



# Homeless people's alliance: Centre for Civil Society's project

**Firoz Khan and Edgar Pieterse**

**Published in 2004**

## **Introduction**

Democratisation, writes James Holston (2002), is normally 'disjunctive'<sup>1</sup> – it comprises processes in the 'institutionalization, performance, and meaning of citizenship that are always uneven, unbalanced and heterogeneous'. Two types of democratic disjunction are especially prevalent. Firstly, although political institutions democratise with considerable success<sup>2</sup>, citizens suffer routine and systematic violations of human rights. Thus many new democracies are electoral and 'uncivil' at the same time. Uncivil electoral democracies exhibit certain significant features of deformed citizenship. Institutions of law and justice become delegitimised; violent crime and abuse increase; the poor are brutalised, criminalized, dehumanised and attacked; 'civility and civil protection in public space declines'; and, illegal measures of control are actively supported by the poor majority. The second democratic disjunction pertains to the relation between the formal status of citizenship and the substantive rights people exercise. Theoretically, membership entails full access to rights and access depends on membership. In practice, 'the two are often independent of each other'. For the urban poor, formal membership in the state is insufficient to prevent exclusion 'in fact and law' from the rights of citizenship and effective participation in its organisation. The two disjunctions - uneven citizenships and discrepancies between form and substance – are characteristic of global and South African democracy.

The globalisation of illiberal and uncivil democracies strikes at the very heart of the central paradox of modern democracy. Following Mouffe (2000)<sup>3</sup>, modern democracy can be characterised in terms of the historical conjunction of two constitutive traditions. The liberal tradition associated with the rule of law, individual liberty and human rights. The democratic tradition is associated with participation, citizen equality and majority rule. The tension between the liberals and democrats has been denied in recent theory and practice – that principles can be reconciled through the exchange of public reason by free and equal citizens. Thus the inclusions and exclusions – a persistent and enduring feature of contemporary citizenship<sup>4</sup> and more broadly 'the constitution of a people' – is effectively denied in these 'consensus' models of democracy.

<sup>1</sup> Holston, J. 2002. Urban Citizenship and Globalisation in A.J.Scott (ed). *Global City-Regions: Trends, Theory, Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (325-348) 330-331 <sup>2</sup> Free and fair elections, political and civil rights, functioning elected institutions and watchdog institutions, the promulgation of constitutions and other legal codes based on the rule of law, individual liberty, human rights and other democratic principles <sup>3</sup> Mouffe, C. 2000. *The Democratic Paradox*. London and New York: Verso – Reviewed by James Tully in *Political Theory*, 30, 6, 862-864 <sup>4</sup> see Kabeer, N. 2002. Citizenship, Affiliation and Exclusion: Perspectives from the South. In J.Gaventa et al (eds). *IDS Bulletin: Making Rights Real: Exploring Citizenship, Participation and Accountability*, 33, 2, 12-23

Nowhere is this more clearly reflected than in the ‘neoliberal’ and ‘Third Way’ ‘supply side citizenship’<sup>5</sup> approaches; an ‘hegemony’ parading as consensus that places the rights of multinational corporations beyond democratic control and a ‘corresponding’ crystallisation of relations of power. Personal autonomy, self-reliance, social initiative on the basis of ability to pay, equality of opportunity, volunteerism, workfarism, no rights without responsibility, procedural justice, and so on are the defining features of Third Way and (neo)liberal citizenship (see Box One for the ANC appropriation of the Box One Third Way).<sup>6</sup>

The ANC government has embraced the Third Way principles with an emphasis on individual responsibility, self-reliance and personal autonomy. Supply-side citizenship represents a curious admixture of the operating

frameworks for community development, private initiative and enterprise, the activist rationale of mutuality and trust, safety net for those who ‘cannot help themselves’, and, where necessary, concerned with the ‘deserving poor’. Some see in this approach the possibility for the dead by the neoliberals a decade ago – in new and innovative ways that ensures that collaboration are built into public policy. For this group, the market emphasis on innovation means that the shackles of passive welfarism and elitist professionalism can be discarded and replaced with the concept of ‘dynamic self-determining communities’. There are those who invoke the ‘fused discourses’ for strategic purposes; i.e. demonstrating a commitment to innovative projects and gaining legitimacy in funding submissions. Then there are those who perceive the new discourses of community development as ‘Trojan horses’ – a means to shepherd and discipline society and community organisations to the dictates of the market that has no commitment to the community participation; a weak commitment to giving and amplifying the voice of disadvantaged groups; and, no commitment to the politics of equality. The only alternative for this group is to embark on the arduous task of re-grounding community development in an activist frame with its emphasis on solidarity and mutuality; political mobilisation and advocacy, structural change and redistribution undergirded by a strong commitment to furthering the

