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**The Politics of Planning
in Eastern Cape Local
Government:
A Case Study of
Ngqushwa and
Buffalo City
1998 – 2004**

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for the degree of Master of Arts of Rhodes University by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the political implications of the integrated development planning process embarked upon by South African municipalities in the period 1998-2004. Through the use of case study methodology that focuses on the Eastern Cape municipalities of Buffalo City and Ngqushwa, the conventions of municipal planning are examined. This inquiry into municipal planning draws upon official government documents and reports and publications from the non-government sector. The thesis is particularly focused on the claims made in policy documents and related secondary sources and compares these to more critical reports and publication as well as the author's personal experience of the integrated development planning process. Of key interest is the possibility that planning serves political interests and the material needs of an emerging municipal elite and that this is seldom acknowledged in official planning documentation or government sanctioned publications on the topic. The primary findings of the thesis are as follows:

- That the 'reason' of expert policy formulations that accompanied integrated development planning has weakened political economy as a prism of understanding and separated itself from the institutional reality of municipal government
- That the dominant critique of planning and other post-apartheid municipal policy is concerned with the triumph of neoliberalism but this critique, while valid, does not fully explain successive policy failures especially in the setting of Eastern Cape local government
- That function of policy and its relationship to both the state and civil society is usually understood only in the most obvious sense and not as an instrument for wielding political power
- That planning still derives much of its influence from its claim to technical rationality and that this underpinned the 'authority' of the integrated development planning project in South Africa and reinforced its power to make communities governable

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This paper will analyse change in the procedures for planning in South African local government from 1998 to 2004 and the manner in which this change is represented in the dominant literature and policy instruments. The research will draw upon both political and social theory to explore how local government practice, particularly in the Eastern Cape and especially that practice that relates to Integrated Development Planning, falls short of the standards and practice prescribed in national policy developed by the state between 1995 and 2002. It will investigate gaps between the “ideal” i.e. the predominant policy framework of the time and the “reality” experienced by local municipalities and various sectors of civil society. It will also explore at a theoretical level, the manner in which planning is represented by the state and non-government organisations (NGOs) and specific instruments and models that fall within an approach known as Integrated Development Planning.

The term ‘a local government policy framework’ embraces a huge range of legal and administrative instruments and less formal ‘guidelines’. Policy for local government is contained in the Constitution, the White Paper on Local Government, two national laws relating to institutional matters and operations (the Municipal Systems Act and the Municipal Structures Act), and the Demarcation Act (which has not just shaped municipal space but patterns of institutional power and responsibility within that space.) There are laws governing municipal finance and draft legislation on the imposition of property tax. Then there is national level legislation by other line departments on the environment, transport, energy and its usage, bulk water supply and a host of other matters. In addition there is a different sphere of policy framed by provincial ordinances that give more substance to national frameworks and bring a regional specificity to policy design (although the import of these ordinances has been greatly reduced by overarching national legislation.) Lastly there are the internal policies, by-laws and regulations of particular municipalities that give a final form and character to policy before it is enacted and experienced by the public.

The new political and civic leadership were responsible for shaping these laws after 1994 had been confronted with the very palpable challenge of turning around a set of largely discredited and certainly unpopular societal values and norms that shaped apartheid South Africa. For the post 1994 South African leadership, the dominant value system, at least overtly, were the norms and principles of democracy, non-racialism and social equality that for several decades prior to 1994

bound them together in their mission to overthrow the apartheid state.¹ The status quo they confronted was a society shaped by state violence, government enforced segregation, gross economic inequality and racial suspicion and hostility. What made this status quo even more complex were the various political and economic reforms invoked by the apartheid government from about the mid 1970s in an effort to prolong its grip on political power.²

For, at the level of administration, policing, and individual consciousness, the legacy of apartheid is likely to persist stubbornly in endless petty and profound ways for many years to come. Breaking it down will require not only educating and empowering the victims of apartheid, but also re-educating its former practitioners, and promoting dialogue between these two groups.³

Some would argue that in the post-RDP phase, the value system of the elected leadership had been fatally contaminated through a clandestine marriage with neoliberalism incorporating values like 'new realism' in public administration, cost reduction and performance management. Portrayed as a stealthy triumph of the 'New Right', GEAR finds few defenders amongst even centrist analysts and becomes a ready explanation for successive policy failures.⁴ While undoubtedly bringing a problem of coherence into the policy framework, it is an all too easy to blame GEAR for all forms of weak policy implementation.

It is certainly more politically acceptable to discuss 'impossible' attempts to reconcile irreconcilable social and economic values within policy than to confront the awkward reality that many politically correct policies are nonetheless hopelessly out of kilter with the institutions that are supposed to implement them. An emotive addition to this turbulent mixture of policy, is the suggestion that a return to sustained consultation, deeper participation, social justice and more enthusiastic partnerships with civil society⁵ would somehow ameliorate the more objectionable aspects of GEAR. This is to be achieved whilst retaining GEAR's limited but much valued benefits like fiscal savings directed to infrastructure spending, tax cuts for individuals and businesses and a sharply reduced percentage of the budget spent on servicing debt.⁶

Research Aims

The research will attempt to describe an unfolding planning framework for local government and its interpretation within the mainstream South African local government policy debate. It will also look at the enactment of policy amongst

smaller non-metropolitan municipalities and in a very limited way draw upon some of the theoretical constructs framed in chapter one, to explain the gap between the ideal and the reality.

In empirical terms, the main point of the dissertation will ultimately be to explore the adequacy and suitability of legislation and policy provisions for local government and the impact of high order technical / scientific interventions that flow from that policy. My main thesis is that these provisions are often ill suited to the operational challenges faced by most non-metropolitan municipalities. As municipal practice falls increasingly behind the objectives outlined in policy, either through neglect, incompetence or willful abuse, symptoms of a *weak state* begin to emerge. On the other hand it will also be shown that policy and planning frequently serve, by design or accident, other less disclosed interests. The discourse that has elevated issues of local governance including planning into a realm of techno-science⁷ and scientific management has little bearing on the day-to-day challenges of local governance but may well help to maintain the authority and the credibility of the state and the (local) ruling class. Even when the interests of the latter become antithetical to the broad principles of the local government project, they may be able to manipulate planning and technical interventions to maintain their ascendancy through a new and distorted form of rationality.

The research will also be based on the following methods:

- *Highly detailed documentation analysis*: The research makes extensive use of the unpublished documentation held by the Local Government Transformation Project at Afesis-corplan, an NGO based in the Eastern Cape, other NGOs around the country and the government agencies with which these NGOs interacted. These documents include NGO and government resource and training materials, official planning guides, policy directives, planning documents including municipal integrated development plans and budgets, media statements, working papers, journal articles and official reports by government & non-government agencies.
- *In depth participant observation*: The candidate has been deeply involved in the subject under discussion and thus carries an *insider* awareness of the issues. This creates the basis for unique insight but also imposes an obligation to be self-aware i.e. to recognise the difficulty of achieving objectivity and the need to constantly clarify the observer's own assumptions and proclivities on the issues.
- *Case studies*: A case study approach involving Buffalo City municipality and Ngqushwa municipality is used. The term case study is used in the loose sense

that most (but not all) of the illustrative material comes from these two municipalities. The paper draws out particular issues from each case study on a selective basis and does not purport to offer a full overview of all municipal functions or even the planning exercise as a whole.

Synopsis of the Study Areas

Buffalo City municipality is a category B municipality and constitutes the second largest urban area in the province. It is centrally located within the province and stretches from the port city of East London in the East to Dimbaza in the West.⁸ Buffalo City Municipality (BCM) estimates its population at 888 000⁹ with 80% residing in the urban areas of East London and King William's Town and 20% residing within interlinking rural areas. Although it constitutes the economic core of the sub-region, BCM is relatively poor with 71% of the population earning less than the household subsistence level of R1,500 per month.¹⁰ BCM nevertheless represents the second most well resourced municipality in the province with a significant revenue base and a reasonably well-established municipal administration.

Ngqushwa municipality is predominantly rural and comprises the small towns of Hamburg in the East and Peddie in the West. Most (95%) of the 93 997 population reside within 20 757 households mainly located in rural villages.¹¹ About 72% of the employed population earn less than R800 per month. Ngqushwa municipality is has a very weak revenue base and relies on financial transfers from national government. Although its administration has grown over recent years and is reasonably well resourced, it lacks key competencies and like many other rural municipalities in the province, seems incapable of delivering effective administration and municipal services.

1.1 Key elements of Planning Theory

Before considering aspects of planning and urban development that appear to have special significance in the South African context, it is worth overviewing a selection of writings that form a useful theoretical backdrop to the examination of Integrated Development Planning. In this regard the paper will look at the work of Robert Fishman, John Friedman, Richard E. Klosterman, Richard E. Foglesong, Robert A. Beauregard, James C. Scott, Charles Lindblom, Paul Davidoff and Bent Flyvbjerg. I have found the writing of Beauregard to be particularly interesting in exploring planning as a force of modernity. Lindblom's frank observations on policy-making as a science of "muddling through" brings some sense of reality to the often lofty world of policy-making and Scott's warnings about the operation of "high

modernism” seem particularly apt in describing authoritarian trends in planning such as the work of the Municipal Demarcation Board 1999-2001. Throughout the paper there is at least implicit reference to the insights of Arturo Escobar’s and his critique of planning which seems particularly relevant to the IDP programme in South Africa:

But development experts have been blind to these insidious aspects of planning.... One cannot look on the bright side of planning, its modern achievements (if one were to accept them), without looking at the same time on its dark side of domination. The management of the social has produced modern subjects who are not only dependent on professionals for their needs, but also ordered into realities (cities, health and educational systems, economies etc.) that can be governed by the state through planning. Planning inevitably requires the normalisation and standardisation of reality, which in turn entails injustice and the erasure of difference and diversity.¹²

The theoretical part of the dissertation will also explore the characterisation of planning and related legal and policy instruments as ‘techno-science’ and the realm of what Timothy Mitchell calls “calculability”¹³ as a reinforcing rationale for a new political order at the local level. Mitchell comes from a post-structuralist school of writers who draw upon Foucault in examining the idea of the political economy and the manner in which this has shaped thinking about management as a function of government and politics. Where Mitchell presents the *map* as epitomizing the power of the coloniser or the modern state, this dissertation suggests that *planning* has been used in a similar manner by the South African state in extending its hegemony and rendering populations governable in the Foucaudian sense.¹⁴ The thesis will try to show how the ‘reason’ of these expert policy formulations has weakened municipal institutions and produced a rationale for democracy and development that is in many respects deeply irrational.

The research has been motivated firstly by the concerns I have felt when working as an NGO consultant in the field of local government and its transition to democracy over the last twelve years. I have had an increasing sense that the project for democratic and developmental local government is beginning to derail. Other attempts to understand this have either been deeply instrumentalist i.e. the perspective of consulting engineers, accountants and planners or else have come from social analysts steeped in a critique of neoliberalism and its impact on the state. I have no quarrel with the contention that this is the most meaningful analysis and goes to the core of local government’s woes however as an NGO worker

who is also obliged to frame interventions to address the problem, I have found the dominant neo-Marxist approach to have many gaps in its epistemology and to readily embrace a form of technical modernism that easily becomes authoritarian. The left discourse also fails to take proper responsibility for its prior influence over the local government project and in some respects seeks to reinterpret historical features of the process to suit the thesis of neoliberal capture. The left critique of the state is limited since it portrays development in South Africa as a stealthy triumph of the New Right. The critique, while valid at many levels, becomes a powerful but blunt instrument for explaining successive policy failures.¹⁵

Planning Theory and South African Integrated Development Planning

To the extent that there has been any theoretical analysis of the IDP programme, it has been mainly in terms of its holism, its integrationist capabilities and the extent to which it has involved public participation.¹⁶ This section of the paper draws upon fairly mainstream planning theory to highlight apparent gaps in the theoretical critique of recent IDP programmes in South Africa. Five main threads of the discourse are considered, namely:

- whether planning serves the public or private realm.
- how and why planning is often able to achieve a virtual *omnipotence* and how its utopian nature can serve to channel key social forces.
- the conceptual issue of modernism and postmodernism and how planning seems especially tied to modernism and its promise of order and progress.
- policy choices, how these are made, and critical differences between ideal and real decision-making in public policy matters.
- finally the section turns to planning as an instrument of authority, espousing developmental objectives whilst often serving more political agendas

A limitation regarding the relevance of mainstream planning theory to the South African *Integrated Development Planning* (IDP) experience is that most of the theory has been developed around planning activity that has the city as its primary focus. After 2000 however the re-demarcation process shifted municipal boundaries to a scale that incorporated both urban and rural, thus planning had to embrace entire 'districts' or 'sub-regions.' Planning theory has in general paid less attention to planning at this scale. Robert A. Beauregard suggests that this is a global dilemma for planning because modernist planning was dependent on the "economic dynamics of the industrial city and the rise of the middle class" for

its holism.¹⁷ Thus the legitimacy of planning remained bound up with notion of progress in an urban environment. For the working class this meant the promise of “embourgeoisement” - a rise to affluence through the taming of capital, a properly organised city and the consequent spread of prosperity.

1.2 The Origins of Planning

There is broad agreement that *planning* emerged in response to social problems located within 19th century discontent about the industrial city, the functioning of market forces and the political outcomes from what many regarded as a poisonous mix (squalor, exploitation and corruption.)¹⁸ A significant body of opinion now asks whether planning can address the social problems in a world of post-modernity.¹⁹

Planning theorists like Scott Campbell and Susan S. Fainstein stress the holism and eclecticism of planning i.e. a mix of fields that include design, civil engineering, local politics, community organisation and social justice.²⁰ With roots in architecture and landscape architecture and a concern to improve the performance of public utilities²¹, planning has come to be regarded as a “quasi-profession” and has increasingly been associated with public sector bureaucracies.²² Campbell and Fainstein note that while planners tackled substantive issues like the need for public health reform, their response, for example the *Garden City* or the *City Beautiful* were visions of something more.²³ This capacity to conjure a vision of something new and emblematic is an important element of the IDP process in South Africa and will be discussed in more depth later.

Richard E. Klosterman suggests, that the essence of planning lies in the belief that the public interest cannot be adequately served by the groups and individuals that comprise ordinary society – planning is the independent “4th power” to do this.²⁴ This notion of planning as embodying the power of expertise is particularly useful when understanding the role of the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) in the mid to late 1990s and draws upon the traditional or classic case for planning. Furthermore the model is based on the centrality of space and a concern to coordinate public and private use of land with the realisation that individual uses of space have consequences for adjoining private and public space.²⁵ The guiding hand of the expert with its sense of *removal* is critical to understanding how planning derives its professional authority. It is based on the belief that:

“...the conscious application of professional expertise, instrumental rationality, and scientific methods could more effectively promote economic growth

and political stability than the unplanned forces of the market and political competition.”²⁶

The planner must therefore work comprehensively and look at the external effects of individual and group action and the projection of the consequences of these into the future. Robert A Beauregard terms this the “modernist project of planning.”²⁷ Modernist because “...it engaged the city of industrial capitalism and became institutionalised as a form of state intervention.” Whereas this school of planning is widely regarded to have faltered because the “...response to the turmoil of modernization” was “shrouded in modernism”, many of the core assumptions of this thinking still prevail in the planning process, namely²⁸:

- Reality can be controlled and perfected
- Planning works in a malleable world where an inherent logic exists that can be uncovered and manipulated
- Alienation can be reduced by addressing social problems
- Experts can drive society forward along a uni-linear path of progress – the planner *liberates through enlightenment*
- Planning achieves objectivity by maintaining a critical distance from social problems
- The logic of planning is able to transcend the interests of capital, labour and the state
- A coherent urban form that overcomes the contradictions and conflicts of capitalism is possible – the planner’s task is to capture this in a ‘master plan’

For Beauregard the manifestation of this thinking was in the various master forms of city plans that began to emerge at the turn of the century. Housing began to be regulated with a move towards the provision of public housing.²⁹ By the 1920s transport planning saw the emergence of highways and later, after World War 2, the advent of *zoning* that restricted land use to certain functions in particular areas. Urban renewal became a concern and by the 1960s planning specialisations like environmental, manpower, social, health, transport, energy and regional planning began to emerge.³⁰ Increasing concern for the social aspects of planning led to a questioning of the dominance of the spatial, especially the fixation with the city as “the common object of interest”.³¹ Beauregard describes this reformist shift in planning as a mix of common sense, emerging middle-class values of social responsibility and organisation with elements of sociology and economics. It was

however “all flavoured with” a sense of classical order related to architecture and the city.³²

In his paper *Toward a Non-Euclidian Mode of Planning*³³ John Friedman argues that to break with its historical ties to a past dominated by science and engineering (now in a state of collapse), planning has to be defined in relation to real action in the public domain.³⁴ This call for more ‘applied’ planning however begins to chip away at one of the key tenets of planning i.e. the notion that its unique value lies in being principle-driven and independent in a world fixated by the expedient and the short-term. The expertise-authority of the Municipal Demarcation Board and its failure to come to terms with some of the mundane realities of local government is discussed later and is probably a good example of an imperfect achievement of this balance.

The Possibilities of Progress

Large scale planning projects, like the Integrated Development Planning programme in South Africa and the municipal demarcation process (1998-2001) are invariably infused with some sort of vision of urbanism. This serves to galvanise the necessary social and political support for the planning project. Robert Fishman has compared the approach of three key figures in planning, namely Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier and has analysed the roots of their radical and all-embracing response to industrial society.³⁵ According to Fishman these three “icons of planning” shared little in the manner of political outlook - all three had very different interpretations of what the ultimate industrial society would look like; Howard’s garden cities³⁶ were significantly different to Wright’s strongly individualistic planned city of ‘Broadacres’³⁷ which was a far cry from Le Corbusier’s hierarchically organised “radiant City³⁸”.

Fishman reminds us however that these three planners were driven by at least three common motivations when embarking upon their projects. One, they feared and were repulsed by the 19th century metropolis, secondly they shared a sense that improvements in technology would allow new urban forms to emerge which had hitherto been considered impossible and thirdly they anticipated a significant realignment of human society or in Fishman’s words: “a revolutionary age of brotherhood and freedom was at hand.”³⁹ Thus whether the problem manifested itself as the 19th century city expanding out of control due to the “blind force of chance and profit”⁴⁰ or the irrational urban patterns left by apartheid, the pre-conditions for the ascendancy of planning are notably similar.

Fishman also suggests that the three iconic planners built upon the optimism of 19th century *utopian socialists* like Charles Fourier, Robert Owen and Henri de Saint-Simon.⁴¹ Whereas the latter had tried to build utopian communal societies free of class struggle and irrational separation of urban and rural, Howard, Wright and Le Corbusier brought technology to the hope and optimism of the utopians. Fishman however readily accepts that the 19th century philanthropists and their colleagues in planning “almost always assumed the continued poverty of the poor and the privileges of the rich.”⁴² Thus planning was dismissed by Marxists and consigned, in Engel’s view to, “part of the superstructure of capitalist society.”⁴³ The Marxist critique of planning is expanded later in this section but it is worth noting that Marxists were impressed by the exercise of technocratic authority and expertise that implied a notable concentration of power. This tendency to reliance on collective organisation of the economy and society on a scale that rarely proves workable, is described by Fishman as, “the concept that the entire productive capacity of a nation could be managed as if it were one huge trust.”⁴⁴

Public or Private: Who does Planning Serve?

The dominant hypothesis in planning theory, is that planning is caught up in the duality of public sector regulator and the demands of the market. Campbell and Fainstein offer two interpretations of this relationship. In the first, planning acts as a check upon the worst outcomes of the market (“chaos and uncertainty”)⁴⁵. In the second, planning is cast as the problem itself i.e. the irrational force that created, and finally led to the collapse of socialist societies in Eastern Europe.⁴⁶ In this instance it is market forces that in fact ‘rescue’ society from the irrationality imposed by planning. A third idea, explored later by examining Marxist thought on the issue, is that planning acts as an important ‘prop’ to the market and that the apparent ‘checks’ it exerts are simply to preserve the necessary harmony between otherwise competitive capitalist interests. These Beuaregard refers to as “fractions of capital”⁴⁷, and although their immediate interests may differ in relation to built environments, they remain bound by the logic of ‘the economy.’

