yena* (but Ashwin Desai made sure that we get Naomi Klein through him). If Ashwin Desai *sebona ukuthi* siyamaccuse, sibanamaquestions, *siyamkhweshina ukuthi manje izinto azenzeki, manje simeleni? Uzohamba yena asilimithe inetwork yethu noNaomi Klein, athi* no, *uNaomi Klein olapha namacomrades, lapha, lapha, lapha* messing around (if Ashwin Desai realises that we are accusing him, we are questioning him, saying that things are now not happening, why are we waiting and doing nothing?). That is why *ngisithi bayasilimitha* (that is why I say that they are putting limits on us, *bafuna ukuthi sibene* network through bona (they want us to network through them). *Mabengathandi, abathandi, mabethanda, bathandile* (When they don't like it, they don't like it, when they like it, they like it).[51]

Hlongwane is referring to the time of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which was held in Johannesburg between July and August 2002. There was the Social Movements *Indaba*, which was a conference of anti-neoliberal social movements held at the University of Witwatesrand in Johannesburg,

[51] **Interview with Mpumalanga**, (pp. 3-4).

which was held in opposition to the WSSD. Naomi Klein was part of the international delegation of anti-neoliberal activists and social movements that participated in the conference. At that time, Klein travelled to Durban as well, and witnessed at first hand the water services delivery problems that the Mpumalanga community experienced. She and some of the Mpumalanga youth activists, including Zakhele Hlongwane, made a short film that exposed the installation of the tricklers, as well as how Operation *Vulamanzi* activists removed them.

The limitations allegedly placed upon the Mpumalanga youth activists by the core CCF leadership is tied in with their concern regarding them not gaining access to other social movements in Durban and throughout the country. However, the youth activists have contradicted themselves on this point. They have expressly acknowledged that the CCF had contacts with other social movements, and that they have benefited and learnt a great deal from the other activists operating in some other Durban townships. They have, for instance, acknowledged the contact and the rapport they cultivated with activists from Chatsworth and Wentworth. Ngwenya, after criticising the CCF core leadership of not having groundwork support in Mpumalanga, later acknowledged that they gained contacts from them. He pointed out that, "*Bona* they do built network, like *sesiyazi e*Chatsworth, *siyabazi ooBrandon, siyabazi abantu baseWentworth* (They do build network, like for instance we now know Chatsworth, we know people like Brandon, we know people in Wentworth).[52]

The CCF is continually involved with other social movements that mobilise on questions of environmental pollution and degradation, the Palestinian cause, anti-

[52] Ibid, (p. 4).

racism, the Jubilee 2000 movement and the LPM. Also, the CCF is well-known by other movements outside Durban, such as the SECC, although it is far less effective, coherent and consistent than these movements. For instance, the CCF supported the APF's and other social movements' condemnation of the shooting of APF activists by the Johannesburg Mayor's bodyguard in 2002, after the Soweto residents, mobilised and led by the APF and the SECC, marched to the house of the Johannesburg Mayor, Amos Masondo, in the suburb of Kensington, to protest against the installation of pre-paid electricity metres. This led to the arrest, the trial and the consequent acquittal of the Kensington 87.[53] In another case, the CCF, along with the APF, the LPM, the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC), the Landless Access Movement of South Africa (Lamosa), launched a people's rights campaign on a nation-wide scale to illuminate awareness about the eviction of poor people in townships and farms. The CCF has worked with social movements in the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in late 2001 as well.

The question of the limitations allegedly placed upon the youth activists is intertwined with the looseness of the structure of the CCF. Drew Forrest pointed out that the CCF is a "loose-knit and fluid" organisation, where"...many have overlapping leadership structures, with the same names cropping up in different contexts."[54] This has led to conflicts fuelled by the inappropriate handling of financial matters. The Mpumalanga youth activists have voiced concerns regarding the usage of money generated from fund-raising activities. There are concerns as to where and how the funds are spent, as it has proven difficult to trace them. Ngwenya argued that:

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[53] See for instance, www.queensu.ca./~mspadmin/pages/In_The_News/2002/April/ccf.htm.
[54] Forrest, D. **Social Movements: 'Ultra-Left' or 'Global Citizens'?**, *Mail & Guardian,* 4 February 2003. See also, www.queensu.ca/msp/pages/In_The_News/2003/Feb/3.htm.

> *Angiandastendi* why *bengainvaythi* a formal structure, *ukuthi makwenziwa i*fund-raising *ukuthi* one of our members *ukhona naye kuloo* fund-raising (I don't understand they don't have a formal structure, so that if there is any fund-raising one of our members will be there). *Siyazi ukuthi mabe*fund-raise *into engaka, kwenzeka into engaka* (We know that when they fund-raise something of such and such an amount, such and such will / ought to happen). So *noba bengasenzakha lutho siye sifile* uncomfortable *ukuthi njengokuba besenza kanje, sekukhona okuncane okuzoya kubo* (So even if they have not done anything we still feel uncomfortable, as we feel that as they operate like this, the little that has been generated will go to them).[55]

For instance, there were questions regarding the channelling and the usage of the money donated to the CCF by Naomi Klein during the SMI. When Klein met with Mpumalanga youth activists and the CCF leadership in Durban, she had apparently informed the youth activists that she had donated some money to the CCF. The amount of money that was donated was not disclosed to them. Only an amount of five hundred rands eventually reached the hands of the youth activists, with a word from the CCF leaders that Klein had given them the money for drinks.[56] That elicited accusations on the part of the youth activists, who complained that they had been patronised by the CCF leadership.

Therefore, the crises in the leadership of the CCF cannot be blamed solely on either the CCF core leadership, nor can it be squarely put on the shoulders of the Mpumalanga youth activists. The looseness of the structure of the CCF has brewed the majority of the leadership crises in the organisation. This has led to the centralisation of decision-making in the movement. At the same time, it has put a veil on the handling of financial matters, which has sown its share of discontent within the organisation. The lack of intellectual, human and material resources for the

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[55] **Interview with Mpumalanga**, (p. 5).

[56] In my interactions with the Mpumalanga-based youth activists before our interview session in late 2002, this in an incident I had witnessed, as the said amount of money donated by Klein passed from a second party to one of the activists, with the instructions that it should be shared among them (for drinks).

Mpumalanga youth activists to carry on with the preparatory work created its own problems of local leadership.

IV. The CCF and Community / Neighbourhood Politics in Mpumalanga, 1998 - 2005

The political history of Mpumalanga helps to explain the peculiarity of the township within the current political dynamics of Durban. The township was established in the early 1970s. From the mid-1970s, it fell under the jurisdiction of the KwaZulu Government, and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) established its first branch there in 1975.[57] The IFP's presence and its influence in Mpumalanga extended beyond the realms of politics. It was not only the leading party in the KwaZulu Government, but was also viewed as a dominant Zulu cultural presence. The IFP was regarded as being at the centre of the provision of housing and other municipal services.

The IFP's political rivals in Mpumalanga in the 1970s and 1980s were the Mpumalanga Residents' Association (Mpura), the Hammarsdale Youth Congress (Hayco), the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and the United Democratic Front (UDF). The latter, formed in 1983, became the major vehicle for internal political forces aligned with the banned ANC. They attempted to curb its political control of the township. At the same time, Mpumalanga residents were convinced that the award of municipal services was tied to political loyalty to the IFP. On the

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[57] Bonnin, D. (2001) **Local Politics in Mpumalanga: Resisting an Ethic Politics of Identity, 1980 – 1987**, (Unpublished paper delivered at the History Seminars, Department of History, University of Natal, Durban).

question of the perception that municipal services in the township were tied to political loyalty to the IFP, a former Charterist activist in the 1980s in Mpumalanga remarked that:

> ...all those things that they [residents] were supposed to enjoy, the rights and other things but they thought that it was because of Inkatha...[I was] trying to explain that pension had nothing to do with Inkatha. I mean to get a house from the town council had nothing to do with Inkatha, the fact that Inkatha councillors were the people who were actually responsible for these things didn't mean that if you were not a member of Inkatha [you wouldn't get it].[58]

In the 1980s, the four political movements active in Mpumalanga stood for municipal elections. The IFP dominated the KwaZulu Government, and was adamant about maintaining its hegemony through various political and social means. It set up *ooQonda*,[59] which were IFP-organised vigilante street committees bent on curtailing the activities of petty criminals. At the same time, they were perceived as vehicles for maintaining control over Mpumalanga in accordance with 'Zulu' customs. This was challenged by Mpura, a civic organisation mainly organised and led by local businessmen. It sought to challenge the IFP at the local government level, and through contesting the imposition of traditional Zulu customs in order to make inroads into the IFP's hegemony over the social lives of the township residents. The UDF and AZAPO were anti-apartheid political movements that perceived the IFP as conservative and an ally of the apartheid regime, and sought to challenge the party as the political authority in the area.