For the poorest of the poor, this has meant that they essentially have to care for themselves, with the exception It emphasises the market rationale of some basic health care services, housing subsidies, slowly improving educational facilities, and increasing access to electricity and water... The principle of equality has become enmeshed with the praxis of ‘meritocracy’ in the welfare industry rationale of a state the sense that the ANC caters to its ‘black middle class’ constituencies’ by supporting affirmative action and ‘black empowerment’ policies. A frequent critique of the ‘black empowerment’ approach taken by the government bureaucratic regulations and charity is that it favours a small, influential, yet consistently growing sector or already relatively privileged individuals. The government’s defense of its approach is to argue that these are ‘deserving’ individuals and that the reinvigoration of the ‘social’ – declared government also attempts to assist the broad mass of its constituents by providing equal access to basic amenities.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, the emphasis on the African concept of ‘ubuntu’ fits easily with the notion of reciprocity rather community-building, trust, mutuality and than individual entitlement, as practiced in western welfare systems. An individual is seen to have larger social responsibilities and given a context of limited state capacity to enact policies to end poverty in the short term, enterprise, self-determination and it is all to tempting to use the ‘ubuntu’ notion to develop an African version of the Third Way motto of ‘no rights without responsibilities’

<sup>5</sup> Shift of emphasis from the state to the individual to take responsibility for his or her life chances and development – de Beus, J. & Koelble. 2002. The Third Way diffusion of social democracy: Western Europe and South Africa compared. In *Politikon*, 28, 2, 181-194 <sup>6</sup> Ibid: 191-192 <sup>7</sup> Rose, N. 1996. The death of the social? Refiguring the territory of government. In *Economy and Society*, 25, 3, 327-356; Rose, N. 1999. Inventiveness in Politics: Review article of A.Giddens (1998) *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*. In *Economy and Society*, 28, 3, 467-493

politics of equality; giving voice to the disadvantaged and vulnerable; and, deepening deliberative democracy.<sup>8</sup>

Founding and grounding of an alternative activist orientation that resonates with the aspirations of the poor demands an abandonment of the nonadversarial/consensus models of 'democratic politics'. As a counter to the globalisation of uncivil and illiberal electoral democracies, democrats, it is argued, should abandon the search for reconciliation and agreement through embracing dissensus, disagreement and contestation – to view democratic politics as an 'agonistic confrontation' among adversaries. In such a confrontation, the left/right configuration plays a crucial role wherein reigning hegemonies and power relations are questioned and contested. As Mouffe (2000:11) writes:

Hence the need to relinquish the illusion that a rational consensus could be achieved where such a tension [between freedom and equality] would be eliminated, and to realise that pluralist democratic politics consists in pragmatic, precarious and necessarily unstable forms in negotiating its constitutive paradox.

In this context, and particularly critical to this project, is to begin a radical deconstruction of the 'frame of existing politics'; the routine subversion of this frame by the 'quite' and organised encroachments of the poor; and, the contamination of economic and political by the subaltern. Following Barry (2002), a distinction is drawn between politics – as a set of technical practices, forms of knowledge and institutions – and the political as an index of the space of disagreement. Viewed in these terms, what is commonly termed politics is not necessarily – or generally – political in its consequences.

Politics can often be profoundly anti-political in its effects: suppressing potential spaces for contestation; placing limits on the possibilities for debate and confrontation. Indeed, one might say that one of the core functions of politics has been, and should be, to place limits on the political. Politicians, officials and activists have developed remarkable sets of skills in containing and channelling the form and direction of political disagreement. Such skills, in using available institutional procedures in holding public inquiries, in maintaining organisational or party discipline, in understanding how to draw up legislation, in using the possibilities for patronage and developing voting procedures, in creating arrangements where consensus can be reached and in managing the press and public relations and so on, are extraordinarily technical.<sup>9</sup>

These 'technical' stratagems are crucial in informing, justifying and reproducing 'particular forms of anti-political action'. In general, legislation and technical regulation place objects and actions outside the realm of public contestation, thereby regularising the conduct of social and economic life. 'Calculation', 'measurement', 'enumeration', corporatist negotiation formats are – amongst other strategies used by the state – to reduce the space of the political and to limit the possibility of disagreement. The elaboration and operation of complex 'metrological regimes'<sup>10</sup> – estimation of service

<sup>8</sup> See Kenny, S. 2002. Tensions and Dilemmas in Community Development: new discourses, new Trojans? In *Community Development Journal*, 37, 4, October, 284-299 <sup>9</sup> Barry, A. 2002. The anti-political economy. In *Economy and Society*, 31, 2, 268-284 (271) <sup>10</sup> Zones in which measurement come to assume relatively standardised forms

and infrastructure backlogs, economic data, health indicators, etc. – reduce the space of the political and limit the possibility of disagreement/controversy in diverse realms – especially the economic. Thus, political actions and events are ‘framed’ by metrological regimes and other strategies, and they are kept separated, as far as is possible, from any contamination by the economic field.

However, the division between the realm of political contestation (on the one hand) and the realms of law, administration, science and the economy (on the other) are always provisional and contestable precisely because these stratagems have regulative and performance implications and consequences. For example, the recent rail accident in Hatfield (London) – a train travelling from King’s Cross to Leeds derailed while travelling at 115 miles per hour – was blamed on metal fatigue and clearly had no traces of political impurity. But the mechanics of metal fatigue raised questions about the viability of a model of economic organisation based on the inadequate regulation of private monopolies. Far from having anti-political effects, calculations of engineers had political ramifications and led to political demonstrations.

