

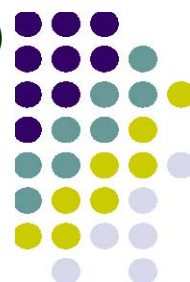


METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Edgar Pieterse

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METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE UNDER CONSTRUCTION: Notes on the Unicity Experiment in Cape Town in the Context of National Municipal Reform¹

Edgar Pieterse

...there is no peace for those in the process of becoming.
(Njabulo Ndebele)

INTRODUCTION

This essay is about the politics and possibilities of democratic governance during a period of transition from the old to the new—being in the process of becoming. Since the analysis is about an unfinished story it is part descriptive, part analytical and part speculative. It is largely a snapshot of the past year in the life of Cape Town (South Africa) as the local authorities in the city worked around the clock to conceptualise, debate and craft a system of metropolitan governance and management that is meant to serve the city for the next generation.

The characteristic feature of the process has been the speed with which proposals have been developed and taken through the interim political system that was created to prepare for the single metropolitan council for the city. Politicians and their support teams were compelled to debate and process a far reaching agenda because the prevailing situation in local government is financially burdensome and institutionally straining. There is significant wastage through duplication, fragmentation, contradictory delivery processes and philosophies, and divided political opinion. The net result is that the city is poorly positioned to deal with the higher order challenges such as regional environmental degradation, social disintegration and pressures that arise from being sucked into an asymmetrical globalisation of the economy. These challenges are not unique to Cape Town but rather comparable to similar experiences in other cities in South Africa (Bloch 2000) and elsewhere (Stren & Polèse 2000).

There are strong continuities between these debates and the design of the local government system in South Africa. An argument could be made that the national local government system reflects a hybridisation of mainstream policy thinking in two contiguous fields: new public management and development planning. It is possible to read the local government model as fundamentally about bringing together hardcore performance management instruments (typical of new public management models— NPM) and the dynamism of community involvement to ensure that democratically elected councils do what they plan and say they will do in their annual and medium-term policy frameworks. In theory, this should produce outcomes that ensure responsible economic management policies, whilst also addressing the interest of sectors that are poor,

¹ This paper was originally prepared for a conference on urban governance in September 2000 as part of the Panel on Urban Population Dynamics under the aegis of the National Academy of Sciences in the United States. I want to thank them for permission to publish the article. An amended version of the paper is forthcoming in *Urban Forum*, 13(1), 2002.

marginalized and awaiting restitution. But this is a complex agenda to realise, not least because development thinking itself has been convoluted with the recognition of multiple claims, heterogeneity amongst the poor and the salience of cultural specificity in understanding any local context (Edwards 1999). On the other hand, public management policies have become increasingly technocratic and intricate, gravitating against the prospect of popular involvement and control (Polidano, et al 1998). If we layer on top of these observations the reality of weak institutions, half-hearted and uneven decentralisation, limited financial autonomy and viability, and rapidly increasing need for urban services in a broader context of growing poverty and inequality within and between cities, the prospects for embedding participatory governance are indeed daunting. This simply reminds one that 'the political' remains crucial in our reading of urban spaces and possibilities. The political comes to the fore when we explore real places and real local actors whose agendas and actions defy neat compartmentalisation in favour or against democratic local governance.

The analytical focus of this paper is on the prospects for entrenching participatory metropolitan governance in South Africa, with a special emphasis on current initiatives to create single metropolitan governments in six major urban centres. The paper presents a case study of one metropolitan government in the making because it is in the detail of current initiatives that we can identify possible starting points for taking the governance discussion into the realm of practice. The case study is the Cape Metropolitan Area, which in the later part of last year was in the midst of substantial restructuring to create a single metropolitan authority that came into being after the South African municipal elections on 5 December 2000.

I take as a starting point the existing literature on urban governance that proposes a relational definition of governance (MaCarney 2000; Stren, et al. 1995; Wekwete 1997; Aina 1997; Swilling 1997a & 1997b). I also build on the bottom-up perspective, which suggests that, multiple forms and relations of governance co-exist, especially in African cities with weak formal institutional systems and limited state capacities to regulate (Halfani 1996; 1997; Simone 1998; Swilling, et al. 1999). The second section of the paper describes the design and underlying rationale of the new system of local government in South Africa, finalised with the elections in 2000. I discuss the architecture of the system in reasonable detail because it circumscribes local agendas at city level and may be of comparative value. Thereafter I explore in greater detail the dynamics of how this agenda is being translated into practice through a case study discussion of Cape Metropolitan Area (CMA), which essentially encompasses Cape Town as a city and the urban edge with mixed agricultural usage that surrounds the built environment. (I will use CMA and Cape Town inter-changeably throughout the paper.)

Cape Town is significant in the South African context, because it is politically and socially heterogeneous in a different way from other South African cities. It is also, arguably, the most divided city in South Africa. The case study devotes considerable attention to the socio-economic challenges facing the city and the proposals of the Unicity Commission to restructure local government in the city to deal with these challenges. (The Unicity Commission is a statutory body established to facilitate the transition from seven distinct municipalities into one integrated metropolitan council for the CMA.) Thereafter, I

extrapolate the specific democratic governance components of the new policy agenda and move on to explore its potential given existing experiences to institutionalise participation and partnerships. The Unicity Commission's proposals have been under threat from the moment they were hatched because of the multiple challenges facing the city, e.g. an intense legacy of urban poverty, economic inequality, socio-spatial fragmentation, systemic violence and criminality, profoundly unequal access to quality education and environmental degradation. The paper therefore concludes with a number of speculative observations about the future prospects of democratic local governance in Cape Town.

CONCEPTUAL STARTING POINTS

It is safe to say that the wave of governance research that commenced in the late 1980s through the 1990s has now effectively been mainstreamed, at least at an international policy level (for a comprehensive summary, see: MaCarney 2000; cf World Bank 1999). In a recent publication of Habitat the following understanding of governance was proffered:

Governance as a concept recognizes that power exists inside and outside the formal authority and institutions of government. In many formulations, governance includes government, the private sector and civil society. Second, governance emphasizes 'process'. It recognizes that decisions are made based on complex relationships between many actors with different priorities (UNCHS 2000).

I have elsewhere developed an extensive discussion on urban governance (Pieterse 2000a, chapter 2), which is summarised here. Urban governance is fundamentally about the nature, quality and purpose of the totality of relationships that link various institutional spheres—local state, civil society and the private sector—in urban areas. These relationships span formally structured/regulated dimensions and informal ones (Hyden 1998; McCarney 1996; Swilling 1997a).

- ☒ The *nature of relationships* refers to the depth of inter-relationships between different institutional spheres, i.e. the level of engagement flowing between the state, civil society and the private sector.
- ☒ The *quality of the relationships* denotes features such as reciprocity, trust, and credibility. These characteristics are enhanced by dedicated mechanisms and opportunities to facilitate meaningful engagement. It also presumes distinctive and reasonably well-organised institutional spheres, i.e. civil society organisations (CSOs), the business sector and of course the local state itself. These spheres are distinctive, yet profoundly inter-dependent.
- ☒ The *purpose of the relationships* denotes that relations are continuously deepened through collaborative action to achieve widely shared social goals and robust

In South Africa, the national constitution (1996) entrenches democratic principles and values across all spheres of government and society within a rights-based philosophy. This allows one to ascribe the following ideal features to the system of urban governance:

- ☒ High levels of trust and reciprocity between urban actors, which are expressed through some form of a political contract, which embodies political equality, tolerance and inclusiveness;
- ☒ Substantial accountability in the various decision-making forums, especially the political and public realms, expressed through active citizen influence and oversight, responsive and responsible leadership, adherence by all stakeholders to the rule of law, and vitally, transparency in decision-making processes;
- ☒ The continuous re-affirmation and deepening of legitimate authority, which is enhanced by a clear recognition of respective roles, responsibilities and forms of effective co-ordination (Devas 1999);

☒ A vibrant and active citizenry that engages with decision-making forums and

In summary, my working approach to urban governance is mainly characterised by its participatory and reciprocal features and consequently implies a fundamentally new approach to municipal decision-making processes and outcomes compared to the previous racially defined system (Cameron 2000). To realise the new municipal processes and outcomes requires transformation of organisational systems, especially the management framework and relationships with society. The reformulation with society is through the (legislatively prescribed) process of integrated development planning and management—brought together through political engagement imperatives to advance sustainability, equitable economic development, political voice, social justice and cultural freedom.

This conception, however, rests on the assumption that the local state can exercise its authority and control over society. Rich analyses from a number of African urbanists have persuasively reminded us that this is not the case in most African cities (Halfani 1996, 1997; Swilling 1997a & 1997b; Swilling, et al. 1999; Simone 1997; MaCarney 2000; Chabal & Daloz 1999; Bayat 1997; Tripp 1997). This literature emphasising the ‘informal city’ in the midst of the modern metropolis reminds us that informalisation is constitutive of ‘the urban’ in much of Africa. One can more accurately talk about a multiplicity of governance systems that span the formal and the informal. Conceptually, the challenge is to remain mindful of the validity of both spheres and especially the ways in which these are often mutually constitutive. Excavating the multiple regimes of governance requires more applied, ethnographic, case-study research to illuminate how these dynamics actually work. The focus of this paper is restricted to the more formal spheres of urban governance because it provides a snapshot of current attempts to construct a dramatically different urban management system through the process of creating a single metropolitan authority for Cape Town. In my discussions of the likely impact of these new proposals, I will reflect on the significance of the informal dimensions of the city, but it is not a major focus of the paper. To fully appreciate the scale of change and reform in Cape Town it is appropriate to locate the processes in the context of broader national trends of urbanisation and local government reform.

URBANISATION PATTERNS IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to the 1996 census, 53,7% of the total population is urbanised. However, there are profound differences between the nine provinces in the country, with Gauteng province being 93% urbanised and Northern Province only 11%. Table 1 summarises the regional provincial variations (SSA 2000). The annual urban growth seems to be slowing down, with projections pegged at 0.6% between 1998-2015. The growth rate was 2% per annum during 1975-1998.

Table 1: Urbanisation levels per province

Provinces :	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free-State	Mpumalanga	North-west	Northern	Gauteng	Kwazulu Natal	SA
% Urban population (1996 Census)	88.9	36.6	70.1	68.6	39.1	34.9	11	93	43.1	53.7

Below I will explore the specific urban challenges confronting Cape Town in greater detail, but for now I want to briefly sketch differential patterns between the three major metropolitan regions in South Africa: Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. It must be stressed that a discussion on urbanisation patterns and challenges in South Africa should also explore the unique challenges that secondary cities and small towns face (Bernstein 1998), especially since the new local government demarcation has guaranteed them an unviable tax base in a fiscal system that compels local government to collect 90% of its revenue from local sources. However, due to space constraints I will focus on the three metropolitan regions to provide context.

