STRUGGLES FOR A NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL STATE IN THE TRANSITION IN SOUTH AFRICA - IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

The struggle for a national democratic developmental state in South Africa continues. It has been a struggle for a transitional state able to consolidate popular power, with a bias towards the workers and the poor. It has been also a struggle for a growth and development strategy that was both people centred and people driven.

South Africa entered a transition based on a negotiated settlement in 1990. As the politics of reconstruction took centre stage, the character of the developmental state, and the role of the mass movement and civil society in democratic development, came under contention. Most striking were the roles played by the South African Congress of Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO). They led in the creating of the reconstruction and development programme (RDP), or played central roles in the negotiations for the new local state. This was in the context of the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe, in the rolling back of social democratic gains in industrialised countries, and in the floundering of developmentalism in Africa.

South Africa stood out as the only case of a non - violent transition from authoritarianism to democracy where negotiations for the local state played a key role, or where the transition occurred simultaneously at sub - national   and national levels (Makura, 1999). Further, the liberation struggle was not just a struggle for the vote. It was at the same time a struggle for people's power. Again, few recent transitions have been as successful as that of South Africa in terms of gender (Waylan, 2004).

Yet despite this, and despite the claims that local government was the 'hands and feet of the RDP', its status as a step - child of the transition increasingly became apparent. Its transformation has been especially challenging and protracted. The typical role of local government, of providing and maintaining services, was being supplemented by a broader developmental role.

South Africa inherited a welfare system modeled on welfare state policies for whites. At the same time it inherited underdevelopment and extreme inequality. This was the product of a particular kind of developmental state. The RDP promised basic welfare rights, including the right to basic needs, while the Constitution promises social and economic rights, in whose realisation the local state has a special role to play. To what extent national democratic struggles in the local state helped overcome the legacies of the past, will be assessed. One of the main obstacles has been the tension between social development and the economic growth model pursued by the government.

Another key issue is whether the promoting of programmes of delivery in the localities has been combined with the mobilisation of the people. It has been a challenge to ensure that the transition was mass driven. More recently, debate has refocussed on the meaning and strategy to build a developmental state. But not enough attention has been paid to the specificity of the local state and the obstacles to its democratisation. This problem has been brought to public notice by a recent wave of popular protest, ostensibly about non - delivery by local government. What is really at issue, it is contended, is the unfinished nature of the national democratic revolution, and the role of the local state in achieving substantive democracy.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THE LOCAL STATE IN SOUTH AFRICA

As an organ of social and economic reproduction, the peripheral local state is a "troubled notion" (Akin Aina, 1997, p. 65). This is in terms of its colonial origins, its location and autonomy, and the shifting relationship between it and society. Existing at a different spatial, administrative and political level to the central state, the struggle has been to bring it close to its constituencies in terms of addressing basic needs and fostering economic development. At the centre of conceptual ambiguities is the issue of power.

Class, racial, gender, ethnic and regional fragmentation was characteristic of apartheid. What is being sought is a public space that overcomes the confining of black poor workers and the poor to the edges of the towns and cities in townships (as well as to informal settlements and slums in the inner cities now). In the past too, rural areas were treated as traditional backwaters, or as the handmaiden of the urban, the particular abode of poor black women. Transformation of the local state must help to enhance a sense of place.

Its strengthening is imperative if globalisation as the current phase of imperialism is to be confronted. Linked to this is 'localisation'. In the countries of Africa these processes have given rise to a distinctive mode of urbanisation and industrialisation, and to modernisation as westernisation. The attempt to reconstruct the local state in South Africa is a response to the global economic restructuring of the past three decades, where the process of tying cities to global forces has exacerbated their fragmentation. With the geographical locality rising to prominence, there has been a shift to sub - regional or local level planning and development, including local economic development. What has bedeviled the refashioning of the local state has been the tendency to shift welfare responsibilities from the central government to the local, community and even household levels.

While there is an ancient urban tradition in Africa, the colonial city was the creature of imperialism. "Everyone in it was far from home" (Magubane, 2000). Magubane has noted that for Marx the whole economic history of society is summed up in the antithesis between town and country. This antagonism only exists within the framework of private property. It is only socialism which will overcome this antagonism.

Urbanisation did not lead to the diversifying of the urban economy, or alter the relations between the urban and the rural. In Africa cities are the nodal points in the chain of linkages

between the urban and the rural, the world division of labour, and underdeveloped and dependent capitalism. Colonialism failed to complete the task of social transformation it had begun. Instead, as it pauperised, it produced profoundly distorted and skewed urban societies. Development goals begun during the colonial period were carried forward into the era of independence. Despite import substitution, industrialisation had not kept pace with the growth of the labour force.

In South Africa had existed 'colonialism of a special type (CST)'. Based on a specific mode of cheap labour, most striking was the contradiction between the colonised black majority and the white oppressor developmental state. It is argued that the scale of industrialisation and urbanisation under CST was greater than that of other African societies. The implications of this for both urban and rural development have still to be considered fully. South Africa was the subject of different modernities. As an illustration, the spaces of the former bantustans still bear the traces of a complex agrarian history. Yet there has been an obliteration of agriculture in what is like an urban society in the countryside. Many of the villages seem empty, lacking in vibrancy. There were no places like this elsewhere in Africa, it has been contended (Raison, 1998, pp. 6 -7).   The bureaucrats of our segregated past imposed an agricultural modernisation and decentralised industrialisation which exacerbated a rural exodus. Contributing to this had been rural local councils and traditional authorities.

The modern council system in South Africa was established under the Glen Grey Act of 1894. It was related to the entrenchment of the reserves. While the Act was presented to the chiefs as a return to the past, in its inception the council system excluded recognition of the chieftainship. But in its development the system of local government was the result of a compromise. It was conceived by the colonists for two elements in African society, the 'progressives' and the chiefs. The councils were linked to the development of the reserves, and were early associated with regulation, control and exploitation. Wave after wave of peasant protest in the reserves attest to this. The Glen Grey Act, with its council system, provided the prototype for local government in the urban black areas. In 1920 the Native Administration Act extended to the union provisions similar to the Glen Grey Act.

Class, national and gender struggles for an alternative modernity were spearheaded by the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union and the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA). The Black Republic thesis of the CPSA drew attention to the colonial, agrarian, and national features of oppression in South Africa. This paved the way for closer co-operation between it and the African National Congress (ANC), laying the foundation for the national liberation alliance. In response the Native Administration Act was passed in 1927 by the government. A cornerstone of segregation, it aimed to modernise the indirect and decentralised system of colonial domination. This was taken further with the passage of the Bantu Authorities Act in 1951. In it administrative, judicial and executive powers were vested in the chiefs. They became the local arm of the despotic central state, which was based on extra economic coercion and violence.