The challenge to the ‘frame’ of existing politics assumes different forms globally not unrelated to the very substantial differences in capabilities and capacities of the state in the continual definition and re-definition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not<sup>11</sup>; i.e. the tactics of governmentality. The challenge is also very deeply conditioned by how social movements and other civil society formations come to understand and appropriate ‘citizenship’; i.e. the liberal versus more agency-driven conceptions.<sup>12</sup> What is notable though is that in the uncivil electoral democracies – not exclusively confined to developing countries - the poor are articulating and championing emancipatory and empowering visions of development that actively engage with, confront and challenge the new geographies of governmentality produced by globalisation.<sup>13</sup> These local challenges and responses are often set within a community development mode; green currencies, local exchange and trading systems, community credits schemes and so on. It is against this backdrop that global institutions and national governments have rediscovered the value of ‘community’ through the lens of ‘communitarism’, ‘social capital’ and/or ‘civil society’. But this does not come without its tensions and contradictions. Indeed, the prominence accorded ‘community development’ is more often than not less about empowerment and meaningful transformation, than a ‘substitute’ for structural and institutional change.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast, the empowering vision of development has its roots in the movements of the urban poor who are mobilising and mediating the multiple contradictions of ‘uncivil’ and ‘illiberal’ citizenship. Theirs is a project of reconstituting citizenship through the construction of countergovernmentality/governmentality from below – ‘animated by the social relations of shared poverty, by the excitement of active participation in the

<sup>11</sup> Phrase borrowed from Foucault, M. – Governmentality – Abridged version of original essay contained in D.McKevitt & A.Lawton, 1994: *Public Sector Management: Theory, Critique and Practice*, London:Sage, 11-24 (23) <sup>12</sup> Gaventa, G. 2002. Introduction: Exploring Citizenship, Participation and Accountability. In J.Gaventa et al (eds). *IDS Bulletin: Making Rights Real: Exploring Citizenship, Participation and Accountability*, 33, 2, 1-11 <sup>13</sup> Appadurai, A. 2002. Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics. In *Public Culture*, 14, 1, 21-47 <sup>14</sup> Craig, G. et al. 2000. Globalisation from below: implications for the *Community Development Journal*. In *Community Development Journal*, 35, 4, 323-335 (329)

politics of knowledge, by its openness to correction through other forms of intimate knowledge and spontaneous everyday politics', and by 'cross-border' activism' through 'transnational advocacy and exchange networks' (creating networks of globalisation from below). The Mumbai Alliance (Society for the Protection of Area Resources Centre (NGO), the National Slum Dwellers Federation (CBO) and Mahila Milan<sup>15</sup>) – which informed the SA Federation model – presents a post-Marxist and postdevelopmentalist vision of how the global and the local can become reciprocal instruments in the deepening of democracy.<sup>16</sup>

Particularly significant about the present era is that cities – and metropolitan regions especially – are the crucial sites and the strategic arenas that foster and encourage the development of 'new citizenships'. This is not surprising considering that cities render the consequences of globalisation a 'lived experience' for the majority, manifest in distorted urban spatial forms, social disorganisation, depressed living conditions, high levels of violence and insecurity, etc. As people struggle over the conditions of conditions of urban life, they mobilise around right-claims to address the inequities of these conditions. In the process, they become 'active' citizens, developing new sources of rights and new agendas for citizenship. In this way, the lived experiences of cities become both the context and the substance of emergent forms of citizenship.<sup>17</sup>

A defining feature of this emancipatory and empowering vision of (city/urban) development is the belief that the state is not the only legitimate source of citizenship rights, meanings and practices. The reasons undergirding this belief are multiple but in the main they relate to the limitations of modernist planning and state development projections that attempt plans without contradictions and without conflict. It assumes a rational domination of the future that is decontextualised and dehistoricised.

It assumes a rational domination of the future in which its total and totalising plan dissolves any conflict between the imagined and the existing society in the imposed coherence of its order. This assumption is both arrogant and false. It fails to include as *constituent* elements of planning the conflict, ambiguity, and indeterminacy characteristic of actual social life. Moreover, it fails to consider the unintended and unexpected as part of the model. Such assumptions are common to master plan solutions generally and not only to those in urban planning. Their basic feature is that they attempt to fix the future – or the past, as in historic preservation – by appealing to precedents that negate the value of present circumstance.<sup>18</sup>

The intellectual and practical content of the alternative project – over and above viewing contestation and conflict as 'productive' – an 'important vehicle' for activating and strengthening social capital<sup>19</sup> - are rooted in the ethnographic present which strives

