Township Redevelopment in Cape Town, South Africa:
Transitioning from Unilaterial Decision-Making to Shared Power

By

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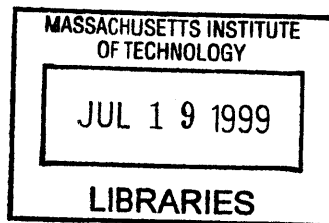© 1999 Julie K. Wagner. All rights reserved.

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ABSTRACT

In 1994, the people of South Africa overwhelmingly voted the African National Congress (ANC) into power, officially ending over 40 years of apartheid rule. Apartheid, which successfully limited civil rights and opportunities for millions of Black Africans, Coloureds and Indians, transformed towns and cities across the country into the "Apartheid City." This spatial construct segregated South Africans by race, isolating millions of Black Africans from employment opportunities and limited their access to housing and infrastructure services.

As part of the new ANC reconstruction agenda, local governments are directed to improve the lives of previously disadvantaged communities -- with new planning and development efforts defined as a crucial first step. Moreover, local governments are instructed by the ANC to involve communities in their efforts, allowing people to have "control over the reconstruction of their lives." Public involvement -- a range of strategies to involve and engage citizens in decision-making processes -- is one approach local governments are using to engage and share power with citizens.

This thesis explores how local governments in Cape Town are working collaboratively with Black Africans as part of spatial planning and development initiatives in the townships. Since public involvement is a value-laden practice, this thesis explores the theories of two Cape Town planners that guided their public involvement initiatives. Two case studies, which focus exclusively on township redevelopment, are then analyzed, uncovering the techniques and tools used to engage Black Africans in planning. This thesis also evaluates the general practice of public involvement in Cape Town, drawing on information from four township planning projects, and interviews with planners, decision-makers, politicians, Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, and the general public.

The analysis presented in this thesis concludes that local governments are failing to effectively involve Black Africans in the decision making process, due to a series of institutional, cultural, and social barriers. While a host of barriers exist within government's institutional framework, power struggles at the community level are further complicating efforts to engage communities of color -- particularly the general public. As part of this thesis, a series of recommendations are offered to improve public involvement efforts in Black townships and successfully share power.

Thesis Supervisor: Langley Keyes
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Introduction

Prior to attending MIT for graduate studies in City Planning, I spent nearly six years implementing public involvement programs for government-initiated infrastructure planning projects (such as the siting of new roads and wastewater treatment plants). Since such projects would undoubtedly impact a range of people -- young, old, environmentally-minded citizens, business entrepreneurs, and a range of others -- I was hired by city, county, and state governments to provide opportunities to involve communities in the planning process. Community concerns, ideas and needs were then used by government and consultant planners to craft and refine strategies.

Reflecting on my experiences, I define public involvement as a process whereby individuals and groups -- who will be affected by the outcome of a decision -- are involved in the decision-making process and thereby possess some degree of power. My definition however, only arbitrarily describes the terms "involved" and therefore "power." Does the term involvement imply citizens receive information and education on why a project is necessary? Or, does the term involvement imply citizens influence the design and direction of strategies? A benchmark is therefore necessary to qualify the terms with some point of reference (such as involvement means "x").

The difficulty with such benchmarks is that they commonly change depending on the government agency and their authority, the type of project, the project's size and scale, the degree of community activism, whether the media is monitoring, and a long list of other variables. Only after implementing several public involvement programs (with different agencies and on a variety of projects) did I conclude that the degree to which power is shared is a function of how the public is involved. In other words, projects that only distributed newsletters shared little to no power. Projects that incorporated community ideas, and worked with communities to reach consent, if not consensus, shared more power. More importantly, I found both governments and communities viewed projects to be successful when higher degrees of power were shared -- often leading to long-term project sustainability and support. Other benefits however, were even longer lasting, such as relationships, credibility and trust.

Re-defining "Success" in Public Involvement

While believing in and valuing the principles of public involvement, I began to question the legitimacy and authenticity of its practice. Outreach efforts others and I organized for governments consistently failed to engage people of color -- those, who are often in the minority and would be undoubtedly be affected by the final decision. Was it first necessary for projects to be characterized as a "racial issue" before people of color took notice? Did projects have to be defined as a "racial issue" for us practitioners to take notice? All I can tell you is that not <u>one</u> project I worked on would I defined to be of particular interest for people of color. And so, out of the hundreds of people that would pour into public meetings I organized, people of color were consistently absent. What does this say about how well we practitioners have achieved the principles of public involvement through our practice? I would argue that we still have work to accomplish.

Spending time away from this profession and focusing on graduate studies, propelled me into deep reflection about the lofty principles we public involvement practitioners are espousing to our clients, governments, engineers, or anyone for that matter willing to listen. While I still highly regard the practice and profession of public involvement and its role in planning, I found myself compelled to find new answers about legitimately engaging a community's minority groups -- particularly people of color. Indeed, there are many success stories here in the United States, but I am willing to speculate that there are more failures to engage such groups than practitioners and planners will admit -- or even notice.

I therefore, looked at South Africa to learn how planners and public involvement practitioners are working with communities of color in a country where race is undoubtedly in the forefront of planning and politics. Since race is a central theme in South Africa, I questioned whether planners are:

- Slowing down the planning process more than in the U.S. to engage groups, who may have a host of reasons for disengaging
- Crafting new techniques to engage/involve minority racial groups
- Moving beyond information sharing or consultation and sharing a meaningful degree of power with minority racial groups

I therefore traveled to Cape Town, South Africa to learn how local municipalities there are working with Black Africans. I found South Africa to be the appropriate country considering apartheid, and apartheid planning, effectively limited

the rights of Black Africans, Coloureds[1] and Indians for over 40 years. In South Africa, race categorically determined what type of house, what type of job, and what type of community would be accessible to whom. Since it has only been five years since the national elections officially ended apartheid, it appeared likely that race in South Africa today would still be at the heart of a planner's work. Only now, planners would focus on implementing the new national priority of creating a new and equal future, for millions of Black Africans, Coloureds and Indians.

In order to draw lessons and uncover information from a variety of sources and perspectives, I constructed the following two-prong research strategy:

1) Gather information on several township planning projects that relied heavily on public involvement to derive planning solutions; and

2) Conduct my own public involvement assessment to learn how governments perceive the value of their public involvement efforts and how external stakeholders (primarily Black Africans) want to participate in such planning exercises.

This thesis therefore, evaluates case studies that evaluate how local governments in Cape Town are currently sharing power with Black Africans, considering race has been, and still is, a central variable in planning. This thesis also explores how local governments' can improve their efforts to share power using suggestions directly from Black Africans and a range of other external groups, who were directly impacted by apartheid and apartheid planning.

The Apartheid City

For over 40 years, the National Party (NP) led and guided South African politics in creating a white-led and economically vibrant state, drawing on labor at will from non-white populations. (EIU 1198-99: 4) The NP, founded in 1914 by Afrikaner nationalists, formalized apartheid or "racial separateness," through a string of state interventions and policies, such as:

- the *Group Areas Act* of 1950, requiring the segregation of races in urban areas

- the *Population Registration Act* of 1951, requiring all South Africans to be classified into the four racial groups (white, Coloured, Indian, and Black African)

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[1] Coloured was a term to describe a racial group that was defined during apartheid. Coloureds are generally people of mixed race. The terms "white, Coloured, Black African and Indian" are terms used throughout this thesis since the terms are still used in South Africa today. The term "Black" however is a term people (regardless of race) may use to describe themselves if they support the causes of racial equality and social justice.

- the *Natives Resettlement Act* of 1954, permitting the state to move Black Africans from inner cities to townships (Lanoo 1998: 3-4)

Through the assistance of laws and policies, the "Apartheid City" gradually took shape across towns and cities in South Africa. The Apartheid City was a carefully crafted plan delineating where and how racial groups lived in and around any given city in South Africa. Simply stated, whites retained the wealthy Central Business District and suburbs, while Coloureds and Indians were moved to outlying or adjacent areas. Black Africans however, were pushed to the far corners of the Apartheid City, removed from opportunities and the web of services found inside. (Brown 1992: 233) In Cape Town, one local government planner described how, in the 1970s, a politician created new Black Townships during a 30-minute aerial tour of the Cape Flats (the area southeast of Cape Town).[2] The illustration below demonstrates how communities were commonly segregated in cities across the country.

Illustration 1-1: The Apartheid City
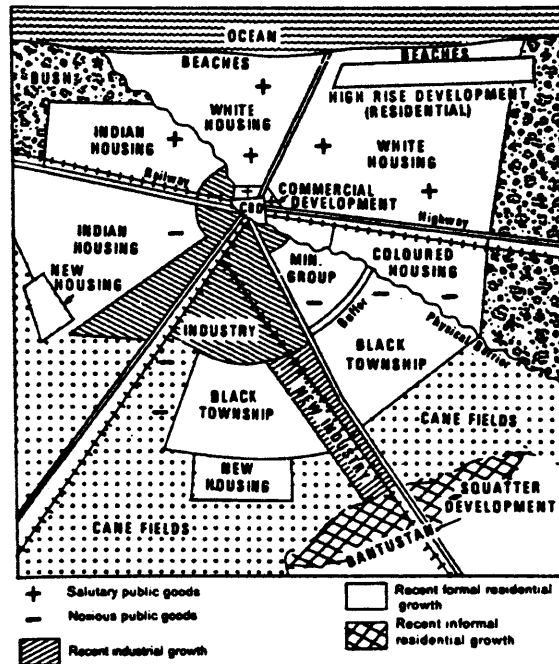
Source: K.S.O Brown, The Apartheid City And Beyond (1992)

As shown above, apartheid policies also discriminated between non-whites. Compared to Coloureds and Indians, Black Africans felt the state's heaviest hand in limiting their rights to employment, education, housing and other opportunities. In South Africa today, Black Africans have twice the unemployment rate of Coloureds, three times the

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[2] Interview, Francois Theunissen, CMC, Summer 1998

rate of Indians, and ten times the rate of Whites (Ministry of Water Affairs & Forestry 1997:7).

Why Sharing Power is Crucial for National Reconciliation

Observing the lives of Black Africans in townships today helps unravel why township re-development is a pre-requisite to securing new national reconciliation objectives. No statistical data can portray the struggle that occurs every day for such a large percentage of Black Africans who are simply stuck: no jobs, dilapidated housing, and little, if any, education. In other words, it is the severity of poverty that continues to stunt Black Africans from obtaining the economic and social equality waiting for them since a new ANC-led national government, the African National Congress, was voted into power in 1994. Planning and implementing new infrastructure, housing, and services is therefore a crucial next step towards gaining equality and long-term reconciliation. (ANC 1998: 3)

Just after the 1994 election, the ANC national government crafted its first wave of policies to fix the glaring inequalities between whites and the rest of the population. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was the centerpiece of ANC's proposal of spending R37.5bn ($10.6 billion) over a five-year period for new housing, creating jobs and providing basic services, such as electricity and sanitation. (EIU 1998:10; and 1999:18) As part of the RDP, the national ANC government affirmed that reconstructing new futures for the disadvantaged would be only achieved through government transparency, citizenry power, and participatory democracy:

> *Democracy requires that all South Africans have access to power and the right to exercise their power. This will ensure that all people will be able to participate in the process of reconstructing our country (ANC 1994:120).*

In other words, a primary thread of democracy is ensuring that citizens play a role in shaping a new vision and future for themselves and their communities.

In light of such National ANC directives, this thesis explores how governments at the local level are sharing power with Black African communities in planning for township redevelopment. Since the terms "power" and "participation" are loosely defined in the ANC statement above, I interpreted the terms – based on my own experiences of what is often necessary for success and project sustainability -- to imply a relatively high level of participation. In other words, governments would work collectively with Black Africans to determine how to blend improvements of the modern city in a way that is

sensitive to Black African culture and values. Since it is at the local level where plans will be drawn, decisions will be made, and projects will be implemented, it is also at this level where collective work must take place.

Reconstruction at the Local Level: The Cape Metropolitan Area

A recent White Paper on Local Government (an ANC draft policy document) recognized the role of local government in achieving national objectives, articulating that local government responsibilities fall squarely within the principles of the new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa:

> *Local governments are to: provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;....and encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government. (ANC: 1998: 3)*

Although considerable emphasis is placed on local governments, no institutional mechanism is in place to ensure national objectives translate to the local level. After the 1994 national election, the new national government uniformly transitioned from NP to ANC rule. Local governments across South Africa however, did not transition so consistently, however. A formal negotiation between ANC and NP in 1993, determined that local governments would individually negotiate their transition before a new local government system is established in the year 2000. (ANC: White Paper of Local Government: 1998: Page 3)

Local governments in the Cape Metropolitan Area underwent substantial changes in electoral voting (e.g., how councillors are elected into office), jurisdictional boundaries, financing and other areas.[3] What did not change however, was the administrative branch of local governments. Many of the same staff, planners and decision-makers, who were instructed to implement apartheid policies are today working in the same government positions. In other words, the ANC is relying on Cape Town local government planners and administrators, who previously coordinated apartheid planning, to implement new national objectives that negate apartheid and its principles.[4] While this fact cannot be directly linked to any possible shortcomings or failures at the local level, it does have a bearing on the legitimacy and credibility of planners as they initiate efforts to redevelop Black townships.

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[3] Interview, Francois Theunissen, Summer 1998
[4] Interview, Sean Jacobs, Idasa, February 1999

What is very clear however, is that Black African communities outside Cape Town are in great need of government assistance. As shown in the map below and to the left, apartheid effectively clustered Black Africans in the southwest section of the region, an area far removed from employment opportunities. The map below and to the right, indicates the Housing Subsistence Level for the region. The HSL is an economic indicator, which sets the basic standard of living for South Africans. As of October 1998, the minimum Household Subsistence income needed for a family of six was R1236 per month, which would include food, clothes, fuel, power, cleansing, rent and transport.[5] For R1000, an average radio/tapedeck/CD-player could be purchased. [6]

Illustration 1-2 Comparison of Racial Composition and Poverty Levels in Cape Town
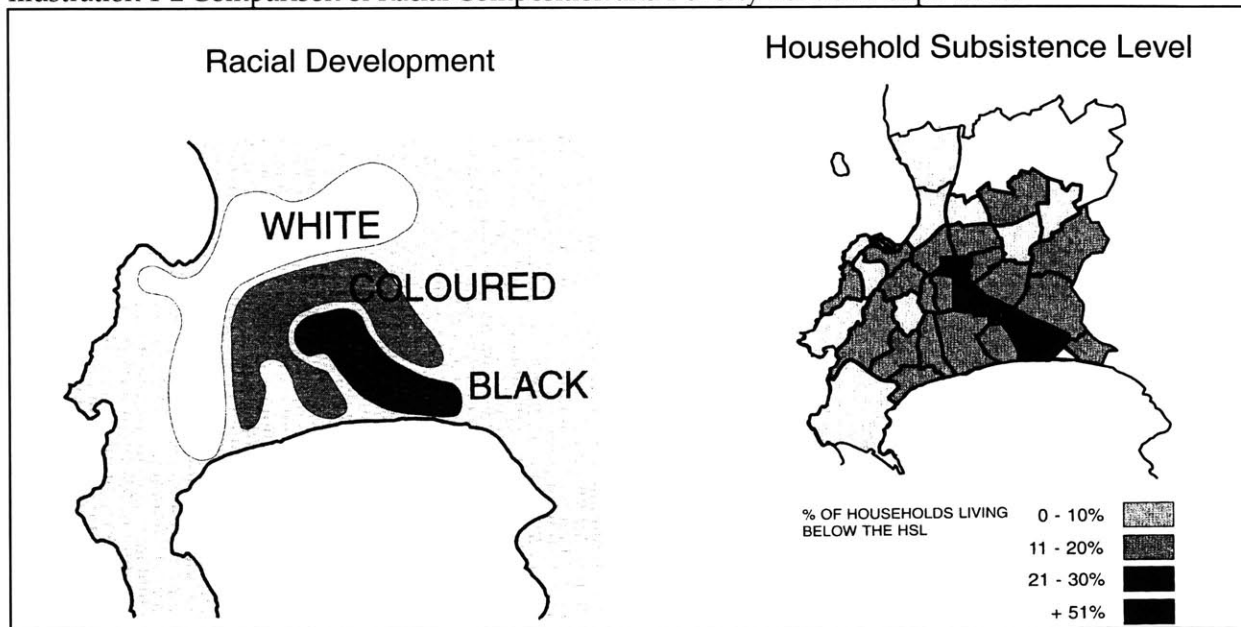
Source: Cape Metropolitan Council, Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (1996)

Comparing data on race and poverty level, reveals that the southeastern portion of the Cape Metropolitan Area, where the majority of Black Africans live, is also where the highest percentage of people live below the Household Subsistence Level (HSL). In fact more than 50 percent of the households in the metro southeast are below the HSL.

Another indicator of poverty is the amount of adequate housing needed in Cape Town, which is another method to determine how many families still lack basic services. The *Cape Town Times* reported in June 1998 that 120,000 families in the region are without proper housing. (Cavanah 1998: 13)

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[5] Inflation since October 1998 has been approximately 6%.
[6] Interview, Francois Theunissen, CMC, Summer 1998

Illustration 1-3: Housing Needs in Cape Town

As many as 120 000 families in Cape Town are not properly housed. Drawn from an aerial survey, this map gives a rough indication of where they live.

HOUSING NEEDED PER SITE	
Site Name	Household
Langa	2 350
New Rest	650
Kanana	200
Gxa Gxa	50
Polla Park	1 780
Sweet Home	450
Brown's Farm	4 000
Vietnam	1 210
Lower Crossroads	?
Crossroads/Boys Town	840
Mahobe Drive	470
Barcelona	1 400
Miller's Camp/Lusaka	560
Black City	400
KTC	1 360
Mkonto Sq	430
Mpinga Sq	200
Mpetha Sq	370
Marcus Garvey	100
Tafelsig	?

OTHER HOUSING NEED	
Area	Household
Guguletu backyards	5 990
Guguletu hostels	830
Langa backyards	940
Langa hostels	1 670
Nyanga backyards	1 260
Nyanga hostels	780
Former CCC backyards	25 000
Other CCC shacks	550

Source: Cape Times, June 15 1998

As the map indicates above, all housing needs are located in the heart of the metro southeast.