The metropolitan centres of South Africa propel the national economy, with Johannesburg being the most significant followed by Cape Town and then Durban. Johannesburg is also the primary service centre for much of South Africa and for the southern region of Africa (Beavon 1997). Table 2 provides a differentiated overview of the leading sectors in each of the urban economies (Wolpe 1999). Table 3 combines economic profile data with some of the social problems evident in all South African cities (Wolpe 1999).

Table 2: Top 3 sectors for each metro economy: 1996-1997

Metro Area	Major Sectors	GDP
Cape Metropolitan Area (1996)	Manufacturing	27% (7.5 bil)
	Retail / Wholesale	22% (5.9 bil)
	Community and personal services	19% (5.2 bil)
Durban Metropolitan Area	Manufacturing	30%
	Retail / Wholesale	20%
	Financial and business services	17%
Johannesburg Metropolitan Area (1997)	Financial and business services	29.9% (R12 bil)
	Retail/ Wholesale	23.7% (9.6 bil)
	Manufacturing	18.4% (R7.4 bil.)

Table 3: Selected Comparative Statistics on South Africa's Major Metros

Variable	Cape Metropolitan Area		Durban Metropolitan Area		Johannesburg Metropolitan Area	
	Metro	% RSA	Metro	% RSA	Metro	% RSA
GDP Contribution to GDP	1997 nominal R56 billion	10%	1994 real R31.2 billion	15%	1991 real R34.8 billion	19%
Total population	2.7 mil. (1996 revised Census)	7.1%	3.1 mil.	8.1%	3.8 (1997)	10%
Unemployment proportion expanded definition	20%	RSA 29%	23%	RSA 29%	25%	RSA 29%
Proportion of Labour Force individuals earning below R1070/ month (US\$152)	46%	RSA 64%	40%	RSA 64%	42%	RSA 64%
Number of formal companies as registered as Levy Payers (as low as 60% of actual firms) ²	+45,000 (incl. 4000 manufacture)		+60,000		+90,000	
CBD Office Vacancy Rate: 1990-1997 (Weber 2000)	4-7%		4-13%		12-18%	
% of dwellings which are formal houses	70%	RSA 65%	69%	RSA 65%	69%	RSA 65%
% of dwellings which are shacks	13%	RSA 5%	11%	RSA 5%	6%	RSA 5%

By international standards, all three metropolitan areas are medium sized, but in an African context their size is significant. These are certainly the largest urban economies in Sub-Saharan Africa and consequently are significant focal points in various migratory circuits (Simone 1998). All three cities are also highly conscious of their positioning in an increasingly globalised economic system and have been investing heavily in various types of local economic development strategies to increase economic competitiveness and easier entry into international markets (Bremner 2000; Khan, forthcoming). All three cities are contending with very serious socio-economic, environmental and spatial problems. As Steven Berrisford observes, “[few] of South Africa’s urban problems are unique: rapid population increase, inadequate housing supply and rapidly growing informal settlements, contaminated and dangerous urban environments, gross inequalities in access to essential services and other opportunities, together with ineffective local government” (1998: 213). The opportunity to establish single metropolitan authorities in these areas are seen by the government as a critical precondition to address the dramatic urban challenges caused by the insanity of apartheid policies and further necessitated by the cruel exclusionary logic of globalisation processes (DCD 1998). I will now explore the policy architecture of the new local government dispensation for South African cities.

SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM AGENDA

South Africa is a good example of how the most recent international policy prescriptions and discourses on participatory local government have been translated into mainstream policy and legislation. In the next section, I will summarise this framework as it represents an important achievement in laying the basis for democratic local governance. Most

² A major source of income for urban municipalities is RSC levies, which is essentially a business tax, dedicated for local expenditure.

significantly, it attempts to balance a partnership-based approach to municipal service delivery with a strong emphasis on developmental local government, which affirms citizenship and active community participation. The policy framework also attempts to combine a decentralised, partially autonomous sphere of local government with a strong participatory and developmental orientation. As I mentioned at the outset, these policies are inscribed by NPM approaches and development planning ideas (cf. Pieterse in press).

Contextual Background

The political transformation in South Africa, which commenced in 1990, resulted in a process of systematically redesigning every aspect of governmental structure and functioning. This process was informed, and curtailed, by the power sharing arrangement agreed to in the negotiations, which made the first democratic national election possible in 1994. A feature of these national negotiations was the little attention devoted to the post-apartheid local government system. As a result, an interim arrangement was put in place, which determined the nature of local government until the second local government elections in December 2000. The five years 1994-1999 have largely been devoted to policy development to completely re-conceptualise and re-design the local government system. This was done in a substantially participatory manner according to the government (DCD 1998). The first policy statement was the White Paper on Local Government (DCD 1998). Subsequently there has been the Demarcation Act (RSA 1998a), The Municipal Structures Act (RSA 1998b), the Municipal Finance Management Bill (DOF 2000) and, most recently, the Municipal Systems Act (RSA 2000a). Together, the Structures Act and Systems Act, enshrine the practical mechanisms to foster participatory and developmental governance.

New Policy Framework

In March 1998, the government released its White Paper on Local Government. This document spells out the formal policy direction and vision for a future local government system. At the heart of the new policy framework is the notion developmental local government. It is defined as local government, which “works with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives” (DCD 1998). According to the Municipal Systems Act, the core processes to achieve developmental local government are participatory governance, integrated development planning, performance management and reporting, resource allocation and organisational change (RSA 2000a). The outcomes of developmental local government put forward in the White Paper are:

- ☒ The provision of basic household infrastructure and services. In line with the Constitution, municipalities must prioritise the delivery of basic services to everyone in their area.
- ☒ The creation of liveable, integrated cities, towns and rural areas. Apartheid planning has resulted in divided cities, towns and rural areas. Spatial integration is encouraged to reduce the costs of transport and service provision, and enable social integration.
- ☒ Promoting local economic development. Municipalities are urged to proactively

☒ Community empowerment and redistribution (from wealthy areas to impoverished and un-serviced areas).³

Specific participatory governance instruments include the following:

- ☒ Four accountability fostering mechanisms: the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), the performance management system, a code of conduct for councillors and a code of conduct for municipal officials;
- ☒ An obligation to be responsive to citizen and client needs and complaints, or face legal action;
- ☒ The option of different types of municipal committees that allow for direct

participation of citizen groups in municipal planning, implementation and review. At the heart of the new local government system is the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), and which provides the primary modality for community interface and the starting point for driving internal institutional reform (Parnell & Pieterse 1999). In terms of the legal framework, every municipal council must adopt a single, inclusive plan for the development of its municipal area. The IDP should unify the various sectoral plans, schemes and proposals for the development of the municipality into a single, cohesive blueprint for the future, while taking into account the resources and capacity of the municipality. The White Paper makes it clear that the entire IDP process must rest on a meaningful and multi-level participation process to ensure that citizens have a direct say about its outcome. Moreover, it also becomes an important tool to enable citizens and interest groups to monitor and assess the performance of the municipality, based on specific targets for development, which are linked to budgets. In fact, in terms of the new legislation citizens can take municipalities to court if they feel that the municipality has not fulfilled its obligation to ensure adequate participation in the design of its IDP. The legislation further stipulates that IDPs must have a five-year framework but be subjected to annual review. This sets up an annual cycle of community involvement, which provides an excellent platform for civil society organisations to focus their energies on.

The Municipal Structures Act (RSA 1998b) further proposes a legislative code of conduct for councillors to compel council members to act consistently with legal frameworks and democratic principles. This further reinforces democratic accountability and is balanced and complemented by a code of conduct for officials, which is provided for in the Municipal Systems Act (RSA 2000a). This is crucial since so much energy is wasted by incessant conflicts about spheres of autonomy and control between politicians and (senior) officials. The same Act also obligates municipalities to develop and implement

³ This formulation is consistent with the Constitutional obligations on local government which define the objects of local government as follows:

- a) To provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- b) To ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;
- c) To promote social and economic development;
- d) To promote a safe and healthy environment; and
- e) To encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matter of local government.

appropriate and efficient mechanisms and procedures for receiving and addressing complaints, taking into account those who cannot read and write as well as those with disabilities and language preferences.

The Municipal Structures Act (RSA 1998b) makes provision for various categories of committees to promote and entrench community participation in municipal governance. The Act requires municipal councils to develop mechanisms to consult the community and community organisations in performing their functions and exercising their powers. Municipal councils have the option to institute either ward committees or 'other' (advisory) committees, which must have delegated powers to make them effectual. The Act further highlights explicitly the importance of ensuring that women and other disadvantaged groups are equitably represented on ward committees.

One of the more complex issues in defining popular participation relates to the role of traditional leaders in rural areas. Prior to the December 2000 municipal elections, traditional leaders had sole authority in rural areas outside of municipal boundaries and were extremely influential. The recently finalised process of re-demarcating municipal boundaries brings all these areas under the authority of local government—evocatively called, 'wall-to-wall local government'. The Municipal Structures Act (RSA 1998b) makes provision for the role of traditional leaders and grants the Provincial Minister for Local Government ultimate authority to decide on their inclusion on councils. Yet in the new system, traditional leaders do not have voting power, unless they have been elected through the ballot box. A draft formal policy dealing with the role of traditional leaders in the functioning of local government was released in April 2000 (DPLG 2000a). This did not provoke too much consternation at the time but as the December elections drew closer traditional leaders across the political spectrum mobilised to prevent the elections, as a tactic to extract concessions out of the government ("Traditional leaders block election date", Daily Mail, 8 October 2000, <http://www.mg.co.za>). President Thabo Mbeki managed the political challenge with great skill and just before the elections it seemed apparent that the wind was taken out of their sails ("Amakhosi stick to their guns", Daily Mail, 27 November 2000, <http://www.mg.co.za>).

The new local government framework also promotes local level partnerships explicitly. A significant policy regarding partnerships was released earlier this year: the White Paper on Municipal Service Partnerships (MSPs). It creates a policy framework aimed at encouraging municipalities to engage in MSPs when appropriate. Interestingly, it is cautious not to be seen as simply promoting public-private partnerships and therefore stresses that public-public and CBO/NGO-public partnerships may be more appropriate in certain cases. In particular it spells out a clear rationale for the use of CBO/NGO-public partnerships:

Partnership arrangements with CBOs and NGOs promote economic development in communities, strengthen democracy and empower civil society at the local level. Experiences in South Africa and other countries have shown that the direct involvement of communities can be positive and beneficial in the creation of accessible and sustainable services, especially in rural areas and low-income communities. [...] The government will support capacity building, especially in the area of identifying appropriate projects for

NGOs/CBOs, business and financial management skills, as well as sound corporate governance (DPLG 2000b: 15).