<sup>15</sup> An organisation of poor women – set up in 1986 – with its base in Mumbai and a network throughout India, which is focused on women's issues in relation to urban poverty and concerned especially with local and self-organised savings schemes among the very poor <sup>16</sup> Appadurai, *op cit*: 25, 36, 46 <sup>17</sup> Holston, 2002: 326 <sup>18</sup> Holston, James. 1998. Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship In Sandercock, L. (ed.) *Making the Invisible Visible*. Berkeley: University of California Press (46) <sup>19</sup> Sanyal, B. & Mukhija, V. 2000. *Institutional Pluralism and Housing Delivery: A Case of Unforeseen Conflicts in Mumbai*. Report prepared for the Management and Governance Division of the United Nations Development Programme, New York, August; Phillips, S. 2002. Social Capital, Local Networks

towards a continual reinvention of the 'social' – the lived experiences, coping and survival strategies of the poor. This is what Holston (1998) terms an 'insurgent citizenship' – or 'insurgent spaces of citizenship' – emphasising the opposition of these spaces of citizenship to modernist planning and its political project that absorbs citizenship into a plan of state building. Important though is the need to recognise that not all master plans and planning negate the present as a means to some imagined future. The implication of this view is that the production of a city – and the realisation of the progressive alternative – needs to tap into the resources and capabilities of the state whilst simultaneously address the formations of insurgent citizenship.

### ***Focus of the Study***

The particular form of this dialogue, engagement and institutionalisation is the subject of this paper framed through a critical analysis of People's Housing Processes. As one component of the national housing programme, the PHP facilitates incremental housing by scaling up participatory processes and relying on self-help processes, communities' resources, and empowerment. To strengthen community initiatives, the programme liaises with grassroots groupings located in the shanties and slums of SA. It sets up housing support centres to stimulate and assist self-help community efforts by passing on information, identifying and channelling subsidies, providing technical advice, and developing co-operative arrangements to purchase building/construction material.<sup>20</sup> The initiative that influenced the formation of this Programme is the Homeless People's Federation, which is the focus of this study.

The origins of the initiative can be traced back to the early 1990s. A grassroots conference of the urban poor held in 1990 in South Korea inspired SA pro-poor activists to organise the 'South Africa People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter'. The meeting convened by the Southern African Catholic Development Association, led to the formation of People's Dialogue with the purposes of supporting and sustaining a network of exchange and mutual learning among community based organisations participating in the conference. People's Dialogue proceeded to facilitate international exchanges with the Indian Slum Dwellers Federation and the Mahila Milan.<sup>21</sup> In December 1991, South African informal settlement dwellers gained their first glimpse of self-development strategies and systems developed by their Indian counterparts. In June 1992, Indian informal settlement dwellers set off for SA to assist their counterparts to launch the first savings schemes. By 1993, there were more than 50 active savings schemes, organised into an informal national "Federation" of Housing Savings Schemes. By 1994, the number of saving schemes reached 200 and the South African Homeless People's Federation was launched.

The key objectives of the Federation in the early 1990s were overcoming socio-economic and political marginalisation and deepening the access of the poor to housing. In these years, the Alliance's strategy was broadly non-collaborationist. Non-

and Community Development. In C.Rakodi & T.Lloyd-Jones (eds). *Urban Livelihoods: A People-Centred Approach to Reducing Poverty*. London:Earthscan, 133-150 (136)<sup>20</sup> Miraftab, F. 2003. The Perils of Participatory Discourse: Housing Policy in Postapartheid South Africa. In *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 22, 226-239<sup>21</sup> An organisation of poor women – set up in 1986 – with its base in Mumbai and a network throughout India, which is focused on women's issues in relation to urban poverty and concerned especially with local and self-organised savings schemes among the very poor

collaboration was significant at the time as it enabled mobilisation around a sense of shared identity and belonging, and the emergence of a movement of the urban poor. By the mid 1990s, the situation began to change, with a shift in strategy towards partnerships with other agencies with a view to addressing needs and demands on a much larger scale and to play a greater role in poverty eradication in the future. In June 1994, the first direct contact was made with the Housing Department, which later (1996) saw the granting of a R10 m loan to leverage the Federation's uTshani Fund (discussed below). In 1996, the National Housing Board, approved an agreement with uTshani that recognised the Fund as an approved conduit for housing subsidies.

Since then, the Federation has played a central role in shifting the People's Housing Process to the centre of government housing policy. The Federation is presently working with government – albeit not without problems – in shifting the existing state-facilitated, market driven housing delivery regime to a one that is civil society driven and state facilitated/guided/driven.<sup>22</sup> Reconciling the guiding principles of the Federation – people-controlled development driven by locally-owned collective development leadership<sup>23</sup> – with the totalising modernist projects and projections of the state presents challenges and dilemmas, which are arguably – at this stage in the rewriting/reorientation of the national housing policy – not insurmountable.

### **Ambit**

The study will address three general themes.

- First, a qualitative assessment of the HPF's own objectives such as the political and personal empowerment of their members, improvement in livelihoods of members through access to a physical asset, and shifting the political/policy context to create more favourable conditions for the urban poor.

<sup>22</sup> see Khan, F. & Thring, P. eds. 2003. *Housing Policy and Practice in Post-Apartheid South Africa*.