Into the 1950s an ideology of development grew to legitimate growing state interference with the productive forces in the reserves. It served to   displace politics and resistance,

generated racial, cultural and gender stereotypes, and obscured the nature of the agarian question. Over time the agrarian features of the national struggle largely fell off the national agenda. The liberation movement did not succeed in establishing a guerilla movement. Also, it was propagated that an independent peasantry no longer existed, and that subsistence farming had collapsed in the reserves. The struggle became township based, in both the urban and rural areas.

Providing the foundation for renewed mass struggles against apartheid in the 1970s and 1980s was the growth of industrialisation and urbanisation. Opposition to the councils in the urban black communities was a key element. The black trade union movement played a leading role in the struggles. Migrant labourers had been the main force behind the independent trade union movements in the 1970s, Mamdani (1996) has maintained. But by the end of the 1980s they had become marginal to the township based revolt, indicative of the rural in the urban. Organised under the umbrella of the United Democratic Front, the centrality of urban forces and movements in civil society was unlike the independence struggles in most African countries.

What was specific to the African political experience as a whole was not so much the structural defects, or otherwise, of civil society. Rather, it was the crystallisation of a different form of power and mode of colonial control. Assuming the form of a 'bifurcated state', it had been based on a distinctive urban/rural division, and fused power in the traditional authority, which was rooted in the communal ownership of land and in the customary. The point of democratisation cannot be just a simple reform of civil society. Instead, it must dismantle the mode of rule. Without a democratising of local rural customary power, urban civil power must inevitably degenerate.

The transition in South Africa is being held back by not completely dismantling the remaining structures of indirect rule. It should be added that the colonial state was a patriarchal one. Of most relevance is the fact that the system of codified customary law, derived from the days of the segregationist state, distorted culture and entrenched patriarchy. Although steps have been taken to change this system, this has not yet translated into policy or legislation. Historically, black rural women played the central role in the reproduction of the working class in South Africa.

PEOPLE'S POWER

During the mass upsurge of the 1980s, liberated districts emerged in various parts of South Africa. Rudimentary organs of people's power were set up in the place of the discredited local councils. The concept of people's power was not equivalent to that of Parliamentary power. It was that and more. The sovereignty of the people was found not only in Parliamentary politics, but also in the practical control of public offices in the educational, economic and cultural spheres:

> ...the dominance of the 'monolithic' notion of people's power as 'the
> supreme controlling power in the state', which has to be seized by
> the people via the instrumentality of their leading organisations -

the ANC and allied organisations - was superceded by a 'dispersed
notion of people's power that has to be seized via the instrumentality
of the various organs of people's power in each and every front of the
 struggle as a matter of both tactical and strategic priority...People's
power is concerned with people's control of their lives in all respects
- political, economic, cultural, educational, etc - on a continuous and
local basis (Mashamba, 1990, pp. 11 - 12, in Nzimande, 1996, p.9)

In the old homeland areas or bantustans the people also sought to overturn chiefly rule. But there has been much less political focus on this revolt. What needs to be better recognised too is that the profusion of self help activities in the townships supported the liberation struggle as a "reserve fund", in similar ways to the activities of peasants in China (SACP Discussion Document, 2005, p.49).

The mass democratic movement (MDM), made up of women, youth, religious, sports and similar organisations, played a vital role in the national struggle for political and economic liberation. Great battles took place in the educational sphere for 'people's education'. Many dimensions of resistance and opposition had been addressed too in the broad popular cultural movement called 'people's culture'. It included the issue of non - racialism. Related to the resurgence of national democratic struggle, people's culture failed to sufficiently dissect the experiences of women and workers. The emergence of working class culture raised awareness that the struggle against apartheid was unfolding in a class context. It spoke with force and directness of the struggles in the workplace and the community, highlighting the brutalities of capitalist exploitation.

The United Democratic Front (UDF) co-ordinated the localised struggles under the banner of the banned African National Congress (ANC). A rich culture of mass struggle and debate developed in the UDF and the labour movement. As a basis for a seizure of power, calls were made in some quarters for the Freedom Charter to be implemented. Drawn up in 1955 in a great participatory exercise, the Freedom Charter was the seminal document of the national democratic revolution. Based on the principle of 'The People shall Govern', it envisaged the radical reconstruction of key aspects of the economy. To cut away at the material basis of the racist power structure, the nationalisation of the banks and mines was advocated.

THE TRANSITION 1990 - 1996

The seizure of power did not take place. Instead, South Africa entered a process of transition. It was contradictory, fostering fragmentation, giving rise to new opportunities, and enabling reconstruction to begin. Without adequate discussion of broad strategy, the UDF dissolved, and the ANC led liberation alliance entered into constitutional negotiations with the apartheid government. Negotiations became another element in the armoury of struggle. A number of compromises had to be struck. They included the retaining of the apartheid civil service through 'sunset clauses' as well as traditional authorities. After the developing of an interim constitution, elections were held in 1994, and a government of national unity was set up. It lasted for a short period.

In a restrictive global and national context, the national liberation movement sought for new approaches for the transfer of power to the people. A mass driven transition would be crucial in empowering the people to learn how to govern. Vigilance was needed to ensure that negotiations did not become the only site of struggle, or a pact between elites, or become a substitute for mass struggle.

In this context the ANC led government sought to build a national consensus across the divide of the 'two nations' of South Africa. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was one innovative if flawed intervention. At the base of nation building was the need to overturn the legacy of underdevelopment, with its deep rooted racial, class and gender inequalities. In the past, legitimation for the national democratic revolution had been best captured in the anti - capitalist programme of the Freedom Charter. Yet the new context was throwing up new challenges. Now, more than ever, what had to be confronted was the issue of the agrarian question. Another burning issue was the need to better conceptualise the role of the NDR in overcoming gender inequalities. How a working class which was being reconstituted by globalisation, could retain or recapture its leading role in driving the NDR to its conclusion, was perhaps the most serious challenge.

Different perspectives in the liberation movement on how the transition should be engaged began to emerge. Some were hesitant about the potential of the masses to grasp the new realities of the NDR. They favoured tight management of the negotiations process. Others were more optimistic. Among these was the SACP. While it supported the ANC in pursuing the NDR, most of the other small left groupings did not. The resolution of the national question in the NDR was the key to addressing the challenges facing revolutionaries in the underdeveloped world. But the SACP did not want to postpone the struggle for socialism until after the attaining of the aims of the NDR, as some independent socialists contended. It acknowledged that an immediate transition to socialism was not possible, but neither would capitalism be able to resolve the contradictions of underdevelopment and national oppression. National, class and gender contradictions could not be resolved outside of a transition to socialism. It began to propagate the slogan, "Socialism is the future. Build it now!".

Momentum towards, capacity for and elements of socialism had to be built in the current period. The market had to be rolled back through the decommodifying of basic needs, and transformed in favour of the workers and the poor. Going beyond nationalisation, the socialising of the public sector and parastatals was advocated. So too was the need to democratise the shop floor and to build a strong co - operative movement. COSATU added to this the call to reclaim redistribution by building the 'social sector' . Collective and social forms of production, based on organisations in civil society such as trade unions and community trusts, needed to be built.