In summary, one can interpret the new local government framework as fundamentally about bringing together hardcore performance management instruments (typical of new public management models) and the dynamism of community involvement to ensure that democratically elected councils find it extremely difficult not to serve the interest of the local community, especially those sectors that are poor, marginalised and awaiting restitution. The Municipal Systems Act captures the intent clearly: “In seeking to maximise resident’s knowledge of municipal plans and targets, and giving both council and residents tools with which to evaluate and compare municipal performance, the [Municipal Systems] Act creates a bottom-up process of driving development, improving performance and facilitating change. Municipalities are obliged to put ‘people first’ in the way they run their administrations, and to constantly seek the best way of delivering services to all residents” (RSA 2000a, own emphasis). However, the new system is undeniably complex and certain policy tools are contradictory. Effectively implementation will require astute leadership, competent management and a reflexive approach to practice. Most municipalities are not endowed with these qualities at this stage (Bernstein 1998).

Unicities in South Africa

The Local Government Transition Act (RSA 1993) made provision for the establishment of a two-tier system of metropolitan governance, called Transitional Metropolitan Councils, which resulted in different models being negotiated locally in each of the metropolitan areas (Cameron 2000). The models varied dramatically in terms of the degree of power that was centralised at metropolitan level, versus the degree to which metropolitan local councils had power. Cape Town had a weak metropolitan model, reflect in a substantial policy-making and budgetary authority at sub-metropolitan level, whereas Johannesburg embodied a strong metropolitan level, which prohibited divergent local policies and strategies. The different approaches and experiences played a significant role in shaping the policy debates about the final metropolitan government model as embodied in the White Paper on Local Government (DCD 1998) and the Municipal Structures Act (RSA 1998b).⁴

As mentioned earlier, the legislative framework for metropolitan government in the final phase of the transition (post December 2000 elections) is set out by the SA Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and the Municipal Structures Act. The Constitution provides for three types of municipalities: categories A, B and C. Metropolitan Municipalities (category A), such as Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban have exclusive legislative and executive authority over the spatial area they are responsible for. Category B and C municipalities, applicable in urban and rural areas respectively, operate within a two-tiered system requiring a sharing of authority. The political intent behind the creation of single-tier metropolitan government is to facilitate economic competitiveness and effective redistribution across the urban system, which is essential given the dramatic spatial

⁴ Different views abound about the performance of the Transitional Metropolitan Councils. Cameron (2000) and Olver (1998) provide useful summaries of the different arguments.

divisions and inequalities that characterise the apartheid city (Donaldson & van der Merwe 2000; Olver 1998). An important secondary objective is to establish high profile city leaders, i.e. Mayors, who can act decisively and accelerate the much needed institutional and political transformation in the respective municipalities (Cameron 2000). Further reasons relate to economies of scale and facilitating balanced economic development capacity in the major urban centres (Olver 1998).

The Local Government White Paper envisaged that community participation and local democracy could be facilitated through metropolitan substructures and/or ward committees. The Municipal Structures Act makes provision for the option to establish substructures and/or ward committees. A system based on substructures consists of a metropolitan council with legislative, executive and administrative powers, with substructure councils that have devolved functions and powers, which are essentially advisory, supervisory and decision-making (Cameron 2000). The ward system is structured around the role of the ward councillor and provides for the creation of area-based ward committees that have advisory powers and some delegated powers and functions (Reddy 2000). It is crucial to appreciate the limitations established through the single-tier model, because it exposes the political reason for opposition to the model from opposition political parties. Even though substructures and/or ward committees can be created, a metropolitan council cannot delegate powers (section 160(2) of the Constitution) such as: the passing of by-laws; approval of budgets; imposition of rates and other taxes, levies and duties; raising of loans; and approval of its integrated development plans. In other words, the legislative framework potentially prevents parochial localism that, in the case of the apartheid city, can reproduce highly unequal levels of access to municipal services.

Lastly, in terms of the Municipal Structures Act, every municipality must delegate executive powers to a person (mayor, or chairperson of council) or a collective (executive committee), but they can decide on the preferred form. In Cape Town, the majority political parties decided against an Executive Mayor in favour of an Executive Council, which was then enacted by the relevant Provincial Minister (as required by law). Metropolitan councils that will have ANC majorities will certainly opt for an Executive Mayoral system. Later on I describe in greater detail the model that Cape Town has negotiated for itself.

Generally, if we consider comparatively (McCarney 1996) the nature of the local government system as discussed before and the Unicity model in particular, the South African system can be depicted as close to an ideal-type of democratic local government as discussed by Harry Blair recently. He argues that the “[viability] for the democratic component of DLG [democratic local government] depends in the final analysis on participation and accountability—bringing as many citizens as possible into the political arena and assuring that local governors [councils/Mayors] are accountable for the actions” (Blair 2000: 35). The legislation in South Africa enacting the local government system places strong emphasis on both participation and accountability. However, is a participatory democratic local government system a sufficient condition to overcome the legacy of apartheid social engineering? In my opinion it is not, unless metropolitan governance can foster the conditions for citizens and communities to reclaim the city and

mould its identity and functionality to their needs. Leading South African urban planner, Lindsay Bremner, captures the urgency of this political agenda in our cities eloquently:

The marks apartheid left on human lives will fade in the course of time. But its spatial logic will continue to affect people's daily lives for generations to come. Because of apartheid, people live great distances from where they work; standards of urban infrastructure vary enormously; parts of the city are devoid of shops, businesses, entertainment venues and schools, while others are saturated with them; chasms separate one citizen from another, so much so that people feel like tourists in each other world's (Bremner 1998: 62).

The core of the city governance and management challenge facing South African cities is to bridge the chasm that separates citizens in order to achieve greater economic efficiencies, political tolerance, social inclusion and sustainability. A closer look at the prospects of Cape Town provides insight into the potential of achieving this agenda.

CASE STUDY: CAPE METROPOLITAN AREA

Background⁵

Cape Town is the largest city in the Western Cape province of South Africa and continues to be the parliamentary capital. It is inhabited by almost 2.8 million people and reflects a totally different demographic profile than any other city in South Africa (see figure 1). The Coloured (mixed race) population⁶ makes up approximately 50% of the population with Whites and Africans each comprising approximately 25% respectively. This is anomalous to the national trend according to which Coloureds and Whites each comprise only 9% of the total South African population and Africans constitute 77%. The specificity of Cape Town is largely rooted in this difference, particularly because the Coloured community tends to be politically conservative and its working class in particular has voted consistently for previous white parties that were protagonists of the apartheid system. Although the African National Congress (ANC) party is the governing party at national level, it is the formal opposition party in the Western Cape Provincial Government and in most of the seven municipalities that function within the Cape Metropolitan Area (CMA). This impacts profoundly on inter-governmental relations, local governance and political interactions.

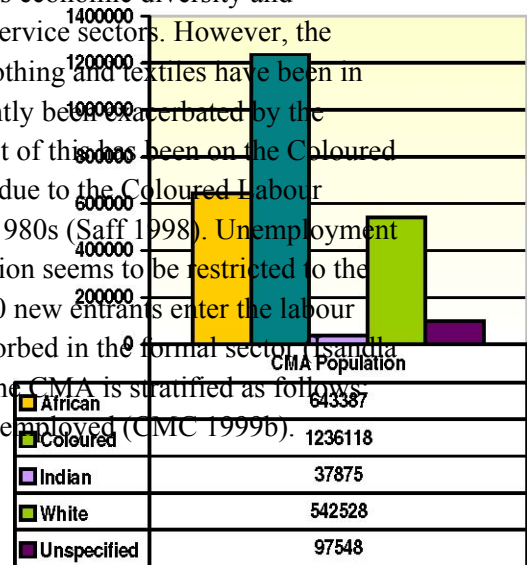
⁵ This section draws heavily on an unpublished report that the author prepared for the Unicity Commission in February 2000 (Pieterse 2000b). Further references for statistical indicators are in the original report that is available from the Unicity Commission and/or the author upon request.

⁶ Given the enduring legacy of racially based social engineering over four centuries, these categories endure, especially in the post-democratisation era as a measure to track redistribution and other equalisation measures. 'African' refers to indigenous inhabitants whose ancestors presence in the region pre-dated the arrival of European and other settlers; 'Coloured' refers to indigenous people of mixed organs; 'Indian' refers to descendants from South Asia; 'White' refers to descendants of European settlers; 'black' refers inclusively to all South Africans who are not 'White' (cf. Marais 2000). Formal racial classification in South Africa was done in terms of the Population Registration Act of 1950 which denoted three major racial groups: Whites (European), Coloureds (which included Indians), and Africans (Bantu or Blacks) (see Christopher 2001).

Economically, the CMA is much better off than

most other cities in the Southern African region. It boasts economic diversity and experiences growth in the information, knowledge and service sectors. However, the traditional manufacturing sectors that revolve around clothing and textiles have been in constant decline the last ten years, which has more recently been exacerbated by the reduction of trade tariffs (CMC 1999a). The main impact of this has been on the Coloured community who tended to be employed in these sectors due to the Coloured Labour Preference policy that was in force from 1954 until the 1980s (Saff 1998). Unemployment has been getting progressively worse and labour absorption seems to be restricted to the informal sector (Khan 2000). It is estimated that 160 000 new entrants enter the labour market each year and at the moment, only 60 000 is absorbed in the formal sector (Isandla Institute 2000). The economically active population of the CMA is stratified as follows:

Figure 1: Population of CMA (1996 census)

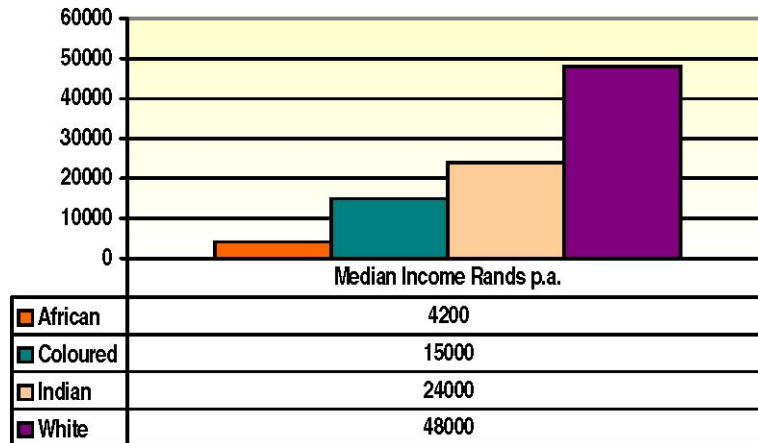


However, the deeper problem facing the city is widespread poverty and vulnerability, which reveals that a number of those who are employed do not earn enough to escape poverty—the working poor (CMC 1999a). Twenty percent of the population live below the national poverty datum line of R1070pm (US\$152), and another 50% hover just above this figure, making them extremely vulnerable to any sudden shocks that may be brought about by illness in the household, loss of a job or increases in the interest rates. The reason for this large proportion of the population being poor is rooted in the dramatic inequality that characterises the city. Figure 2 captures the income inequalities between the four main race groups and reflects the consequences of systematic racial discrimination and exclusion of the apartheid system. Deepening poverty further contributes to an increase in diseases such as malnutrition and chronic lifestyle disorders, e.g. alcoholism, smoking and drug abuse (Unicity Health Trends Research Group 2000).