Campbell and Fainstein offset these foundation principles with the more complex reality of overlap between the public and the private sector and the increasing privatisation of what were traditionally public sector functions.⁴⁸ As the democratic rights and obligations of citizens are increasingly reduced to issues of consumerism and ‘who can pay for what’, so planners are confronted with more complex questions of who they are serving and what values underpin the process of planning. However this ‘dilemma’ also lends the planner a form of power. This

power derives from professional or expert discretion and is attributable to the freedom to choose which imperative to serve and to what degree. This latitude gives rise to the possibility that in many instances, *planning serves those who plan*.

Intersections between Market and State

Richard E. Klosterman sets out the rationale for the first and most common planning paradigm viz. the familiar notion of planning as a periodic and pragmatic response to the shortcomings of the free-market.⁴⁹ The second model described by Klosterman, (the pluralist view) proposes planning as an improved form of representing the public interest, in a context of imperfect political systems. The third model returns to some of the foundation ideas of the *iconic planners* i.e. the search for rationality set apart from ideology and material interest or the planner as 'expert'. Here knowledge and instrumental rationality allow the planner to function autonomously from the dictates of interest groups or societal pressures.⁵⁰

As Klosterman notes, the cause of planning is enhanced by weaknesses in the classical and neo-classical economists faith in market forces, rule of law and individual rights as the systems and values for effectively allocating society's resources.⁵¹ The classical liberal tradition has long argued that planning and other forms of state regulation serve only to stifle entrepreneurial energy and stand in the way of innovation. This argument focuses on the financial costs and administrative burdens that government bureaucracy inevitably imposes upon entrepreneurial initiative. The classical argument is that only the economy can allocate society's resources effectively.⁵²

In a now well-established line of critique, Klosterman points towards the simplifications in this representation of the "ideal market." Examining concepts like public goods, externalities and spill over effects that are linked to public and private investment in built environments, Klosterman argues that the ideal market is in fact impossible. Its validation requires it to be "perfectly competitive", and it relies on large numbers of traders with identical goods and services, rational choices by buyers and sellers. It further assumes that labour, production and consumption is mobile.⁵³ Both classical and neo-classical economists now recognise that this ideal world does not exist and thus arises the rationale for state intervention to correct the failures of the market.⁵⁴

The need therefore arises for instruments like building codes and the mandatory maintenance of buildings. It is self-evident that some degree of government intervention is required to reduce incompatible land use, to coordinate private

development and public infrastructure and to preserve public open spaces and historic buildings. Klosterman concedes that the rationale for planning cannot be based on the deficiencies of the market alone, which is in many respects more effective than centralised coordination by government.⁵⁵

Klosterman also sets out the *pluralist argument* where the economic argument for planning prevails but the scale and reach of planning is curtailed by the system of representative politics.⁵⁶ Long-range planning and large-scale coordination i.e. the sense of an engineered society are avoided and instead the “existing political bargaining process” guides government.⁵⁷ That formal political process suggests Klosterman, is seldom played out on ‘playing fields’ that are level in terms of citizen’s power.

By thus tying individual’s political voice to underlying disparities in political power and resources, current political processes exacerbate existing inequalities in income and wealth and fail to provide adequate information for fully informed policy-making.⁵⁸

This also raises the fundamental question of whether any planning can occur from “a position of value neutrality.”⁵⁹ Paul Davidoff’s asserts, “values are inescapable elements of any rational decision-making process”.⁶⁰

The recommendation that city planners represent and plead the plans of many interest groups is founded upon the need to establish an effective urban democracy, one in which citizens may be able to play an active role in the process of deciding public policy. Appropriate policy in a democracy is determined through a process of political debate. The right course of action is always a matter of choice, never of fact.⁶¹

This last point is critical in recognising deficiencies in the IDP programme in South Africa which invariably limited rather than expanded public policy solutions to complex social problems. Planning therefore becomes a conduit to a limited set of state-sanctioned remedies. Charles Lindblom suggests that the relationship between citizens’ values and technocratic decision-making is in fact quite complex. Administrators who retreat to the position of “majority preference” ignore the fact that preference has not been registered on most issues. Even when the importance of values is recognised, different values come into play in different decisions (especially matters of social policy) and may be judged to be of greater or lesser importance.⁶²

Lindblom concludes that choices between values and policy options are made at one and the same time and not in sequence (as ideal planning scenarios suggest). This inter-twinning of marginal analysis and empirical analysis is both inevitable and relevant since the hard distinction between *ends* and *means* is a myth. The only way for administrators to truly assess policy is to ask whether the objective could have been better served through an alternative policy. In democracies the issue at hand is more about how to achieve the policy than the policy itself.⁶³ Lindblom also suggests that the problem of *comprehensiveness* in planning may be resolved by simply allowing certain values to be safeguarded by watchdog institutions. These institutions, provided they are strong and articulate, will ensure that key values are not lost in the policy-making process. In a somewhat idealised notion of the United States system, Lindblom suggests:

A policy nevertheless evolves and one responding to a whole variety of interests. A process of mutual adjustment among farm groups, labour unions, municipalities and school boards, tax authorities, and government agencies with responsibilities in the field of housing, health, highways, national parks, fire and police, accomplishes a distribution of income, in which particular income problems neglected at one point become central at another point.⁶⁴

Thus a convincing case is made for a rough process of *trial and error* where social scientists, politicians and administrators "...do not know enough about the social world to avoid repeated error in predicting the consequences of policy moves."⁶⁵ This form of incrementalism stands in stark contrast to the bold high modernist systems described with much trepidation by James Scott. In the former there is at least the opportunity as Lindblom notes to avoid the "big disasters" and remedy error before it becomes fatal.

Pluralistic and Participatory Planning

Davidoff makes the case for citizen's participation in planning as a counterweight to bureaucratic dominance and other forms of centralisation that occur when a 'unitary' or comprehensive plan is espoused.⁶⁶ Davidoff suggests that public agency planners have no place seeking loyalty from independent planners or interest groups because "Lively political dispute aided by plural plans could do much to improve the level of rationality in the process of preparing the public plan."⁶⁷ Public awareness of alternative choices, competition within the planning process itself and devolved responsibility to outside interests (non-establishment) to produce better plans (rather than simply criticize) are some of the envisaged benefits of pluralistic

planning. Davidoff goes on to propose a strong role for advocacy planners – planners who align themselves with a particular set of values or interests. At the same time Davidoff also laments the circumstances, namely expanded roles for government bureaucracies and weakened party politics at the municipal level, that made it necessary to invoke highly organised forms of citizen's participation.

There is something very shameful to our society in the necessity to have organised "citizen participation." Such participation should be the norm in an enlightened democracy. The formalisation of citizen participation as a required practice in localities is similar in many respects to totalitarian shows of loyalty to the state by citizen parades.⁶⁸

These misgivings could well be applied to the many orchestrated forms of participation, currently regarded as 'cutting edge local democracy' in South Africa, notably *representative forums* for planning, *public hearings* around proposed developments and for environmental scoping and *ward committees* for ensuring on-going contact between elected municipal representatives and their constituencies.

Pure pluralist formulations thus neglect the reality of small powerful groups pursuing strongly vested interests on a playing field that is strongly biased towards their success. The fact that the influence of such groups is disproportionate to their numerical significance is less important than the fact that the policy they influence spills over to groups whose interests are very poorly represented.⁶⁹

Advocacy Planning

This dilemma provides much of the rationale for Davidoff and Klosterman's focus on *advocacy planners* i.e. planners who do not adopt the mantle of 'value neutral' planning but explicitly set out to serve a set of interests considered to be underrepresented – frequently society's poor. For Davidoff the social advocacy planner is one who is 'engaged' both in the sense of acting as an agent for a particular interest group but also because the planner is 'hands-on' and probably identifies with the values being served. Thus the planner is able to abandon the myth of neutrality and become a *proponent* of "specific substantive solutions."⁷⁰ The advocacy planner also has the function of the *cross-examiner* i.e. providing a fresh and usually critical perspective on mainstream planning and revealing existing bias. Thinking mostly in terms of organisations and well-defined interest groups (for example down-town neighborhoods threatened with relocation), Davidoff suggests that the advocacy planner should also assume responsibility for the education of such groups, supporting them to better formulate and articulate their ideas.⁷¹

Klosterman however makes the obvious point that advocacy planners are also prone to problems of representivity. It is easier to represent narrow interests and preserve the status quo than to advocate on behalf of “diffuse and widely shared interests.”⁷² This is one of the main critiques that has shaped the development of planning theory – planning’s pretension to serve a collective public interest whereas the track record indicates its service to the “needs of civic and business elites”.⁷³ However it is possible that Klosterman counter poses the “shared interests of the community” versus the “private interests of individuals and groups”⁷⁴ too simplistically. Clearly these are interwoven and untangling the former from the latter is difficult.

The Marxist View

In South Africa, the IDP process did not attract a strong Marxist critique despite the relatively strong left discourse that was generated around local government transformation. Perhaps this was because the IDP sufficiently resembled the state-led planning historically favored by socialist states. Marxist writers on planning insist that any understanding of planning can only emerge from recognising how modern capitalism relates to space and the physical environment.⁷⁵ Questions of what constitutes the public interest are irrelevant because the social and political institutions of capitalist society promote the interests of those who control productive capital over the interests of society in general.⁷⁶ Planning is little more than a system for managing class conflict, and providing for the needs of the working class in a manner that ensures that the capitalist order holds together and is maintained.⁷⁷ Planner’s use of scientific techniques is simply an attempt to mask this reality and legitimate the state’s actions in the service of capital.⁷⁸ Similarly the reformist tendencies in planning, like advocacy planning or planning with a particular social mission are dismissed as a co-optative strategy invoked to preempt more fundamental reform.⁷⁹

For Marxist analysts like Francois Lamarche⁸⁰, the existence of “fractions of capital” is key to understanding the significance of planning. Sometimes termed ‘property capital’, and comprised of real estate developers, construction firms, mortgage lenders etc, this group is threatened by the need for social control of space and would be in constant conflict with other elements of the capitalist order (who seek an expanded role for government in planning and using space) were it not for the mediating role of planning. The “central contradiction of capitalist urbanisation” according to Foglesong is the “social character of land and its private ownership and control.”⁸¹ Foglesong cites manufacturing capital’s need for state intervention

in the arena of worker housing and public infrastructure whereas urban developers will seek as little state intervention as possible to maximise land as simply a commodity (albeit a commodity that is not moveable) and thus the generation of profit.⁸² These constitute some of the *competing imperatives* that capitalism imposes on the urban environment.

The fact that the market cannot produce an urban built environment capable of maintaining capitalism obliges the capitalist order to create the legal space for state intervention. This however brings with it a reliance on formally democratic institutions and the danger of passing control on to a non-landowner majority.⁸³ The capitalist order is thus constantly searching for a legitimating political system. The system must deliver that which the market cannot, namely the reproduction of labour and public infrastructure.

Marxists therefore see some vindication in the post-modern failure of planning. The grand strategies and vision of the reformists and the utopians, which served only to ameliorate the worst effects of the market and defuse the potential for class conflict, have now been exposed in their inadequacy. Thus in Foglesong's view, the political agenda of planning i.e. urban renewal, education, health, transport, crime etc have largely failed to meet expectations. In the post-Fordist era, planning has returned to its true function, namely a managerial / administrative vehicle for tactical decisions dedicated to preserving the capitalist order.⁸⁴

Beyond Modernist Planning?

For David Perry social or advocacy planning has been succeeded by a focus on economic development as a response to de-industrialisation and the growth of the service sector. Local government tries to attract new industries by offering incentives like land and financing. Development planning now focuses on growth rather than redistribution. Questions of equity and the contradictions of capitalism no longer concern planners. According to Perry, this thrusts the planner into the role of the developer or the "entrepreneurial deal-maker."⁸⁵ Generating economic growth is the new legitimating factor for planning and the basis for measuring its success.⁸⁶ The contradiction between planning and capital is eliminated through a "new abstract code in which private advantage is equated with public benefit."

There is no longer a tension between accumulation and redistribution: it is assumed that accumulation will ultimately generate redistribution.⁸⁷

Perry warns that even as planning becomes more ubiquitous, the "wild city" is

beginning to re-emerge with conditions of hopelessness, new forms of under-employment and unemployment, spaces of decline and 'zones of fear.' These "disfigured" spaces exist in contrast to the 'regulated space' of the concentrated central business district, the city-edge malls and the mixed use industrial / office parks. Thus urban space becomes "splintered."⁸⁸

Beauregard shares this view, noting the abandonment of the emancipatory potential of planning and a reluctance to embrace social theory.⁸⁹ The emphasis on production of high technology products, the mobility of capital matched by flexible workplace procedures and the reality of defensive and weak labour, have redefined the task of planning.⁹⁰ As the state has become weaker and more ideologically conservative, it has deepened its pact with capital and the balance between welfare and economic growth has shifted entirely towards the latter. In this view, one of planning's key principles, that of *critical distance*, is lost. Complex partnerships between public entities and the private sector emerge to "isolate development politics from democratic politics".⁹¹ Urban development initiatives are thus removed from public scrutiny.

At the same time the increased mobility of capital removes property and industrial development from the local sphere and makes it a matter of regional, national and even global significance.⁹² Decisions on location and local quality of life are more ephemeral and public authorities compete to 'sell place' or attract investment in ways that commodify local social conditions and amenities. Local consumption patterns and lifestyle are therefore shaped by the global dictates of capital and middle-class values. This occurs against the failure of the modernist planning project – evinced by the lack of any consensual notion of urban development and persistent inequalities of class, race and gender. In Beauregard's view, the post-modern city is *layered with historical forms*, i.e. industrial, post industrial, formal and informal, thus making the identification of the unitary public interest more difficult.⁹³

Reduced state controls and the enhanced power of capital consequently drive cities along a "seesaw" path of uneven development comprised of cycles of growth and decline where the costs and benefits are unevenly distributed and where the main, albeit contested purpose is consumption.⁹⁴ Evidence of the failure of modernist planning lies in the abandoned hopes for "orderliness, functional integration and social homogeneity". Planners therefore find themselves in a state of "post-modern helplessness" according to Beauregard.⁹⁵

Post-modernism and the Return to Pedagogy

Robert Beauregard suggests that in the face of a failed modernist planning project, modernist planners turned back to pedagogy rather than confront the social reality of planning.⁹⁶ The succeeding school of thought, *postmodernism*, reflects on the “demise of the master narrative, the bankruptcy of positivism, and the political deficiencies of technical expertise” but presents little in the way of a new and clear political agenda. It may well be that the modernist planning agenda has “disintegrated but not disappeared” and in fact re-emerges in various forms to impose ‘expertise’ on democracy and a new grand vision built mainly around pragmatism.²

This nascent principle – the idea of technical rationality, remains a key element of planning despite the subsequent development of transactive and communicative planning models. John Friedman writes of the *Euclidian order* with its predominance of engineering and planning sciences and its emphasis on the “time-space continuum”.⁹⁷ It is the world of “stable entities and common sense assumptions that have governed our understanding of the world for the past two hundred years.”⁹⁸ It is in this world that planning is able to operate as a ‘vanguard profession’ using its own inherent logic and knowledge of science to shape society and seek new intellectual boundaries.⁹⁹ The demise of this approach to planning may be clearly evident in the discussion of planning theory and the crisis that has befallen modernist planning but the actual functions of planning in particular circumstances, for example IDP in South Africa, reveals much reliance on the techno-modernist approach.

Planning as Authority

Why then do municipal and other government authorities rely on a demonstrably failed modernist planning paradigm? James C. Scott proposes that historically the state or dominant elites experience social and economic circumstances that set the scene for the preponderance of *high modernism*.¹⁰⁰ High modernism is the confidence in scientific and technical knowledge associated with Western European and North American industrialisation. True to modernist principle, it embodies a faith in continued uni-linear progress, the expansion of production and the possibility of rational social order in all aspects of human activity, through state regulation.¹⁰¹ Scott observes that 19th century optimism around improved human conditions possible through science and industry created expectation for a “continuing stream of new marvels.”

² I am para-phrasing Beauregard here

Simplification and rationalisation previously applied to forests, weights and measures, taxation and factories were now applied to the design of society as a whole. Industrial strength social engineering was borne.¹⁰²

From this emerged scientific ways of describing population (demographics) and scientific readings of society that mimicked long-standing scientific conventions for understanding nature. This faith in progress based on science and technology seems to be a 'super-charged' version of the inspiration that drove the early iconic planners and the utopian reformists. In Scott's view it was greatly boosted by German mobilisation during World War II when it became evident what could be achieved through planned and well-serviced mass production.¹⁰³ It has one critical difference however in that it is not content to flourish on its own merits and seeks instead to use the authority of science and knowledge to silence other 'authorities' like received tradition.¹⁰⁴ Thus emerges the defining trait of high modernism – its authoritarian nature, manifest in Lenin and le Corbusier, which creates the propensity to sweep aside those who cling to tradition or remain 'untransformed.'¹⁰⁵

At its most radical, high modernism imagined wiping the slate utterly clean and beginning from zero.¹⁰⁶

In this view, nature has no inherent merit in its untransformed state and exists merely as a drawing board on which to sketch out the grand designs of the planners, engineers and architects.¹⁰⁷ Thus socialist intellectuals were fascinated with capitalism's grand projects, like the Suez and Panama canals, regarding these projects as evidence that it was man's destiny to "tame nature."

In fact, this promise, made plausible by capitalist development, was for Marx the point of departure for socialism, which would place the fruits of capitalism at the service of the working class...¹⁰⁸

But high modernism is not in Scott's view the exclusive preserve of socialist regimes. Scott offers the examples of Nazism, social engineering under apartheid, modernisation plans of the Shah of Iran, villagisation schemes in Vietnam and other great colonial ventures to show that the only ideology attached to high modernism is that of modernity and the unquestioned authority of the expert. High modernism flourishes in colonial and revolutionary settings for different reasons. The common thread however is the concentration of authoritarian power.

...the great state-sponsored calamities of the 20th century have been the work of rulers with grandiose and utopian plans for their society."¹⁰⁹

In Scott's formulation it is the combination of 3 key social conditions that gives rise to episodes of high modernist planning:

1. The desire for an improved and radical re-configuration of society to be achieved through administrative ordering and re-engineered social life in all its aspects. Thus the importance of change as an end in itself – the promise of a break with the past.
2. The existence of the modern state with its power for administration and coercion are key.
3. Civil society must be weakened or “prostrate” and therefore incapable of resisting these plans.¹¹⁰

Modernist planning in this vein is thus frequently the domain of progressive or revolutionary elites whose power lies in their comprehensive critique of existing society and a popular mandate to transform that society. The conditions for such a planning approach to emerge are crises of the state i.e. war, economic depression, revolution or significant shifts in power. According to Scott, such planning is only dangerous when it is in the hands of elites that cannot be held in check by democracy or civil rights.¹¹¹

The past is an impediment, a history that must be transcended; the present is the platform for launching plans for a better future. A key characteristic of discourses of high modernism and of the public pronouncements of those states that have embraced it is a heavy reliance on visual images of heroic progress towards a totally transformed future.¹¹²

But there is invariably a gap between the planned ideal and the reality – a contradiction commonly present in societies undergoing transformation. This is particularly evident in the *IDP wish list* approach in South Africa and the grinding bureaucratic indifference of municipal government on the ground. For Scott this is very much the formula of high modernism i.e. the promise of a better future justifies short-term sacrifices required to achieve that future.