Planning for the Future

In an effort to ameliorate housing and employment shortages in the metro southeast area, local governments have been developing spatial plans (improvement strategies linked to a physical place) for the Black townships during the past five to eight years. While some projects are promoted and funded from the national or state institution level using RDP funds, the vast majority of projects are currently funded from local government coffers.

As part of plan development, local governments have committed resources and time to involve Black Africans and other stakeholders through public involvement strategies. Inclusionary planning (planning that includes external stakeholders as a means of developing strategies) with Black Africans is a new concept for local governments that are sorting through cultural issues and values while drafting planning solutions. "It is more difficult to work with the African communities, since their culture is so very different...Africans are strangers to us," shared one planner in the Cape Metropolitan area, who, like many, is wrestling with new complexities of planning in Cape Town.

Why Cape Town? The Jewel of the Western Cape

Cape Town, as well as its Province, the Western Cape, was selected for this study since the region is considered to be a political and racial anomaly compared to other regions in the country.

Map 1-1: The Western Cape of South Africa
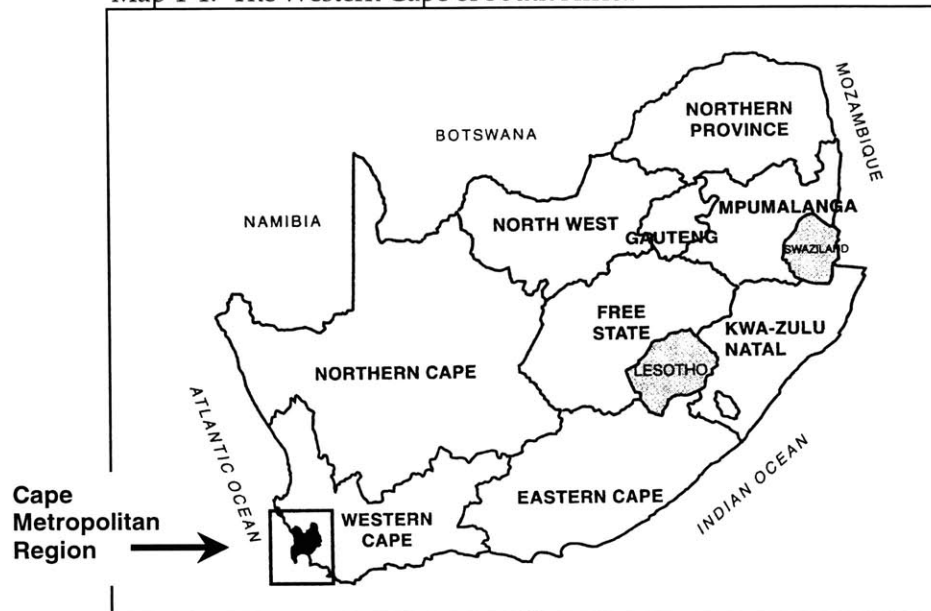
Source: CMC's Metropolitan Spatial Development Plan, 1996

Politically, the Western Cape is the only province whose voting majority voted for the National Party (NP) not the African National Congress (ANC) during the 1994 national elections.[7] The NP led the country for over 40 years, instilling apartheid policies and limited the rights of non-white communities. On the national level, the ANC received 62 percent of the vote while the NP received 20 percent. In the Western Cape however, that trend was almost completely reversed. The NP received 46 percent of the vote while the ANC received only 29 percent. Pollsters found the critical votes in the Western Cape to be the Coloured voters. Many Coloureds voted for the NP out of concern that the ANC would not speak on behalf of Coloured rights (Eldridge & Seekings 1996: 517)

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[7] The KwaZulu/Natal region's voting majority did not vote for the ANC, instead the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom party won control over that Province.

This raises another difference between the Western Cape and other provinces in South Africa -- racial composition, as illustrated in the chart below:

Table 1: Percentage of Racial Groups in the Western Cape and South Africa, 1996

	Western Cape	South Africa
Coloureds	54 %	8.5%
Black Africans	21%	76.3%
Whites	21%	12.7%
Indians/Asians	1%	2.5%

Source: South African Census 1996 in Statistics of South Africa (1999)

When comparing the table above with the 1994 data on Cape Town in the table below (1996 Census is not available for Cape Town), the racial demographic trends in the Western Cape correlates to the racial demographics in Cape Town. This correlation is not surprising considering the high percentage of people in the Western Cape living in urban settings, with Cape Town being the province's most prominent city.

Table 2: Racial Group Data for Cape Town, 1994

	Percentages	Number of people
Coloureds	50%	1,456,000
Black Africans	27%	850,000
Whites	23%	705,000
Indians/Asians	not available	not available

Source: Cape Metropolitan Council, Metropolitan Development Framework Plan (1996)

Differences in racial composition and political ideology are highlighted to illustrate the diversity and polarization of interests situated in Cape Town. Unlike other areas in South Africa, such as Johannesburg or Pretoria, Cape Town does not possess a hyper-majority of one racial grouping with support for one political party. As a consequence, directives from the new ANC national government to 'reconstruct' the lives of non-white communities, such as Black African townships, must also be balanced with the local politics of other racial groups. It is therefore likely that other cities and provinces may have an easier time reaching consensus on local planning priorities, including funding allocations. Cape Town is therefore an interesting case for the theory of public involvement for here, local governments are wrestling with the acuteness of South African issues, while working collaboratively with a racially and politically divergent population. While the case studies examined in this thesis are exclusively within Black townships and the government planners leading the efforts are primarily white (making the dynamic more Black African-white than multi-cultural), projects and solutions derived in these cases, must be reviewed and approved by government

councils, which are multi-cultural indeed. The lessons learned in these case studies, will therefore help other cities attempting to collaboratively solve extreme inequities in diverse, polarized and explosive settings.

A Sketch of Future Chapters

The framework of the thesis begins with an examination of how Cape Towns governments are involving Black Africans in planning -- drawing purposely on information collected and analyzed by Cape Town planners in order to be as objective as possible -- and then transitioning into a personal evaluation of their practice, based on my six years of experience of implementing programs in the United States.

The thesis is purposely structured this way, since the practice of public involvement is deeply rooted in the values, cultures and philosophies of a country or community. Simply evaluating another country's efforts, without understanding the context (such as the historical context, cultural and social values, politics, and the institutional framework) is both inappropriate and inaccurate. In light of this, I looked to two Cape Town practitioners to understand how they value and measure public involvement and its relationship to sharing power. *Chapter 2* therefore, explores the theoretical framework underlying the work of the two practitioners. The assumptions underlying the theories are also highlighted in this chapter to understand what gaps may inherently exist between theory and practice.

Understanding the theoretical principles against which two Cape Town practitioners are basing their practice, *Chapter 3* examines the public involvement programs they designed and implemented as part of two township planning projects. Both projects -- the Metro South East Plan and the Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Plan are two of four planning projects I evaluated that focus on spatially "integrating" the townships into the greater Cape Metropolitan area. Prior to outlining the two planning projects however, Chapter 3 will first describe the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework Plan. The MSDF is Cape Town's regional plan, which crafted a vision for how the Cape Metropolitan Area is to look and function over the next 20 years -- including how townships are to redevelop.

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to uncover: 1) the types of strategies and tools used to involve Black Africans; 2) where governments have encountered problems specific to their public processes; and 3) how government actions corresponded with their practitioners' theoretical principles.

While Chapter 3 highlights specific examples about the actual practice of public involvement in Cape Town, *Chapter 4* provides an analysis on public involvement

efforts in Cape Town in general, drawing on perspectives from government, organized groups and the public. The assessment includes a review and analysis of four townships planning projects (two of which are described in Chapter 3), interviews with planners and decision-makers from three municipalities, Non Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, politicians, and the general public. In my assessment, I specifically focused on learning how Black Africans, who live in the isolated townships, have been -- and would like to be -- involved in re-developing their communities.

Specific information extracted from the two planning cases and my assessment are then tied together in *Chapter 5*. In this final chapter, I summarize the causes for governments' limited success to share power and to what degree the limitations have created a gap between theory (described in Chapter 2) and practice. Recommendations to improve the effectiveness and value of public involvement are described in this chapter, which may help solve some concerns and frustrations shared by planners, and communities in Chapter 3 and 4 of this thesis. As this thesis illustrates, my intention to learn from Cape Town planners in working with communities of color, transitioned into a joint-learning exercise, as I was also able to offer suggestions to help governments creatively inform, involve and educate Black Africans in planning new communities.

Chapter

2   Using Theory to Guide Public Involvement Practice

Ask any well-seasoned practitioner, who is committed to the practice of public involvement to share its related theories, and he/she will likely describe a theory that best illustrates their value of public involvement. Posing this question to public involvement practitioners and planners is helpful in that it identifies what theoretical base -- a framework of political, organizational and societal principles -- is grounding their practice. The answer also allows theory and its related practice to be critically analyzed, based on: the merits of the theory itself (which is often a normative exercise); how the theory was interpreted through practice; and whether the outcome of the public involvement strategies achieved the theory's intended goal. Identifying and reflecting on the discrepancies between espoused theory and the practice of public involvement therefore allows us to question assumptions, clarify goals, and sharpen overarching principles and objectives, as well as identify the means for achieving them.

During the summer of 1998, David Shandler, a public involvement practitioner, and Anine Trumplemann, a Cape Town planner, referenced theories they believe inform their own public involvement practices in Cape Town. Their comments are significant to this study since Trumplemann and Shandler's firm played a central role in defining the public involvement programs for the case studies presented in Chapter 3. Shandler, who has a public policy background, highlighted several theories that influenced his practice. (Shandler et al 1996: 3) Trumplemann, who is a Town Planner for the City of Cape Town, implicitly described a theory when explaining why "public involvement is more than public consultation or public information."[8] Trumplemann came to the City advocating public involvement in planning to encourage a deeper commitment to government-community collaboration. A few years earlier, Trumplemann completed a planning degree from a university outside Cape Town, known for its traditional English planning methodology.

The two theories described in this chapter are authored by Sherry Arnstein and Melvin Webber. Arnstein's theory illustrates how the degrees of participation (such as information, consultation, or involvement) strongly correlate to the level of power shared between the power holder and other stakeholders in a decision-making process. Webber argues that planners must facilitate policy dialogues in order to satisfy competing wants and maximize equity. While both Arnstein and Webber

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[8] Interview, Anine Trumplemann, City of Cape Town, Summer 1998

focus on process, Arnstein believes that a degree of power <u>will</u> be the outcome; Webber argues maximizing equity <u>should</u> be the outcome. In other words, Webber is prescribing what degree of power ought to be achieved, which is one of many possible constructs of Arnstein's model. For this reason, Arnstein's model is highlighted in this chapter and through other chapters when referencing the values and principles of the two practitioners.

The following sections describe the theories shared by both Cape Town practitioners, which serve as the conceptual background against which their actual participatory practices (described in Chapter 3) are framed. This chapter also uncovers a series of theoretical assumptions that will be used to contrast true practice in Cape Town. This type of exercise can help determine whether the theories are appropriate given the relevance of Cape Town political and cultural dynamics. In Chapter 5, the Cape Town case studies are then measured against the theoretical yardstick.

Theory One: A Ladder of Citizen Participation

In 1969, Sherry Arnstein, the director of a non-profit research institute at that time, crafted a "typology" of citizen participation to articulate what she believed to be its central component -- the sharing of power with the "have-nots". Arnstein describes have-nots as individuals or groups who do not possess, or are not perceived to possess, any meaningful power. Her previous work, as the Chief Advisor on Citizen Participation in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Model Cities Administration and her evaluation of citizen participation efforts on urban renewal and anti-poverty projects, led her to challenge the conventional wisdom at that time, concluding that:

> *...citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. (Arnstein:1969: 216)*

Arnstein analyzed the abstract concepts of power and participation and identified eight distinct levels of participation. She arranged the levels on a eight-rung ladder to illustrate how increasing efforts of participation affect the dynamic of sharing power.

Figure 2-1 Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation

Citizen Control	Degrees of Citizen Power
Delegated Power	
Partnership	
Placation	Degrees of Tokenism
Consultation	
Informing	
Therapy	Nonparticipation
Manipulation	
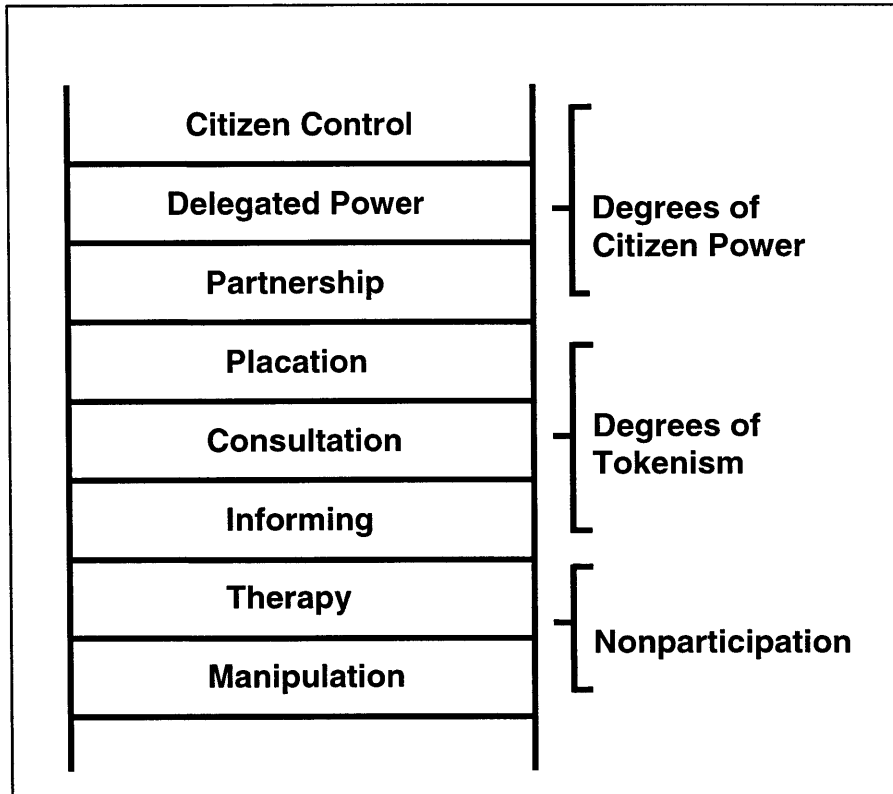
Source: Arnstein, A Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969)

To contextualize the ladder, the following paragraphs describe Arnstein's model using historical South African cases of involving Black Africans in decision-making. These historical examples illustrate how a range of South African political objectives have propelled various constructs of power.

The bottom rung, *manipulation*, implies that citizens are involved in decision-making in a cursory way, allowing power to remain safely with the powerholder (in this case the powerholder is government). During the 1980s in Cape Town, as well as other cities and towns across South Africa, the national government created Community Councils and Black Local Authorities -- mechanisms through which Black African issues/needs were to be identified and solved. Both the Councils and the Authorities were supplied with limited power and resources, making any meaningful efforts to exercise control simply futile. Placating Black Africans using "involvement" mechanisms (such as Community Councils) reveals cases where government manipulated, or were perceived to manipulate, Africans in the process of soliciting and considering their needs. (ANC 1998: 2)

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Skipping to the third rung, *informing* implies that citizens are updated of plans although they possess no legitimate role in its development. Even if powerholders provide formal mechanisms to encourage two-way dialogue, powerholders are still only informing communities if citizen concerns are not valued in the plan. *Consultation*, the fourth rung, does mean that citizen feedback will be heard. The limitations with this level however, is that citizen's simply respond to government-generated ideas rather than contributing community-based concepts to the plan. Ideas/concerns will be valued and incorporated into the ideas of the powerholder. A few recent Cape Town projects have received criticisms from the community that public involvement efforts simply seek community "rubber-stamp" approvals.[9] This criticism mean that involvement efforts have only reached the level of consultation.

Partnership, is the level at which citizens and/or groups negotiate and engage in trade-offs with the traditional powerholders. *Delegated power*, moreover, implies where have-not citizens posses many, if not most, of the decision-making seats. Negotiations in 1993, between the ANC and NP, where major policies were collectively agreed upon, seemed to have reached these levels of participation.[10]

Looking Underneath the Ladder

Compressing the complexities of politics, communities and power into eight simple rungs forces a great deal of detail to be lost or distorted. Such detail, particularly in the South African context, largely defines a government's ability and/or willingness to reach certain levels of shared power. Arnstein therefore, included the following insights when applying her model to practice:

- *The model sharply defines the powerholder (viewed as "the system" by the have-nots) and the have-nots (viewed as "those people" by the powerholders).* Such a clean delineation of power rarely occurs, however. Swarming amidst the politics of planning in complex communities, practitioners will find competing interests, splintered sub groups, and range of viewpoints.

- *The model itself does not uncover the subtleties that can greatly impede an upward movement along the eight rungs.* Such subtleties on the part of the traditional powerholder include racism and paternalism, while the have-not subtleties include limited knowledge, distrust, conflict among groups, and the failure of group transparency and accountability. (Arnstein 1969: 217)

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[9] Based on interviews with several community representatives, Summer 1998
[10] Negotiations also included establishing the process for national elections

Four recent township planning projects[11] in Cape Town, which were initially reviewed for this study, have all wrestled (or are still wrestling) with the complexities and subtleties Arnstein describes above. The two case studies described in Chapter 3, demonstrate -- in detail -- the difficulties with achieving the intended objectives of public involvement in the face of contextual complexities.

While Shandler wrote of Arnstein in his draft working paper, and shared Arnstein's philosophy to his clients, he found his own personal philosophies most closely aligned to the works of Melvin Webber, who has a strong emphasis on facilitated policy dialogue. While the arguments of Webber can be translated into one possible construct on Arnstein's ladder, understanding Webber helps us understand Shandler and his principles. (Shandler et al, 1996: 3)

Theory Two: Maximizing Equity

Shandler's Firm in Cape Town, Zille Shandler & Associates and later called Common Ground, developed and implemented public involvement strategies for several governments in Cape Town. Their role was a difficult one: the Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC) contracted with Zille Shandler to run a highly visible public involvement process as CMC staff continued to question its worth. (Shandler et al, 1996: 3)

The firm relied on theoretical arguments to help articulate a range of perspectives for the CMC to consider. The firm first provided a theoretical overview by identifying two branches of public policy: the technical/rational branch (focused on introducing knowledge into the decision-making process) and the social action branch (focused on the connections between knowledge and action). The social action branch of planning theory is concerned with improving the quality of the "decision-implementation sequence," which values the process of reaching a decision more than reaching a decision considered to be rational. Webber, a scholar who subscribes to the social action branch, outlined principles of maximizing equity. (Shandler et al, 1996: 2)

According to Webber, planning is predisposed to understanding the way decisions are made as opposed to their substantive content, and that:

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[11] The projects are the Metro South East Plan, the Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Plan, the Khayelitsha Spatial Framework Plan, and the Khayelitsha Strategic Management Plan.