The racist political and planning systems of the recent past have left deep spatial scars on the city, not unlike other South(ern) African cities (Dewar 1992 & 1998). In particular, Cape Town confronts a very distinctive problem. The majority population of Coloured people were forcibly removed during the 1960s and 1970s as part of implementing the Group Areas Act (1950) and became effectively ghettoised in their new housing estates. This community seems to be disproportionately endowed with very extreme social pathologies, especially in the poorest sections of the community. The most serious of these pathologies is systemic violence at household and community level. Various studies suggest that the Coloured community has disproportionately higher shares of domestic violence, especially sexual violence, even by extreme norms as in South Africa (Fanaroff 2000). Most poor communities are characterised by very high levels of gangsterism, linked to chronic domestic violence and abuse (Ibid). Current research in one of the worst-off

communities on the Cape Flats, Manenberg, suggests that up to 70% of the young males in the community are proud members of these gangs (Chipkin 2000).

Figure 2: Income inequality in terms of Race (1996 Census)



Violent crimes per capita are the highest in Cape Town compared to other South African cities. (This statistic is particularly frightening if we accept that South Africa is listed as one of the three most violent countries in the world, rivalled only by Columbia and Brazil.) Violent crimes are more prevalent in poor areas whilst crime against property are unsurprisingly dominant in middle-class and wealthy areas. These patterns tell us that Cape Town residents experience day-to-day life in vastly different ways and counter strategies to secure safety and reduce crime will have to be designed to deal with these differential patterns. Significantly, the perpetrators of crime tend to be young men and the concentration of violent crimes tends to be in familial and familiar spaces, i.e. the home and local neighbourhood. This suggests high levels of dysfunctionality and social fragmentation in these households and communities, which undoubtedly impact on the ability of these households to be involved in collective action and participatory forums with municipal staff or political representatives.⁷

Future prospects are equally daunting, especially in terms of employment and health patterns. It is particularly young people who are most at risk of marginalisation and death, either through criminal violence or Aids. Unemployment levels are highest amongst the 20-24 years band, which reinforces the earlier observation that the majority of new entrants into the labour market cannot find work. In line with earlier efforts to disaggregate trends, it is highly significant to identify whom exactly is failing to find work in terms of race and gender. In the age category 20-24, 68.4% of African women are unemployed, compared to 29.1% of Coloured women, and 6.2% of White women. Similarly, in this age category, 46.5% of African men, 23% of Coloured men, and 7.6% of White men are unemployed (CMC 1999b).

⁷ A separate report has been prepared on safety and security in the Cape Metropolitan Area. It provides more in depth discussion on these issues and substantiates it with relevant statistics. See: Fanaroff, B. 2000. "Report on Safety and Security for the Unicity." Cape Town: July.

A number of epidemiological studies report that serious social dislocation characterises⁸ poor neighbourhoods, especially in poor Coloured and African communities. These symptoms manifest themselves in disproportionately high levels of alcohol and drug abuse, which can be linked to very high incidence of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Socialisation processes that are dominated by gang sub-cultures, which target young men in particular, further exacerbate this vicious circle. As a consequence, it is mostly young men who are the perpetrators and victims of violent crime outside households. These realities make any form of social development processes almost impossible and undermine positive social capital (Chipkin 2000; Robins 2000). It is evident that high unemployment fuels the power and influence of gangs, which reproduce criminal-based economic processes based on the drug and alcohol economies, which in turn ensure that dependency⁹ cultures and violent behavioural patterns persist. The governance implications of these social processes are starkly confronted by the largest municipality in the CMA, the City of Cape Town, which had to implement a neighbourhood renewal exercise in Manenberg after a freak tornado displaced close to a 100 households in 1999. The economic mainstay of the community is a drug economy run by the 45 gangs who operate in the area. The municipality decided to prohibit its employees to engage with these gangsters in establishing local social compacts, which seek to involve the community at large in the renewal process. (More on this community later when we explore the implications for fostering participatory metropolitan governance.)

Cape Town displays typical diseases associated with poverty and poor environmental health. The most prominent is tuberculosis (TB) and this is likely to increase as long as the prospect for improvements in living environments remains low. More disconcerting is the fact that there is a close link between HIV/Aids and TB. It is projected that in just eight years time Aids will become the biggest cause of mortality, compared to all other causes combined (Dorrington 2000). Already, 15-20% of TB patients are infected with the Aids virus (Personal communication with Ivan Toms, Chief Medical Officer). The group that is most severely affected is young African women. It is projected that 50% of future Aids victims will be African women (Unicity Health Trends Research Group 2000).

The unique topographical and biophysical features of the CMA also promote very particular environmental problems. For example, the high water table means that it is more expensive to install infrastructure for low-income housing. As a result, the proportion of the national housing subsidy that can be spent on the top structure gets eroded. The most crucial urban environmental concerns in the CMA include problems related to: i) loss or destruction of natural resources and systems; ii) pollution; and iii) access to basic environmental infrastructure and services (Killian & Sowman 2000). Good quality arable land is being threatened by rapid urban expansion and low-density urban sprawl. Coupled with current housing backlogs (estimated at 220 000 units), high levels of

⁸ The Medical Research Council of South Africa has a special unit, National Urbanisation and Health Programme, which studies the health impacts of urbanisation processes and can be contacted at: <http://www.mrc.ac.za>.

⁹ The inter-relationship between processes of social dysfunctionality and crime is explored more fully in a background report mentioned earlier (Fanaroff 2000).

pollution, inadequate access to safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation and stormwater drainage systems, and lack of waste removal facilities, it is obvious that the negative impact on the environmental health and quality of life of the urban poor is severe.

This background analysis provides a context to assess the approach of the Unicity Commission to establish a future governance framework and system. To fully appreciate the scale and complexity of the challenge it is necessary to summarise the institutional legacy of racially-based local government in South Africa and how this manifested in the CMA.

Brief History of Local Government in the CMA

The historical norm in South Africa during the 20th century was racial segregation and (violent) control of the influx of Black bodies into the city. Local government was structured to facilitate and regulate this agenda of racial segregation and exclusion. Consequently, each 'racial group' was afforded its own type of local government and the different types coincided spatially with the formal segregation of races in terms of the Native Areas Act (1923) and later, the Group Areas Act (1952). Practically, it meant that the four designated 'racial groups' (in terms of the Population Registration Act of 1950), Whites, Coloured, Indians and Africans, had their own version of local government although with very different capacities and powers (Cameron 1999).

The pre-1994 local government system was effectively established in the early 1920s with periodic reforms in an attempt to make the racially discriminatory system more palatable, but with minimal success (Cameron 1999). The local government system made provision for race-based municipal authorities. White (group) areas were governed and administered by White Local Authorities (WLAs) that were fully-fledged municipal institutions with a political council, administration to carry out the functions of the councils and taxation powers. Management Boards and Local Affairs Committees technically governed Coloured and Indian areas. Both of these institutions relied on the administrations of WLAs and/or Provincial Administrations to provide services on its behalf. Typically, these Management Committees were established through elections characterised by very low levels of voter participation and were generally regarded as illegitimate (Cameron 1991). These bodies were generally regarded as puppet structures controlled by the (White) National Party and comprised of politicians with a penchant for corruption. African communities fell under the jurisdiction of Black Local Authorities (BLAs). These were beleaguered structures from their inception due to militant opposition from the black community and a well-established reputation for inefficiency, graft and collaboration with White interests (Shubane 1991). In the late 1980s, a metropolitan-type authority existed in most urban areas in South Africa, called Regional Services Councils (RSCs). These structures were essentially dedicated service delivery bodies that concentrated on bulk services that were best delivered on a metropolitan-wide basis to maximise economies of scale. They were established in 1985 with the proclamation of the RSC Act (Cameron 1999).

In the Cape Metropolitan Area (CMA) a plethora of these municipal authorities existed. After the 1988 municipal elections, there were 19 WLAs, each with their own administration (Wilkinson 2000). Five BLAs covered the African group areas although they were totally dependent on the Regional Services Council and some of the WLAs to

provide services on their behalf. Only one Management Board in the Coloured areas had municipal status out of a total of 29 committees. Management Boards secured services from the WLAs and the RSC. To complicate matters further, a number of ‘non-status’ areas existed in the CMA, mainly informal settlements, and these were serviced in part by the Provincial Administration (Cameron 1999).

It is important to appreciate that the 19 WLAs were of very different size and capacity. The largest WLA was the City of Cape Town, which had a staff complement in excess of 16 000 and fulfilled a metropolitan-wide service delivery role with respect to certain services. It was responsible for transport planning given that the central business district and most industrial areas fell within its jurisdiction. It also provided bulk services such as water, wastewater treatment and electricity on a metropolitan scale (Sewell 1998). The other significant actor in the CMA was the Regional Services Council. This body was the largest of its kind in South Africa in terms of its staff complement (around 6000) and the scale of service provision it performed (Schmidt 1998). It rendered services to almost all of the Coloured and Indian Management Committees. Even though it was a metropolitan level municipal structure, it refrained from any metropolitan level policy formulation or planning functions.

In the wake of the national negotiations that commenced after the opening-up of the political sphere in February 1990, a plethora of local negotiations between WLAs and oppositional movements were initiated. (Some even pre-dated this period by a few years but on single issues.) It soon became self-evident that a national framework was required to inform and regulate these local negotiations processes. In 1993, a national level Local Government Negotiations Forum (LGNF) was established to reach agreement on the future local government system and the transition mechanisms and procedures. The product of LGNF was Chapter 10 in the Interim Constitution which dealt with local government affairs. The provisions were formally promulgated on the 2 February 1994, which signalled the start of the Pre-Interim Phase of the local government democratisation process.

The local government de-racialisation and democratisation was divided into three phases: i) pre-interim, which commenced with the passing of the Local Government Transition Act until the first local government elections (1995/96); ii) interim phase, which stretched between the first democratic elections and the second elections; and iii) final phase that would commence when the final constitutional model was implemented with the second local government elections. This approach allowed for policy development of the new local government system between 1994-1999, which was described earlier (also see: Parnell, et al. in press). In the CMA, it effectively meant that between 1988 – 2000 the area moved from having more than 50 different types of municipal authorities that were racially-based, to just one metropolitan authority—the Unicity Council. The institutional reform process is summarised below in table 4.