<sup>23</sup> Johannesburg: Heinemann People-controlled development is the cornerstone of the Alliance's approach, which aims to create sustainable, cost-effective systems of development to identify, develop and harness the capacities already present in poor communities. People-controlled development is seen to foster social development practices that can be self-replicable (i.e. that do not rely on outsiders) to sustain ongoing development. The Federation holds that the homeless poor are the most prolific producers of shelter globally and nationally. As a result, the Federation seeks to channel affordable housing finance directly to poor communities, rather than through profit motivated developers - to demonstrate that it can tackle the housing challenge in a way that maximises available resources by enabling the development of better housing than the pro-developer government route. The Federation holds that supportive mechanisms for people-driven development need to be flexible and informal to encourage experiential learning, localised problem solving and bottom-up formulation of development procedures. This premise has led to the development of processes that are closely modelled on those developed generically by the poor themselves. This approach is in contrast with conventional practice, which, at best, attempts to make formal and institutionalised development processes more accessible to the poor. Another important premise of the Federation works with the poorest of the poor. Federation systems are designed to emphasise the participation of the most marginalized members of society – women in particular. Finally, the Alliance holds that collective 'grassroots' ownership of the development process, initiatives and opportunities is the primary way to democratise development and promote social transformation. The Federation emphasises collective leadership, based on the acknowledgement that power and access to resources come with leadership opportunities (?)



He  
He  
Homeless People  
le's

People  
le's Dialogue  
e  
u  
Tshani  
Fund

le's

People  
le's Dialogue  
e  
u  
Tshani  
Fund

- Second, an investigation of the relational dynamics of the HPF's functioning. Those would include internal and external relations. Internally, the HPF operates through a nucleus of local networks that provide an immediate support, savings and solidarity circle. There are approximately 1500 savings collectives nationally. Membership is estimated to be in the region of 100 000 families (85% female) who have saved more than R3.5 million. These groups link up with other groups in the immediate neighbourhood and larger territorial scales such as the metropolitan area, in other cities and towns, and in other parts of the world. These exchanges have helped to spread skills, encourage solidarity, instil self-confidence and generate knowledge.<sup>24</sup> The Federation is supported by the NGO People's Dialogue that manages the uTshani fund, which provides low-interest housing loans to the poor. These loans are mostly used in combination with the government housing subsidies towards self-help construction of dwellings. They are bridging funds to assist the poor to build while waiting for the subsidy or to supplement their subsidies while repaying their loan. The external relations are dense and complex entailing both scaling up (local capacity building, empowerment and working with different organisations) and scaling out (expanding the realm of community influence and control) activities.<sup>25</sup>
- Third, the study will explore the HPF's contribution to the building and consolidation of a radical democratic project in the cities/towns where they operate. This line of inquiry is premised on prior theoretical work that we have done to define what such a political framework may look like.<sup>26</sup> It is this component that will help us make an evaluative assessment of this movements contribution to social

<sup>24</sup> Patel, S. & Mitlin, D. 2002. Sharing experiences and changing lives. In *Community Development Journal*, 37, 2, 125-136 <sup>25</sup> See People's Dialogue. 2002. **Cities Alliance Project on a Pro-Poor Slum Upgrading Framework for South Africa for Submission to the Cities Alliance/United Nations Centre for Human Settlements** – Report prepared by Development Works, Johannesburg <sup>26</sup> Pieterse, E. (forthcoming). 'At the limits of possibility: Working notes on a relational model of urban politics', in Simone, AbdouMaliq and Abouhani, Abdelghani (eds.) *Urban Processes and Change in Africa*. Dakar: Codesria.

change in terms of the interests of their members and larger determinants of power that structure resource allocation decisions in transitional South Africa.

***Lines of exploration***

The research approach will be theoretically informed but empirically attuned. We hope to explore the history, practices and paradoxes of the movement largely on its own terms before we interpolate such a reading with theoretical lenses that refract merely foregone conclusions. Within this in mind our initial thinking suggests that we should structure the research along the following lines of exploration.

1 Historical-Spatial: Our task will be to explore the evolution of the organisation in terms of the factors that gave rise to its emergence and the initial decisions that informed the mode of organisation. Furthermore, we hope to understand what the formative struggles were that gave the movement its original character and set in train particular preoccupations, which were very different to those of other urban social movements operating at the time. How did the HPF manage to elide and negotiate the political imagination that was dominant at the time about what constituted appropriate or acceptable forms of organisation? What was the approach at the outset about different scales of political and social engagement (i.e. block, neighbourhood, sub-region, city, provincial, national, global)? How did this change over time, and why?

2 Content of Mobilisation: This line of enquiry is about the rich combination of interior and exterior values that informs the practice of the HPF. For example, the exterior pertains to the realisation of adequate, affordable and durable dwellings, access to (temporary) employment/skills, and political empowerment vis-à-vis developers and the (local) state. The interior involves the promotion of dignity, individual empowerment through learning and engagement with fellow members, and most importantly, solidarity as a value to get ahead socially, politically and economically. Out of these exterior and interior values and reference points a unique and contextually sensitive philosophy of mobilisation emerges that is continuously defined and refined through practical struggles that embrace both immediate and strategic objectives. The focus of this line of enquiry will be turned on the meanings of these concepts/values that inform the political agendas of the movement. Also, how slippages between values and the vicissitudes of practical struggle are addressed and reworked in the flow of political engagement.