This vision of a great future is often in sharp contrast to the disorder, misery and unseemingly scramble for petty advantage that the elites may very likely see in their daily foreground.¹¹³

High modernism does not concern itself with competing values in the planning process but by its own reliance on technical rationality, is by definition obliged to

deliver something more than “muddling through.” This ability to re-invent challenges and goals is an essential component of modernist planning exercises, along with the ability to badger a “technically backward and unschooled”¹¹⁴ population into accepting the role of the governing elite as technical and cultural educator. This was arguably one of the crowning achievements of the Municipal Demarcation Board and the official exponents of IDP in South Africa. However tendencies towards high modernism are invariably constrained where distinctions between state and society remain strong – the liberal democratic emphasis on pluralistic models of government and civil liberties, freedom of expression and sensitivity to trends in polling, all stand in the way of unmitigated high modernism.¹¹⁵

Some concluding thoughts on planning theory

Planning is in a significant crisis with the advent of post-modern scepticism and the rise of neo-liberal values and neo-conservative economic policy. Part of the response entails a return to *modernist* traditions with some indication the Euclidian³ impulse is not forever buried. Trends towards pluralism and the acceptance of advocacy planning are bound to weaken in a general shift back to technical rationality. The prescription that planners cannot be agents of change in a capitalist order is difficult to contest, however the alternative notion of serving the working class in bringing about real transformation seems equally improbable. The problem however is not the *intellectual binds* that confront planning theory but the fact that in the world of realpolitik and formal government, planning still exerts huge authority based on its foundations in techno-science and its manipulation of rationality. There is little reason to believe that authoritarian manipulation of planning will not inflict further calamities on societies desperately seeking remedies to untenable human settlements and unworkable political / economic regimes. In the following descriptive sections of this paper this understanding of why planning is undertaken, who it serves and its potential as an instrument of state power, are critical if we are to move beyond the idea that planning is simply a technically informed response to a particular set of local circumstances.

³ John Friedman's term

CHAPTER 2: APARTHEID ERA PLANNING

Urban policy under apartheid was not simply a technocratic process for protecting white interests and the middle-class lifestyle, it was also a powerful mechanism for framing a vision of society based on segregation and a version of modernity that was racially exclusive and protected by space. Apartheid offered an alternative to the problems that typically beset modernisation in developing countries:

...the Verwoerdian paradigm (which) postulated that unrestrained black urbanisation would inevitably lead to overcrowding, the proliferation of squatter settlements, urban and industrial strife and decay, regional inequalities and a rise in the levels of social pathology in urban areas.¹¹⁶

Urban policy under apartheid had elements of integration that often go unrecognised by critics who focus upon its more obvious shortfalls. The urban policy of segregation and restricted movement of black citizens, known as influx control, was matched by supportive policies for labour and its mobility, housing, and industrialization. Verwoerdian policy indeed amounted to a comprehensive exercise in social engineering which fundamentally restructured the urban environment: influx controls were systematized and refined, an elaborate system of labour bureaux were established with the purpose of channelling African labour more effectively between the agricultural and industrial sectors, huge modern townships were constructed, and black people living in inner-city areas and squatter camps were relocated to these tightly regulated townships designed to accommodate only the legitimate labour requirements of urban employers.¹¹⁷ In the 1960s and 1970s industrialists were induced to relocate to decentralised growth points by the imposition of limitations on labour and industrial land supplies and by the offer of attractive financial incentives in the new areas.¹¹⁸

Industrial decentralisation policy was linked to the political policy of establishing self-governing homelands - a doomed from the start strategy for deflecting black political aspirations. Patrick Bond describes the underlying motives for this policy and its implications:

There was, additionally, apartheid's own supposed geographic antidote to the glut of domestic manufacturing capital: the homelands-inspired 'regional decentralisation' policies and subsidies which picked up steam during the 1970s, and which turned during the 1980s to three dozen specific 'deconcentration points.' Aside from the policies political purpose, namely propping up the

Bantustans, decentralisation also played a (temporary) role as a form of spatial fix, by promoting a qualitative new degree of 'competition in laxity' (dramatically lower wages, tax holidays and other incentives) which fuelled capital mobility.¹¹⁹

These policies undoubtedly established a link in the minds of many black South Africans between the politics of racial dominance and state intervention in favour of capital. Business would no doubt claim that most of its members did not benefit from this policy and opposed both its political and economic dimensions. However it is also true that there were those who were not opposed to apartheid per se but sought a more liberalised economic environment in which to do business. The liberal opposition argued that the policy meant restricted labour supply in the context of growing black unemployment and that not all industrialists were able to follow the route of increased mechanisation. There were also limited options for industrial expansion due to non-market regulation of industrial land. A liberal business perspective suggested that less regulation of black urbanisation might not only ease the supply of labour but "promote industrialisation, economic growth and modernisation..."¹²⁰ Nevertheless as Stack notes, untrammelled urbanisation risked bringing increased poverty, joblessness and decayed infrastructure and facilities from the rural into the urban.¹²¹ Clearly inevitable, urbanisation needed to be managed if the predominantly white middle-class were to be protected.

2.1 Reform

By the mid 1980s the apartheid state had begun to reform its urbanisation policy with the assistance of bodies like the Urban Foundation. Stack described the broad principles of this policy as follows:

The proposals advocate an urbanisation strategy aimed at accelerating economic growth and achieving a comprehensive and systematic approach to both urban and rural development. Effective urban management is emphasised, with greater local political autonomy, increased financial support for cities and reconstituted local government boundaries defined according to functional criteria. The acceptance of informal settlement, the promotion of large-scale job creation, a non-racial rural land market, inter-city competition for public and private investment, state assistance to bring the poor into the urban system, and community participation in urban and rural development programmes...¹²²

In the late eighties, the rapid crystallisation of these policies, amid massive pressure on the organs of the state charged with urban planning and development,

effectively 'pulled the rug from under' the liberation movement as it appeared to answer many of the demands of street level engagements between state and popular township-based organisations. Staff of the Urban Foundation, teamed up with newly recruited community leaders in the Eastern Cape as housing technocrats, and began to play the role of both mediators between civic organisations and the state, and agents of housing and infrastructure programs within the new policy framework. Some activists experienced a growing disquiet that their moment of triumph had been quietly usurped by neoliberal forces acting in cahoots with select elements of the out-going government. Bond for instance, describes how the Urban Foundation used its considerable resources to lure formerly progressive academics who had served the liberation struggle intellectually, to 'switch sides.'

One leading UF strategist, Jeff McCarthy (formerly the leading Marxist scholar in South Africa) had hoped that local alliances between local civic associations and developers/financiers would 'hasten the prospect of alliances on broader political questions of "vision" '123.

This wariness of an urban development agenda captured by neoliberal forces operating through the Urban Foundation and the Independent Development Trust was not new. In 1991 Louise Stack, then a researcher at the Centre for Policy Studies at the University of Witwatersrand had recognised this sense of unease filtering through activist circles.

Underlying part of this ambiguity is a fear that the state and private sector have a shared vision of the future city in which the market, rather than the state, is to play a dominant role. Suspicion runs deep that this amounts to a strategy to avoid any substantial redistribution of wealth and reparation of the economic imbalances that have resulted from apartheid policies. Also of concern is the prospect that the proposed new strategies may merely replace racial barriers to the benefit of the urban environment with economic ones, thereby sharply dividing urban black communities along class lines.¹²⁴

It nevertheless became clear that after 1994 planners would be confronted by massive urbanisation in a limited number of viable metropolitan centres with huge internal disparities in services, facilities and economic infrastructure and irrational spatial design. In surrounding rural areas, particularly in the Eastern Cape, small towns with already decaying infrastructure and in cyclical or long-term economic decline, would become the focus of a lesser influx of rural people

seeking livelihoods and public services whilst maintaining a tenuous link to the rural homestead.

Accelerating rates of growth and an overwhelming concentration of people in metropolitan areas will require fundamental changes in the urban planning process. In future planners will have to plan on a scale and with a degree of co-ordination with other government and private bodies not seen before in South Africa.¹²⁵

The ascendancy of planning and the increased scope of what needed to be planned, at this crucial juncture in South Africa's history, seemed the logical step forward, specifically in response to the kind of spatial and development failures that had occurred under apartheid. Swilling's description of the key settlement issues to which apartheid contributed have already been touched upon but are worth quoting verbatim:¹²⁶

- Concentrations of people in the five metropolitan areas which are, in turn, dispersed and sprawling conurbations characterised by extremely inefficient land use, long travel times highly unequal access to services between richer and poorer areas and the distribution of the urban poor on the peripheries in both formal townships and increasingly in sprawling squatter settlements that provide shelter for at least seven million people;
- the distribution of the non-metropolitan population in some 300 settlements outside the homelands;
- growing urban populations in 293 towns inside the former homelands, many of whom had economic bases supported by government's industrial decentralisation policies;
- the proliferation of semi- and peri-urban informal settlements located inside the homeland boundaries, but located on the peripheries of metropolitan economies from where they derive some of their income;
- the survival of a rural population that is expected to increase from 11,4 million to 15,3 million between 1985-2010.

Swilling goes on to describe the other major feature of urban settlements, namely the fact that all major industrial and commercial investment had been in the areas of the former white local authorities thus providing a significant source of subsidy to property rates and service charges that was not available to residents in former black townships.¹²⁷ Considerable moral authority was generated by analysts on

the left and leaders of the *mass democratic movement* by being able to show that township dwellers, far from posing a chronic problem of non-payment, had in fact been subsidising white service costs by virtue of their labour and spending in white controlled areas which had contributed towards a viable commercial tax base for middle-class white suburbia that former township areas lacked.¹²⁸ Thus emerged the call for a single tax base for the city as a whole that would not allow taxes to be trapped and preferentially expended in those racially defined areas that had already enjoyed decades of advantage. The impact of this argument on subsequent policy design cannot be over-estimated especially in respect of the metropolitan options where the idea of the 'Uni-city' as the only answer to administrative and financial fragmentation and protection of privilege by predominantly white areas, loomed large in the minds of the new municipal leadership.

The imperative for unification was a policy issue that both politicians and their constituencies could understand and the argument carried its own moral weight in the light of the historical injustice already described. As discourse about municipal models evolved and policy options became more complex with criteria and values that sometimes conflicted, a few core principles like 'the need for unification', became an increasingly blunt instrument that had less to do with equitable distribution of public resources and more to do with concentrating power. Another peculiarly South African policy issue emerging from the immediate post apartheid period was the irrational location of the urban poor and working classes in neighbourhoods that are most distant from places of work.

In most urban centres internationally, the poorer residents generally reside close to their places of employment in central city areas where transportation costs are minimised. South Africa on the other hand, has a partially distorted dual settlement pattern. In contrast to the international model, the poorer black residents live on the city peripheries whereas the white urban settlement pattern conforms with the general norm: lower-income whites reside in the central areas of the city while higher-income whites live in the outer surrounding suburbs.¹²⁹

This too is a fairly easy to understand and visually obvious aspect of spatial planning, and yet it featured much less powerfully in the imperatives of the new municipal leadership once they have secured their own residence in middle-class suburbia. In some urban conurbations the potential to settle poor residents closer to the central business area and industrial areas is constrained by existing and planned land usage that may be difficult to revise. In 1991 Stack predicted that this would allow little scope for dramatic changes in racially defined suburbs:

No rapid or massive transition in the racial dimension of the physical layout of the cities can therefore be expected. Rather, a limited black in-migration into existing white areas, accompanied by an expansion of both formal and informal black urban areas, is more likely.¹³⁰

Nevertheless within the constraints mentioned above there is little indication that new municipal authorities have looked at the problem in a more creative and visionary manner. The Propnet owned land known as the 'sleeper site' in East London central business district is a case in point. At an Afesis-corporation seminar in East London on February 7 1996 the largely dormant site was identified by local architect Jeremy Watson as essential space required for a CBD that was 'choking' on limited parking, unregulated informal trade, poor public transport facilities and a general decline in the aesthetic appeal and functionality of the city core for working people and ordinary citizens.¹³¹ Watson proposed four basic development objectives for the site that would improve commuter flows and reintegrate an alienated seafront area back into the city.¹³² These proposals were refined and adjusted in a number of plans and featured prominently in the then East London Transitional Local Council development pledges throughout the nineties. By October 2003 the site remained utilized and none of the proposals had been implemented, despite the 2002 completion, with huge fanfare and expense, of the Integrated Development Plan for Buffalo City. In general housing development for the poor still tends to be planned on the edges of what is already acknowledged as unacceptable urban sprawl and it is often left to informal civic leadership to raise objections to the fact that their communities are being dumped on the periphery. Patrick Bond puts the problem in stronger terms:

The geographic locations of new projects were in far worse locations than apartheid era townships (further from the city and job opportunities, with no hint of community, school, clinic or shopping facilities in most new housing projects).¹³³

By 1996 little had changed in cities like East London and researchers at Afesis-corporation felt obliged to note that:

To urban planners, East London is a sprawling, poorly performing social, spatial and economic environment. As a result of its spread out structure, this city is very inconvenient for most of its inhabitants. The average commuter journey is too long, too expensive, too dangerous and difficult unless one has access to a private car. The poorest of the poor are forced to spend much of their meagre income just on getting to and from work.¹³⁴

These largely unheeded calls by both NGO and private sector planners constituted one of the early indications that a fresh policy approach to planning and development would not immediately deliver the fundamental changes required in actual urban morphology. Indeed the Afesis-corplan researchers warned that the planning authority, in this case the municipality, might battle to win broad endorsement for a vision that seemed obvious to the planners. Even if it achieved consensus on the vision, it still lacked the resources and autonomy to make the vision happen – property developers for instance would exercise their own influence over the urban morphology. These sobering reflections did little to stem the ambitions of those who looked to the planning discipline to comprehensively re-engineer what apartheid had wrought. Faith in planning as a panacea to a host of urban and rural dysfunctionalities, reached unprecedented levels. These expectations of planners were qualified by the insistence that the discipline itself had to be transformed to tackle a programme that now had ambitions far beyond the fairly technical and spatial conventions of town and regional planning. Alan Mabin suggests that these high expectations of the discipline and perceived need for change in its approach are not unique to South Africa.

Planning history indicates that the urgency of overcoming the damage wrought by war and by repressive regimes creates conditions in which planning systems grow and change. At times of reconstruction, planning has often been proposed as the means to accomplish such rebuilding. In such periods, existing planning systems are almost always considered obsolete and useless for the new task.¹³⁵

Indeed one of the points that NGOs like Afesis-corplan tried to make in the wake of a February 1996 seminar on planning in East London was that the planning profession had served apartheid well and to expect it to adapt overnight to the new mission for planning was naïve:

The structure, function and development of East London have undoubtedly benefited a wealthy elite in the past, while immeasurably disadvantaging the poor. The planning frameworks which were central to achieving this, did not emerge organically – they were consciously introduced to fragment the city.¹³⁶

Mabin confirms the view that planning in South Africa entered the 1990s with unfortunate political baggage and further points out that apartheid era planning was based on a configuration of the state and its institutions which was bureaucratically complex and subordinated the planning function of municipalities to different and sometimes uncoordinated line functions of provincial and national departments.

Most agencies became perverted to the apartheid vision of the National Party during the 1950s, which also saw the creation of separate bureaucracies for transport and environmental planning, again with divisive consequences for municipal planning activity.¹³⁷

From Mabin's description it is clear that planners not only served the bold social programme encapsulated in apartheid, they were able to significantly enhance the importance of their profession and generate increased volumes of planning work, because space and its differentiated and highly regulated usage was so important to the success of apartheid.

The massive impact of apartheid on South African towns and rural areas involved, of course, a great deal of planning. While local governments contributed in many ways, by and large they were not the main instruments of apartheid planning.¹³⁸

This increase in the perceived importance of a particular profession and its consequent impact on public policy is little recognised but an important insight when considering how policy is shaped. The thinking of planners became obvious in the two key Ministries charged with local government matters, namely Land Affairs and Constitutional Development however it can also be argued that the planning industry benefited from the emphatic shift of planning, as a government function, from provincial and national spheres to local government post 1996. Whilst national and provincial departments could usually afford to employ in-house planners, cash-strapped and institutionally weak municipalities below the large-medium city level had little prospect of retaining their own professional planners and were inevitably forced to look to the private planning industry to meet the technically complex requirements of Integrated Development Plans and Land Development Objectives. The period from 1997-2002 thus became a boom period for the planning industry although many consultants were to discover that weak municipalities made for frustrating and risky clients. The more conventional explanation for this shift in planning responsibility relates to the enhanced status of local government in the 1996 Constitution – a sphere on an equal footing with national and provincial government bound into an interactive framework of cooperative governance.

Underlining local government's increased significance was the international trend towards urban management that the United Nations promoted in its attempt to get to grips with increasingly chaotic cities in the developing world. These factors and

the post apartheid government's global obligation to pay homage to the principles of decentralisation have dominated policy at the rhetorical level. What is mostly understated is the need for new policy-makers to find a new institutional home for planning in largely symbolic terms, where provincial and national government had become tainted by apartheid planning conventions. In a more pragmatic analysis it would be recognised that municipalities and their planners were more often than not, enthusiastic collaborators in carving up communities into racially defined and unequally serviced areas.

But many municipalities did make major inputs to the national government agencies responsible. For example, planners working for the East London City Council developed detailed plans for the application of the 'the Group' (Group Areas Act) which were broadly accepted by national government.¹³⁹

One irony went unrecognised by policy-makers in the crucial 1997-2002 period when planning once again offered another bold programme of promises related to social and spatial integration and expanded and equitable municipal services. The irony was this: many of the longer serving planning consultancies that were employed by government to identify and resolve spatial and social dysfunctions in urban areas resulting from apartheid, had previously been the architects of that dysfunctionality.¹⁴⁰

2.2 The Scope of Planning

Another illustration of the thoroughness of the policy shift as it effected planning was the increased scope of what referred to as 'development planning' in non-professional jargon. Before 1996, planning was conventionally the domain of professionals and technicians who worked with land and its possible uses. It was a rational discipline of strategic choices made on the basis of verifiable data and empiricism where the social and the human were allowed to impinge only to the extent that such influences were measurable and relevant to the use of space, land, facilities or natural resources. Anyone who met the trusted planners of the state in the often tense forums of negotiated urban upgrading in the early nineties would have encountered the quiet self-assurance of men⁴ who 'knew it all' when it came to planning roads, clinics or mass housing development. Anything that could not be reduced to the variables understood and manageable within the profession, was regarded as irrelevant or something to be taken up with the 'welfare office'.

⁴ The term is used advisedly since very few women appeared in these forums

Planning in local government though, was overwhelmingly a matter of land use in urban areas, conducted under a plethora of laws and in association with enumerable provincial and national institutions. It was a confusing picture in which about a thousand professional planners (almost exclusively white and mostly male) qualified in 'town and regional planning', occupied a dominant position ...¹⁴¹

Mabin suggests that, internationally, a shift in planning on spatial terms to planning as a form of urban management emanated from the 1976 Habitat conference in Vancouver. The United Nations and the World Bank had begun to focus on improving the performance of local government and concluded that strategic, budgetary and effective management issues posed the key challenges to an institution that had been absorbed with traditional and largely irrelevant functions, particularly in the cities of the developing world. Thus planning through the Urban Management Programme became concerned with improving the performance of local authorities. These trends only began to seriously impact South Africa in the late eighties with the opening up of the political environment and the acceptance that a new local government dispensation would have to be negotiated. Playing a guiding hand in this as already mentioned, were agencies like the Urban Foundation whose staff had been exposed to urban managerialism.¹⁴³

CHAPTER 3: POST-LIBERATION SOUTH AFRICA AND THE RISE OF IDP

Upon its formal liberation, the future of South Africa's post-apartheid cities attracted the attention of academia within the country and international agencies like the World Bank.

