A FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
IN THE PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION,
MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMMES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

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Declaration

I declare that A FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

___________________________
Kim Morgan
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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis argues that there is a major crisis in the very notion of development aimed as it is at bringing about social justice, respect for human rights, equity and redistribution. The crisis has to a large extent been brought on by the forces of economic globalisation and neoliberalism, which is already having detrimental and long-lasting effects in South Africa as in most other developing countries. The influencing and shaping of socially conscious legislation, institutions and programmes by these forces is slowly negating the social gains made through decades of community struggle and sacrifice in South Africa. This thesis firmly believes that the responsibility rests on civil society organisations, working with progressive local governments, to recapture the original notion of development and to render obsolete mechanistic, top-down models of development primarily concerned with economic development.

It is further argued that the driving force behind this change must be the goal of alleviating and challenging growing poverty, inequality and lack of capacity resulting in ineffective and unsustainable development programmes in South Africa. Striving for these changes must naturally lead to a reassessment of the meaning of governance in society. Following Rondinelli (1996:2): “Governance can be defined as the manner in which authority is organised and exercised in the management of a society's affairs and resources. It should be understood as a broad concept that encompasses the functioning of organisational structures and activities of central government and local authorities as well as the institutions, organisations and individuals that comprise civil society and commercial organisations insofar as they actively
participate and influence the shaping of public policy that affects their lives”.

Effective local governance can offer a direct means for people to participate in governance at all levels thereby facilitating representation of communities in the decision-making structures of government. In this regard we cannot but concur with Rondinelli (1996:2) who argues “that the effectiveness of government and its relationship to civil society is a key determinant in whether a nation is able to create and sustain equitable opportunities for all of its people, and that the improvement of governance at the local level is the most effective means of building this relationship, enabling human and financial resources to be more directly and effectively mobilised in support of improved governance at all levels”.

It should be noted that in this thesis local governance is viewed as encompassing a political strategy to enhance the participation and empowerment of individuals, communities and their organisations, aimed at giving people greater control over decisions involving their development affairs. Local governance also implies the continuous assessment and improvement of management programmes and policies concerned with effective resource development and service delivery at the local level. Esman (1991), Bryant & White (1984) and Korten (1980) confirm the importance of the management and co-ordination dimension in participatory processes. They believe that participatory processes are unlikely to yield desirable or meaningful development outcomes without proficient management, value consensus, collaborative behaviour, leadership skills for facilitation and procedures and routines that enable the process to work. For Esman (1991:125) the facilitation and co-ordination of participatory structures is a major function and responsibility
of government. Arguing that the achievement of development goals depend on the strength and viability of these networks, he goes on to motivate that government has to “facilitate their formation, operation, maintenance, and adjustment to changes”.

This thesis presents arguments to support these propositions, and outlines an alternative approach that, it is suggested, is better suited to managing development programmes in South Africa. In particular, it examines alternative approaches to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of such programmes. In so doing, the thesis does not profess to outline a pre-determined methodology for community participation in local level development programmes but rather suggests a potential framework for local government-civil society engagement that can and should be further defined, strengthened and debated.

**Background**

In South Africa, the defeat of apartheid and the birth of a non-racial democracy were hailed with pride and optimism. Despite continuous government pronouncements of an ideology of development anchored in improving the quality of life for all, striving for social justice and people driven processes, six years later the misery and neglect of the poor still grows. This is not to suggest that the government has failed to make any improvements at all. The following achievements since 1994 have been reported: “1 million housing subsidies have been granted, 8.5 million people were treated at clinics, 68 000 families gained access to farming land, 1500 kilometres of road have been built, 1.3 million rural people have access to clean water within 200m of their dwelling and 1.5 million homes have been electrified” (Indicator South Africa – The Barometer of Social Trends, 2000).
However, in the critical areas of human development, eradication of poverty and the elimination of inequality the government’s success has been less than optimal. Mohamed (2000b:1), quoting a number of sources in this regard, notes that: “The poorest 40% of black households, for example, saw a 20% fall in their incomes between 1991 and 1996 (Business Day, March 1, 2000), while only 5% of all South Africans own 88% of the country’s wealth (DRC, 1997). Between 1994 and 1997 unemployment rose from 32% to 38% with women accounting for almost 52% of the unemployed. If this is added to the number of people who still do not have access to electricity, water and sanitation services, the enormity and scale of human suffering and deprivation fellow South Africans have to endure daily can be appreciated”.

Increasing misery, poverty and a decline in real incomes in the developing world is a real prospect, particularly in Africa. The costs in human terms are enormous. What accounts for the growing disparities in wealth and income? Why is the transformation process in South Africa slowing down? Why does the state appear to be incapacitated in the pursuit of its development goals?

First, there has been the dramatic ascendency of neoliberalism imposed by powerful financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the inter-American development bank, partly as a result of the rise of the neo-conservative movements arising from the squeeze on profits, the disgruntlement with the welfare state and the inflationary impact of Keynesian solutions.

Second, this aggressive expansion of neoliberalism within global processes has compelled all governments to restructure their
state-market relationships, further elevating the influence of market forces over development polices and programmes.

The liberalising of globalisation during the past few decades has demonstrated disastrous social consequences globally. Martinez and Garcia (1996:1) explain how these developments have come about:

- "Liberating "free" enterprise or private enterprise from any bonds imposed by the government (the state) no matter how much social damage this causes.
- Greater openness to international trade and investment, as in NAFTA.
- Reducing wages by de-unionising workers and eliminating workers' rights that had been won over many years of struggle.
- No more price controls. All in all, total freedom of movement for capital, goods and services.
- Cutting public expenditure for social services in areas such as education and health care.
- Reducing the safety-net for the poor, and even cutting down on maintenance of roads, bridges, water supply - again in the name of reducing government's role while there is no opposing of government subsidies and tax benefits for business.
- Deregulation – reducing government regulation of everything that could diminish profits, including protecting the environment and safety on the job.
- Privatisation – sell state-owned enterprises, goods and services to private investors. This includes banks, key industries, railroads, toll highways, electricity, schools, hospitals and even fresh water. Although usually done in the name of greater efficiency, which is often needed, privatisation has mainly had the effect of concentrating wealth even more in a few hands and making the public pay even more for its needs.
Eliminating the concept of "the public good" or "community" and replacing it with "individual responsibility." Pressuring the poorest people in a society to find solutions to their lack of health care, education and social security all by themselves.

Compounding the problem is what Sachs (2000:2) describes as "a more intractable division taking hold, this time based on technology". As the economy dictates the terms upon which people serve it rather than how it serves the people we are witnessing a growing technocracy at all levels of society. Sachs notes that a "small part of the globe, accounting for some 15% of the earth's population, provides nearly all of the world's technological innovations. A second part, perhaps involving half of the world's population, is able to adopt these technologies in production and consumption. The remaining part, covering around a third of the world's population, is technologically disconnected, neither innovating at home nor adopting foreign technologies".

Sachs (2000:2-5) explains that many of the "technologically excluded regions are caught in a cycle of poverty. They often require technological solutions to deal with the devastation caused by tropical infectious disease, low agricultural productivity and environmental degradation. While these technologies might be available abroad the countries are too poor to purchase or license them.... Many countries that do not keep up with global technology often collapse, unable even to maintain their standard of living, much less increase it.... Demographic pressures magnify the risks while urban jobs are few because technological backwardness limits export competitiveness in the mainly urban manufacturing and services sectors.... Meanwhile rich countries are unilaterally asserting rights of private ownership over human and plant genetic sequences, or basic computer codes, or
chemical compounds long in use in herbal medicines, all of which exacerbate global inequities”.

Sachs' points further indicate the need for new forms of supranational governments as states' interceding capacity, along with their independence, is eroded by corporate interests and bodies like the World Bank and IMF.

The effects of economic globalisation and neoliberalism on South Africa’s social policy

In South Africa these effects of globalisation, structural adjustment and economic liberalisation are frustrating redistribution expectations. The South African state appears to have been forced to retreat and respond to the dictates of transnational corporations and multilateral agencies like the World Bank and IMF. The degeneration of development plans that resulted in an ever widening gap between new polices adopted and what people required to change their lives was confirmed by the barrage of neoliberal influenced policy documents that followed, along with the closure of the RDP office in 1996.

Bond, Dor and Ruiters (2000), citing a number of policy documents including the Housing White Paper of 1994, the Water Supply and Sanitation White Paper of 1994, the Urban Infrastructure Investment Framework of March 1995 and the Local Government White Paper of 1998 argue that the World Bank’s intervention in social policy further entrenched the status quo wealth and power relations. They note, for example, that it was due to the World Bank’s intervention in the housing policy debate that the new policy, which conflicted directly with the RDP, was adopted three months later. The World Bank’s policy argued for a reduction in the proposed subsidy levels and that more use be made of commercial banks.
Bond, Dor and Ruiters (2000:18) further contend that it was World Bank influence in the development of the government’s Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework (MIIF) which resulted in the government agreeing to provide only minimal infrastructure and services to low income urban South Africans. They demonstrate the MIIF’s many objectionable components: “pit latrines, communal (not house or yard) standpipes, a weak electricity supply, open storm water drains and communal waste dumps instead of kerbside removal”. To compound matters it is estimated that “nearly 30% of urban residents and 70% of rural residents would be subject to these low standards with 20% to have no services at all, even after the ten year plan for service provision (1997-2006) was fully implemented”. In the field of health care, the Bank promoted “managed healthcare through policy and International Finance Corporation investments (a super-commodification process that sets insurance companies atop a vertically integrated system whose main purpose is to cut costs by closing health facilities and limiting patient access and quality)” (Bond, 2000:183).

World Bank staff also contributed to the development of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) econometric model which appears to have gone badly awry as illustrated by Bond (2000:193-4) who shows that between 1996-1998 virtually all GEAR’s targets were missed: “Annual GDP growth fell from 3.2 to 1.7 to 0.1 in 1996, 1997 and 1998, instead of the projections of 3.5, 2.9 and 3.8 growth. The rate of increase in private sector investment fell from 6.1 to 3.1 to a negative 0.7% in 1996, 1997 and 1998 (instead of rising 9.3, 9.1 and 9.3% respectively. Of private investment, virtually all foreign direct investment were related to the purchase of existing assets through privatisation and merger/acquisition deals as opposed to new plant and
equipment, and South African outflows of foreign direct investment ($2.3 billion in 1997) were far higher than what came in ($1.7 billion that year). Savings fell from 18% of GDP in 1996 to 15% in 1997 and 14% in 1998; private savings fell from 20% in 1996 to 17% in 1998 (instead of rising to 21% as GEAR forecast). Exports of South African products (other than gold) rose slowly in 1997-98 (5.3 and 2.1%, respectively) confounding GEAR projections of 8 and 7%. Formal sector job losses were 71,000, 126,000 and 186,000, instead of GEAR anticipated gains of 126,000, 252,000 and 246,000”.

From the arguments presented above it would appear that the ANC’s abandonment of its “growth through redistribution” strategy has paved the way for the more market-driven, export-competitive, neoliberal strategy which seems to have little promise for growth or significant returns for the majority of impoverished South Africans. Instead it can be argued that the resulting political disillusionment and heightened criminality that plagues South Africa today is a result of shattered hopes and a growing fear that the mass struggle to realise developmental socio-economic outcomes will come to naught.

Perhaps the most glaring evidence of the anti-social nature of the neoliberal orientation of economic policy is reflected in the labour market. The drive towards international competitiveness has seen a shift in production towards “skills-biased technological change” (Business Day:2001). The result has been a massive drop in demand for labour at the bottom end of the skills market. This implies a large part of the working population is unemployable, even if GDP growth reaches the 6% level that is thought to be required to substantially reduce unemployment. In the medium to long term it is therefore imperative that South Africa develops its human capital in line with the demands of a modern
technologically driven economy. Government policy, however, appears to be silent on what happens in the interim. Public sector restructuring has also resulted in government being the “number one job shedder from 1995 to 1999 after making about 140,000 workers redundant. Of concern is the high attrition rates among teachers and nurses when community services recorded a loss of 45,000 jobs” (Business Day: 2001).

On the basis of these facts, it seems safe to assume that government has no effective policy on job creation for the millions who appear not to possess the requisite skills demanded by the economy. The RDP’s growth through redistribution strategy recognised this and therefore proposed a labour-based expansion of public services and infrastructure. What is worse, cuts in social expenditure and the commodification of public services is reshaping the citizen-state contract to the market based ability to pay. This is not withstanding the commitment to a basic level of free water and electricity.

Understanding these changes is essential in defining economic and social policy and the role of the state.

We have seen how politics of liberalisation, the rolling back of the state, cuts in social expenditure and rampant consumerism and individualism undermine efforts at levelling the playing fields in South Africa. In this regard the clear need for a countervailing force in the form of strong social movements with a strong value system to take root and grow in civil society is unquestionable. Korten (2000:9) convincingly argues that: “The defining political struggle of the 21st century is not so much between political ideologies as between life values and financial values – between a civil society and a capitalist society”. For Korten (2000:9) the outstanding feature of global capitalism is an economy which
holds exclusionary power in terms of its “ability to control access to both the means of living and material comforts” and a political sphere which is increasingly being dominated by a public discourse which elevates the market and provides a tiny minority with greater influence over public policy at the expense of the majority. Under these conditions it is this type of “culture power” that is embedded in civil society which will determine the extent to which the economy functions in a way that provides “productive and satisfying livelihoods for all” and a “balanced relationship with the non-human environment”. At the same time it is only an active citizenry that can ensure that the political sphere is “radically democratic in terms of openness, equity, active citizen participation and consensus oriented decision making”.

Korten (2000:9) further contends that in the context of the rise of global capitalism, with its marginalisation and exclusion of the poor, and a state which is increasingly aligned to the dictates of business, a civil society – characterized by an active citizenship and imbued with the normative values of social justice, equity and substantive democracy – can serve as an important countervailing force or check against the destructive power of global capitalism and their political minions.

The need to strengthen civil society to rid our world of what Korten (2000:13) calls “this social pathology” is beyond question. The answer may lie in the formation of strong horizontal and vertical political linkages to facilitate collective action that challenges the global and national systems that circumvent and undermine equality and justice.
Creating an enabling environment for the poor

While due largely to the influence of neoliberalism, it is now a development policy orthodoxy that governments should strive to create “enabling environments” for “private investors”. We can only but agree with Joshi and Moore (2000: 4) who assert that the same should be done for the poor. Let them also enjoy the “level playing field” that business so often demands of governments in these times.

Clearly, much more than an enabling environment for business and the deregulation of the market, we need an enabling environment within which the poor can mobilise for collective action. An environment which nurtures a civic culture that will promote grassroots democratic institutions, change the attitudes of all key role-players towards the developmental process and transform the bureaucratic departmental approach of government agencies. An environment that will build partnerships across sectors and institutions based on mutual respect and trust and change the ivory tower mentality and deeply ingrained cynicism prevalent among the technical elite.

In this regard, this thesis will argue that the existence of the state and the rules it establishes and enforces can strengthen and increase the efficiency of local organisations and institutions, and can give rise to collective action increasing the power of the state.

In summary, the thesis is based on the belief that the synergy between local government and civil society can be a catalyst for development and that norms of co-operation and networks of civic engagement among ordinary citizens can be promoted by public agencies as a powerful tool for development. Thinking and doing policy and process together emphasises ongoing collaboration, sustained engagement and strategic institutional reorientation.
Building and sustaining such dynamic synergies and facilitating such co-production in South Africa calls for what Khan describes as “the creation of a developmentally flexible, democratically-facilitative and politically responsive local government regime that: maximises all strategic opportunities to address poverty; deepens social justice; fosters balanced economic growth; builds a democratic culture and commits material and non-material resources to the creation of vibrant associational life; forges dynamic complementarity between formal and informal modes of governance. This new interventionist and flexible local government regime pushes beyond the historical constraints of both the laissez-faire and developmental states and calls forth the need for the facilitative state whose role will be a new form of interstitial participation focused on optimising the beneficial outcomes of relatively autonomous market, hierarchical and collaborative linkages while minimising the costs and failures of each” (Undated: Research report, commissioned by the Department of Constitutional Development for the Working Committee on the Local Government White Paper Process:2).

**Motivation for study of local government**

Efforts to build and strengthen participative local governance in South Africa have been disappointing. The meaningful application of sustainable development at the local level clearly requires a special approach that recognises that South Africa has untapped resources, people and organisations which can partner with government to enhance creative partnerships between civil society and government in developing low cost, high impact methods and techniques of delivery spurred on by a common vision.

It will thus be the contention of this thesis that what is required is an alternative local government approach to strategic services
planning and implementation. An approach guided by the principles of democratic decentralisation, local government-civil society synergy, local government intervention in promoting and nurturing a civic culture and democratic participation driven by a deliberate political strategy.

All these are regarded as essential elements to improve municipal sector performance, to mobilise and focus the resources available in a community and to address the challenge of long term sustainability at the local level.

The principle aim of this study will be to develop a framework that could guide democratic practice and public involvement in the delivery of local government community oriented services. Specifically, it will look at developing an integrated development plan for local service delivery as a way of bringing together civil society organisations and local governments. Above all it is hoped that this framework will contribute towards resolving the dilemma facing local government - how to bring about the optimum allocation of scarce resources to meet the growing needs of society in a sustainable way while striving for social justice and equity in the distribution of social resources.

**Research problem**

Broad agreement exists within South African local government that service delivery and infrastructure investment should contribute towards poverty alleviation and that community participation should be solicited in this regard. Unfortunately the reality on the ground indicates this is not the case. In this regard we cannot but agree with Mohamed (2000b:2) who argues that “the transformation of the state, where it has happened, has tended to concentrate only on the managerial and functionalist aspects and ignored the political aspects. So while community
participation and deepening democracy are often spoken about, strong political leadership to ensure this happens has often been lacking. Building and mobilising community co-operation and collective action to meet societal problems and enhance the development process have taken a back seat to technocratic approaches focussing on administrative reform.

In addition there is a widely held view that the poorer sections of society do not participate in development because of their apathy and resistance to change. This has provided an excuse for many not to act despite the fact that these views have seriously been challenged. The main question is whether people will participate effectively in development programmes or whether they will participate in resistance against developments which frustrate their expectations or disadvantages them. The main issue then is not whether people will participate or not but rather how and in what form they will participate.

The specific focus of this research will therefore be to investigate the conditions under which local government participatory anti-poverty interventions might have positive and effective consequences. The ultimate aim will be to develop a workable framework to bring about the constructive engagement between communities and local government in the management of programmes and policies concerned with effective resource development and service delivery in South Africa. In this regard the key elements, methods and processes that could constitute such a framework will be delineated and discussed.

It is accepted that the prerequisite for confronting these issues is a clear set of ideas regarding the notions of civil society and community participation.
The premise of challenging capital

The premise of this thesis is captured in Sam Gindin’s statement (quoted in Bond, 2000:252): “The real issue of ‘alternatives’ isn’t about alternative policies or about alternative governments but about an alternative politics. Neither well-meaning policies nor sympathetic governments can fundamentally alter our lives unless they are a part of a fundamental challenge to capital. That is, making alternatives possible requires a movement that is changing political culture (the assumptions we bring to how society should work), bringing more people into every-day struggles (collective engagement in shaping our lives), and deepening the understanding and organisational skills of activist along with their commitment to radical change”.

A reconsideration of the limits of state action has led to an increased awareness of the potential role of civic organisations in the provision of public goods and social services. In many parts of the world, where social services are not provided by the state, the gap is being filled either through formal structures such as NGOs or through popular or community associations, self help groups or community networks (Cornwell and Gaventa, 1999).

In this regard, Cornwall and Gaventa (1999:19) note that “much of the discussion of the role of NGOs in social policy may have overshadowed the importance of other more informal and indigenous forms of civil society which are vital to social provisioning but which are not NGOs: religious bodies, traditional healers, midwives, parents, groups, squatter groups and welfare associations. Not only are they important in general but they are often particularly important for marginalised groups, including poor women. The 1999 Consultations with the Poor exercise which examined people’s perceptions of institutions confirmed this argument. In most of 23 countries in which the survey was
done, the institutions which people saw were important were local ones – religious institutions such as the church or mosque or temple, burial societies, local co-operatives and others in which they had some voice and through which their needs were met in times of crises”.

In line with these arguments this thesis adopts the view that civil society should be seen as constituting the whole range of intermediate associations including: interest groups such as trade unions and professional and business associations; organisations based on kinship, ethnicity, culture or religion; community associations which focus on service provision; neighbourhood associations; co-operative societies; savings clubs or credit unions; non-governmental development organisations; environmental associations; women’s associations and so on.