Planners have a particular way of thinking about pluralities of individual and group wants, and a particular way of satisfying these competing wants, namely through a facilitated policy dialogue. The plan, participated in by multiple stakeholders, represents the solution which, within the confines of maximizing equity, is the most procedurally acceptable, as opposed to being the most efficient or effective. (Shandler et al, 1996: 3)

The key words in Webber's writings is maximizing equity, which implies giving (or attempting to give) equal weight or power to stakeholders, which could be translated onto one rung of Arnstein's ladder. Webber's arguments however, make an erroneous assumption that *equity will also be fair*. Maximizing equity is not necessarily the appropriate recipe for project and process legitimacy. Governments with limited resources that are in the business of distributing a tangible goods, such as water, housing, or a new transit stop, will likely -- even in a shared power dynamic -- have a plan that is not necessarily fair. Equal distribution may mean giving proportionally less to those who need the most, or may mean undercutting overarching objectives, such as regional coordination, for the sake of improving a situation at the local level.

Arnstein's theory however, does not naturally fit within the South African context either because of the theoretical assumptions underlying her arguments. This next section uncovers the assumptions with Arnstein's model, which helps identify weaknesses inherent with the model itself that may be a factor in its effectiveness in Cape Town.

Questioning the Ladder: A Reality Check on Theoretical Principles

Arnstein is an American practitioner, who grounded her model in the context of the 1960s Model Cities program and urban renewal. In both cases, U.S. governments tapped into substantial financial resources, allowing a relatively consistent implementation of their planning initiatives. (Arnstein 1969: 217) In Cape Town, governments are fiscally constrained, forcing governments to pick and choose projects carefully, and delaying project development. Involving communities (which still have basic needs to be met) in project identification can and has, as one case study will show, raised community expectations since projects are not consistently implemented in a relatively short time-frame.

Furthermore, U.S. public involvement processes comfortably rely on the institutional stability consistently found on all levels of government. South African institutions however, are wrestling with the country's political transformation, where new leadership translated into a new national vision that has revamped the national

decision-framework. Moreover, the decision-making framework is still unfolding at the local level. In April 1999, the six Cape Town municipalities and the regional government (the CMC) received a formal directive from the national ANC government to essentially dissolve and become one large mega-city government.[12] Transitions of this magnitude, greatly challenge the legitimacy of any public involvement process, given its reliance on institutional and community-based stability.

While institutional stability and funding availability are central to legitimizing a public involvement process, there are several other underlying assumptions that constitute how well theoretical objectives can be achieved in South Africa, such as:

- *Democracy is desired across all cultural groups.* In South Africa, there are several African groups, many of whom are/were traditionally led under utilitarian, chieftain rule (such as Xhosa and Zulu). Should the new national values of western democracy supersede the cultural values treasured in some African communities? Indeed, the country elected the ANC over the National party, but it does not preclude that all Black Africans also believe in the principles espoused in Arnstein's model, nor all principles espoused by the ANC. While there is no answer here, it is important to recognize that western views may not be appropriate where ideologies and cultural values are simply different.

- *Participation pertains to the process, not the specific outcomes.* Arnstein describes process success in terms of power. This implies that project outcomes are downplayed in the faith that collectively, stakeholders and government will derive at the most "procedurally acceptable" answers. To reach procedurally acceptable answers however requires that all groups possess a baseline of time, money, and education. The wide discrepancies between the white local governments and the Black African townships however, are enough to disqualify that the right resources are there to ensure that the process does in fact lead to the appropriate outcome.

The assumptions listed above, tell us that U.S.-based theoretical models cannot be easily applied to the South African context. While such models may be helpful to evaluate the principles that guided some U.S. practice (although a wealth of other U.S models exist), practitioners in other countries must also assess their own country's institutional decision-framework, community complexities, internal politics, and a range of other variables. Recognition of the sticking points -- where public involvement principles clash with the local realities -- is required to re-frame theoretical goals into the local context.

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[12] Interview, Francois Theunissen, CMC, April 1999.

Using two cases in Cape Town, the next chapter illustrates how community and institutional complexities, along with particular theoretical assumptions, have influenced the outcomes of two public involvement efforts.

Map 3-1: MSDF Spatial Framework Plan

Source: CMC's MSDF Technical Report (1996)

As shown on this map, the MSDF proposes a new metropolitan node almost in the heart of the Black townships with new activity corridors stretching from its core to other areas in the region. Strategies such as these establish how the region's inequities are to be addressed. Many of the spatial strategies are intended to "integrate"[16] Coloured communities and Black townships into the Central Business Districts -- traditionally white areas equipped with services and employment opportunities. (CMC 1997: 1) The term "integration" in this context has a unique definition: building services and providing employment opportunities for Coloureds and Black Africans in the outlying areas where few services and jobs are currently found. Improving services translates

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[16] The term integration is used in the Metro South East Plan and the Wetton-Landsdowne Corridor Project.

The chapter is dedicated to the two case studies, the MSEP and the Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Project, by providing an overview of the two projects and highlighting snapshots of the planning process. The cases are intended to uncover where and why governments and/or external stakeholders have revealed difficulties in reaching the level of shared power and decision-making subscribed to by the two public involvement practitioners, Shandler (Metro South East Plan) and Trumplemann (Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Plan). Because of the intrinsic relationship between the MSDF with all other planning projects in the Cape Metropolitan Area, this chapter begins with an overview of the MSDF and a description of MSDF's underlying assumptions. The assumptions are very telling with respect to how, and how well, governments will proceed in implementing MSDF strategies at the sub-regional and local level.

The MSDF: A New Planning Philosophy in the Cape Metropolitan Area

Overview
In 1991, National Party rule was losing its power and influence over the country's politics as sentiments for racial equality buzzed feverously across the nation.[13] In Cape Town, regional and local governments viewed this time of uncertainty as an opportunity not only to provide direction for physical growth at a metropolitan scale, but also to employ a new strategy to improve the lives of the disadvantaged (namely Black Africans and Coloureds). (CMC 1996: 1) One Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC) Planning Manager shared that it was easier for planners in Cape Town to shift from apartheid policies compared to governments up north. "Government workers up in Pretoria and Johannesburg tended to be more politically aligned with the NP." Irrespective if this sentiment was felt by most Cape Town planners, the MSDF was indeed the first large-scale government initiative in Cape Town that would reverse the apartheid policies regional and local governments had implemented for over 40 years.

The CMC's Urbanisation & Planning Branch (known as the Western Cape Regional Services Council at that time) jointly prepared portions of the MSDF with the Cape Town City Council "on the basis of public participation." (CMC 1996: 1) Key metropolitan stakeholders, various government departments, local municipalities, and community representatives crafted the *Vision for the Western Cape*, a document intended to guide the development of spatial strategies and policies. The vision made the following statements:

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[13] Interview, Francois Theunissen, CMC, Summer 1998

We commit ourselves to satisfying the basic needs of the population and to the development of a strong dynamic economy...Government of the urban areas and the region will be democratic, open, participative, and non-discriminatory. In all ways the development of the region will seek to provide opportunities for all its inhabitants to realise their maximum potential and fulfillment within an environment of increasing choice and opportunity. (CMC 1996: 27)

Informed by the vision, the Regional Services Council crafted *Development Principles, Goals and Guidelines*, including guidelines such as Urban Integration (which seeks to integrate urban areas by promoting affordable housing, improving transportation links, and mixing residential areas with recreational, commercial and employment opportunities) and Redressing Imbalances (which seeks to improve unequal distribution of services by directing investments to areas of greatest need, locating new housing to existing urban resources, and creating new centers for activities). (CMC 1996: 27-29)

The Principles, Goals and Guidelines informed the MSDF technical report, called *The Way Forward*, which drew from technical and stakeholder information and an evaluation of other countries' land use, transportation, growth management, economic development, and environmental preservation strategies. (CMC 1996: 1) The culmination of the work from regional and local governments, other government agencies and external stakeholders was melded into the final MSDF -- an integrated set of spatial strategies and policies to achieve the new regional vision. Strategies outlined in the MSDF included:

- **Metropolitan activity corridors --** bands of high-intensity development, concentrated along a public transportation route;[14]

- **Metropolitan urban nodes --** high concentrations of development possessing an agglomeration of functions (e.g., facilities, services and economic activity) that impact the metropolitan region as a whole, such as the Cape Town CBD;[15]

- **Metropolitan Urban Space System (MOSS) --** a network of interconnected open spaces that complement the built environment and protect bio-diversity in towns and cities; and

- **Urban edges --** a boundary and policy that manages, directs, and controls the outer limits of urban expansion within a city or town. (CMC 1996: 35-46)

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[14] Defined in the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework Plan
[15] The remaining strategies were defined in CMC's Metro South East Plan

Map 3-1: MSDF Spatial Framework Plan

Source: CMC's MSDF Technical Report (1996)

As shown on this map, the MSDF proposes a new metropolitan node almost in the heart of the Black townships with new activity corridors stretching from its core to other areas in the region. Strategies such as these establish how the region's inequities are to be addressed. Many of the spatial strategies are intended to "integrate"[16] Coloured communities and Black townships into the Central Business Districts -- traditionally white areas equipped with services and employment opportunities. (CMC 1997: 1) The term "integration" in this context has a unique definition: building services and providing employment opportunities for Coloureds and Black Africans in the outlying areas where few services and jobs are currently found. Improving services translates

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[16] The term integration is used in the Metro South East Plan and the Wetton-Landsdowne Corridor Project.

into building new roads and housing, increasing transit options, providing employment training opportunities, and creating new health and educational facilities. Integration, then, is about creating equal but separate services and economic opportunity for predominately Coloured and Black areas.

Such an approach to integration could be, and has been, criticized for perpetuating the separation of races, since Cape Town's integration strategies do not encourage the actual spatial mixing of people, as interpreted in U.S. planning and politics. It is quite possible that underneath the current planning rhetoric still lies a powerful trace of racism.[17] Stepping back and examining this planning strategy given the economic realities of most Black Africans, building on-the-ground services for these townships could still be viewed as a palatable approach to balancing such extreme inequities. Lower land rents and stretches of underdeveloped land allow these areas to be more approachable for market-based development. Thus, from an economic standpoint, Black townships would become appealing places for new development because of lower out-of-pocket costs.

MSDF Assumptions
This form of "integrating" townships with the rest of the region is not an insignificant shift in policy -- it requires political wielding, resource re-allocation, and in many instances, new municipal and community leadership. Moreover, it requires a consistent vision from planners, decision-makers and communities at the local level. Although the Regional Services Council acknowledged that impacts of the MSDF will not be fully realized until planning was done at the local level, its future success nevertheless was built on the following assumptions:

■ Local governments will continue to support the MSDF, even if the plan encourages more economic development opportunities for certain municipalities than others.

■ Local governments will substantially design, finance and implement major strategies in MSDF, abiding by its principles and guidelines.

■ The involvement of external stakeholders in the development of the MSDF -- including Black African community leaders -- will mean consistent support of MSDF spatial strategies and policies.

■ Community complexities, and shifts in local politics, will not undermine the overarching objectives and strategies in the MSDF.

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[17] Even if one is to assume that the underlying goal was racial separation in the traditional sense, integration would some day be unavoidable due to population growth and increases in per capita income (allowing migration into previously unaffordable areas).

A successful outcome for MSDF principles and strategies relies on implementation at the local level, where planning strategies will meet the true test of community support. At the local level, every-day citizens, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and other groups will experience the impact of regional plans on their everyday life. It is very likely therefore, that implementation will play out inconsistently at the local level -- where local municipalities may squeeze in their (competing) political perspectives and communities may refute previously-agreed upon ideas. Assumptions therefore, will have a direct bearing on both sub-regional and local level plans, which will unfold in the following two case studies.

The Metro South East Plan (MSEP)

Overview
The development of the Metro South East Plan (MSEP), one of eight sub-regional plans, came on the heels of the MSDF in an effort to further elaborate on regional strategies for the south east portion of the Cape Metropolitan Area. The MSEP is the only sub-regional plan in the Cape Metropolitan Area focused specifically on improving the devastatingly poor conditions found within Black African communities (townships). The Macassar Dunes and the Phillipi Horticultural Area are also in south east region, intertwining the area's economic poverty with natural resource issues. (CMC 1997: 1)

Map 3-2 Metro South East inside the MSDF
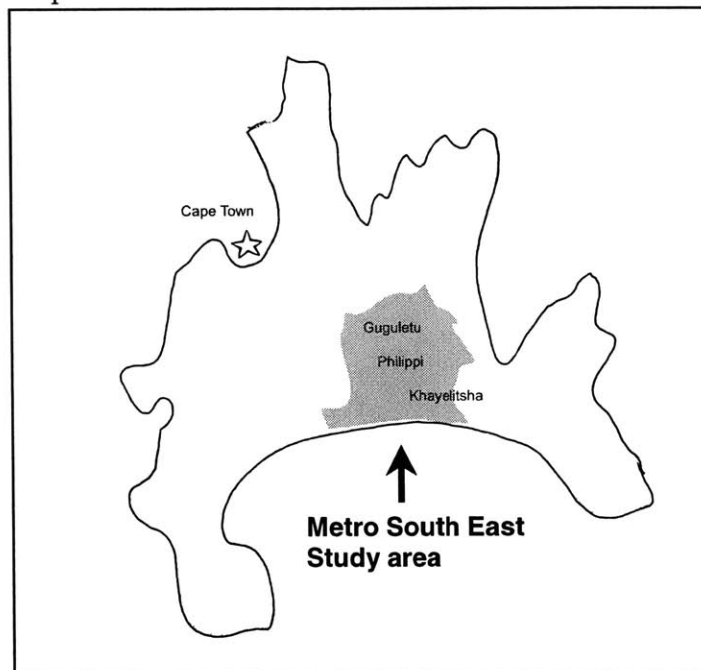
Chittenden-Nicks, the same external planning consultants that designed major portions of the MSDF, led the MSEP in solving area-specific spatial and policy needs. The public involvement consulting firm, Zille Shandler Associates, developed a involvement program to engage Black Africans and other stakeholders in plan development.[18] Public involvement activities in the MSEP were regarded as a means of deriving planning solutions to township problems. This case study therefore, provides specific examples of sub-regional planning that use public involvement as a means of deriving

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[18] Interview, Francois Theunissen, CMC, Summer 1998

planning solutions. Since the MSEP are primarily Black African townships, Black Africans then are to play a large role in defining planning strategies.

In 1993, the CMC informed township communities of the MSEP project and solicited comments on community problems and needs. (CMC 1997: 3) Black Africans shared a wide range of problems or concerns, such as those listed below:

Table 3-1 Spatial Issues Identified during MSEP Process

Category:	Issues:
Development:	*Lack of housing; *Poor quality housing; *Informal squatting; Encroaching urban development; Lack of land developments near community facilities; Airport restricts surrounding development; Runway alignment issues
Infrastructure:	*Lack of public facilities; *Long distances to work; *Lack of safe and frequent public transport; Pedestrians cross highways to reach destinations
Natural Resource/Dev. Conflicts:	Flooding; Incompatible development near Kuils River; River degradation from untreated sewage; Open space versus industrial development
Health-related:	*Limited access to health facilities
Other Issues:	Illegal dumpings

Source: CMC, MSEP (1997)
* Issues raised by more than one group meeting

"The set of problems were then elaborated by officials and consultants to uncover the underlying issues and to provide a basis for proposing solutions that would effectively address these problems." (CMC 1996: 1) The proposed solutions were drafted into a *Goals, Objectives, Policies and Strategies (GOPS) Document* and received feedback community representatives. (CMC 1996: 1) The policy component of the document covered issues such as education reform, poverty alleviation, environmental preservation, and crime reduction. The CMC also drafted recommendations to help meet the policy objectives, including:

- "Employers should contribute to housing subsidies for their employees;
- The central government should sell land to migrants;
- Tax and rate rebates should be introduced to reward companies that create jobs in the MSE sub-region;
- Local residents should be encouraged to purchase local businesses; and
- Education must be accessible to all." (CMC 1996: 1)

The core of the document however, was dedicated to spatial strategies that would effectively "integrate" the disadvantaged Black African townships into the rest of the Metropolitan Area. Over 600 organizations that initially reviewed the GOPS, also reviewed the draft strategies. (CMC 1996: 4) A weekend retreat of over 150 representatives from townships, NGOs, government agencies, and others reviewed and modified the spatial strategies. The final version of the strategies included the following improvements for the metro south east:

- 4 additional railway lines
- 2 new transit stations
- 3 freeway or road extensions plus the designation of other roads to be limited access
- 7 activity spines (the core component of an activity corridors, which is a major road linking a major urban node)
- Approximately 26 activity streets (lower intensity streets than activity spines and do not have to connect to a major urban node)
- 15 centers (smaller than a metropolitan node but an important economic and service center for a particular community)
- 1 metropolitan node in Phillipi
- 5 areas designated as a part of the Metropolitan Open Space System
- Proposed urban edge boundary (CMC 1996: 7-17)

Described in local newspapers as the "first major post-apartheid development strategy in Cape Town," the CMC and consultants relied on a host of government agencies and scores of external stakeholders to pull together the final MSEP. (Streak 1995)
Gaps between project and process goals and the realities of practice however, led several Black Africans, NGOs, and other local governments to share their (during 1998 interviews) dissatisfaction with the process and outcome of the MSEP. What happened to make an effort -- focused on the needs of the 21 communities and equipped with new technical data -- fail in the eyes of so many stakeholders? The following sections uncover points in the process where there were sticking points directly, or indirectly lowered the level of involvement. The points in the process occurred during: project initiation; defining project boundaries; refining the initial public involvement strategy; identifying community issues; and in translating planning into implementation.