In the building of a democratic state different approaches were debated. A dominant view in the SACP was that the process of transition provided opportunities for 'revolutionary reform'. Rather than the seizure of power in one fell swoop, a number of terrains of power needed to be engaged on an ongoing basis through a series of decisive moments. One of the

sites was the state. It was key to the exercise of power. But there were other sites, such as the economic, cultural and educational. Their control would enable the empowering of the workers and the oppressed to begin to subvert capital. Another view was that together with the building of a new democratic state, the colonial state had to be destroyed.

In the politics of reconstruction, vibrant debates about civil society and its role in democratic development also took place. Some defined civil society from the standpoint of strengthening bourgeois democracy or liberal representative democracy. They saw it as a public realm of private associations which provided a check on state power. A hallmark of a vibrant civil society was a plurality of independent voluntary organisations. These would form the basis of 'associational socialism'. Others emphasized the economic origin of civil society. According to them unequal property relations were at its foundation. A related view was that the relationship between state and civil society was a tenous one. As long as the state acted in the interest of privilege, tension between it and civil society would persist.

In the struggles of the past the concerns of political and civil society had overlapped largely. During the transition a process of separating out was occurring. It was argued that this separation was a bourgeois democratic concept which would endanger the building of socialism. The close link between the two needed to continue in the form of organs of people's power. Others vaunted the concept of 'working class' civil society, whose role should be to serve as a 'watchdog' of the state and business. It is this which would form the building block of socialism. What was at issue was what the relationship between the state and civil society should be in democratic development.

It was disconcerting that the MDM began to be demobilised, or it began to be reconstituted. Large sections of the mass movement were harnessed inside the branches and leagues of the ANC. In the realigning of the political and the civil, not enough thought was given to the aims and consequences of this reconstitution. In fact, the question of the relationship of the ANC led liberation movement to the ANC in government, was not thought through sufficiently. The apartheid goverment had sought to limit politics to the negotiating table, divorcing it from the wider civic, labour and socio-economic struggles. Mass struggles began to fragment around disparate or sectoral issues. They were becoming uncoupled from the broader struggle for political and economic liberation. Another problem was that tensions between new national co-ordinating structures, and their local membership, began to appear in some of the organisations.

On the other hand the rise of the Women's National Coalition (WNC), and the move of COSATU to a 'strategic unionism', was instructive of considered responses to the new context. Formed in 1985, COSATU treasured its independence from the state, even though it had entered into the national liberation alliance. Some critics deprecated what was seen as a move away from 'social movement unionism'. They urged it to consider alliances with other progressive civil society formations. It became a leading role player in a "corporatism of a special type' (Webster, 1995, p.25) in an era when corporatism seemed to be on the retreat. The National Economic, Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) was formed in 1995. It was an attempt to go beyond Parliament to build a broad social consensus for the reconstruction of South Africa. Drawing in government, business and labour, it sought,

unusually, to incorporate the community sector. NEDLAC derived from the numerous forums which had been set up in different social sectors and at all levels. By adopting an inclusive and democratic format, they had aimed to restrict the unilateral actions of the apartheid government.

The Women's National Coalition was formed as an umbrella organisation of diverse women's groups during the period of negotiations. It seized on the special opportunities of the era to place women's issues and gender relations high on the national agenda. The lessons of the struggle of women in the communities, churches, schools and trade unions informed its activities. Women across the country and across political divisions were galvanised to produce the women's charter for effective equality. The WNC developed a strategy to build a broad based and inclusive mobilisation campaign, and to undertake participatory research aimed at gathering women's demands for the future dispensation.

Negotiations for the Democratic Local State

It was in this dynamic context that the restructuring of local government took place. Civics had played a political role as organs of people's power, struggling for the removal of black local authorities in the townships. They also took up problems related to the provision of services on a day to day basis. In playing a civil 'watchdog' role, they sought the delivery of services, affordable tarriffs and the writing off of arrears. Refusing to recognise them, the apartheid government passed the Interim Measures Act in June 1991. The civic movement rejected the IMA as unilateral restructuring. With the demise of the UDF, SANCO had been established. There was a need to co-ordinate the civics in the negotiations for democratic local government. However, the unitary national structure of SANCO was set up amid fierce controversy. A theme reiterated was that SANCO had to strive to take its constituencies along with it in the negotiations process.

At a meeting with government in August 1992, SANCO, proposed the formation of the Local Government Negotiating Forum. This was launched by a SANCO delegation in March 1993. In the delegation were national liberation alliance representatives from the ANC, SACP and COSATU. The LGNF sought to standardise the negotiations around restructuring, to establish guidelines to remove past imbalances and to achieve democratic local government, and to find a format to replace all apartheid structures with interim democratic structures. It worked towards achieving "one city, one budget, one administration". Two hundred and fifty nine local negotiating forums were set up around the country.

SANCO was ultimately recognised by the authorities as a legitimate representative structure. Its influence seemed to be on the increase. Represented in key forums, it had significant influence on local development processes, and played an important role in the LGNF. Yet commentators noted that organisationally, most civics were weak. Women had not been well represented in the LGNF. Local government was in a serious financial crisis. Among the main reasons for the recognition of SANCO by government was that it was expected to bring stability, to help end the boycotts, and to persuade residents to resume rent and service payments.

Others claimed that SANCO was a junior partner in the LGNF. There were signs that the ANC was becoming more influential in negotiations for new local government. As part of the national negotiations at the World Trade Centre, and as one of the compromises, it had agreed that the core of new city administrations would consist of the apartheid bureaucracy. New measures for the transformation of local government were contained in the Local Government Transitional Act. A multi - party or power sharing approach was at the base of the proposed transitional local councils. Providing they met certain criteria, local negotiating forums could have a say in appointing the transitional councils, the Act allowed. The councils would remain in office until a new constitution had been drawn up.

In the national climate of heightened political consciousness and mobilisation, the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) was formed. It was born out of a merger between five COSATU affiliates in local government. With a strong commitment to democratic practice, it placed great emphasis on building sound structures in the workplaces. Its continued restructuring took place against the background of deregulation and the privatising of services by apartheid local government. The approach adopted by the union was to push for the setting up interim structures in every local council. By this time, many types of council had collapsed altogether. A dilemma was that local initiatives were taking place in the absence of the establishment of national guidelines. Greater co-ordination between COSATU and its allies in the civics and in the broader liberation alliance, who were involved in negotiations with the local authorities, was needed.

While there was an overlapping of leadership of COSATU and the civics, the link which had existed between struggles in the workplace and those in the community was being tested under the new conditions. COSATU affiliates like SAMWU and other municipal unions had to exercise caution in making claims for scarce public resources. Struggles to disband the illegitimate black local councils and to restructure the public service were leading to the paradoxical result that SAMWU and other municipal workers were being retrenched. The battle for a living wage in local government was being made more difficult by the call for local government to address the basic service needs of the masses too.