Overcoming apartheid spatial designs and the unjust / irrational placement of infrastructure and facilities was one of the obvious challenges but planning also had to tackle the challenge of getting more value from public expenditure and more effective use of facilities and infrastructure. By explicitly setting out the options for redistribution and economic growth, Integrated Development Plans (IDP) also created the political space for diverse local interests to be identified and become subject to a local process of mediation and ultimately prioritisation.¹⁴⁴

In addition the architects of the new municipal dispensation had to ensure that the local state grew into an increasingly comprehensive form of government with constantly expanding responsibilities and powers – this in global terms was the vision of the future. Some might argue that in the face of these challenges, the planning industry 'bit off more than it could chew.'

The first piece of post-apartheid planning legislation was the ambitiously titled Development Facilitation Act (DFA) (Act No. 67 of 1995). When first presented to civil society groupings and NGOs the Act seemed to have multiple and often confused objectives. One of its principal requirements was that all local authorities should draft *land development objectives* (LDOs). This plus the key role played by the Department of Land Affairs suggested that planning legislation would continue to be concerned with land and its usage. However the LDO label proved to something of a misnomer and while the more conventional planners tended to follow the thread of land and its importance, officials outside the planning discipline stressed the broad strategic function of these plans. Then Director of Land Administration in the Department of Local Government and Housing (Eastern Cape) Christelle Bartlett explained that LDOs were "...really strategic development plans" and "...concentrate on spatial budgeting and development time frames."¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, the DFA was also a simple piece of trouble-shooting legislation that made special provision for 'development tribunals' to cut through red tape and get stalled development moving again:

...the forward-looking, wider planning aspect of the provision had been dumped into a piece of legislation mostly concerned with speeding up land development decision-making, but also carrying a large range of provisions for change. The complexities of the new law completely bamboozled many professionals, let alone officials, community members and local politicians.¹⁴⁶

Later with the 1997 amendment of the Local Government Transition Act, the emphasis on municipal planning legislation shifted to the rationalisation and streamlining of local and national level planning procedures. Hitherto as both Mabin and Stack note, planning obligations were imposed on municipalities through different line departments, each with its own concerns and demands. Thus integrated development plans (IDPs) set out to draw together and coordinate a number of line function plans:¹⁴⁷

The draft Housing Bill in circulation in 1997 required municipalities to plan for and set housing goals and identify appropriate land as well as planning the necessary infrastructure and the initiation and running of projects.

The National Land Transport Bill 1997 required municipalities designated as transport authorities to develop transport plans.

The Water Services Bill required municipalities designated as water services authorities to compile a water development plan including targets for service accessibility and financial and institutional components.

Regulations contained in the Environmental Conservation Act (73 of 1989)

A number of other departments including health and education were also preparing legislation that would impose their own line function concerns on local government. Implicit in the IDP model was the idea that local government was an appropriate level at which to bring together and coordinate not just a number of different sector plans in its own sphere of influence (sometimes regarded as the 'functional' aspect of planning), but that of different state institutions and departments (the vertical axis of planning) located further up the ladder of what remained essentially a hierarchy of power despite the rhetoric of 'equal and inter-dependent spheres.' Furthermore municipalities were also expected to consider integration across geographic localities framed by municipal boundaries (horizontal integration.) The merits of this assumption are explored later. What was ironic about the rhetoric of 'rationalisation and integration' was the fact that initially at least, the DFA provisions for land development objectives (LDOs) driven by the Department of Land Affairs were not rationalised with the Department of Constitutional Development sponsored Local Government Transition Act (1993) requirements for IDPs. Considerable behind the

scenes wrangling and negotiation, that sometimes spilled over into public forums, took place before the two legislative frameworks were presented, somewhat unconvincingly as different components of a single planning programme. Thus two different ministries attempted, at least initially, to impose their new planning frameworks on municipalities in an uncoordinated and often competitive manner, all in the name of more rational, integrated planning. Afesis-corplan researcher David Savage, a planner by profession observed of planning prior to this new policy:

A major reason for the lack of integration in planning at present is the attitude adopted by different authorities (in all spheres of government) who argue that they alone have sole responsibility to plan for a particular issue or area. This argument would seem to suggest that the authorities exist for their own sake, and not to serve the community. If we look at planning from a community perspective it becomes less important who provides a service and more important that the service is provided effectively and efficiently.¹⁴⁸

A second key provision of the DFA which was geared towards unblocking bureaucratic bottlenecks, was the creation of a review body known as the Development Tribunal comprised of experts within and outside of government, who had the power to fast-track development which might otherwise be held up by bureaucratic red tape or the short-sighted application of dated or irrelevant legislation. Analysts like Ivor Chipkin have argued that the main impetus for the DFA came from the slow implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP)

As the implementation of the RDP became bogged down in bureaucratic delays it was deemed necessary to provide a 'fast-track' for development. This arose from two concerns. Business and civics complained that projects became caught up in lengthy administrative procedures. The legal profession worried that, on the other hand, that a myriad of laws and regulations embroiled developers in complicated and sometimes parallel legal processes.¹⁴⁹

In the light of the longer term problems associated with the legacy of apartheid planning and development procedures, it is important to recognise that the delays in RDP roll-out were simply the most recent manifestation of what were more deeply rooted problems and unhelpful conventions. However the increased rate of delivery expected by the RDP certainly brought the problem to a head. The Tribunal was intended to operate in parallel to existing development screening procedures which it would attempt to streamline and if necessary, circumvent.

The Eastern Cape Development Tribunal was therefore characterised as an independent decision-making body that functioned to speed up development in the Province.¹⁵⁰

A very useful dimension of the DFA which was possibly under-utilised and remains valid although the Act itself is largely obsolete, is the specification of unusually clear principles for development:¹⁵¹

1. Promote integration with respect to social, economic, institutional and physical development
2. Promote the integrated development of rural and urban areas in ways that are mutually reinforcing
3. Promote the proximity and integration of residential and employment opportunities
4. Optimise the use of existing resources
5. Promote diverse and mixed land use
6. Contain urban sprawl
7. Ensure towns and cities become more compact
8. Correct the historical distortions in the use of space and the use of infrastructure

3.1 Questions of Local Autonomy

Thus the DFA and other legislation provided local government with a set of benchmarks against which to evaluate its own plans and policies. Chipkin argues that the DFA and the LGTA by setting out specific policy criteria like integration; prioritisation of basic needs remove a large degree of political discretion from municipalities in the exercise of their duties. Municipalities can work out ways to best perform their developmental mandate but the value system that has shaped that mandate is set out by national government.¹⁵² This calls into question the fine line between imposed political values and universally *accepted developmental criteria*. While the latter may be regarded as a paradoxical in the academic realm, it has a key role in the more tangible world of development projects and programmes where movement would be impossible without a core of well-understood and largely incontrovertible principles. Clearly planning and other 'sciences in the service of development', allow select political values to be depoliticised and as a consequence, shift into the realm of uncontested 'development criteria.' In South

Africa, the Constitution frames those broad values which are held to be non-negotiable, both binding on and endorsed by the majority. National legislation obviously has to be wary of elaborating basic Constitutional principles into restrictive legal frameworks that eliminate all forms of discretion and judgment at local level. This is the issue to be critically considered when Chipkin, for example, goes on to argue that since the 'how to' is left to the discretion of local government, municipalities retain the right and indeed the obligation to play a hegemonic role in relation to development, provided they serve the political objectives outlined in national legislation and the Constitution.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, *hegemony*, limited to systemic options and choices in institutional and administrative policies would seem to be a rather hollow concept.

Mabin on the other hand suggests that the key planning provisions, namely the specification of Integrated Development Plans within the LGTA, coincided with the finalisation of the 1996 Constitution and thus carried forward the notion of local government's enhanced status as a 'sphere of government.'¹⁵⁴ Although the IDP provisions may have drawn upon local government's new Constitutional standing, in more practical outlining of functions and exploration of necessary inter-governmental relations, the IDPs acted in their own right to boost at least the symbolic status of local government. Since the emphasis was entirely on demonstrating decentralization and what 'could be achieved' and not on what local government had proven itself capable of, IDPs tended to load municipalities with functions and responsibilities that had little bearing on real capabilities or what had evolved as municipal functions. Indeed, as a new policy provision which embodied the important principle of '*breaking with the past*' and escaping the bounds of convention, integrated development planning set out to shatter what had become a *comfort zone* of functional responsibility for municipalities.

3.2 Urban management and decentralisation

Meshack Khosa¹⁵⁵ has described certain forms of policy being a propagandistic exercise and operating within the world of symbolism. Turner and Hulme¹⁵⁶ confirmed that this is indeed not unusual and conforms to acknowledged universal trends. Given the focused nature of planning policy and legislation – at least at the outset, and having to come to grips with the spatial and social consequences of apartheid, this would not always be a valid critique. As Mabin notes earlier in this chapter, responding to apartheid was a very reactive and applied form of policy / planning design. The DFA maintained this convention of focusing on immediate urban development problems and working from the known. It was at the level of forward-looking, projective and sometimes speculative planning policy that serious

political speculation and *scenario guessing* began to take hold. In this respect Integrated Development Plans out did themselves.

Why *integrated* plans? Apart from the anticipated merits of the three forms of integration already described, Integrated Development Planning confirms the centrality of the municipality in urban management and planning and thus signified a break with apartheid conventions of national and provincial government acting in a paternalistic manner. Another reason that may not have been apparent to that sector of civil society, particularly NGOs who so enthusiastically embraced IDPs, was that certain sectors of society looked to the experience of central government in the developing world and decided that national government was not to be entrusted with planning that could shape the lives of local communities.

There is a strong connection between the idea of urban management as an approach to local government activity in poorer cities and the concept of decentralisation – really a way of shifting development and management responsibility from national government to local government – perhaps based on the charitable concern that that if national government could not do the job then local government provided the alternative.¹⁵⁷

This is a very limited reading of the forces behind decentralisation and is characteristic of the 'developmental local government' discourse that attempts as far as possible to depoliticise issues of local government. The entire movement for enhanced local government status was undoubtedly seen as a check on a unitary state with a strong dominant party in control of parliament. On entering the world of formal parliamentary politics, the ANC initially embraced the idea of decentralisation, indeed it had little choice as concessions to federalism and increased autonomy for local government had been key to the peaceful settlement reached at CODESA. On the face of it, integrated development planning as a new and powerful framework for planning based in municipalities, and with an expanded range of development and service responsibilities to be covered by municipal planning, was confirmation of local government's enhanced status. Indeed it is held up in countless government documents as proof that the new state was serious about decentralisation. This commitment was not simply to appease South Africa's minority parties in their quest to limit the power of central government. It was also part of an international shift in development thinking prompted by the mounting evidence during the 1980s that development initiated from the centre had failed.

A broad-based consensus emerged that democratic decentralisation will produce effective local government that is responsive to the needs of the poor and can provide opportunities for participation around issues that matter most in people's lives.¹⁵⁸

One of the reasons why the IDP policy appealed to the NGO / civil-society sector was because of the more radical values implied in decentralisation, namely an enhanced status and role for civil society and a state increasingly open to democratic participation.¹⁵⁹ Nor were the IDP policy provisions an isolated example of recognition of these values; "In South Africa, these conceptual strands prevail in almost all of the policies produced across government departments between 1994 and 2000."¹⁶⁰ Thus while IDP policy may have been naïve in the competencies it expected of local government, it never tried to supplant central government with local government on the basis that local government would be more effective. The decentralisation benefits held out by IDP policy had two key elements, firstly that of giving local municipalities the power and resources to resolve local development needs as co-equal spheres of government acting with enhanced autonomy and secondly, putting control of these municipalities in the hands of a local populace. However local government has also been created as a 'wall-to-wall' sphere of government charged with implementing the national programme for reconstruction and development. The political discretion exercised in drawing up local development plans is subservient to a set of national principles and guidelines that shape the minimum outcomes that these plans have to deliver. Local autonomy is thus balanced by a broader vision of 'developmental local government' and the latter policy is overseen by national government. Is this anything more than a 'spin' exercise by government spokespersons and their sharp-witted advisors? Considering state-society relationships and the problem of casting these as dichotomous relations of weakness and strength, Sophie Oldfield suggests that the concept of "embedded autonomy" better explains the tension between local autonomy and national interest.

The balance between local autonomy and national and provincial intervention reflects the state's imperative to enforce the vision and regulatory framework of developmental local government as the primary delivery mechanism of services and infrastructure, the foundation to the national goals of reconstruction and integration.¹⁶¹

How robust is this notion of embedded autonomy? If the national framework for developmental local government has become all-embracing and pervasive in all

aspects of municipal functioning, can 'local autonomy' still be talked about with any degree of credibility? Few South African analysts of the new local government system seem concerned with this issue although some seem to regard national government's control over financial transfers to local government as a potential check on local autonomy. Oldfield for example asks, "Is the 'iron fist' of the national government disguised by the 'kid glove' of embedded autonomy? Will the 'equitable share' of funding from the central state be employed to curb recalcitrant local authorities dominated by opposition parties?"¹⁶² Thus far there seems to be little evidence that the state has even considered resorting to such crude forms of intervention to assert its political will. Indeed it could be argued that the tight meshing of policy frameworks like the Integrated Development Planning chapter contained within the Municipal Systems Act and the principles of spatial and physical development contained within section 2 of the Development Facilitation Act, are in fact a check on local autonomy that make cruder interventions unnecessary.

What makes these policy tools particularly effective is not just the subtlety of the framework of consensual norms and standards that they embody but the ability to reach outside of the sphere of government and the party and to draw in civil society as a whole. Thus IDP policy explicitly creates a particular legal space for the participation of the public through planning committees and most recently, representative forums. In this way, suggests Oldfield, the idea of embedded autonomy is also a feature of community – state interdependence.¹⁶³

The problem with this as a general rule for local government policy, is that it requires an 'across-the board' application. The phenomenon must be valid for all municipal-community relations to retain significance, whereas in reality, as Oldfield notes, it is locally specific. Oldfield's view of the defining element of autonomy is that it requires acknowledgment of the differentiated capacity of government and community to "take up the challenge of developmentalism at the local level..."¹⁶⁴ This widely accepted supposition in local government policy tends to overlook the extent to which civil autonomy survives and finds expression in these partnerships and the extent to which this varies from locality to locality – in other words it is largely blind to the possibility of a hegemonic state.

3.3 NGOs, Civil Autonomy and the Allure of Planning

The NGO sector, illustrated in the following example by the well-established Cape Town-based NGO, the Foundation for Contemporary Research¹⁶⁵, readily endorsed

Integrated Development Plans as a new instrument to regulate and direct local government activities in the late 1990s:

...municipalities should act in a pro-poor manner, maximising the development and growth impacts of activities.¹⁶⁶

NGOs were also anxious to ensure that municipalities became more strategic in their analysis of local issues and possible responses. However they tempered this endorsement of local responsibility by noting that:

The development of strategic capacity and orientation is arguably the primary 'macro' – level concern of the current policy framework, and a key intention behind the introduction of IDPs.¹⁶⁷

Thus even NGOs, reputed champions of decentralisation and de-concentration, had concerns about placing strategic decisions about planning and development entirely within the realm of autonomous local decision-making. Thus we are confronted with the unusual prospect of NGOs, a key sector of civil society, drawing from its long history of loose alliance with the African National Congress and the new government of the day, arguing strongly that the guiding framework of (government designed) policy would ensure that local plans had the right developmental orientation. Initially this was motivated less by concerns about the capacity and abilities of local municipalities and more about the anticipated influence of other social forces who would either seek alliances with the new local state or use their superior power to influence gullible local authorities. The NGOs sector clearly felt that this somewhat patronising stance was justified as they represented the interests of 'poor communities'. The concern for civility and some role for autonomously civil bodies was clearly present. The remarkable aspect is that NGOs looked to central government to protect the status of civil society with respect to local authorities:

...municipalities should seek to co-ordinate and integrate rather than to displace, control or dominate actor's contributions. Rather than regulate and control in response to diversity, social exclusion and marginality, municipalities should tolerate community solutions and enhance joint or collective problem solving and decision-making and service delivery.¹⁶⁸

Thus the NGO sector acted as an invaluable vehicle for gaining broad endorsement of the new planning policy. This happened in two ways. Firstly the overarching

government policy framework was supported and elaborated as necessary for carrying key principles and values into the municipal realm. Secondly NGOs emphasized the importance of community involvement in planning and ensured that the necessary clauses and legal provisions were introduced into relevant law and policy. This not only gave professional NGOs a stake in facilitating 'community participation', it also ensured that local community organisations were incorporated into the planning process and became jointly responsible, with the municipality, for the outcome. Potential dissidents were often effectively co-opted or incorporated in this way.

Public participation in planning came to be a key principle of the new IDP policy framework. There was little concern that citizens 'hands-on' involvement in planning might blur the responsibilities of the state and elected civic leadership. The only real limitation on such participation was identified as the refinement of such plans into operational programmes.

Citizens would be involved in devising plans where programmes are largely seen as the mere translations of the plans best left to experts to draw up. Councillors and the administration would be involved in formulating programmes. A monitoring and evaluation framework is an exception to this: it is a point of overlap between the plans and programmes. It is seen as the key instrument through which the municipality is held accountable for implementing the plan.¹⁶⁹

It would be a mistake however to regard this as simply a clever ruse by the state to make civil society complicit in rolling out government policy. Development planners, NGOs and the new planning regime as a whole, were highly sensitive to the criticism that planning had conventionally done little to address issues of economic justice and usually served the prevailing configuration of social forces and marginalized the poor and those who lacked the capacity for meaningful participation (see Chapter 1 discussion of planning theories related to pluralism and advocacy planning for elaboration of this critique.)

The approach is also specified to be "participative". Participation is defined to encompass a broadening of collective decision-making as well as a broadening of participation in the local economy including the municipal services economy. "Pro-poor" is a description that is also applied; "pro-poor" action should result in increased social participation in mainstream political and economic processes.¹⁷⁰

But the NGO sector went further than simply functioning as a watchdog of participatory / pro-poor values in the new IDP framework. They readily partnered with the state in the roll-out of the IDP programme and became vehicles for the propagation of planning dogma. To understand this it is necessary to review specific examples of NGO programmes involving IDP.

NGOs like Afesis-corplan had attempted to use the newly created IDP framework in a flexible manner, inserting their own concerns with the social and participatory aspects of development and trying to create as much local responsibility as possible for the design and operation of planning. In 1997 Afesis-corplan and other NGOs concentrated on honing participatory planning techniques and influencing local municipalities like Nqgeleni and Bizana to use such techniques. Other NGOs like the Johannesburg based Planact, concentrated on the production of comprehensive and often detailed planning resource documents like the booklet *Integrated Development Planning: A Handbook for Community Leaders*. First published in October 1997 the handbook found fairly wide usage within the Urban Sector Network – an increasingly formalised network of NGOs that sought to shape the transforming South African local government and urban development system, according to its own ideals and social aims. Having worked extensively with township-based civic leaders and community-based organisations that had resisted apartheid, these NGOs now saw the opportunity for on-going social change through their allies who had since become the policy-makers and civil servants of the post-apartheid state. Their established relationship with the new political leadership and shared vision would, many believed, virtually guarantee their influence over the policies and systems of post-apartheid South Africa. The IDP programme of government presented these NGOs with the ideal vehicle.