Project Initiation: Evaluating the Public Involvement Process
At the onset of the MSEP planning process, CMC planners lacked experience in conducting public participation and consensus building processes and therefore relied heavily on external consultants to complete such tasks. The CMC turned to public participation practitioners Zille Shandler Associates (later called Common Ground Consulting) to develop strategies for working with the Black townships and other stakeholders. This was not the first time the CMC looked externally to complete this type of exercise. Zille Shandler Associates had been first hired to manage the public participation program for the MSDF. The apparent success of the MSDF among a long list of government and non-government entities, prompted the CMC to continue Zille Shandler's contract for the MSEP. [19]

The consultants initially developed a strategy derived from their own values and theory of public participation. Based on prior public policy experience and exposure, they saw the value of their work to be closely aligned to the insights of Melvin Webber (described in more detail in Chapter 2), who placed a particularly strong emphasis on maximizing equity through process-derived outcomes. Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Participation, also described in their analysis, can succinctly capture where the consultants' valued the role of communities in sharing power. (Shandler et al, 1996: 3)

Figure 3-2: Shandler's Desired Outcome of Public Involvement Efforts
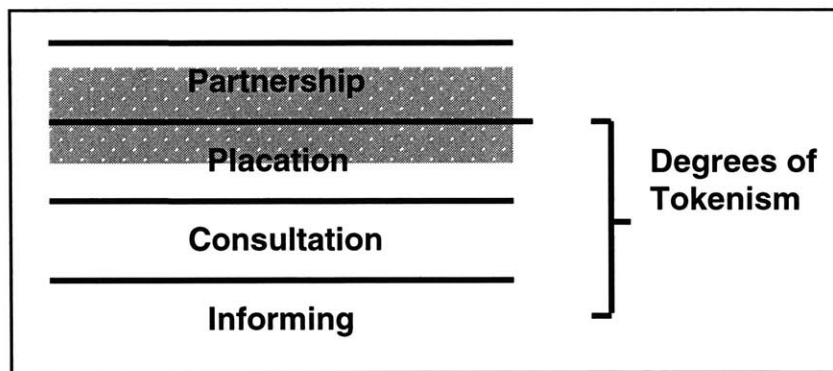
The consultants' values drove the strategy to involve the public in policy and project decision-making. Zille Shandler Associates viewed it as a process well beyond pure consultation or negotiation:

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[19] Interview, Francois Theunissen, CMC, Summer 1998

1) "To achieve as much agreement as possible on what process to follow as well as the outcome of the process;
2) To empower Interested & Affected Parties[20];
3) To develop adequate mechanisms for transferring normative and regional level decisions and strategies to the local and project level;
4) To bring about social change through social learning; and
5) To achieve political buy-in needed to restructure the apartheid city." (Shandler et al, 1996: 6)

Although Zille Shandler Associates defined their work in terms of Webber's theory, some government and consultant planners found the theory to be "over the top" (too much) and others found it "barely inclusive or participatory enough." Differences between staff and consultants regarding the value and role of public involvement was never fully resolved, however. And the first symptom of this disagreement quickly surfaced when community representatives confronted the CMC over the project area definition. (Shandler et al, 1996: 3)

Project Area Definition: Wrestling over Public Will & Technical Justification
While initiating the MSEP, the CMC defined the project area to include only and all Black townships in the southeastern portion of the Cape Metropolitan Area, the largest conglomeration of townships in the region. Many community leaders and representatives perceived the separation of this area from other sub-regional planning efforts as a decision that would perpetuate Apartheid policies. The Federation of Cape Civic Associations (FCCA) wrote a letter to the public involvement consulting firm, which stated that:

> *The FCCA cannot see its way clear to assist in the entrenchment of Group Areas since the purpose of the Metro South East Plan is to upgrade the ghettos into which people have been forced by apartheid policies of the Nationalists. (Constable 1993: 1)*

"People perceived the MSEP as a poverty trap,"[21] explained a planner from one of the local municipalities. Rather than sorting through the concerns, and collectively determining a mutually satisfactory definition (which might have been the same once concerns were aired and addressed), the CMC referred to their technical criteria to justify area definition. The CMC attested that the criteria was "its (the Metro South East) common features such as land use and racial segregation, its sprawling mono-

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[20] Definition used to describe stakeholders who have an interested or a stake in the outcome of a public decision-making process. Term was coined in national environmental legislation, similar to the U.S. Environmental Impact Assessment process.
[21] Interview, Jaco van der Westhuizen, Oostenberg Municipality, Summer 1998

functional residential towns, poor linkages with the rest of the CMA, poor revenue base, and hostile and degraded natural environment." (CMC 1997: 2)

From a technical and even political standpoint, such a justification might well make sense. Black Africans' failure to trust the CMC with their technical rationale however, seemed to require additional dialogue and transparency. Instead of valuing community concerns equally with technical justification, the CMC decided to move forward, containing all south east townships in the plan and -- as several representatives in the Black townships explained[22] -- leaving community concerns regarding project boundaries unaddressed.

Refining the Public Involvement Strategy
During the initial stages of the process, the consultant team prescribed a broad-based public involvement approach for the Metro South East area, which included stakeholder interviews, committees, public meetings, and a range of public information tools (such as newsletters and radio spots). The consultants believed this approach to be particularly important since little information was known at that time as to how townships were organized and how people received information. The MSEP in fact, was one of the first government-led initiatives to uncover the formal and informal networks in the townships. (Chittenden & Zille Shandler 1993: 19)

Contacting organized structures seemed the most appropriate start to the consultants because of limited resources and communication realities within the townships (e.g., there was no postal service and a limited number of telephones). Concerned that contacting only a few groups would create an appearance as being exclusionary, the consultant team spent eight weeks compiling an exhaustive list of community groups, uncovering a high number of groups distinctly within each township. In the township of Blue Downs for example, the consultants learned of seven different representative squatter committees, at least 13 ratepayer committees, and multiple religious, sport, political, and business organizations. (Chittenden & Zille Shandler 1993: 20)

Having identified the community groups, the consultants formed eight "broad areas" out of the 21 townships or distinct areas, meaning that in some cases, several townships were clustered together.

The consultants proposed holding an Area Forum (a public meeting) for each of the eight broad areas to: 1) share information about the MSEP, 2) identify and prioritize community issues and needs, and 3) learn of community -generated solutions. The

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[22] 1998 interviews.

study team would then develop a draft problem statement for each area, which would encapsulate the range of issues, needs and possible solutions to be considered. Before initiating Forums in all eight areas, the consultants channeled their energies on one township, Blue Downs to learn if the proposed process would satisfactorily meet the three above goals. (Chittenden & Zille Shandler 1993: 21)

In Blue Downs however, a series of challenges twisted the consultants' ability to complete all the aspired goals in one meeting. While representatives failed to attend in some instances, others required additional time to question the legitimacy of the MSEP, the intent of the CMC, and to share long-held frustrations and anger. A summary by the consultants described that representatives:

> ...identified a litany of 'broken promises' over the years and were concerned that Blue Downs would never get the facilities and infrastructure apparently promised at its inception.[23] They expressed considerable concern that when the time came for implementation, the authorities would say that there was 'no money' to implement the plan. (Chittenden & Zille Shandler 1993: 22)

The consultants also began to recognize that certain organizations were unwilling to speak with other local groups, requiring significant work to resolve conflicts. Only then could representatives move on to discuss the agenda the consultants brought to the table. Moreover, the length of the Blue Downs process, which was extended to three meetings rather than one, became more complicated than originally planned. Even after meeting notifications were hand delivered, for example, several representatives would stall for more time to share new ideas with their constituents. (Chittenden & Zille Shandler 1993: 22)

Increased costs and lengthening of the process, prompted the consultant team and the CMC to curtail the depth and breadth of the public participation program. (Chittenden & Zille Shandler 1993: 23) Streamlining the process was also promoted by a number of representatives, who expressed that governments should already recognize township deficiencies, given the history of community protests. Representatives further emphasized that resources should be directly applied to correct these devastatingly acute problems rather than conduct such a costly process. (Chittenden & Zille Shandler 1993: 21) Comments such as these speaks volumes: extending the length of planning processes in order to "to talk shop" can be considered insensitive to community needs, given that people need basic services today. It raises an important question as to whether a balance can indeed exist between governments unilaterally reconstructing Black African communities (which was similar process under apartheid) and Black Africans spending time to define how their communities and lives should be reconstructed.

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[23] Inception implies the time when the township was created during apartheid.

The initial stage of the process was therefore refined to conducting 10 stakeholder interviews in each the remaining seven "broad areas" and using information from the interviews to develop the draft problem statements. The consultants complemented these interviews by surveying all related literature and newspaper cuttings. After generating initial problem statements, Areas Forums were then held in each broad area, encouraging representatives to comment on the statements. (Chittenden & Zille Shandler 1993: 24)

Issue Identification: How Valuable Are Public Voices?
Community feedback consisted of problems such as poor housing quality, lack of public facilities, and long distances to work, which appeared obvious to the CMC. Certain staff shared that planners and engineers could have easily determined the problems and issues, considering the poor conditions of the townships. Technical staff, in particular, questioned the value of public involvement in this type of process. Staff concerns were further validated in the next stage of the process when long-range strategies were shared with community representatives. CMC planners found meaningful feedback and discussions to be limited at best, pointing to the inability of Black Africans to move beyond current issues. "These people are unable to look that far ahead when they don't have the basic needs met today,"[24] shared one consultant.

However, it is difficult from the research to determine if whether community limitations were the only cause of the problem. No information was available on what types of questions were posed to Black Africans nor if time was spent educating them on what, for example, makes developed communities function before asking to describe community issues. Moreover, it was difficult to identify the detail of comments shared by Black Africans. A planner, who worked on the MSEP shared however, that meeting minutes and community comments were edited so much by the CMC that the "essence was lost."[25]

While some believed that limited community comments, justified the project to be quantitatively driven, others shared that the CMC never really intended to legitimately engage with external groups and stakeholders in the first place. "It was just a big show of public participation," shared one CMC planner. "The CMC saw community viewpoints very much as secondary information,"[26] shared another.

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[24] Interview, David Schandler, Common Ground and Francois Theunissen, Summer 1998
[25] Interview, Maddie Mazaza, CMC, Summer 1998
[26] Interveiws, Maddie Mazaza and Claire Holiday, CMC, Summer 1998

Translating Planning Into Implementation: Jurisdictional Roles and Responsibilities
The obscurity of the CMC's role and its relationship with local municipalities limited CMC's ability to share power with communities. In most cases, local municipalities are not required to adhere to CMC's regional and sub-regional plans unless they are approved by the Province to become a statutory document. (CMC 1996: 1) Since the MSDF and MSEP have not been approved as of yet to be statutory documents, it is not clear whether CMC strategies -- such as the width of the road intended to be an activity corridor[27] -- will necessarily be implemented.

The lack of clarity over CMC's role in implementing strategies at the local level has been criticized as raising community expectations.[28] The primary reason is because the CMC and consultants shared that community involvement was a means of deriving solutions -- even though no institutional mechanism was in place to assure that the solutions would indeed be implemented. Community representatives early in the process, moreover, voiced such concerns regarding accountability, which were recorded by the public participation consultants:

> *Throughout the process, participants made it clear that they were interested in devoting their time to the process if there is a clear direction towards action. There was concern about the lack of delivery and a need to understand more clearly how public and private decision-making processes worked.* (CMC 1996: 1)

The CMC raised expectations in the Black African community by not placing clear parameters around planning strategies (e.g., by clearly defining the authority of the CMC and the process by which most strategies are implemented at the local level) although this concern was raised by the public involvement consultants early on in the process (Chittenden & Zille Shandler 1993: 24). Furthermore, Wesgro, an investment and trade promotion agency, reviewed the MSEP and supplied several comments including that,

> *The spatial and policy proposals in the MSEP too often appear to be made without an understanding of their financial and economic implications and constraints. This is likely to result in such proposals raising expectations without any capacity to be implemented. (Wesgro 1997: 3)*

In other words, gathering community comments and developing strategies to address the needs in a cursory way, disregarded realities such as the market, funding, the

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[27] The width of the road defining the activity corridor is important because the corridor is intended to balance a diversity of modes and encourage the corridor to be a land use "destination." Widening a road to six lanes, which is what a local municipality proposes, will change the entire character of the corridor to what was not intended.

[28] Interview, David Schandler, Common Ground and Francois Theunissen, CMC, Summer 1998

business community, agreement by local municipalities, and more. The Manager of the Spatial Division at the CMC, who headed the MSEP effort shared that the planning firm leading the effort, Chittenden Nicks, "has a moralistic, advocacy approach to their planning. This Department no where nearly has the budget nor the authority to make changes in these areas."[29] Nevertheless the MSEP plan moved forward in drafting and finalizing strategies the CMC had little jurisdiction or money for.

When examining this particular disjuncture deeper, the assumptions underlying the MSDF (particularly that local government will implement MSDF strategies, abiding by its principles) provokes expectations that inequities will be solved swiftly and collaboratively. In real time however, fiscal constraints are limiting what can be achieved and some MSDF/MSEP strategies are bypassed by municipal planners in order to develop their own strategies. Failure in implementing the MSDF/MSEP strategies according to the assumptions, has left some Black Africans, especially those who contributed to the MSEP, frustrated by governments' failure to deliver promises"[30]

Reflections on CMC's Public Involvement
Throughout the MSEP planning process, Zille Shandler wrestled with the glaring disjunctures between their values and the values held by many government and consultant planners. It seems likely that the inability to solve differences at the onset of the project protagonized the value of public involvement at key project milestones, as described in the public involvement firm's discussion paper:

> *In practice, it was often the case that agreements reached in the process*
> *were eroded by intervention on the part of stakeholders acting 'outside' of*
> *the public participation process. Among the key offenders in this regard*
> *were CMC officials and planning consultants....Agreements reached in*
> *meetings and workshops were regarded as an input into a larger process*
> *over which they had sanction. (Shandler et al, 1996: 7)*

Similar sentiments were shared by community representatives, who were interviewed during the summer of 1998. Representatives described that "it [the MSEP] should be considered illegitimate because it was not open or transparent," indicating that Zille Shandler Associates' initial objectives of empowering, bringing about social change through social learning, achieving political buy-in, were not nearly achieved. Zille Shandlers' theoretically-based aspirations however, could not attach to the institutional and community underpinnings found in South Africa -- essentially the current institutional and community instabilities and financial constraints.

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[29] Interview, Francois Theunissen, CMC, Summer 1998
[30] Interview, Richard Dyantji, Federation for Community Research, Summer 1998

Amid concerns over whether the MSEP is perceived as a legitimate plan, the MSEP is waiting final approval by the CMC's decision-making body, the Council. Even when approval is affirmed, how, when and who will implement MSEP policies and strategies is still uncertain. Active involvement by CMC staff in local planning, and the powerful persuasion of CMC's financial resources, will be required to keep the goals and objectives of the MSEP alive and off the shelf.

Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Programme

Overview
Both the MSDF and the MSEP identified the Wetton-Lansdowne area as an important corridor for future development. Partially located in the Metro South East area, and completely within the City of Cape Town's jurisdiction, Lansdowne Road is earmarked as a central link between a proposed metropolitan node in the Metro South East and one of the three existing metropolitan nodes in the Cape Metropolitan Area, the Claremont/Wynberg node. (CMC 1996,1997)

Map: Wetton-Lansdowne linked to the MSEP
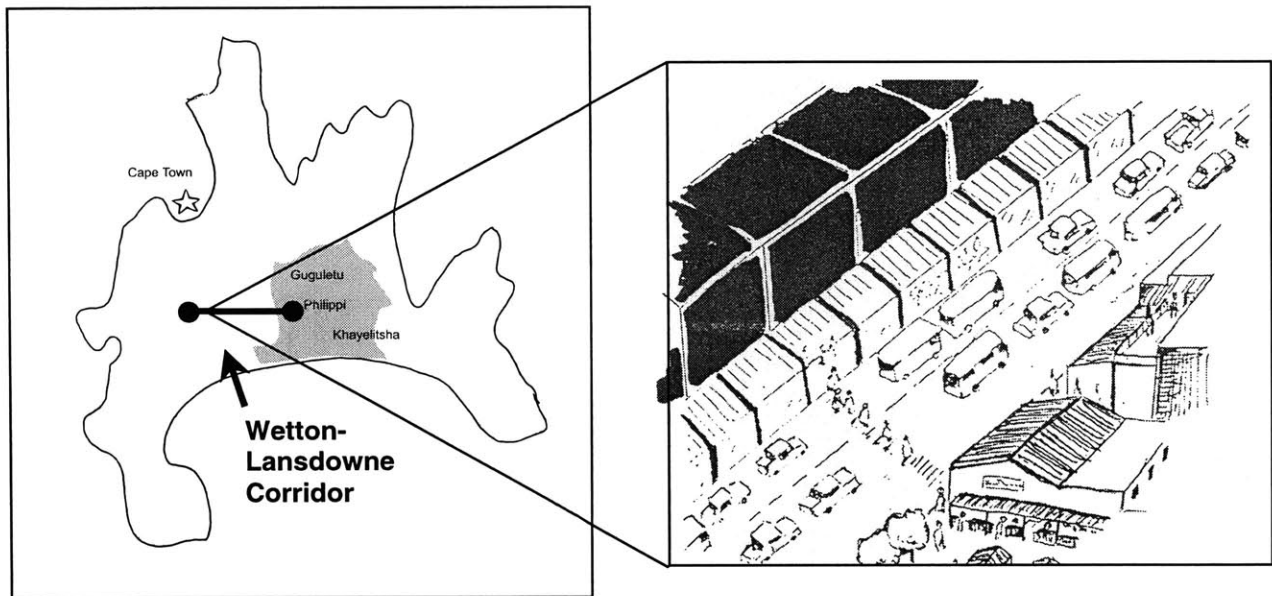
This transportation route is anticipated to be a central lifeline for future development in the Black townships. Both the CMC and the City of Cape Town propose Lansdowne Road to be a corridor of metropolitan significance, providing activities such as shopping, schooling, trading, and recreation. In less than 8.5 miles, (13.3 kilometers in length), 15 communities touch Lansdowne Road, with the majority being economically disadvantaged, and are anticipated to take advantage of new services and employment opportunities along the corridor. (City of Cape Town 1997: 1)

In 1996, the Wetton-Lansdowne corridor was identified as a priority project for the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), receiving 35 million Rand from

the National Department of Transport. The City of Cape Town's Town Planning Branch was selected to coordinate the project, which allocated 2.2 million of the 35 million Rand to pay for planning support and services. (City of Cape Town 1997: 2) The Town Planners opted for a two-prong planning approach. The first was to craft the *Overall Development Framework*, which included a spatial development plan and the second was to establish an *Implementation Programme* to help secure funds and manage implementation. While the spatial development plan initiated the projects, both efforts are now running concurrently, with the Implementation Plan feeding off of projects identified through development planning. (City of Cape Town 1997: 4)