Bookchin (1995:4), supporting this argument, explains: “The living cell that forms the basic unit of political life is the municipality, from which everything such as citizenship, interdependence, confederation, and freedom emerges. There is no way to piece together any politics unless we begin with its most elementary forms: the villages, towns, neighbourhoods, and cities in which people live on the most intimate level of political interdependence beyond private life.... I refer here to the block organisations, neighbourhood assemblies, town meetings, civic confederations, and the public arenas for discourse that go beyond such episodic, single-issue demonstrations and campaigns, valuable as they may be to redress to redress social injustices. To ignore the irreducible civic unit of politics and democracy is to play chess without a chessboard, for it is on this civic plane that the long-range endeavour of social renewal must eventually be played out”.
By accepting such an inclusive definition of civil society this thesis is in no way implying that civil society has an inherent or natural innocence or that civil society institutions are inherently democratic, because it recognises that repressive power relations exist in civil society. This thesis also accepts the view of Evans (2000:4) who notes that there is no one type of social agent (civil society, communities or government) that can bring about the goal of sustainable communities – each of these potential agents of sustainable development is flawed. On the one hand communities are wrapped up in a tapestry of differing interests and social groups, they lack the social capital and organisational capacity to pursue the goal of sustainable communities. States on the other hand are likely to become entrapped by strategies of accumulation and bureaucracy that threaten sustainable development. NGOs and other community organisations are only as effective as the communities and public agencies with which they work and sometimes introduce agendas of their own. It is therefore accepted that as long as all these agents work at cross-purposes the quest for sustainable communities is doomed. It is only the interaction among these actors, each reinforcing the other’s strengths, which can generate the possibility of sustainable communities. This implies that the search for possibilities of synergy among the different actors involved must always be sensitive to the possibilities of negative sum interactions.

Thus viewing civil society purely as an aggregate of institutions existing between the public and private realms does not take us forward. The fact is poverty eradication and the removal of inequality begs for a political context within which developmental civil society can forge a new political reality that challenges the dominance and hegemony of neoliberalism which has become entrenched globally and nationally.
The problem is that no matter how exemplary individual civil society initiatives on behalf of the poor are, they are often dispersed, small scale and isolated activities. These activities by themselves are not sufficient to transform the social reality in which the poor exist. For civil society to mount an effective challenge to neoliberalism, we have to go beyond the neutral definitions of civil society. Civil society has to be defined from a distinctly political and developmental point of view, noting that civil society counts when it upholds the "values of substantive democracy such as redistributive socio-economic reforms, broad popular participation and human rights" (Lloyd and Sachikonye:1995).

Arguing along the same lines, Mohamed (2001a:2) notes that: "Where the state is developmental and committed to achieving full and substantive democracy, a politically conscious civil society can assist the state in this regard. In such a context, civil society will be linked to the state, in the achievement of what Manfred Bienefeld (1995) refers to as to as the broad concept of the "common good". At the same time, in a pluralist democracy such as South Africa's, a politically engaged civil society can also serve as a safeguard against any party wishing to reverse democratic gains and other human development achievements and or challenge any party not prepared to enhance human development and democracy".

Further debate and rigorous discussion about ways in which the different sectors of civil society can be galvanised into united action is obviously needed.

The fundamental challenge is for civil society and the state to become the condition for each other's democratisation. The
purpose of this thesis is thus to propose a framework for engagement which could facilitate this process. It should be stated that in the course of developing such a framework, the thesis will at all times be vigilant against embracing the kind of notion of participation adopted by government and even some NGOs which tends to be an event wherein time is set aside for public participation in which ratification of proposals that have already been finalised is sought. Participation from the point of view of this research is viewed as public engagement in an ongoing process of policy formulation, decision-making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It embraces a notion of citizenship that creates opportunities for the public to influence decisions of government and to exercise their power over development choices.

**Research methodology**

The research methodology applied will consist primarily of secondary research techniques supplemented by detailed case studies. The secondary research methods will be based on theoretical works and international examples that will not be used for a comparative study, but rather as a source of ideas to assist in developing a framework for participatory development in South Africa.

Methods used will include a contextual analysis of theoretical works and two case studies with a view to grounding the research in lessons which demonstrate the potential of some of the key aspects or elements that the framework for community engagement proposes. The research method will therefore, for the most part, be an exploratory investigation followed by a proposed process for community participation in service delivery. The aim will be to delineate the main themes and components that could constitute a process for local government-civil society engagement.
targeted at improving the quality, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of service delivery at the local level.

It is accepted that the true test of the framework will be in its practical implementation. It is outside the scope of this research to follow through with this type of research simply because a great deal of time is required to monitor its effectiveness and usefulness.

**Structure of the study**

The thesis is divided into 5 chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction and overview

Chapter 2: In attempting to explain why, in critical areas of human development and the eradication of poverty and inequality, the South African government's success has been less than optimal, this chapter will review the developmental responsibilities of local government in South Africa and the challenges facing it in this regard.

Chapter 3: This chapter examines participation as a response to neoliberal globalisation. Drawing on a range of studies, the chapter advances a conceptual framework to help us think more constructively about the conditions under which democratic participation could be enhanced in South Africa which, it is argued, could be an effective impetus for social and political transformation attacking poverty and capable of resisting and challenging the forces of global capitalism and neoliberalism.

Chapter 4: In practical terms this chapter will focus on developing a participatory framework, grounded in the concept of integrated development planning, aimed at bringing together civil society organisations and democratic local governments to build a power base that can shape and influence social change.

Chapter 5: Conclusion
Conclusion

By reviewing the challenges and identifying some key opportunities, this thesis hopes to improve the potential for local government and civil society organisations in South Africa to make a significant contribution to poverty reduction, human development and sustainable communities by working within a framework that facilitates genuine community participation in local level service delivery. These ideas are meant as a starting point that will hopefully help to further develop the understanding of, and approaches to, effective local governance.
Chapter 2

A review of the developmental responsibilities and related challenges facing local government in South Africa

Introduction

If the purpose of development is "development of the individual as a social being aimed at his/her liberation and fulfilment, seeking to challenge poverty, ignorance and disease and attempting to reduce inequalities within and between groups by integrating the poor and alienated social groups into the mainstream of society" (Agere, 1986:1) then in this context sustainable development at the local level can constructively be seen as development that starts by delivering basic services such as environmental, social and economic services to all, based on equity and social justice, without threatening the viability of the environmental, built and social systems upon which these services depend. Sustainable development must therefore also imply working towards limiting the depletion of the social, human and economic capital from which benefits that enhance the quality of life of citizens flow.

There is little doubt that at the heart of this principle must be the notion that for development actions to be sustainable they must involve local communities at all levels of decision making. All citizens must have the right to participate in actions that affect them. They must have the knowledge and skills and the relevant information to equip them to make sound decisions and judgements and to be able to take the collective action that is needed to force the state to be more responsive.

Because democratic local governments have a central role to play in advancing the notion of sustainable development, they could play a key role in the wellbeing of communities – especially with
regard to the delivery of basic services and infrastructure. As the level of government closest to the people it is best placed to manage development in ways that utilise the skills and resources of local communities and builds community life and capacity. Therefore local government is also best placed to promote state-society synergy as a catalyst for development and to design and manage anti-poverty programmes in a way that they stimulate the collective action needed among beneficiaries to make development programmes far more effective.

In South Africa, however, there are a number of issues that have to be addressed for local government in South Africa to play such a role. These relate to the lack of resources and capacities of local government, their administrative incapacity and financial constraints, their constraining organisational approaches, their adoption of a technocratic vision of development and the lack of a political will to act decisively.

**The government’s stated position on social redress and local government**

The challenges facing the newly elected government is succinctly illustrated by the following: “In 1994 the new government inherited a mixed but rapidly deteriorating infrastructure stock. Economic infrastructure was reasonable with transport and electricity fairly well developed. However these networks were not appropriate for the needs of the population and the economy. City transport systems were increasingly strained as the majority of population had been forced to live in places far from their places of work and basic services. Access to social and domestic infrastructure was restricted mainly to urban areas and people in rural areas had few services. In 1994 only 20 percent of rural dwellers had access to electricity, 35 percent to clean water and 5 percent to sanitation. Even in urban areas, at least a fifth of
households could not access these services. The government needed to provide infrastructure that would meet the country’s economic demands, while simultaneously redressing apartheid imbalances” (Mbeki, 1998:1).

In 1994 the ANC made a commitment to address this situation in its pre-election manifesto titled the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP): “In attacking poverty and deprivation, the RDP aims to set South Africa firmly on the road to eliminating hunger, providing land and housing to all our people, providing access to safe water and sanitation for all, ensuring the availability of affordable and sustainable energy sources, eliminating illiteracy, raising the quality of education and training for children and adults, protecting the environment, and improving our health services and making them accessible to all.” (ANC, 1994:9)

While it is accepted that the responsibility for meeting this challenge lies with all levels of government, the new Constitution (RSA: 1996) calls upon local authorities to “give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote the social and economic development of the community” while the Local Government White Paper outlines the central challenges facing municipalities as “the legacy of segregation and illegitimacy, the institutional weaknesses, the backlogs in services and the mounting financial crises”. These crises, the White Paper argues, can be overcome by establishing developmental Local Government where the central responsibility of municipalities must be seen as “working together with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives” (RSA, 1998:11-13).
The section on Administrative Systems in the Local Government White Paper (1998:54) goes further in defining the role of developmental local government: “Under apartheid there was systematic under-investment in municipal infrastructure in black areas. This deprived millions of people of access to basic services, including water, sanitation, refuse collection and roads. Developmental local government has to address this backlog. Its central mandate is to develop service delivery capacity to meet the basic needs of communities”.

In fulfilling its core functions, duties and responsibilities, local government is further obliged by the new Constitution to execute its affairs in an accountable, responsive, transparent, accessible, participatory and equitable manner.

The explicitness of the mandate given to municipal councils in the Local Government White Paper is puissant, it however masks the colossal task and the difficult environment in which local authorities have to operate. This is discussed below.

**Challenges facing local government**

The democratic transition has formally removed all discriminatory statutes and has established formal equality and transformed South Africa from a highly centralised political system under apartheid to a more decentralised system. Sadly, the legacy of apartheid is such that in every sphere of life the newly elected democratic government is confronted with serious problems. This is the focus of the following sections.

**Lack of institutional capacity**

If the main objective of the state is eradicating poverty and ensuring social and economic development, it needs an effective and efficient public service. The local government administrations
that democratic South Africa has inherited are highly bureaucratic, rule driven, hierarchical, departmentally fragmented and unresponsive institutions. Mohamed (1997c:1) concurs: “It is widely accepted that the apartheid administrative apparatus was characterised by secrecy and paranoia rather than openness and interaction with civil society. Accountability, where it was acknowledged, was practised as bureaucratic accountability. Under this system, public servants are held accountable upwards to hierarchical superiors through a set of complex and rigid rules and procedures. In this regard one of the striking challenges in the new South Africa, is to render the vast machine of the Public Service more responsive, more representative and more responsible to the public in whose name it acts”.

Moreover, local governments also face the difficult task of transforming themselves from institutions that created a situation where poverty and deprivation existed side by side and which protected white supremacy and privilege into institutions that will promote democracy, accountability and effect redistribution.

The current situation in the civil service “led the editor of a newspaper to surmise that the basic obstacle to development in South Africa was its civil service which was too big, too old guard, too costly, too much apartheid duplication and that the price of reconciliation, the agreement to protect civil service jobs has compounded the problem” (Picard and Garity, 1995:74).

Ineffectual affirmative action policy has resulted in an inefficient and ineffective patronage-based public service system.

Compounding the situation is the fact that “many urban authorities have been formed through the amalgamation of a
number of administrations and/or have extended their constituencies by many times. In rural areas there is little or no administrative machinery to draw on. The new policies and approaches require new skills that were not present in the former system and some councillors have little technical and administrative experience” (Cashdon, 1998:17).

Cashdon further notes that “at the same time we are plagued with a fragmented system of governance whose borders make neither planning nor administrative sense. There is a concern that the current demarcation process might, by virtue of moving local government to towns many kilometres away, have a negative impact on local democracy” (1998:17). Bloemfontein for example now incorporates the areas of Botshabel and Thaba-Nchu that are approximately 50 km from Bloemfontein city. These areas are deeply rural and have a strong history of traditional control. Extending services to these underdeveloped areas and incorporating traditional leaders into the decision making process will pose a considerable challenge.

The absence of effective institutions of governance and policy making and implementation, managerial and planning skills suggest that we must agree with Picard and Garity (1995:65) who insist that “priority must be given to contextualising development strategies within a governance framework”, that “rationalising of the public sector is necessary to define a post apartheid civil service”, and that “building capacity for sustainable development must occur among South Africans of all backgrounds”. Furthermore they recommend that the above must be carried out “prior to embarking on elaborate plans for social transformation or economic redistribution”.

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Worsening poverty and inequality

It can be said that a useful criterion for the success or failure of governance programs to meet basic needs is the impact it has on poverty reduction and its social impact. The fact is that in the critical areas of human development and the eradication of poverty the government’s success has been less than optimal. This has been raised in chapter one. To compound these problems the negative impact of neoliberal hegemony within globalisation processes in South Africa is being manifested through market oriented policies that have stifled economic growth and redistribution. The effects of this can be seen in job losses, the crises in education, the closure of hospitals, the widening of loopholes in the social security net, water cut-offs, worsening housing shortages and persistent poverty in the context of deepening inequality between the haves and have-nots.

Spatial planning

The draft Green Paper on Development and Planning (1999:9) aptly describes the characteristics and implications of the inherited spatial planning system in South Africa:

"In urban areas influences of apartheid, land market forces and urbanisation have created a pattern of human settlement primarily characterised by racial, socio-economic and land use segregation. The phenomenon of displaced urbanisation led to the rise of large dormitory towns and other settlements, lacking any functional autonomy and designed to serve as holding areas for people who had been removed from areas designated for white occupation, dammed up behind homeland boundaries. This process also saw the extreme overcrowding of areas with a limited agricultural base with dramatic, negative, environmental consequences. In response, the accelerated "rationalisation" of agriculture through "betterment" programmes was intensified. In towns and cities large tracts of the urban fabric were destroyed, frequently under the pretence of slums removal or to consolidate the grand apartheid plan for separate ethnic and racial areas. This resulted in the systematic uprooting of settled communities and the creation of large, alienated islands of poverty. The physical consequences of these processes are settlement patterns in both urban and rural areas that are often grotesquely distorted. Spatial environments are inconvenient and dysfunctional for the majority of citizens as they generate..."
enormous amounts of movement with great costs in terms of time, money, energy and pollution. Settlement patterns make the provision of efficient and viable public transportation almost impossible, making servicing costly to the public fiscus, and constraining affordability. In addition, large tracts of land with agricultural and amenity potential have been destroyed, poverty and inequality have been aggravated and opportunities for individual entrepreneurship have been dissipated.”

Overcoming this inequality and division presents great challenges for local authorities. The fact that apartheid and economic segregation based on race and class is alive and thriving is demonstrated by Cashdon (1998:5): “A recent paper by a business funded think-tank on the Local Government White Paper illustrates this point by referring constantly to the need to maintain high standards in middle class neighbourhoods and to avoid diverting too many resources for basic needs in poor areas despite the fact that a key objective of the integrated planning is to mix people with different income levels to break down social and economic segregation and entrenched inequality”.

**Service delivery and infrastructure investment**

Local government is under tremendous pressure to overcome the huge backlogs in basic services such as water, sanitation, roads, storm water drains and electricity. In addition, with the democratic transition and the effects of market liberalisation has come the growing influx of people from other African countries and a greater movement of people from rural areas to towns and cities. The result is that the demand for basic services and infrastructure is far outstripping local government’s capacity to meet it.

Meanwhile, as Khosa argues, inequality in access to services continues. Whereas the richer part of the general population enjoys relatively high standards of service, many people, especially rural women and the majority of black people lack the
basic services. The following figures produced by the Development Bank (in Khosa, 2000:3) proves this point:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number with access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cashdon (1998:3) estimates that “the capital costs of providing an “acceptable” service to the entire population (i.e. at least a yard tap, flush toilet and electric power in urban areas, and at least communal standpipes and ventilated pit latrines in all but the most remote rural areas) will be around R8bn – or 5.3% of the national budget after interest payments – each year for a period of ten years. This is over twice the amount currently allocated by national government for this purpose”. Quite clearly the developmental features of infrastructure and service provision will not necessarily be realised unless low-income residents of municipalities are in a position to benefit from at least lifeline supplies of water, sanitation, electricity and other services.

Undoubtedly, infrastructure investment and service delivery have a key role to play in achieving some of the central goals and objectives of reconstruction and development. In this regard local governments can, through infrastructure investment and service delivery, make a major contribution to poverty alleviation, to improving the quality of life, to implementing redistribution and promoting economic growth and creating opportunities for job creation. Moreover “it can play a major role in transforming apartheid spatial patterns and form and promote equity and social, physical and spatial integration. Local government can set standards on quality of services that will lead to equity in service delivery and significantly improve the quality of life of the poor. It can take active steps to raise the affordability threshold of the
poor to move towards achieving equality of standards in service delivery’ (Mohamed, 1997a:1).

Local government in South Africa is, however, clearly facing a range of problems that raises questions about its ability to meet the challenges of infrastructure investment and service delivery.

**Fiscal crises**

At the heart of meeting basic needs is sustainable service delivery. This requires serious examination of the revenue base of local governments. According to Bond, Dor and Ruiters (2000:45): “More than half of the 878 municipalities face formal bankruptcy at the turn of the 21st century due to declining central-loan grants and a low level of service payments by residents”. These problems have been exacerbated by budget cuts exercised by national government and the drying up of private lending to municipalities. Local governments have to deal with the double-barrelled problem of fiscal crises and excessive demands for services due to the combined effects of economic and political factors and urbanisation. Unfortunately, many municipalities are using up their inter-governmental grants for balancing their books rather than using the money for development and assistance to the poor.

The implications of this fiscal crises are far reaching as it implies that it will be virtually impossible to meet the growing needs of communities with regard to basic municipal services if local governments lack the financial means to address these problems.

**Employment**

According to Cashdon (1998:2): “South Africa is currently experiencing one of the highest reported unemployment rates in the developing world. Including those who have stopped looking
for work, the rate stands at between 30-33%. Since the increasing adoption of free-trade and free-market principles – crystallised in the government’s Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macro-economic strategy – the situation has deteriorated rapidly. At the same time hundreds of thousands of school-leavers have entered the labour market. As well as pushing up urban unemployment rates directly, and lowering the overall wage level, this increased supply of workers and decreased supply of employment opportunities has had a knock-on effect in the former homelands where rural unemployment rates are a staggering 50%”.

This crisis of unemployment, low investment and eroded tax bases have seriously hampered local government’s ability to provide services while growing poverty accompanied by service cut-offs is an indication that people cannot afford basic services.

**Challenges posed to social policy and development by neoliberalism and globalisation**

Despite policy attempts to turn things around the reality is that problems associated with the provision of basic infrastructure and services has plagued ANC rule and local government in particular. The fact is that the ANC appears to have abandoned the RDP in some of the most crucial areas of social policy. Bond (2000:89) argues that contrary to conventional wisdom, the RDP did not fail. Instead its progressive sections were simply not adopted as government policy and were often contradicted by most of government’s new social policies.
Bond (2000:115-117) demonstrates how many of the RDP directives were distorted, contradicted or simply ignored in subsequent government policies:

The promised land distribution target of 30% within five years was scaled down dramatically (less than 1% of land was redistributed), and substantial funding for land redistribution was not forthcoming. The promised minimum standards for housing were replaced by “incremental” process and inadequate “basic services”, and a strong state role in housing was negated in favour of market driven approaches. The proposed municipal supply of “lifeline” water (based on cross subsidies) was rejected in favour of insistence on virtually full payment of operating and maintenance costs (plus an erratic “equitable share grant” that only became effective in mid 1998 and only in a few areas). There was a lack of commitment to promised cross-subsidisation within the electricity sector (hence the rate of rural electrification slowed to a crawl). Publicly owned passenger transport – mandated to increase in the RDP – was instead replaced by tendered contracts and permits for rail, bus and taxi operations with privately controlled passenger transport deemed to be self-regulating at a time when transportation subsidies were reduced. Workers environmental rights were not addressed. There was a shift from state to individual responsibility for retirement resources and there were dramatic cuts in social assistance grants to impoverished, dependent children. References to nationalisation were ignored in the RDP White Paper and GEAR and no subsidies, as promised for local economic development, were made available. Civil society participation in parastatal governance was largely ignored”.

It is clear from the above that the negotiated political settlement did not transform the main contradictions of social injustice, inequality and concentration of economic power. Although the space and opportunity for these to be resolved exist, it appears the ANC has fallen wide of its mark by over-accommodating the forces of neoliberalism

All the problems discussed above are further compounded by the inherent weaknesses characterising local government. This is discussed in the following sections.
A perception that service delivery is uncontroversial

It has been incorrectly assumed that there is a national consensus on the goals and plans of the RDP and that there is broad agreement on the needs and priorities of communities. The implication is that service delivery should be seen merely as a technical and administrative exercise, and that there is no contention regarding the method, level, coverage and financing of such services. The fact that this is not so is reflected in the erosion of local government legitimacy with communities increasingly acting unilaterally through land invasions, informal water and electricity connections, illegal occupation of unoccupied homes and so on.