The activities of these four political movements shaped the nature of the political and social spaces in the township. Mpumalanga in the 1980s, especially from

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[58] Ibid, (p. 3).
[59] Ibid.

1987 to the early 1990s, was plagued by political violence. The use of political violence was a means for the IFP to maintain its hegemony in the township, and supporters of the UDF and AZAPO felt there was little option available but to counter the violence if they were to challenge the IFP. There was also strong trade union activism as a result of the presence and the absorption of Mpumalanga labour in the nearby industrial complex in Hammarsdale. Due to the predominance of textile plants in Hammarsdale, the largest trade union active in Hammarsdale/Mpumalanga was the National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW), which was an affiliate of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu). In the 1980s, Mpura challenged the IFP at the local government level, and won some seats.

Mpumalanga has from around 1998 been one of the first African townships in Durban to experience a visible resurgence of strong social protest. The principal areas of mobilisation are water disconnections, water services, the irregularity of the water billing system, the increase of municipal services rates and land evictions. In 1999, the Concerned Citizens' Forum (CCF), a Durban-based umbrella body of civic movements, led the 'ten rands' campaign. The campaign was launched in protest against the increased municipal rates that the then Durban Metro Council imposed. Instead of accepting the payments of the increased municipal services rates, and as a statement that they were willing to pay only the affordable municipal rates that they were accustomed to paying in the 1980s, the Mpumalanga residents submitted their ten rands to the Durban Metro.[60]

[60] To further frustrate the Durban local council, the residents endeavoured to pay the ten rands in coins, thus making the amounts collected difficult to calculate (interviews with Mpumalanga activists and Heinrich Bohmke, October – December, 2004).

Ten rand was the basic municipal services rates that the KwaZulu Government charged townships that were under its constituency in the 1980s. However, Moyo[61] explained that the increase of the municipal services rates was meant for houses which were worth more than R60 000.[62] He argued that many Mpumalanga residents who participated in the march were led on the disinformation campaign by the CCF leaders that the increase of municipal services rates applied uniformly to every resident in the township.

The issue of the return to the previous municipal services rates reverberated throughout the other municipal areas where the water concessions and management contracts were in place. In Fort Beaufort, Queenstown and Stutterheim, there were queries by the residents about the hike in municipal services rates. There have been queries about the exorbitant increase in municipal service rates in many of South Africa's municipalities from multilateral international research agencies and institutes. The municipal rates, according to Menaheim Libhaber of the World Bank's water and sanitation engineering unit in Latin America, are reported to be consuming about 10 per cent and more of the incomes of poor residents. Libhaber also pointed out that, "Look, we can raise tariffs only by a socially acceptable amount --- 3 to 4 per cent of income --- if you get more than that, they will not pay. The World Health Organization suggested you could go to 7 per cent, but to me just 5 per cent. South Africa is paying too much."[63]

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[61] Fanie Moyo's constituency stretches from Eshongweni, Berksfarm, Ntabentengayo, Cliffdale, Summerveld, to Alverstone and Mpumalanga. He had been politically active since 1991as a member of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) at Wozamoya High School in Eshongweni, and was elected Chairperson of the ANC Youth League there. In 1992, he was elected by the structures of the ANC Youth League in Mpumalanga as its Zonal Secretary. From 1995 until 2001, Moyo was the Regional Secretary of the ANC Youth League in the Durban West region. At the time of the interview, he was Chairperson of the ANC in Ward 7, and a local councillor on an ANC ticket in the same ward.
[62] **Interview with Moyo,** (13 December 2002, Hammarsdale, Durban).
[63] www.publicintegrity.org/water/report.aspx?!sID=ch&RID=49&aID=49

The ten-rands campaign march in April 2001 was organised by Sipho Mlaba, an ex-Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) local leader, shop owner and local businessman, and Maxwell Cele, an ex-African National Congress (ANC) local leader and an ex-IFP leader. Sipho Mlaba and Maxwell Cele have a convoluted history of political mobilisation and activism in Mpumalanga.

Sipho Mlaba is a prominent political and business figure in Mpumalanga. Most important to note though is his role in the violence-ridden political landscape of Mpumalanga. Violence in the township stretched on from 1985, when the IFP branch clashed with AZAPO, and then later on in mid to late 1980s with Hayco. Violence also raged on in the mid to late 1980s between the charterist UDF and SASCO. He came to occupy a prominent role not only in Mpumalanga, but in KwaZulu-Natal when he and a prominent ANC leader in the township, Dr Meshack Hadebe, engineered the peace accord between the IFP and the ANC. The two leaders came to realise their shared interest in peace when they exchanged lists of priorities for the township's development. They came to acknowledge that both sides were prioritised similar development issues ---- health, education, social welfare and employment opportunities.[64] It was then, in 1987, that the peace processes were initiated and successfully followed up. Mlaba's and Hadebe's roles in peacemaking have been hailed in KwaZulu-Natal and internationally as exemplary. To that effect, they were jointly awarded the Africa Peace Prize in the late 1990s. Also as a recognition of their success and skills acquired in peacemaking, Mlaba and Hadebe have been recently

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[64] Schori, P. **Poverty: Prime Enemy of Peace and Democracy**, (http://www.gppac.net/documents/pbp/intros/a5_pover.htm). The author, Pierre Schori, is Deputy Foreign Minister, and Minister for International Development Affairs for Sweden. He was writing for *People Building Peace* (PBP), a publication for the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP).

invited to join the teams that assessed violence and opportunities for peacemaking and peace-building in Haiti (2004)[65] and Burundi (2003).[66]

Before the 1999 general elections, Mlaba had been an IFP local councillor for Mpumalanga. He had quarrelled with the IFP leadership shortly before the 1999 elections. The President of the IFP, Gatsha Mangosuthu Buthelezi, had made this clear in 1998 that Mlaba had showed unwillingness to work with the IFP for the general elections campaigns since his name was absent from the list of candidates selected for IFP representation in the National Assembly. Buthelezi made this statement at a Thanksgiving Rally at Lindelani, KwaZulu-Natal, in 1998. The rally was attended by the IFP national leadership and supporters. Buthelezi also pointed out that certain local councillors from Lindelani threatened to pull out their contributions and support towards the IFP's national election campaigns if they were not elected to parliament. At the Thanksgiving rally, Buthelezi firmly maintained that:

> A delegation from Hammarsdale also approached the National Council threatening not to work with us in the elections because Councillor Sipho Mlaba was not in the list of candidates for Parliament. And yet it was a decision of our General Conference that our Councillors have a very important job being on the coalface of delivery services to our people. It was decided that they should not be in the list of candidates in the elections as their term for which they were elected had not even expired. Many Councillors some known to me declared that they were not going to work for our electoral success because they had not been allowed to be candidates in the election.[67]

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[65] See the following reports, **News and opinions on situation in Haiti**, (http://www.williambowles.info/haiti-news/2005/sa_haiti.html); **Mlaba and Hadebe to travel to Haiti**, (http://www.konpay.org/pmwiki.php/Main/ReportJanuary6); (http://www.olgp.net/ministry/haiti/news/1.6.05.htm).

[66] **Mlaba & Hadebe left for Burundi peace talks**, *International Peacekeeping News – Issue No. 9,* May 1995, (http://www.csf.colorado.edu/dfax/ipno0.htm).

[67] **IFP Thanksgiving Rally at Lindelani**, Buthelezi, M., (1998), (http://www.ifp.org.za/Speeches/270604sp.htm).