Table 4: Recent evolution of local government in the Cape Metropolitan Area

Period: Number & types of local authorities in the _ □ □ □ □ □ _ □ □ □ □ □	Pre-negotiations Phase: 1988-1994 19 White Local Authorities 29 Management Committees 5 Black Local Authorities 1 RSC Non-status areas serviced by Provincial authority	Pre-Interim Phase: 1994-1996 40 Appointed Councils, comprised of 50% statutory councillors and 50% non-statutory councillors	Interim Phase: 1996-2000 1 Metropolitan Council (weak powers) 6 Sub- Councils (own policy-making and fiscal powers)	Final Phase: 2000- 1 Unicity Council Number sub-councils (weak policy and fiscal powers) to be defined
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Establishment of a Unicity Governance Framework¹⁰

Prior to the first democratic local government elections held in May 1996, the area presently known as the CMA was governed by 40 appointed local authorities that worked through 19 separate administrations. The 1996 local government elections saw the establishment of a two-tier metropolitan government system with six autonomous local authorities and a “weak” (policy and co-ordinative) metropolitan authority. This area became the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Council after the local government elections on 5 December 2000.

The Unicity Commission (UC) is a statutory body charged with the responsibility of preparing detailed recommendations for the incoming Metropolitan Council to ensure a smooth transition process from seven distinct municipalities to one municipality for the CMA. The existing seven councils combined comprise 26 000 staff and a cumulative annual budget of R8.5 billion (US\$1.2 billion), of which approximately 22% is allocated for capital expenditure to address the severe backlogs amongst the African and Coloured communities. Working out the logistics of amalgamating these seven organisations in a highly charged labour relations environment has proven to be a massive undertaking. It was agreed that the UC will not only restrict itself to preparing transition plans to ensure uninterrupted provision of services, but will also develop a five year service delivery and financial plan to enable the new council to ‘hit the ground running’ as quickly as possible. According to the independent chairperson of the Commission, the transition will be about transformation if new policies, systems and strategies can be implemented as quickly as possible to avoid a situation that staff becomes complacent with the new dispensation and does not see the need to change attitudes, behaviour and performance (personal communication with N. McLachlan).

The UC is legally mandated to fulfil six tasks: **i)** Advise the Provincial Minister on the transition to a Unicity, including: a) disestablishment of the seven councils; and b) establishment of the Unicity; **ii)** Protect the integrity of the Unicity, especially with regard to financial management and maintenance of assets; **iii)** Design a 5 year term of office plan (an IDP), including budgets and service delivery strategies for the Unicity;

¹⁰ Most of the discussion presented in this section is based on my participation in the Technical Support for the Unicity Commission between 26 May – 8 September 2000. However, I am solely responsible for any interpretation of events, processes and possible causes presented here.

iv) Design arrangements to ensure initial smooth functioning of the Unicity, especially uninterrupted delivery of municipal services; v) Consult and negotiate with employees and unions; vi) Communicate with all stakeholders (internal and external), including municipal employees (Unicity Commission website, 2000).

The most salient aspect of this agenda is the design of the 'term-of-office-IDP', as it has become known during the last number of months. This section elaborates the current thinking of the UC on this issue with an eye on pulling out the emerging governance model that is being constructed. In particular, I will focus on the implications for citizen/civic participation and the adoption of a partnerships approach in service provision. The policy proposals of the UC are premised on a very general consensus amongst decision-makers, advisors and key stakeholder groupings that the long-term plan for Cape Town must address:

☒ Global competitiveness;

☒ The eradication of poverty;

☒ Sustainability (financial and environmental); and

The detailed proposals of the UC are structured around four policy themes: the provisional city development strategy; a metropolitan governance model, a service delivery strategy, and a medium-term income and expenditure model.

City Development Strategy

The UC decided at the outset that it wanted to use the transition process as an opportunity to put long-term strategic planning on the agenda of local government. The uncertainty in local government during the last ten years due to perpetual, even if essential, restructuring has sedimented as a short-term mentality in local government. The UC sees this as detrimental to the strategic political management function of the city, which is essential in the current globalising environment. The UC has debated and formulated an initial argument about the problems facing Cape Town and how best these can be addressed through a partnership-based strategy. More importantly, the UC has developed a detailed proposal to involve all the stakeholders in the city in a comprehensive city visioning process, similar to strategic planning initiatives such as the iGoli 2010 Partnership initiative in Johannesburg (GJMC 2000) and previous efforts in cities such as Barcelona, Toronto, etc (GHK Group 2000; Landry 2000). The process itself will be kick-started by the Metropolitan Council after the municipal elections but it will be owned and driven by a partnership-based institutional vehicle. The approach to selection and questions around representivity of such a partnership-based institutional vehicle has not yet been resolved. The intention is that the City Development Strategy (CDS) will have a twenty-year vision that directly shapes five-year IDPs, which in turn sets the parameters of annual development priorities and budgets.

Metropolitan government political system

The governance model is rooted in one option provided for in the Municipal Structures Act, which is the creation of an executive committee system as opposed to an executive

mayoral system. Provincial legislation precludes the creation of an executive mayor and ward committee with decision-making powers. (The political models that are excluded are seen as ANC models by the Democratic Alliance¹¹ parties in the Western Cape.)

The future City of Cape Town Metropolitan Council will be led by a strong executive committee comprised of various portfolio committees, emulating the national parliamentary system. In addition a number of oversight committees will be created to monitor performance, ethical standards and human rights. An independent public protector office is also being proposed. The political system will further be designed to facilitate planning and other regulatory decisions at an area level (it is unclear how many areas will be created because the criteria are still being debated). A number of informal ward participatory mechanisms are proposed, although they will not have any formal legislative or decision-making role.

Strong emphasis is being placed on creating responsive, accountable and transparent municipal institutions. A number of localized one-stop shop arrangements are proposed, similar to the Johannesburg approach (GJMC 2000). The rationale is that citizens and interest groups need to be empowered to engage with local government on the basis of objective verifiable information that is collected at the area level. These areas are being demarcated to allow for comparison between different parts of the city. According to the UC's technical advisory team, this system will be an essential decision-making infrastructure to promote, monitor and justify redistribution across the city. It is unclear whether civil society organizations have geared themselves to engage with local government in this manner, but it does mean the basic architecture for informed political debate is in place.

The UC has accepted the idea to develop a Citizen's Charter for Cape Town to give practical expression to the commitment to provide high quality services and create the basis for a citizen-driven performance management strategy. A Citizen's Charter is envisaged to capture the social contract between the municipality and citizens, referring to minimum service standards, quality of service provision, and the rights and obligations of both citizens and the council. It will be developed through an extensive consultative and mobilisation process.

Lastly, the current policies have a strong bias to promote an e-government approach, even though Internet access is low in the city, especially amongst working class citizens. It is more a future-orientated approach based on the assumption that access will systematically increase and it reinforces a broader economic development policy approach to promote connectivity. It is envisaged that information technology (IT) has to play three interrelated roles within the new agenda for local government and these roles will be fleshed

¹¹ The Democratic Alliance is a new political party that is an alliance between three national political parties: the Democratic Party, the New National Party and the Federal Alliance. All three are traditionally white parties that reflect respectively, a centre of right liberal orientation, a religious centre-of-right orientation and a rightwing conservative approach. It was formed after the last general election in 1999 to constitute a more substantial opposition block to the ruling party, the African National Congress. The move has consolidated race-based divisions in South African society and politics.

out in a full IT Strategy for Cape Town. The first role is to have an IT enabled administrative strategy for local government. Issues to be addressed here is how IT can ensure that city services are delivered in the most efficient and effective ways (thereby also contributing to increasing city competitiveness). It includes issues like making local government more customer-friendly and citizen oriented, reducing bureaucracy, bringing down transaction costs and providing cheaper services. The second role is to have an IT enabled development strategy for the city. This will focus on how IT can be used to support small businesses, increase the exposure and access to IT training, create job opportunities, rebuild community spirit, etc. These issues also contribute to making a city more competitive in a global market. The third role is to have an IT enabled city governance strategy. This will focus on how IT can make local government politicians and officials more accessible. It will also focus on how IT can be used to make the processes of local government and related performance information more transparent (building accountability). IT can also be used to improve the relationship between local government politicians and officials with the community by providing a platform for timeous interaction.

Service delivery approach

Due to the complexities involved in amalgamating seven large organizations with distinct and uneven organizational systems, procedures, computer systems, conditions of service and financial systems, a much more cautionary approach is being followed than what is the case in Johannesburg (GJMC 2000). In Johannesburg, a radical institutional restructuring is being pursued. It involves the disaggregation of the organisation and the creation of various single-purpose bodies that take the form of utilities, corporatised bodies, privatised companies, agencies or in-house ring-fenced service departments respectively (Devas 2000). The main purpose is to achieve greater efficiencies within local government so that surplus can be generated, which can be reinvested in development priorities. A related objective is to split apart the service assurer, policy custodian and service delivery functions to create adequate performance monitoring pressure (Beall, et. al. 1999; GJMC 2000).

The UC proposed a more gradual approach. It has essentially identified a number of conceptual starting points for service reorganisation, which have been agreed to by all political parties. Further analysis will be carried out to inform the restructuring route that will be followed. The first starting point is agreement on the need to provide a core package of basic services on an equitable basis to all citizens. Secondly, once a single administration has been created, with a clear understanding of the internal business processes of constituent services, a movement will be made to provide special services that address needs of different constituencies, e.g. areas of special need such as zones of poverty or business improvement districts, etc. Lastly, the Unicity must be geared-up to execute targeted intervention programmes to address key priorities as they emerge from the CDS. Lead consultant, David Schmidt, explains that a detailed institutional design process is also underway to create the new organisation that can give expression to this approach (personal communication with David Schmidt). The central challenge is to move away from a fragmented service delivery organisation to one that is oriented to address the complex social and economic challenges of the city as explained earlier.

Financial model

At the heart of the reform process is the new financial framework and system. For the first time, a proper multi-year (5 year) planning and budgeting system is being introduced. The budget process is being redesigned to reinforce the introduction of a performance management system to promote developmental behaviour and greater efficiencies. In other words, a deliberate attempt is being made to change the nature and formats of municipal accounting and credit control measures to ensure that it is demystified and subject to the overall strategic priorities of the city. The intent is to ensure that the financial system becomes the backbone of the integrated development planning cycle for the city.