The overarching goals defining both the Development Framework and the Implementation Programme are to:

- Bring jobs, facilities and amenities to disadvantaged areas
- Focus development along Lansdowne Road to improve access from adjacent neighborhoods to facilities.
- Improve public transportation and other services to increase economic activity and decrease travel times to jobs
- Promote mixed use and high density development, including medium density housing.
- To improve municipal efficiency through improved service delivery

Local initiatives and other municipal efforts in the vicinity of the road have also been viewed as contributors to the corridor planning effort. And so by 1997, the Implementation Programme had contributed to a third of the monies spent on project implementation in the area. Such monies were used to upgrade intersections and pedestrian crossings on Lansdowne Road; construct the Ikewezi Community Centre in Guguletu (a township just north of Lansdowne); and build a multi-purpose hall in Phillipi (the location of the future metropolitan node). (City of Cape Town 1997: 3-4)
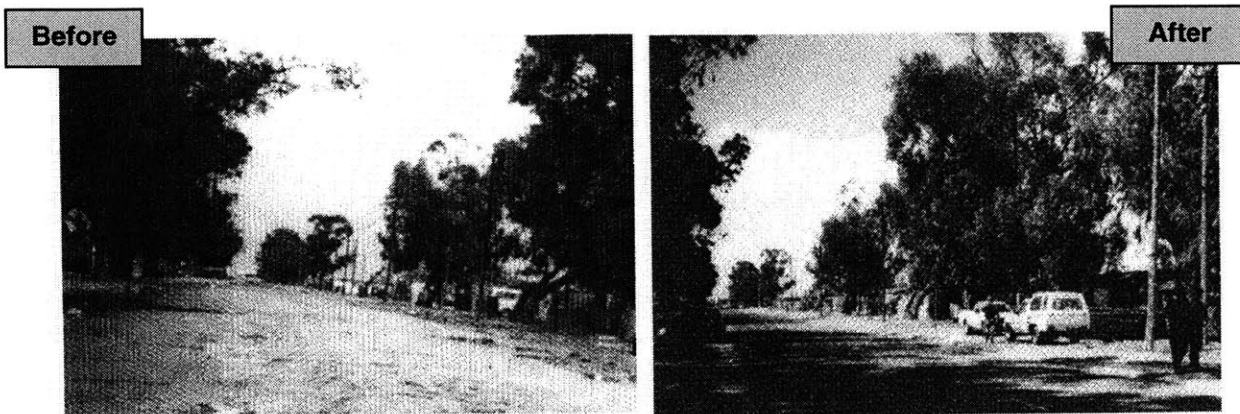
Source: City of Cape Town, Wetton-Lansdowne Newsletter, December 1997

Like the Metro South East Plan, the Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Plan, incorporated a public involvement program as part of the planning and development exercises. The two planning efforts are quite different is size and scope, however. The MSEP is a sub-regional framework plan with a 20-year vision, while the Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Plan has a strong emphasis on project design and implementation in five year increments. Collaborating with communities on the Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Plan is in some ways more challenging than the MSEP, since the citizens will be able to recognize how particular planning strategies will impact them directly. More communities will therefore, want to participate more intensively in the process.

Valuing Public Involvement Differently
When the Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Plan was originally initiated in 1996, the project did not include a public involvement program as part of the overall planning strategy. Anine Trumplemann, a new Town Planner for the City of Cape Town at the time, persuaded the City that public involvement was necessary, considering the localized nature of the planning. After the scope and budget were revised, 650,000 Rand out of the 2.2 million Rand dedicated for planning were allocated for public involvement activities.[31]

At the onset of the project, the City initiated a public workshop, where 150 community representatives (from organized groups), local politicians, and NGOs shared a strong interest and commitment in planning with the City. Following the workshop, the City used newsletters, radio spots and meetings with organized groups to share information and solicit comments on strategies. The tone shared in newsletters and other documents regarding the City's willingness to involve the community however, starkly contrasted the comments shared during a private interview with Trumplemann during the Summer of 1998. Trumplemann described that the "We [the City] determine what issues are worthy of community interest and debate." In her experience however, not much information has been considered to be of community interest. Even issues such as whether Lansdowne Road, which touches 15 communities should be widened to six-lanes. In response, Trumplemann explained that communities will have opportunities to raise issues and concerns when specific projects are undergoing their own specific planning. Trumplemann's view, in other words, implied that process and project expediency supersedes a contributory public involvement program.

Using Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Participation, I have graphed where Trumplemann's desired outcome for the City's public involvement efforts.

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[31] Interview, Anine Trumplemann, City of Cape Town, Summer 1998

Figure 2-3: Trumplemann's Desired Outcome of Public Involvement Efforts
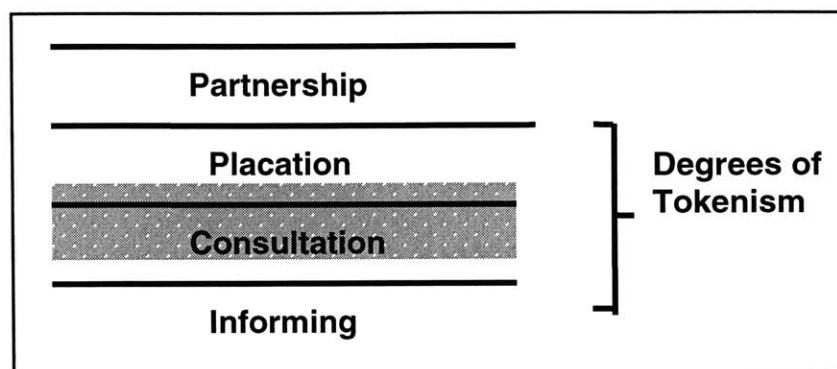
While the City may be focused on service delivery, not allowing open dialogue on many planning-related issues, implies that projects will move forward without community consent. "The City will focus on organized groups at the broad level of planning and will then focus on impacted groups at the project level," shared Trumplemann. In other words, the general public will react to City initiatives and projects as they come down the pipe. The Wetton-Lansdowne involvement efforts, therefore places communities more into a reactionary than proactive and collaborative stance. This implies that the process is more at the information-sharing or consultation levels (at best) on Arnstein's ladder. However, when comparing this point with a statement Trumplemann shared earlier, that the "City's public involvement is more than public consultation or public information," it reveals an inconsistency between Trumplemann's intended principles and the realities of Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Project. This has not gone unnoticed, however. One Ward Councillor, who was participating in a public meeting for the project, shared that "development must not divide the communities. We still need greater consultation."

Targeting Stakeholders
At the first City workshop, the majority of group representatives advised the City to work primarily with existing organizations rather than work with the traditionally excluded voices. The City followed their recommendations, relying primarily on Reconstruction and Development forums[32], since "we found RDP forums to be the most important," shared David Gough, Manager of the project. The Metropolitan

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[32] RDP forums were initiated by the national ANC to encourage communities to participate in the reconstruction of their lives and communities. A range of special interests groups in the townships participate in RDP forums.

Development Forum (the City of Cape Town's metropolitan-wide group linked to the local Redevelopment Forums) and civic organizations have also participated at key stages. [33]

While the City revised their participation strategy based on feedback from community representatives, clashes regarding who participates in the process became evident while observing a Wetton-Lansdowne community meeting. Squatter camp[34] representatives protested that the City failed to notify them of their upcoming displacement to make room for a new project.

The Eyes and Ears [and Voice ?] of Government
As part of the public participation program, the City hired community networkers (outreach consultants) to inform community groups and organize representatives to participate in workshops. Networkers also identify who has fallen out of favor with the community and the RDP forums. "More often than not, people were not informing us [the City] when they were officially no longer representing an organization," shared Trumplemann. "We knew when there was a problem and without them [the networkers] we never would have known," Trumplemann added.[35]

Networkers are also used as translators in public meetings, since City staff cannot speak Xhosa. Although many Black Africans can speak English (particularly group representatives) their fluency is not consistently advanced to share well-articulated arguments or concerns about a project. The City's reliance on the networkers/facilitators to translate dialogue is therefore imperative. My observations indicated that accurately translating both emotive words and technical and political "know-how" is quite difficult and requires sensitivity. At two points in the Wetton-Lansdowne public meeting, participants become disgruntled after learning that the networker had not correctly translated their concerns.

Reaching Out But Not Embracing
The City's central public involvement strategy includes public meetings and workshops. While workshops can be used creatively to draw out ideas from a community, most Wetton-Lansdowne workshop participants are personally invited. "Things that get discussed in a workshop, don't reach the people, and those that do

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[33] Interview, David Gough, City of Cape Town, Summer 1998
[34] A squatter camp is an informal settlement living illegally on a vacant land. Squatter camps are common in townships. One NGO reported that almost 80% of the people living in one township are living in squatter communities.
[35] Interview, Anine Trumplemann, City of Cape Town, Summer 1998

attend the meetings come out more blank than ever," shared a high--power community leader.

Public information strategies for Wetton-Lansdowne, which focus on getting the word out, include newsletters, radio shows, the use of information repositories, and telephone hotlines.[36] Such strategies can be particularly useful in communities where infrastructure is in place and people possess the skills to acquire information through different mediums. Within the Wetton-Lansdowne study area, many communities possess high levels of illiteracy (decreasing the usefulness of newsletters and information repositories), high poverty rates, and limited public services (making the phone a much less convenient link). Moreover, information shared to the public must be easy to understand.

Even though the City has dedicated time, energy and resources to reach out to communities, the constraints inherent in the Black Townships limited many of the City's proactive initiatives.

The Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor project is currently in full swing, as project implementation is consecutively following spatial planning and resource allocation. As planning and implementation continue, government planners and engineers are likely to only feel the small ripples of a larger wave of community contentiousness. Interviews with the general public spoke of the retribution likely to be sought by those community leaders who take power to feed their own agendas. "Decisions made without consulting the communities will start conflicts, which will sometimes be physical," shared one member of the public in one township. "People need to talk to us before a project gets built." Based on the information presented in this case, the Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Project will likely face additional controversy in the future.

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[36] Interview, David Gough, City of Cape Town, Summer 1998

Concluding Thoughts on the Cases

While these two cases are not the only government-led initiatives in the townships, they are the most highly visible cases that used public involvement as a means of deriving solutions. The cases illustrate how efforts to involve communities have been limited by inconsistent government actions, streamlined efforts that undermined involvement objectives, and a wide range of barriers found in the townships themselves. While government planners and managers have expressed frustration, anxiety and disappointment, most found limitations with the Black African community as the largest obstacle for meaningful participation. These cases highlight however, that governments have indeed played in a role in limiting the effectiveness of their programs. Specific outreach tools (such as newsletters) and a heavily curtailed involvement strategy have limited Black Africans in articulating the range of concerns and ideas present in the townships.

The next chapter summarizes the public involvement assessment I conducted in Cape Town to derive additional answers on government outreach efforts, and learn more about what planners are facing as they conduct public involvement activities for township redevelopment.

Chapter 4

Personal Assessment of Cape Town Public Involvement

Chapter 4 provides an assessment on public involvement practice in the Black townships in general, drawing on four recent planning projects[37] – two of which were described in Chapter 3. In addition to the four planning projects, interviews with planners, decision-makers, politicians, Non Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, and the general public, were used to assess the effectiveness of government public involvement and identify how to improve outreach efforts.

Using my experience as a public involvement consultant in the United States, I conducted similar research in Cape Town as I did for projects domestically. Given the considerable political, cultural and social differences between the two countries however, I approached my research anthropologically – focusing on observing and learning – rather than as an advocate for change. My findings however, do provide additional insights on the problems experienced in the two case studies described in Chapter 3.

In initiating the assessment, I focused on learning more about the relationship between government and the organized community structures, which are used almost exclusively to provide the range of community perspectives in planning. I therefore conducted an assessment on government public involvement initiatives in addition to an assessment on organized community groups.

Government's Public Involvement Initiatives

To learn more about how local governments are involving Black African communities in participatory planning, I conducted an internal assessment with the following questions in mind:

- Are local/regional governments philosophically aligned with the principles of public involvement? If so, what are they?
- Are governments involving Black Africans in planning, and if so, to what degree?
- What are the process tools governments use to involve Black Africans in planning?

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[37] The four planning projects are the Metro South East Plan, the Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Project, the Khayelitsha Spatial Framework Plan, and the Khayelitsha Strategic Management Plan.

- How are Black African issues translated into planning strategies?
- How much time and money are spent on public involvement?
- Who conducts the public involvement (government or consultants)?
- Are governments pleased with the outcome?

To answer these questions, I: interviewed planners, managers, and two planning directors who work for the Cape Metropolitan Council, the Tygerberg Municipality and the City of Cape Town; reviewed draft, interim and final plans to identify modifications based on external stakeholder comments; interviewed planning and public involvement consultants; examined budgets and timelines; participated in public meetings; attended internal meetings; and reviewed public information materials.

One of the initial areas of research was to identify how planners and decision-makers view public involvement in the context of planning. Through my analysis, I found that government planners, managers, and administrators, in fact question the value and legitimacy of public involvement, and raised the following concerns:

- **Time.** Public involvement can be very time consuming – especially recognizing that communities (and the media) are pushing for the immediate delivery of services. "Just get something done," is heard regularly within communities who lack proper housing, basic services and safe transportation options.

- **Value for money.** For several projects, the out-of-pocket costs for public involvement has been substantial. Finances were allocated for public involvement with the anticipation that valuable information would be solicited from the community. Many planners explained however, that they heard the same issues, concerns and needs regardless of the type of project. Moreover, planners found that Black Africans only express their needs for today and not for the future, which is necessary when developing a long-term vision. "These people don't relate to what you want," explained one manager. Frustrations with limited responses has led planners to question the value and costs of public involvement.

- **Brainstorming "community needs" raises expectations.** Community exercises during public meetings that identified "current needs" has led many participants to believe their needs would be met in an unrealistic time-frame. Planners' shared their frustration that meeting participants were unwilling to listen to the constraints that bind immediate service delivery, such as funding shortages.

- **Public involvement reduces the professional role of planners.** "Planners are taking instructions from the community rather then providing a professional service," shared one planner. This and many other comments indicated a tension between the traditional role of planning and the emerging role of public

involvement. Planners also shared that public involvement has bound the role of a planner to simply reiterating suggestions rather than providing expertise and vision.

- **Too many other constraints exist to effectively and meaningfully work with disadvantaged communities.** Even when time and money were dedicated to involve communities, planners were confronted with constraints that limited, if not eliminated, their ability to share and solicit information. These constraints included: an inability to speak the local African language (Xhosa); Xhosa traditions (men and elders speaking on behalf of others); low literacy rates; political conflicts within communities, among Councillors, and between political groups; gatekeepers who refuse to share information with the broader community; the high number of people to involve; and concerns for personal safety.

Understandably, the concerns listed above has led planners -- who are relatively new to the practice of public involvement -- to question the merits of this emerging field. It is also quite likely that these concerns explain why certain planners and consultants have questioned governments' true commitment to inclusionary planning. Although I found commitments to public involvement in writing (such as in newsletters and public meeting minutes), some government staff indicated that government <u>actions</u> during key stages discredited process legitimacy. Broad examples of government actions (or lack of action) that brought government intentions into question include:

- Planners limited community discussions on planning issues – even on issues that could be greatly impact communities.

- Plans were significantly modified during the final planning stage with no additional consultation to the stakeholders and the public, who previously contributed to the plan's content.

- Consultants often conducted too much of the public involvement process – removing crucial government-community interaction, relationship and skill building opportunities, and government accountability.

In addition to learning what actions prompted government efforts to be questioned, I reviewed the public involvement programs of seven planning projects, which were implemented over the past eight years. Overall, I found consistencies in the principles that guided the public involvement strategies.

Principles Guiding Public Involvement Strategies

Principle 1 – Existing community structures and particular I&APs (Interested and Affected Parties) provide the "community" perspective on planning and development

projects. Interviews with key staff reinforced that the term "community" in most cases is actually organized community groups, not the general public. All projects relied on community groups, such as RDP forums, community development forums and SANCO, to share information and solicit input.

Principle 2 – Councillors play a key role in disseminating information to his/her constituents. Since councillors are elected representatives of the community, they should facilitate discussions with his/her particular ward.

Principle 3 – Streamline the public process while maintaining the broadest possible inclusion of stakeholders. While this has been partially achieved using community structures and Councillors (Principles 1 and 2), the issues of time and cost have weighed heavily when crafting public involvement strategies. In some instances, this meant limiting who would be consulted; in others it meant what information would be open for discussion. "We decided that issue was not open for public debate," explained one Town Planner, is an example of the decisions planners are making.

Whether local government have legitimately involved "communities" on the appropriate issues will be determined once projects reach implementation. If not, citizens may (as already witnessed on some development projects) express frustration, anger and even go to great lengths to stall or halt project development.

In light of these principles, I uncovered successful techniques governments have used to work closely with, and learn more about, Black Africans. Some of the techniques I purposely highlighted do not fit within the principles listed above

Effective Public Involvement Techniques

- One government hired people living in particular townships to share information with their neighbors. Community representatives were also selected translate information into Xhosa at public workshops and explain hard-to-understand planning terms in everyday language.

- A consultant, who is white, recognized racial tensions and went out of his way to establish personal relationships. He, for example, attended numerous evening township meetings and drove people to their homes after the meetings. He later relied on his new relationships when he needed to consult and inform the community -- moving beyond community structures to reach the broad public.

- The same consultant hired Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) to share information and solicit community feedback. He selected who was to work as CLOs rather then

allow the community groups to take over the selection process. He found CLOs to be particularly effective in informal settlements, where the areas are densely populated and information travels easily and quickly. In these areas, CLOs walked from settlement to settlement, sharing information.

- Another consultant met with people individually prior to workshops to share information in more detail. "Information needs to be explained carefully and slowly," he shared. The consultant found that setting time aside to meet with people in this capacity has improved their capability to understand complex information and provide useful feedback.

- Buffaloes are one effective information-sharing tool that one consultant has used to disseminate information to the general public. Buffaloes are cars or vans equipped with a loud speaker or mega-phone. The driver announces project information through the speaker while driving through main and side streets of the townships. The consultant described this method as a safe and inexpensive approach to information sharing. He did emphasize first informing community groups before conducting this type of outreach.