Poor evaluation of local government

IDASA’s 1998 Public Opinion Service (POS) found that local government is seen as the least responsive level or type of government in the country. Ironically the institution physically closest to the people was seen as the most distant from them. Only 36% (as opposed to 58% in 1995) of respondents felt that local government officials were interested in what people felt.

In comparison to other levels of government, local government also received the lowest job approval rating. Only 30% approved of the job their local authorities had done the previous year, the lowest levels of trust and some of the highest levels of perceived corruption in the country (44% of respondents perceived significant levels of corruption in their local councils).

This ever-widening chasm between local government and communities is further demonstrated by the Human Science Research Council’s survey on public participation which found that 75% of respondents did not understand or understood only a
little of local government activities (Roefs, and Liebenberg, 1999:5).

**Managerial and co-ordination problems**

An indication of the managerial and co-ordination problems facing local government is revealed below in a summary of the study undertaken by the Department of Constitutional Affairs and Local Government on the needs and capabilities of municipalities with regard to municipal-community partnerships (MCPs).

Municipalities lack the capacity to put in place appropriate regulations, service standards and contracts and to monitor the outputs of MCPs. There is evidence of poor service organisational capacity in many towns and rural areas. Of significance is the finding that many officials and councillors have limited knowledge about the transformation agenda and alternative service delivery methods and strategies and they lack the appropriate technical and managerial capacity to initiate and sustain MCPs. At the same time they do not have the ability to identify, design, manage and monitor the outputs of partnerships. Furthermore, municipalities are perceived as being overly bureaucratic, response time to community proposals is long and many staff members are not committed to engaging with service providers on alternative delivery strategies in a sustained way. It was also found that municipal officials and politicians are not always sensitive to the complexity of social and economic processes within communities, particularly around the multiple survival and livelihood strategies of households and communities. With regard to planning it was found that different municipal departments work in isolated and non-integrated ways and there is poor integration of MCP projects into overall development plans for specific areas. The view of those involved in existing MCPs is
that the dominant barrier to successful MCPs in South Africa is municipal capability, inadequate administrative and financial resources, poor co-ordination and integration across departments at planning and operational levels and the fact that local government officials tend to “projectise” development and once the project is over, community participation and engagement ceases (Cranko and Khan, 1999:10-11).

Community participation and empowerment
The RDP states that “development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment of the people in shaping their own environment and future. Active community participation and representatives are key ingredients for the development of strong, effective and stable institutions” (ANC, 1994).

All the major policy initiatives from government express the values of sustainable communities, participation and democratic decision making. However there is a huge gap between the stated intention and the objectives of such policies on the one hand and the reality on the ground on the other. Patrick Heller (2000:1) agrees. He points to the fact that “local government has done little to enhance the level or scope of participation and NGOs tend to act as government contractors rather than catalysts of community initiative”. Heller further declares that “the primary mechanism for inviting local participation – the preparation of Integrated Development Plans – has proven to be a largely bureaucratic exercise, providing plenty of work for consultants but little room for a community voice. And, in a climate of fiscal restraint and stringent budget directives from the Department of Finance, local governments (bar a few wealthy municipalities) have enjoyed limited financial discretion. In the absence of
community participation and effective local budget autonomy, local integrated development planning has been a non-starter”.

The degree of inaction on the part of government and the extent to which it has failed to ensure a steady and progressive flow of social gains to the vast majority of impoverished communities is reflected in the continuing desperate struggle against the ravages of poverty, hunger, violence and disease. Meanwhile the government panders to the dictates of global capital and relies on the experts and technocrats to determine public policy. So much so that a number of major studies have shown that South Africa has settled into the global pattern where the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

Mohamed (2000a:1) supports this argument: “Since the government policy stance is increasingly being based on a neoliberal framework its language is deeply infused with the language of impossibility; the constant refrain is fiscal, or technical or capacity constraints or market constraints on the delivery of a “better life for all” – the electoral promise of the ANC and the RDP document. Consequently the development discourse is framed not in the language of rights and justice but in the vocabulary of technical expertise, neutrality, efficiency and deep paternalism”. Thus building and mobilising community cooperation and collective action to meeting basic needs and enhancing the development process has taken a backseat to technocratic approaches focussing on administrative reform.

The irony is that all policy initiatives from government express the value of participation and democratic decision making. Well publicised successes of the environmental and water sector, for example, mask the problems ranging from “the positive health impacts of projects which have not been realised, while system
breakdowns and contaminated tap water have in some cases contributed to poor health. The rhetoric of community participation has not been realised in practice and cost recovery is a persistent problem through unwillingness to pay and costly project design" (Schmitz, 1999:3).

South Africa’s political transformation would be a hollow one without steady and broadly based improvements in the quality of life of the poor majority – the spectre of the past constantly haunting us. In this regard the state has no choice but to play an active role in shaping and directing development with citizen participation geared towards achieving development goals and addressing wider social issues. While in many cases there is evidence of community and local government interaction, this has not happened in a way that has firmly entrenched community involvement in the structures, policies and processes of local government.

Conclusion

Given that the principle challenge facing local government is overcoming poverty and inequality, and given the legislative definitions of the role of local authorities – the constraining factors preventing it from meeting its responsibilities raises two important questions. What basis is there for local authorities in South Africa to use service delivery as an anti-poverty strategy geared towards human development? What opportunities are there for it to transform visions into reality through innovative mechanisms, matching them with available natural and human resources and finding the most appropriate framework for implementation?

Quite clearly the development challenges are complex with no easy solutions. An infrastructure and service delivery program
that looks to addressing all of these issues requires huge investments and resources in the context of a real fiscal crises exacerbated by joblessness, unemployment and a lack of capacity and means on the part of most individual local authorities. Therefore the challenge has to be approached strategically and innovatively.

What local government requires is a fine balance to manoeuvre successfully through its dilemma of how to bring about the optimum allocation of scarce resources to meet the growing needs of society in a sustainable way, while striving for social justice and equity in the distribution of social resources. The best way out, it would appear, is to seize the opportunities that participatory development offers. By combining multiple resources, initiatives and the energy of institutions of the state and communities, many of these limits can be surpassed and the service base enlarged. This notion of governance not only embodies the need to bring society’s multiplicity of forces into constructive engagement in development processes, it also creates the space “for the inclusion of groups and individuals in civil society that are increasingly instrumental in political relationships, where state structures are weak and unable to provide basic services” (Albo, 1993).

In this way the notion of governance transcends formal equality and seeks to promote civil society participation in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation.

In embracing this concept of state-civil society synergy, a “dual aspect is apparent – one involving the state, where legitimacy rests upon accountability; and one involving civil society, where
participation, empowerment and access are the critical components” (Hayden, 1992).

The key issue is how can we bring activity to bear at the local level so that the above conceptualisation of democratic governance is realised. What kind of engagement is necessary at the local level to bring about a coherent system of local democratic governance that will assist local government to solve the problems and meet the challenges of reconstruction and development. This is the subject of the next chapter.
Chapter 3

Participation as a response to neoliberal globalisation: Review of literature, clarification of concepts and two case studies

Introduction

Chapters 1 and 2 attempted to explain the social, political and economic context of this thesis, the basic premise being that at the heart of the most fundamental issues of poverty, inequality and development are issues of power. In attempting to explain why, in critical areas of human development and the eradication of poverty and inequality, the South African government’s success has been less than optimal this study found that the effects of globalisation, structural adjustment, economic liberalisation, rolling back the state and cuts in social expenditure are all undermining efforts at levelling the playing fields in South Africa. Furthermore, the research found that while the Local Government White paper (RSA:1998) calls upon “local authorities to work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve their quality of life” efforts at solidifying citizenship rights and responsibilities, reducing poverty and developing local democratic governance in South Africa have been disappointing.

The question is: how do we go about forging a new political reality in South Africa that could challenge the status quo and the powers that be? This thesis is of the view that one answer might lie in a more organised, politically active and empowered civil society which can express the demands of citizens and play a critical role in shaping government policy, forcing it to be more accountable and responsive to the needs of society working together with more democratic, responsive and accountable local governments which can meet the demand for
public services. This form of engagement between citizens and local governments could be a force that can halt the drift towards neoliberalism where policy is being increasingly shaped by institutions like the World Bank and IMF and by trans-national corporations and where compromises that are being made in society are increasingly to the detriment of the working class and the poor. This thesis addresses a small component of such a force.

The problem remains that participatory local governance has yet to take root in South Africa. Questions about how to enhance and strengthen the processes of citizen participation, how to strengthen the accountability, responsiveness and effectiveness of local government institutions to meet the demand for public services and how citizens can engage and make demands on the state have to all be addressed. Drawing on a range of studies, this chapter advances a conceptual framework to help us think more constructively about how to create the prerequisite conditions for local participatory governance to succeed with a view to assist in resolving South Africa's current development impasse.

Based on the understanding that the point of departure of this thesis is a broad sympathy with the theoretical and analytical view that substantive participatory democracy is not achievable within a neoliberal capitalist framework, the chapter will, without entering into the ongoing debate about apolitical forms of participation, first briefly review the origins of participation and its role in the past and present. This will be followed by an examination of how changing contexts and conditions – particularly the ascendancy of neoliberalism and globalisation – challenge these traditional approaches to participation. It will be argued that these approaches must be re-examined and repositioned in the light of current realities and the potential of
civil society organisations and strong local governments to act as a countervailing force against neoliberalism and economic globalisation. The chapter will then focus on the development of enabling conditions for participatory governance in South Africa. In the course of this discussion the thesis will refer to examples in which ordinary people have participated in affecting social policies and provisions in the past. In this regard the thesis will draw on the examples of Kerala (India) and Porto Alegre (Brazil) to show how their strategies of opening up spaces within sub-national government for new relationships with citizens and creative forms of engagement by citizens in policy formulation and decision making in key areas of public life could be a source of key lessons for South Africa.

**Reflections on the origins and role of participation**

The concern with participation and development can be traced back to the struggles for independence in the period following World War II. Although the adoption of participation by mainstream development actors has achieved significant gains and a recognition on how it can contribute to a more equitable, democratic and just social order, the reality is that poverty and inequality remain a blight on society. This is being exacerbated by the consolidation and expansion of global capitalism, which in turn has played a big role in ensuring that the wider transformative power implications of participatory development remains unfulfilled.

Kothari (1999:1) aptly describes how the original notions of development and participation were hijacked by monopolistic tendencies:

“The original notion of development was to open up spaces for deprived social sectors who were themselves often deeply
involved in the struggles for self-determination. In that context the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was conceived and the United Nations (UN) was set up to promote processes which subsequently gave rise to the concept of development. The state was supposed to be, in its counter-imperial and post-colonial role, a catalyst for social action; a role that received serious attention from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The state’s agenda as a catalyst for social action was, however, hijacked by monopolistic tendencies. Soon after the post-colonial phase, both the state and international agencies began to emphasise social and economic policies that focused on wealth-creation. “Development” thus became tied to the creation of national market economies to be integrated into a global economic system that was based on market principles. This approach, much accelerated by the deregulation of global markets from the 1980s, has led to growing wealth disparity, polarisation of social classes, and increasing dependence on foreign aid and international capital in many Third World countries. The most recent of these tendencies, especially after the collapse of the socialist states and the emergence of a unipolar world, is known as economic globalisation.

In this context, over the last thirty years participation has acquired a plethora of meanings and given rise to a diversity of practices. For much of this time a distinction could be drawn between so-called community participation in projects and political participation associated with voting, political parties and lobbying (Gaventa and Cornwell 1999:4-5).

In the 1970’s participation was seen as organised efforts by social movements and small groups to gain control over resources and institutions that controlled their development. At this point, participation was still located outside of the state.

The lack of a common understanding, however, of the term “participation” saw a variety of practices carried out and justified under its label. There were also concerns about issues of power: how would the views and preferences of those without power be taken into account. This resulted in studies focusing on issues of empowerment of communities with a view to giving them greater decision making power over their lives and the redistribution of
power. Moreover, having such a say was seen as a basic civil right, which the state had the responsibility to support. "Increasingly, then, the concept of participation began to move from one of users and choosers of services provided by others, to one in which people became actors and agents in broader processes of governance" (Gaventa and Cornwall, 1999:6).

As the focus turned to democratic decentralisation, efforts to strengthen the notion of participation as citizenship and to enhance bottom-up approaches to development were witnessed around the world.

However the 1980's and 1990's saw the emergence of macroeconomic policies in the major international development institutions like the IMF and World Bank bearing a neoliberal philosophy of reform that called for a drastic reduction of public expenditure and services in favour of the private sector, all in the name of "economic efficiency" and "pragmatism". In many cases this action was embodied in what have become known as structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), packages of reforms which must be adopted by developing countries as a precondition of assistance from the World Bank or the IMF. SAPs had the effect of coercing nation states to conform to the policy prescriptions of neoliberal fundamentalism at the expense of the rights, needs and priorities of the local population. Failure to conform saw consequences in the form of withdrawal of aid and investment, capital flight and the thrashing of currencies in developing countries.

The emergence of structural adjustment programmes saw a shift from bottom-up to top-down approaches to development. A movement away from concerns with equity, democratic participation, state intervention and greater accountability and
responsiveness to a focus on deregulation, privatisation, cuts in social services and curtailment of state spending.

Quoting a World Bank report from 1989 titled Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth, Leal and Opp (1998:7) demonstrate the move toward the incorporation of participation into official discourse: “Elements of civil society are to be supported by the Bank as they create channels of participation, by establishing links both upward and downward in society and [voicing] local concerns more effectively than grassroots institutions”. Leal and Opp (1998:8) contend that this position on participation allows the Bank to “assume a populist appearance that is reminiscent of PAR and is not linked with political or state power and that the incorporation of participatory and empowerment discourse into the framework of SAPs and neoliberalism also serves to legitimize and support the implementation of neoliberal reforms which might otherwise be rejected. Thus the majority of activities under the label of participation remain focussed on aspects of project implementation and consultation, without a substantial political component”.

This situation has resulted in participatory processes being dislocated from the dynamics of power relations and social injustices and being reduced to a question of technical design to improve the “delivery” of development packages.

It is against the backdrop of these studies on participation that the following sections will seek to understand the current global context in which participation functions, what strategies there are for increasing participation and assessing what its potential for the future is.
Globalisation – new challenges for participation

This thesis is based on the firm assumption that the notion that there are no longer any political choices in a globalised world is a paralysing one. Globalization is not necessarily a phenomenon cast in stone, because while it can inhibit movements for transformation it can also ironically enable the realisation of a vibrant, politically active and vigilant civil society.

This process which has seen an increasing transfer of wealth and power from public to private control, affecting the way expectations and social choices of individuals and groups are being circumscribed and eroding states’ sovereignty, has created a number of fundamental challenges for society. Instead of the economy serving the people, people serve the economy with consequences and human costs that are morally unacceptable and indefensible. The persistent poverty and hardship of the poor makes this situation an untenable one, especially if, like Weisbrot (1999:11), we believe “it is certainly possible to imagine a world in which globalisation could raise the standard of living for the majority of the world’s people. It could increase the size of markets and the efficiency of production, allow countries who are short on capital to borrow from those who have a surplus, and even break down some of the barriers and prejudices that have contributed to military conflicts in the past”.

The problems and challenges that neoliberal economic globalisation has created for governability and accountability are discussed below.
Aspects of the global crises

The diminishing role of the state

An active and developmental state that works for its citizens is key in the fight against poverty and inequality. An effective developmental state is one that is able to create, maintain, and deepen the democratic structure and participation of society and shape developmental outcomes in productive and equitable ways. Sustainable improvements in the quality of life of the poor is the ultimate goal. Social capital is seen as indispensable, recognising that its development does not require the use of scarce resources and that its value increases with use.

Kothari (1999:6) explains how this role of the developmental state is gradually being diminished. He notes that “advocates of economic globalisation (EG), pushing for the increasing privatisation and commodification of all spheres of life, have referred to the economic viability of the welfare state and the need for states to ‘harmonise’ their economic priorities with their ‘dependency-creating’ social responsibilities. Such visions have contributed significantly to states’ desperate search for better ‘economic indicators’ that are divorced from better ‘social indicators’. The advocates of a strong state fear the bargaining away of state sovereignty under multilateral trade, investment, finance, and intellectual property agreements, and under the regimes of structural adjustment and debt repayment. It is essentially argued by EG proponents that the state can no longer, in fact need no longer, play a proactive role in terms of fulfilling the economic, social, and cultural rights of its citizens. The private sector (national and international) along with a vibrant NGO sector can well handle these tasks”.

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This approach, based on the premise that the only institutions of importance are the ones instrumental in promoting market transactions fails to incorporate the essential elements that make people collectively productive. It gives no real attention to the proposition that promoting democratic participation and state-society synergy and co-production can be the heart of developmental success.

In responding to the dictates of transnational corporations and multilateral agencies like the World Bank, IMF and WTO, the South African state also appears to have been forced to retreat from its developmental position opting instead for a more liberal democratic state predicated on free market competition and the belief that market led growth will decrease poverty and improve well being.

There are a number of multidimensional factors in South Africa that raises questions about the state’s ability or willingness to promote radical democratic participatory development. This is briefly raised below.

The powerful impact of neoliberalism and globalisation has played a clear role in hampering participatory democracy in South Africa. The ANC’s abandonment of its “growth through redistribution” strategy and its adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), regarded by many as a self imposed Structural Adjustment Programme, has clearly paved the way for the more market-driven, export-competitive, neoliberal strategy which seems to have little promise for growth or significant returns for the majority of impoverished South Africans. In adopting GEAR the state avoided any significant process of consultation. There is little doubt that while policies have expanded opportunities for foreign investors, they have also
deepened the poverty inherited from apartheid’s policies. South Africans at the bottom of the income ladder are getting poorer and poverty continues to persist overwhelmingly in African households while the interconnectedness between social problems, the lack of consultation, democratic decision-making and the economy becomes more obvious.

The absence of coherent, dependable institutions of government, the lack of effective policy making, implementation, managerial and planning skills and the government’s inability to contextualise development strategies within a governance framework has made state-civil society cooperation in development and reconstruction in South Africa harder.

State-society cooperation in South Africa is also hamstrung by the lack of social capital and demobilization within civil society. As a result of local governments’ own scarcity of resources, their administrative incapacity and their financial constraints they provide little in the way of tangible support to local and civil society organizations. In addition the constraining organisational approach of local governments and their adoption of a technocratic vision of development has left little room for local government officials or their civil-society counterparts to take initiative and develop creative strategies for development.

There can be little doubt that the extent of inequality that many South Africans are still forced to endure, coupled with the slow progress of reform, constrains the possibility of developing synergistic relations. In this regard, local governments’ inability to transform themselves from institutions which protected white supremacy and privilege into institutions that will promote democracy, accountability and effect redistribution is glaringly
evident and has resulted in a growing crises of legitimacy for local government structures.

Democratic impulses are further threatened by the government’s defensiveness and aggressiveness towards critics of the state and by the centralisation of authority within the presidency. So much so that democratic debate has all but disappeared within the ANC party structures and official government cabinet ministers are expected to tow the line or face sanction. The government’s preposterous position around the HIV/Aids issue and its refusal to institute a credible investigation into the arms deal debacle are but two examples of its intransigence.

Successful developmental countries around the world have shown that a key way in which to create and maintain the democratic structure of society is in fact to decentralise democratic decision-making. The South African government has however opted for limited devolution to provinces because of macro-political considerations thereby further constricting democratic decentralised decision making.

All these issues raise questions about the extent to which the state is able or would be prepared to support a meaningful process of democratization and popular participation.

However, while the general orientation of the ANC and the government is towards a liberal democratic state there are also a series of factors that can facilitate effective participation. These include a progressive Constitution, a policy environment that is supportive of democratic values, a decentralised system of government and a rich tradition of community organisation and mobilisation. It may be difficult, but not impossible to achieve a developmental state if the state or “reformers” in the state and
civil society became the condition for each others' democratisation.

Porte Alegre in Brazil and Kerala in India have shown us that the combination of strong public institutions and organised communities can be a driving force behind development. However, the active participation by communities can be restricted unless their governments dependably support them with resources they lack and the rule of law. The South African government is bound by the country's Constitution to respect, promote, and protect human rights, including the right to political participation, and the right to an adequate standard of living. If it continues to succumb to the negative pressures imposed on it by economic globalisation and neo-liberal forces it would be in violation of the human rights of the majority of its citizens.

Clearly, the fundamental priority facing South Africa and other developing countries is to bring an end to the untenable situation that has seen the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, either as a result of the forces of economic globalisation and neoliberalism or the socially inadequate or unjust policies of governments.