It is reported that Mlaba defected to Bantu Holomisa's United Democratic Movement (UDM) in November 1998.[68] He informed a press conference in Durban in November 1998 that he had been frustrated by conflicts between him and the IFP local leadership. However, on 30 November 1998, Mlaba failed to turn up at a press conference, where he had set to declare his UDM membership. There were rumours that he had received death threats from anonymous IFP leaders if he formally defected to the UDM, and that he had gone into hiding. Mlaba denied that he had been a victim of such threats and that he had gone into hiding, insisting, "I stay with my family in Mpumalanga and I own a business in the area and I will never hide. I realised that I made a mistake after I was persuaded by the local IFP supporters. I am an IFP member and I will never join any party."[69] He announced his return to the IFP in December of that year. He was reinstated as a member. However, he had lost his seat in the Durban local council. He only regained his seat in May 2002 when he replaced IFP Councillor N. Sewcharan.[70]

Maxwell Cele's political history is more chequered and more difficult to follow, since he has occupied a significantly less prominent role in Mpumalanga's local politics in comparison to Mlaba and Hadebe. He had been an ANC activist in Mpumalanga in the 1980s.[71] He then defected to the IFP just before the 2000 local government elections, and enlisted himself as a candidate for the elections on an IFP ticket. Mpumalanga lost the elections to the ANC. In 2001, at the time of the ten rands campaign, Cele had announced his intentions of forming a party called *Izwi laBantu*

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[68] **ANC Daily News Briefing**, (18 December, 1998), (http://www.anc.org.za/newsbrief/anc/newsbrief/1998/newa1218).
[69] Ibid.
[70] **Minutes of eThekwini Council**, (Friday, 2002/05/24), (http://www.durban.gov.za/Council/minutes/20020524/view).
[71] **South Africa: Former rivals unite to fight against ANC attacks**, Bohmke, H. , (http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/2001/447/447p22.htm).

to contest the 2004 general elections.[72] He was reported to have moved to Pietermaritzburg after the ten rands campaign, following his alleged disappointment for losing a bid for the tender of the sale and installation of pre-paid water metres, and became politically active there.[73] In early 2005, he was reported to be a spokesperson for a taxi organisation in Pinetown, the Pinetown Taxi Owners' Association.[74]

Mlaba was one of the chief organisers of the ten rands campaign, along with the leadership of the CCF. The campaign, which culminated into a march in April 2001, protested against the installation of the pre-paid water metres. There were claims that the water bills of some residents climbed up to R8 000.[75] Mlaba had claimed that Mpumalanga residents were "fed up" with the DMWS's inability to solve the township's fifteen years long water problems. On the other hand, local ANC councillors, Prince Ntanzi and Bongani Khumalo, claimed that residents were forced by the leaders of the campaign to march. They also argued that Mlaba and Cele had organised the march with the intention of dissuading the residents from supporting them, since they had lost the previous government elections on the IFP tickets, and Mlaba was no longer an IFP local councillor. There were also allegations that Mlaba used the ten rand campaign as an opportunity to further heighten his role in the IFP, as he was no longer a local councillor. The ANC councillors in Mpumalanga claimed that:

> The march organisers, Sipho Mlaba and Maxwell Cele, who are both IFP Councillors, are upset because they lost the elections to us. They have been inciting and intimidating the residents to get them to remove us from our

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[72] **'We Won't Pay'**, *Witness Echo*, Zondi, D., (14 March, 2002), (http://www.queensu.ca/msp/pages/In_The_News/2002/March/pay.htm).
[73] **Interview with Fanie Moyo**.
[74] **Warring Taxi Organisations Convene Meeting**, (2005), (http://www.sabcnews.com/Article/PrintWholeStory/0,2160,98058,00.html).
[75] **Residents March to Protest High Water Bills**, Hosken, G., (10 April, 2001), (http://www.queensu.cam/msp/pages/In-The_News/2001/April/Protest.htm).

> positions as councillors and to make the residents lose faith in our ability to bring services to them.[76]

ANC Councillor in the Outer West Local Councillor (including Mpumalanga) Fanie Moyo, also argued that the installation of the pre-paid water metres was deliberately politicised by Mlaba and Cele, as a way of gaining access to the eThekwini local council. Moyo pointed out that:

> While we're on that issue, people started using the water issue as their stepping stones towards the election, because they wanted to be candidates. Then they succeeded because they were defeated, but then they were defeated by us, because some, like at Unit 4, because there were too many who wanted to be councillors. Those were Maxwell Cele and Sipho Mlaba. Now Sipho Mlaba is part of the council. The friendship has been broken down between himself and Cele. Now Cele is in Maritzburg.[77]

However, the police officers who oversaw the march maintained that there were no incidents of intimidation reported to them. It is highly unlikely though that the residents were forced to participate in the ten rands campaign.[78] A more plausible account is that many residents participated in the campaign without full knowledge of the protest. Although they were severely affected by the water billing irregularities, the CCF had not made a concerted effort to inform, nor to prepare them. Thando Mchunu, one of the Mpumlanaga youth activists who organised the ten rand campaign, pointed out that there were no preparations for the ten rands march. He maintained that people were expected to get into buses that the CCF had organised without having the background behind the march thoroughly explained to them. He pointed out that:

> *Ama*leaders *lawo uwamenshinile yinto, angazi,* each and every time *benz' into, yabo, abasinvolvi thina* (these leaders you have mentioned [Ashwin Desai and Heinrich Bohmke], I don't know why they don't involve us each and every time they organise things). If *ufuna ukuqhubeka ne*march *yabo, ngoba i*march

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[76] Ibid.
[77] **Interview with Fanie Moyo**, (p. 2).
[78] Mhlanga, E. **Durban to Crack Down on Water-Borne Violence**, *Mercury*, (2001, April 12).

> *ayivele ibekhona nje, ivele ibekhona, sivele sisuke nje siye ematshini, sivele siye eThekwini siyokhampeynela iMpumalanga, u*funa-raise *imali, imali iqhamuka phi, ngempela?* (If they want to proceed with their march, because you don't just have a march, and just get up and go to a march and march to Durban campaigning for Mpumalanga, you have to fund-raise, and where does the money really come from)*? Sonke zange sibe* involved (All of us were never involved). *Baqhamuka sebe sithi masingene emotweni sekuyiwa ematshini* (They just came up to us saying that we should get into the car because we are going to a march).[79]

The CCF did not have any facilities and resources it utilised to communicate and connect with the Mpumalanga residents. The CCF leadership had very little access to Mpumalanga residents on their own, and it heavily depended on the township's youth activists.

The irony is that after Mlaba's involvement in the CCF-led campaigns, he is now the primary supplier of pre-paid water meter cards in the entire township through his supermarket located in Unit 1 North. This raises the question of the interplay between political leadership and personal economic and political gains. At the time of the fieldwork research, it was also suggested by various informants closely associated with the leftist social movements that there had been a dispute among some influential political leaders belonging to both the ANC and the IFP on the awarding of tenders for the installation of pre-paid water meters. They also maintained that Maxwell Cele had had interests in the award of the tenders, but had lost. Cele had also lost his political status. He had moved to the IFP, but failed to win a seat in the local council, as the ANC won Mpumalanga in the 2000 local government elections.

Noticeable here is the intricate relationship between perceived political and economic gains played against the backdrop of anti-neoliberal collective action

[79] **Interview with Mpumalanga CCF Activists**, (p. 5).

campaigns. The CCF intellectual-cum-leaders were not unaware of these dynamics, nor were they naïve about the possibilities of them playing themselves out. Despite that, they associated themselves with Mlaba and Cele. It can also be plausibly argued that perhaps the CCF leadership was not a victim of these trajectories. It deliberately associated itself with these figures so as to gain a foothold in Mpumalanga. By doing so, the predominantly white and Indian male intellectual-cum-activists of the CCF could make inroads into an African township whose politics are intimately shaped by neighbourhood politics and spatially particular political legacies. Most of these intellectual-cum-activists were politically isolated from mainstream political agencies and from the other partners of the tripartite alliance after the fall of apartheid. Hence several of my informants from both the ANC and the Durban bureaucracy insisted that the anti-municipality riots and organised unrest in Mpumalanga 'had nothing to do with politics!'[80]

The protests against the installation of pre-paid water meters in Mpumalanga in 2001 attracted city-wide attention. The Mayor of Durban, Obed Mlaba, and the chairperson of the Durban Unicity Infrastructure Committee, Mina Lesoma, called a special briefing meeting to deal with the issue. When the Durban Unicity Council commenced with the installation of water metres, Mpumalanga residents set alight council property, resulting in damage that was estimated at R2 million.[81] The installation of water meters was then stopped. After a few days, the Durban Unicity Council resumed installing water metres, and some council workers were intimidated by Mpumalanga residents. The council expressed its intention of installing water meters in the township so that they could start billing water consumers by July 1,

[80] It is not possible here to disclose the names of the informants for politically sensitive reasons. For professional reasons, I also have to maintain my promise of confidentiality.
[81] Mhlanga, E. (2001, April 11) **Durban to Crack Down on Water-Borne Violence**, (The Mercury).