Policy makers adopted an optimistic view of IDPs, endorsing the idea that local IDPs are capable of fundamentally transforming local government through the aggregation of local change processes. In other words, a single extensive planning process can restructure and reorient the institutions that constitute local government. Local government, for the reasons outlined in previous chapters, was seen by many as deeply problematic and therefore in need of intensive transformation. According to this logic, nearly every activity needed to be reoriented. The new policy for IDP was seen as the main tool to define this reorientation and to police it.¹⁷¹

The new vision of local government, endorsed by both the NGOs and government policy-makers was known as *developmental local government*. Its main

elements have already been outlined but it is useful to record an explicitly NGO interpretation, in this case the Johannesburg-based Planact :

- The active promotion of social and economic development by municipalities
- A more equitable and efficient shaping of municipal space
- Municipal government that is strong in policy-making and strategy
- Municipal restructuring that allows for both community participation and effective service delivery
- Municipal government that serves the interests of the poor¹⁷²

The influence of this NGO thinking is carried through to the 1998 Local Government White Paper which describes *developmental local government* thus:

Developmental local government is local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives.¹⁷³

The White Paper outlines four key qualities of developmental local government which are similar to those suggested by Planact:

1. Maximising social development and economic growth
2. Integrating and co-ordinating
3. Democratising development
4. Leading and learning¹⁷⁴

The Planact handbook argued for better strategy and holism in municipal development endeavours and an overt bias towards the interests of the urban poor. The handbook was very broadly targeted at "local government councillors, officials and civil society structures."¹⁷⁵ Unlike other more technically orientated handbooks by the state and various parastatals, the Planact handbook attempted to provide an abbreviated *schooling* in planning, the social and political issues thrown up by the South African urban environment and recent attempts to improve its governance and administration. Thus the handbook covered an ambitious range of topics from the history of urban development in South Africa, the techniques of integrated development planning as a specific approach to development, the challenge of getting all spheres of government to work in a coordinated manner plus fifteen key themes which were deemed critical to understanding the urban environment. These included land use, housing, transport, roads and storm water, water, sanitation, electricity, waste management, safety and security, health, welfare, education, arts and culture, local economic development and environment.¹⁷⁶

Within each of these topics Planact attempted to frame its own social assumptions and those of like-minded experts thus offering the users of the handbook a discursive outline of the issues at stake and the prevailing thinking by policy-makers. Like many IDP resources at the time the Planact handbook saw its primary undertaking as the undoing of apartheid:

During the years of apartheid, cities and towns took on a particular structure and character, which was characterised by segregation and inequity. Overcoming such a legacy will require interventions that address its root causes, and not simply its symptoms.¹⁷⁷

In two pages the handbook sought to give its target group (councillors, officials and civic leaders) a snapshot of South African political history. Describing the familiar racial peculiarities of the apartheid city, Planact went further and tried to contextualise the underlying causes.¹⁷⁸ Key elements of this background included the racial allocation of land, including the 1913 Land Act, the 'pass laws' that controlled the movement of urbanised Africans, homelands policy, the impact of mines on the urban economy and the emergence of labour migrancy.¹⁷⁹ Planact briefly discussed the impact of housing and infrastructure under the Group Areas Act with matching policies like subsidised transport for African workers and the slow loss of control of African urbanisation by apartheid authorities.¹⁸⁰ The handbook explains the mid 1980s attempt by the state to set in place a less explicitly racial urbanisation policy and to withdraw from responsibility for township housing and the resultant "spread of shack settlements around South African cities."¹⁸¹ It outlines the financial dilemma faced by the apartheid directed Black Local Authorities and their role in sparking civil disobedience and ultimately well-organised urban political resistance. In outlining the fragmented economic and social features of the *apartheid city* Planact reminds its target readers how planning played a key role in realising the apartheid vision of segregated suburbs, amenities and economic facilities:

The process of planning itself was a crucial tool which was used to achieve apartheid objectives. The ownership, use and distribution of land in particular, enabled the apartheid city to develop in as (sic) segregated manner as it did.¹⁸²

Ostensibly the purpose of such observations seems to be to create a stronger condemnation of apartheid policy and its architects by showing that racial inequality and exploitation were not simply the consequences of poorly framed and misdirected policies but were the direct and intended objectives of the apartheid

system. In the simplest terms, it was argued that '*what was planned could be unplanned.*' Implicitly the other purpose of these familiar tracts is to show that South Africa's dysfunctional urban environments did not evolve naturally, shaped by lamentable but irresistible forces within society itself, but were in fact a planned and manufactured 'reality.' However, far from provoking a caution or wariness in relation to the power of 'planning' and its potential to serve a concocted social and political vision, Planact and other NGOs embraced planning as a powerful 'vehicle for transformation.'

We believe that integrated development planning (IDP) is a crucial mechanism to achieve developmental local government, and to overcome the apartheid legacy of our cities and towns.¹⁸³

Having condemned the apartheid local government system as irrational and structurally unjust, Planact expresses the optimism of many NGOs at the time, for the newly democratised municipalities to act as agents for broad societal transformation:

Despite the huge problems facing South African cities, they have one major element in their favour: the democratic, newly empowered local government. Municipalities could play a powerful role in transforming the urban landscape, especially if combined with community efforts and commitment.¹⁸⁴

Some might argue that in retrospect this optimism proved to be tragically misplaced. It was however generated in part by the assumption that local government's enhanced constitutional status and the resulting increase in its legal powers and administrative functions would progress beyond a paper commitment and take the form of effective, powerful institutions, democratically directed to the most pressing issues of poverty and under-development i.e. genuine and constructive decentralisation was at hand. Gideon Pimstone refers to this as the "promise" within the Constitution, both demanding of, but also imbuing the state with a multitude of principles related to justice, human rights and democracy:

In terms of these constitutional values, democratic local government is, firstly, answerable to the people it serves, and is required to justify its decisions in a rational, cogent manner. Secondly, local government is also responsive government, a value coupled with effectiveness, and signaling the requirement that local government be sensitive to popular needs and be capable of acting to fulfill those needs. Third, there is the transparency norm, a call for local

government to be open to scrutiny and criticism, accessible and informative. Local government is required to be a participatory system which facilitates on-going dialogue with communities. And lastly, the Constitution speaks to values of equity, ethical behavior, procedural and broader administrative justice and formal, substantive equality.¹⁸⁵

It might be argued that these imperatives endorsed by government policy-makers and legislators and by civil society role-players like NGOs, simply '*set the bar too high*'. That local government's crisis of credibility in 2003/2004 relates in part the yawning gap between the reality of municipal practice and the impossible benchmarks created by post apartheid municipal policy frameworks. Furthermore local government's constitutional status, portrayed as being on the same footing with provincial and national government, is probably illusionary. It may well be that local government's license to shape its own future is based upon 'hollow powers' that promise much but in fact leave municipalities at the mercy of national legislative and policy frameworks and any of the faults contained therein. Nonetheless the myth has been sown that local government will, as an autonomous and equal sphere of government, determine its own fate. These presumptions may be overblown as Pimstone warned in 1998:

Ours is a unitary democracy with many features of the centralisation of power. Primary legislative and executive power resides in national organs with Parliament, the President and Cabinet. Legislative initiative is taken by national government where matters are to be dealt with uniformly in accordance with national standards, norms, policies and frameworks. This is made clear by the detailed mechanisms of legislative override presently in the Constitution. Provincial governments are afforded generally narrower, matter-specific legislative and executive powers, including the power to legislate over all local government matters. There is, therefore, a distinct power gradient in the Constitution which has significant consequences for local government....There is a marked degree of legislative subordination: municipal government cannot legislate in conflict with national and provincial legislation. Local government has the right to govern on its own initiative the local government affairs of the community, but subject to national and provincial legislation.¹⁸⁶

Parts B of Schedule 4 & 5 of the Constitution, conventionally regarded as framing the powers of local government, can be misleading because section 156 of the Constitution limits municipal authority in respect of these functions to "executive authority in respect of, and the right to administer ...and to make and administer by-

laws” as Pimstone notes.¹⁸⁷ According to Pimstone this definition of powers renders local government subservient to other spheres of government:

This evokes an overtly administrative function for local government and raises the specter of a resuscitation of the municipal role as administrative handmaiden to more powerful government spheres. Although greater administrative powers can be assigned or delegated, this really leaves municipalities at the mercy of other spheres in terms of policy-making. Such a definition of municipal power renders the notion of local government as a sphere of government equal in status to other spheres quite ludicrous.¹⁸⁸

This argument has already been outlined in previous sections but requires clarification; the argument is not that local government has not undergone a considerable enhancement of its powers and functions but that it exercises these powers within a fairly restrictive framework. One effective of this increasingly comprehensive framework of obligations is the duty to assume vast social and developmental responsibilities and to do so by participating within expansive national-scale programmes like the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (CMIP). It is important to distinguish this argument from the more simplistic rendering of a local government systems starved of financial resources necessary for the performance of its functions – often referred to as the ‘*unfunded mandate*.’ The burden he is in fact one of performance and complexity and not simply of having insufficient finance to meet responsibilities. “The burden is heavy, and at present many municipal structures are simply incapable of shouldering it. The discrepancy between need and capacity is one of the more telling features.”¹⁸⁹

Policy-makers and allied sections of civil society like NGOs initiated and conducted a discourse about local government’s potential role largely free of these sobering reflections. Planning and in particular municipal IDP was given an impossibly sweeping mandate. The handbook by Planact for example, talks of the more general function of planning in bringing about change, “Planning is a tool that may be used to bring about desired change. In effect, it sets up each step towards bringing about the change.”¹⁹⁰

Couched in many of the NGO resource documents on planning is the idea that the planning process can be *recaptured* and controlled by ordinary councillors, community leaders and municipal staff, if they acquire an understanding not only of the broad political and social objectives of planning but more concretely the methods and techniques it uses. Thus in Chapter One of its handbook Planact



attempts to overview the procedures and phases of the planning process, trying to reinterpret the specialised methods and jargon of planning into simple concepts and language. The concept of *indicators* as measures of development is explained, as are *forecasting and appraisal* techniques.¹⁹¹ Cost benefit analysis is explained as “a tool used to analyse the economic advantages and disadvantages of a plan or project” with a cautionary note that some benefits are difficult to quantify or value in monetary terms.¹⁹² Characterising conventional planning as primarily concerned with economic issues, NGOs like Planact sought to emphasize both the social and economic:

It is important that social impact assessments and environmental impact assessments are used to supplement appraisal tools which focus on the economic aspects of a project proposal and generally ignore the social and environmental costs and benefits of each alternative course of action.¹⁹³

The handbook goes on to discuss a range of assessment and management tools like social or environmental impact assessments, the use of bar charts to represent project progress and management / logical framework matrices as a means of monitoring and representing overviews of projects and managing results towards well-defined objectives.¹⁹⁴ The new municipal role-players were also encouraged to become familiar with technically powerful data management systems like Geographic Information Systems (GIS).¹⁹⁵ As many NGOs had only recently begun to adopt these techniques themselves, (often as a result of funder pressure or as an attempt to compete with private sector consultants) the attempt to pass these skills onto community organisations and councillors may have been imbued with more fervor than realistic assessment of the prospects for successful implementation by the client groups.

How were NGO values and principles inserted into IDP? Chapter 1 of the Planact handbook opens with a set of terms and concepts that the authors seek to define. These “concepts” also provide an insight into some of the NGO aims and values that were inculcated to the planning process:

- *Accessibility*: the term is used in its spatial sense and relates to the ease with which citizens access facilities and move between work and home. The concept of the “integrated” city carries with it the promise of easier, cheaper and reduced travel for working people.¹⁹⁶
- *Bottom-up and Top-down*: Clearly the NGOs preference is for the former i.e. “A



bottom-up approach to planning is one where the proposals are made at the very local level, the lowest level being the community.¹⁹⁷

- *Budget*: Ostensibly not a value laden term but the NGO emphasis on budgets emphasized the critical link between plans and the allocation of funds – in other words planning needed to link projects to specific sources of funds to have any credibility.¹⁹⁸
- *Centralisation*: NGOs were concerned by the extent to which decision-making was centralised. *Decentralisation* meant, “the power to make decisions is dispersed to people, groups, or organisations at lower levels of the hierarchy.” Planact does not explicitly endorse this but generally NGO literature of the time favored considerable decentralisation of decision-making to local government for example, rather than provincial or national government.¹⁹⁹
- *Compact city*: this is posed as the alternative to the apartheid city that is characterised as separated, segregated and sprawling. The concept of *urban sprawl* embodies a number of negative features including inappropriate usage of land better suited to agriculture, destruction of the natural environment by built environments and the uneconomic use of land for residence purposes.²⁰⁰ A feature of the apartheid city is *dormitory townships or suburbs* so named because they function purely as residential areas and lack facilities for employment, shopping or business activity. In the *compact city* the objective is proximity of services and facilities and concentration of infrastructure. One of the ways to overcome this is to engage in *infill* projects that target vacant or poorly used land for residential or other purposes. The sought after result is a denser more compact urban area. A related concept is containment i.e. the *containment* of urban development to protect land better suited to agriculture or environmental preservation.²⁰¹
- *Development*: Planact offered a fairly comprehensive definition of *development*. “...the process of improving people’s quality of life. Development is successful when people have greater choice and opportunities. It can refer to physical improvements like housing, access to water, community facilities and so on. Development should result in, in among other things, improved health, education, employment, equality and freedom. Development is not the same as economic growth.”²⁰²
- *Urban nodes*: embody the idea of select points where there is a concentration of urban activities like business, residences, shops and community facilities. Ideally nodes are linked via transport routes and function as the centre of new growth and development.

A potential dilemma for NGOs embracing the rationale of planning, was the necessary corollaries of state imposed control, regulation and restriction that had to accompany any form of planning, even the relatively *laissez-faire* approach of integrated development planning. Under apartheid these mechanisms had served the purpose of protecting racial privilege and enforced inequality. For many township dwellers, all experiences of local public administration and systems for controlling urban development were tainted by these racial and economic motives. NGOs like Planact had to overcome these negative perceptions in order to create understanding and respect for the 'non-political' imperatives of planning. The irony of course was that these same NGOs were supporting a planning programme that was deeply political.

Zoning regulations determine the way land is used. For example, these laws may state that businesses cannot be opened in residential areas. Under the previous government there were many zoning regulations which were strictly adhered to and helped shape the apartheid city. Now these laws are much more flexible (and) try to promote the integration of urban areas.²⁰³

NGOs saw the opportunity to use processes like land-use planning to bring about their vision of a transformed urban environment. Problems of unequal distribution of services and facilities were to be tackled through *urban integration*. Planning would become a tool to force the privileged and middle class suburbs to share their superior facilities and services with low-income areas, while poor townships would receive preferential consideration for upgrading and infrastructure expenditure.²⁰⁴ Increased rural-urban integration would occur, as rural-urban economic linkages were better-recognised and promoted through trading facilities and improved connecting infrastructure.²⁰⁵ Land use planning, according to Planact, had the potential to prevent or curtail irrational uses of land brought about through the operation of an unrestrained urban land market.²⁰⁶

Training in IDP

Between 1999 and 2003 government, donors and the NGO sector expended vast resources on training for councillors, municipal officials and community organisations in IDP. One example of this programme was the contract awarded to the Urban Sector Network, a national network of NGOs, in 2001. Four members of the network, Planact, the Centre for Community and Labour studies (CCLS), the Foundation for Contemporary Research (FCR) and Afesis-corplan were appointed by the Department of Provincial and Local Government to run the program which

ran from July to August 2001.²⁰⁷ The handbook used by the USN for this training was similar to that produced by Planact some four years previously. Its contents included the history of planning in South Africa, the legal context for planning, key concepts and assumptions that underpinned IDP and how these should be applied, the role of councillors, the rationale for cooperative governance and public participation.²⁰⁸ The emphasis on integration of municipal activities and moving planning out of its purely spatial concerns was carried over into the new handbook however new elements like the distinction between district and local municipalities, the importance of public participation and the imperative to manage municipal performance, were now included. The handbook (more concise and geared more directly to training than the Planact document) emphasized that Integrated Development Planning now enjoyed legal status as a municipal function, being a requirement of the 2000 Municipal Systems Act.²⁰⁹ It explained how the executive committee and other decision-making bodies of council would, in terms of the Municipal Structures Act, be required to identify and prioritise the needs of the community and formulate strategies for dealing with those needs.

Thus NGOs were now in a position to use the power of the law to train and orientate elected government representatives and civil servants in the new planning process and the values and norms they regarded as having maximum potential to deliver democracy and development. In some respects the NGO sector seemed even more convinced than the state of the efficacy of the new policy framework. The handbook claimed for example that the Municipal Demarcation Act:

Initiated a new demarcation process that has resulted in a dramatically reduced number of municipalities, which are larger and in a better position to become viable local government units.²¹⁰

The USN affiliated NGOs became the promoters and even the cheerleaders of the new local government system and rightly claimed their joint authorship of it:

We have developed a broad understanding that local government is no longer just a service provider but goes beyond that as stipulated in the Constitution. South Africa has been breaking new ground in creating participatory, democratic, accountable structures of local governance. Developmental local governance implies a change from the old way of planning to a new style of local government planning that focuses on the developmental needs of citizens. It is this new system of planning that is called Integrated Development Planning (IDP).²¹¹

The handbook reminds municipalities that planning is no longer a discretionary matter and the new IDPs with a 'lifespan' of five years are to take precedence over all other plans:

The Integrated Development Plan has a legal status superseding all other plans that guide development at local government level. It is clearly stated in the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 that all municipalities, i.e., Category A municipalities, Category B municipalities and category C municipalities must undertake an integrated development planning process.²¹²

It is remarkable how NGOs through their joint ownership of the new planning paradigm, are drawn into a role whereby they act as partners of the state in gaining local municipal compliance with the new policy. Some of the points that the USN handbook attempted to drum into municipal stakeholders included:

- Every newly elected municipal council would be required to prepare an IDP for its term of office and the IDP should be reviewed annually
- The completion of the IDP should take 6-9 months and be linked to the municipal budgeting cycle²¹³
- The IDP process was to be "interactive and participatory": the role-players identified are municipal officials, councillors, provincial and national line departments and 'municipal stakeholders' (community as a whole, disadvantaged groups "e.g. women, the disabled etc" and non-organised sectors of the community assisted by NGOs.)²¹⁴
- The elements of the IDP should include:
 - o The vision of the municipality;
 - o An assessment of the existing level of development and remaining needs in the municipality including basic services, unemployment and the needs of the 'marginalized.'
- The elected council's development priorities and strategies including local economic development objectives and internal transformation challenges plus the operational strategies to achieve the above;
- A spatial development framework setting out basic guidelines on managing land use;
- Disaster management plans;
- Key performance indicators and performance targets – these would be differentiated according to "gender and economic principles."²¹⁵

It is important to note the power of terminology in these tracts. The USN handbook advocated what it termed an “event centred “ approach to planning. In describing the steps in the planning process, the USN struggled to specify the technical and bureaucratic steps of planning and to imbue these with a developmental mission and its own concerns with matters of gender, equality and the need to curb the spread of HIV/Aids. Terms like “harmonization” begin to appear and are used in a technical context but are infused with a value-laden meaning that suggests rationality, coordination and consensus between different government plans and programs. This term is destined to be picked up by government bureaucrats and used in increasingly obscure ways, often dressing-up more political imperatives.

Another noteworthy element is the assumption that planning will primarily result in “proposals” suggesting that even the NGO sector was increasingly resigned to a form of local government dependent on the central state for its project and operational revenue – a far cry from the *autonomy* principle. Also evident in the following tables is the numerous planning products expected i.e. the one certain outcome of the planning process was that it would produce many plans – all to be integrated at some level. This would ultimately make the process easier to monitor and measure by provincial government and other oversight authorities. Municipal planning performance could simply be measured through the production of particular planning documents, a simple tick-box exercise. Another remarkable aspect of the process is the constant reminders (based on core NGO concerns) that issues of poverty, gender equity and the need to tackle HIV / Aids, should be included in each phase of the process. The constant repetition of these topics suggests a strong advocacy function by the NGO sector but the terminology attached viz. to “receive consideration”, “be addressed”, “not to be marginalized”, suggests more concern with the rhetoric than careful strategic consideration.