**Unemployment**

The worsening employment crises resulting from economic globalisation is illustrated below:

“In almost all parts of the world, even in the North, the phenomenon of “jobless growth” is on the increase. Therefore, even with the increase in production output, there has been no growth in employment. The UNDP's Human Development Report revealed that whilst developing countries experienced a 4-5% increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between 1960-73, employment increased by only half as much. In industrialised
countries such as France, Germany and the UK, employment levels actually fell during the 1973-87 period, even though they achieved a fairly respectable increase in output. The trend towards economic liberalisation in Brazil, for example, led to a fall of the number of jobs in the formal and industrial sectors from 6.5 million to 4.3 million between 1988-93. Between 1979-92, Fortune 500 companies slashed 4.4 million jobs, in order to improve their so-called "economic efficiency and effectiveness."

Part of this new phenomenon is the development of long-term unemployment. The HD Report states that 25% of the 30 million plus unemployed people in developed countries have been out of work for over two years. This has been declared the number one problem in Europe today. In the South, over the next decade, the unemployment problem is expected to worsen, with the anticipated total job requirement estimated at one billion. Conditions are even more insecure in the so-called informal sector which provides a high percentage of total employment. In 1991, 30% of all jobs in Latin America were in the informal sector and in Africa, it was as high as 60%" (Cobelli et al, 1997: 2-3).

In South Africa, "149 000 jobs were lost at the end of June 2000 with the bulk of the losses coming from government and state-owned enterprises, according to Statistics South Africa. The poorest 40% of the population saw their incomes drop by 20% and the Second Economic and Social Rights Report of the Human Rights Commission for the period 1998-1999 concludes that government departments are not realising the socio-economic rights of many South Africans. That GEAR has failed to meet a number of its main targets and in fact led to the deterioration of unemployment and poverty levels is abundantly clear" (Mohamed, 2000a:3).
Consequences of the modernisation of technologies

One the most important causes of structural unemployment is "represented by the characteristics of so-called "technical progress", which on the one hand tends to find technological solutions which require less and less labour and on the other, produce state-of-the-art technological products which will be in demand by a limited number of consumers in high income brackets" (Cobelli et al, 1997:3).

Environmental degradation

This covers all the problems associated with the environment. The major harmful and destructive mechanisms have been widely studied and condemned, but only in a few cases have international agreements and co-ordinated economic policies (in the USA, the EC and of some international organisations) led to intervention aimed at halting and reversing the imbalances created. (Cobelli et al, 1997:3).

The problem is that the dominant globalising institutions are continuously changing the rules of the game so as to apportion income and power upwards. Agreements like NAFTA are a case in point: "NAFTA, for example, gave private foreign investors and corporations the right to sue governments directly for profits lost as a result of regulatory measures – a right they did not have under previous trade or commercial agreements such as the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). This right has already been exercised by an American corporation against the Canadian government, which had instituted a ban on the gasoline additive MMT. This additive is effectively banned in the US, but the Ethyl Corporation was able to sue under NAFTA's provisions and force the Canadian health ministry to reverse its ban in July of 1998. The corporation also collected $13 million in damages for lost profits" (Weisbrot, 1999:13).
The worsening situation in the South

The worsening situation in the South and their outlook for the future continues to raise fears and concern as is shown below:

"After more than forty years of development policies and "aid" interventions by international organisations and industrialised countries, the South is in sharply worsening situation and its prospects are abysmal. In particular, for more than ten years Latin American countries have experienced a fall in national income levels, whilst in Africa the majority of countries have returned to the income levels of the 1950s....The demographic forecasts for up to 2005 show, for example, that the current 500 million who are starving will become 1500 million, that 900 million jobs will be needed (when all the multinationals together have only managed to create 5 million so far)" (Cobelli et al, 1997:4).

Furthermore “over one billion people (or one in five) are considered poor and unable to meet their most basic human needs. In all major cities, in both South and North, homelessness has become a widespread reality. Whilst poverty has increased throughout the world, the global income distribution over the years has also deteriorated. In 1960, the ratio of the richest 20% to the poorest was 30:1 – today it is 60:1. 25% of the world's population alone, control as much as 85% of the world's industries and consume 80% of its energy supplies” (Cobelli et al, 1997:5).

Weisbrot (1999:10) calls attention to the enormous human costs of the Asian economic crisis and depression caused to a great extent by the IMF: “Tens of millions of people have been thrown into poverty, with many millions of Indonesians now earning less than the amount necessary to purchase a subsistence quantity of rice. In the countryside, millions are eating leaves and grass, tree
bark, and insects in order to survive. Decades of social progress have been undermined or reversed, as girls are pulled out of school to help their families survive, with a rising number being sold to brothels, for example, in Thailand. Jobs in sweatshops that just a year and a half ago would have been avoided by most workers are now being fought over. In spite of all this, the IMF's managing director Michel Camdessus has called the Asian economic crisis a “blessing in disguise,” even repeating and defending this statement after it drew criticism.

The debt burden

“The South's overall external debt which totalled $100 billion in 1970, had dramatically increased to $1350 billion by 1990 and still continues to grow. Therefore it is the South which “finances” the North, in so far as the annual interest and capital repayment rates exceed the value of new loans” (Cobelli et al, 1997:4). Bond (2000:118) notes “that it is not common knowledge that the third world has repaid almost a trillion dollars of principle over and above $771 billion in interest”.

For many poorer indebted countries the debt burden has devastating human consequences. Structural Adjustment Programmes imposed by the IMF and World Bank to obtain the repayment of foreign debt have led to famine, environmental destruction, erosion of social welfare programmes, increased poverty and unemployment. For example, Mozambique “spends 25% of its export earnings on debt service. This represents a huge drain of resources out of the country, and prevents them from investing in things that they desperately need. In fact their debt payments exceed the country's spending on health care and education. If just half of Mozambique's debt service payments could be spent on health care, it would save the lives of 115,000 children each year, as well as 6,000 mothers who die in
childbirth, according to estimates derived from the analysis of UN economists" (Weisbrot 1999:5).

There is no doubt that the external debt of developing countries is one of the greatest obstacles to growth and sustainable development and remains a key challenge for all affected nations.

**New pathologies**

Cobelli et al (1997:5) rightly conclude that “People’s inability to satisfy their basic human needs also generates what Manfred Max-Neef calls “pathologies”, which develop not just at individual or small group level, but also at collective level. These pathologies manifest themselves in frustration and fear – sparked off by violence, isolation and marginalisation. Social disintegration, alienation and moral and spiritual bankruptcy have become increasingly evident throughout the world. Drug abuse, neglect of the elderly, the infirm and the vulnerable, ethnic violence and religious intolerance, are just a few examples of the spread of decay of our societies”. This seems very applicable to South Africa.

Clearly, the fundamental priority facing South Africa and other developing countries is to bring an end to the untenable situation that has seen the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, either as a result of the forces of economic globalisation and neoliberalism or socially inadequate or unjust policies of governments.

There is little doubt that the crushing poverty and loss of control over their lives that the poor and powerless experience is forcing the need for countervailing action on the part of individuals and institutions alike.
Repositioning participation

In the context of the above discussion it is becoming increasingly evident that the way participation is conceived and practised becomes a crucial element because it can be a source of strength and potential at the centre of a new alternative development. It requires a paradigm whose rationality is guided by the bettering of the quality of life of citizens, driven by the direct action of people themselves towards creating a society that is socially just, politically and democratically participatory and much more humane.

What also becomes obvious from the studies quoted above is that development practice and discourse must come to terms with the transformative imperatives for participation by dealing with the issues of power and empowerment. Drawing on a number of studies Leal and Opp (1998:17) explain what this means in practice: “Participation must be set within the same framework of globalisation that civil and grassroots movements are viewing themselves.... Globalisation must be understood as creating an emerging civil and popular consciousness about the critical interfaces between the local space, the state and the market at local and global levels. This gives rise to a new impetus for constructing and sharing meanings about collective power and collective action. One dimension of this civil collectivity is the search for accountability in the face of new state-global concentrations of power which tend to favour a select few as well as the meeting of human rights and active citizenship. As such, globalisation presents new potentials and impetus for local and global manifestations of creativity, collaboration, interaction and harmony as a counter-force to the tendencies for segregation and conflict and degradation”.
For this new alternative development paradigm to emerge and grow, novel and creative ways will have to be found to cultivate more inclusive and purposeful forms of engagement between citizens and local government.

Empowering both civil society organisations and local governments remains a critical challenge. This implies that participatory action must be seen as “the process which facilitates the permanent ability to identify and analyse problems, formulate and plan solutions, mobilize resources and implement them in all areas of people’s developmental needs as they seek to gain control over the processes which affect their lives” (Leal and Opp, 1998:19).

Finally, repositioning participation in the current global context implies redefining the notion of participation to embrace a shift from consultation with beneficiaries in projects to citizen participation in shaping and implementing policy and in decision-making in governance and development processes that affects their lives.

This alternative development paradigm also call for an examination of what conditions are required for participatory governance to succeed. There can be no question that the increasing encroachment of globalised corporate power on local and national state institutions calls for a forceful defence of the institutions of local democracy and local government. This is the subject of the following sections.

**Local governments and civil society – a countervailing force**

This thesis has argued that the onus is on civil society organisations and local governments to recapture the radical
notion of development, and that the catalyst for doing so is to be found in the very processes that have been generated by economic globalisation.

In this regard Wiseman (1998:19) believes “that it is vital that the emerging institutions of local civil society are nurtured, resourced and connected as a counter weight to the power of the globalised firm and as locations within which new relations of production and distribution can be explored. The critical point however is that strong local communities need the backing of strong, democratic and effective forms of local government”.

Wiseman (1998:19) further asserts that “democratically accountable local governments must be defended as spaces for monitoring, regulating and challenging the local impact of decisions made by more distant and less accountable corporations and nation states.... The most important role for local government will be to help provide the space and the resources for the exploration of new relationships of governance based on emerging forms of co-operation between local states, markets and non government, “civil society” organisations”.

If South Africa is to stand up to the forces of economic globalisation and neoliberalism it is clearly going to have to strengthen both civil society organisations and local governments by reasserting their transformative role. This should not only be done in order to regulate but also to create the conditions for the growth of spaces that allow for the realisation of quality of life and human rights of all its citizens.

It should be stated that while recognising the potential of civil society to act as a counter force to the negative forces of economic globalisation and neoliberalism, this thesis prefers not to
romanticise the idea of these bodies as value-driven facilitators of change. Many have been co-opted to implement the social-net programmes of institutions that are committed to economic liberalisation. Division and competition has grown among many NGOs and, like in South Africa, there is evidence of polarisation around issues of globalisation and neoliberalism. While some see themselves as deliverers of services, others are seeking solutions to problems of economic globalisation, while others yet are attempting to re-establish relationships with grassroots activists. While these differences do not negate the search for common ground to build stronger alliances, it does mean another arena of struggle.

Towards the growth of an empowered civil society and the development of democratically accountable local governments in South Africa

Some of the strategies that can be pursued to affect the growth of an empowered civil society and the development of democratically accountable local governments in South Africa are reviewed below. In this regard the focus will be on:

- Government intervention in promoting participation
- Developing sustainable, capable local governments
- Building local capacity for participation
- Promoting democratic decentralisation

Government intervention in promoting participation

Government intervention in promoting participatory democracy means that power should be vested in the hands of the people. It also implies that this ideal requires real and sustainable institutions. Our current institutions, however, are proving incapable of dealing with the problems we face. With economic globalisation and its attendant neoliberal influence has come
deregulation, privatisation, reduction of social services and curtailment of state expenditure rather than participation, greater responsiveness and more creative and effective forms of democratic state intervention.

Wright (2000:8) concludes that “Perhaps the problem has more to do with the specific design of our institutions than with the tasks they face”. He contends “that a fundamental shift is needed to develop transformative democratic strategies that can advance our traditional values of egalitarian social justice, individual liberty combined with popular control over collective decisions, community and solidarity, and the flourishing of individuals in ways which enable them to realise their potential”.

There is ample evidence of the failure of projects carried out without genuine community participation in the last four decades of so called development programmes.

According to Chambers “Between 1973 and 1986 the World Bank, for example, lent 19 billion US dollars for 498 rural development projects. The total costs were estimated at 50 billion US dollars. In the World Bank’s own evaluation it stated that “the bank had apparently lost sight of the reality the cost of failure, in what were identified as initially risky experiments, would be borne by the developer countries rather than the Bank” (1997:17). Chambers asks what might have happened if, in these cases, participatory approaches had been applied. He concludes that it is reasonable to suppose that deprivation could have been avoided.

Burkey (1993:xvi) agrees by arguing that despite the fact that huge amounts of money and millions of “expert” man hours have been put into rural development projects, the results for
hundreds of millions of poor men, women and children have been
discouraging in the extreme.

Yet during this same period of increasing doubt as to the
effectiveness of “top down” approaches to development there have
been numerous local initiatives throughout the world which have
given impetus to the movement away from “top down” to “bottom
up” approaches.

Kerala and Porto Alegre are two such initiatives. A set of
qualitative priorities and principles on the public agenda which go
beyond the question of what the state delivers and into the realm
of how the state delivers is clearly demonstrated by these
initiatives discussed below. Principles such as “transparency”,
“inclusivity” and “people driven” all highlight the need to promote
democracy and development in new and innovative ways and
prioritises the fundamental re-conceptualisation of the state in
relation to society.

Khan, drawing on case studies, provides a compelling case for
government intervention in promoting such participation:

“There is evidence that the existence of the state and the rules it
establishes and enforces can strengthen and increase the
efficiency of local organisations and institutions and that, at least
in coalition with other urban-based groups, local organisations
and institutions can give rise to collective action increasing the
power of the state.... Rather than being a zero-sum game, state
involvement can facilitate developmentally effective action by
citizens. Case studies of countries at different stages of
development demonstrate this very clearly.... In Kerala the
positive cycle of interaction between a highly mobilised industrial
workforce and a deeply engaged government demonstrates that
redistribution is compatible with accumulation. Government not
only supports mobilisation but offers institutional resources that
hold the promise of making militancy compatible with
accumulation. In Brazil, effective delivery of services (sewer
systems) depends on joint activity of citizens and government
enabling poor neighbourhoods to secure access to expensive
infrastructure at cost-effective rates..... These instances of
successful development place citizens and their associations at
the centre of decision making and choices...” (Undated: Research report, commissioned by the Department of Constitutional Development for the Working Committee on the Local Government White Paper Process:2).

The enhancement of democratic participation requires a number of necessary conditions. These include the motivation, resources and support that the poor and civil society organisations have, a strong, effective, institutionalised state, including its sub-structures, that will nurture and support community participation, strong linkages and synergy between local government and communities and community participation in the analysing, planning, implementing and monitoring phases of social policy. These conditions will affect the degree to which the poor and the organs of civil society are able to organise and make their demands heard, influence policy and be a driving force for democratising the state and society.

Clearly, the above arguments all imply that governments should direct their attention towards structures and processes that maximise public participation in policy, planning and implementation processes and in the use and allocation of public resources. Without this, the poor and unorganised sectors will be relegated to the development fringes, while efforts to curtail excessive powers of interest groups with powerful financial and technical resources will be minimal as long as they continue to control the development vision.

**Developing sustainable, capable local governments**

Participatory initiatives are clearly a valuable form of social capital and effective management to ensure their maintenance and sustainability is thus an important factor. For Esman the facilitation and co-ordination of participatory structures is a major function and responsibility of government. Arguing that the
achievement of development goals depend on the strength and viability of these networks, Esman (1991:125) goes on to motivate that government has to “facilitate their formation, operation, maintenance and adjustment to changes”. Although Esman's statement implies that the state has an overriding managerial responsibility in encouraging, shaping and maintaining participatory processes and structures, he does warn against an overtly intrusive, commanding and heavy-handed intervention. If, according to Esman, the state has a major role facilitating and expanding participation then the state and its substructures will have to undergo serious bureaucratic reorientation with communities given a central role in decision making, planning and implementation processes.

A change in culture and style is needed that accords “cognitive respect” to citizens and their ideas, especially from the poor or those with “less status or authority” (Bryant & White, 1984:55). In this regard Korten (1980) gives highly persuasive examples of the importance of appropriate management systems in a series of five successful cases from Asia. Korten argued that the comparative success of these cases largely depended on a management approach that encouraged bottom up perspectives and social learning. That is, they adopted a learning process approach that “(a) embraced error; (b) planned with the people and (c) linked knowledge building with action” (Korten, 1980:498).

Rondinelli (1996:3) concurs by arguing that “management approaches to local governance projects/programmes need to be iterative, interactive and flexible, thereby meeting the changing needs and wants of stakeholders and the unpredictable and rapidly changing demands of socio-economic and political environments. Emphasis should be placed on accepting and learning from mistakes rather than error prevention, and on
promoting creativity rather than blind compliance with predetermined targets set by people uninvolved in implementation and far removed from the scenes of action”.

Joshi and Moore (2000:2-5) warn that a new set of institutional arrangements for delivering public services to the poor are justified through the rhetoric of “community”, “client demand”, “localism” and “decentralisation” while little real attention is paid to creating an organisational context that will enable the poor to actually organise to ensure that programmes work in their favour. In this regard they focus on how anti-poverty programmes can be designed to positively encourage the mobilisation of the poor based on the key concept of predictability – the various dimensions of anti-poverty interventions from the perspective of the poor and activists who are needed to stimulate and lead them into collective action.

Drawing from examples of anti-poverty programmes they suggest three sub categories of the concept of predictability. Credibility: this refers to the behaviour of public officials in relation to the poor, the extent to which officials implementing anti-poverty interventions can be relied on to do their jobs correctly and to behave predictably. It refers to both technical competence and dependability when interacting with others. Programme stability: this is the extent to which anti-poverty programmes are stable over time in content, form, procedural requirements and so on. The authors show that from the perspective of grassroots activism, programme stability and formal entitlement are valuable assets. The fact that they have often involved discordant relationships with the local state apparatus has contributed to rather than detracted from their effectiveness. Thirdly, formal entitlements relate to the legal and normative rights conferred on society. The absence or presence of these rights can spur
collective action by the poor by either challenging the state to enforce rights (assertion) or by challenging the state to expand rights where these do not exist.

For Joshi and Moore the concern is that although contemporary anti-poverty policies tend to be formally justified in terms of concepts like "participation" and responsiveness to client needs, there appears in practice to be little concern for the issues and relationships discussed here.

To keep the participatory process functioning, there must also be value consensus, collaborative behaviour and leadership skills for facilitation. Common values bind the different parties together, but management capacity, procedures and routines that enable the participatory process to work are also necessary. Critical to this are the mechanisms to resolve the stresses and conflicts, which are certain to occur since interests and preferences are not homogenous.

Another critical issue regarding the management dimension of participatory development is the responsiveness of local government to the demands and needs of citizens. This would entail local government being structured in a way that makes it easier for citizens (particularly the poor, women and less educated) to be "heard and responded to" (Sanders, 1996: 149).

Recently more attention has begun to be paid to mechanisms that can enhance the accountability and responsiveness of the state and the opening up of space for new alliances between social movements to demand accountability. "By bringing together those who are directly affected by policy and those who are charged with ensuring responsive service provision, opportunities are opened up for enhancing accountability and responsiveness."
Participatory budgeting in Brazil offers an important example of the use of participatory approaches to enhance transparency. This has enabled citizens to engage directly in municipal fiscal planning, through an elaborate consultation and negotiation process... Through such participation, users of services can potentially shape social policy not only as beneficiaries or consumers in pre-determined programmes, but as citizens exercising rights of agency, voice and participation" (Cornwall and Gaventa (1999:15-25).

Kerala and Porto Alegre demonstrate that encouraging, and indeed prioritising, the wider participation of the public in the development effort means embracing a notion of accountability that goes beyond the formalistic and legalistic application of the concept. It means applying accountability in the wider context of state-society relations underpinned by a new ethos and culture within the public service. This argument is line with Albo who argues for a different kind of public encounter. He calls for the fundamental transformation of the public service involving the levelling of the organisational hierarchy, decentralisation of decision making to active networks comprising officials, unions and users, to increase flexibility and responsiveness and empowering the front line through operational autonomy and room to input into policy formulation to improve the quality of service.

A paradigm shift that results in “sustained action oriented towards development through continual exchanges between the institutions of the state and society” is needed (1993:29). This perspective implies that accountability should be located within the overall concept of governance, which emphasises interactive processes with society.
Hyden (1992) argues along the same lines by identifying accountability along with reciprocity, trust and authority as qualities which form the basis of a governance realm. He contends that the more a state is associated with these qualities, the more it generates legitimacy and “the more people will participate in the public realm”. The conditions that facilitate good governance according to Hyden (1992) are the means and degree of participation by citizens in the political process (including the methods of public accountability and citizens control), the degree of transparency in public policy making, the responsiveness of political leaders and officials to the public, and finally the level of equality among citizens.