2001. On the unrest sparked by the installation of water metres in April 2001, McLeod pointed out that, "All we did was go and put metres there and started sending people bills, and ask them to act responsibly and pay for what they use beyond their free water."[82]

On the burning of council property and the intimidation of council workers by some Mpumalanga residents, Lesoma stated that the law would deal with the perpetrators. Durban Mayor Mlaba stated that, "It is very disturbing to see certain individuals or dissidents of political organisations mobilising people for the wrong reasons. We are aware that those short-minded individuals are disgruntled, and they want to deceive innocent people in Mpumalanga."[83] Mlaba further went on to criticise 'self-styled leaders' who deceived people of Mpumalanga who were willing to pay for their services, "to join them in their senseless marches."[84] The article chronicling the event in *The Mercury* went on to state that, "Mpumalanga township residents use more than double the amount of water a household than the city average, but do not pay for the services. The council had not billed them because meters had not been installed and, as a result, it had incurred a loss of R23-million."[85] Mpumalanga residents had apparently been consuming double the amount of water a household than the other townships' average, McLeod stated that, "I think he [the newspaper reporter] was mistaken. He was talking about what was owed in total for all the communities in the metropolitan council. In Mpumalanga a share of that is no worse than any other communities' share."[86]

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[82] **Interview with McLeod**, (p. 7).
[83] Mhlanga, E.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.

The ANC won the entire township in the 2000 local government elections, and the IFP is in opposition. CCF Mpumalanga youth activists have found allies in the IFP. The CCF leadership has also exploited the political prominence of Mlaba. Mchunu vouched for this, stating that, "On the issue of mobilising between those two political parties, I can say that in the IFP area we don't have a problem, because in South Africa the government is ANC. So we don't have a problem in IFP strongholds here in Mpumalanga. But the problem we are having concerns the ANC."[87] Hlongwane, also a youth activist in Mpumalanga, further commented that, "About the politics between the ANC and the IFP, okay it was a problem, because the people who I can say were leading the initiatives were coming from the IFP side."[88]

Opposition parties tend to ally themselves with various movements and organisations on policies and issues that such movements feel strongly about, especially in areas where the ruling party is not performing well. In that way, the opposition party fortifies its strength and popularity, while trying to get closer to power. At the same time, CCF-aligned activists and the general members of Mpumalanga who reside in the former IFP strongholds in the townships have experienced some problems with the IFP leadership in the area. Despite the ANC's clear victory in the township, the legacy of IFP power lingers on today. In sections that have traditionally been IFP strongholds in the township, residents are forced to report any civic problems they experience to their IFP councillors. Also, any overt support of the ANC in sections that are former IFP strongholds are still suppressed, although in a less violent and palpable manner.

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[87] **Interview with Mpumalanga**, (p. 17).
[88] Ibid, (p. 18).

The positioning of the local council in this political set-up is less obvious. The Durban local government is viewed synonymously with the problems of water disconnections ---- the installation of water tricklers, exorbitant water bills and the increased municipal services rate and the persecution and conviction of the Operation *Vulamanzi* activists. The township residents view the Durban local government with some degree of detachment from the ANC and its cost recovery policy. The visibility of the Durban Metro and its officials during water disconnections; the surveillance of water meters; the installation of water metres and tricklers; the ever-present security guards that accompany the officials during these missions in the townships; the harassments and the apprehension of Operation Vulamanzi 'activists' ---- the very visible bureaucratic machinery of the Durban Metro is constantly seen at work during these occasions. The Mpumalanga residents equate the cost recovery policy and all its other adverse manifestations with the Durban Metropolitan government, and not necessarily with the ANC. This is not a phenomenon visible only in Durban, but is observable in many of the municipalities where the cost recovery policy on water and electricity has been implemented. These therefore prove that the closeness of the Durban local government and its bureaucracy to the problems of water cost recovery policies has brewed on a new perception of the local government, separate from the party that controls it.

V. Conclusion

The cost recovery policy has certainly made access to potable water costly and unaffordable for many residents. At the same time, there is a lack of connection between the intensity of the crises, and the direction of the grassroots social

movements. Despite the unaffordable service levels apparent in Mpumalanga, the CCF's activities have not displayed any coherent, cohesive and extensive mobilisation that has built a rapport with its base, that is, the Mpumalanga residents. This might be due to the novelty of the organisation and the issues, on the one hand. On the other hand, this might be attributed to the lack of understanding on the part of the Mpumalanga activists as to what is happening on the ground.

The break from the 1980s culture of township movements' is important in trying to make sense of the lack of proper organisation and mobilisation of grassroots social movements in townships such as Mpumalanga. There is a new generation of 'youth activists' that has emerged in the late 1990s. They are mainly unemployed, unemployable, or dropped out of high school. They have little prospects of productive livelihoods, and are now thrust into grassroots political movements in a new era with new political dynamics. These were youths who were too young to participate in the organised social unrest in the 1980s, and for whom that is a part of the history that has very little visible legacy in terms of the experiences it is supposed to bring benefit them in their organisations. That also has to be taken into consideration in attempting to understand the complexities and the conflicts within grassroots social movements in townships such as Mpumalanga. On the changing nature of grassroots social movements In democratic societies, Monique Marks aptly pointed out that:

> All social movements have a career that is determined by both their internal dynamics and the external environment. Social movements are not static. They undergo a number of changes in their goals, structure, tactics, strategies and social base over time...With democratisation, social movements can become marginalised and isolated and their participants frustrated, disappointed and apathetic.[89]

Despite the fact that there has been a break between the 1980s' township

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[89] Marks, M. (2001) **Young Warriors: Youth Politics, Identity and Violence in South Africa**, (Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg), (p. 130).

Despite the fact that there has been a break between the 1980s' township mobilisation and the post-apartheid anti-neoliberal politics of mobilisation, the political culture of crowd renting still lingers on, now to be used by the veterans of the 1980s social movements who are either disenchanted with the ANC, or have been expelled from it and from the other former Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) organisations. They now recruit youth activists without that earlier experience. As pointed out in Chapter 5, these leaders are usually marginalised political actors who try to use the new political environment to establish their own niches in the new political landscape.

What should also be questioned is the intensity or the level of activist loyalty of the youth activists. These are youths who have very little prospects in townships defined by high rates of unemployment. They come from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, and they find themselves politically conscientised by the blight of the prevalent socio-economic circumstances brewed by the cost recovery policies. Further heightening their political conscientisation is their unemployment. Therefore, it should not be ruled out that the elasticity of the activism, or activist loyalty of the youth, might also be affected by the prospects, or the lack of prospects of changes in the labour market and other socio-economic improvements, and not entirely on their ideological clarity.

The process of democratisation has also in South Africa highlighted the question of the type of relationship that social grassroots cultivate with the state. On the one hand, the CCF engages in anti-state activities, such as Operation *Vulamanzi*, whereby its activists illegally reconnect residents who have been disconnected from

their water supplies. On the other hand, the CCF marches with the government to protest against industrial pollution perpetrated by Engen.

Mahmood Mamdani has noted that, "Civil society is not just external to the state; rather, various and even contradictory groups in civil society penetrate the state differentially (Cammack 1989: 261-290)... For the state is no longer a force that just confronts civil society as something 'external' to it; it is simultaneously an arena of struggle for forces whose springboard is none other than civil society."[90] The nature of the relationship between the state and civil society, and the eclectic stances of local social movements, make it difficult to clearly draw nor predict their directions in post-apartheid South Africa.

The success of the new social movements is further complicated by the political opportunism of the political figures in Mpumalanga. There is a complex relationship between the ANC as a ruling party, the IFP as an opposition party and the CCF as a civic movement. They all seek to exploit each others' vantage positions in the local political landscape to forward their organisations' and their personal political and economic gains. At the end of it all, none of the parties are mere victims. All participate in the game of collective action that the new social movements conjured up. At different times, and from various angles, the three parties emerge as the exploited, the exploiters, victims and victors.

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[90] Mamdani, M. **A Critique of the State and Civil Society Paradigm in Africanist Studies,** cited in, Mamdani, M. & Wamba-dia-Wamba, E. (eds.) (1995) **African Studies in Social Movements and Democracy** (CODESRIA, Dakar, p. 605).

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

At the beginning of the researching and writing processes of this doctoral thesis, I unwittingly embraced this task from an activist sympathiser's angle. As any university supervisor anywhere in the world would advise any research student, this was a totally wrong beginning. Any research student is supposed, even assumed, at the beginning of his or her research to occupy a neutral zone. Such is the case, for it is the purpose of research to unpack and unearth discoveries. In that way, one contributes to the constitution and the development of knowledge.