3 Praxis: The multi-dimensional character of the HPF makes for many avenues of documentation and exploration. In terms of the values mentioned in the previous point, there are a series of questions to be explored about explicitness, consistency, and management of deviation from the norm. In other words, what is the nature and dynamism of internal democratic practices and how does this culture relate to the impact of the HPF out in the world. What is the relationship between the organisational approach, structure, maintenance and development and the effectiveness of the organisation in realising its objectives as mentioned in the first point above? How does the HPF relate with the large number of actors that impinge on and shape their political terrain? For example, different departments of municipal, provincial and national government; relations with other movements; relations with private sector actors; and land markets in general?

## ***Final methodological considerations***

The HPF is too large, complex, established and dispersed a movement to study in its full richness in the confines of this project. Fortunately there are earlier studies that we can draw on to enhance the knowledge base that we will work with.<sup>27</sup> We will seek permission from prior studies to use detailed interviews with key leaders and activists in the movement. This will cut down on the number of participant observations and interviews we need to do. It will also allow us to hone in more finely on the central questions of this study (to be finalised after the methodology workshop on 9-11 June 2003) and use interviews and ethnographic encounters more judiciously.

Furthermore, we intend to slant the study in the direction of the developmental significance of the HPF. By this we mean to say that the HPF is particular in that engages with claim-making politics to secure rights and entitlements from the state through a combination of cooperative and conflictual strategies - not unlike SEWU. At the same time, it also has an approach that is autonomous and about setting examples of alternative strategies to address the livelihood crises of the poor in urban areas. Here the political implication is to lead by example with the anticipation that success will lead to large-scale policy adaptation by the government. Incredibly, this is what has happened through the adoption of the People's Housing Process by the Department of Housing. Predictably this has not been a straightforward victory (as is portrayed above). There are many questions about the efficacy and viability of the strategy within a broader policy framework that remains stubbornly wedded to neoliberal macro-economic precepts, and the modernist planning orientations and projections of the state.<sup>28</sup>

Nonetheless, it did qualitatively alter the political significance of the movement and the political opportunity structure to make claims, win concessions, and significantly shape governmental policy with potential benefit for millions of people beyond the membership of the HPF. This seems to us the most vital aspect to explore in full in this study. Echoing Foweraker (1995), social movements impact on the political and institutional context, and are strongly influenced by it. This impact is always likely to be gradual and uneven, with many setbacks, as they attempt to influence general perceptions of social reality and alter personal and institutional practices. Yet, whilst their success in radically transforming the 'frame of politics' may be limited, their impact on changing the sense of self and identifying a range of new possibilities, without denying the productive (and destructive) potential of conflicts (internal and external), can be very profound.<sup>29</sup> The important point raised by Foweraker is that while in developed countries social movements have grown and matured in the shadow of the liberal democratic welfare state and where they seek autonomy from the state; in developing countries, social movements have often arisen in the context of centralised

<sup>27</sup> Napier, M. 2003. Supporting People's Housing Process. In Khan & Thring (op cit); Marx, C. 2003: Supporting Informal Settlements In Khan & Thring, P. (op cit); People's Dialogue, 2002 (op cit); Mitlin, D. & Baumann, T. 2002. **The South African Homeless People's Federation: Investing in the Poor** – Paper presented at the National Institute for Economic Policy's *Rural and Urban Development Conference*, 18-19 April; Bay Research and Consultancy Services. 2002. *Delivering the Housing Subsidy in a People's Housing Process Context: Challenges, Experiences and Options*. Cape Town <sup>28</sup> Rust, K. 2002. **No Short-cuts: Implementing the South African Housing Policy** – Paper prepared for the Institute for Housing of South Africa <sup>29</sup> Reviewed in Miller, C. 1997. The theory and practice of social movements. In *Community Development Journal*, 32, 3, 289-294

authoritarian (despotic/military) states in which the 'public space' had to be either invented or profoundly expanded. Thus rather than assuming the existence of democracy, social movements often contribute to the 'creation' of the conditions for democratic life. Additionally, this can only be achieved, along with the creation of new identities, in close relationship with and often in direct response to the state and its policies. Not unsurprisingly, the state is likely to be the primary focus of attention. Often, within the context of a partial [and/or consolidating] democracy, 'the primary driving force is the extension of citizenship and inclusion within the public life'. The pre-occupation with achieving influence within the system makes the likelihood of institutionalisation very great, which should not necessarily be interpreted as a 'sign of social movement failure' but could equally be seen as the successful achievement of movement goals as it learns to negotiate effectively with the state. The nature of the state in many developing countries is such that the restriction of social movements, in the Eurocentric literature, to civil society and an assertion of their autonomy from the state is often inappropriate.<sup>30</sup>