Governance crisis occurs when one of these qualities fails to exist. Removing citizen influence and oversight for instance breaks the bond, the public service becomes less responsive and inequalities within society widen. In South Africa these measure have yet to be implemented at the local level even though the government has committed itself to the ethos of good governance.

When local communities and other actors become involved in an interactive process they begin to gain control over their economic, social and political destiny. Any initiative undertaken in the context of this kind of relationship between state and society is shaped according to the needs and vision of the people and cannot suffer from a crisis of legitimacy. They become popularly accepted decisions.

Clearly, far from being “nothing but a buzzword”, the above points demonstrate that the functional aspects of participatory development are crucial to bridging the gap between the needs of society and the lack of resources. These are crucial to making local government more effective through promoting equity,
improving the quality of citizenship and producing better social outcomes through state action.

**Empowering communities**

The necessity for an effectively organised and empowered civil society in state-society relations is aptly summed up in the following quote: “Effective governance requires an urban population which is aware of its civic rights and duties, which has the collective capacity to determine the destiny of its local context and the means to influence, in a democratic way, the wider public arena. A reciprocal relationship between the state and the civil society can be maintained only through the empowerment and participation of urban communities” (McCarney et al, 1995: 125).

Participation for empowerment and poverty alleviation requires strengthening the capacity of marginalised and powerless communities and their organisations. Most of the poor live in marginalised areas, are unorganised, lack the means to mobilise local resources to address their problems and often lack the capacity to make their voices heard or to negotiate their development needs. From the literature discussed in this chapter it becomes obvious that, to be effective, participation must be embedded in legitimate local organisations capable of mobilising citizens with a view to taking collective action and negotiating their development needs.

Empowering beneficiaries and stakeholders is thus an essential component of participation that enables people to assess their own needs and to meet these needs through development projects and programmes. Rondinelli (1996:1) points to the importance of building such capacity: “It enables people to enter into negotiations and dialogue with government institutions and bureaucracies, thereby influencing access to and influence over
resources and services, most particularly those groups hitherto marginalised such as low-income populations and women. Enhancing dialogue can also contribute to social equity by providing a means to impact public policy and provide a check on the power of government. Through building capacities and promoting self-reliance, the people and organisations of developing countries can take hold of the responsibility and control of development activities, significantly contributing to their efficiency and effectiveness. The empowerment of beneficiaries and stakeholder can help sustain a project beyond the disbursement period due to enhanced capacities and an increased level of beneficiary and stakeholder interest in project management. In addition, enhancing the beneficiaries’ and stakeholders’ perceived ownership can often be directly linked to improved maintenance of the project and therefore further contributes to its sustainability in the long-term”.

Furthermore, a government that is committed to citizen participation has to ensure that the necessary support mechanisms and resources are made available to enable citizens to understand “complex public issues and to deal directly with technicians and political professionals” (Sanders, 1996:149).

The failure of many participatory initiatives to achieve desired outcomes is as a result of not including processes that enhance and expand the capacity of citizens to participate. Clearly, contribution in time and resources by government in developing the “organisational and deliberative skills and capacities” of communities are necessary so that opportunities for a direct public role in decision-making can be actively taken up by citizens (Mackintosh, 1993 : 45).
**Democratic decentralisation**

People the world over are demanding greater self-determination and influence in the decisions of their governments. If making a democratic state has been difficult, making a responsive state has been near impossible. The challenge of decentralisation has been a formidable one. Heller (2000a:3) argues that “technocratic visions have failed because their a-political and frictionless vision of the world are invariably frustrated by friction and politics. Blueprints developed in the West are hardly appropriate to Third World contexts of uneven economic development, pervasive social inequalities, cultural heterogeneity, large-scale social exclusion, the resilience of pre-democratic forms of authority and weak state capacity”.

Working on the assumption that decentralisation is worthwhile only insofar as it deepens democracy, Heller (2000:6) sees decentralisation as “redistributing power (the authority to make binding decisions about the allocation of public resources) both vertically (incorporating citizens) and horizontally (expanding the domain of collective decision-making). Decentralisation means a shift in power between entrenched power networks and groupings (defined by their privileged access to the state) and newly empowered subordinate constituencies”.

Heller further contends that there are three necessary but not sufficient preconditions for decentralisation: “A high degree of central state capacity – because any effective decentralisation effort requires co-ordination between levels of government and calls for more, not less, regulation to guarantee basic transparency, accountability and representivity, weak states cannot successfully pursue decentralisation. A well developed civil society – because it enables the participatory dimension of decentralisation and can potentially provide new sources of
information and feedback, as well as the constructive tension that is an essential ingredient of democratic governance. A political project in which an organised political force – especially political parties that have strong social movement characteristics – champions decentralisation” (2000:6).

The two cases studied here, Kerala in India and Porto Alegre in Brazil, are of interest because they meet all of these necessary requirements and share in common significant cases of decentralising reform.

**Examining the extent to which local government decentralisation and participatory initiatives have expanded the depth and scope of democracy in Porto Alegre and Kerala.**

**Porto Alegre**

In Porto Alegre, Brazil, the Workers Party (PT) won the majority in the city government in 1989 and it immediately set itself the task of deepening democracy through citizen involvement in the affairs of the city government. Participatory budgeting was identified as the concrete way in which citizens can play this role. It is a process by which thousands of residents can participate each year in public meetings to allocate about half of the municipal budget, thereby governing their own communities. “This reform symbolises a broad range of municipal changes and poses an alternative to both authoritarian centralism and neoliberal pragmatism” (Goldsmith and Vainer, 2001:2).

The PT, however, faced a daunting challenge to overcome deep-seated suspicion and lack of confidence in the municipality among the people as result of clientalism, and the “unequal and unfair urban development” that characterised the culture of
previous administrations (Municipal City Hall of Porto Alegre, 1996:4). People were tired of promises that never materialised.

To develop an effective participatory framework and entrench a new democratic culture, the PT embarked on an extensive preparatory phase laying the basis for democratic decision-making and political growth and empowerment of the population. In this regard Abers quoted in IDS (2000:1) notes that “State reformers took a proactive role – not only in providing the enabling environment in which the formation of civic groups was explicitly promoted but also worked directly and closely with local communities to help them organise”. The IDS (2000:2) notes that the process of civic organising was intense, “indicated by the percentage of participants coming from the 10 least mobilised districts (out of 16) which rose from 40% in 1989 to 62% in 1995. This was aided by the fact that community organisers visited unmobilised neighbourhoods, seeking out new leaders, helping people organise and disseminating information about what they could gain from collective information”.

The municipality also took time to study and understand the social and physical environment in which people live. Issues like the level of infrastructure which exists and types of services provided by the council, accessibility to land, economic activity in terms of employment and unemployment levels were all considered. Armed with this understanding and restoring a sense of confidence among the people, the PT began to develop the institutional and organisational structure that would make the practice of participation possible. Together with the League of the Dwellers Associations of Porto Alegre the council divided the city into 16 areas. Sixteen Area Co-ordinators for the Participative Budget (ACPB) were appointed.
The task of the 16 area assemblies is to discuss the income and expenditure of the municipal budgets, as well as hearing the community's needs. They decide on the priorities of the budget, "which services need to be provided, the work and improvements to be carried out, and supervise the performance of the public administration" (Pont, 1996: 46). The area assemblies ensured that representatives put forward the needs of the community they were representing and gave regular feedback.

Within the government structure the participatory budget process was transferred from the Planning Department to the Coordination of the Relationship with Community (CRC), which was connected to the Municipal Government Department. The budget section of the Planning Department was transferred to the City Hall's Planning Office (CHPO) and both the CRC and CHPO were directly connected to the Mayor's office giving the process strong political and administrative authority (Participative Budget Process, 1995: 20). The CHPO is responsible for developing the political process of the Participative Budget.

The Porto Alegre municipality also extended representation to other sectors such as trade union organisations and professional and non-governmental organisations. These groups were represented on five thematic plenary sessions consisting of traffic and transport, health and social assistance, education, culture and leisure, economic development and taxation, and city organisation and urban development (Participative Budget, 1995:44).

According to Porto Alegre's Mayor, Raul Pont, the city government established these "thematic assemblies to counteract the notion that participatory budgeting is only for the poor" by dealing with
broad subjects such as health, social assistance, education and economic development (Dosdrof, 2000:3).

Criteria to guide resource allocation and selection of priorities were developed. The Participative Budget Council decided upon four types of criteria to be applied: The lack of facilities or of urban infrastructure in the area; size of population in areas with a severe lack of facilities or infrastructure; total population of the area; and area priorities. Each criterion has a specific weight that represents its relative importance. The next step was to analyse the scores and give a final mark to each area. Based on the score, each area received the percentage of investment that would go into that area. (Participative Budget, 1995: 35)

"The 16 district assemblies meet throughout the year to determine the fiscal responsibilities of city departments. They produce two sets of rankings: one for twelve major in-district “themes” such as street paving, school construction, or water or sewer lines, and the other for “cross-cutting” efforts that affect the entire city, such as transit-line location, or programmes assisting the homeless" (Goldsmith and Vainer, 2001:2).

To address the issue of revenue, the city increased service fees. The progressive payment of the Municipal Real Estate Tax Fees was also approved. This meant that the boroughs, which were equipped with better infrastructure and higher levels of services, paid higher property rates. As a result taxes for houses and apartments were reduced while taxes on land were increased. Strangely, this move caused little opposition On the contrary, it was widely accepted by all, even those faced with the higher taxes. This “who owns more, pays more” principle increased revenue by 132 percent (Participative Budget, 1995: 29).
In Porto Alegre, the participatory process has changed the lives of the people fundamentally. A counter argument to prevailing neoliberal economic theory, the process assisted in addressing the issues of poverty, social deprivation and economic decline by allocating a major portion of the city’s financial resources to improving the living standards of its neediest citizens. In this regard there has been “a massive shift in spending towards the poorest regions of the city. Participation levels of citizens in the process have been high and sustained. The vote for PT has increased in each election, indicating that this process has generated high levels of legitimacy. The right has been unable to demonstrate any corruption in the process” (Wright, 2000:10).

Furthermore a “new relationship between government personnel and local citizens has been observed. The new type of governing privileges accessibility, flexibility, negotiation” (IDS:2001:4). Local democracy is being reinvented. Godsmith and Vainer (2001:4) agree, they believe “the PT’s success lies in the way the participants are redefining local power, with increasing numbers of citizens becoming simultaneously subject, object, initiator and recipient, so they can both govern and benefit directly from their decisions. This reconfiguration is immediately discernible in the procedures, methods and behaviour of local government”.

**The Kerala decentralisation experiment**

Though the Kerala experiment in decentralisation is much younger than Porto Alegre’s, its achievements are in many respects quite comparable. The most remarkable feature is the unquestionable observation that it has indeed been a popular campaign.

The Kerala experiment in democratic decentralisation has attracted world wide attention. The people’s planning campaign in
Kerala is a mass movement to empower local bodies to prepare plans for comprehensive local development and to create an environment for radical institutional reform. This experiment presents the rationale for a political strategy that gives voice to the poor in the struggle for equity, human rights and democracy directed and supported by the state.

Background

Since independence India underwent a number of attempts at establishing a democratic local government system with the appropriate powers and resources. Due to a host of factors, these attempts came to nought and it was only with the passing of the famous constitutional amendments 73 and 74 in 1993 that a renewed effort at meaningful decentralisation and devolution of power to local levels gained impetus. With these constitutional amendments states were required to delegate some 29 general administrative functions to lower level bodies, along with some taxation powers to finance them. “Kerala’s left activists decided the amendments were a perfect device for trying to create genuine local democracy in which ordinary people would see the main empowerment” (Franke and Chasin, 1997:3).

Kerala – Unique features and history.

The single most important characteristic of Kerala is its diverse, robust and highly active civil society. Kerala has a long history of social mobilisation and a tradition of radical political activism. The achievements in terms of human development can be attributed to the highly conscious and active progressive political forces committed to democratic reforms and social justice. Powerful class and mass organisations such as trade unions, peasant associations, student, youth and women’s organisations further strengthen the case for local democracy in Kerala. A wide variety of associations, sports clubs, theatres, art groups, reading
rooms and voluntary organisations supplement these politically affiliated organisations. More than half the population can be said to be actively involved in organised civic life (Issac and Frank, 2000:4).

If we were to take account of Kerala’s achievement we would find that in critical areas of human development (literacy rate, child mortality, poverty levels, and so on) the achievements surpass India’s national average and in some important areas are comparable to Malaysia and Thailand (Kannan:1999).

In this regard Isaac and Frank (2000:4) note that Kerala has sharply reduced deprivation and poverty – 91% of the population over seven years is literate, the infant mortality is 12 per 1000 in the state compared to the all-India average of 65 in 1997. The birth rate is 18 per 1000 in Kerala as against the all-India average of 29. Life expectancy is 71 for Kerala and 62 for India. The Kerala government carried out one of the most successful land reforms in India that transferred agricultural land from landlords to tenants and provided house sites for agricultural labourers.

According to Frank and Chasin (2000:5): “In its first two years, the Campaign led to the construction of 98,494 houses, 240,307 sanitary latrines, 17,489 public taps and 50,162 wells” – all this despite low levels of economic development.

These high levels of social development and the social provisioning of health services and education and the redistribution of land are, as Heller (1997:3) asserts, “tied to what are clearly exceptionally high levels of social capital [and] the vigour and dynamism of civil society is matched only by the size and activism of the state”. There is no doubt that in the process of improving the quality of life of citizens the state and society have
reinforced each other. In providing public services the state has relied on existing social capital resources and in turn has bolstered that social capital.

**Decentralisation and Development**

Creating and sustaining an environment for ordinary people to play an active role in development and economic progress was viewed as vital to securing and expanding the social welfare gains. In this regard democratic decentralisation was viewed as the correct political response to Kerala’s development crisis. In Kerala, decentralisation is viewed as a means for making the state more effective through “promoting equity, improving the quality of citizenship and producing better social outcomes through state action” (Isaac and Frank: 200:5).

As undemocratic organisations like the IMF and World Bank dictate the abdication of state responsibility for general welfare, decentralisation is put forward as an alternative. History has however shown that decentralisation with weak states only sees continuing poverty and hardship. Kerala’s state supported decentralisation makes it a different form of decentralisation which has clearly worked.

**Launch of the Campaign and key phases.**

There is much to be learnt from the approach that Kerala adopted in devolving power to local level institutions and creating the conditions for the genuine empowerment and participation of the people in decision-making.

**Main features of the campaign**

*Reversal of sequence*

A typical argument in the past would be that the preconditions for successful decentralisation have to be put in place sequentially
with a clear demarcation of functions among the various levels of government. This model presumes “a linearity of implementation informed by a socio-technocratic vision in which the blue print can be enacted in a frictionless environment”. In Kerala, the decision by the state was not to wait for these conditions to mature. On the contrary, “one of the first decisions by the Left Democratic Front Government was to earmark 35 to 40 percent of the state outlay to the Local Self-Government Institutions (LSGI’s). This was to compel the state to ensure that the essential conditions are created and the relevant reforms are undertaken in terms of a proper functional division of labour” (Isaac and Frank 2000:8).

*Planning as an instrument for social mobilisation*

The LSGI’s were given maximum autonomy in formulating local plans. The only condition was that the planning process be participatory and transparent. To ensure that local planning processes mobilised grassroots involvement and input, a statewide Peoples Planning Campaign was launched. The Campaign was divided into a series of phases with each having a set of clear objectives, activities and training programs. The entire process was completed in about a year. When one considers that the population of Kerala is 30 million (two thirds the size of South Africa’s population), this is a tremendous achievement. More important though is that literally millions got together in their specific localities to discuss their problems, consider solutions and agree on the actions needed; i.e. above all it was a genuine movement to deepen democracy and transfer power to the grassroots. All the expertise and support around technical aspects was provided by volunteers and not the usual consultants (Isaac and Frank 2000:6).
Institutionalisation of the decentralisation process.

To address the question of how to ensure that the new values and spirit do not die away but are sustained over a period of time, the sustainability of a new development culture depends on institutionalising it in the legal and administrative system. This is what was sought through amending the Kerala Panchayati Raj Act of 1994 to incorporate recommendations regarding institutionalising the new development culture (Frank and Isaac: 2000).

Phases of the campaign

Phase 1: Grama Sabhas (GS)

The convening of the GS, or people’s assemblies at ward level, represented the first step in the campaign. Mohamed (2000:7) describes these assemblies as “the fundamental building blocks of the democratic decentralisation campaign. Their role is to identify the felt needs of the people in the ward, discuss and decide on the local provisions of public goods and services and regulate and monitor their elected and administrative local executives. In addition to preparation and monitoring of local development plans, they also participate with respect to local resource mobilisation (through voluntary labour) and in the selection of beneficiaries”.

A typical GS has 10-12 wards with about 1200-2000 members. After a brief common meeting participants are divided into 12 small groups, each dealing with a particular development sector, and discuss in depth the problems of that sector. Despite the fact that Kerala is characterised by extreme political fragmentation, more than 14,149 GS and ward sabhas were convened. The rank and file of all political parties participated in the campaign. The GS’s are given such importance that their relationship to the
council is seen as akin to cabinet and assembly. They are convened twice a year and the local council is obliged to present before the GS the "financial account, work report and a statement of the development activities that are intended to be undertaken in the ward" (Isaac and Frank 2000:319).

Each GS was also provided with a team of trained resource persons which included elected representatives and volunteers. In the first year, 100,000 local activists were trained for this purpose and they became the backbone of the initial stages of the campaign. "In 1998 specialised training in particular development sectors was offered by 545 state level faculty to 4,950 district trainers who offered workshops to 93,000 participants. In 1999-2000 additional mass training was given including workshops for women activists. The peoples campaign training constitutes one of the largest adult education programmes in the world" (Frank and Chasin, 2000:6).

**Phase 2: Development seminars**

The purpose of the development seminars are to take into account the problems and issues raised in the assemblies and to develop a comprehensive integrated plan for the development of the area. Mohamed (2000:8) describes the objectives of this second phase as: "Undertaking participatory and scientific inquiries with regard to the status of the material and human resources as well as development problems in every locality and to prepare a comprehensive local development report. Organising development seminars in every Grama Panchayat and municipality to discuss the above reports so that the ward-wise development dialogue initiated at the GS could be scaled to a higher level of the village and collectively drawing up sector-wide recommendations for development action on the basis of the deliberations at the
seminar as part of a medium term perspective for local development”.

As with the GS various techniques such as participatory rapid appraisals, socio-economic census surveys and resource mapping were used to present and document the status, problems and development prospects of each of the 12 sectors identified such as agriculture, fisheries, industry, energy, housing, health, water, women and development, education, etc. (Isaac and Frank 2000:105).

This process culminated in a panchayat development report for each locality. The report contains an evaluation of the local resources available. The Panchayat Development Report (PDR) which is a local panchayat and urban development report provided the discussion document for the development seminars. Community delegates to the seminar are elected at the GS (equal representation of men and women). In addition all the officials and councillors are present. The executive committee of the panchayat may also invite outside experts whom they feel can make important contributions to the deliberations. All delegates receive the draft report well before the seminar. On the day of the seminar the focus is on the content of the development report (Frank and Chasin, 2000:4) and (Mohamed, 2000:9).

The report is first presented in plenary. Thereafter the seminar is broken up into discussion groups. Each group or commission is tasked with considering the particular sectional report of the overall development report and suggest modifications and changes where necessary. These are then presented to plenary as amendments and discussed and approved. “People are thus given an opportunity to review to what extent their needs and priorities were represented in the development report and to seek clarity
where these were changed or not accommodated. Moreover, people have an opportunity to reconsider their needs in terms of the priorities of other wards and the broader development socio-economic challenges of the locality” (Mohamed, 2000:9).

Fung and Olin Wright (2000) refer to this process as “empowered deliberative democracy” in action. They view experiments such as the one in Kerala as “democratic in a radical sense in that they rely upon the participation and capacities of ordinary people. They are deliberative since they institute reason-based decision-making. And they are empowered because they tie action to deliberation”.

**Phase 3: Task forces**

The development seminars provided every panchayat and municipality with a list of recommendations regarding what to do in each development sector. The next step was to prepare detailed project proposals to carry out these recommendations. “Each of the 12 subject areas got a task force to distil the various project concepts into specific proposals, giving the appropriate technical, cost benefit, and time frame considerations, as well as an assessment of the resources of the local community to carry out each project” (Franke and Chasin, 1997:7).

**Phase 4: Elected bodies**

It was decided that the task of formulating the plan could run concurrently with preparation of the projects. The elected bodies (councillors) made the final decision as to which projects and programmes are to be included in the annual plan through a transparent and participatory process. “Prior to making a decision on which projects to select, the panchayat has to formally adopt a resolution outlining the development strategy and the inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral priorities of the council. This was
viewed as necessary in order to avoid the arbitrary selection of projects. The resolution and the annual plan have to be made public by way of a statement of development activities to the GS. This process strikes a neat balance between the constitutional rights of elected bodies and subjecting them to the will of the people" (Mohamed, 2000:10).