This was the wisest advice I was given as a student before I undertook my fieldwork trip in June 2002. However, as if it was mere inertia, my mindset began from the endpoint ---- the conclusion. Before the research had yielded to me the data and the insight into what I was supposed to undertake, I had already driven my stake into the so-called 'doers' of injustice, and applauded and ululated the 'seekers of justice' ---- the leftists, activists and leaders of the anti-neoliberal new social movements. As I have explained in the Introduction, I could not have done otherwise. I felt that it was impossible for me, at first, to occupy a neutral zone in the new South African political fulcrum because of my identity, my status and my upbringing as a black South African male who grew up, and still has roots anchored in the townships. I was dead wrong. Inertia and knee-jerk reactions are almost always the unadvisable reactions for a researcher. They are not supposed to be part of the vocabulary of

someone who is meant to be a thinker, an actor in the dynamics of the reconfiguration of the contours of knowledge in one's field.

As I delved into the fieldwork research, the gathering and the synthesis of data, something else transpired. I saw and sensed in front of me processes and dynamics far too complex , befuddling and interesting unfolding. Most importantly, I realised that these could not be captured in any hermetic theory(ies) or explanations. They had to be let loose in an open-ended container. In question here is the emergence of the anti-neo-liberal new social movements in a developing economy. These are 'new' social movements in that they mushroomed within the context of the post-Seattle anti-capitalist cycle of protests. In the developed countries, these movements mostly operate from above, with their agendas and repertoires of collective action engineered from above by students, leftist intellectuals, community activists, displaced and marginalised politicians at local and national tiers. In South Africa, most of the new social movements (certainly the case in Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Western Cape), they emanated from below. These are movements shaped by cost recovery policies.

Be that as it may, in the middle of my research, I had an 'inward-bent' or 'turned around' Damascus road conversion, as it were. I moved from sympathising with the new social movements to taking a dim view of them. On the other hand, this conversion entailed a deeper understanding of government policies on municipal services delivery and the political economic environment within which these policies are drawn. I gained a deeper sense of the ANC Government's predicament: a Janus-faced disposition towards economic growth, on the one hand, and economic

redistribution, on the other hand. To focus on these two inherently antithetical economic positions within the neo-liberal mould is next to impossible. At the heart of it all, the government is trying to balance economic growth with redistribution. It is, again, a gargantuan task. Aptly summarising the ANC Government's predicament, the current Director-General of DWAF, Mike Muller, observed that a better characterisation of the government, "...might be of a well-meaning state struggling to manage rapidly expanding services, constrained by limited management capacity and resources."[1]

This 'inward-bent' Damascus road conversion was partly caused by the new social movements' neglect of the government's dealing with the 'nuts and bolts' and 'number crunching' on municipal services delivery. There are few concerted attempts that the social movements have made in seriously studying the dynamics of municipal services delivery. There have been far too many false pronouncements made by the leaders of the new social movements regarding the government's policies on public-private partnerships and the delivery of municipal services delivery. It is apparent that these pronouncements have been made without paying a closer and thorough study of the government's position on these issues, or that they were deliberately furnished by the movement leaders in an attempt to strengthen their collective action strategies. Patrick Bond, Maj Fiil-Flynn, David A. McDonald *et al* are the core of the intellectuals who are part of the new social movements scene who have made concerted efforts to understand the problems and the intricacies of municipal services delivery. Ashwin Desai's *We are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, which covers community struggles in Durban against the cost recovery

[1] Muller, M. **Keeping the taps on**, *Mail & Guardian* (30 June, 2004).

policies, water disconnections and evictions, is a sensational and journalistic account without any empirical research grounding it.

It is difficult, if inadvisable, to cast a net on the nature and trajectory of the development of the new social movements in post-apartheid South Africa. These movements were born in the late 1990s. They are thriving in some areas, such as in Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Western Cape. In KwaZulu-Natal, they are 'amoebic.' They expand as they react to crises, and disappear again to their cocoons (wherever they are) at the calming down of the crises (usually after handing a petition or memoranda to local authorities, or after they have been scattered about by the police).

The new social movements have shown various strains, yielded to different pressures, exploited and were exploited by various circumstances. As it is argued in Chapters 5 and 7, the new social movements are neither purely 'activist' nor saintly. They are not the former in that they are privy to temptations to not only participating in mainstream politics, but to integrate themselves into it. Activists and leaders, as it has been pointed out in Chapter 5, have been tempted to use their activist positions to heighten their political positions. More interesting is the intersection between local or neighbourhood politics, and the economic and political interests of the activists, opposition party leaders and marginalised political leaders. The other interesting observation in the entire process is how the people on the ground seem to be detached from the mobilisation processes of these movements in Durban, except in times of volatile collective action, which have as well been 'stolen' and 'hijacked' by the activists, leaders, opposition party leaders and marginalised political leaders. This all goes to highlight the precarious location and standing of these new social movements,

and their compromised influence in South African politics. Perhaps this is the case because of their youth. They are new. What is clear though is that the political landscape for the anti-neoliberal new social movements is still being carved. The status of the new social movements globally is varied, with some wielding more influence over the political landscape compared to the others in the other parts of the world. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri noted:

> ...the forces that contest Empire and effectively prefigure an alternative global society are themselves not limited to any geographical region. The geography of these alternative powers, the new cartography, is still wanting to be written ---- or really, it is being written today through the resistances, struggles, and desires of the multitude.[2]

Chapter 2, *Mpumalanga, Locality and Social Differentiaton,* analyses changes in the political landscape brought forth by the new social movements are shaped by the nature and the formation of that landscape. They are shaped by the particularities of the landscape. This then invokes the appreciation of the sensitivities of socio-spatial differentiation, and how the specificities of the social, political, economic and historical variables that go into constituting that space influence the dynamics of social protest. The importance of this lies in the realisation of the fact that globalisation is intercepted at the local level, interrogated, penetrated and compromised by the local political, social and economic actors and agents. How this is done depends on the nature of these variables. Chapter 2 endeavours to make a stab into this.

As it has been proved in the case of Mpumalanga, the gravity of the anti-state hostility of the residents of Mpumalanga from 1998 to 2002 is attributable to the township's economic-geography. Mpumalanga, located nearby the small town of

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[2] Hardt, M. & Negri, A. (2000) **Empire**, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge).

Hammarsdale, was one of the areas affected by import-substitution investments in the 1980s. This was the apartheid regime's response to the economic sanctions on primary products. The industrial complex located in Hammarsdale became then the site for the production of primary products, ranging from food and engineering products, chemicals, plastic, to paint and wood. These were products highly protected by the state, and townships such as Mpumalanga became defined by such economic dictates. The Hammarsdale industrial plants were state political projects, and this therefore meant that their survival was guaranteed by the state. This was the case in the mid to late 1990s, as many of these manufacturing plants gradually uprooted themselves as a result of fierce global competitive pressures as South Africa opened up to the international economy after the downfall of apartheid.

As pointed out earlier on, this has immensely affected Mpumalanga's demographic landscape. The majority of breadwinners employed in these factories were retrenched. Many of Mpumalanga's residents worked in Hammarsdale, and not in Durban, due to the high commuting costs between Durban and Hammarsdale. Therefore, the cost recovery policy that was implemented in the late 1990s further unmasked not only the inability of the Mpumalanga residents to pay the inordinate water bills, but their socio-economic frustrations. They were set apart in their anti-state hostility from other townships such as KwaMashu and Umlazi, in that they were far from the more stable sources of employment in Durban, around the CBD and at the Durban industrial base. It is therefore within this accentuated socio-economic environment that the CCF managed to make a success of its collective action campaigns at that time.

The CCF's success in its collective action campaigns in Chatsworth can also be hugely explained by the concepts of the socio-economic particularities of a specific space. The predominantly Indian township of Chatsworth had mainly depended on the clothing and textile factories. These industries formed a social safety valve for the working class residents of Chatsworth, as they absorbed a massive amount of labour. These industries were also affected by the apartheid government's protectionist measures. However, from the early 1990s, as South Africa opened up its economy to the world, consequently yielding to the liberalisation pressures, many of these industries were adversely affected. They could not cope with the competition, as the costs of production went higher. Consequently, many of them closed down, or relocated, resulting in massive unemployment.

The CCF intervened in Chatsworth as the cost recovery policy on water further unmasked the precarious socio-economic situation of the township's residents. Despite the fact that the cost recovery policy and mechanisms on water were uniformly implemented throughout Durban, Chatsworth's opposition to them was more vociferous compared to the other township. This is because of the massive unemployment in Chatsworth caused by the closing down and the retrenchment of the clothing and textile factories.