Hence, the transformation of social capital into sustainable sources of livability requires that the state become an active partner with community organisations. Others have similarly argued that state-community partnerships are likely to be more fruitful than either the state or community efforts alone, and that co-operation among households is insufficient to the task of empowering the poor. In many of the alternative development projects, new ground rules for state-community partnerships are jointly/collaboratively engineered which include new roles for the local state, innovative representation formats, and the prising open of new political terrains. Following Mike Douglas and colleagues (2002), these experiments reflect a coincidence of strong democratic participation and securing access to public resources to directly give effect to the rights of the urban poor—state-community synergy in their parlance.<sup>31</sup> In our view then, the future of social movements will be strongly influenced and shaped by the positioning of these movements within the emerging democratic institutions, along with the nascent raft of socio-economic rights, and imperatives to provide relief and immediate support to social citizens who are ravaged by unemployment, HIV/AIDS, and harsh physical conditions; making for livelihoods that are interminably vulnerable and precarious, yet with an undertow of resilience. This calls for a politics of insurgent citizenship<sup>32</sup> that seeks to strengthen and deepen the democratic framework through a politics of claim-making and the construction of insurgent, even if provisional, alternatives.

These considerations lead us to explore a number of concrete struggles in specific places.<sup>33</sup> We anticipate a process of negotiation with the HPF itself on which struggles to choose. The ideal is to find cases that will illuminate the questions we are posing here but more importantly, inform the ongoing praxis of the movement itself. There is an unapologetic commitment to use the project as one instance of reflection for the HPF so

<sup>30</sup> Ibid: 291-292 <sup>31</sup> Douglas, Mike., Orathi Ard-am, and Ik Ki Kim, (2002). 'Urban Poverty and the Environment: Social Capital and State-Community Synergy in Seoul and Bangkok', in Evans, P. (ed.) *Livable Cities? Urban Struggles for Livelihood and Sustainability*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>32</sup> Holston, James., and Arjun Appadurai (1996). 'Cities and Citizenship', in *Public Culture*, 8(2): 187

204. Holston, James (1998). 'Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship', in Sandercock, L. (ed.) *Making the Invisible Visible*. Berkeley: University of California Press. <sup>33</sup> Possible case studies include the Victoria Mxenge project in the Western Cape; the revamped Mayibuye Project in Gauteng; and the Briardale Project in Durban

that their ambitions and challenges can be explored in ways that build the movement as well as further knowledge. But more importantly, our intention is also to take up Appadurai's (2000)<sup>34</sup> challenge to further 'grassroots globalisation'/'globalisation from below' in the academic/research world. This is about engaging with the scholarship of the public intellectual and social critic – the intelligentsia of the poor – whose work is not primarily conditioned by the professional criteria of criticism and dissemination associated with the barren world of the global professoriate. This is an exercise in intellectual transgression – an attempt to find a rapport between the academic social scientific register and the humanistic styles of inquiry rooted in the imaginations and aspirations of the poor and their intellectuals.

<sup>34</sup> Appadurai, A. 2000. Grassroots Globalisation and the Research Imagination. In *Public Culture*, 12, 1,

### **Provisional Reading List:**

- Abers, R. (2000). *Inventing Local Democracy. Grassroots Politics in Brazil*. Boulder & London: Lynne Reiner Publishers.
- Ahluwalia, P. (2001). *Politics and Post-Colonial Theory. African Reflections*. London: Routledge.
- Rivlin, P. and Tewdwr-Jones, M. (eds) (2002) *Planning Futures. New Directions for Planning Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Alvarez, S., Dagnino, E. and Escobar, A. (1998). 'Introduction: The Cultural and the Political in Latin American Social Movements', in S. Alvarez, E. Dagnino and A. Escobar (eds) *Cultures of Politics. Politics of Cultures. Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements*. Boulder & Oxford: Westview Press.
- Amin, A. and Thrift, N. (2002). *Cities. Reimagining the Urban*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Appadurai, A. (forthcoming). 'The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition', in V. Rao and M. Walton (eds) *Culture and Public Action*. Publisher Balaaram.
- Baklanoff, T. and Mitlin, D. (2002). 'The South African Homeless Federation: Investing in the Poor' *Paper presented at Rural and Urban Development Conference*, Rietveldam: History Workshop & National Land Committee.
- Bayat, A. (1997). 'Un-Civil Society: On the Politics of the "Informal People"', *Third World Quarterly* 18(1): 53-72.
- Bayat, A. (2000). 'Social Movements, Activism and Social Development in the Middle East' *Civil Society and Social Movements Programme Paper*, Geneva: UNRISD.
- Beall, J. (2000). 'From the culture of poverty to inclusive cities: Re-framing urban policy and politics', *Journal of International Development* 12: 843-856.
- Cherry, J., Jones, K. and Seekings, J. (2000). 'Democratization and Politics in South Africa Townships', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24(4): 689-905.
- Cooke, B. (2001). 'Institutions, Agency and the Limitations of Participatory Approaches to Development', in B. Cooke and U. Kothari (eds) *Participation: The New Tyranny?* London & New York: Zed.
- Cooke, B. and Kothari, U. (2001). 'The Case for Participation as Tyranny', in B. Cooke and U. Kothari (eds) *Participation: The New Tyranny?* London & New York: Zed.
- Cornwall, A. (2002). 'Locating Citizen Participation', *IDS Bulletin* 33(2): 49-58.
- Desai, A. (2000). *The Poores of Chatsworth. Race, Class and Social Movements in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Durban: Madiba Publishers.
- Douglas, M. and Friedmann, J. (eds) (1998) *Cities for Citizens. Planning and the Rise of Civil Society in a Global Age*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Edmunds, D. and Wollenberg, E. (2001). 'A Strategic Approach to Multistakeholder Negotiations', *Development and Change* 32(2): 231-253.
- Evans, P. (1996). 'Introduction. Development Strategies across the Public-Private Divide', *World Development* 24(6).
- Evans, P. (2002). 'Introduction: Looking for Agents of Urban Liveability in a Globalized Political Economy', in P. Evans (ed) *Livable Cities? Urban Struggles for Livelihood and Sustainability*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (1998). 'Empowering Civil Society: Habermas, Foucault and the Question of Conflict', in M. Douglas and J. Friedmann (eds) *Cities for Citizens. Planning and the Rise of Civil Society in a Global Age*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Friedmann, J. (1992). *Empowerment. The Politics of Alternative Development*. Cambridge & Oxford: Blackwell.
- Friedmann, J. (2000). 'The Good City: In Defence of Utopian Thinking', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24(2): 460-72.
- Fung, A. and Wright, E. O. (2001). 'Deepening Democracy: Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance', *Politics & Society* 29(1): 5-41.
- Gaventa, J. (2002). 'Introduction: Exploring Citizenship, Participation and Accountability', *IDS Bulletin* 33(2): 1-11.
- Goetz, A. M. and Lister, S. (2001). 'The Politics of Civil Society Engagement with the State: A Comparative Analysis of South Africa and Uganda', Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