It was a challenge to unionists to contribute to creating a new national ethos and culture in the public service, away from the old bureaucratic approaches of the apartheid era. They needed to find a way to work more closely with the communities to improve their lives, and to win their support. At the same time, and despite the struggle for improved wages and working conditions, they needed to find a way of working with the new democratic government to drive the reconstruction and development of South Africa. This was and has not been an easy challenge, particularly in the light of the privatisation of services and of state owned enterprises.

What was becoming apparent was that in the debates about the restructuring of government as a whole, the realm of local government seemed to be becoming relatively neglected by the liberation alliance. There were a number of weaknesses in the Local Government Transitional Act. Also many of the transitional councils which were set up were financially unstable or greatly lacking in capacity.

Even more neglected was rural local government. Local negotiating forums had not been set up outside the rural towns. Existing systems were fragmented and centralised, with unco-ordinated delivery. The Local Government Transitional Act did not make provision for a broadly based structure to facilitate and support rural local government. At issue was the legitimacy of the chiefs, and whether and how the traditional leadership might be accommodated within elected local structures. Related to this was how to cater for farmworkers, landless people and women. Another question was that of finance and revenue rising. The majority in the rural areas relied on urban remittances or welfare disbursements. Also of relevance was the issue of capacity within commercial farming areas as well as within the former Bantustans. The result has been that traditional authorities in the ex -bantustans were enabled to entrench their powers long into the transition, particularly in regard to control over communal land. They have challenged a number of aspects of local state transformation, proving to be especially an obstacle to provisions made for the equality of women.

Towards the Reconstruction and Development Programme - the Process of Development

Most development and planning bodies in South Africa had been government initiated. While the apartheid state had encouraged planning at the national rather than the regional or local levels, the 1970s and early 1980s saw a shift to regional development and planning. This was accompanied by a modicum of community participation. The introduction of black local authorities, increasing privatisation and the deregulation of economic activities, facilitated the greater involvement of the private sector.

Where present, the community development process tended to be "stop - start, discontinuous and ad hoc with duplication" (Juggernath, 1996, p.102). There was overlapping, turf protection, competition and rivalry on the part of service organisations that was sometimes destructive. The dependence on funders helped entrench a culture of hand outs. Development tended to be product oriented rather than process driven. Such an approach was fostered by the development related institutions of state and provincial administrations which were "top down, often autocratic, with a hidden agenda to co-opt..."

The politics of resistance began to make way for the politics of reconstruction. COSATU initiated the RDP. In 1990 a 'reconstruction accord' was proposed in the National Union of Metal Workers. There was growing concern in the broader trade union movement about the economic challenges facing South Africa. Many felt that there was a need for an agreement on economic strategy. It was believed too that a union strategy for development would only be successful if the unions had sufficient organisational and political power to be able to influence the state. Without this there would no prospect for successful reconstruction. The Industrial Strategy Project within COSATU developed a model for an industrial strategy. It was based on export markets, production based on high technical skills, and the need to be competitive.

The RDP was intially conceived as a pact to be signed between COSATU and the ANC. On

the one side COSATU would deliver votes for the ANC. On the other it wanted to hold the ANC to specific agreements. But the feeling began to grow that the programme needed to go beyond the two organisations to become a nationally unifying plan. Civil society, other political parties and organisations needed to be incorporated. The plan should not be like a social contract with business. Rather, an agreement between unions, civics, rural organisations and progressive political parties about a national development strategy should be sought.

In building consensus, the proposed programme went through many drafts. It was discussed at workshops and conferences involving the national liberation alliance and the broader MDM, integrating gender issues. The ANC's Macro - Economic Research Group contributed a model which favoured an inward industrial strategy based on servicing basic needs, with an interventionist role for the state. Views about the need for a mixed economy were also included. The basic approach of the RDP was one of 'growth through redistribution'. A strong role for local government was advocated. Among its principles were integrated, sustainable and people driven development. Its key programmes aimed to meet basic needs, develop human resources, build the economy, and democratise the state and society.

The RDP was highly innovative in seeking to tap the creative potential of the people and the mass organisations, and to harness their creative energy for development. It sought to forge a relationship between the state and its institutions, and the various organs of people's power. Through it, COSATU was enabled to maximise its influence in the liberation alliance, and to influence the agenda of the transition generally. SANCO also made telling contributions, especially on issues related to local government.

The cornerstone was that development had to be people driven. In its contribution to the RDP, SANCO propagated a more decentralised, community oriented economic development. It prioritised five development arenas. They were housing, democratic community finance, rural development, grassroots economic development and economic restructuring. Barriers needed to be removed. A people's economic charter and a document on development finance were also drawn up. SANCO advocated the provision of vastly increased housing and services in the impoverished areas.

Central to rural development had to be land reform, it proposed. This needed to be based on a political strategy which would involve bottom up mobilisation, and the organising of rural people. Options for land reform included land occupation, restoration and redistribution. Market based processes involving grants and loans, as well as state expropriation, were proposed. SANCO called for urban/rural divisions, especially those centred on the production, distribution and consumption of food, to be bridged.

In the national elections of 1994 the RDP formed the basis of the ANC's election manifesto, as well as in the staggered local government elections of 1995/6. It was the basis of engaging other forces, including business, in debates about the economy and the future. An RDP Office was set up in the Presidency of the newly elected national government. Ideas from the RDP also found their way into the new South African constitution which was

finalised in 1996. In it local government must ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner, must promote social and economic development, and must encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in its affairs. Also relevant is the Bill of Rights. It includes the rights to housing, health care, education, food, water and social security.

Local Government Elections

In the elections COSATU and SACP members played strong roles in mobilising support for the ANC. Amid debate about whether COSATU and the SACP should put forward their own candidates, it was agreed that members of the alliance organisations (and SANCO) should be included in the ANC election lists. No formal mechanism for collective or individual accountability to their organisations was put in place. In addition, the election lists were based on a combination of constituency and proportional representation. While proportional representation had several advantages in a complex society like South Africa, it helped weaken accountability, this time to the local constituency.

The loss of many key leaders seriously affected the mass organisations, SANCO much more so. In fact the relationships between SANCO and ANC branches had become quite conflictual, as they struggled to redefine their roles in the new context. What was needed also to ensure the accountability of councillors was a strong mass movement. A strategy needed to be forged that would encompass the shift in focus of the mass organisations from resistance to development, would ensure that they would be rebuilt, and would link worker struggles to wider ongoing mass action.

While the ANC won the elections, the turnout and the percentage of the vote garnered by it was lower than for the national elections. In the national elections the ANC won 62% of the vote, while in the local government elections it obtained 58.8 % of the vote. Between them the liberal Democratic Alliance, increasingly becoming the voice of the old guard; and the Inkatha Freedom Party, mouthpiece of the chiefs in Kwazulu - Natal, won about 30% of the vote (Sachs, 2001, pp. 11 - 16). The rest of the political parties obtained minsicule percentages. Although women made up 19% of the councillors (Beall, 2004, p. 8), their footing in local government seemed to be less secure than nationally. This was due especially to the system of rural and traditional local government. Depending on patronage, it was particularly negative towards women.