Chapter 3, *"Rhetoric is dropped, reality prevails...": The ANC in the South African Economy, 1990s – 2002*, explains why and how Mpumalanga's (and Chatsworth's) socio-economic frustrations were accentuated. These were frustrations foregrounded in the state's thinking on the restructuring of the post-apartheid South African economy. Chapter 3 therefore provides a background that explains the

political and economic pressures that informed the concretisation of the neo-liberal project in post-apartheid South Africa.

It traces the country's economic development from the early 1990s, and how the economy went the 'third way', as Anthony Giddens calls it. It analyses the various factions that contributed to the great economic debate; from MERG, the SAF and the SALM. The significance of this chapter lies in its offering of a foundation for an understanding of the basis for the embrace of the cost recovery policies on water services delivery.

The development trajectory of South Africa's economy has dramatically altered the political landscape. On it, the ANC has shifted from the left to the centre-right, although many within the ANC and some members of the tripartite alliance would dispute this. The ruling party has taken more or less a similar ideological path to the British New Labour.[3] In South Africa, the adherence to the Third Way has been 'necessitated' by the ANC Government's acknowledgement of the state's inability to shoulder on its own the financing of the public services delivery and its machinery. The state has to involve various stakeholders in the provision of the ailing services infrastructure and the financing of the delivery of public goods and services. These stakeholders range from the NGOs, but mainly include domestic and international capital. On the other hand, the state has been validly criticised for giving way too much credence on the inherently integral role that the private sector has to play in the provision of public goods and services. The state mainly stands on the argument that it does not have sufficient budget to wholly undertake, on its own, the provision, the

[3] Giddens, A. (ed.) (2001) **The Global Third Way Debate**, (Pluto Press, London; in association with Blackwell Publishers, Oxford).

financing and the management of public goods and services. Thabo Mbeki pointed out in 1996 that:

> ...to deliver municipal services to everyone within an urban local authority at an affordable level will cost us in the region of R61 billion over the next ten years. The combined resources of central and provincial government will not be able to cover much more than half of these capital costs. For the remainder of these resources we must look to other sources: local authority budgets, community contributions, and the extensive portfolio investments of big business and the institutional investors.[4]

Earlier on in 1995, Mbeki admitted to various economic constraints that have hindered, and continue to hinder, the delivery of public goods and services. Among these inherited financial constraints were a relatively high budget deficit; a 55 per cent dent to the GDP ratio; and a government budget heavily skewed towards funding recurrent expenditure than capital expenditure.[5] The implication of these factors, he pointed out, were the inevitable rationalisation of the public services sector, and a move which favoured funding through capital expenditure from recurrent expenditure.

The ANC's shift to the centre-right on the political fulcrum has also been informed by its realisation that it has to move its position from a liberation movement to a party in government. This is a fact that the government has admitted to. As Pallo Jordan pointed out, the post-Cold War political environment favoured minimal state intervention. There were therefore immense pressures exerted upon the state on the way it is supposed to conduct itself as a ruling party in government. The ANC also had the burden of weighing South Africa's burden as a regional power bloc in Southern Africa. It had the added burden of continuing to ensure that the massive, important and strategic South African economy had to continue to flourish. Within

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[4] Mbeki, T. (1998) **Africa – The Time Has Come: Selected Speeches**, (Tafelberg Publishers, Cape Town & Mafube Publishing (Pty) Ltd., Johannesburg), (pp. 133 – 36).
[5] Ibid, (pp. 96 – 103).

that setting, it had to face to its historic and complicated task: reconciling economic growth with economic redistribution. In handling such a task, it is indeed nearly impossible to conjure up a win-win situation, in the sense of achieving economic growth, while ensuring satisfactory economic redistribution. Initially, the ANC, during the time of the RDP, preferred the policy plank of 'redistribution through growth.' That mantra soon gave way to 'growth through redistribution'. These changes came to the fore as GEAR was introduced in 1996.

This chapter emphasizes an appreciation and understanding of running a sophisticated and massive economy with political strategic importance, ailing under the ravages of the economic and social effects of apartheid, and also striving to thrive and redress the socio-economic imbalances under the neo-liberal era. This is something that the left fails to understand, or underestimates, in its criticism of the ANC Government. To understand the delivery of municipal goods and services, one has to appreciate these macro-economic pressures, and understand them in detail.

The left has shown very little understanding of the intricacies of the delivery of municipal goods and services. What is often gleaned from the polemics of the left with the ANC Government are mere emotional leftist and Marxist sentiments, asking the same old questions and providing us with the same old answers. As Suren Pillay, a South African sociologist pointed out, these debates from the left often are non-starters, in that they leave little space for debates. What is left is clearly defined. Also, what is left is not grounded on the ever-shifting realities of the ever-changing South African economy.

More worrying about the left in South Africa is that it stifles debate by condemning anyone who tries to nuance debates on the development of the South African political economy. It condemns anyone who tries to understand the 'nuts and bolts' of the South African political economy, and the municipal services delivery machinery, as right-wing or reactionary. For them, there can be no middle-way. They also fall short of offering a sensible and workable 'leftist' way.

In that vein, Chapter 4 then, *Water: Policies, Politics and Delivery*, captures the details, the intricacies, the 'nuts and bolts', as it were, of water services delivery in South Africa. It fills that space which will afford the reader the appreciation of the realities of water services delivery. In that way then, one is able then to also understand the political-economic influences that go into, and are allowed in, the processes of water services delivery.

It provides a framework that explains in detail the many technical aspects that have shaped the policies on water services delivery. The first part outlined the precarious environmental status of drinking water internationally. With escalating populations across the globe, accompanied by global warming, so much pressure has been exerted on drinking water. This has had adverse effects on its availability. Most importantly, these pressures have also politicised water services delivery, and have also turned it into a lucrative business venture.

There are various types of municipal costs associated with financing water services delivery. There are the capital or expenditure costs, which are sourced from their own (local authorities) sources (90 per cent of them accrue from tariffs for the

provision of water and electricity, and property rates); capital grants; borrowing from parastatal intermediaries; borrowing privately; and equity investments in public-private partnerships. On the other hand, recurrent expenditure is comprised of operation and maintenance costs, bulk purchase costs and debt servicing.[6] The shift from recurrent to capital expenditure costs implies the cutting down of government expenditure on the delivery of public goods and services. The burden of shouldering costs on the delivery of these services is being shifted more to the private sector through the implementation of the public-private partnerships. The government put stress on the failure of recurrent expenditure to maintain the appropriate infrastructure. The MIIF maintained that, "The ability to afford recurrent expenditure is particularly important: if infrastructure is put in a place which is too expensive to run, it places a permanent burden on the economy which dampens growth and can lead to the disintegration of the infrastructure."[7] Consequently, some analysts have argued that the municipal governments have separated the roles of ensuring that everyone has access to services delivery, from actually delivering the basic services.[8]

It is, therefore, clear that the state's shift towards capital costs tallies well with the acceptance of the state's broader stance on minimalist local governance. It is a sign of the incapability of the state to provide public services delivery. As Bill Freund pointed out, "...public-private partnerships can become a mask, if the state is weak, for simply subsidising the initiatives of powerful private interests."[9] Freund's argument though fits more appropriately in the context of smaller municipalities, and

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[6] **Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework**, (2001), (Ministry of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, Republic of South Africa).
[7] Ibid, (p. 10).
[8] van Niekerk, S. (1998) **Private Gain, Public Loss: Service Delivery in the New South Africa**, *Southern Africa Report Archive*, vol. 12, no 14.
[9] Cited in, Freund, B. & Padayachee, V. (eds.) (2002) **'D'urban Vortex: South African City in Transition**, (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg), (p. 35).

those whose constituencies are predominantly made up of rural, peri-urban, and those municipalities that were formally under the jurisdiction of the former homelands and Bantustan governments. These municipalities have weaker or virtually non-existent management structures, poor infrastructure facilities, outdated accounting principles and dilapidated human resources structures. As pointed out in Chapter 6, the smaller and weaker municipalities of the Eastern Cape province for instance, such as those of Stutterheim, Queenstown and Fort Beaufort, have been more susceptible to public-private partnerships in the forms of contract and management leases.

Chapter 5, *Social Citizenship and the Emergence of the New Social Movements*, explored how the breakdown of social citizenship informed the emergence of the new social movements. Various revelations emanated from it. After examining the theories on social movements, certain complexities significant in South Africa emerged. Firstly, it is clear that there are leadership problems in the new social movements. These are in turn shaped by confusions over ideological and political alignments. The social movements are aware that they are marginalised politically. Their marginalisation is, on the other hand, informed by their detachment from the urban and rural masses.