These brief summaries of a number of expansive policies are inevitably guilty of simplification. However, they do capture the general thrust of the reorganisation agenda. Nico McLachlan, independent chairperson of the UC, captures the spirit and intent of these policy recommendations as...

[A] combination of centralisation, de-centralisation, special area services, and programme/project-driven interventions are planned in order to effectively address the issues and trends impacting on the city. It is envisaged that the unicity will focus its attention much stronger on the developmental roles and responsibilities of local government and that it will shift from the role of provider of services to the role of insurer of services. In this context the establishment of utility-type organisations, special purpose vehicles, and more multi-sector partnerships is foreseen (McLachlan 2000).

Implications of Unicity Commission Policy Agenda for Governance Relations

There are many potentialities to explore. For the sake of brevity I want to hone in on key proposals to expand participation in agenda setting processes—the City Development Strategy and the IDP process. Secondly, I want to explore the prospects of service delivery partnerships that address service delivery needs and also strengthen engagement between citizens and the municipality. However, it is crucial to keep an eye on the broader civil society landscape in South Africa and the specific precursory processes in Cape Town. I explore these aspects now and proceed to unpack the opportunities for governance in the wake of the UC's policy proposals.

South Africa boasted a vibrant and diverse civil society sector fashioned by the anti-apartheid struggle, which resulted in the peaceful transition to democracy in 1994. The scale and dynamics of the progressive civil society sector has been documented elsewhere (Kraak 1996; Marais 1997). It was particularly in the main urban centres that a variety of community-based (CBOs) and professional non-governmental organisations (NGOs) took a foothold and grew in influence. In particular, the civic movements and developmental NGOs were very influential in shaping the character and role of local government in the post-apartheid context (Swilling 1997a). Six years after the 1994 elections, this has changed dramatically for a number of different reasons, some relating to lack of continued funding and others relating to the ascendancy of the ANC as a political and organising

force at grassroots level at the expense of civic-type organisations (Seekings 1997; Idasa 2000).

In the CMA, the picture is somewhat different. At a broad level, civics and progressive NGOs have suffered influence, especially since the (former) National Party¹² achieved a political majority in the city. The governing party was not too interested in the views of radical social movements and NGOs, but preferred to promote more welfarist-type civil society formations that could act as transmission belts for their particular brand of patronage politics. However, this was not entirely feasible because of the established civil society umbrella associations and community-level structures that were constructed before the elections in 1994 (Pieterse & Simone 1994).

In 1991, an umbrella body was established to bring together the viewpoints of the business sector, trade unions, civic associations, political parties and other civil society formations. It was called the Western Cape Economic Development Forum and provided the first instance of getting together civil society formations from different political persuasions, and especially the business community (Pieterse & Simone 1994). The initiative became extremely influential in shaping the transitional local government arrangements during the 1990s (Wilkinson 2000). It was also an ideal vehicle for the former Regional Services Council (a service delivery and planning local government structure that serviced black areas with limited or no local government coverage), who wanted to engage with the public on a metropolitan level spatial framework, later to be called the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (MSDF). This body also influenced the emerging negotiated settlement around local government in the city. A broad-based corporatist framework for local political discussions goes back to this period. In a context of deep divisions and oppositional political ideologies, these relations relied heavily on mediated forums.

In 1992, a local branch of a national NGO, the Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa (Idasa), launched a seminar series called City Futures Seminars which brought together a cross-spectrum of political opinion to debate the future challenges facing the city and the potential role of a non-racial local government system. It dovetailed with the national trend to establish local negotiation forums between white municipalities and radical community-based organisations, as characterised by Swilling (1997b). The result of these processes was a formal Metropolitan Negotiation Forum, which created the first un-elected, non-racial local authority in Cape Town in 1993. This forum appointed an interim council in 1995 which governed until the first elections in May 1996. These processes capture the recent legacy of participatory local governance in the CMA. They were characterised by a corporatist approach, which made it difficult to fully realise participatory processes that genuinely animated and involved local communities who were represented by leaders in these forums. In fact, the direct link between participation in these processes and achieving political office after the elections arguably caused distance between former leaders and their support base in communities. The decline in stature,

¹² This political party re-named itself the New National Party (NNP) to shed its links with its history as the architect of the apartheid system, but with limited success. It also a founding member of the new political party, the Democratic Alliance (see footnote 10).

influence and effectiveness of civic associations can partially be ascribed to these processes.

The main form of municipal-citizen interaction at the metropolitan level post 1996 was through the Metropolitan Development Council (MDC). It is a metropolitan wide body that is made up of local development forums at neighbourhood and metropolitan local council levels. Ostensibly, its function is to provide a meeting point for a diverse range of local stakeholders, including organised business, trade unions, sports clubs, welfare bodies, religious structures and development associations, especially civics and development projects. It is buttressed by provincial legislation, which established the Provincial Development Council that fulfils an oversight and advisory function with regard to the Provincial Parliament. The MDC is partially funded by local government and in that sense reflects political commitment for the role of the body. Unfortunately, although questions have been raised about the efficacy of these structures in the context of the UC investigations, no evaluative research is available to assess the impact of the body on the decision-making of local government, either at a council level or individual programmes/projects of the various departments in the organisation.

In light of these trends and institutional legacies, the question is: what form and character of governance will be promoted by the policies of the future City of Cape Town Metropolitan Council after the forthcoming municipal elections? A definitive answer is obviously not possible at this stage because of the high levels of flux and changing political landscape in the wake of the elections. In the next section, I summarise the different opportunities for civil society involvement in municipal processes and interventions. This provides the platform for more speculative comments about sustaining participatory governance relations.

Governance Opportunity Structure

The transition process towards the establishment of a metropolitan council for Cape Town presents a range of opportunities for civil society organisations to influence and shape the agenda of the process. One set of opportunities revolve around democratic participation in the public sphere to influence the content of the political agenda of the council, and a second set pertains to opportunities to become involved in different types of service delivery partnerships at neighbourhood and locality levels. The two dimensions could be inter-related and mutually reinforcing (Wilson & Robinson 1998). It is worth extrapolating the specific participation and partnership opportunities available to civil society organisations:

- ☒ Engaging with the CDS process to directly shape its content. The provisional design of

- the process allows significant scope for CSOs to serve on the governing structure of the process and drive the multiplicity of initiatives that will be undertaken to forge a city vision and related strategies. Most of 2001 will be dedicated to this process.

- ☒ Keeping the IDP process meaningful in a participatory democratic sense: this involves active organisation and mobilisation to influence the development priorities that anchor the municipal IDP; putting forward proposals on appropriate indicators and systems to monitor compliance with priorities on a regular basis, and which are disaggregated at macro and micro levels;

☒ Influencing sectoral and intersectoral policy frameworks that cut across the work of municipal departments. During the next few years, a number of metropolitan policies will be developed, overhauled and sharpened, e.g. transport, environment, spatial framework, economic development, poverty reduction, social development, etc. These will have to comply with the direction of the CDS and the IDP, which provides further opportunity for pro-active engagement, monitoring and especially mobilisation if the council fails to perform;

☒ Influencing the suite of new organisational management policies that will be developed to concretise the performance-based institutional approach. It will be particularly important to assess whether these systems, e.g. affirmative action policies, appraisal systems, performance monitoring, etc., are consistent with the policy direction established by the IDP framework. Informed CSOs will even be able to use explicit (pro-civil society) guidelines established by the national and provincial departments of local government to argue and advance their case.

☒ Examining and influencing the establishment of an 'area-based system' for information management, political monitoring and identifying special interventions. This will be critical because in future, redistribution in the city will be based on comparative data and analysis about the differential trends in different areas of the city. Area-based models will also directly shape the design of service delivery strategies, and provide the integrative logic for all municipal services that require a high degree of community input, e.g. social and economic development, land management, housing, health and environmental management. There is great scope in this regard because the area-based system is still on the drawing board and it will take the better part of the next few years to develop and mainstream a system across the metropolitan government system.

☒ Getting involved in local-level service delivery partnerships. These will vary significantly across the city but will become more prominent in the approach to service delivery for reasons related to enhancing democratic citizenship, cost efficiency and sustainability that flows from a sense of ownership by the 'beneficiaries'. In virtually all of the six metropolitan local councils (that have been amalgamated with the metropolitan council to form the new single metropolitan council) there have been micro experiments to involve residents from poor communities in service delivery processes with varying degrees of success. These service delivery partnerships could contribute greatly to democratisation of both the local state and civil society if conducted in a suitable manner (Tendler 1997; Johnson & Wilson 2000). There is substantial scope for CSOs, especially grassroots organisations, to prepare themselves for such roles as a means of securing the interests of their members and inserting these organisations into the heart of the city's service delivery strategy.

Within each of these strands of participation and partnership one could identify a plethora of specific methods and tools to induce and sustain participation. In fact, the UC prepared a special report on these methods and tools to raise awareness and foster common understanding (Unicity Commission Programme Office 2000). This is not the focus of my

discussion here but rather to suggest that CSOs in the CMA are faced with an excellent opportunity to impact on the resources and culture of the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Council. The question is, will civil society organisations seize these opportunities (contingent openings)? And secondly, will there be sufficient political will amongst the political-administrative leadership to see the reforms through?

Partnership Prospects: Two Local Instances

Engaging with the opportunities summarised above requires different levels of skill and competence within civil society and the municipality, and a particular predisposition to strengthen the democratic political system. The last factor is absolutely key, especially in a context such as South Africa where the civil society sector emerged and defined itself in opposition to the state. Civil society organisations (CSOs) in general in South Africa are struggling to redefine themselves in a democratic context and in their rhetoric fail to appreciate that one can oppose a particular government policy or action, yet still support the legitimacy of the state in general terms (Pieterse, 2001). The result is that a lot of CSOs operate on the basis of absolute political ideologies, which lead them to question the bona fides of the state (cf. SANGOCO 2000). At this point they also see collaboration on certain issues as tantamount to selling out their constituency. This culture amongst a number of radical CSOs is understandable given the rapid policy changes that the government has taken in the direction of neo-liberal tropes, especially with regard to macro-economic issues (Habib & Padaychee 2000). Nonetheless, it is also short-sighted because ideological puritanism quickly leads to missed opportunities and political irrelevance.

This generalisation is certainly applicable to radical CSOs in the CMA. However, one finds the other extreme as well. An expansive tradition of liberal welfarist organisations exists in Cape Town. For decades these organisations have defended the interests of the (white) middle classes and often continue to fight to protect the inflated standard of services and living that these groups have become accustomed to during the apartheid era. These organisations are also deeply suspicious of the state, because they see all redistributive policies as a direct attack on their 'hard earned' standards of living. These are stark depictions, which fail to capture the nuances in-between where most local CSOs fit. Suffice to say that civil society democratisation and unity remains an elusive ideal and corporatist structures such as the MDC and its constituent organisations struggle to produce tangible benefits for their members because they are kept in stalemate by conservative and radicalised agendas. The problems are obviously deeper and more complex than this, rooted in leadership weaknesses, infrastructure limitations, poor communication systems and a general lack of shared purpose. But this cursory description is adequate to appreciate the challenges within civil society to engage in meaningful participation and partnerships.