THE TRANSITION POST 1996 - FROM THE RDP TO GEAR

It was now possible to realise some of the strategic objectives of the RDP at community level, to take the struggle for the completion of the NDR further, and to bring government closer to the people (Nzimande, 1996). The elections both nationally and at local government level had not led to a complete transfer of power. They merely shifted the balance of power in favour of democratic forces. The challenge was for political rights to be translated into social rights, and for representative democracy to enable a shift to substantive democracy.

In Western Europe this had been possible only to the extent that working class demands were organised and found effective representation in the state (Heller, 2000, pp. 23 - 27).

There were other lessons. In Kerala in India, Marxism had inaugurated a "new social imaginary of substantive equality" (Nissim, 2005, p.10). A broad based working class movement enabled the Communist Party to lead or form part of various coalitions in government. They pursued what was arguably the most successful strategy of redistributive development outside the socialist world. In South Africa a Russian Marxist, Boris Kagarlitsky, commented that certain challenges had to be confronted if the RDP was to work (Webster, 1995, pp. 76 - 79). Some restructuring of the economy was necessary. The expansion of the public sector had to be connected to the democratic transformation of the state, and experiments with decentralisation, different forms of democratic accountability, and workers participation and control, considered. Otherwise, Kagarlitsky warned of a "coming crisis in the transition" between the rising black elite and the residents in the townships.

However, the era of globalisation has bedeviled the ability of nation states in the developing world to provide the benefits of redistribution. It is contended that in furthering the NDR in South Africa, changes in formal representative democracy had to be aligned with changes in the system of participatory governance, and the political and civil brought into alignment. Ways of translating political rights into social rights had to be sought too.

Apart from the advocating of the setting up of broad based RDP forums at local level, the implementation of the RDP practically had not been adequately discussed in the liberation alliance. Shifts had begun to emerge within it. Especially some leaders in government maintained that globalisation, and the domestic power of capital, was forcing on the liberation movement a far more limited vision of the NDR. Another view was that the essential character of the NDR remained the same, even if international and local conditions required more dynamic strategies to be developed (COSATU, 2002, p. 45).

Contestation and reinterpretation of the RDP began. Included were the private sector and technocrats. In addition to the existing middle class and capitalists, still largely white, a stratum of black middle class professionals and capitalists was emerging. The National Growth and Development Strategy were abandoned. It was replaced in 1996 by the Growth, Development and Redistribution Macro - Economic framework (GEAR). Its proponents in government argued that economic growth rates were slow and unemployment was rising. National government had to provide a stable macro economic environment to secure investment and job creation. Imposed unilaterally, and seeking economic stabilisation and fiscal restraint, GEAR was said by government to be non negotiable.

Faced with probably one of the greatest challenges in any country of the South in terms of service delivery backlogs, the ANC led government made great efforts to address basic needs. It delivered housing, electrification, water and social services on a large scale, as well as providing social security. This was an important contribution to redistribution. But it was offset by a massive loss in formal jobs and rising unemployment. Wage inequalities were among the highest in the world. The severe inequalities formed a critical obstacle to economic growth. There was a large increase in informal jobs, which were worse paid, less secure, and more dangerous. Retrenched workers were forced into survival strategies in the communities and townships and informal settlements. The role of these settlements as zones

of reproduction deepened.

Even the public sector came under pressure of job losses. State owned enterprises and local government faced pressure to downsize to permit cuts in state subsidies. Especially from 1995 a capital strike, with falling investment, had become evident. COSATU argued that GEAR was failing to deliver on its promises of growth, employment and redistribution, with cuts in budgets for social services. If the NDR was to be taken forward, the provision of economic and social services was imperative. It began to argue that as the strongest organisation in civil society it had to play a critical role in championing the interests of its members in relation to the state and capital, and those of the broader working class.

Another problem was that the transformation of the civil service was very difficult. This restricted the ability of the interim local state to address its developmental goals. Infrastructure was essentially provided by state owned enterprises and local government. Many of the disputes in restructuring these two arenas hinged on whether the private sector should or could provide adequate services for the poor. While the national government supported the strengthening of the local state to tackle the service delivery backlog, it passed on much of the responsibility of finding funds for this programme to the local state itself. As a result, the local state was continuously pushed towards cuts in budgets and a serious financial crisis. This caused many local councils to adopt policies which led to privatisation, contracting out, outsourcing and the corporatisation of local government services and functions.

Consensus in the coalition that sought the reconstruction of South Africa based on the RDP began to unravel. Under threat was the attempt to foster a national identity based on the non - racial identities generated by traditions of resistance. These traditions needed to be examined critically, renewed and recreated and a "usable past" (Mangcu, 2004, p.2) made relevant. They needed to broach the racial and ethnic political identities and citizenships engendered by the apartheid state, now being recovered by globalisation. Instead, contestations of the meaning of the past increased. Heed needed to be taken of previously silenced or marginalised voices, and not only those of an emerging black bourgeoisie. In forging a new public domain the voices of especially black poor and working women who were staking claims to, or restating cultural identities in our African context, needed to be heard.

The Masakhane 'Let us build Together' campaign, initiated by government, became a stop/start affair. It was perceived to be a bureaucratic campaign run by government aimed at getting reluctant communities to pay for services. Yet it had started out as a promising process of nation building, seeking to draw in mass involvement into local government transformation and the creation of unified non - racial public spaces. It should have been about the accountability of democratic government, reporting back to the people on delivery and the problems being encountered.

In 1997 the ANC put forward a new stance on the emerging developmental state. It argued that the state was a neutral arbiter in the relations between capital and labour. There was a strong response from the SACP, who disputed this view. Disagreement in the alliance

deepened. There were numerous differences between workers and management on issues related to public sector restructuring, as well as public / private partnerships (PPPs) and privatisation, which were taking root.

The Central Committee of COSATU resolved that water, education, housing, municipal services, energy and communication needed to remain in the public hands. This was in opposition to the proposed municipal development plan of Johannesburg. Called Igoli 2002, it recommended the privatising of these functions. COSATU resolved to develop a programme of action to reject the privatisation of core sectors. It aimed to engage its Alliance partners in developing a coherent programme aimed at strengthening the public arm in economic restructuring. There was a need to defend the unified state and to strengthen local government, it contended. What was needed was a strong central state in the context of participatory democracy. Central and provincial levels of government were shifting more powers and functions to local government, but these measures were inconsistent, since they frequently did not provide the necessary funds. Local government was the critical structure for building integrated participatory democracy.

The SACP held its Tenth Congress in 1998   where it adopted a programme of action. It sent a clear political message. "The working class must dare to become the hegemonic force in our society... must dare to assume power, to engage with and transform and hegemonise the state"(SACP Tenth Congress Programme of Action, 1998, p.18).   It advocated the need to struggle for the socialisation of the pre-dominant part of the economy. This included a pre-dominant and varied public sector.