The new social movements want to create alliances with COSATU. The need for closer ties with COSATU is necessitated by the ideological ties. However, both these needs are not necessarily that strong any longer in the townships. The outsourcing of various jobs in the public services sector, and the restructuring of the parastatals has led to massive retrenchments. That has significantly reduced the membership base of COSATU.

Also, despite the fact that the socialist rhetoric and the working class political culture is still visible within the structures of COSATU and in their collective action repertoire; that does not necessarily mean that it wields much influence on the mind of an average unionised member resident in a township. The socialist rhetoric and the political working class culture have existed, especially in the 1980s, more as part of the MDM's political culture of protest, rather than as ideologies that visibly and functionally drive the average unionised member. The average member of COSATU resident in a township is a medley of influences, mostly made up of basic wants and needs based on survival, and the other ordinary wishes, such as owning properties and businesses, for instance. Therefore, the new social movements' identification with COSATU as a necessary ally, as they realise that the 'working class' is the pillar of the struggle for a socialist dispensation, remains a vision with an unworkable base.

What also remains a mere vision with a dysfunctional platform, is the new social movements' (or APF's) determination to form a mass workers party. This is, firstly, a move or thinking that has found little support among the various factions of the APF. In Mpumalanga in July 2002, the CCF yet again made calls for the formation of an MWP. This found little support, as residents in Mpumalanga were more concerned with campaigning for the affordability of municipal services delivery. Secondly, the question of the formation of the MWP has divided the APF itself, with the Socialist Group, led by such leaders as Trevor Ngwane, fervent in calling for the founding of the MWP. Again, these are debates and concerns which seem to vex only the leadership and the activists of the APF. Furthermore, they seem to remain mainly in Johannesburg, where the APF is headquartered.

Chapter 6, *Water Services Struggles in the Mpumalanga Township, 1998 – 2002*, carries further from the broader observations of the trajectory of the new social movements, to focusing explicitly on Mpumalanga and the water services struggles and patterns in other South African townships. Results emanating from the fieldwork research survey I undertook revealed the entrenched status of cost recovery policies. They exposed us to the existence of the high water bills that have affected all the occupational or class groups in Mpumalanga. These policies have come in the form of the implementation of the public-private partnerships. As revealed in this chapter, different municipalities have implemented different forms of public-private partnerships, in accordance to the varied capacities of these municipalities.

At the same time, the qualitative research findings of the fieldwork revealed the capacity of the Durban local government's responsiveness towards them. The central state has also now begun to pay closer attention to the services delivery problems that have plagued the townships. It is also beginning to take seriously the actions of the social movements. President Mbeki has acknowledged that as a result of the urban unrest, there is a need for stronger state intervention in the running of the country. However, he pointed out that there are no 'centrifugal tensions'[10] that have belaboured other sub-Saharan African states. Mbeki cautioned though that, "...this should not serve as cause for complacency. There are various matters that arise as part of our daily reality, which indicate the fault lines that can emerge and generate conflicts that we do not need."[11]

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[10] **Urban unrest could lead to conflict, says Mbeki**, *Sunday Times*, 26 May, 2005.
[11] Ibid.

On the other hand, the research results exposed the CCF's lack of response to the Mpumalanga residents' plights of disconnections and making sense of their water bills. It is Chapter 7, *Crowd Renting or Struggling from Below? The Concerned Citizens' Forum (CCF) in the Mpumalanga Township, 1999 – 2002*, that exposed the realities of the CCF's form of connection with Mpumalanga. The crowd renting phenomenon is real. This is manifested in the CCF leadership's chequered visibility in the township on the one hand. On the other hand, it is manifested in the organisation's chequered mobilisation. The CCF leadership, throughout the course of its existence, has exploited the crises of water services delivery in Mpumalanga. After sensing the existence of the crises ---- of the high water bills and disconnections, they landed in the township. It can perhaps be argued that they have heightened the visibility of the problem, or even the gravity of the crisis, through their mobilisation.

Perhaps the term 'renting the crowd' is not exactly suitable in describing their exploits in Mpumalanga, as there was no exchange of money involved. What is clear though is that the residents of Mpumalanga were involved in collective action campaigns that they were not fully aware of, although they were fully conversant with the depth of the crisis. The Mpumalanga residents were the ones who were directly affected by the crisis. The phenomenon of crowd renting might have displayed the predatory nature of some of these intellectual-cum-activists. More important though to identify is the lack of ideological coherence of the CCF's programmes. Also crucial here are the leadership problems, or lack of leadership in the CCF.

What is more interesting in this entire drama is the relationship between the CCF leadership's political interests with the political and economic fortunes of the

local politicians in Mpumalanga. This is the part of the drama that has received little or no coverage in the print and electronic medium of the new social movements. It has received meagre coverage because of the township's political legacy. The Mpumalanga youth activists have often noted the lingering effects of political violence in the township. They have also often observed the silent threats accompanied to any pro-ANC campaigns in the IFP-dominated sections of the township. Therefore, the workings of local or neighbourhood politics in Mpumalanga have rendered the theories on the implications of neo-liberalism on the ground complex. The political history of the township from the early 1970s to the late 1980s defined contemporary politics in the township. The CCF has proved that it was not a mere victim of the legacy of community politics in Mpumalanga, but a willing participant that took advantage of it. The CCF used the IFP leadership, in opposition to the ANC and decades-old rivalries, to gain influence for their own objectives, making inroads in political mobilisation in the township. The IFP leadership, on the other hand, used the CCF to denounce the ANC in the township.

Were the Mpumalanga youth activists caught in the middle of this drama, as victims? This as well does not have a clear answer. It is clear though that the youth activists are political amateurs. They are youths. They were not part of the legacy of the 1980s township movements that shaped, in many ways, the political culture and collective action repertoire of the new social movements. However, they were not mere victims of the local or neighbourhood politics of Mpumalanga. They were aware of these conditions. Also, they were active participants in their victimisation by the CCF leadership, in that they benefited from the networking and organisation skills the CCF leadership imparted on them, however meagre and limited they were.

The youth activists also did not have a clear ideological direction for their own struggles, apart from the vexation caused by the water crisis, and the entire post-Seattle, anti-IMF, anti-World Bank mood that engulfed the social movement scene. The despondency in the township caused by poverty, unemployment and lack of education also directed them to the scene of the new social movements and the anti-neoliberal struggles. Are they committed anti-neoliberal cadres? Were they to be offered employment by the very eThekwini municipality they mobilise against, if they took them, would it be justifiable to brand them confused cadres? Perhaps yes, and perhaps no. It remains to be seen. It is early for a judgement call. As Hardt and Negri put it, the geography, the cartography of the struggles against neo-liberalism, is still being drawn.

Mpumalanga Township Survey
Section 1: Demographic Data

Unit No. / Name: _____
Name of the Street: _____
No. of houses in the street: _____
No. of houses with tricklers in the street: _____
No. of houses with pre-paid water meters in the street: _____

N.B: Please circle the appropriate section, and write or state where appropriate

Sex of the Head of the Household	Age of the head of the Household	Type of Employment of the Head of the Household	Income of the Head of the Household	Number of Dependants in the Household	Relations of Dependants in the Household	Ages of Dependants in the Household
Male	20 – 30		R300 – R500		Grandfather	
Female	30 – 40		R501 – R800		Grandmother	
	40 – 50		R801 – R1000		Father	
	50 – 60		R1001 – R1500		Mother	
	60 – 70		R1501 – R2000		Uncle	
	70 – 80		R2001 – R2 500		Aunt	
	80 – 90		R2 501 – R3000		Grandsons (how many)	
	90 – 100		R3 001 – R3 500		Grand-daughter (how many)	
			R3 501 – R4000		Nephews	
			R4 001 – R4 500		Nieces	
			R5 001 – R5 500		Others	
			R6 000 – R7000			
			R7 001 –			

			R8 000			
			R8 001 – R9 000			
			R9 000 – R10 000			
			R10 000 – R11 000			
			R11 001 – R12 000			
			R12 001 – R13 000			
			R13 001 – R14 000			
			R14 001 – R15 000			
			R15 001 – R16 000			
			R16 001 – R17 000			
			R17 001 – R18 000			
			R18 001 – R19 000			
			R19 001 – R20 000			
			Other			