- Schools have also been used as a forum for information sharing. "Kids have a different status; they are the hope of the future," explained one interviewee. For one project, leaflets were distributed to science teachers, who then explained the information to the children.

Beyond these conclusions I drew from the government assessment, I found the work of Cape Town planners to be extraordinarily intense and stressful. Planners' personal aspirations to improve lives are easily dissolved by political fingerpointing, community controversy and limited funds. I realized that as much as planners wanted suggestions on how to improve their strategies, they needed to hear what current work deserves to be applauded.

The second component of the assessment was learning more about organized community groups in the townships. Since governments are referring to community groups to represent the broad community, I was interested in community groups' effectiveness in working with local governments and the public.

Organized Community Groups

For nearly two months, I focused on learning more about the organized community groups in the Black townships today and their involvement in government-initiated township redevelopment efforts. Since time was limited, I targeted my assessment to three Black townships: Gugeletu, Phillipi, and Khayletshia. These townships were selected since they have undergone significant planning during the past eight years. Through this assessment, I intended on learning more about:

- The dynamics of community structures
- How information flows through the structures
- Whether information is indeed shared with the general public
- The perception of local governments and their willingness to involve them in planning
- How Black Africans describe their lives today and what they want their lives and communities to look tomorrow
- What Black Africans believe to be the opportunities and challenges for building a new future, and whether they want to be involved in developing this future
- Acquire information and what is the accuracy of this information

To answer these and other questions, I: interviewed key community leaders active with NGOs and Community Based Organizations; held small group (informal) meetings with randomly selected members of the townships; participated in adult education classes; interviewed educators; attended a community rally; interviewed City Councillors[38]; and reviewed materials written by local groups and organizations.

At first glance, community groups appeared to provide easy access to the community: they claim to invite representation from varying interests, they meet regularly, and encourage information sharing with the general public. Moreover, local government has been <u>firmly</u> advised by these community leaders that it is necessary and politically advisable to formally involve these structures. The findings of my assessment uncovered more as to why governments' have experienced problems when they conducted their outreach.

Ward Councillors[39]
An important development after the end of apartheid was the ability for Black townships to elect their own Ward Councillors. In the Tygerberg jurisdiction for

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[38] Community elected decision-makers, who work with government's administrative bodies on planning and policy development.
[39] For the purposes of this thesis, Ward Councillors are included as a community structure since some government planners view them as an outreach to disseminate information to constituents.

example, there are 44 wards, 21 of which are in Khayletshia, the largest black township in Tygerberg. Ward Councillors are an essential part of the local politics: they meet regularly to discuss and debate policy and political issues and fight for resource allocations. All Ward Councillors under each municipality meet as part of the jurisdiction's city council. The City of Cape Town has a City Council as does the City of Tygerberg.[40]

Many Black Africans interviewed view Councillor responsibilities as extending to informing and involving constituents. Considering that each Councillor has, on average, 6,000 constituents with some upwards to 15,000 people, this could be considered a quite precarious task. Councillors presently discuss planning issues with the RDP Forums, SANCO branches, and political party branches located within his/her ward.

More often than not, community stakeholders expressed frustration with the Ward Councillors. "Councillors have been particularly bad at consulting the community." Another interviewee who lives in Khayelitsha, explained that Councillors come to meetings with the position of "Now hear me, we are going to do this. They don't want to discuss the project, they just want people to agree with it." These and other comments indicate that many in the community specifically blame Councillors as the first roadblock for information sharing. "We blame our leadership; they are fighting with the government. They have a strong political agenda so we hear information on a train rather than from our Councillor."

Councillors on the other hand, have expressed their frustration in trying to discuss information with community groups. One Councillor explained that representatives within RDP forums were previously vying for the Councillor position so it's common for them to try to sabotage a Councillor's effort. "When I go back, people tell me you're not accountable." This same Councillor explained that although some say this just to hurt his credibility, others are raising a valid point. Pressure to provide their constituents with projects they want and need, entice Councillors to create new answers. "A Councillor can say, well, we have this project but the reason why we didn't get this other one is because the planning has not been done yet -- even though this is not always a legitimate answer."

When asked how they would liked to be helped to improve the dynamics with their constituents, one Councillor recommended that government staff support them by sharing technical information. "It would greatly help if engineers and planners would come to these meetings to help educate." Staff support would help focus the meetings on the community agenda rather than become sidetracked on political issues.

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[40] Interview Richard Dyantji, Foundation for Contemporary Research, Summer 1998

SANCO:

SANCO (South African National Civic Organization) was visibly active in the later years of apartheid in an effort to publicize and mobilize against civic injustices. SANCO has a regional office in the Western Cape area and branch offices within specific communities and townships. Under each SANCO branch are a number of substructures called Block Committees. Block Committees in turn, are comprised of a number of Street Committees that share and distribute information within most streets in the three townships I studied.
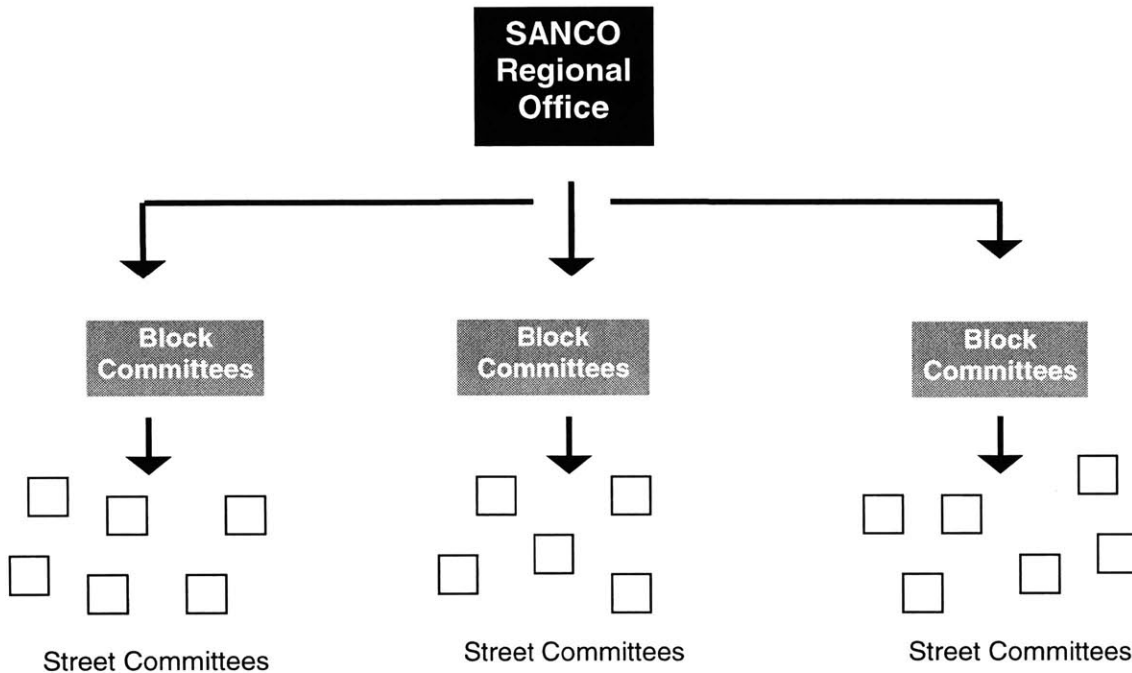
SANCO receives information from Councillors and other sources, which is then intended to trickle down within the substructures. People pay a fee to join SANCO, although it does not assure that people they have a voice in decisions or hear all information.

Interviews from a wide-range of stakeholders, expressed frustration with SANCO's unwillingness to share information and involve the public. "SANCO was once an NGO and held the position that they need to inform the community. But it is now more distanced – information sharing is no longer there," explained one community member. A priest interviewed in Khayelitsha shared his personal frustrations with SANCO. He has found this organization to be a tremendous barrier, "destroying area democracy" and focused exclusively on power. "Information is not getting to the people. People need to know what is going on in their community and these civic organisations are a barrier."

When Councillors meet with organisations like SANCO, interactions are often tense and confrontational. One Councillor shared that he often found SANCO "defending the needs of the community" without acknowledging the work Councillors are attempting to achieve.

RDP Forums:
In 1994, the African National Party created the Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP), a new directive on how to "mobilize all our people and our country's resources toward the final eradication of apartheid and the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future." (ANC 1994: 1) The Programme sought to revise the power- and racial-based inequalities in land reform, water and sanitation, energy and electrification, telecommunications, transport, the environment, health care, and a series of other sectors. Directed from the National government, the Programme's concepts, and respective funding, trickled down through the Provincial level of government to the local level.

In an effort to transform the civic activities from "a largely oppositional mode into a more developmental one," (ANC 1994: 131) the Programme recommended the development of these forums, in which communities would learn how to plan for and implement changes at the grassroots level. Recognizing deficits in the social capital in townships, the Programme recommended capacity-building support and funding.

For Cape Town, the Provincial government established the RDP forums whereby large community meetings were held in the townships. The rules allowed as many RDP forums in a township (or even one a sub-area of a township) as long as each forum represented more than 6,000 people and no more than 15,000.

Representation on the RDP forums came exclusively from already-organized groups, since the Programme determined that they would be the able to speak to a broad range of community issues. To be accredited by the Provincial government, and receive financial assistance and support, RDP Forums first had to demonstrate that the range of interests found in a particular area (among the 15,000) were represented on the forum. Although not all groups agreed to participate, the Province required that groups be at least invited. The re-shuffling of civic groups into RDP forums, was inextricably linked to political lines, since the RDP was an ANC-initiated program. Organizations that philosophically disagreed with the ANC often opted out of the RDP forum. In 1998

however, the majority of organized groups and the public in the Black townships surrounding Cape Town were ANC-affiliated.[41]

Another prerequisite to be accredited was that the general public had to be invited regularly to public meetings to allow open dialogue. The concept of RDP forums were received warmly in most area townships since many Black Africans saw RDP forums as an opportunity to work in concert with other fellow Africans to improve their quality of life. Moreover, local governments recognised the RDP forums as a streamlined approach to working with community groups.[42]

A year or so after the RDPs were established, political transitions at the provincial level eliminated funding and Provincial government oversight of the RDP forums. "It's frustrating because we don't have anyone assisting the RDP forums now," explained a representative with the Department of Trade, Industry and Tourism (previously known as the Department of Economic Affairs). With resources now eliminated to monitor RDP forums, the Department is left wondering how well they are representing broad community interests. "RDP forums don't know what they should be doing; their roles have not been clarified. They also have enormous problems functioning because of the lack of funding and most members are from disadvantaged backgrounds."

At public meetings, discussions focus more on political agendas and positioning than sharing and discussing community issues. One member of an RDP forum in Khayelitsha explained that "You don't actually get community views and feelings using the forums. People will look at a proposal and think, will this upset power?" Others interviewed explained that information often doesn't move beyond those on the Executive Committee. Knowledge is considered a valuable commodity, and in some cases information is not shared to benefit a select few.

These dynamics make RDP forums a difficult setting to reach consensus as well as to effectively involve the broader public in community issues. Furthering their institutional complexity is the fluidity of its leaders. Leadership changes quickly and swiftly, making RDP representation on planning projects unstable. It is common for planning processes to proceed without the proper RDP representatives in place. Once discovered, the process is slowed, often stalled, until the appropriate RDP representatives are participating.

Several government officials and planners moreover, expressed the paralysis they feel with the RDP forums, referring to them as gatekeepers of public information. "Access to power is significant and often people exploit it," shared David Shandler, public participation consultant for the MSEP. RDP forums have been criticized for clogging

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[41] Interview, Lisa-Ann Hosking, previous RDP Coordinator, Summer 1998
[42] Interview, Lisa-Ann Hosking, previous RDP Coordinator, Summer 1998

the funnel of public dialogue. "If you don't work with the gatekeepers they will find a way to trash your project and destroy its credibility."

Illustration 3-2 RDP Forums New Role in Facilitating Dialogue

Local Governments in Cape Town

Information funneled down to the
townships through
the RDPs

?   ?   ?

?

General public receives little project information and has few or no opportunities to participate
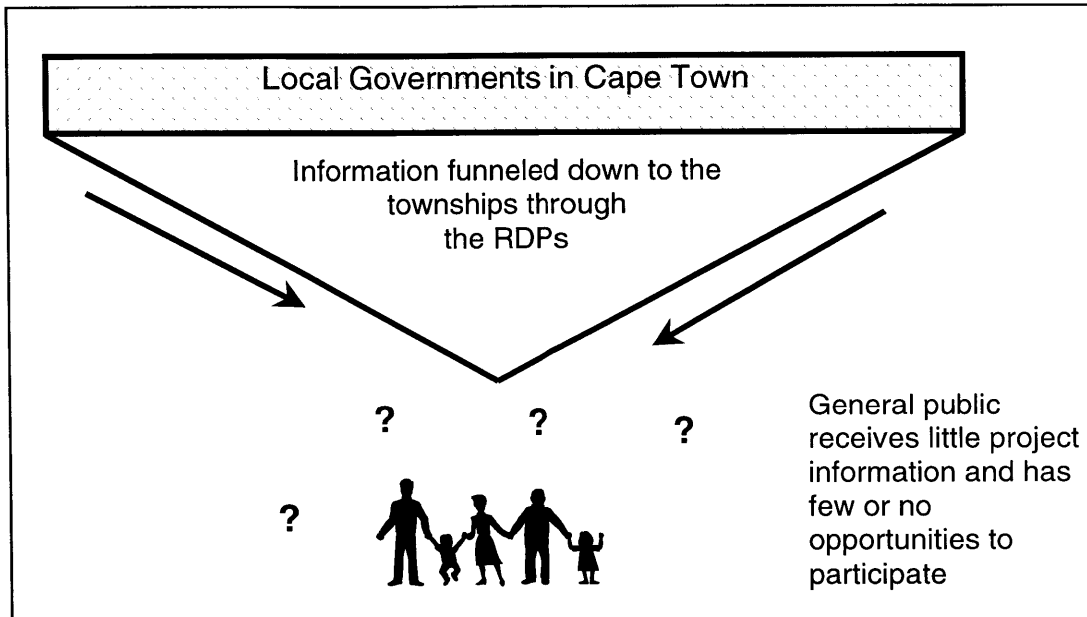
When asked what could be done to improve the RDP forums, several stakeholders responded that funding and proper training is instrumental in order for them to become well functioning community structures. One Ward Councillor believes that RDP forums need a permanent meeting place, an address to receive information through mail, and training. Others however, were less positive when discussing the value of RDP forums. Some believe that RDP forums are corrupt and are purely surviving to take advantage of the power these structures provide. One NGO representative, who works closely with a handful of RDP forums, explained that "Government cannot use RDP forums as 'one-stop shopping'. Very few are there for the good of the community."

Street Committees:
Street Committees are formed by residents living on particular streets in an effort to share and discuss neighborhood and community issues. All Committees are either linked to RDP forums or SANCO, which is where they are to receive information on planning projects. I found Committees to be active within significant sections of the three townships. Committees operate by election, where the Committee on each street determines the number of positions on the Committee, the length of the meetings, and

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the frequency of the meetings. Although the intent of Street Committees, especially from a public involvement perspective is good in theory (a localized public forum), several interviewed do not find them useful. While information from SANCO and the RDP forums do sometimes trickle down to the Committees, "people don't know how dated or accurate the information is," explained one community member.

Members of Street Committees, who were interviewed, shared that their committee is more focused on addressing neighborhood quarrels and are not well attended. Members of other Street Committees disagreed however, mentioning that information is shared from their respective SANCO branch or RDP forum but "they are never ask us how we feel about the ideas or issues." Almost all local residents interviewed agreed that Street Committees need training. "They don't play their role adequately. They point fingers at each other; there is no focus." Street meetings were also criticized for not being inclusive. One young woman explained that she was kicked out of a meeting because she was considered too young to attend. Another explained that "they want to know who you are before you can share your opinions."

Reflections on Community Structures:
Based on interviews with a wide range of internal (local government) and external stakeholders, some shared that certain community structures have threatened governments into using their communication channels and forums to share and discuss information or face project delays[43]. Moreover, structures such as RDP forums have earned a reputation as "gatekeepers," purposely withholding information and stopping projects if the appropriate (and often changing) representatives were not consulted. Many interviewed referred to the leaders of such groups as "warlords."

The internal political and power struggles, seem far from stabilizing, however. *Newsweek* reported in March of 1999, that a growing political faction, the United Democratic Movement, killed an ANC Ward Councillor Zwelinzima Hlazo in Nyanga, a township in the Metro South East, setting off a series of politically-motivated murders throughout the townships. (Newsweek 1999: 41) Cape Town planners and decision-makers should interpret this as a further example of political motivation superseding other moral judgments, and must be considered when determining how best to work collaboratively with township communities.

Since it was very clear that the government-community group dynamic was failing to engage the general public, the next section focuses on resident perspectives government's public involvement efforts. The comments shared in this next section came specifically from Black Africans that are not involved in any community groups in

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[43] Some consultants shared that when RDP forums are not used, RDP representatives make sure other community groups to refuse to participate in the planning process.

order to learn what the general public is learning. To find Black Africans that fit this criterion, I hired one Black African, Patrick, to select residents who live in one of the three townships, to meet informally with me during weekends. Patrick also translated conversations between English and Xhosa. I also met with women empowerment groups and one adult education class.

Perspectives from the General Public

Group interviews, private interviews, and group exercises uncovered the following issues, which indicated how the general public views government and their outreach efforts:

The Role of Local Government: Several interviewed were unaware of local government within the Cape Metropolitan Area. In fact a few expressed that the only government they were aware of is the national government. Others interviewed were aware of local governments but found them to be operating exclusively without the interests of the communities. What I found to be most interesting to observe however, was their sense of complete disconnect from all the hard work local governments are conducting to provide basic services for these communities because not enough information was reaching the public.

Involvement by the General Public: Almost all interviewees that were aware of planning and development projects, shared that they learned information through word-of-mouth (such as on trains, on the street, or in a taxi). They also shared that the general public is generally not invited to participate in public meetings. "Only representatives are invited to meetings – not the public, not the youth," explained one local resident from Khayelitsha.