To appreciate the prospects in areas with the most acute urban problems, it is instructive to summarise two different sets of experiences in fostering municipal-community partnerships. The first example is the recent initiative of the City of Cape Town municipality, which is the largest of the six metropolitan sub-councils, to pioneer an area-based model in what they term a 'zone of poverty'. The example demonstrates the continued difficulties to realise participatory development, even if there are numerous

civil society organisations and a strong commitment from the municipality to civil society involvement and empowerment. A senior municipal manager, responsible for a cluster of functions categorised as 'community development', pushed a very strong agenda to structure municipal interventions on partnership-based institutional lines. The neighbourhood, Manenberg, is severely impoverished, racked by gang-based violence and was one of the areas that was hit by a freak tornado during 1999 (Robins 2000). The tornado provided an opportunity to intervene in the community and create new housing and other opportunities to address deeper social problems, manifested in high levels of criminality, unemployment and social violence. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the sophisticated design and planning aspects of the initiatives, but significant lessons emerging in the course of an evaluative study conducted by Isandla Institute.

The study confirms the presence of a thick layer of associational life and support organisations that attempt to provide a range of services ranging from health, social service advice, computer training, youth and childhood development, hairdressing, arts, sport and culture (Browne 2000; Robins 2000). These organisations tend to be driven by underpaid, sometimes voluntary, but dedicated community activists. Religious leaders in the community also play an active role in organising projects and social organisation processes. However, due to a lack of resources to support the work of these organisations, the CSO sector in Manenberg is characterised by intense rivalry and corrosive competitiveness. Frequently, this coincides with and reinforces religious and political differences in the community. These tensions are compounded by poor managerial and organisational skills and little commitment to cooperative solutions. One of the consequences is that most organisations and CSO leaders tend to be overly critical of the council and more or less anticipate failure even before an initiative has gotten underway (Robins 2000). In the cut-thrust of daily interactions between frontline staff of the municipality and local CSO leaders, it is difficult to consolidate common ground. CSO leaders express frustration that the municipal staff act in a top-down and paternalistic manner. The officials in turn argue that the CSO leaders are not cooperative and that if they cannot control a process they become obstructionist and undermining (Browne 2000). There is clearly a need to rebuild a sufficient level of trust between these (inter-dependent) actors. At this point, given the lack of institutional support systems, it has been impossible to surface and deal with these issues in a manner that can strengthen the relationships.

At a recent workshop (23-24 November 2000) to discuss these problems, a number of proposals were explored to deal with these issues by refining the institutional approach of the municipality. There was general support for the concept of inter-disciplinary area-based teams that can provide more coordinated services and consolidate a shared approach to engagement with community-based organisations. The intention is to facilitate more effective two-way communication systems between these area-based teams and CSOs. The earlier experiments to work on an area-basis is being treated as pilots that lessons will be drawn from to extrapolate new principles and, hopefully, consensus for future collaboration. It is too soon to say whether this will improve the prospects of practical collaboration and the impact of the council. Time will tell. It is significant that this approach seems to align with the policy guidelines identified by White and Robinson (1998). They identify the distinctions and different benefits of three types of collaboration/partnership: co-determination (both parties determine what social service is

to be produced and how), co-financing (both parties contribute to the cost of supplying the service in cash, kind or time), and co-production (involves both parties in actually supplying the service). What we can assume is that unless the divisive and antagonistic tendencies within CSOs, and between the CSOs and the council, mentioned earlier are not addressed through capacity building interventions, these new partnership initiatives will probably fail.

A qualitatively different experience is evident in the second largest metropolitan sub-council, the City of Tygerberg Municipality. The commitment of the City of Tygerberg Municipality to Agenda 21 principles and actions has led to the initiation of a significant partnership process between the council and CSOs in the area. The municipality has a dedicated officer to promote and facilitate Agenda 21 projects and create enabling conditions for community-based projects that comply with Agenda 21 principles. An impressive portfolio of practical projects (60-plus) has been established over the course of the last few years and productive partnerships with community-based environmental organisations have been established. Joint service delivery arrangements have resulted from this, especially with regard to waste management projects involving waste pickers and children. During the last year, the municipality decided that it wanted to systematise relations with CSOs and create a framework to allow CSOs to learn about each other's work and become eligible to access external funding earmarked for Agenda 21 projects. The municipality is a partner with a municipality in Aachen, Germany, that is keen to fund environmental projects in Cape Town.

An independently facilitated workshop was convened (6 June 2000) with all of the formally registered and active NGOs in the jurisdiction of the municipality. The purpose was to discuss the potential of a broad partnership framework to structure relations between the municipality and civil society organisations, with particular emphasis on potential Agenda 21 projects. However, such a framework would also improve the quality of inputs into the IDP process and potentially improve access to development finance for CSOs, because the municipality has leverage over a number of foreign donors. This framework could further drive a capacity building initiative to enable CSOs to become involved in service delivery partnerships and/or increase the effectiveness of their own autonomous initiatives.

The Director of Municipal Planning argued at the workshop that it is in the interest of the municipality for CSOs to be organised and become viable partners in service delivery. He asserted that many CSOs are not viable partners, because they are not geared to fulfil functions on behalf of/with the municipality. In response, representatives of CSOs pointed out that the municipality is not very forthcoming with information about council activities and what the opportunities are to influence decision-making processes at the level of tenders and financial and political debates. The CSOs further argued that the municipality tends to ignore the ongoing contribution of CSOs and could do a lot more to facilitate their work in terms of making the infrastructure of the council, such as halls and communication technology, available for use by CSOs. A number of practical steps were identified to begin the process of establishing a more effective relationship between the council and CSOs. For example, it was agreed that a register would be established of existing work done by CSOs to facilitate partnerships with departments in the

municipality, improve communication between CSOs and avoid duplication. The municipality also committed itself to make accessible information available about how the council functions, who is working on what and what the entry points are to engage with the council.

Finally, a Partnership Steering Committee has been established, comprised of councillors and officials, on the hand and representatives from amongst the CSOs who attended the workshop. The Partnership Steering Committee will jointly organise a series of further workshops to reach consensus about how best to structure relations between the municipality and CSOs to overcome traditional suspicions and miscommunication. The participants feel confident that their work could be scaled-up to metropolitan level and taken further by the new metropolitan authority.

Participation Prospects: Embracing Strategic Planning

“Strategic Planning is a way of directing change based on participatory analysis of a situation and its possible evolution and on drawing up of an investment strategy for the scarce resources available at critical points. The diagnosis takes into consideration the settings (globalization), the territory (in its various dimensions) and government (or system of public agents). Special consideration is given to dynamics and work under way, social demands, critical points, obstacles or bottlenecks and potential” (Borja & Castells 1997: 154). Strategic planning is deliberately and self-consciously different to the traditional master planning approaches that underpin the actions of local government, especially in urban contexts. The planning and facilitative work of the UC was more or less to clear the ground for a fully-fledged strategic management approach to metropolitan governance after the election. The strategic imperative was to lock the new council into a mindset and (cyclical) procedure that would have as its starting point a city-wide strategic plan, captured in a city development strategy (CDS), similar to the models being promoted by the World Bank and others (GHK Group 2000).¹³

By definition the UC’s process of the past year has been an elite-driven process (largely within local government), because of the agenda that it attempted to address in a very short space of time (January – October 2000). The agenda entailed a vast range of both practical and strategic management issues. The underlying rationale was to push through as many radical ideas (organisational design and functioning) as possible in a context of what it perceived as sedimented vested interests and a deep conservative commitment to ‘old ways’ of working within local government. The UC attempted to capitalise on a brief ‘window of opportunity’ to formulate proposals and secure political consensus to implement them, and to restructure local government in all fundamental respects. Given the limited frame within which the UC’s work had to be completed (effectively between March-September 2000), the time pressure was seen as leverage to exact political commitment before all the vested interests within local government and outside (e.g.

¹³ The most recent urban policy framework of the World Bank attempts to incorporate the explicitly normative framework for integrated and holistic development, promoted by Wolfenson through the policy framework, the Comprehensive Development Framework. It reflects a debatable attempt by the Bank to give equal weight to economic, political, institutional, social and cultural factors (World Bank 2000; GHK Group 2000).

professional bodies and business interests who rely on local government contracts) could cotton on to the full implications of the multiple restructuring processes. It is important to appreciate the backdrop to this reasoning. One example will suffice. Once the new metropolitan council is in office, it will inherit 26 000 staff with 29 different conditions of service which specify different levels of benefit. The process of rationalisation will compel an upward rationalisation, dramatically inflating the wage bill of the council. Conservative estimates by actuaries suggested that the cost could effectively prohibit any capital budget for more than ten years (CEBANO 2000).

One of the serious problems associated with following the internationalised recipes for urban strategic planning, as most recently expressed by the CDS model, is that it undermines the expression of locally rooted visions expressed in a locally inflected vernacular. Politicians and local government managers struggle to express an intelligible statement about the future that does not stumble over the generic mantras of becoming 'globally competitive' and simultaneously 'alleviating poverty'. It seems that only after these standardised tropes have been identified as priorities one and two, they can move on to a discussion about more locally specific issues. Invariably, the next set of priorities tends to be related to the factors that undermine global competitiveness and reproduce poverty, e.g. crime, inner-city grime (sometimes short-hand for eliminating informal trading and clearing out street children and the homeless), bureaucratic red-tape that scupper foreign investment, etc.

Ideally, future-oriented discussions and visioning exercises should be an attempt to facilitate political debates about the future of the city, explicating whose interests should be served and how various interests will be negotiated and positioned in terms of a shared set of values (rooted in the Bill of Rights and relevant legislation). However, they are often interpreted as conflict-free processes that can build discursive commonality between opposing political parties to ensure that everyone buys into the proper agenda to deal with urban decay and economic competitiveness in an era of vicious economic pressures. One can certainly sympathise with the sense of urgency and instrumentality that underlies this approach, given the peripheral position of African economies (Castells 1998, chapter 2). However, in a deeply divided city such as Cape Town, political pacts about the future will never be sustainable unless they are underpinned by cultures of explicit debate and contestation about whose interests the city is serving (Mouffe 2000; Unger 1998). There is a deeper argument here regarding the need for mindset changes (Landry 2000) as a strategy to infuse democratic debate with vitality that I cannot go into at this point, given constraints of space. This line of argument attempts to work around the problem that different city actors enter the public sphere from different positions of power and only certain, powerful, voices tend to dominate city-wide agendas.