In this context an Alliance Summit was held in September 1998. It grappled with a document entitled "The State, Social Transformation and Property Relations" (Umrabulo Third Quarter, 1998).   The document dealt with the issue of state power, its various locations, and the centrality of capital in the transformation process. Different forms of capital were identified. They included state or public capital, co-operative or social capital, as well as large conglomerate capital. In addressing contradictions between the state and capital, the state was not neutral, the Summit resolved. The core of any revolution was property relations. But as a multi - class organisation, the ANC was not aiming at resolving the issue of property relations in the NDR. It sought to reshape them in the interests of the majority, most of whom were poor. That economic relations were at the centre of social transformation was acknowledged. The state also had an important role to play in removing the glass ceiling of apartheid for the black middle and capitalist class, the document argued. In dealing with continuing market failures a range of regulatory mechanisms were needed.

Clearly the result of an uneasy compromise, the document did not deal with the specific issues of the local state nor take up issues of gender. But it clarified the role the state could play in social transformation. This had impact on those shaping the vision for developmental local government. Another intervention in the battle for strengthening the public sector in the local state was initiated by COSATU. It signed the Framework for the Restructuring of Municipal Service Provision with the South African Local Government Association, a statutory body, in December 1998. The framework arose out of an impasse at NEDLAC. Acknowledging the huge backlog in access to basic services as defined in the RDP and the

Constitution, it stated that municipalities would need to consult all parties on the process of restructuring the public sector. Included were users of services, providers, workers and elected local government representatives. To facilitate the transformation of the local state and to build its capacity, a co-ordinated effort from all spheres of government was required. The process of integrated development planning and a performance management system should form the basis of transformation.

A breakthrough was the recommendation for a basic level of service to ensure reasonable quality of life. All service providers would have to implement certain principles, it was proposed. Among them were a life line amount of basic services and universal coverage, cross subsidisation for an affordable service, and democratic practices and accountability to residents and users. While acknowledging the involvement of the private sector, a motivation was made for the public sector in local government to be the preferred provider. The private sector could play a complementary role to a municipality, but had to be properly managed and regulated by it. All service providers would be subject to a regulatory framework. Employment conditions with specific regulations for the private sector were set.

Over the next few years COSATU and the SACP played leading roles in the struggle against privatisation, using the framework as one of the weapons. Newly formed social movements outside the influence of the alliance were also coming to the fore. As an example of social dialogue at the local state level, the Framework was put to severe test. A weakness was that the community sector or even SANCO had not been central to it. Nonetheless, some of the principles of the Framework were incorporated into the forging of the new local state.

Between the first local government elections and the second in 2000, the policy and legislative framework for 'developmental local government' were put in place by the ANC led government. The struggles resulted in national government seeking to strengthen the local state as an instrument of redistribution and service delivery, harnessing it to social transformation. A new set of laws defined structures of local government, the planning and services delivery systems, and the demarcation of new municipal boundaries. Significant development responsibilities and resources were shifted to the local level:

Developmental Local Government put forward a vision centred on working with local communities to find sustainable ways of meeting their needs and improving the quality of their lives. Local government became a *sphere* of government, with original powers and functions enshrined in the constitution. It was not a third level of government, subordinate to provincial and national levels. But neither was it completely independent. It was interrelated with national and provincial government in a system of co-operative governance. As well it needed to work with a range of public and civil society organisations and the private sector to contribute to economic growth and social development. This was by means of a variety of partnerships, including public/private partnerships, or partnerships with NGOs and community based organisations. In the future it would take on further responsibilities for service delivery and development, it was envisaged.

Key to fulfilling its developmental role was the requirement that all municipalities had to

adopt integrated development plans (IDPs). An IDP "sets out the vision, needs, priorities, goals and strategies of a municipal council" (Carrim, 2001, pp. 32 - 44). In terms of the law the community in a particular municipality must participate in both the content of the IDP and the process by which it is drafted. It provides the framework for determining the budget of a municipality, and is closely linked to its performance management system.

Participatory Governance: What was striking was that the legal definition of a municipality now comprised not just the councillors and the administration, but the local community as well. A municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that complemented formal representative government with a system of participatory governance. To enhance participatory governance the new system allows for ward committees to be set up in each ward. A ward committee could make representations on any issue affecting a ward to the council. Women had to be equitably represented on it. In fact the new system made strong provision for the needs, interests and active participation of women in municipal affairs. This was reflected in the electoral system and in the many requirements to ensure their involvement in the mechanisms, structures and processes of community participation.

Demarcations: With the new demarcation of municipal boundaries the previous 843 municipalities were reduced to 284, destroying the old apartheid boundaries in both rural and urban areas. Racially separated areas were linked, and urban and rural areas merged. Six metropolitan municipalities, and forty seven district municipalities which share power with two hundred and thirty one local municipalities, were set up. As spatial development plans were implemented as part of IDPs, and as a 'local community' identity was fostered, non - racialism was set to take root.

Local Government Elections 2000

The progressive forces needed to ensure that the innovative new local government system was implemented. They needed to accelerate the struggle for redistribution and economic growth. But the local sphere was the slowest to be inaugurated. It was only with the elections of 2000 that the transition to a fully democratic dispensation began. Many capacity problems and lack of resources persisted. Despite their misgivings about privatization and state transformation, the SACP and COSATU again worked hard to support the ANC in the campaign, nominating members to be included in the election lists. The National Executive Committee of the ANC committed the organization to working with its alliance partners to develop a programme for transformation, which would incorporate a local government component. Also, an Alliance Summit on local government transformation was proposed to take place after the elections. Both the SACP and COSATU were actively involved in the drawing up of the ANC election manifesto.

In the elections the ANC maintained its level of support. So did the IFP and the Democratic Alliance. Thanks to the changed legislative context, 28% of the councilors elected were women (Beall, 2004, p.8). What was striking was the voter turnout of 48%. This was similar to the 49% turn out in the first elections. The two past national elections had seen voter turnouts of over 80% (Sachs, 2001, pp. 11 - 16). While this different voting behaviour for national and local elections is a feature also of western democratic countries, it was surprising given that the local state is meant to be closest in taking up the developmental

needs of the people on the ground. Especially sectors among the poor such as women and youth abstained from voting. As in the first local government elections, the implementation of list processes in the ANC caused some controversy. Dissatisfactions with councillors had not been adequately addressed also.   Another important reason was that traditional leaders were not enthusiastic about the process of building local democracy.

Although the institutions of the local state were becoming more representative in racial and gender terms, there was a lesser focus on the entrenching of democracy, as inequality deepened. A neo - liberal developmentalism fostered increasing centralisation in government, the bureaucratising of liberation movement organisations, and market forms of service delivery. The year 2001 was one of the most difficult years for the alliance. Unresolved policy differences combined with conflict over privatisation to deepen distrust. COSATU organised a general strike and a large march against privatisation during the World Conference against Racism in Durban. It entered into coalitions with a range of civil society organisations, but had restricted contacts with community based organisations.