The Value of Public Meetings: A few interviewees that have attended some meetings explained that only a few people provide input. Information governments shared, some explained, is often too technical to provide comments. One interviewee, who lives in the Phillipi area, explained that it's difficult to understand information at public meetings because it was "explained too quickly and the map was difficult to understand." It was also clear to him that the meeting was geared toward people that have been a part of the process from inception since a lot of the content required more background information to make sense.

Frustration with Community Groups: Most shared their frustration with the existing community groups, which are limiting the communication between the public and government. "We blame our leadership," share one woman from Khayletshia, who has been unaware of plans to improve the center of the township. Others became angry in group discussions when others shared information they were unaware of. At the end of

group meetings, people traded addresses to meet in the future and continue sharing information.

Since community interviews identified a strong desire from the general public to be involved in planning discussions, I creating exercises with two groups to gather their concepts of community visions.


Community Visions
Interestingly, community visions were not easily extracted from the public. Rather, I found that I had to somehow equally participate by drawing or telling a story before they shared their ideas. In one meeting, I was first asked to participate in an African dance (yes, people did laugh at me) before people felt comfortable to sit down and focus. I asked people to share me their 20 year vision in one of several ways: 1) draw their ideas on a blank piece of paper; 2) cut out pictures in magazines and arrange them on a paper to show their relationship to one another; 3) answer a range of questions, such as: what would you like your community to look like in 20 years; how would you like to participate to make sure your ideas happen?; and what do you like about your community now that you don't want to change?

Not only were the responses beautiful and inspirational, they were filled with ideas that could have both spatial planning and policy implications. One simple example, is the proximity of police and health facilities in the townships. In addition to building new police and health facilities, some women suggested roving health vehicles to help people that currently live long distances from the nearest doctor. I watched women draw ideas of a new future for themselves, their families and their community. On the following pages are just three of their drawings along with the corresponding answers to the questions listed above:

1) What would you like your community to look like in 20 years?

I would like to have big parks for children; clinics near train stations; everybody having a job; school for children and adults; and a place for old people and disabled children. I don't like to see squatter camps in Khayelitsha. We need peace work in our community, more doctors in our clinics and also more nurses.
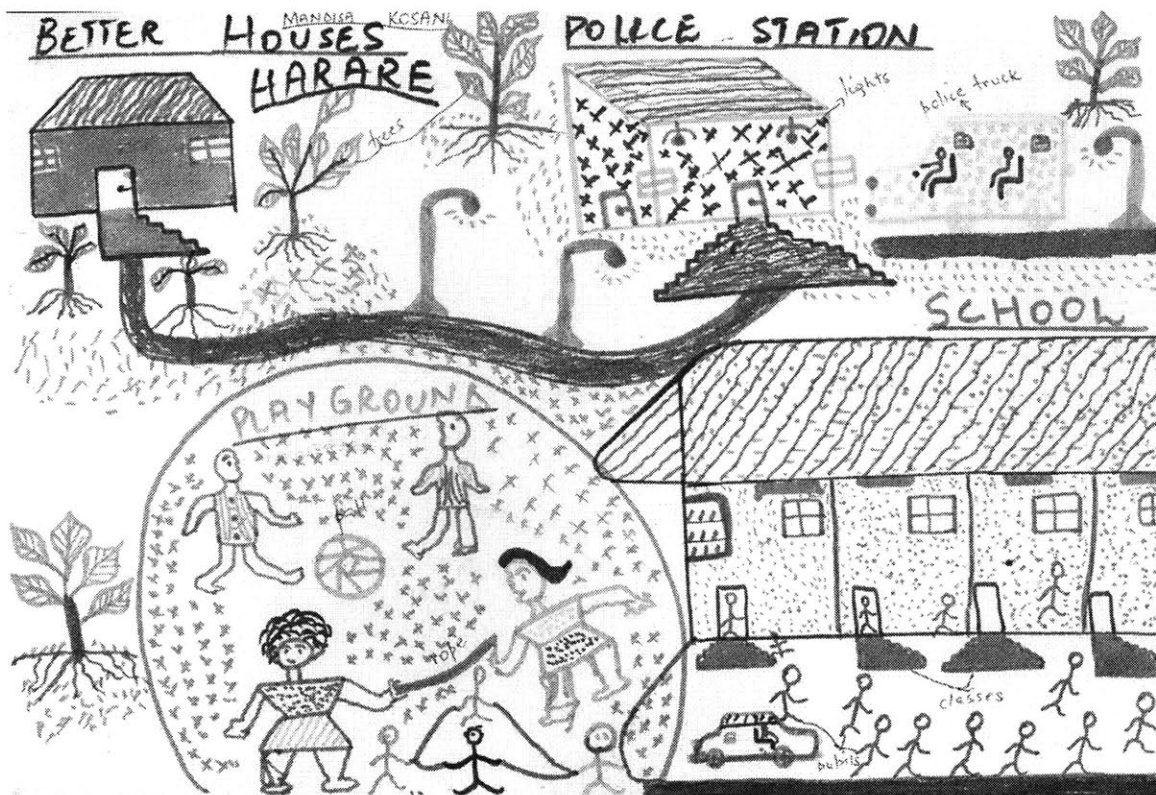
How would you like to participate to make sure your ideas happen?

I will. I will participate when they call a meeting and ask what we want but we did not have a meeting like that.

What do you like about your community that you don't want changed?

The police stations are closer and must stay like that. The clinics are also closer too. Everyone is allowed to vote

2) What would you like your community to look like in 20 years?

For all the squatter camps to be converted into brick houses; for all Khayelitsha areas with electricity; better sewerage in all areas -- no bucket system; more clinics and hospitals with better service; employment opportunities; less crime rate, more security and more police; no more education crisis.
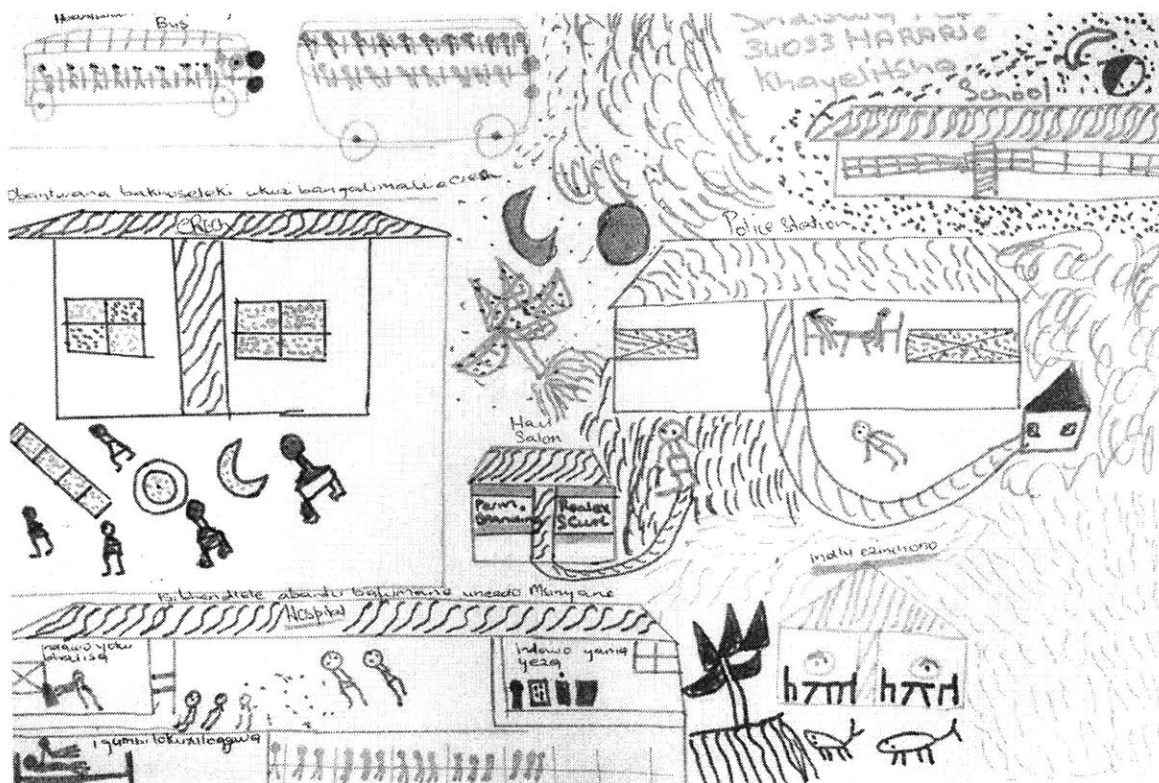
How would you like to participate to make sure your ideas happen?

To attend development and leadership courses and implement what we have learned in our communities. Cooperation with government structures, civics, and street committees.

What do you like about your community that you don't want changed?

The upgrading of roads; that there are peace-workers and security guards in our communities; to be involved in elections -- to be voters.

3) What would you like your community to look like in 20 years?

Houses with more than two rooms -- we need six rooms; bigger yards to have a garden to grow vegetables and flowers; new schools with a maximum of 20 children per class room; playing fields in each section of Khayelitshia that are secure.
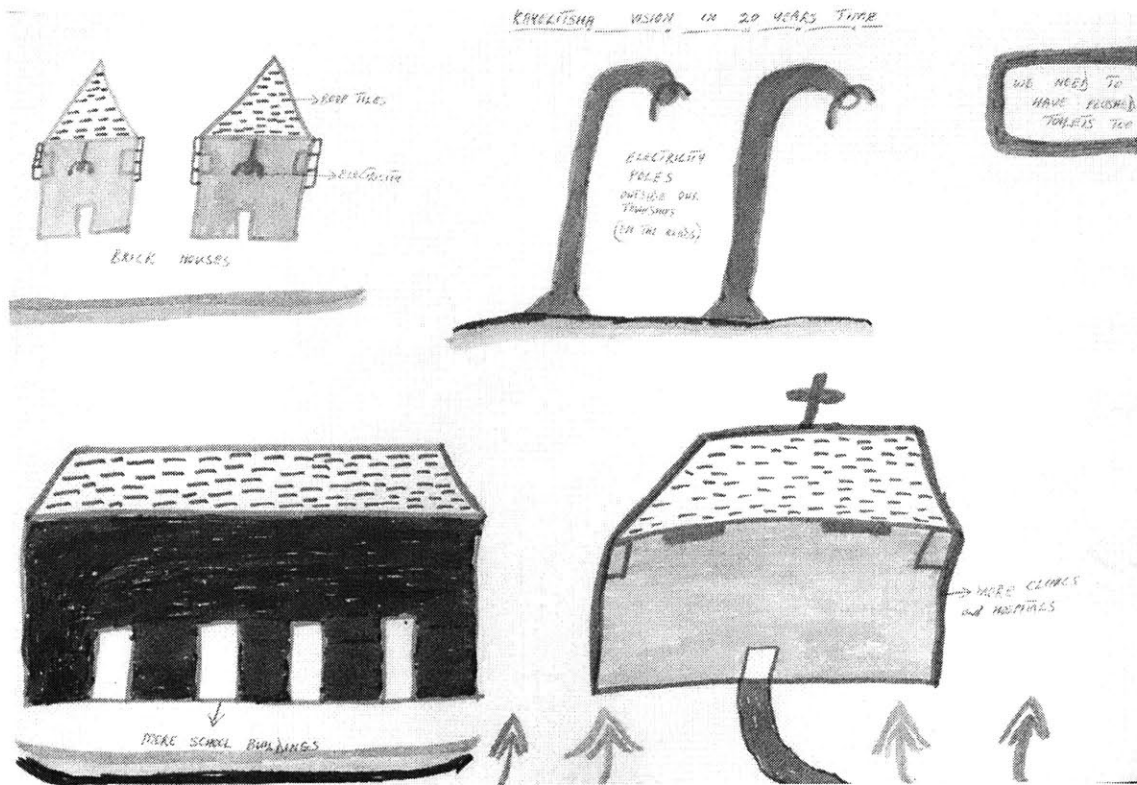
How would you like to participate to make sure your ideas happen?

Encourage that we all work together as a community and as women. Whatever we have learned we must share it with other people. There first must be trust in the community.

What do you like about your community that you don't want changed?

There is nothing good at all but at least we are given a chance to vote. We can relate to white people as human beings.

The richness of information I uncovered through these exercises reveal opportunities for local governments to learn from, and work with the Black African community – particularly the general public. Not only was I impressed by the sophistication of some ideas and touched by the emotions shared, these exercises indicate that Black Africans have very clear ideas about their environment. The exercises also highlighted a few important ingredients for effective collaboration, which is helpful when thinking through how to empower communities in the short- and long-term. Asking people what they like about their community uncovers what is valued and encourages a public declaration of a community's admirable qualities. Moreover, answers to this question assist planners in deciphering what to "redevelop" and what to preserve.

In conclusion, my experiences with Black Africans and local government planners, taught me that government strategies of "targeting" stakeholders will continue to exacerbate power struggles at the community level -- many of which will go unnoticed by planners. Moreover, basic project information is failing to reach the general public. Colorful newsletters are simply not read by people who would be equally impacted in projects as RDP members. Even more, Black Africans lumped in the category of the general public, shared a strong interest in learning about and participating in planning projects. What is now required is local governments to try new approaches and creatively involve the general public in conversations.

Chapter 5

There Are Lessons We Can All Learn

Reflecting on my aspirations to understand how South African planners are working with communities of color, I did not anticipate being so impressed by the challenges both planners and communities face on a daily basis. Political transformation, dynamic and polarized communities, extreme poverty, and cultural issues, are simply redefining how national objectives of empowering disadvantaged communities are articulated at the local level. (ANC 1994: 133) While the National ANC government developed policies condoning Black African participation in the "reconstruction" of their communities, two fundamental objectives – government-community collaboration and the ability to provide service delivery – seem to be conflicting at the local level.

Obstacles to Sharing Power: The Map Leading to This Conclusion

Since evaluating public involvement efforts is largely a value-laden exercise, I relied on the theoretical base of two public involvement practitioners that worked on the two projects to measure whether their involvement efforts are meeting their own theoretical objectives. I believe this type of measurement to be imperative since my personal values and experience implementing public involvement programs in the United States could easily be inserted. Moreover, the cultural, social and political values couched within South Africa's decision-making framework cannot easily be translated into U.S.-based principles of shared power. Sherry Arnstein's "ladder of public anticipation" (Arnstein 1969: 217), was therefore used as the yardstick to measure the sharing of power, since the model was referred to by Shandler's consulting firm (which worked on the Metro South East Plan), and used implicitly by Trumplemann (a Cape Town planner currently working on the Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Plan). Arnstein metaphorically describes the relationship between power and participation using a ladder to illustrate that increasing levels, or rungs, of participation strongly correlates with the dynamic of shared power. A caveat with Arnstein is that she is a U.S. practitioner, who based her model on a stable decision-making framework and the availability of financial resources. Her model therefore cannot apply readily to the South African context, which since 1994, has experienced radical shifts in national, provincial, and local level governance and is constrained by fiscally-constrained budgets.

Arnstein argues that the dynamic of sharing power is greatly influenced by barriers, such as paternalistic behavior, by the "power holders" (government) and conflicts between the "have nots" (communities). (Arnstein 1969: 218) Through my research in

Cape Town, a range of government and communities barriers were identified through the cases and my assessment. Collectively, the barriers are responsible for limiting the sharing of power between local governments and Black townships.

Institutional and Cultural Barriers

The barriers to participation that exist in Cape Town planning are quite unique in and of themselves. Cumulatively, however the barriers have successfully distorted legitimate efforts to share power.

Technical Expertise Over Community Ideas: Several planners and managers shared that professional experts, not communities, should develop plans in order to craft creative solutions that may require government intervention. Several planners also shared that Black Africans are unable to contribute new information in planning discussions, allowing planners to draft the almost all solutions. If that was true, why then have planning efforts, which claimed to be inclusionary, are later criticized by external groups as simply seeking community rubber stamps for approval? The mismatch in perspectives indicates that a professional "observer" should monitor future efforts to pinpoint problems. The tensions between technical arguments and community entitlements in this context however, are further exacerbated by the history of apartheid. For instance, technical justifications could be, or perceived to be, masking racial prejudice.

Race: Years of apartheid have segregated the lives and cultures of whites and Black Africans, and has partially manifested in how white planners and Black African communities groups relate. In Cape Town, the vast majority of planners (both in government and in consulting) are white. Furthermore, in one interview, one manager shared how not all who work for him believe in equality of the races, which hurts how well national reconciliation and reconstruction objectives are expressed at the local level. Furthermore, apartheid has desensitized some planners' ability to recognize the plight of Black African communities. "We don't even notice them (Black squatter camps) anymore, shared one planner casually in a conversation. By no means are all Cape Town planners cradling such ideas or values, but as indicated on the next few pages, some Black Africans are indeed suspicious of whites working in Black townships.

Language: Most (if not all) white planners cannot speak the local African language, Xhosa. While many Black Africans can speak English, many more are limited in how well they can articulate ideas, concerns and arguments. Planners must therefore rely on translators when speaking with Black Africans. At a public meeting in Phillip (a

township), I observed how translators limited open communication between planners and the Black African community. At several times in the meeting, the translator mixed up words or did not share all of the information, angering the community.

Barriers in the Townships

Community Leaders and Groups Lacking Transparency: Interviews with governments, consultants, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and the general public have consistently reported that community leaders and groups are limiting the amount of information exchanged within the broader community. Many Black Africans are frustrated with their community leaders, who refuse to hear community ideas at meetings and share information from governments after-the-fact. Locally-elected Councillors are also criticized of lacking transparency in order to propel their own political aspirations.

Fluidity of Leadership: Predicaments with community leadership are further exacerbated by the fluidity of community leaders -- often eliminating consistency in community leadership and vision. In planning projects, the fluidity of leadership has extended the length of the process since new leaders had to be brought up to speed. In several cases, new leaders refused to support ideas that were approved by the previous leader.

Outreach Limitations: Low literacy rates are limiting the effectiveness of certain outreach tools such as newsletters, newspaper articles, and even maps. Attempts to share information are curtailed by low levels of infrastructure services in the townships, such as telephones and postal service.

Daily Pressures: Interviews with Black Africans indicate that lengthy travel commutes, long work days, high alcoholism and domestic violence are the realities Black Africans face on a daily basis. The daily pressures of township life therefore limits who is even willing/able to participate.