It could be argued that CDS-type processes do not really produce authentic visions of what the city should become given its specific legacy, structure and socio-spatial dynamics. It is mirrored in the inability, as yet, to confront the tough questions about trade-off's and realising a different future than the one nested in the imaginary which is expressed in planning that is "reactive, controlling [and] supports the separation of uses, a suburban model of housing and the strict separation of public and private sectors" (Dewar 1998: 371).

As an urban planning practitioner who draws on a widely circulated repertoire of methods and tools to facilitate political processes that may induce democratic governance, I fully appreciate the difficulties of creating narratives and understandings that are more than mere replicas of fashionable phrases and discourses popularised by so-called successful cities, e.g. Curitiba, Singapore, Barcelona, etc. On the other hand, I am also certain that unless we can convince politicians and officials to transcend vacuous terminology and engage in 'real' dialogue and democratic contestation, the quality of the plans and decisions we take will suffer and will almost certainly be incapable of withstanding the pressures of inevitable conflict. In a sense, these dilemmas between the generic and the specific are insoluble. In my view it is more important that we recognise the debate than attempt to settle it. Moreover, inducing real dialogue is dependent on the quality (and format) of information that is fed into the political processes. Traditionally, council and committee agendas have been designed in a way to undermine substantive debate and discussion. Agendas force politicians to focus on the mundane and skate over the substantive. This creates an ideal situation for expert administrators to decide how matters of substance will be dealt with. Strategic planning frameworks are clearly useful and essential in the broader process of inducing inclusive, participatory governance that allow politicians and citizens to engage in substantial debate. However, it does have drawbacks and these need to be confronted and managed.

Prospects for Embedding Democratic Governance in the Unicity

In concluding this discussion on the governance dynamics in Cape Town I want to make a number of speculative observations to complement the three instances discussed before. Firstly, we can expect much more explicit promotion amongst the leadership of the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Council for partnership-based approaches to many of the challenges facing the city. These are most likely to take the form of public-private partnerships to lure private investment and lay the ground for securing private sector involvement in the corporatisation and utilitisation initiatives of the council. It is also likely that even stronger emphasis will be placed on security enhancement initiatives, such as the network of cameras that provide surveillance in the central business district, which add value to properties and promotes increased retail activity. However, it is unlikely that the established local business community in Cape Town will be keen to enter into partnerships to promote linkage developments in the townships or to agree to development initiatives that may need intervention in land markets to allow for in-fill low-cost housing and mixed-value/use residential development. All of these are essential initiatives if the apartheid form of the city is to change and if poor people are to have access to living areas closer to their (potential) places of work. The real leadership challenge facing the Unicity is to challenge the private sector to redefine their interests in line with the long-term sustainability and viability of the city, which means creating a more inclusive, integrated and equal society (Turok 2000; Wilkinson 2000). Focus group discussions, submissions to the UC and recent public hearings confirm that the mindset of the private sector is very far removed from a city-wide perspective.

Secondly, the new approach to the organisation, clustering and delivery of municipal services could have a dramatic impact on municipal-community interactions. The proposed model allows for the emergence of a much more differentiated approach to

community participation. Interest-driven, project linked community structures will be stimulated to work with municipal project teams at a street/block scale to ensure the effective design, costing, implementation and monitoring of infrastructure linked projects. Different forms of community organisation will be required to be involved at an area level to monitor the cumulative impact of various municipal inputs. It will be more feasible to explore the impact on cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth, children, etc. at this scale. It is possible to calibrate the performance and impact monitoring indicators at the area scale because the baseline data will be collected at this level. At the metropolitan scale, social movements will be able to engage more focussed around various metropolitan-wide policies and strategies. This could provide a tremendous impetus to revive and refocus the plethora of politically minded social movements that were prevalent in the 1980s and early 1990s. However, the stultified political culture amongst the Democratic Alliance and sections of the ANC will inhibit the scope of these movements.

Thirdly, the proposals around a Citizen's Charter could lead to the establishment of a serious municipal consumer movement across the city. The proposed Citizen Charter will be launched through an extensive consultative and canvassing process shortly after the elections in December 2000. It is meant to reflect the commitment of local government to deliver 'best-value', high quality and equitable services to the citizens of Cape Town. It will further capture the responsibilities of citizens in terms of service payment, democratic participation and city promotion to give effect to the social contract between local government and the citizens. The proposed Public Protector office will be the guardian of the charter. A real fear is that this tool will further divide the white and black, poor and well-off citizens of Cape Town because the rate payers associations in the wealthy suburbs of Cape Towns will be the most organised, vociferous and demanding to ensure that they do not experience a drop in standard of living and services. The kind of politics promoted by a Citizen Charter is precisely the mainstay of existing rate payers associations who champion the interests and privileges of the middle classes.

Lastly, the most uncertain and unnerving aspect of realising a working model is the thick institutional layers of informal, criminal and illicit survivalist networks in poor communities. These social formations present a formidable challenge to the credibility and authority of local government, largely because they are impervious to state disciplinary and regulatory efforts. More precisely, they can render entire communities inaccessible and out-of-reach if they perceive a municipal intervention to counteract their interest and livelihood streams. One of the most urgent priorities of the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Council is a comprehensive safety and security strategy for the metropolitan area, even though it is not a function of local government (Fanaroff 2000). This will potentially pit local government against these powerful and violent institutions. Unless the process is tackled with clarity of purpose, political will and consistency, it can unravel the entire strategy of the Unicity Council to realise developmental metropolitan governance. Time will tell how serious this dynamic will be in shaping the chances of democratic and participatory metropolitan governance relations.

At the outset of my brief exploration of governance prospects and instances in the CMA, I asked whether CSOs are likely to seize new opportunities and whether there was

enough political will amongst politicians and officials to substantiate rhetorical commitment to participatory governance. The multiplicity of actors, processes and dynamics in Cape Town is too complex and layered to make any definitive statements. Much more research and ethnographic effort need to be applied before we can understand, interpret and project into the future with confidence. Nonetheless, the few instances discussed here suggests that there is a wide chasm between different actors within civil society at local neighbourhood level, and even more so at a city scale. There are hardly any city-wide civil society organisations that pursue truly urban agendas, apart from a few specialised middle-class NGOs. On the other hand we can also observe a widespread rhetorical commitment to the stock of participation tropes that characterise national legislation and local municipal policies. The experiences of communities suggest that local government has a long road to travel before these principles and values have been internalised, and, as important, bureaucratic procedures are overhauled to reflect a participatory ethos. The recent local government election campaigns, as one indicator, suggest that as a city, Cape Town is some distance away from a democratic public sphere where the inequalities, prejudices and associated violence can be dealt with. In a sense, the acid test for participatory governance is the improvement (or lack thereof) in the quality of life and opportunity structure of the majority of Cape Town citizens who live below and just above the poverty line.

CONCLUSION

My working definition of governance suggests that we pay attention to three aspects of the emerging relations between local government and other actors in the city, especially the citizenry: depth of inter-relationships, quality of the relationships and sense of purpose to achieve shared goals. Given that this paper is essentially a snapshot of a fast changing and dynamic process of institutional transition in local government, it is impossible to pronounce in any definitive way on these three aspects of governance. However, we can get insightful hints, suggestions and a sense of possibilities.

Clearly, the possibilities of governance are intimately related to the contextual trends and the challenges that must be addressed by (local) government and civil society. The paper explored in considerable detail the specific urban challenges that stare Cape Town in the face and located these on a broader canvas of urbanisation patterns in South Africa in general. Each of the major metropolitan centres in South Africa confront similar generic problems but must respond to highly particular manifestations of decades of systematic apartheid planning and city building. As much needs to be constructed as what must be deconstructed and destroyed, especially since the wastage and inefficiency of segregation is producing dramatic economic, environmental and social crises.

The national policy process of creating a fundamentally new local government system seeks to create the conditions to enable localities, working in partnership, to confront and beat these multiple crises. However, the new local government agenda is marked by the contradictions of our age. On the one hand, it is inspired by the confidence and instrumentalism of new public management theories and rhetoric. On the other hand, it is also profoundly influenced by the participatory, social agenda that has become dominant in the development (management) field during the last decade. These approaches and

rationalities do not necessarily sit comfortably together and inevitably require local actors to choose a preference and orientation. It also opens up interesting new spaces for political engagement and contestation at the interstices where these rationalities clash and confuse. We can therefore anticipate very dynamic and differentiated local politics to emerge in the forthcoming period, even if it will not necessarily lead to improved living conditions for marginalized citizens.

The detailed discussion of Cape Town's prospects in this dynamic process suggests that the challenges of metropolitan governance present more questions than answers at this stage. Being in the eye of the transition processes impairs our vision. However, the questions represent a distinctive advance in our thinking about the complexities and challenges of democratic, participatory governance in South Africa more generally. Democratic local governance needs to simultaneously strengthen the capacity of local government and civil society to enable each sector to be effective in its own right. If both 'actors' are empowered, they can engage in meaningful partnerships when and where appropriate, and in robust political engagement when CSOs and citizens feel that their interests are being undermined, or when the state feels CSOs are being unrealistic. Democratic politics of this nature presupposes a commitment to the democratic political system and its values, significant trust and a predisposition to be involved in deliberative processes that give effect to the system. However, if local government fails to deliver meaningful resources and opportunities to large segments of the city, and these segments rely mostly on informal and illicit economic systems, it is unlikely that the ideal-type CDS will come to much. The highly fragmented and divisive party political system poses a further threat at the moment, especially since it also coincides with deep racial cleavages in the city. The future prospects of democratic, participatory local governance rooted in a rights-based framework is uncertain at this stage, but the opportunity framework that has been established through the work of the UC and to be carried forward by the newly elected metropolitan government is promising, even if overshadowed by the number of 'ifs' that have been explored in this paper.

It may be deduced that I am suggesting that the challenges facing local government in South Africa and Cape Town specifically is too immense to be overcome. This is incorrect. I believe that a deep democratic practice is conceivable in Cape Town. I believe that it is possible to shift mindsets and construct new political dialogues and narratives that will enable both local government and citizens to accept and deal with multiplicity, fragmentation and inequalities because it is the constitutive elements of learning one's way through problems and stumbling across solutions ever so often. However, the path to construct such a practice can only be through engaging in multiple pilots and experiments that enable widespread participation of various actors in various institutional configurations. This approach has to be coupled with a commitment to an over-arching process to identify suitable lessons and possible models for large-scale implementation. The 'getting-your-hands' dirty approach of the UC is partially prefigurative of such a reflexive practice. Hopefully, it will provide the continuity between the pre- and postelection restructuring processes. Indeed, there can and should be no peace for those in the process of becoming...

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