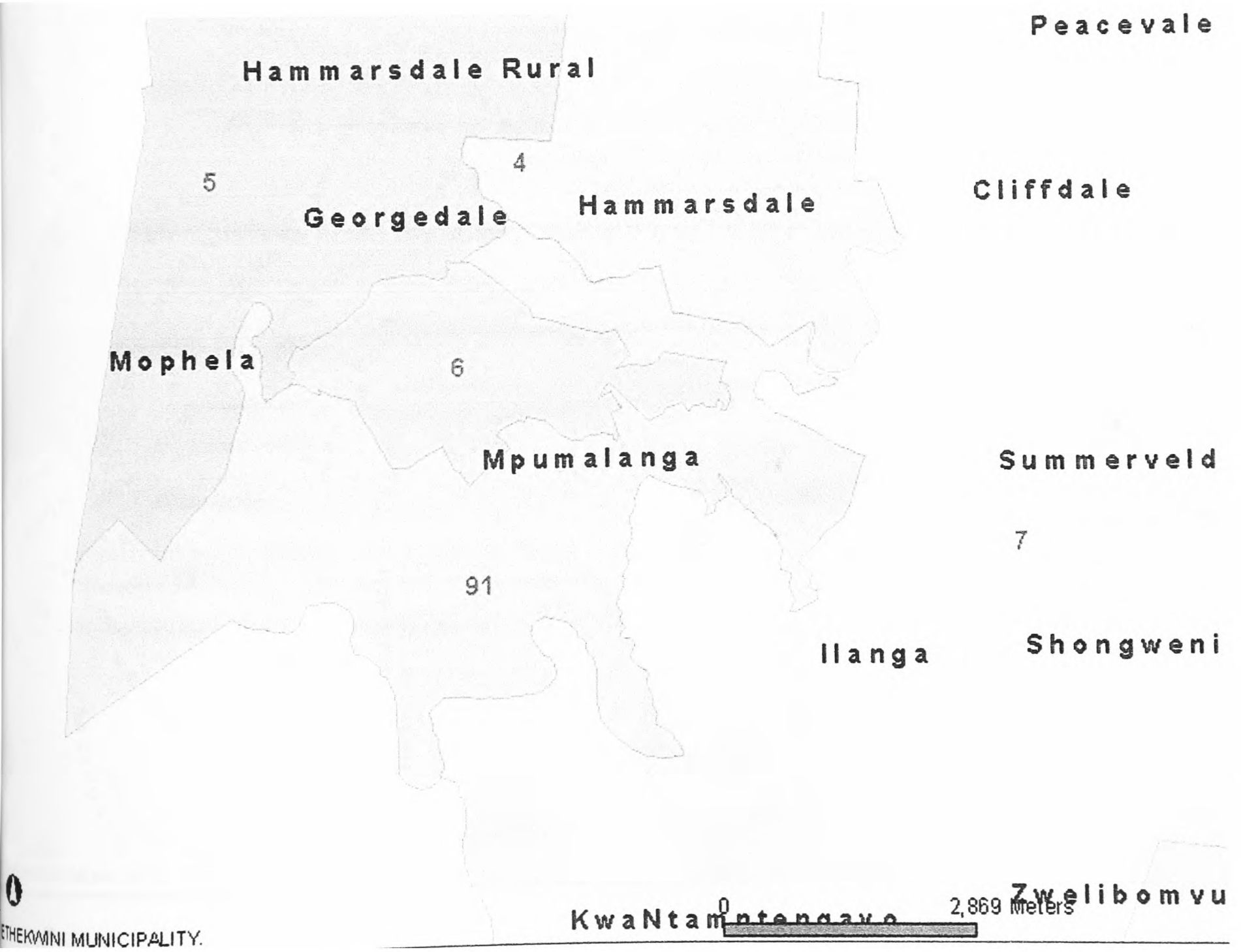
Section 2: Water Disconnections

Type of Water Meter	No. of times you have been disconnected	Resolutions you took	Amounts of water bills you received in the last two years	How many times have you had a device (eg. Water trickler) removed?
		Paid the water bill	R100 – R200	
		Approached Durban Metro Water for advice/assistance	R201 – R300	
		Approached lawyers	R301 – R400	
		Approached CCF	R401 – R500	
		Approached the bank	R501 – R600	
		Asked for a bank loan	R601 – R700	
		Asked for a loan from some other institution	R701 – R800	
		Asked for a loan from relatives	R801 – R900	
		Asked for a loan from stokvel, etc.	R901 – R1 000	
		Asked for a loan from a friend	R1 001 – R 2000	
		Other	R2001	

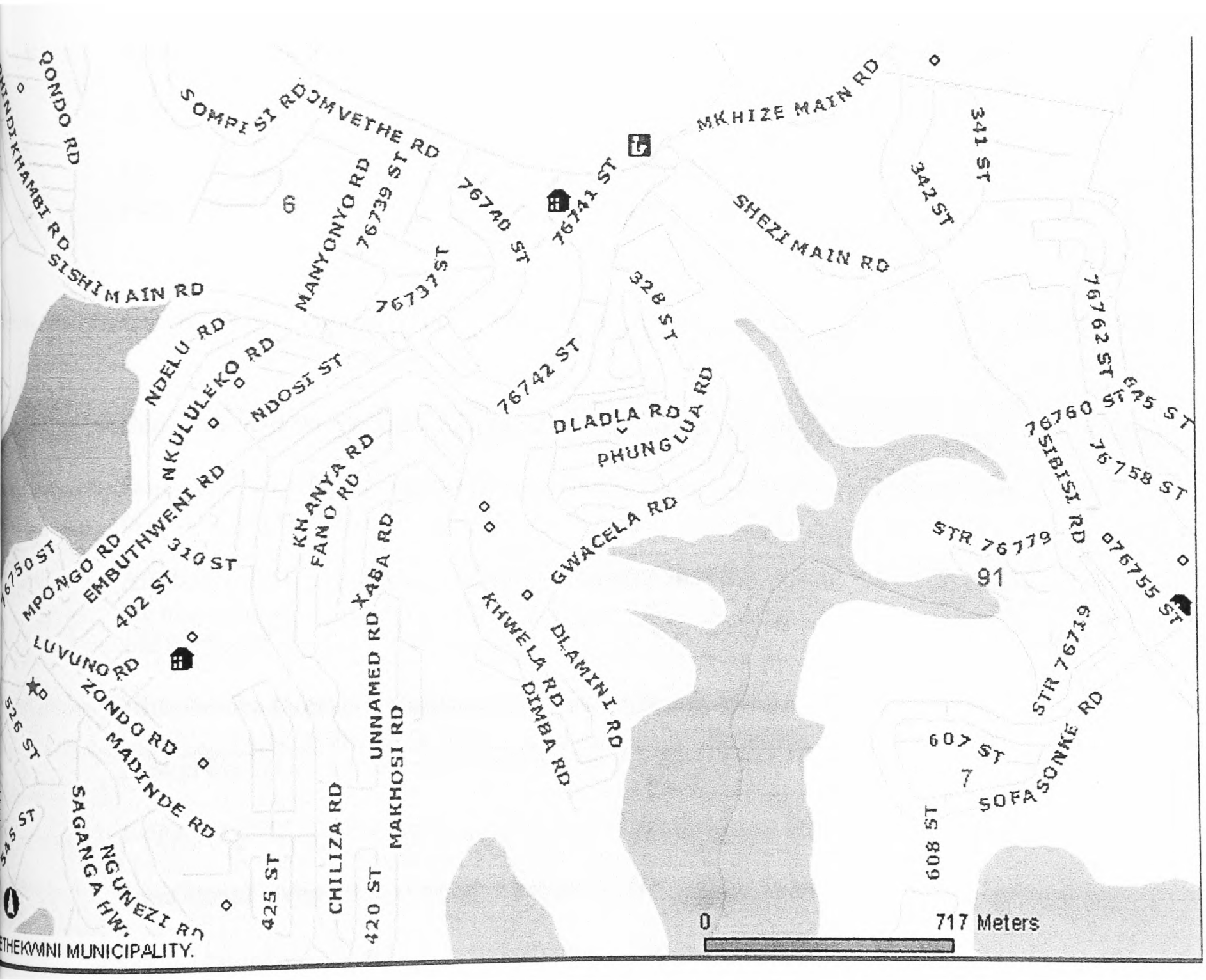
Appendix 2
Mpumalanga in the Outer West Region



Appendix 3
Mpumalanga and the Surrounding Areas



Appendix 4
Street Map of Mpumalanga



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