Barriers Overarching Township Realities

Chieftain Rule Clashing with Democracy: Involving communities in decision-making is a principle founded within the western political ideology of democracy. Democracy in South Africa however, is not seamlessly integrating into the predominant Black African culture in Cape Town -- Xhosa -- which was traditionally led under chieftain rule. While many Africans pledge to the ideologies of political groups – like the ANC – traditional roles and rules still define how leaders, groups, and individuals define themselves with others. Clashes between Chieftain rule and democracy have been

most evident in public meetings, where leaders speak on behalf of the people in the room, although planners are interested to hear ideas and concerns from all participants.

Role of Women: As part of the traditional Xhosa culture, women do not naturally subsume a decision-making or leadership role. During interviews, Xhosa women described how men refuse to listen to the opinions of women in meetings, unless their husbands or fathers presented the issues. Although women's role are slowly changing (mostly in younger generations), government officials that hold public meetings are still unable to hear the concerns of women.

Information gathered from the two cases and my assessment, as summarized above indicate that both practitioners did not meet their original objectives to share a higher degree of power with the Black African communities. The number of barriers and their affect on what, how and when information is shared between governments and Black African communities, successfully limited efforts to collaborate and share power.

Figure 4-1: Comparison of Outcomes: Public Involvement Efforts in Cape Town
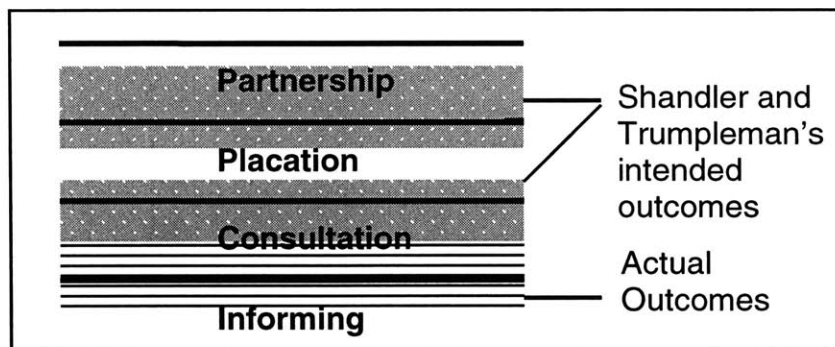
In some of his later writings, Shandler articulated the existence of such barriers and acknowledged their role in limiting power sharing. I believe Shandler would agree with the assessment in this thesis that the level of power given to the Black Africans was lower than what his firm originally intended.

Of the barriers summarized above, the issue of race must be explored and analyzed further, considering its role in past and present politics and planning. I found this to be particularly true since planning discussions and documentation however, failed to surface and address issues pertaining to race and race-related prejudices. The inability or unwillingness for local governments and communities to work through issues

around race will likely limit the value of public involvement as well as South Africa's ability to move toward national reconciliation.

The Role of Race in Collaborative Decision-Making

Perspectives on Race from (white) Government:
Despite a political and legal transformation from apartheid to democracy, planners in predominantly white local governments are reluctant to acknowledge and identify the role of race in planning and decision-making. While the white, conservative National Party brought the issue of race and power unequivocally into focus, local governments today are almost unwilling to discuss its existence. No demographic information on race exists at the CMC's Spatial Planning & Urbanisation Department for example, meaning that no Geographic Information System maps can characterize trends using race as a criteria. An inability to understand racial trends (especially in a country where most communities are still racially-separated), greatly limits planning departments' ability to plan and implement projects accordingly.

During private interviews, local planners and managers almost consistently failed to discuss the role of race in planning, as well as its role today. The views that were shared however, spoke volumes on how race in planning was interpreted. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one manager recognized that not all who work for him believe in equality of the races. Others have completely disconnected and absolved themselves from any responsibility of their work during apartheid. One manager shared, for example, that "we were more like doctors in a state hospital." Meaning that planners were instructed to follow orders regardless of its implications. Another planner however, directly connected the role of the planner with race. Under apartheid, he was unwilling to participate in what he called "apartheid planning," which propelled him to work for causes to eliminate racial discrimination. This planner, who now works for government, sees his role as an avenue to correct past wrongs.

The range of perspectives such as these are important to uncover, since it is not so clear how planners see themselves connected to the issue of race: Do they have a role? Do they have a responsibility? Do they even care? What further complicates any meaningful declaration on this issue is local government's strong connection to apartheid still today. Regardless of planners' own personal beliefs and values, their employer, local government, enforced apartheid objectives. Moreover, many planners under apartheid are still working for local governments today. It is no surprise then, as to why some Black Africans have questioned the legitimacy of local government efforts, and local governments all together. How, then, can public involvement efforts

be viewed as legitimately seeking the best solutions for Black Africans when the intent of local governments are in question.

Perspectives on Race from the (Black African) Community:
Interviews with Black Africans indicate that race is a central, defining issue in their lives – even in the context of planning. Interviews indicated a reluctance to trust people working on township development, who have not intimately experienced the struggle. "We are very suspicious of people coming in – especially if you are not Black." Black Africans also shared that Coloureds would meet the same criticism, since they did not experience the same struggle. To feel comfortable in other words, several of the Black Africans interviewed (especially those who would be classified as the general public) need direct reconciliation over these issues or would rather be addressed by fellow Black Africans. It is likely that both options should be explored further.

Guess Who is the Planner?

Source: City of Cape Town, Wetton-Lansdowne Newsletter, (1997)

Based on information uncovered through this research, minimal dialogue between Black Africans and local governments about the legitimacy of local government has seemed to fail in providing enough assurances. This in turn implies -- which has been supported by several Black African comments -- that local government planning efforts are viewed skeptically from the start.

While the issue of race is indeed relevant in Cape Town planning, the issue of power and how it relates to race is also very pertinent. As shown in this thesis, community groups, which are comprised exclusively of Black Africans, are experiencing new

degrees of power compared to the general public. Collaborating with township communities therefore, cannot be equated to collaborating with community groups. In other words, the issue of power needs to be acknowledged as much as the issue of race. In the future years, it is possible that issues of power will even supercede issues pertaining to race.

I therefore believe that addressing the issues of race and power in planning is a crucial pre-requisite to actual "planning" the Black townships. In other words, I encourage local governments to initiate open dialogue with Black African communities, where both Black Africans and local governments jointly share their personal and professional impacts from apartheid. To no surprise, such deliberations will, by default, delay service delivery since large slots of time would be necessary to move discussions from sharing anger to uncovering concerns about the legitimacy of current efforts. The dialogue should therefore be structured in a way to allow planning issues (such as how can communities and governments provide the appropriate services) be a direct outgrowth of the discussions.

Recommendations for Cape Town Planners

The following sections are suggestions that could assist planners in reaching a higher level of shared power with the Black African community. How these suggestions are used in a way that balances collaboration with improvements in service delivery can only be determined locally – and will likely take many forms depending on the type and nature of each project and community. I therefore encourage the assistance of strong facilitators, whose only agenda is to effectively and efficiently strike a balance between collaboration and timely service delivery.

Before local governments move forward with any type of open dialogue, local governments must first reach agreement on the role of public involvement in planning, and understand their role in improving efforts to share power.

The Role of Public Involvement in Planning
With the assistance of a public involvement practitioner, government planning and engineering departments should uncover concerns (such as how public involvement undermines political and technical perspectives) to allow planners, engineers and decision-makers determine what degrees of involvement seem appropriate. Open discussions will encourage participants to share what they believe to be the benefits and drawbacks of both inclusionary planning and traditional planning approaches. A discussion of this nature will likely uncover different shades of opinions, allowing a public involvement practitioner to emphasize the importance of internal consistency.

Clarification around these issues will allow governments to contemplate how, or if, governments should modify formal institutional mechanisms (such as the government charter) to ensure shifts in philosophy are mirrored in practice.

National objectives define how communities should possess power over the reconstruction of their lives. Moreover, national government has articulated that the new role of government includes involving communities in matters of local governance. Since support is there on a national level, the largest challenge then will be for local governments to establish legitimacy and trust with communities that were purposely abandoned for decades. The only way this will be achieved is for governments to learn how to work collectively with such groups. The following sections below are recommendations I crafted as part of the assessment I conducted in Cape Town. While some suggestions were crafted based my experiences implementing public involvement campaigns in the United States, most techniques are specific to the South African context. Interviews and community exercises primarily identified techniques are appropriate to inform, educate and involve Black African communities today. Moreover, many of the suggestions below will help solve some of the problems and frustration government planners experienced in the previous case studies.

The Role of Governments in Sharing Power

Increase the number of planners who are fluent in Xhosa and understand Xhosa culture and traditions. Low literacy rates in the Black townships increased reliance on verbal communication to share and learn information. Translators are required to intermediate government-community discussions, since the vast majority of government planners cannot speak the local language. Hiring translators, community representatives, and networkers however, should be considered a short-term solution to a long-term need. Government planners speaking directly with Black Africans would help establish relationships and credibility. Planners should begin to take language classes (the University of Cape Town offers courses in Xhosa) and spend more time in the townships. One NGO suggested planners move their offices to the townships to increase their exposure to the Xhosa culture.

Hire and Train Black African Planners. One government planner working in a series of townships shared that "planning with is automatically assumed to be planning for when it is conducted by all white planners." Hiring African planners will not only help facilitate the planning process, eliminate some of the communication bottlenecks, and establish stronger relationships within these African townships, it will help meet larger

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objectives of national reconciliation and reconstruction. A few recent graduates of the University of Cape Town shared that there are several Black Africans completing a planning degree. Governments that are focused on smooth planning and implementation in the townships should seriously think about the hard skills Black Africans will provide: perfect language skills, an intimate knowledge of township dynamics, relationships, and some degree of credibility. In other words, there is more than just hiring a Black African planner than furthering national equality objectives.

Inform/Involve the general public as much as, if not more than, community organizations. Relying on the existing RDP structures to distribute information is now recognized as an unstable outreach method. Interviews with the general public indicate that RDP forums and similar groups making decisions on behalf of the larger community will create township conflicts, which are likely to turn violent. Government plans that were crafted based on RDP interests will therefore face considerable objections from the larger community – a phenomenon already occurring with the Wetton-Lansdowne Corridor Plan.

In the Metro South East area, not only should RDP structures continue to be involved, they must continue to be involved or else planning processes will be in jeopardy. However, I encourage governments to creatively involve the public, and I offer the following recommendations:

Focus on "grassroot" efforts to reach the general public. Structured, formal meetings are encouraging political agendas and posturing. Reaching out to smaller groups (in their environment) may foster relaxed discussions and two-way information sharing. Sewing groups, job training sessions, and church group meetings are only some of the forums where planning proposals can be shared. While costs may limit how much outreach can be done, governments should consider initiating a speaker series. A speaker series is a program where government staff volunteer to visit organizations to inform them or project information and solicit input. In the United States, government staff, who participate receive longer vacation time and are recognized for their efforts in their yearly reviews.

Hold stakeholder focus groups to gauge a cross-section of interests. In planning exercises that cover a large geographic area, such as regional planning efforts, it can be particularly challenging to involve the general public. One idea used for similar projects in the United States is to hold stakeholder focus groups to solicit input about planning or policy proposals. Separating people into particular groups will allow planners to facilitate discussions on particular issues. For example stakeholders with a particular interest in the environment are targeted to discuss environmental policy or planning issues. Women could be channeled into one group, especially recognizing the tradition

for Xhosa men to speak for women. Small businesses could be another group to target. One method of working with organized groups is to host focus group specifically for certain politically-affiliated groups with other focused groups comprised of other interests. Lastly, although the results of this strategy may be valuable, it should not replace other outreach efforts.

Flood townships with information in as many formal and informal channels as financially possible, using the following outreach tools:

- *Radio* – "Almost everyone has a radio – perhaps one out of ten doesn't," shared one local in a township. Some Black Africans interviewed perceive radio as one of the more effective methods to convey information to the general public. Others disagreed however, "radio waves don't reach everyone in our community, it only works in certain areas and not everyone will hear the messages." Although radio fails to reach all groups, it seems to be a communication method that is worth using.

- *Buffaloes (vans with a megaphone)*– Even in different group discussions in the townships, all agreed that driving cars or vans through an area and announcing information using megaphones or loud speakers is the most effective outreach tool to reach people. "Then people can talk about the information while on trains," explained one local.

- *Posters* –Although some people are illiterate, local residents in the townships mentioned that Africans are very outspoken and "it's hard to keep information to ourselves". Several believe that hanging posters in the area would foster community discussions.

- *Expand the water paypoints to also include information centers.* When residents of a township come to pay for water at paypoints, they would also have the opportunity to issue complaints and/or obtain information. One consultant suggested this idea and I believe it at least warrants consideration.

- *Use surveys to gather information.* One planner at the CMC strongly advocates using stratified sampling to provide planners with information on the general public – not just organized groups. I agree that surveys could provide valuable insights about community perspectives (especially in the initial stages of a project). If a goal is also to <u>involve</u> the public, then a consequence of only using surveys to solicit input is that only minimal information on a project could be shared and discussed (at best).

However, I still believe surveys have a valuable role in gauging a public's perceptions, issues, and knowledge base. During the Summer of 1998, an economic development survey was conducted in Khayelitsha, providing valuable information for local governments to use/consider when planning. RDP forum representatives agreed to the merits of this project and UCT students, fluent in Xhosa, conducted the surveys – proof the governments can get around the RDP forums.

Focus on education as much as on information sharing. Providing basic information to the public on a project is often not enough to solicit valuable responses that planners can use to develop plans. In these three townships, people have shared difficulties in grasping the nuances of planning. Asking for their input on concepts they cannot understand will: 1) allow community leaders, who have had more exposure to the issues, to dominate the discussion; 2) limit the content of the community input – such as hearing the same issues or needs regardless of the type of project; 3) allow the public to continue not understanding the challenges planners face on a daily basis; and 4) may leave members of the public disconnected from the planning proposals specific to their community. Suggestions to educate the community on planning projects are as follows:

- *Combine public workshops with public open houses.* An hour or two before a formal public workshop, hold an informal open house to educate participants[44] on: the background of the project, the MSDF, why this project is needed, when it is anticipated to be complete, a description of the process, and who is participating in the process. Participants are welcome to come to the open house anytime during the posted hours to review information and talk with staff one-on-one. Maps, text boards[45], and other project-specific information are posted around the room and staff is available at various areas or "stations". For open houses to be successful in these townships, staff must be familiar, if not fluent, in Xhosa since many displays will need to be explained verbally. In this informal setting (particularly one-on-one), members of the community may be willing to share their thoughts on the project. Staff should document all feedback from participants. If information collected does not pertain to your project, forward these comments to the appropriate government agencies (and follow-up with these agencies, if possible).

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[45] Text boards are used to convey short and simple messages about a project. The font size on text boards is large to allow many people to read them simultaneously.

- *Consider combining public meetings with other local governments.* Not only will this save financial resources, it will help participants learn about more than just one project and how, collectively, they will upgrade these communities.

- *Educate people who interact with the public in these townships.* Supplying priests, police officers and educators with project information can be a valuable outreach tool. One priest interviewed expressed a willingness to share information to his parish. "I would absolutely distribute flyers if you gave them to me." Recognizing that a considerable percentage of people within these townships attend some religious ceremony, this could be an effective approach to informing large groups of people.

- *Co-ordinate youth activities that encourage community awareness.* A number of local residents in these townships encouraged more focus on the youth. While one person suggested establishing youth activity centers (not ANC-specific) and sending information through that channel, another person recommended holding youth activities that also educate children on the environment and community planning issues. "We need activities to draw them away from alcohol."

- *Educate adult learners, sewing groups, and women empowerment groups.* Two teachers I spoke with expressed interest in having their classes learn more about planning. In a survey conducted in 1993 by the USWE (an adult education and training program), it was identified that educators and learners wanted to learn more about maps, water issues, pollution, employment, housing and the movement of people – all concepts under the umbrella of planning. In a class I attended, I found learners to be articulate, very interested in planning issues, and spent time to think through their comments before sharing.

Planners and public involvement practitioners should consider these suggestions in light of their larger public involvement program in considering time and budget realities. However, I also caution planners to allow limited financial allocations to curb creativity. College interns and community volunteers can help complete substantial portions of the program with the proper oversight and direction.

Concluding Reflections

Reflecting on my exposure to Cape Town planning, governments are in fact beginning to think critically about the appropriateness of balancing technically-derived choices with community issues and values. Some planners are also beginning to recognize how conflicting values within government undermined governments' overarching objectives of transparency and legitimacy. I strongly believe that any planner questioning and reflecting on their practice is a healthy step towards institutional learning. What is complicating institutional learning in such a dynamic and highly contentious environment however, is the interconnectedness of so many issues and problems. Establishing protocols to work with Black Africans, for instance, raise issues of race, power, emotion, and trust. In other words, pursuing national <u>reconstruction</u> objectives without insight on, and sensitivity to, the uniqueness of each community, will likely undermine <u>reconciliation</u> objectives. In light of this, I encourage planners to continue asking questions, especially pertaining to their approaches to planning and making decisions. With hard work, determination, creativity, and patience, I am confident that governments and Black African communities can, and will, move closer toward mutual support and trust.

Based on the findings of my research, I believe that power struggles at the community level will continue to monopolize the attention of governments unless governments learn how to balance interest groups with the interests of the general public. While the intent here, is not to dis-empower community groups, a continued emphasis on relying exclusively on community groups will exacerbate the general public's powerlessness.

Analyzing Cape Town public involvement, in light of my own personal objectives – to improve how I and others involve people of color in planning – uncovered how race and power define the level of involvement. Although the issues of power and race are strongly intertwined in South Africa, the connection is in fact slowly unwinding as Black Africans participate in new opportunities that leverage power. This dynamic therefore requires local governments to continue learning how communities' shift along this continuum. Government evaluations would in turn guide practice, and refine approaches to community engagement. Government efforts to involve "Black Africans" for instance, can no longer qualify the involvement of only Black African groups, which now retain large degrees of community power. Rather, governments should begin to understand and appreciate the levels of power within the Black African community, and revise strategies to invite discussions with the range of power structures (including the general public).

My public involvement efforts domestically, naturally defined people of color as possessing the same degree of power as other groups or publics – which is not necessarily true. In other words, public involvement efforts should further explore how

people with various levels of power in a community are participating. If, for example, I recognized that a people of color possess lower degrees of power -- and my efforts recognize the value in their power differences -- then efforts to creatively involve such groups (like what is needed in South Africa) would likely ensure new representation. In South Africa, a central issue for public involvement practitioners is recognizing the value behind differences in power and representation – an issue we practitioners must similarly address here in the United States.

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