3.5 Phases of the IDP Process

Table 1: Phases of IDP - Urban Sector Network

The USN 5 key phases to IDP may be represented, in para-phrased form, as:

Phase 1	Purpose	Process	Outputs
Analysis	Factor in needs through participation and assemble information on available resources. Assemble information and develop understanding of local 'dynamics' for sound decision-making	Data-based analysis of service standards and gaps. Prioritise issues of participation In-depth analysis of priority issues Include socio-economic and gender concerns in analysis Identify the poor & other special needs in the analysis	Existing levels of development assessed Frame priority issues and causal factors Identify available resources incl. finance Economic and gender specific issues integrated into problem statements



Phase 2	Purpose	Process	Outputs
Strategies	'Inter-sectoral' discussion on strategy options for tackling priority issues with consideration of multiple alternatives. Policy guides to be considered. Emphasis on choices that unlock best solutions	Inter-sectoral workshops – open forum concept for dealing with priority issues Inter-government & sector cooperation via district level workshops Refer to or develop municipal policies on HIV/ Aids, gender and ensure consideration thereof in strategies	Vision for municipality Objectives set for all priority issues Strategic options outlined and choices made 'tentative' financial framework projects identified



Phase 3	Purpose	Process	Outputs
Projects	Ensure a smooth link between planning and delivery through detailed project planning by joint teams of professionals, 'sector specialists' and stakeholders. These teams are to draw up proposals with tentative target figures, technical standards, locations time horizons and cost estimates. Project proposals must factor in issues of poverty, HIV/Aids.	Project task team to 'work out' project proposals in consultation with specialists, departmental staff and 'domain specialists.	Indicators for objectives Specified project outputs with targets and location. Activities specified with time-lines. Responsible agencies and actors identified.



Phase 4	Purpose	Process	Outputs
Integration	The results of project planning are checked against the original vision and objectives. Strategies and resources are " <u>harmonised</u> ". This harmonization "will result in a consolidated spatial, financial and institutional framework as a sound basis for smooth implementation.	Project proposals discussed at IDP Representative Forum (a public forum). Matching and alignment occurs within the municipality. Revision of proposals by project teams also includes review of gender and HIV/Aids concerns	Revised project proposals. A 5-year financial plan and capital investment programme A 5-year municipal action plan An integrated spatial development framework. Integrated programmes for local economic development, environmental matters, poverty alleviation, gender equity and HIV / Aids A management plan Monitoring / performance management systems Cross references to sector plans Disaster management plans



Phase 5	Purpose	Process	Outputs
Approval	Creating legitimacy and support for the IDP by allowing all stakeholders to comment on the draft plan.	Municipal council and public to discuss draft plan Check to see that 'special needs groups' have opportunity to comment Amendments according to comments Approval by council Alignment with district, provincial and national plans Check for legal compliance Further sector alignment Feasibility check / professional feedback Final amendments and adoption by council	An amended and adopted Integrated Development Plan HIV/Aids strategies area proved by council & community Issues related to poverty and genders are incorporated.

[Source : Department of Provincial and local Government & Urban Sector Network (undated) IDP Training Handbook Urban Sector Network, Johannesburg South Africa, p26-30]

Did municipalities follow this planning process? The select municipalities considered in the case study section of this paper seemed to follow a set of procedures that were at least similar. In subsequent discussion of Ngqushwa municipal staffing matters it will be shown that this consideration of competing concerns and especially affordability issues was entirely lacking. In fact for every real or imagined function to be performed by the municipality, the approach was to simply create a staff post. This suggests that the planners made little effort to follow

their own prescripts or conduct what might be termed a *reality check* during the 'strategies phase'.

Envisaged Benefit

Like the Planact handbook the USN IDP Training Handbook envisaged that the IDP process would have a significant impact on the manner in which local communities were governed. Municipalities would gain understanding, in social and technical terms, of the problems that beset the area and would be able to match up the resources and strategies required to address these problems.²¹⁶ The USN's intriguing formulation of the issue was that under the new Constitution, municipalities had been "awarded major development responsibilities..." These encompassed the provision of basic services, the creation of jobs, promoting democracy and accountability and eradicating poverty. The IDP constituted a strategic management instrument whereby all of this could be achieved.²¹⁷ Echoing throughout all of this is what Arturo Escobar termed "salvation" or more precisely that 'development' was about breaking the link with "natural forces, which had not produced the most happy results."²¹⁸

To achieve these benefits planning would have to be accompanied by a shift towards more professional management practices and adoption of scientific management principles or what Escobar terms planning as "rational social action". Public sector planning would therefore be accompanied by refurbished concepts from the corporate sector like *performance management*. The USN provided the following rationale for adopting performance management.

Performance management is a strategic approach to management, which equips leaders and managers at different levels with a set of tools and techniques to regularly plan, continuously monitor, periodically measure and to review performance of the organisation in terms of indicators and targets for efficiency, effectiveness and impact within their own organisations.²¹⁹

But performance management would not confine itself to those commodities typically traded by the corporate sector i.e. that which was easily measured and quantified, for instance; targets related to the number of water connections installed or maintained, the average time it took to rectify a service breakdown or the extent to which municipal expenditure conformed to budget. Instead in the USN handbook on planning, performance management would draw upon the much acclaimed Batho Pele (people first) principles.²²⁰ This charter of values and principles was framed in the 1997 Batho Pele White Paper and included a number of less tangible social

values. These values were extended to local government in the 1998 White Paper on Local Government.²²¹

Batho Pele:

- Consultation: citizens would be consulted on service levels and quality
- Service standards: There would prior agreement about the service standards that could be expected.
- Access: citizens would have equal access to the services they were entitled to
- Courtesy: civil servant (including local government officials) would be required to show courtesy and consideration in their dealing with citizens.
- Information: the municipality would be required to provide full and accurate information about the manner in which it provided services
- Openness and Transparency: information on operations, budgets and management practices would be open to scrutiny by citizens.
- Redress: where services were lacking or inadequate, citizens would be entitled to remedial action or at least an explanation and apology.
- Value for money: citizens could expect that services would be provided economically and efficiently.²²²

3.6 A New Start

These principles were hardly new and might reasonably have expected to form the basic approach of any well-functioning local government i.e. the basic good sense that would shape the norms and tradition of any democratically elected council and its administration. The existence of these norms would be taken for granted in the regular interaction between the local municipality and local citizens. If the municipality strayed from these norms it would be reminded from time to time through the voting patterns, petitions, delegations, letters, phone calls and complaints of local citizens.

The Batho Pele White Paper and the Local Government White Paper effectively removed these values from the realm of common practice and convention and created from them a set of 'scientifically derived' performance benchmarks i.e. it moved common sense into the realm of expertise.²²³ What might have reasonably emerged from traditions of understanding and convention were now placed under the control of systems and experts. Chapter 6 of the Municipal Systems Act now

required that municipalities develop key performance indicators related to the above norms and the objectives set out in its IDP. Municipalities would also be required to undertake annual monitoring and internal auditing of these indicators that would result in both internal and external reports.²²⁴

Thus while the Integrated Development Planning paradigm promised economies of scale, rationality and greater efficiency, it also entailed more management, systems and procedures and thus entrenched the need for expertise. At the same time the complex new local government policy framework became the focus of protracted bureaucratic discussion and rumination. Breaking with the past especially a past tarnished by apartheid required that the municipality constantly reaffirm its commitment to the new order and its post-modern vision of professional and developmental local government.

3.7 NGOs, Planning and Modernity

Participation was seen as a safeguard not just against the dominance of middle class and business interests but a way of avoiding the more extreme shortfalls whereby planning became simply a matter of technical rationality – yet another ill-advised pursuit of modernity. To avoid this, the IDP programme readily embraced methods of participatory workshops, rapid rural appraisal and other community-driven information gathering techniques that acted as a check on the techno-science approach of conventional town and regional planning. To understand the broader dialectical context for this concern it is necessary to briefly return to the theoretical. Underlying these reservations was the concern of analysts who had become skeptical about the technical and social benefits of Western-led modernisation and the extent to which these provided relief to the problems of the developing world. Arturo Escobar, for example, argued that:

Generally speaking, the concept of planning embodies the belief that social change can be engineered and directed, produced at will. Thus the idea that poor countries could move more or less smoothly along the path of progress through planning has always been held as an indubitable truth, an axiomatic belief in need of no demonstration, by development experts of most persuasions.²²⁵

Escobar suggests that planning conventions introduced into the developing world during the post-World War II period have been unable to escape their cultural and historical origins:

When deployed in the Third World, planning not only carried with it this historical baggage, but also contributed greatly to the production of the social-economic and cultural configuration that we describe today as underdevelopment.²²⁶

The South African IDP programme tried to reverse this by explicitly using planning as a means of reducing social and economic inequality. Planning now came with its own, frank political agenda.

They (Integrated Development Plans) require municipalities to weigh up their obligations and systematically prioritise programmes and resource allocations. In a context of great inequalities, IDPs serve as a framework for municipalities to prioritise their actions around meeting urgent needs....²²⁷

Indeed South African planning policy was anxious to demonstrate that it was alert to the link between poverty, underdevelopment and marginalisation and those commodities and services that formed the focus of planning.

They (IDPs) help municipalities to develop a holistic strategy for poverty alleviation. Poverty is not just about low household income. It includes other aspects of deprivation such as a lack of assets to help households cope with shocks and stresses, a lack of the resources or contacts necessary to secure political advantage, a lack of access to education, health care and emergency services, and the lack of safe, secure and adequately sized housing with basic services.²²⁸

Although integrated development plans were supposed to provide a vehicle for framing the local governing manifesto of a municipality, the challenges confronting *all* municipalities were already defined in considerable detail in an all-embracing national policy framework, principally the White Paper. Any concept of *embedded autonomy* would therefore have to be understood against the backdrop of the White Paper which prescribed a number of challenges facing South African municipalities, some of which directed municipal action directly towards particular manifestations of inequality and underdevelopment, "Extreme concentrations of taxable economic resources in formerly white areas, demanding redistribution between and within local areas."²²⁹

Huge backlogs in service infrastructure in historically underdeveloped areas, requiring municipal expenditure far in excess of the revenue currently available within the local government system.²³⁰

Great spatial separations and disparities between towns and townships and urban sprawl, which increase service provision and transport costs enormously. Most urban areas are racially fragmented, with discontinuous land use and settlement patterns. Municipalities in urban areas will need to develop strategies for spatial integration, while managing the continuing consequence of rapid urbanisation and service backlogs.²³¹

While the impetus for decentralisation and increased local autonomy existed and could theoretically be served by both the process and product of municipal integrated development planning, the central state nonetheless retained the primary responsibility for defining the objectives of planning and prescribed how these should be tackled by local municipalities. Accordingly, the 1998 Local Government White Paper, held out the integrated development planning system as a neutral, technically superior vehicle for more efficient local planning.

Integrated development planning, budgeting and performance management are powerful tools that can assist municipalities to develop an integrated perspective on development in their area. It will enable them to focus on priorities within an increasingly complex and diverse set of demands. It will enable them to direct resource allocations and institutional systems to a new set of development objectives.²³²

What is omitted is the fact that these development objectives and the means of reaching them were already largely prescribed by the central state through comprehensive and over-arching policy as outlined above. Some of this policy addressed itself to the mechanics and procedures of planning. Integrated Development Planning's actual planning products i.e. what had to be produced on paper, for instance was regulated nationally through the Municipal Systems Act, the Development Facilitation Act and the Local Government Transition Act (2nd Amendment). In addition there was a host of provincial level regulations, the Eastern Cape's provincial gazette number 274 of 24 October 1997 *Land Development Objectives in Terms of the Development Facilitation Act* for example, which prescribed procedural aspects within the province.

In 1999 the Foundation for Contemporary Research tentatively pointed out this problem in a rare criticism of the over-arching national framework for planning:

This centralisation is evident in the policy framework, not only in the directive for municipalities to "be developmental", but also in the different avenues

through which national and provincial governments have trespassed on municipal planning autonomy. While national policy specifies planning outputs, the provincial policy regulates planning processes, albeit less formally. With both inputs and outputs pre-specified municipalities have little discretion to behave “strategically” in responding to need. Indeed, it is the more powerful or independent municipalities (who can afford to challenge or ignore the policy framework) that have behaved more strategically in the planning process.²³³

More importantly a broad and interlocking national policy framework had virtually pre-determined a comprehensive set of social and economic objectives for planning, neatly and somewhat glibly bound up in the notion of ‘developmental local government’. National planning policy and guidelines prescribed at least three social / economic objectives of planning which it clearly felt needed to be ‘drummed home’ to municipalities. These became the focus of extensive training and briefing sessions directed to municipalities with the assistance of NGOs, the private sector, para-statal like the CSIR and foreign donors, principally the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

Spatial restructuring: undoing the spatial manifestation of apartheid was a national government priority that called for local implementation via municipal integrated development plans. Laudable as this objective was, it sought to replace one form of social theory with another:

Integrated development planning is a mechanism to restructure our cities, towns and rural areas.

Apartheid planning entrenched the ideology of separate development in spatial development patterns. Integrated development planning will redress these spatial imbalances and promote integrated human settlement through:

- Ensuring a shared understanding do spatial development opportunities, patterns and trends;
- The localisation of spatial development principles that promote integrated and sustainable development;
- The formulation of specific strategies aimed at the spatial restructuring of cities and towns; and
- The formulation of a spatial development framework that provides a spatial overview of planned public and private sector investment.²³⁴

Social justice: given the history of the state in South Africa and the new government's determination to be seen to overcome this legacy of inequality and racial privilege, planning was obliged to become a vehicle for social transformation:

Integrated development planning is a mechanism to promote social equality.

The planning process is participatory in nature and allows for local processes of democratisation, empowerment and social transformation. The integrated development planning process is designed in such a way that all role-players and stakeholders have a voice in the issues affecting their lives.²³⁵

While these promises of social equality may seem necessary and authentic, it would also be prudent to recall the warnings of Escobar who likened the activities of planners in the developing world to their 19th century counterparts serving a bourgeoisie who were struggling to cope with the pressures of a new urban modernity. Escobar noted the state's efforts via science, technology and planning to cope with social problems like health, education and unregulated economic activity.

In sum, the rise of the social made possible the increasing socialisation and subjection of people to dominant norms, as well as their insertion into the machinery of capitalist production.

And;

...those very operations and forms of social planning have produced governable subjects. They have shaped not only social structures and institutions, but also the way in which people experience life and construct themselves as subjects.²³⁶

Economic equality: A further social function which IDP policy claimed to perform was to tackle South Africa's vast problem of economic imbalance. The basic premise being that municipalities and indeed the state in general, had hitherto favored a range of commercial and middle-class interests over the interests of the poor.

Integrated development planning is a weapon in the fight against poverty.

Integrated development planning should address severe social and economic imbalances such as the urban /rural divide as well as adverse conditions affecting marginalised groups on the grounds of race, gender, age or disability. The Constitution requires that: a municipality must structure and manage its administration and budgeting processes to give priority to the basic needs of the

community and to promote the social and economic development of the community. The strategies, projects and programmes that are generated through the integrated development planning process must be assessed in terms of the extent to which they assist in empowering and improving the living conditions of the disadvantaged.

The holistic, integrated and participatory nature of integrated development planning allows poverty alleviation to be addressed in a multi-faceted way. The IDP can do this through:

Focusing on areas of greatest need;

Prioritising projects that focus on the plight of the poor and the marginalised;

Addressing landlessness through implementing appropriate land reform initiatives;

Promoting local economic development; and

Preparing spatial frameworks that mainstream the poor into the economy.²³⁷

These are just some of the vast social impacts that government promised of its IDP programme – the implication being that the plans would deliver miracles if municipalities would only properly implement them. Other social benefits anticipated from IDPs included: creating wealth by attracting new investment partners for government, ensuring more sustainable and effective development strategies, building the community by creating a shared vision and ownership of the municipality, creating a public “arena “ for mediating different interests and getting consensus on priorities, improving municipal governance, providing a framework and guide for decision-making, aligning financial and human resources with the municipalities aspirations and ambitions, transforming the municipal institution itself and enhancing political accountability and improving cooperative governance.²³⁸ Indeed it seemed that every imaginable quality in the realm of governance and public administration was theoretically achievable through the IDP.

CHAPTER 4: DEBATING INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING THEORY

4.1 Background

The IDP policy framework aimed to bring about a new configuration of municipal procedures and institutional forms loosely termed 'developmental local government'. This concept has been explored through the literature of by Chipkin, Parnell and Pieterse. The link between GEAR and 'developmental local government' has been extensively explored by other writers but it is worth revisiting the official explanation in the Local Government White Paper:

A central principle of the Reconstruction and Development programme (RDP) is the empowerment of poor and marginalized communities. This is repeated in the Growth Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) which calls for "a distribution of income and opportunities in favour of the poor."²³⁹

The White Paper goes on to discuss 'equitable share subsidies' to poor households and although these come from national government, it warns that they should also be affordable within the overall municipal budget. The White Paper also urges municipalities to link economic growth and investment in the municipal area to "redistribution and community development."²⁴⁰ In reality, the IDP programme and the developmental local government ideal it served faced a near impossible task of bringing vast neglected and under-serviced settlements within the realm of a newly established, service orientated, pro-poor municipal dispensation that faced, not unjustifiably, pressures for rationalisation.

However, the policy framework itself contains a number of important contradictions that, it appears, must be resolved by local actors before proceeding with their IDP.

Firstly it appears to respond to at least two different pressures for reform. On the one hand macro-economic pressures and fiscal stress on the public sector (and, more pertinently within the local government sector) encourage the scaling back of municipal operations, the search for greater productive and allocative efficiencies and other elements of New Public Management (NPM) –style reforms. On the other hand, massive service backlogs, extensive under-servicing and broader democratic transformation create pressures for a dramatic expansion of service delivery, with associated budgetary expansion.²⁴¹

In preceding chapters it has been argued that the influence of the market and the general impact of neoliberalism offer a neat but simplistic critique of new municipal policy. Professional and disciplinary tendencies that impacted on Integrated Development Plans came from a range of sources and ideological bases. In its analysis of IDP case study phenomena, the FCR suggested that the challenges confronting municipal government were being seen through three distinct analytical lenses, all of which posed the fundamental problem in slightly different terms.²⁴²

Firstly, the exponents of '*governance*' as the key value for assessing local government, tended to see the challenge as one of strengthening democratic accountability and winning a broad based trust and legitimacy for municipal councils and the administration. Council's primary role would be to reconcile and mediate between local interests and ensure strong links with civil society. For their part, administrators had to be responsive to public needs and will, whilst ensuring that there was a clear connection between council's policy decisions and the actions of municipal line departments. Municipal institutions would become less hierarchical and more cooperative in their work. Service delivery would include partnerships and networks with civil society and strategic planning and management would increasingly see programmes and services based on clear targets defined through participative processes with communities. The institution would function according to good corporate governance principles that would eliminate patronage, corruption or any undue influences outside council's policy framework.²⁴³

Secondly, a more functionalist bureaucratic approach to local government survived but not within the new policy realm, indeed new policy regarded 'rule bound' bureaucracies as part of the problem rather than the solution. In fact many of the 'old guard' administrators and managers who had survived the purging of the municipal bureaucracy became the scape-goats for frustrated Ministers and politicians. Politicians became very adept at championing the new policy framework in the face of what they portrayed as racist bureaucrats fighting a rearguard action. However the bureaucratic approach was well-entrenched in the civil service, not just at municipal level and not just under the peculiar racial circumstances of immediate post-apartheid South Africa. Some of its core tenets have been described by Turner and Hulme whose observations are purportedly global. In the discourse of change in South African municipalities, these bureaucrats seldom offered a theoretical explanation for their behaviour – any attempt to raise their beliefs to the level of principle or theory would have been tantamount to career suicide. The traditional bureaucrats distrusted the influence of the politician

and the boundless faith in electoral and representative democracy to deliver leadership of integrity and technical competence. They were deeply troubled by rule-bending and tampering with what they regarded as immutable principles of local public administration. Caste (often unjustifiably) as faithful servants of an increasingly politically impotent white middle class, the municipal bureaucrats found justification for their suspicions in the many cases of corruption, patronage and gross incompetence at senior level which often made the ambitious new policy framework seem like tokenism and fraught with comic hypocrisy. Often regarded as a *reactionary approach* lacking in any substantive theory, the “traditional approach” was in fact underpinned by principles encompassed within the Weberian view of an ideal bureaucracy.²⁴⁴ The Foundation for Contemporary Research describes this approach as valuing:

...uniformity in service delivery across jurisdictions, and the clear definition and allocation of powers and responsibilities both within administrations and with political leadership. The primary role of municipalities is to monopolistically deliver local public services on the scale and scope of identified by political leaders on the basis of their electoral mandates. The IDP process would thus attempt to improve the operation and management of existing municipal activities, through building ‘better’ rule-sets to guide bureaucratic decision-making.²⁴⁵

Within the NGO and ‘progressive’⁵ academic sector and indeed amongst many emerging politicians there was little empathy with this approach despite the fact that a large degree of institutional failing clearly arose from weak administration and disregard for rules and procedures. As a policy discourse this perspective lacked ideological appeal and bordered on the politically incorrect.