*Phase 5: Preparation of the higher tier plans*

This phase entailed the integration of local plans into wider, district level plans. “Kerala’s 14 districts have put together plans that consolidate the panchayat and block [neighbourhood] levels. These 14 plans are consolidated into an overall state plan to which certain state-level projects are added” (Franke and Chasin, 1997:8).

*Phase 6: Voluntary Technical Corps*

An incredible innovation of the Kerala experiment was the mobilisation of retired experts to assist in the technical and financial appraisal of the projects. “The 4000 Volunteer Technical Corps (VTC) members included engineers, doctors and professors. With the plans drafted, appraised and approved, implementation also benefited from the knowledge and skills of the VTC; many supported and advised the local monitoring committees” (Frank and Chasin 2000:4).

**Lessons of the People’s Plan Campaign.**

The people’s campaign has achieved something commendable – the preparation of local plans through a genuine bottom up process on a state wide scale. The level of genuine mass participation in formulating and drafting plans is a remarkable feature. To a great extent planning has been demystified. The learning by doing exercise is also expected to reduce the amount of time spent on planning.
Believing that the Kerala state constitutes a “giant experiment in the uses of democracy to solve problems” and overcoming poverty, Frank (1999:12) outlines some of the lessons to be learnt from Kerala: “Democracy is more than voting. It can be a mechanism for solving problems and while it does not assure their solutions it mobilises the most powerful forces available—the energy and knowledge of the largest numbers of people. Democracy requires the greatest possible degree of equality among all members of society.... Democracy means activism and participation. Kerala's experience shows that people can improve government accountability by raising the levels of participation in their communities. Effective democracy requires detailed knowledge of one's local community. By gathering information about their communities for the reports ordinary people learnt about their problems in a systematic way, going beyond personal options and individual gripes, and making democratic decision making possible”.

Perhaps the outstanding feature of the Kerala experiment is that it has been characterised as a new democratic initiative in defence of the exploited and weaker sections of society. The single biggest aim of the decentralisation campaign is to maximise the opportunities for the direct involvement of people in decision-making. In this regard the campaign actively seeks to nurture state-society synergy, to create a civic culture which will promote grassroots democratic institutions, changing the attitudes of all key role-players towards the developmental process and transforming the bureaucratic approaches of government agencies.

Quite clearly, the objective of the peoples campaign for decentralised planning was not simply to draw up a plan from below. Kerala demonstrates how the creativity and logic of a
movement, social mobilisation and the nurturing of a civic culture coupled with democratic reforms, which create opportunities for participatory initiatives as part of a larger political strategy to make the state more responsive and effective, can bring about a transformation in participants themselves and generate a new development culture. This approach to decentralisation stands in stark contrast to the technocratic interpretation of decentralisation.

In describing the potential of democratic local governance for social transformation, Rondinelli indirectly sums up the achievements of the Porte Alegre and Kerala initiatives: “The hope is that through programmes that promote the decentralisation of governance, a continuum can be established in which, as people gain a voice in critical decisions, they will increasingly apply pressure from below for power and resources to ensure improvements in their access to resources and services, and will further pressure government to decentralise. Development should therefore theoretically lead to an equitable sharing of power and to a higher level of political awareness and strength, particularly among weaker groups. A decentralisation project or activity is then a means of empowering people so that they are able to initiate actions on their own and thus influence the processes and outcomes of development” (Rondinelli, 1996:2).

In South Africa, the country’s Constitution recognises that a decentralised government system is best placed to deepen democracy and achieve social and economic equity. While all spheres of government have an obligation to involve communities in decision-making, local government is viewed as the key instrument for building grassroots democracy and responding to service needs of the public.
As we have seen, it was precisely this approach adopted by the Peoples Campaign for Decentralised Planning in Kerala and the Peoples Participatory Budget in Porto Alegre that opened up spaces within sub-national government for creative forms of engagement by citizens in policy formulation and decision making in key areas of public life.

Yet currently in South Africa the primary mechanism for inviting such local participation – the preparation of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) – is a non-starter chained by a technocratic vision of top-down transformation. Despite the fact that “Government policy specifically conceives of local government as developmental and having a key role to play in redistribution, the promotion of local democracy through citizenship participation and the empowering of marginalised groups the formal empowerment of local government in South Africa has not measurably increased the inclusion of subordinate groups, nor has it promoted collective transformative projects” (Heller, 2000b:2).

At the same time this situation is not helped by the fact that: “The majority of NGO’s have become welfarist type NGO’s involved in activities described as instrumental participation... A small minority are guided by a political vision for change and therefore have an explicit political strategy.” (Mohamed, 2000a:2).

A politically vibrant and robust civil society, conscious of its socio-economic rights and prepared to act in defence of these rights is crucial for democratic nation building, regardless of the national context. A political context within which the popular classes in civil society can challenge and circumvent global and national systems in South Africa does not exist.
The two case studies show clearly that "the synergies that can emerge from a states partnership with social movements can result in engaged and sustained state-society negotiations in which conflict is carefully accommodated and creates new associational incentives and spaces; it allows for a continuous dynamic process of institutional learning; it promotes deliberation and informed compromise over zero-sum interest bargaining; it helps promote innovative solutions to classic tensions between representation and participation and it bridges the knowledge and authority gap between technocratic expertise and local involvement (Heller, 2000a:23).

The two case studies also demonstrate that the combination of strong public institutions and organised communities is no doubt a powerful tool for sustainable development, alleviating poverty and challenging the negative forces of economic globalisation and neoliberalism which have seriously damaged anti-poverty struggles.

In South Africa hope comes in the form the Kgatelopele 2001 project which has seen municipalities in Bloemfontein adopt as their guiding philosophy a broader notion of participation as citizenship. Conceptually many similarities can be seen between this development planning programme and the decentralised planning effort in Kerala and the people's participatory budget process in Porto Alegre.

**Conclusion**

In summary, the participatory literature and case studies point to the fact that expanding the depth and scope of participatory democracy is not compatible with neoliberalism and the present stage of global capitalist development. The research consistently argues that the way participation is conceived and practised can
be a determining factor in the unfolding of a new alternative development whose motivation is guided by the improvement of the quality of life of citizens and the building of a socially just and equitable society which is democratically participatory.

What also becomes obvious from the literature is that development practice and discourse must come to terms with the transformative imperatives for participation by dealing with the issues of power and empowerment. The literature moreover confirms that participation promotion at the local level requires the integration of a number of elements: Participation must have a positive relation to the distribution of social and material benefits. Participatory processes must involve communities in a dynamic and continuous process of conceptualisation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A conscious strategy by local authorities to promote community participation, genuine democratic decentralisation, and the nurturing of a civic culture is required. A guiding vision and clarity on the political aims of the process that sets the parameters for consensus building around resource allocation must be developed. An organisational structure based on decentralised and devolved centres of planning and decision-making is essential. Effective management and co-ordination that integrates the decentralised and representative community-based decision-making units into the official decision-making process is imperative. The management and co-ordination of the organisational structures largely depends on the human, technical and financial capacity which exists within community structures and the responsiveness of local government in assisting these structures where they lack capacity. Management and co-ordination is not to be seen in isolation of developing leadership and empowering community structures. Integrated development planning is seen as a crucial approach and a valuable tool to facilitate the fundamental
reallocating resources to meet the challenges of reconstruction and development.

Finally, it can be said that in South Africa, there are a series of factors which impede people's participation at the local level. These relate to the lack of resources and capacities of local government, their administrative incapacity and financial constraints, their constraining organisational approaches, their adoption of a technocratic vision of development, the lack of a political will to act decisively, post 1994 demobilisation of community organisations, the slow process of local government reform, limited devolution to provinces because of macro-political considerations and the powerful impact of neoliberalism and globalisation. There are also a series of factors that can facilitate effective participation. These include a progressive Constitution, a policy environment that is supportive of democratic values, a decentralised system of government and a rich tradition of community organisation and mobilisation.

What remains are the methodologies and practical steps that will facilitate the meaningful and constructive engagement between communities and local government in determining development priorities and strategies. This is the focus of Chapter 4. In this regard this thesis proposes a workable framework for local government-community engagement to take us beyond the confines of representative democracy into the realm of meaningful direct democracy in South Africa.

The aim of Chapter 4 would be to develop a framework that represents a practical approach which can bring together civil society organisations and alternative local governments to build a power base that can shape and influence policy at all levels and empower community organisations with the skills, knowledge and
capacities they need to act collectively and build sustainable organisations. Furthermore, the framework will emphasise not only planning and implementation but capacity building for long term political power with a view to influencing broader levels of social change.
Chapter 4

A participatory framework for local government-civil society engagement

Introduction

In Chapter 2 apartheid’s legacy of abomination and distortion in the areas of economic and political structure, wealth and income distribution, basic infrastructure and services and participation were discussed. These issues, coupled with present social problems including economic policies which have failed to dent high unemployment rates, inadequate and inefficient delivery of basic services, corruption in government, the lack of appropriate mechanisms for redistribution, the lack of clarity regarding the role of civil society and the pressures of globalisation and neoliberal forces were described in the context of development problems currently confronting South Africa.

Chapter 3, drawing on a range of studies, focussed on developing a conceptual framework to help us think more constructively about finding solutions to the development impasse that South Africa finds itself in. The participatory literature and case studies which form the basis of the chapter seem to indicate a number of lessons for South Africa: Democratic participation must be seen as a strategic response to poverty and inequality. An organised, politically active civil society can play a critical role in challenging the dominance and hegemony of neoliberal fundamentalism as well as in shaping government policy and forcing it to be more accountable and responsive to the needs of society and citizen. Local government-civil society interaction can be a powerful and constructive force for social and political transformation. In addition, the studies also indicate that the materialisation of
these conditions requires a distinct political strategy driving
democratic participation.

In Kerala and Porto Alegre, for example, democratic
decentralisation is a distinct political strategy of the left to
counter the globalising tendency and the drift to neoliberalism of
the national state. As a result there was purposeful action on the
part of these forces to ensure that democratic decentralisation in
support of the fundamental values of participatory democracy and
equity took root and flourished. In South Africa, however, this is
not the case. Local government is often at the forefront of
implementation of government's pro-market policies as is evident
from the commercialisation of municipal services. Market and
business principles have also encroached upon the management
and administration of municipal services and operations so that
efficiency, outsourcing, commodification of essential services and
cost recovery are emphasised often at the expense of
redistribution and equity – not that efficient administration is not
important. These conditions clearly reduce the prospects for
participatory democracy, particularly where the state in intent
and deed is decidedly oriented towards market-based approaches
to the management of public services.

However, the participatory literature in Chapter 3 also
demonstrates that despite this seemingly hopeless situation,
there is certainly a great deal that local governments and civil
society organisations in South Africa can do to rise to the
challenge. To this end, drawing on the lessons that the research
and case studies offer, the chapter discussed the conditions
under which local governments and civil society organisations
could be brought together and strengthened to build a power base
that could shape and influence policy at local, regional, national
and global levels. In practical terms, chapter 4 attempts to do
precisely this. It focuses on unpacking or disaggregating what could be the key elements and main phases of a participatory framework in the context of development programmes at the local level.

It should be stated from the outset however, that the proposed framework is not viewed as a panacea capable of delivering equitable and just social outcomes. It requires a political context that eschews the market-based approaches as the only efficient and effective processes. In contrast to most participation models which ignore issues of power, relations of production and forms of societal organisation, the framework calls for a different kind of state that sees democratic participation as a distinct political strategy. The framework recognises that popular participation is intrinsic to a particular type of social order. The Kerala and Porto Alegre experiments grappled and confronted precisely these questions of power and social relations – hence their phenomenal success.

This thesis is thus challenging existing thinking and discourse at a fundamental level. It is firm in its belief that true and substantive democracy cannot co-exist with neoliberalism and under the present stage of global capitalist development. This is evident by the fact that hardship, poverty and inequality continues to persist after twenty years of structural adjustment under the aegis of its multi-lateral agencies, while democratic participation remains an illusion under the one-size-fits-all approach which prevents nations from pursuing separate or alternative paths.

A re-evaluation of our assumptions concerning development and economic growth is clearly required and as Shiffman argues: “We must overcome the insidious tendency of the professional, and of
those with economic power to believe that they or we have the wisdom, resources and responsibility to develop those who are marginalised and “underdeveloped”. We have to begin to recognise the inherent qualities, the ingenuity, knowledge and creativity that people possess. We have to recognise that empowering people means that sovereignty exists in the people, that they are the major forces for change. For as Ron Leger points out “people must be the real actors for change. Development must be their creation; it cannot be transferred to or bestowed on one people by another” (1995:10-11).

Under the present conditions in South Africa, the potential value of the framework lies in the fact that the South African context is not homogenous and there is evidence that pockets of meaningful democratic and developmental approaches are possible at the local level. It is towards these genuine efforts that the framework is directed. The research would have been worthwhile to the extent that it contributes, however modestly, to the enhancement of these dedicated efforts. Equally important to note is that the framework is not and cannot be offered as a generic one, simply because it is underpinned by strong normative principles like anti-neoliberalism, pro-redistribution, equity and participatory democracy and moreover, because it requires a specific political context. In this sense the framework could be a be part of an integrated strategic approach which could be adapted as a possible guide for more left-leaning municipalities rather than all municipalities.

**The basis of a participatory framework**

The new Constitution confers a clear development role to local government. Mohamed (2001b:2) asserts that “this notion of developmental local government assigns to local government an
important role in deepening democracy, protecting human rights and meeting basic needs”.

In pursuit of this goal, South Africa views integrated development planning as a powerful instrument: “Standing in sharp contrast to the planning procedures of the era of Apartheid (top-down, sector-oriented, ad hoc and non-participatory), this approach centres around co-operative, co-ordinated, strategic and participatory planning” (Otzen et al, 1999:1).

It is the view of this thesis that integrated development planning could form a solid basis for the development of a participatory framework. This is the focus of the following sections.

**Integrated development planning**

Integrated development planning, an approach to planning as set out in the Local Government White Paper, can be seen to have great potential.

According to the Local Government White Paper (RSA, 1998): “In a context of great inequalities, integrated development plans serve as a framework for municipalities to prioritise their actions around meeting urgent need. They help municipalities to develop a holistic strategy for poverty alleviation”.

Cashdon (1998:6) explains what this means in practice: “These integrated development plans (IDPs) should encompass all the activities of a municipality and should include a needs assessment, a prioritisation exercise, implementation strategies and programmes, as well as targets and systems for monitoring. Poor communities are to be centrally involved in the exercise. IDPs are to have a spatial component (to address segregation), a financial component (to restructure budgets) an institutional
aspect (to direct organisational change) and performance indicators to permit management and monitoring”.

It is envisaged that this process will lead to the development of plans for various sectors such as housing, education, health, infrastructure, local economic development, annual and medium-term budgets and communication and institutional plans.

In South Africa, a channel for participation and representation in IDPs has already been determined by legislation namely, the Municipal Structures Act (1998). This thesis is of the view that an IDP based on the establishment of demarcated wards can provide the vehicle for enabling local government to perform their developmental duties while simultaneously laying the foundation for building organised and empowered communities and civil society structures.

If implemented appropriately, IDPs have the potential to integrate rich and poor areas, break down social and economic divisions and entrenched inequality, assure equal access to employment opportunities and services, and above all can help deal with the obstacles to redistribution.

In practical terms, this chapter will focus on possible methods and processes that could be adopted in developing an integrated development plan within the context of a democratic participatory framework. While municipalities and communities must ultimately determine actual practice, it is hoped that this framework will provide a background for discussing the conceptual basis for and practical elements involved in implementing participatory planning and development initiatives.
It should be stated that much of the information dealing with the practical aspects of the framework has been extracted from other well researched sources on participatory development and planning in the hope that we will begin to rediscover these often forgotten basic beacons and lessons of human endeavour.

Objectives of the framework and guiding principles

It is intended that such a practical framework should “provide a democratic base through which civil society can flourish”, become an “internal social and political and organisational base to address social and economic problems on the ground” and offer “a political base through which substantive social, political and economic change can be achieved at all levels of policy development and implementation. Comprehensive and integrative planning plays a central role in realising these goals.” (Shiffman, 1995:5).

Ultimately, the focus will not just be on development style and good delivery technique, but will look towards building sustainable communities which allows people to overcome their vulnerabilities against all odds, circumvent international policies, increase democratic decision making and facilitate government accountability and equitable distribution of resources. All of this combined will make it a good anti-poverty strategy embracing the concept of participatory, sustainable human development.

Practical steps

It is proposed that the participatory framework would embrace a number of practical steps and phases. The different phases can be described as:

- Phase 1: Preparatory phase
- Phase 2: Establishing legitimate structures, partnerships and representation
Phase 3: Assessing the current situation
Phase 4: Community priority setting
Phase 5: Capacity assessment
Phase 6: Action planning
Phase 7: Designing the programme document
Phase 8: Working towards implementation and managing implementation
Phase 9: Developing strategies for monitoring and evaluation

All these phases are discussed in detail in the next section. It is proposed that all the phases are implemented with the full participation of all stakeholders within their ward committees. Approaches to enhance such participation might be adapted in each phase and from ward committee to ward committee to suit the nature of the intended outcome and depending on the skills, experience and level of consensus among participants.

**Enlisting support for implementation**

While local government is allowed to appoint consultants or an institution to assist in formulating IDPs and facilitate the participatory process, nothing can replace the experiences and skills of community members working in their own communities. With the breakdown of basic community values, norms, and social relationships in South Africa has come the curtailment of community voluntary action and consequently levels of trust and social cohesiveness have fallen. Volunteering and participation in community programmes can serve as a potential source of reconciliation and reconstruction in divided societies, particularly where it cuts across race, ethnic, religious, age, income and gender lines. Restoring and building up trust should therefore be a key focus of the IDP process thereby encouraging solidarity and the development of a common vision.
South Africa's history demonstrates the regenerative power of inspiring, committed action for the public good. In this context the framework calls for an opening up of the democratic space for the involvement of the poor to input into the political and social system. Kerala relies on strong social movements that have active members running into the hundreds of thousands. It was this movement that forced the communist party to abandon its top down central party Leninist approach and embrace the people.

In South African communities there are presently hundreds of experienced committed former activists who are willing to work again at grassroots level, to engage in open and honest deliberations with the people, and value their input and contributions. These activists could play a key role in driving the different phases of the framework. For example, in the preparatory phase they could help lay the foundation for a different kind of democratic encounter between the state and the people, assisting in setting the parameters for popular engagement particularly as it relates to the establishment of a more egalitarian and just social order. In phase 2 they could ensure that the structures allow people to meaningfully participate and that they truly represent the interests of the people.

Allowing these activists to play an active role in facilitating the planning framework process will help to ensure that the interests, priorities and needs of the poor and working class gain ascendancy and inform public policy and decision-making. Ultimately the role of radical democrats and activists should be to establish a context where the people and their energies are harnessed and their organisational and technical capabilities enhanced during each phase.
Local government in the hands of radical democrats can therefore seek to mobilise and channel the energies of volunteers from among the people. In this way a corps of volunteers could be identified and trained to assist in the facilitation of the IDP process.

**Phase 1: Preparatory phase**

The preparatory phase is aimed at socialising citizens to the underlying philosophy and policy objectives of the participatory initiative and to raise consciousness. Mohamed (2001b:3) notes that the preparatory phase is crucial for the promotion of effective participation in that communities become conscious and aware of the purpose and content of the participatory initiative, citizens become confident that participation can deliver real benefits, civic unity is built around a clear set of moral, social, and political parameters to guide decision-making and local governments and communities become aware of the overall development needs of the municipality and are sensitised to the problems and needs of others.

Throughout the process it must be clear in the minds of municipalities that securing support for the IDP process requires a number of issues to be addressed. This includes the building of a new political and civic culture. In this regard the IDP process might start by generating publicly reached agreement on development principles like equity, redistribution and participation. It must be also be recognised that members of society would have to be convinced that the processes are in the interest of both the majority and minority groupings. One of the most important tasks of the new South African government is to facilitate the integration of society which, as a result of the past apartheid policy, is still largely fragmented and spatially
separated. Otzen et al (1999:9) argue convincingly that Integrated Development Planning, carried out in a participatory manner at the local level, can contribute to this goal: “Community participation in the IDP process can increase the communication between groups from different areas of a municipality; as such it constitutes a value in itself. It also ensures that in contrast to the past, municipal planning will take people's needs and priorities into account and thus have the potential for improving local ownership”.

Furthermore, the support and commitment of all key political party leaders and their supporters, as well as the support of diverse groupings of the population including key leaders from all racial and religious groupings, and civil society groupings must be obtained for the process. In addition, attention must be paid to specific challenges such as uncoordinated, parallel and inefficient planning procedures, unclear definition of tasks and roles between different spheres of government and different departments within one sphere (Otzen, 1999).