A new low in the national liberation Alliance relations led to a series of bilaterals among its members. The SACP argued that the alliance could have done better as a movement despite the hostile environment. GEAR and the relative privatisation had failed to achieve the fundamental restructuring of society. In many ways it had taken society backwards. Government retreated somewhat from GEAR, with a greater commitment to an active development strategy that could restructure the economy to create jobs. Debates about the nature of the developmental state revived. A Growth and Development Summit was held in 2003. Despite serious disagreement, COSATU and the SACP still saw the Alliance as the only vehicle to achieve the long term NDR vision. Also, they had benefited from it in a number of ways in the new dispensation post 1994.

Towards Democratic Development - Marginalisation and Redefinition in Participatory Democracy

A problem has been that the struggles for the national democratic developmental local state have been largely urban. Also, they did not incorporate all sectors of the working class, linking struggles in the sites of production and reproduction to struggles in the state.

The decline and lack of participation by the civic movement in local government politics has contributed to demobilisation, and the erosion of participatory democracy. While SANCO and the civics were weakened by the shift to a more statist approach to development, they also battled to come to terms with changed approaches to politics post 1994. With their role subject to wide and often painful re-evaluation and redefinition, their decline has been one of the main reasons for the marginalising of the community sector. There is the danger of representative democracy being reserved for elite, with participatory democracy becoming a civil sphere for the most marginalised citizens.   Among the problems faced by SANCO was the overlapping of its leadership with that of other progressive organisations (the 'many hats' problem), tensions between local civics and political organizations, as well as weaknesses of capacity and the lack of control over resources.   SANCO was greatly weakened by its leadership exodus to local government. As membership numbers declined,   it felt it

necessary to recall some of its members from government.

What added spice to the debates about the role of the civics were the myriad and diverse forums which had sprung up at all levels. Based on the idea of 'social compact', they arose during the period of negotiations when the liberation movement sought to prevent unilateral decision making by the undemocratic state. They had facilitated a more participatory democracy at local level. With the institution of new representative local government, their role was not so clear cut. As local government struggled to stake out a relationship with the forums, the question of what civics should do to foster their role as watchdogs for the people especially over the delivery of services, was a difficult challenge. Despite the perhaps inappropriate organisational structure of SANCO, many civics on the ground in both urban and rural areas, especially street committees, have slowly reoriented towards development. They are overcoming demobilisation, facing up to the redefining and realigning of their political and civil roles.

Another factor contributing to the decline of SANCO was the steep rise in unemployment and poverty among its core constituency, with tendencies to social exclusion and economic marginalisation. New divisions based on race, class, gender, and migration have emerged in the black townships, slums and informal settlements. As urbanisation was hastened by the relaxing of old influx control laws, and as the struggle for scarce development resources mounted, community and neighborhood based self help organisations such as *stokfels*, burial societies, homeless people, and street committees have flourished. Buoyed by the provision of the social wage and social security, especially poor black women have engaged in the political economy of basic needs, struggling to forge a means of living. In the transition the issue of the exploitation of their reproductive or unpaid labour, and their subjection in the family and household, has taken on renewed significance. This has been against the background of the move from the RDP to GEAR.

To prevent NEDLAC from turning into a setting which fostered the formation of pacts between elites or strongly organized interests, ways of drawing in the full participation of the 'Community Chamber' needed to be explored. The presence of this chamber is what helped make the South African approach to corporatism unique (Webster, 1995, p.25). It included the most marginalised sectors in society, such as national organisations of the youth and the disabled, as well as SANCO and the Women's National Coalition. The Chamber has lacked in unity and capacity and mandate. It is also arguable whether the model of dialogue, negotiation and the managing of conflict on which NEDLAC is based, best serves the needs of those battling social exclusion and economic marginalisation.

NGOs, as not for profit organisations, saw their role change from a partisan one in the apartheid era to a mediating one in development. At the end of 1996 the South African National NGO Coalition was set up, with a membership of an estimated 30,000 NGOs. Key issues tackled were the need to define their confusing relationship with the government, to deal with a funding crisis as international donors switched funds to the new government, and to develop cohesion in the sector. The NGO sector advertised itself as a resevoir of community based, localised development experience from which the government could benefit. But in an era and a continent where private, indirect government, or alliance

between NGOs, communities and the private sector, seeks to bypass the state, government has dealt gingerly with NGOs. Like other liberation organisations many NGOs have been bureaucratised. Many seem to favour work with government over work with civic organisations.

New style NGOs and social movements have also made an appearance. They sometimes had scant regard for the liberation alliance. Mounting single issue campaigns, they maintained global links, were vociferous and strong on advocacy, and were not afraid of confrontation with the government. They sometimes seemed to be acting in lieu of the fragmented community sector and for an informalised working class, taking up struggles for basic needs in the space vacated by the local state. The ANC government tended to be very critical of these struggles, seeing them as opposing government, although COSATU and to an extent the SACP have struck up independent relations with some of them. Their rise was due partly to the weakening of grassroot structures of alliance organisations, and a lack of effective combination of governance and mass mobilisation.

Related to this, a decline in the mass organisations which had belonged to the MDM became noticeable. This includes the organisations of the women's movement. They had helped to secure key legislative and policy measures of the new democratic government. As the space for autonomous action has seemed to shrink, they have been slow in mobilising further, in shifting from resistance mode to a development mode, and utilising the scope for popular participation. The liberation alliance has failed to give effective leadership on the ground too. During the national democratic struggle of the past local issues were used to mobilise the people. The mass movement must be rebuilt, developing new approaches to new challenges, demystifying politics.

Most citizens do not know their democratic rights, with local government slow to implement participatory measures. Despite most development policies and strategies paying lip service to the concept of inclusive development and partnership, the role of communities has remained shadowy. There was a tendency to exclude the active participation of the community in decision making about development activities. It was seen as a stakeholder merely to be consulted, with local government as deliverer of all development. Even then local government functionaries often bemoaned 'consultation paralysis'. Nonetheless communities have struggled to remain involved in development activities and structures:

Ward Committees: They were instituted towards the end of the 1990s. But many municipalities hesitated to set them up. Wards are sometimes too big, especially in the rural areas. Bringing together people of widely diverse interests, ward committees have enabled participation. But so far it has been mostly on government terms. Many are too closely associated with political parties, or are dominated by 'gate keepers', or a few notables, or councillors and consultants. Ward committees must transcend the institutional spaces created through representative democracy to achieve participatory democracy across racial, gender and class lines. They need to organise themselves and educational programmes to enable community ownership of integrated development plans. While they are not extensions of the municipal council, they do enable it to build a relationship with the communities and to sustain its legitimacy (Nakedi, 2004, p. 4).