Thirdly, a contextual backdrop to planning is incomplete without some mention of the pressures for institutional reform that were at work during the IDP era. The New Public Management or market-based approach has already been indirectly outlined through discussion of Bond’s critique of municipal change. Turner and Hulme’s discussion of *Public Choice Theory* is also relevant as it draws upon the idea that government crises may be attributable to the bureaucratic *turf-wars* where senior managers engage in narrow budget maximisation and departmentally competitive behavior. Institutional manipulation and control of communication is used to advance and protect narrow departmental interests. The supply of public goods becomes irrational because information is monopolised by the bureaucracy and presented to elected councillors in a way that justifies maximum resources

⁵ A term widely used to describe those who had associated themselves with the liberation movement and the new government

and power to the bureaucracy. Resource allocation becomes de-linked from public need.²⁴⁶ In the 1998 FCR discussion of IDP models, one of the remedies to institutional failure was to increase output efficiency by adopting private sector management culture and techniques. More efficient allocation of resources and a more productive administration is needed to ensure a broader spread of better quality municipal services directed and shaped by market imperatives, or so the reasoning went. This opinion also called for performance management via measurable indicators and benchmarks to ensure greater management autonomy along client-supplier lines whilst political interference must be minimised.

For municipalities this implied a ruthless rationalisation of the bureaucracy and a far more economic approach to the provision of public services. Traditional career paths and work cultures had to be overhauled and a competitive contracting approach would fill the minimum number of municipal posts. In other words, science, in this case of the managerial variety, would produce the sought after *lean and mean* municipal administration.

In the departmental literature and policy documents, commitment to this approach is tempered by consideration for the reaction of powerfully organised municipal labour. In general the Ministry was able to reconcile this approach with the governance approach by arguing that the urgent need for effective service delivery would not be subjugated to the interests of labour. Government however was also careful to use the somewhat coy rhetoric of 'partnership' to defuse and co-opt labour interests. The services of the South African Local Government Bargaining Council were key to this corporatist approach:²⁴⁷

Approaches to improving service delivery efficiency and quality which build on existing capacity are most likely to succeed if they are structured as a partnership between Council, management and labour. Other partnership approaches have implications for the for the position of workers in the administration, and no amount of capacity to plan, effect and administer them will bring success unless the real concerns of labour are recognised and addressed.

While the successful transformation of municipal administrations depends on recognising the particular interests of labour, labour's interests cannot stand in the way of transformation or delivery to communities. The South African local Government bargaining Council (SALGBC) will become a critical forum for shaping the partnership between labour, management and Councils around new service delivery and development objectives.²⁴⁸

The incorporation of labour into the local government 'transformation exercise' was largely successful and did not come under serious strain until 2002 when the South African economy experienced a steep surge in inflation after the plunge of the Rand in 2001. The South African Municipal Worker's Union demanded a 10% increase in municipal wages and called a strike in July when the South African Local Government Association (the employer body) refused to negotiate on its final offer of 8% across the board.²⁴⁹ SAMWU media officer Anna Weeks noted that a previous increase in 2001 had been 7% and therefore below the average increase in the cost of living and that by the 2002 the minimum wage for a full-time worker was only R1 900 per month.²⁵⁰

Many might argue that the unaffordable wage bill for local government had other contributing factors, one being the failure of the 1999 / 2000 re-demarcation process to achieve one of its key objectives, namely to significantly rationalise municipal work forces when amalgamating municipalities. Secondly, the fact that the wage bill was inflated through that portion assigned to senior management salaries rather than ordinary workers. The Congress of South African Trade Union's (COSATU) Tony Ehreneh remarked on the settlement reached in the wake of the 2002 SAMWU strike:

It also deals with the exorbitant salaries of management, which were part of the problem. They are milking the system while the workers do most of the work, yet do not earn proper salaries.²⁵⁰

The IDP process thus could count on little pre-arranged consensus regarding the matter of personnel costs and where exactly the proposed rationalisation would be most painfully felt. In planning terms, FCR suggests that the market-based approach to IDP would emphasize an overhaul of administrative systems and practices in order to improve the management and delivery of services. Planning would be led by senior officials and councillors and would be "cascaded down through the administration in a top-down fashion."²⁵² Citizens would participate in this exercise mainly as clients of municipal service provision – communicating what they wanted and how much they were prepared to pay. FCR suggests that the role of the citizen could be taken one step further – they would be the force of the market, choosing between municipalities that provided the best and most affordable services and thus fuelling competition between municipalities to outdo each other in terms of 'lean and mean' service provision.²⁵³

Conceiving of municipal plans as a form of short-term contract between supplier and consumer had its own weaknesses according to FCR. The IDP policy imperative of comprehensive planning and integration could be lost due to the autonomy afforded to service providers and fragmented delivery and performance management systems could obstruct strategic control.²⁵⁴

Returning briefly to planning theory, a common critique is that which refers to 'top-down' methods. The criticism is rooted in the perception that professional planners assemble the available data on a particular community and make the necessary formulations that will meet their needs and ensure that their future is carefully predicted and set out. Control of the means for change and even the direction of that change passes from society to the planner or the relevant bureaucrat. In the South African IDP exercise, the identified need for structural and operational change was vast. 'Ordinary' changes, driven from forces within society were regarded as antithetical to the purposes of transition because society itself was flawed, shaped and riddled by the legacy of apartheid. Escobar's observations on planning in the Third World sponsored by the World Bank in the 1940s are surprisingly relevant to turn of the century 'integrated development planning' in South Africa:

In the face of the imperative of the 'modern society', planning involved the overcoming or eradication of 'traditions', 'obstacles' and 'irrationalities', that is', the wholesale modification of existing human and social structures and their replacement with rational new ones.²⁵⁵

While the IDP programme was in no way geared towards the destruction of traditional rural livelihoods or peasant life, along with associated services policy, it did elevate 'modern' municipal services to a new level in the collective South African consciousness. Through its broad range of social, economic and environmental ambitious, the IDP programme attempted to 'wipe the slate clean.' Anyone who was subject to the 'developmental local government' and 'integrated development planning' rhetoric in South Africa will recognise the resonance in Escobar's quote from a 1949 World Bank mission to Colombia:

Only through a generalised attack throughout the whole economy on education, health, housing, food and productivity can the vicious circle of poverty, ignorance, ill health and low productivity be decisively broken.²⁵⁶

4.2 Community Appropriation of Planning?

In South Africa the conceptual tools of calculability and planning were offered up for 'community ownership' and control'. This served not only to accommodate South Africa's particularly mobilised neighborhood-level organisations, widely referred to as community-based organisations, it also pre-empted criticism from a fairly powerful and well resourced NGO sector that might otherwise have been skeptical of the powers and broad mandate being handed to 'planners'. In 1997 Afesis-corplan, an Eastern Cape NGO that had long advocated increasingly levels of local community control over all aspects of state-led development programmes, embraced the IDP framework as a practical expression of these principles. Writing in the *Local Government Transformer* (an Afesis-corplan newsletter directed at local government) researchers Lu Heideman and Dave Savage observed:

The new framework for municipal planning being introduced in the province calls for a very different approach. Councillors must lead the planning process themselves, the community must be involved in formulating plans, and the process must be supported and implemented by the administration at the most senior level. To play these leading roles councillors and senior staff must understand fully the purpose, approach and content of municipal planning exercises. This implies that the method to be followed in the planning process must be designed at local level to meet local needs.²⁵⁷

This statement gives credence to Alan Mabin's observation that in times of social upheaval and reconstruction, planning systems tend to be re-worked to serve new political and development objectives. More importantly, planning is cast as the panacea to a very large range of societal problems. The ambitions for the IDP programme in South Africa outlined above, illustrate the allure of planning very clearly. As the Department of Provincial and Local Government and its foreign donors rolled out their expansive IDP road shows and SALGA supported training programmes, planning became the new municipal 'de rigueur'. The modern benefits of planning tended to outshine any concern that plans might also bring a level of regulation and dependency to the lives of citizens and tied them and their fortunes more tightly to the control of the state. The caution of Escobar was entirely absent from the headlong rush into a massive IDP programme:

But development experts have been blind to these insidious aspects of planning.... One cannot look on the bright side of planning, its modern achievements (if one were to accept them), without looking at the same time

on its dark side of domination. The management of the social has produced modern subjects who are not only dependent on professionals for their needs, but also ordered into realities (cities, health and educational systems, economies etc.) that can be governed by the state through planning. Planning inevitably requires the normalisation and standardisation of reality, which in turn entails injustice and the erasure of difference and diversity.²⁵⁸

Planners and other IDP functionaries seldom acknowledged the way that the IDP programme would extend and consolidate the state's control. This did not mean that they were unaware of the potential for extending control or what had become the 'radical' critique of planning. Andre Olivier, a planner and at the time, a senior manager in Strategic Support Services for the South Peninsula Municipality made the following remarks at a Local Government Conference in March 1999.

Plans in themselves are a very important form of communication. If you read the radical literature, planning is seen as a tool of control. And its not just zoning control but actually to keep the masses at bay, because you fob them off with a plan. Plans also say what we will be doing and have a quasi-legitimacy attached to them that seems to work.²⁵⁹

This may ultimately be the real achievement of integrated development plans. While they may not transform society and reduce inequality in real terms, they bring the assurance that the state is sensitive to these problems and doing something about them. As public consciousness became saturated with the 'policy-speak' of IDP, so the ability to critically differentiate between what is promised and what actually happens, is reduced. Statistics like the number of housing units delivered, the kilometres of tarred road rolled out, the number of standpipes installed are important reinforcements. Assuming these targets are met, and often they are not, they 'prove' that the citizen's faith in calculability and planning is well placed, that the strategy is working and the vision and mission set out in the plan is being realised. These assurances cloud the reality that for most, there may have been very little change in their prospects of a secure or improving livelihood. Indeed it is worth reflecting on Foglesong's view, that the political agenda of planning i.e. urban renewal, education, health, transport, crime etc are seldom realized and that planning has returned to its true function, namely a managerial / administrative vehicle for tactical decisions dedicated to preserving the capitalist order.²⁶⁰

These reservations were entirely lacking from professional and consultant critiques of IDP which tended to suggest the need for tweaking the process to

better generate and understand data. In this sense the fundamental assumptions of planning are not challenged and it is simply a case of improving the approach. However sometimes it is also acknowledged that certain human / social conditions defy 'capture' in planning. Analysts like Sue Parnell of the University of Cape Town's Urban Research Unit have tended to argue that these shortfalls in IDP and other municipal policy, result from an imperfect understanding of the specificities of poverty in South Africa. Parnell argues that poverty in South Africa embodies three main elements:²⁶¹

The legacy of apartheid: spatial segregation persists and is not tackled in IDP documents; static financial base – while municipal boundaries have expanded the principle commercial revenue base of municipalities has remained static i.e. we look to the same business districts to generate revenue for much larger areas; municipal systems for administration zoning and planning are mostly inherited from apartheid or our colonial past.²⁶²

Expanding Urban Areas: Parnell predicts urbanisation levels rising from the current 50 percent to 75 percent. This makes the management of urban areas critical, particularly large urban areas. Increased urbanisation results from: in-migration – people are moving to towns and cities; natural urban growth – urban populations are growing, immigrants tend to gravitate towards the large cities.²⁶³

Urban Diversity: people will have increasingly uneven access to technology; the effects of globalisation are unevenly felt – our economy will be increasingly shaped by global forces that allow some to prosper while others flounder; a growing and diverse informal sector that forms a key part of the overall economy, particularly in Africa. Parnell argues that the informal sector is poorly understood in terms of how to succeed how to survive and those who barely survive. Cultural diversity and a diverse and vibrant civil society must be successfully incorporated.²⁶⁴

Parnell suggests that many failures in South African municipal policy result from a basic lack of understanding of the urban environment and a lack of reliable information on its key features. Policy-makers are also not adept at translating this information into policy and financial mechanisms.²⁶⁵ While these elements no doubt form part of the policy-making challenge, Parnell's argument that they are not dealt with in policy is hard to sustain when considering the broad scope of IDP for example, already outlined in this paper. Any analysis that begins by assuming that the primary function of policy is solely to 'make life better' is necessarily limited in explaining and evaluating policy outcomes. As this paper has already

demonstrated, policy has a much more diverse and sometime invidious purpose. In many respects IDP served as a clever conjuring trick, imparting the illusion of control and predictability. In 1998 the Foundation for Contemporary Research reviewed a number of IDP processes underway across the country and noted:

The focus on visions, missions, strategies, goals, programmes and projects tends to overcomplicate the objectives of the exercise. The focus thus shifts to planning outputs (such as the planning documents) rather than its impacts (or outcomes). Experience suggests that formalised strategic processes seldom deliver new strategies but rather reassure key role-players that they remain “in control”. Evidence from the surveys suggests that where strategic planning capacity exists, planning processes are likely to have useful exercises, not in developing a strategic orientation but in reflecting it. Many “nice thoughts” and “nice sounding “ principles may emerge but these tend to have limited meaning for organisational practice.²⁶⁶

4.3 Planning and Techno-Science

The imperative for control is linked to the ascendancy of the ‘economic’ as the primary point of reference for local government actions, including planning. Escobar suggests that the rise of technical professions like planning coincided with what he refers to as “the invention of the ‘economy’”. Whereas ‘the economy’ was an unknown paradigm for understanding human society prior to the end of the 18th century, the expanded influence of the market in Europe accompanied by new philosophies of human behaviour like utilitarianism and individualism gave rise to the classical concept of political economy.²⁶⁷ The ‘economy’ now existed as a largely autonomous domain “separated from morality, politics and culture.”²⁶⁸ According to Escobar, the centrality of the logic of the economy, displaced concerns for reciprocity and redistribution. Subsistence activity was scorned as the world economy began to establish itself not just as a theory but a new all pervasive framework of rules and instrumentalist logic.²⁶⁹ Planning, a tool of modernity, embodied this faith in the use of science and technology to manage human behavior – the rise of the calculable and measurable against convention, tradition, culture and belief. Timothy Mitchell refers extensively to this pre-occupation with the calculable and the measurable in his study of Egypt.

During the second half of the twentieth century, economic established its claim to be the true political science. The idea of “the economy” provided a mode of seeing and a way of organising the world that could diagnose a country’s

fundamental condition, frame the terms of its public debate, picture its collective growth or decline and propose remedies for its improvement, all in terms of what seemed a legible series of measurements, goals and comparisons.²⁷⁰

Mitchell shows how 'the economy' having become the "true political science", began to impose its own fiscal and monetary criteria for measuring successful nations. Neo-liberalism and structural adjustment were reinforced by representing nations with low inflation figures, reduced budget deficits and impressive rates of economic growth as 'successful'. This despite the fact that in Egypt for example, powerful economic forces were at work which were of dubious value to the country as a whole.²⁷¹ South Africa obviously did not experience these trends for the first time in the late 1990s to early 2000 when IDP attained its maximum momentum as a policy framework. However it is noteworthy that IDP roll-out coincided with governments adoption of a new macro –economic programme, GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) and widely regarded as the most clear indication of the ANC's a shift to neoliberalism. While the South African government's ideological shifts, left or right, on the spectrum of economic policy is the subject of extensive study, less attention has been focused on how the notion of *economy* per se, has dominated policy thinking.

CHAPTER 5: INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN THE EASTERN CAPE

5.1 The Eastern Cape in Profile & Literature

The Eastern Cape is one of South Africa's nine provinces and is bounded by a long coastline with the Indian Ocean to the south-east.²⁷² At 169 580 square kilometres, the province is the second largest in South Africa and constitutes 13,9 percent of the country's total land mass.²⁷³ The population of the province is 6,3 million people (2002).²⁷⁴ This constitutes 15,5 percent of the total population of the country and was expected to grow by 22 % by 2006 (a 2% higher growth rate than the national average.)²⁷⁵ The Eastern Cape's share of the country's Gross Domestic Product is just 7.2 percent²⁷⁶ and government literature frequently portrays the province as one of the poorest in the country with an unemployment figure (2002) of 48,5 percent compared to the national average of 33,9% (2002).²⁷⁷ In 2002 the province had the highest assessment of household food insecurity, 49,7 percent of households interviewed indicated that children (under the age of 17 years) went hungry because of insufficient food.²⁷⁸ The Bisho / King William's Town area functions as the seat of the provincial government. There are 5 significant cities in the province namely Port Elizabeth, East London, Queenstown, Mthatha and Grahamstown.