Provision should also be made for dealing with conflict. Marks (1999:6-7) in her article refers to the importance of this provision by showing how the implementation of the RDP had resulted in conflict within disadvantaged communities in Durban and Johannesburg, where people have competed with each other for access to resources. She concludes that serious consideration must be given to “who is consulted, and in what manner” and “the role of the police needs to be addressed, so that the safety of all communities is ensured”.

**Objectives of phase 1**

The first objective of phase 1 will be to launch a mass campaign, similar to that of Kerala, that will eventually lead to an integrated
development plan that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of the people. This will involve initiating a process of critical awareness building by setting in motion a dialogue on the realities of the local situation. Such a process, if well managed, could ultimately enable people to identify their own needs and problems and express what kind of changes they want and how they would like to see them come about. This phase could involve the following steps:

**Step 1**
As discussed above, a corps of activists and volunteers is critical for success. Local government, working with key community activists, could host a convention of political parties and their supporters, mass organisations/civil society organisations and other interested groups and individuals. The agenda: Enlistment of a corps of volunteers who could be trained to help oversee the process and the development of a strategy for creating awareness and support among communities for the participatory planning process. This kind of organisation is what provided the backbone for the campaign in Kerala.

**Step 2**
This step should be geared towards the identification, development and communication of an approach which local government and their volunteer team could outline and communicate to communities regarding the processes and approaches it will adopt to facilitate the formulation of a comprehensive integrated plan.

**Step 3**
Once the basis of steps 1 and 2 have been laid, the implementation of the awareness campaign can begin, using leaflets, house visits, posters, and the holding of various
stakeholder meetings. Community consultative seminars on ward committees and their roles and functions should follow.

**Phase 2: Establishing legitimate structures, partnerships and representation**

Partners are those who can be affected by the outcome of development activities negatively or positively or those who can affect the outcome of a proposed intervention. The concept of partnerships should reflect the continued involvement of key partners with the planning, implementation and monitoring and maintenance of local development programmes. Partnerships also have the potential for contributing towards the building of community capacity and for moving communities from a point of being viewed as beneficiaries to a point of becoming owners and managers of services and assets.

It is recognised, however, that: “social partnerships are rarely a relation among equals based on common cause. From the beginning these partnerships are based on an unequal footing. They are (at times) dependent on the interests of private corporations whose main objectives are profit and growth. The corporations are accountable only to their shareholders, not to the communities in which they work. They can always decide – solely on a cost-benefit basis – to withdraw from a community or remove funding for social improvement. At the same time NGOs run the risk of mediating between a corporation and the community, undermining the role of elected local authorities and losing their own autonomy. Civil society organisations need to preserve their autonomous voices and their critical capacity to empower communities to control their own resources and human potential” (MacDonald, 1995:4).
Different partners thus have different levels of power and influence, different resources and agendas. It is important to level the playing field by building the capacity of those who might not have the organisational or financial capacity to participate effectively. This will allow partners to interact on a more equitable basis.

In a heterogeneously structured population like South Africa it is also imperative to try and involve all possible target groups including political, ethnic and religious groups as well as the socio-economic strata of South African society that are affected by and involved in the planning and activities.

If local government were to secure the active support and commitment of all partners it would have to address the reasons why there has been a reduction in civil society’s capacity to organise and to impact on social processes. In this regard local government should take note of the signposts raised by Seekings (1995) and Simpson (1995). Seekings, quoted in Marks (1999:9-10), views the decline in civil society’s capacity to organise and mobilise as being a result of “a changed institutional environment where much decision making and debate now takes place within corporate institutions which mediate the interests of the state and civic groupings…. there is a tendency for such forums to make use of participation as a means for securing the consent that private interest groups give to the state. When this occurs, parties become bound to negotiated agreements, which instead of empowering civil society, bureaucratise it. Bodies outside of the formal state, therefore, need to ensure that incorporation into corporatist bodies does not serve the sole function of legitimating state policy. Similarly, caution needs to be taken so that those who participate in such forums do not merely represent those who would be heard anyway, and mechanisms need to be
developed for the representation of those who are not formally organised”.

Furthermore, the fact that South Africa is less unified than it used to be must be seriously considered when developing strategies for participation. Seekings notes in this regard that “subsequent to the transition, divisions have occurred as interest groups have emerged, and class in particular, divides previously united communities. A multiplicity of identities have come to the fore based on religion, language, ethnicity, geographic location, to name but a few”.

Moreover, Seekings asserts that the lack of resources in civil society organisations must be taken into account: “A large proportion of experienced leaders within civil society organisations, have chosen to participate in government where, they believe, their skills and knowledge will best be used. Added to this, the resources which were once pumped into civic organisations by donors, both locally and abroad, are now directed at the development activities of the state”.

Simpson, quoted in Marks (1999:11) paints a dark picture of the consequences of decreased donor funding and the lack of support of government and the corporate sector with regards to NGOs: “As foreign support for NGO services dries up and government and local corporates continue to resist substantial investment in the sector, the gap between policy and delivery may well grow wider as a result of the demise of these vital NGO services!”

In seeking to reduce the potential pitfalls for effective participation in the IDP process, local governments would do well to prioritise the issues raised above and to take heed of Cashdon’s warning: “Achieving lasting change in the context of opposing interests will
depend to a large extent on local power dynamics. The best way to ensure that poor people’s interests are not marginalised is to bring them to the centre of the planning and decision-making process. Hence support for community organisation and empowerment, as well as regular public meetings and debates, will be essential if IDPs are to succeed. Local plans cannot be legislated from above. National IDP requirements provide an opportunity, not a solution. Only where local leaders are courageous, committed and rooted in the community will this opportunity be seized. IDPs will not help if they become the property of officials sitting in smoke-filled council chambers” (1998:7).

**Objectives of phase 2**

The objectives of phase 2 would be to address the potential problems that could hamper genuine and active participation of all concerned partners. In addition, this phase will focus on constituting ward committees and appointing community representatives consistent with the principle of legitimate and credible representation and the generation of collective needs and priorities. In so doing Mohamed’s observations should be heeded: “Ward committees should not be seen as ‘gate keepers’ and that means would have to be established to prevent them from being what Evans terms ‘engines of parochial loyalties’ as was the case with many local and community development forums” (2001:5).

The following steps are envisaged for this phase:

**Step 1: Identifying partners**

It is accepted that, as a rule, partnerships for strategic planning processes must include representatives of key public, private and civic organisations, interest groups and different disciplines.
**Step 2: Enlisting the support of partners**

Once appropriate partners have been identified and steps taken to ensure their participation the next step to address is how to engage partners in participatory planning and decision making.

**Step 3: Determining scope of planning**

The stakeholder group should determine at the outset what the parameters of the planning exercise should be by addressing the issues raised in the box below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible parameters of a planning exercise for partnerships</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✷ What will be the scope of the planning exercise – will it be comprehensive or will it focus on a particular geographic region?</td>
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<tr>
<td>✷ How will the process be organised and managed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>✷ What role will the municipality play?</td>
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<td>✷ How should marginalised groups be included?</td>
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<tr>
<td>✷ Is there political support for the proposed process? If not how will such support be enlisted?</td>
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<tr>
<td>✷ Who will technically prepare the plan – how will it be financed?</td>
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<td>✷ What is the time period for planning?</td>
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<td>✷ How will the planning effort be linked to existing formal plans?</td>
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<tr>
<td>✷ How will the final plans be integrated into existing municipal budget processes?</td>
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*ICLEI, 1996:9*

**Step 4: Establishing partnership terms of reference**

Once partners are identified and the scope of the planning exercise determined, terms of reference should be developed to define their involvement in the process.
Phase 3: The development seminars: Assessing the current situation

The Constitution specifies that a municipality has a developmental duty to “structure and manage its administration and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote social and economic development of the community” (Chapter 7, s153(a)).

Therefore it is assumed that “if effective participation at the ward committee level is a means to identify the priority needs of communities, then it follows that the decision making systems and processes of the council must adjust to integrate the ward committees into, and make them a vital part of, the overall decision making processes of the council” (Mohamed, 2001).

Objectives of phase 3

The main objective of phase 3 should be to undertake an assessment of the project area. Such an assessment should provide the necessary framework for a comprehensive understanding of basic needs, service delivery requirements and organisational status of the area and the development of alternative scenarios regarding the meeting of basic needs, service delivery and capacity development.

This information will also be pertinent to the development of a public awareness campaign and capacity building strategy. (See Appendix A for an example of mapping the current situation of an existing water delivery system).

Ideally, phase 3 should embrace the following steps:
Step 1
Meetings in decentralised ward assemblies should be set up, taking into consideration the issues raised in phases 1 and 2. These assemblies are the fundamental building blocks of the campaign. As in Kerala, their role will be to identify the perceived needs of the people in the ward, discuss and decide on the local provisions of public goods and services, prepare and monitor local development plans, mobilise local resource, participate in the selection of beneficiaries and regulate and monitor their elected local council.

After a brief common meeting participants can be divided into smaller groups each dealing with a particular development sector, and discuss in depth the problems of that sector, for example, housing, water and crime.

Each ward should also be provided with a team of trained resource people that includes elected representatives and volunteers.

Step 2
This step should entail discussions with participants on how information gleaned from the initial assessment reports can be useful to them, what should be measured and how it will measured as well as procedures for obtaining all the other necessary information relating to the project area. Reaching some degree of consensus on these initial issues will certainly bolster the much-needed confidence of participants.

Step 3
This step involves actually obtaining the required information. The participants themselves should be trained to collect the data, prepare questionnaires, process the data and analyse the results.
In this way they will be able to discuss the conclusions of the information gathering exercise from an informed position and be better able to relate these to the improvement of their situation. This is an important part of the empowering and capacity building process.

Participatory Action Research, questionnaires and focus groups could be used in the information gathering exercise. In addition, existing information and research that has impacted on service delivery and organisational development should also be examined. Where there are information gaps research on a limited scale could be undertaken. (For Participatory Action Research questions that could be asked during the course of investigations see Appendix B.)

**Phase 4: Community priority setting**

Integrated development planning can be seen as an approach with great potential to holistically transform the spatial, social and economic configuration of apartheid’s legacy. It can be a participatory process which, as Cashdon (1998:7) argues, “addresses the backlogs in basic services in the townships by quantifying and prioritising them in the affected communities, which prioritises mixed-income and mixed-use neighbourhoods, which assesses tariff and subsidy approaches aimed at maximising access to basic services and infrastructure, which redistributes from higher luxury consumption to lower basic household consumption by the poor, and which ensures that the local government budget process is changed from being viewed merely as a technical exercise to one that encompasses a wider process of long term planning, priority setting and monitoring and evaluation”.
The IDP process clearly has the potential to be an effective part of an anti-poverty strategy geared towards meeting the challenges of reconstruction and development and "a genuine process of community priority setting ought to make it somewhat harder to continue old patterns of expenditure and old forms of segregated development" (Cashdon, 1998:7).

Case studies point to the fact that for service delivery projects to succeed they must win the support of communities and they must reflect the priority needs and concerns of the service users.

The understanding of objectives and priorities attached to them by various partners in the project can often differ and the need to arrive at a common consensus about priorities is crucial for the success of the project.

Designing a process for community priority setting involves identifying and using approaches that enhance the way communities participate in service delivery projects. Processes making use of tools likes community mapping, individual interviews and focus group discussions can give legitimacy to the priority setting process.

The initial steps in setting and implementing the priority setting process should include "a general information campaign – the public should be made aware of current research findings, steps of priority setting and timing, how local groups and individuals can become involved, what to expect and what not to expect from the priority setting exercise, and how final decisions on priorities will be made" (ICLEI, 1996:18).
Objectives of phase 4

The overall goal is to engage partners in a participatory process which identifies, analyses and ranks priority issues, (taking the assessment report into consideration) which in turn will lead to the design and implementation of action strategies to address priority problems. It is imperative that all partners arrive at a common consensus about priorities. This is crucial for the success of the project.

Proposed method for priority setting

Once issues have been identified they need to be analysed with a view to enabling people to determine the underlying problems that need to be addressed. Methods of analysis include force field analysis, SWOT and environmental scans. Once priorities are selected they have to be ranked. In the final analysis the issues identified through such analysis becomes the final list of priorities for implementation. (See Appendix C for Action Checklist for community priority setting.)

Phase 5: Capacity assessment

Capacity development is a participatory process in which partners are engaged in planning, implementing and sustaining a process of change and continuous learning for improvement.

The aim of capacity development is to ensure greater ownership and sustainability. It is a process by which individuals and organisations interact, learn, assess information, gauge opportunities, solve problems and make decisions to reach their goals. There is increasing recognition that the building of social capital, trust, co-operation and the sense of common purpose that exist in a community and its organisations is critical to successful development.
Previous chapters in this thesis have demonstrated that there can be no doubt that social movements and civil society organisations are a major asset in the effort to democratise and develop our society. It stands to reason that attention must be paid to building the capacity of these movements and organisations. It should be noted that "The development of social capital in South Africa suffered a major setback in the early nineties. A planned national capacity building programme for community organisations never got off the drawing board" (Cashdon, 1998:16).

Cashdon (1998:17) puts forward other problems related to capacity building which will have a bearing on the effectiveness of the IDP process: "A general problem in local government in South Africa is a lack of institutional capacity. Many urban authorities have been formed through the amalgamation of a number of administrations, and/or have extended their constituency by many times. In many rural areas, democratic local government is something quite new, and there is little or no administrative machinery to draw on. The new policies and approaches require new skills which were not present in the former system, and some new councillors have little technical or administrative experience, although many have essential skills and experience gleaned whilst building resistance to apartheid. In such a major transformation process a tendency can creep in to lose sight of the big picture and become trapped in the urgent detail".

Assessing the degree to which these problems could hamper the IDP process, and identifying solutions to these problems, could be assisted by a Capacity Development Assessment process.
Capacity development assessment process

Capacity Development assessment is a process that enables partners to confirm their goals, map existing capacities, identify gaps between available capacity and the capacity targets needed to meet their goals (UNDP, 1997).

Objective of phase 5

The objective of phase 5 is thus aimed at instituting a process for capacity assessment (based on a UNDP capacity assessment model) which will ultimately contribute to the development of sustainable capacities at all developmental levels and the better design of programmes and projects.

The proposed process of assessment meets a number of other key objectives that form the basis of this thesis. It establishes the key element of community ownership over their development affairs, it is in itself a learning process and it builds on existing local knowledge, experiences and capacities.

Method: A framework for analysis and assessment

Capacity dimensions and potential areas of assessment

Capacity issues can be analysed at three levels, the systems level, the organisational level and the individual level. The notion of capacity is linked to change and the management of change at these three levels.

See Appendixes D, D1 and D2 for checklists that could assist in the assessment of the system, organisational and individual levels respectively.

See Appendix E for the key steps that should be considered in a capacity assessment process.
The net results should be a clear mapping of the ideal system along with an articulation of the new functions and capacity targets required to meet project goals. Each target should also be associated with outputs and, if possible, be quantifiable. Outputs should be proportional to the target and be manageable as well. Benchmarks could be established for each output, describing the expected results in that year. Finally the possible strategies for filling the gaps can be further refined (UNDP, 1997).

**Phase 6: Action planning for social and organisational development**

**Introduction**

Following the identification and analysis of priority service and capacity issues, the partners can begin the process of creating action plans. Action planning facilitates the making of practical decisions about the direction and priorities for action needed to change the status quo in order to reach envisioned goals. Action planning is a critical step in the planning process – it is the point of implementation. Action plans are the specific activities required to achieve targets. They are statements, prepared in advance, of what is to be done. Action plans consolidate what is seen as the best route towards achieving targets (ICLEI, 1996).

**Objective of phase 6**

The objective of this phase is to facilitate participatory planning sessions towards the development of group consensus in prioritising objectives and devising action possibilities for the future.

Action strategies and commitments should be clearly defined and contain specified projects, time schedules for implementation,
and commitments to allocate money, time and human resources. The action planning process has a number of components that can be translated into steps for planning. These steps are based on the ICLEI’s Local Agenda 21 approach to planning.

**Step 1: Establishing the action planning process**

Discussions regarding how targets will be translated into a set of action steps and procedures for setting goals and targets for action must be agreed upon. The selection of methods and tools for action planning must be a participatory process. Methods should be those that best provide opportunities for partners to review the information gathered in all previous phases in order to reach consensus on action strategies based on a common vision (ICLEI, 1996).

**Step 2: Establishing a vision for sustainable services**

A strategic vision developed by partners should identify key principles that all partners can agree to as being fundamental to their notion of sustainability and which should be applied to all aspects of work related to the project (ICLEI, 1996).

**Step 3: Establishing planning action goals**

Goals must be practical and achievable and related to all spheres where activities need to occur.

**Step 4: Setting targets**

A target is defined as a measurable commitment to be realised within a specific time frame. Targets focus resources and help the selection of action options and measurement of progress in implementing the plan (ICLEI, 1996).

**Step 5: Developing a framework for the action plan**

The framework action plan should contain a consensus position on current problems and opportunities, a statement of goals,
specific target to be achieved, a description of key partnerships, action recommendations for achieving these goals and a framework for periodic evaluation of progress and implementing agreements. Also to be considered in the action plan are fallback planning procedures, policy research and policy development targets, initiatives for building capacities for strategic management, procedures for co-ordination within the system and procedures for co-ordination with other major programs and external funders. It should also include procedures for financial management, for example the drawing up of contracts (ICLEI, 1996).

The ICLEI recommends that action strategies be designed to commence immediately. This is especially important because the sustainable development planning process will inevitably raise community expectations for action and change.

(See Appendix F for checklists for possible planning questions and Appendix F1 for checklist on methods and tools that could be used for strategic services planning.)

**Step 6: Promoting partnerships for implementation**

The final action plan should be presented to partners and local institutions for their consideration with a view to consolidating partnerships for implementation.

**Phase 7: Designing the project plan document**

The usefulness of developing a project plan document lies in the fact that it can ensure consistency among objectives, outputs, activities and inputs with a view to ensuring that interventions obtain measurable results. A project plan document can also be used as the basis for monitoring the progress of programme or project implementation. A well-structured project document
should include the following (Kerala included many of the items listed below in their action plan document): Objectives should be clearly defined in quantified and measurable terms. The criteria to be followed in selecting partners should be explained. The exact nature, sequence and time frame should be listed and explained with reference to the technology proposed to be used. The agencies involved and their responsibilities should be explained. The total investment requirements of the project, the sources of funding, the allocation from the municipal plan funds and time frame for investment and returns from the project should be stated. General qualitative assessments may be made with reference to the impact of the project on the poor, women and environment. Details of strategies to promote the participation of partners, to facilitate capacity development, and to promote information-sharing must be described. An implementation strategy should be accompanied by a detailed work plan, a staffing plan, a management plan, along with a responsibility structure for the project. A strategy to be followed for systematic monitoring and evaluation must be included with details of separate budget lines, with adequate financial allocations set aside for both monitoring and evaluation (Isaac and Frank, 2000:132).

It should be noted that while the project plan document includes some amount of forward planning for the implementation and evaluation phases, these phases are put into action only after the project plan document has been drafted.

Phase 8: Developing strategies for implementation, working to implement and managing implementation

A community’s vision defines the “what”, the strategy defines the “how”. An implementation strategy is linked directly to the mission or vision and consists of detailed plans that are
resourced and implemented, all of which are aimed at closing the capacity gap identified in earlier phases in an integrated manner (ICLEI, 1996).

**Objective of phase 8**

The objective of this phase would be to develop detailed implementation strategy plans. In this regard partners should reach agreement on a number of issues. These include details of who prepares the implementation strategy, the form that the document must take – it must be readable and non-technocratic so that it may be easily understood and accepted – and the time frame for the implementation strategy to be completed. Furthermore, “comprehensive strategies must be integrated to ensure there are no overlaps or duplication and that each is linked to the whole. All capacity requirements must be addressed. The strategy must be feasible from a financial, technological and human resource point of view and strategies must utilise and build on existing capacities” (ICLEI, 1996:43).

It should be stated that the successful implementation of IDPs depends on a range of instruments. One of the most important being a budget process which takes its lead from the IDP. Local government will have to be willing to shift the municipal budget to sectors prioritised in the IDP and to encourage redistribution between different parts of the municipality. In order to achieve this, new ways of fiscal decentralisation providing national and provincial funding to local government have to be found (Otzen, 1999)

Moreover, IDP priorities should be reflected in the local government structures in order to pave the way for their successful implementation.
Phase 9: Strategies for monitoring and evaluation

The only way to assess IDPs will be for people to see real change on the ground: "The erosion of residential segregation, the improvement of basic services, the creation of a healthy, integrated settlement. IDPs will need to produce clear targets or indicators that are agreed by poor communities, and hence can be monitored and reviewed. This should probably be backed up with tougher national (and/or provincial) legislation which requires municipalities to publish their progress against certain standard indicators, and which introduces penalties for low performers" (Cashdon, 1998:8).