Local Economic Development: Economic development at the local level had assumed a prominent role in the RDP. It was a process in which local government and communities could work together to create new job opportunities and to stimulate new economic growth. Among the objectives was to mobilise public, private and community resources, promoting participatory development at the community and neighbourhood levels. This would enhance the ability of the community to strengthen its control over its economic destiny.

There has been no shortage of communities who were inspired by the prevailing spirit of reconciliation, and who were ready to take their destinies into their own hands. These included the rural communities of Stutterheim and Hertzog in the Eastern Cape, the new township of Kayelitsha in Cape Town, the Joint River Action Project in Pietermaritzburg, and the old township of Duncan Village in East London, among many others, big and small. Usually based on inclusive and broad based local development forums, they made use of their human, physical and economic resources to build a consensus around their developmental needs. They also utilised a range of LED strategies. These included infrastructure development, developing existing and new businesses, plugging leaks in the local economy, developing job capacity and marketing the community.

At first LED tended to consist of coalitions of the private sector at local level facilitated by the local state, sometimes in the guise of 'social entrepreneur'. The dilemma facing the state, including the local state, has been on whether to strengthen broad mobilisational approaches and social development in the communities, or whether to focus on a rapid development of economic growth within the formal sector. Priority was given to rapid physical delivery of infrastructure and housing in the townships, driven by developers. This led to the downplaying of the RDP principles of people driven development and holistic development. Residents obtained shelters but were not able to maintain them or to sustain development. This left communities vulnerable to economic marginalisation and social exclusion. It contributed also to the partial demobilisation of the numerous community based development organisations. Under these conditions, the role of LED in overcoming of poverty was inhibited. Lately there has been a shift in government towards a local economic development which is focused on the needs of the poor and marginalised.

Decentralisation: Especially the creation of large new metropolitan councils saw key powers decentralised from national and provincial governments to the local state, while at the same time powers were centralised away from local communities within municipal areas. Accompanying the centralisation was a push for the corporatisation of municipal services. In some metros like Durban, councillors and black city officials resisted these moves. Complexities of management and the demands for community participation saw a search for decentralised management forms begin.

The scope for area based management to overcome the problems of fragmented housing development and unco-ordinated service delivery, the crisis of shrinking operational costs, and rapidly increasing needs, helped it win adherents. International and South African experience of area initiatives in a number of precincts were used as examples. The task of area managers was to co-ordinate service delivery. They were meant to be accountable to

community development forums and ward committees, as well as to the city council. Within the areas plans needed to be drawn up through participatory processes inclusive of all stakeholders. The Urban Renewal Strategy and Integrated Sustainable Development Programme adopted from 2001, both represented a move towards area based approaches. But like other government programmes it has been a struggle to ensure meaningful community participation.

Integrated Development Planning: The use of consultants to complete IDPs has become very prevalent, including in the rural areas. In the Igoli 2002 example from Johannesburg, public sector employee unions and SANCO withdrew in protest at the unilateral action of the municipality. In the push for delivery, integrated approaches, undertaken within top down planning and with implementation at scale, were very complex. More incremental approaches, with more community participation and more emphasis on human development, were marginalised. These approaches would allow for a more decentralised, participatory approach to development, with a stronger focus on human development, enabling the mobilising of the people. This has worked to great effect in Kerala. It was undertaken as a way of resurrecting planning for social transformation in an era of liberalisation. What is at issue in South Africa is the way participatory and democratic local government is being undermined by market forces (Heller, 2000, pp.23 - 27).

Municipal Community Partnerships (MCPs): While the trend towards public/private partnerships has been pre-dominant, municipal /community partnerships have been utilised also. They are able to meet the development needs of poor people, especially if based on strengthening democracy, increasing municipal effectiveness and extending basic services. But the potential to enhance accountability and community ownership of projects was not one that most municipalities promoted. They showed greater interest in the potential of MCPs to support job creation, tending to use them in labour intensive sectors.

Procurement: Some municipalities adopted targeted procurement policies. These were based on increased usage of local resources, the redress of skewed employment and ownership patterns through black economic empowerment, the creation of opportunities for job creation and poverty alleviation, and the fast tracking of small enterprise development. While the municipalities have become more open to developing procurement policies for co-operatives, complex tendering procedures have bedeviled their participation, as well as that of SMMEs.

Overall, community participation within development programmes has been downplayed. The installation of representative democracy has contributed to its decline. It was perceived by many councillors as a threat or as redundant. As government became subjected to the dictates of delivery, a basic problem has been the contradiction between principles in policy such as community participation and developer driven delivery, or the economic empowerment of communities versus immediate delivery. Ultimately this derived from a conflict of vision between interests favouring a more market oriented approach and those favours a more collective approach where communities are central players. At the heart of the conflict were divergent views about what the role of government should be, particularly local government. The increasing pressure for delivery saw success being measured more in

numbers and less by the extent to which the community was empowered to sustain development. Trying to balance process and product implies a community participation which is more than just an efficient means to deliver development products. The investment in people and communities which it entails is a medium to long term investment in more sustainable delivery.

Conclusion

The struggles for a national democratic developmental local state in the transition lead to the creation of an innovative local state which is able to make a specific contribution to social and economic development. Formal representative government is complemented by a system of participatory governance. Together with the administration and councillors, the community now forms an integral part of a municipality. This system is still new, being not more than five years old.

But the struggles to implement the new system have had to overcome obstacles in the different sites of power in the local state. One of these has been the slow democratisation of rural local customary power. This has rendered urban civil power unstable. Another source of instability has been the centralising of power in the executive in the national state. Within the local state the centralising of power in formal government has helped marginalise participatory democracy. There have been difficulties of aligning the two sectors, of joining the struggles for the democratising of the formal state to struggles in the civil realm.

Central to these difficulties have been tensions between social development and the model of economic growth adopted by the government. Instead of growth through redistribution, redistribution has been perceived as being marginal to the central project of economic growth, it is contended. One of the results is that the local state as an organ of social and economic reproduction has been faced with the burden of 'unfunded mandates'. This has helped make the provision of welfare a private responsibility, being bolstered by capitalist patriarchal ideology, with a material basis in the sexual division of labour. Welfare responsibilities and the costs of social reproduction have been shifting to the local, community and even household levels, increasing the burden especially poor women must bear. The implications of this for socialist and feminist struggles for gender equality must still be considered, as the women's movement in some ways has been demobilised.

It is argued that the working class has a leading role to play in broadening the struggle from representative to substantive democracy, in translating political into social rights. The leading working class organisations succeeded in linking the struggle for social transformation to the issue of property relations. What needs further exploration is how the struggle for an effective national democratic developmental local state will help a reconstituting working class to retain or recapture its role in leading the NDR to its conclusion. There is the challenge of mobilising for a lasting solution to a migrant labour system, which is Southern Africa wide, through a democratic land reform programme in both urban and rural areas. Increasing urbanization, hastened by the lack of productive agricultural options, must be addressed too. Taking up these options will help strengthen

struggles in the localities, or zones of underdevelopment, for sustainable livelihoods.

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