- Goverde, H., Cerny, P. G., Haugaard, M. and Lentner, H. (2000). 'General Introduction: Power in Contemporary Politics', in H. Goverde, P. G. Cerny, M. Haugaard and H. Lentner (eds) *Power in Contemporary Politics. Theories, Practices, Globalizations*. London: Sage.
- Heller, P. and Ntlokonkulu, L. (2001). 'A civic movement, or movement of civics? The South African National Civic Organisation in the post-apartheid period' *CPS Research Report*, Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies.
- Heller, P. (2001). 'Moving the State: The Politics of Democratic Decentralization in Kerala, South Africa, and Porto Alegre', *Politics & Society* 29(1): 131-163.
- Hillier, J. (2002). 'Direct Action and Agonism in Democratic Planning Processes', in P. Allmendinger and M. Twedwr-Jones (eds) *Planning Futures. New Directions for Planning Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Holston, J. (1999). 'Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship', in J. Holston (ed) *Cities and Citizenship*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Holston, J. and Appadurai, A. (1999). 'Introduction: Cities and Citizenship', in J. Holston (ed) *Cities and Citizenship*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Kabeer, N. (2002). 'Citizenship, Affiliation and Exclusion: Perspectives from the South', *IDS Bulletin* 33(2): 12-23.
- Long, N. (2001). *Development Sociology. Actor Perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Roulet, G. and Williams, C. (1999). 'Poverty, Participation and Government Enablement. A Summary of findings, lessons learned and recommendations of Habitat/ISS evaluation research (1996-1998).', Nairobi: Habitat.
- Lyons, M., Smuts, C. and Stephens, A. (2001). 'Participation, Empowerment and Sustainability: (How) Do the Links Work?', *Urban Studies* 38(8): 1233-1251.
- (2002). 'The impact of a changing policy framework on isolated communities: a South African experience', *Habitat International* 26(2): 191-212.
- Marais, H. (2001). *South Africa. Limits to Change. The Political Economy of Transition*, 2 Edition. London & Cape Town: Zed Books & UCT Press.
- McDonald, D. A. (ed) (2002) *Environmental Justice in South Africa*. Athens/Cape Town: Ohio University Press/UCT Press.
- Mouffe, C. (2000). *The Democratic Paradox*. London & New York: Verso.
- Peet, R. (2002). 'Ideology, Discourse, and the Geography of Hegemony: From Socialist to Neoliberal Development in Postapartheid South Africa', *Antipode* 34(1): 58-90.
- Saff, G. (2001). 'Exclusionary Discourse towards Squatters in Suburban Cape Town', *Ecumene* 8(1): 87-107.
- Saul, J. (2001). 'Cry for the beloved country: The postapartheid denouement', *Monthly Review* 52(8): 1-51.
- Scott, J. C. (1997 [1990]). 'The Infrapolitics of Subordinate Groups', in M. Rahnema and V. Bawtree (eds) *The Post-Development Reader*. London: Zed Books.
- Storper, M. (2001). 'The Poverty of Radical Theory: From the False Promises of Marxism to the Mirgae of the Cultural Turn', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 25(1): 155

179.

- Swilling, M. and Russell, B. (2002). *The Size and Scope of the Non-profit Sector in South Africa*. Durban/Johannesburg: Center for Civil Society/Graduate School of Public and Development Management.
- Sylvester, C. (1999). 'Development Studies and Postcolonial Studies: Disparate tales of the 'Third World'', *Third World Quarterly* 20(4): 703-721.