Participatory monitoring and evaluation allows organisations to accurately determine whether they are progressing towards or achieving their goals and objectives. Evaluation information is used to guide planning and resource allocation processes so that these processes are kept accountable to the community vision and its action objectives. If an action plan fails to correct problems or to satisfy prioritised needs then the feedback system triggers further planning or action (ICLEI, 1996).

A participatory process would thus be incomplete if it fails to incorporate the monitoring and evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the process in achieving the desired outcomes. “Monitoring and evaluation is an important element of a learning process approach. It makes it possible for participants to learn to be more effective, learn to be more efficient and learn to expand capacity” (Korten, 1980:498).

Evaluation is thus integral to this learning process. Monitoring and evaluation is also a means by which communities keep government accountable to the policy choices and programmatic
targets that were selected and opted for in the course of the participatory process.

Effective monitoring and evaluation encourages willingness to initiate changes to enhance results. According to Mohamed (2001b:7-8) "an appropriate monitoring and evaluation process must be able to reflect on the following minimum aspects in order to ensure continuous learning and improvement: Evaluation of process design – are the ward committees and their links to the official decision-making process effective; what has the experience been thus far and how can the design structure and organisation improve, are communities happy with the performance of the ward committees, what changes would they like to see and are mechanisms and tools in place that will enable the public to hold the municipality accountable to the policy choices and programmatic targets that were selected and opted for in the course of the participatory process".

**Objectives of phase 9**

The objectives for this phase include the continuous assessment of project implementation in relation to the project plan and the early identification of actual or potential successes and problems to facilitate timely adjustments to project operation.

**Method**

The stages involved in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation include:

- Preplanning and preparation
- Generating monitoring and evaluation questions
- Data gathering and analysis
- Reflection and action.
See Appendix G for an example of an action checklist for participatory evaluation.

Conclusion

Quite clearly, developing and implementing IDPs is a complex and daunting task, notwithstanding the possible dangers that partners have to be vigilant of: "In some cases there may be incentives for old-style officials to twist the legislation and run technocratic processes which simply rubber-stamp existing priorities and budgets. In this case it is even possible to imagine IDPs being used to deepen inequalities if they are used to formalise existing plans and thwart innovation and creativity. There is also a danger that councils will produce over-ambitious IDPs without having identified the powers, instruments and resources they intend using to implement them. Avoiding this pitfall requires that IDPs be seen as dynamic instruments – the centre of continuous a cycle of consultation, planning, budgeting, management, monitoring and public feedback and review. Instruments will be required to make these links work" (Cashdon, 1998:7).

It is these very instruments to which Cashdon refers that this chapter has focussed on. It is hoped that the proposed approach to participatory IDPs would allow for the development of a concrete plan for collective action within "a continuous a cycle of consultation, planning, budgeting, management, monitoring and public feedback and review of the broader context" in which that action will take place. This approach also embraces a set of key values: By building community capacity, sustainability and participation it allows for ordinary people to influence policies and forces which impact on their lives. It encourages more responsive institutions and an equitable distribution of resources, helps people understand the broader social, political, cultural and
power contexts that affect their lives, and ultimately are able to
develop and implement a vision for the future.

In summary, this participatory planning approach can be used to
improve municipal sector performance, to mobilise and focus
resources available in a community, and to address the
sustainable development challenge at the local level in South
Africa. It is acknowledged that the planning process can be a
complex one and there is no ready blueprint for implementation.
The approach must be tailored to local circumstances, and
learning by trial and error must occur to discover the best
procedures, mechanisms and methods to prepare an IDP for
sustainable development. While the participatory approach is
aimed at breaking out of the vicious cycle of poverty and
helplessness that the majority of South African people have had
to endure for so many decades, it would be naïve to believe that a
comprehensive participatory based planning framework alone
could significantly add to this. It is the view of this thesis that
true democrats can use it as a tool to embed popular democracy
through slow but concerted action at the local level in line with a
political and social ideology that challenges the basis of global
capitalism and neoliberal orthodoxy.

These ideas are meant as a starting point that will hopefully help
to further develop an understanding of, and approaches for,
effective community participation in IDPs.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

This research set out to uncover some of the key elements that could contribute towards the construction of a framework and guidelines for community participation in local level development programmes. In so doing it has consistently argued that the question of turning around the social devastation and polarising effects of apartheid, coupled with the current globalisation and neoliberalist hegemony over social and economic policy in South Africa, rests upon the prospect of the emergence of an alternative political culture that would transform traditional institutions into new social networks which will allow for the maximisation of strategic opportunities to address poverty, deepen social justice and build a democratic culture which would open up spaces for collective action and local government-civil society synergy.

The research has also argued that in this context participation must be seen as an anti-poverty strategy geared towards tackling the issues of inequality, redistribution and popular democratic control and that an essential prerequisite for this to happen is deliberate action on the part of government, and local government in particular, to ensure that democratic decentralisation in support of such fundamental values take root and flourishes.

The thesis accepts, however, that under the present conditions in South Africa where local government is often at the forefront of the implementation of government’s pro-market policies such a transformation in local government might be a long time coming. Therefore, the proposed framework for participation cannot be seen to be a panacea capable of delivering equitable and just social outcomes. For it to bear any real fruit it requires a political
context (which does not yet exist) which eschews the market-based approaches as the only efficient and effective processes. It calls for a different kind of governance where in place of disorienting abstractions of participatory rhetoric, genuine, democratic participation is viewed as a distinct political strategy.

Hope comes in the form of the few examples of communities and municipalities who have risen to this challenge: the Kgatelepele 2001 initiative in Bloemfontein is one such example with much potential.

The emergence of what could be seen as more left leaning municipalities signal the beginning of an alternative that allows local people to control development initiatives, based on the principles of equity and redistribution and democratic participation, that affect their lives and create a new relationship to the state. It permits popular power to be created from below and presents people with the opportunity to define and build the future according to their own vision and needs. This framework for participation is directed at these efforts – if it will contribute, even in some infinitesimal way, to the enhancement of this deep fund of human insight and dedication for the public good, the research would have been worthwhile.

The issue of political agency remains a difficult one and will probably only be worked out in the context of particular struggles and campaigns. Perhaps the social movements mooted as the countervailing force in this thesis will ultimately have to coalesce with the more left leaning municipalities into a genuine left political party with a mass base capable of holding a long war of position, constructing local nucleuses of power and building blocks of participatory development until it is ready to contest state power at the local level if needs be. Basically this could
mean the slow abrogation of our specious democracy that is based on neoliberal principles and its replacement by communities and organisations, together with alternative municipalities, that take responsibility for their own development based on principles of co-operation, equality, redistribution, self-government, and democratic participation.

Until then, the struggle for social, economic and political change is not a theoretical issue. History has shown us that organised committed activism is responsible for the degree of democracy we have today and that political activity dedicated to the public good can make the world we live in a more humane one. In South Africa we have reached that point where the “overriding challenge is knowing how to get people to re-mobilise politically so that we “democratise” ownership both of the existing instruments and of the process of refining and developing these, and to hold the states and the international economic agents and forums accountable to our human rights and our fundamental freedoms” (Kothari, 1999: 11).

This is the overriding objective of the proposed framework which is embedded in these values of access and opportunity for the marginalised poor and the voiceless.

In this regard the research has also been weary of reducing participation to a particular institutional design of decision-making and therefore accepts that the framework is not a specific technique for participation. The thesis has instead sought to highlight what could be key elements in a participatory process which could in turn bring citizens and their organisations into a collective power base with a view to influencing broader levels of social change.
The thesis also recognises that there are a number of crucial challenges confronting the framework's workability viz how to ensure participatory channels are genuinely representative of the community, motivating communities to participate in their own development and achieving broad consensus among different sectors and interest groups around a notion of democracy that would introduce a new politics of redistribution and expansion of social citizenship.

Finally, this research is firm in its belief that it is unconscionable to assume that no appropriate alternative to the status quo exists. It is true that the goal of establishing a workable and humane post-capitalist society has a quixotic air about it. But at times ending formal apartheid and establishing a democracy, no matter how feeble it might be, seemed out of reach too. The fact remains that the very process of development requires involvement by the people in shaping their future, and thus it is worthwhile to continue to wrestle with the dilemmas that democratic participation presents.
Example: Assessing an existing water delivery system

1. Project locality and resource characteristics
   1.1. Project locality
   1.2. Water resources
   1.3. Surface water resources
      1.3.1. Available data and quality

2. History, Socio-economics and Politics
   2.1. Macro-historical trends
   2.2. Demographic attributes
      2.2.1. Data sources
      2.2.2. Population
         Population estimates
         Total population
         Population density
   2.3. Socio economic profile
      2.3.1. Household size, structure and income
      2.3.2. Employment
      2.3.3. Education
      2.3.4. Women
      2.3.5. Refugees
   2.4. Statutory local government
   2.5. Civil Society structures
      2.5.1. Water committees,
      2.5.2. RDC's,
      2.5.3. Political structures
2.5.4. NGO’s

2.6. Partners

2.6.1. Inventory

2.7. Knowledge attitude and practices

2.7.1. Methodology

2.7.2. Results

Note: Knowledge attitude and practices survey will aid in establishing baseline data regarding water allocation and usage, payment for services, institutions responsible for water supply, knowledge of and implications of new water bill etc. This information will be pertinent to the development of a public awareness campaign and education and training strategy.

3. Water demand, practices and sources

3.1. Water demand

3.1.1. Basic human needs

3.1.2. Economic use

3.1.3. Ecological reserve

3.1.4. Allocatable water demand

3.2. Water practices and sources

3.2.1. Access to domestic water

3.2.2. Payment for services

3.2.3. Recycling of water

3.2.4. Sources of water

This information will help ascertain the efficiency and acceptability of current water use and distribution.

4. Economic returns for water use
4.1. Macroeconomic overview

The purpose is to develop a picture of the relative economic efficiency of water and to assess the economic consequences of changes in water use patterns.

5. Infrastructure development

5.1. Water Resource development e.g. dams, bulk water supply and reticulation

5.2. Sanitation

5.3. Housing

5.4. Roads

5.5. Electrification

5.6. Informal and light industry

6. Administrative arrangements, policy and legislative framework

6.1. Administrative arrangements

6.1.1. Past practices

6.1.2. New institutional arrangements

6.1.3. Introduction to national water legislation

6.2. Policy Framework

6.2.1. White Paper on National Water Policy

6.2.2. White Paper on Environmental Management Policy for South Africa

6.3. Legal Framework

6.3.1. The Constitution of 1996

The Constitutional distribution of powers over the environment

Effect of the division of Powers over the environment

6.3.2. The Bill of Rights
The environment Right

The administrative justice and Access to information Rights

The right to property

6.3.3. The National Water Bill 1998

Financing water resources management and water services provision

6.3.4. The Water Act

7. Other Initiatives relating to water provision

7.1. Government initiatives

7.2. NGO initiatives

7.3. Research and Development

Appendix B

Some Participatory Action Research questions that could be asked during the course of investigations

- What social and economic ecologies are present in the area?
- What resources are available in the area? Who controls the use of these resources? How is the control distributed?
- How do people make a living in the area? What are the various productive activities? What are the constraints on production?
- Who are the poor and disadvantaged in the area? What do the poor themselves see as the causes of their poverty? What are the other causes of their poverty? What restraints are hindering their development?
- Who are the advantaged in the area? Why are they advantaged? What is the degree of social and economic homogeneity? What internal divisions are there in the community?
- What dependency relationships exist between the poor and others? Is there exploitation of the poor? What form does the exploitation take? What is the degree of exploitation?
- In what ways are the interests of the various socio-economic groups similar? In what ways do they oppose each other? Which of these contradictions are mutually antagonistic and which are non-antagonistic?
- What natural factors are causes of poverty and hindrances to development? What is the potential for improvement?
- What is the pattern of social conditions among the poor? E.g., disease, nutritional status, literacy levels, hygiene and sanitation? Which factors are primary causes of poverty?
- What are the cultural and religious beliefs and practices of the people? Does everyone share them? Do they benefit the poor? Which are detrimental?
- Which governmental services and programmes are operative in the area? Who are they available to and who is taking advantage of them? What
other local and external organisations are operating in the area? Who is benefiting and how from their programmes?

(Burkey, 118:1993)
Appendix C

Action Checklist for community priority setting

Step 1
➢ Review Current situation report with a view to the report serving as an entry point for consultations

Step 2
➢ Identify key partners to be consulted and planning questions to be addressed

Step 3
➢ Conduct consultations with partners through individual interviews, questionnaires, community meetings etc. Prepare a report that describes the first step (who was involved, the nature of discussions, the issues, alternative strategies, constraints and priorities that have emerged).

Step 4
➢ Prepare agenda and organise meeting for partners forum. The objective is to arrive at a consensus on priority problems, constraints, opportunities and strategies.

Step 5
➢ Make a matrix to assess different problems e.g. – lack of adequate clean drinking water, surface water contamination and water borne diseases. The matrix should be based on both information obtained from the public via the knowledge and practice survey as well as from an analysis of the current situation report. In this way information obtained from the public could broaden the focus of analysis and decision makers by bringing attention to issues that may not be known while information obtained from the analysis of the current situation report could focus public attention on problems that do not have high visibility but that are real nevertheless.
Step 6
➢ The list should be subjected to a comparative analysis in which the best available scientific information will be used to assess and rank the relative problems and risks related to water and environmental problems, to human health, ecology and quality of life.

Step 7
➢ A scale (1=low impact 2=medium impact, 3=high impact) is then applied to each problem along with a set of criteria; the rankings are then totalled to reach a score for each problem.

Step 8
➢ After rankings are made issues are divided into priority areas: high (13 or more points), medium (7-12 points) and low (less than 7 points)

Step 9
➢ Numerous activities to educate the public about the results of the priority setting exercise including community information meetings, publishing articles in the local press and setting up information displays should be initiated.

(ICLEI, 1996:17-25)
Appendix D

Checklist for areas of assessment at the systems level

- Policy framework in which development plans are set

- Legal/Regulatory Dimension: includes the rules, laws, norms, standards which govern the system and within which a capacity initiative is to function.

- Management or Accountability Dimension: defines who manages the system and which entities or partners function within the system. From a capacity development perspective, this would identify who is responsible for potential design, management and implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and all other related capacities at the systems level.

- Resources Dimension: (human, financial, information) that may be available within the system to develop and implement the programme and/or the capacities.

- Process Dimension: the inter-relationships, interdependencies and interactions amongst the entities, including the fact that these may comprise subsystems within the overall system. This includes the interrelationships amongst entities in terms of the flow of resources and information, formal and informal networks of people, and even supporting communications infrastructures.

(UNDP, 1998:9)
## Appendix D1

### Checklist for areas of assessment at the organisational level

This sector includes the operations of government, the private sector, NGOs, voluntary organisations etc. The dimensions of capacity include:

- **Mission and strategy**: include the role, mandate, and definition of products/services; clients/customers served; interactions within the broader system and "partners"; the measures of performance and success; and the presence of core strategic management capacities.

- **Culture/Structure and Competencies**: organisational and management values, management style, and standards, organisational structures and designs, core competencies.

- **Processes**: (internal and external to the entity) supporting such functions as planning, client management, relationships with other entities, research/policy development, monitoring and evaluation, performance/quality management, financial and human resources management, etc. Process can be both internal and external.

- **Human resources**: the most valuable of the entity’s resources and upon which change, capacity and development primarily depend.

- **Financial resources**: both operating and capital resources required for the efficient and effective functioning of the entity.

- **Information resources**: of increasing importance, and how these resources (all media, electronic and paper) are managed to support the mission and strategies of the entity.

- **Infrastructure**: physical assets (property, buildings and movable assets), computer systems and telecommunications infrastructures, productive work environments.

(UNDP, 1998:8)
Appendix D2

Checklist for areas of assessment at the individual level

This includes individuals both within entities involved in the management and delivery of an initiative, as well as those who are beneficiaries or are otherwise impacted by the initiative. Dimensions of capacity at this level include:

- Job requirements and skill levels
- Training and retraining
- Learning and on the job training
- Career progression
- Accountability/ethics
- Access to information
- Personal/professional networking
- Performance/conduct
- Incentives/security
- Values, integrity and attitudes
- Morale and motivation
- Work redeployment and job sharing
- Interrelationships and team work
- Interdependencies
- Communication skills

(UNDP, 1998:10)
Appendix E

The Assessment process: A checklist

A clear strategy for the process must be developed. This must include:

- The selection of the method and approach.
- Development of an action plan and a schedule.
- Defining the nature and acceptance of the final product.
- Determining the resources required for the process.
- Identify and assign responsibilities.
- Providing training where required.
- Setting up information sharing, co-ordination, evaluation and feedback mechanisms.
- Writing the program document as the process evolves.
- To facilitate this process a network assessment approach is regarded as most appropriate and involves the use of:
  - Mapping the system organisation and partners.
  - Meetings of partners to compare and exchange experience and wisdom about system stress points, opportunities and constraints on the system development.
  - Use of professional or technical methods to analyse operating efficiencies, technical system capacities and other issues identified in stakeholder meetings preparation of an assessment report containing information about key compartments in the system, conditions and trends and the presentation of the report to partners for their consideration.
- Once the assessment has been completed, the existing capacity clarified, the future capacity recorded and the capacity gap identified, recommendations relating to the following should be considered by partners with a view to developing the needed capacities as well as ensuring their sustainability:
  - Options to improve services/functions/roles.
• Estimates indicating costs of different options.
• Operation and maintenance implications of different options.
• Alternatives for financing improvements.
• Options for service/functions/role improvements.
• Preliminary planning for improvements.
• Identifying micro contracts associated with plan.

[ICLEI, 1996:26-37]
Appendix F

Checklist for planning questions

- Why have we come together to do this activity? What are the problems we want to solve and why are we having these problems?
- What are we trying to accomplish? What will indicate that we have reached our goals? This discussion should lead to an agreement on objectives as well as agreed upon ways to measure success or failures.
- Which obstacles might we encounter in carrying out this project? What precautions can we take to avoid these problems? What alternatives do we have if they nonetheless arise? These discussions are a useful exercise in contingency planning as well as helping groups to thoroughly think through the project before they try to implement it.
- With what resources is it possible to carry out the planned activity? What alternatives are available? Is the project technically feasible? These discussions will provide the groups with all the inputs necessary as well as alternative solutions.
- How many or how much resources are needed?
- How much is each item on the list of inputs and services going to cost?
- How are we going to achieve our objectives? What are the activities or actions need to be carried out in order to progress towards our goal?
- Who is going to be responsible for each action/activity and who is going to assist? Consideration will have to be given to different skills, availability etc.
- When is each activity going to take place? When is the earliest that an activity can take place? When must it be completed? Which activities must be completed before others can start? What delays could arise? What changes can be made should such delays arise? These discussions should produce a time plan which is realistic and allows for unexpected circumstances.
- Where are the activities going to take place? Where can assistance be received?
Once all the questions have been discussed the entire plan has to be reviewed in order to check there are no contradictions or omissions. During implementation the plan should be regularly reviewed and revised. Finally, when the entire activity has been completed the plan should be reviewed again so that lessons learned can be followed in preparing the groups next plan.

(Burkey, 1993:156)
Appendix F1

Checklist for methods and tools for Strategic Services Planning

- Surveys/questionnaires
- Focus group discussions
- Field trips
- Public forums
- Community meetings
- Participatory radio shows
- Mapping technique
- Historical mapping
- Field force analysis
- SWOT
- Interpretative brainstorming
- Ranking.

(ICLEI, 1996)
Appendix G

Action Checklist: Participatory evaluation

1. Preplanning and Preparation
   1.1. Outline conceptual framework based on participatory evaluation principles
   1.2. Define Terms of reference for evaluation:
       1.2.1. Project context
       1.2.2. Purpose of the evaluation
       1.2.3. Proposed methodology
       1.2.4. Preliminary identification of partners
       1.2.5. An evaluation strategy that outlines the phases of the evaluation
       1.2.6. Duration of the evaluation process
       1.2.7. Composition of the evaluation team
       1.2.8. Responsibilities of the consultants
       1.2.9. Resources required
   1.3. Assess constraints and resources or enabling and inhibiting factors
   1.4. Identify the participatory evaluation facilitator, team members and partners
   1.5. Negotiate the purpose and objectives of the participatory evaluation with the key actors
   1.6. Decide when evaluation should be done – mid point or end of project etc
   1.7. Decide on time frame for evaluation
   1.8. Consider costs involved in evaluation process
2. Generating evaluation questions
2.1. Facilitate participatory workshops in or field visits to stakeholder workplace or residence
2.2. Collectively identify the main focus of the evaluation

3. Data gathering and analysis
3.1. Provide necessary training in data gathering methods
3.2. Gather data collectively
3.3. Analyse data collectively

4. Reflection and action
4.1. Prioritise problems to be solved and questions to be answered
4.2. Co-ordinate resources for resolving problems identified in the evaluation

(UNDP, 1997)
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