The Eastern Cape has long been characterised as one of the regions to suffer the worst effects of apartheid:

...hundreds of years of colonial and apartheid policies left the Eastern Cape deeply scarred, with enduring structural problems, underdevelopment and enormous socio-economic development challenges. These include very high levels of poverty and inequality, huge disparities in access to basic services and infrastructure, soaring unemployment, economic decline and sub-optimal performance in key sectors.²⁷⁹

Historically, the Eastern Cape is widely regarded to be a region whose livelihoods and social attitudes have been shaped by 19th century violence, principally that of colonial conquest.²⁸⁰ Clifton Crais notes for example "the frontier wars seem to have become part of the genetic make-up of many South Africans."²⁸¹ There is almost a sense that the region perpetuates its own peculiar brand of hardship, "Grinding poverty, premature deaths, stunted lives have been constant features of the Eastern Cape for well over a century."²⁸² Such circumstances of systemic

vulnerability beg explanation and consideration of models that focus on human capability and the manner in which people are able to respond to periodic political, social or natural calamities. Thus argues Crais; scholars of the region may have to look to climate, change, violence and the spread of the market economy to properly understand why the Eastern Cape seems to face chronic and systemic insecurity. The Eastern Cape is renowned for its cyclical droughts;

Historical climatologists have suggested that the severe drought at the end of the eighteenth century, felt from the Eastern Cape to the Zambesi Valley and clear across the Indian Ocean to New South Wales, represented one of the first modern ENSO (El Nino / Southern Oscillation) events. Beginning around 1791, droughts and hunger continued in the general Mozambique region up to 1796... the Eastern Cape in the nineteenth century experienced pronounced variability in terms of rainfall. ²⁸³

Reflecting a link widely endorsed by historians, Crais notes how extreme climatic conditions lead to changes in agricultural practices, most disastrously the spread of a mono-crop (maize) economy. It also created the conditions that sparked the migration of entire populations accompanied by political instability.²⁸⁴

Most conflicts between Africans and Europeans took place during a drought or shortly after one. Droughts invariably create insecurity, particularly when they are accompanied by crop failure, malnutrition and, in the worst cases, outright famine. The environment then, was one engine of historical change, particularly when tied to other developments.²⁸⁵

There is a sense that current Eastern Cape political and social circumstances are linked in some way to historical circumstances of insecurity and the vulnerability of certain groups to risk and misfortune. Imprecise as this observation may be it is nonetheless important; "That earlier history indeed may lead to or exacerbate political conflict, creating a vicious circle in which economic and political crisis feed off each other."²⁸⁶ Crais goes on to cite instances where colonial military conquest began to incorporate 'total war' i.e. not just military subjugation but complete economic devastation, including cattle theft, crop burning and destruction of shelters, for the Xhosa.²⁸⁷ Crais estimates that in the frontier war of 1851-1853 "...ten percent of the African population engulfed by the war – that is one in every ten people – died in one of the most vicious and costly colonial wars of the nineteenth century."²⁸⁸ Whereas drought brought insecurity, combined with war it plunged the region into total and repeated crisis. Not all conflicts emanated from

colonial expansion however and parts of the Transkei, and specifically Pondoland for example, saw the effects of the migration of Griqua people also resulting in violence and instability.²⁸⁹ Insecurity also arose from what Crais refers to as a *sociology of dispute* over land in particular. Land and its usage, including its central role in African economic production became subject to disputed laws and authorities that arose from conquest and the imposition of indirect rule, that drew in and simultaneously undermined customary law.²⁹⁰

The current towns and settlements of the Eastern Cape were established as colonial initiatives in the mid to late eighteenth hundreds, frequently as military-settler ventures.²⁹¹ Grants of land were made to settlers, mostly of British or German descent and in some very isolated instances such as Keiskamma, to African people such as the Mfengu who has demonstrated some form of loyalty to the colonial administration.²⁹² African settlements thus established were generally under the communal tenure system, freehold title or quitrent.²⁹³ Communal tenure did not provide an individual title deed to the land that remained under government ownership.²⁹⁴ Settler land was generally that won by conquest or 'vacated' during war. The frontier wars and the cattle-killings of 1856-57 had driven much of the African population out of the areas settled by colonists but early in the 20th century, African refugees had begun to drift back into these areas.²⁹⁵ By the middle of the next century rural villages were commonly under a Native Commissioner for the district who exercised both executive and judicial functions.²⁹⁶ These 'locations' as they were known and were administered locally as separate units by a headman who was also the judicial officer for the village as well as undertaking a policing role. These officials were also empowered to allocate land but their position in local village society was tenuous being both a civil servant to the village and the face of colonial authority.²⁹⁷ An important function of the headman was the administration of the commonage:

The commonage was open to all members of the community, for grazing livestock, cutting thatching grass, and collecting firewood and manure...arable and residential rights were individually held, and the final authority over the allocation and use of land lay with the Native Commissioner.²⁹⁸

It is difficult to outline a uniquely Eastern Cape record of apartheid local government but some broad national patterns are applicable to the region. At the time of the Union in 1910 there were limited exceptions to rule of white controlled local government.²⁹⁹ The four provinces had slightly different qualifications for the municipal franchise for example. In the Eastern Cape, as part of what was then the

Cape, coloured and Indian citizens had the municipal franchise until 1970 when it was removed by the National Party to create separate quasi-local government institutions for these two groups.³⁰⁰ Similar concessions were made to Indians in Natal until 1925. White local authorities nevertheless continued to administer urban areas in which coloured, Indian and African people resided.³⁰¹ Some white local authorities attempted to incorporate representatives of black townships onto advisory or management boards to give advice on the administration of township areas. The running of townships was generally funded by a separate municipal account that received revenue from rents, service charges and the sale of beer and liquor from township-based beer halls.³⁰²

White municipal control of black townships ended in the early 1970s as a stricter form of apartheid policy began to be rolled out to urban areas. Bantu Affairs Administration Boards were created to enforce an urban policy that attempted to relocate black residents to homeland areas and to limit the number of Africans who returned according to the labour needs of 'white South Africa.'³⁰³ Two of the largest and most sustained homeland 'projects' were in the Eastern Cape, namely the Transkei and the Ciskei. To reinforce the notion that the 'real homes' of black South Africans were in the homelands, the Bantu administration boards even diverted some township revenue to infrastructure development in the homelands.³⁰⁴ As "temporary sojourners" in white South Africa, township residents were provided with minimal services and infrastructure and township government was largely about imposed and coercive administrative boards rather than representation. The deteriorating conditions of most black townships by the mid 1970s is widely credited with having fuelled black anger and resistance that characterised the period from 1976 into the 1980s.³⁰⁵

In 1977 the Community Councils Act provided for elected councils in townships however the administration boards continued to exercise authority over these councils. The Riekert and Cillie Commissions looked into the 1976 uprising and found a need to improve township living conditions through more credible local government structures for blacks.³⁰⁶ The 1982 Black Local Authorities Act therefore made provision for township local authorities still attached to the administration boards but gradually taking over their functions.³⁰⁷ The BLAs as they were known came into being during a period of broader constitutional change designed to co-opt Indian and coloured communities into a reformed apartheid dispensation. Contrary to its political intentions, this "tri-cameral" system backfired and fuelled an expanded and heightened form of resistance to apartheid and apartheid local government in particular.

Elected during 1983 and 1984 on rather low polls in the face of vociferous opposition led by the newly formed United Democratic Front (UDF) and its allied civic organisations, the powers of these authorities remained limited and their role confined largely to the provision of basic services.³⁰⁸

The BLAs in fact now provided a focal point for local resistance and the councillors who were drawn into these structures became a ready and accessible target for popular anger and renewed urban resistance.

Ever since their establishment the BLAs have been extremely controversial institutions in township politics. Councillors were categorised by important actors, including the civic associations, as effectively being government stooges implementing government policies. At the height of the conflicts of 1985-1987, many councillors resigned in the face of pressure...³⁰⁹

Not only were the BLAs politically untenable, the design of urban apartheid and its limitations on black urban life made the new institutions financially unviable:

Limitations on property rights, business and industrial development in the townships severely restricted the income-generating capacity of the BLAs. Massive bridging finance had to be provided by the provincial authorities to enable the BLAs to provide even limited essential services.³¹⁰

Humphries and Stack describe other reforms recommended by the Browne Committee, including transfer payments by white local authorities to prop up BLA administration and the refinement of this into the Regional Services Council model. These developments were highly significant to the Eastern Cape with its mixture of homeland governments and urban areas administered by white municipalities, and its long-demonstrated propensity for state violence and an insurrectionary response.

Indeed, once the decision was made to include blacks, virtually the entire justification for RSCs began to hinge on the need to improve municipal infrastructure in the townships as an integral part of the government's counter revolutionary strategy. (Humphries 1991)³¹¹

Government then began to look into a range of options for re-generating economic activity in BLA areas and providing support from better-established white councils. It was quickly recognised that the principal issue was that of revenue 'leaking'

out of these areas due to an imbalance in tax generating potential between 'white areas' and black townships.³¹² In 1990 the general move towards a constitutionally negotiated future saw different options for local government being outlined by the Thornhill Report (based on the work of the Co-ordinating Council for Local Government.)³¹³ The report included important principles for a future systems including: local government as an autonomous sphere of government, directly elected local councils as a constitutional right, maximum devolution of functions to local government with matching fiscal powers, non-discriminatory and non-racial local government and the opportunity for local citizens and role-players to negotiate their own way to a new municipal order.³¹⁴ The similarity between these principles and those carried through into the Constitution and the Local Government White Paper are obvious (the latter documents having been already described and discussed.) Although the ANC embarked upon a different policy formulation process for local government, it ultimately adopted many of the core principles of the Thornhill Report.³¹⁵

The features of the negotiating forums (1993-1995) and the transition phase (1995-2000) are outlined in a number of different sections of this paper and need not be repeated. We return therefore to the circumstances in the province at the end of the century.

In 2000 the province received 17,5 percent of national revenue in terms of a formula that allocates an "equitable share" of national revenue according to need.³¹⁶ The province has generally lagged behind other provinces in the provision of infrastructural services. For example in 1994, the year of the first democratic elections, the Eastern Cape had the second lowest percentage (59,7%) of urban and lowest (3,1%) of rural households with electricity.³¹⁷ By 1995 the percentage of urban households that accessed electricity had increased significantly to 67,2% (but still the second lowest compared to other provinces) while the rural household access to electricity had only increased to 5,8% compared to a national average of 20,6% for other rural households around the country.³¹⁸ Consultant to the Eastern Cape Socio-economic Coordinating Council (ECSECC) Chris Edwards notes a **worsening** of public access (to basic services) between 1995 and 2001 in both the Eastern Cape and South Africa.³¹⁹

This lag in service provision has persisted despite consistently preferential Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (CMIP) allocations to the province. For example, the Eastern Cape has the highest allocation of CMIP funding for the 2002/03 financial year according to the Department of Provincial

and Local Government (DPLG) November 2002 Report. The Eastern Cape was allocated R444.1 million which is equivalent to 24% of all national allocations. These allocations are also directed to the areas of greatest need i.e. the eastern part of the province. The largest share of the Eastern Cape 2002/2003 provincial infrastructure allocation was directed to the OR Tambo District (27.95%), with a total of R124.00m. The Chris Hani District has the second largest allocation of R71.66m (16.15%). Alfred Nzo and Amatole districts are allocated R48.22m (10.87%) and R46.57m (10.50%), respectively. The fifth and sixth largest share of the infrastructure grant is directed to the Nelson Mandela Metropole, at R39.75m (8.96%) and Ukhahlamba District, at R38.92m (8.77%). Buffalo City is allocated R30.62m (6.90%), and the remaining infrastructure grant funding is allocated to the Cacadu District, at R16.93m (3.82%).³²⁰

A number of special interventions have been focused on Eastern Cape local government and sought to understand and remedy the breakdown in local administration. The Presidential Project Team (PPT) launched in 1996 focused on the former Transkei and reported at its inception that water, sanitation, roads, telecommunications, health facilities and urban infrastructure were all facing imminent collapse.³²¹ Municipalities had “rotted and decayed” and were bankrupt, surviving only on grants from provincial government.³²² The PPT attempted to remedy these problems by installing service meters, introducing computerised billing systems, upgrading electricity services and other infrastructure, unblocking stalled housing projects, renovating municipal facilities, drawing up rates registers and introducing management plans and other human resource systems.³²³ The PPT exercise resulted in a number of short-term improvements but by 1999 most of these had reversed and fresh interventions like the Municipal Support Programme and the Municipal Mentoring Programme confronted much the same problems that the PPT had in 1996.⁶

The Eastern Cape is one of three provinces that retains a fairly intact system of traditional authority. Lungisile Ntsebeza, using Mamdani's analogy, argues that this has led to a 'bifurcated' state i.e. one where state authority functions in a dual way where the modern state serves urban citizens in a democratic order and the traditional or rural state rules rural subjects in a despotic mode. The South African government's strategy to 'democratise' traditional rule, in particular the legal and policy attempts to find an accommodation between chiefs and elected local government, are a failure according to Ntsebeza.³²⁴ Drawing on an article by Leslie Bank and Roger Southall (Traditional leaders in South Africa's new democracy)³²⁵ Ntsebeza supports the view that the values of South Africa's constitutional

⁶ Based on my own experiences of having interacted with all of these programmes

democracy are undermined by the on-going existence of traditional authority. In particular he draws attention to the exercise of traditional power in the allocation and administration of land and the view that this practise has and continues to be corrupted.³²⁶ Ntsebeza shows that government's concessions to the role of traditional authorities had resulted in irrational forms of rural local governance and have irreparably set back basic principles of gender equality for example.³²⁷ Ntsebeza ascribes these concessions to a resurgence of conservative sentiment within the ANC, mirroring other neoliberal influences that resulted in the adoption of GEAR.³²⁸ He also allows however that there might also be a concern for the possible alienation of chiefs and their support base with the risk that this brings for serious civil and ethnic conflict.³²⁹ Ntsebeza also notes that there is a significant, but misguided argument that traditional authority may be no less legitimate or more corrupt than elected local representatives.

5.2 Negotiated Local Democracy and the Integrated Development Plan

Integrated development planning was the first planning campaign of the newly democratised local government system. To understand how this programme played out in the Eastern Cape it is necessary to briefly revisit the circumstances of the local government democratisation process in the province. The broad context of locally negotiated municipal change has already been outlined and its impact on subsequent local government systems discussed. In the Eastern Cape, *local negotiating forums* were often a response to untenable levels of conflict and violence with concomitant effects on small town economies.

The negotiation of a local 'ceasefire' frequently moved rapidly to the beginnings of longer term endeavors to find a lasting solution to local government and administration. These forums operated for many months as a form of local response to crisis before they were formally recognised in the 1993 Local Government Transition Act (LGTA) as a procedural mechanism for change.

A well-known example is Stutterheim, a rural town, fairly typical of small-medium sized towns in the Eastern Cape. Stutterheim has followed an evolutionary route in political and social reconciliation with a greater degree of success than many other towns. In so doing, Stutterheim has become one of the most researched and documented examples of development that has arguably combined both economic and governmental progress.³³⁰

The roots of the Stutterheim initiative would appear to lie in multiple causal factors. The most immediate and pressing one being the endemic political violence and tension which characterised the town in the 1980s (Magwangqana, pers. Com., 1996) Clashes between the black communities and the police, riots, strike action, a consumer boycott and business closures marked the last years of the 1980s and the first months of 1990 (Grahamstown Rural Committee, 1990; July, pers. Com., 1994). It was out of this negative environment that the Stutterheim Forum developed from what for all intents and purposes was the figurative ruin of the town. It would seem that the suffering and economic hardship had become so intense in all communities, both black and white, that both sides realised that the situation had to be defused or the town's entire future was in jeopardy (Tandy, 1993; Nel, 1994a).³³¹

Given the political experience with disingenuous 'political compromise' and various reforms that sought to perpetuate apartheid local government in different forms, the recently unbanned ANC was initially wary of allowing these forums to become a joint negotiated locus of government and administration and sanctioned their operations in terms of negotiating improved services and infrastructure only. Thus the UDF and the ANC aligned civic movements in the Eastern Cape were prepared to endure government by apartheid structures for a few months longer, rather than allow locally negotiated power-sharing options to emerge, where the relevant power balances may have favored the existing state.

Nel suggests that the local leadership in Stutterheim were sufficiently mature and far-sighted enough to pursue cooperation towards an "improved urban environment" while other towns got bogged down in the question of party-political sanction for participation in the negotiating forums.³³² In retrospect, some might argue that this hesitancy in endorsing local leadership's efforts to find workable, albeit temporary solutions to local government, was a warning of the dominant parties tendency to exercise power and control from the centre. Suspicion of the negotiating forums stemmed in part from a rather complex strategy by ANC aligned organisations which allowed participation by allegedly non-political structures like the South African National Civics Association (SANCO) whilst withholding party members from such forums. This despite the fact that the SANCO strategy was clearly determined by the ANC.

The South African National Civic Organisation's (SANCO) General Secretary has confirmed that his organisation would not be contesting the local government elections. He indicated that SANCO would be supporting the African National Congress, as they did in the April 1994 national elections.³³³

Having participated in the negotiating forums with the blessing of the ANC some SANCO leaders were by-passed when it came to formal nomination as an ANC councillor. This caused tension between the ANC and SANCO in many Eastern Cape towns. Splits occurred within SANCO itself as some individuals questioned the link between SANCO and the ANC and opted to stand as independents despite the ANC's warning against this strategy. Stadler describes the longer-term effects of these events:

It (SANCO) had backed the ANC in the local elections in 1994(sic) and after...However its relationship with the ANC is problematic, the national leadership having lost any identity separate from the ANC, and the grass roots organisations pursuing diverse objectives.³³⁴

Similar problems of internal conflict were also experienced in other provinces. Stadler goes on to describe how in Mpumalanga for example, the ANC was divided after the 1995 elections by SANCO who used 'populist' strategies like resistance to service payments to mobilise opinion against ANC councillors.³³⁵ In other instances like Leandra, the SANCO Mayor and the ANC chairperson of the Executive Committee allowed their personal and organisational animosities to disrupt the functioning of council.³³⁶ There were also instances where ANC councillors have come under pressure from municipal labour for seeking material benefits over the interests of workers. These accusations from the labour movement were accompanied by "...references to fat cats and gravy trains".³³⁷ On the other hand SANCO had also come to the assistance of the ANC. Stadler cites instances where SANCO, through overlapping membership and joint intervention with higher level ANC leadership, seems to have succeeded in marshalling 'disruptive elements' back to conformity. These events may be well documented but they are rarely analysed in any depth within a theoretical framework of pluralism and relations between civil society and state.³³⁸

What becomes clear in retrospect is that this reversion to factionalism and games of power, in the Eastern Cape (and to a lesser extent in other provinces), often with the sole objective of personal advancement, do little to lend credence to the new policy frameworks with their notions of healthy democratic competition and a civil society untainted by political intrigue. As already suggested in past chapters this was in part a response to strategies by the National Party, the officialdom of the Provincial Administrations and the white municipalities who all played an equally complex game of trying to create multiple 'establishment' groupings, each with its own power-base to confront and limit the non-statutory (ANC) grouping. Thus Black

Local Authorities, the white municipal councils with their 'puppet' coloured and Indian partners, the CPA and even the municipal administration often all claimed equal and separate representation on the negotiating forums in their efforts to match the mass support of the civics. Stadler notes that conservative and militant right-wing groupings went as far as forming alliances with black township residents associations in an effort to curb the power of the ANC.³³⁹ The emergence of anti-ANC vigilante groups or militant opposition groups (frequently manipulated by the apartheid security forces or Bantustan governments) was particularly pronounced in the Eastern Cape.³⁴⁰

These forays into cynical forms of Machiavellian politics were seen as anomalies in the political culture of the time, which stressed the building of a politic based on consensus and universality. Graham Gotz's detailed observations on the build-up to the 1995 / 1996 election on the other hand, suggest an emerging state that rapidly calculated how 'sufficient' consensus would have to be in order to govern effectively. Gotz compared the behavior of different politicians from various parties and concluded that the new generation of local politicians were prone to putting the interests of their party over that of the citizenry as a whole.³⁴¹ These observations proved to be prophetic in the emerging Eastern Cape municipal system. In contrast to growing cynicism, Nel suggests that Stutterheim's unusual progress resulted from local leadership figures who were "...prepared to get on with other business while waiting for facilitating mechanisms to be introduced at national level to permit the institution of one-municipality initiatives."³⁴²

By way of example, in the case of the *Joint Negotiating Forum* set up in Grahamstown in 1991, the non-statutory civic movement was assisted by the local office of the Black Sash and negotiated only with the white Grahamstown City Council and the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA) thereby depriving the puppet BLA, the Rini Town Council of real status and credibility as a political opponent. In many cases the 'shadow council' role of the forum reflected not so much the inadequate will to take power and run the municipality but a strategic decision by the non-statutory grouping not to give credence to reformist models that fell short of a democratically elected local council.³⁴³

In most Eastern Cape towns and cities, white councillors and their bureaucrats, confronted with the prospect of being removed from power through non-racial, democratic elections, used their political experience and municipal knowledge as well as the nationally agreed concessions in the Local Government Transition Act, to win privileges from what was widely referred to as the "mass democratic movement". There was little indication however that this effected the credibility of

the process. In a 1995 public opinion survey Idasa found that in the Eastern Cape 94% of respondents said they were registered to vote while only 80% reported as such in the North West province. The Eastern Cape had the lowest expressions of the intention to abstain (4%). Nearly 70% agreed to some degree that there was 'great value' in voting in the 1995 local elections and only supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) had a significant portion (27%) who felt that voting would be a waste of time. This, in broad terms is not a picture of a populace too disillusioned and apathetic to take the first municipal election seriously.³⁴⁴

5.3 Expectations

In a brief October 1995 review of party election media in East London by Afesis-corporation researchers, it was observed that parties had opted for "a barrage of candidate and party statements and associated mudslinging" while key issues about the city's future were largely being ignored and were not being formulated into strategic programmes.³⁴⁵ All parties regarded the following as important issues:

- Fighting crime: more policing, stronger punishment, community involvement
- Restructuring local government: improving administration and management and redressing racial imbalances in staffing whilst retaining merit-based advancement
- Service levels and rates and service charges: improving service, keeping tax and service charges affordable, subsidies for poor areas
- Representation and participation in local government – endorsement for the idea of advisory or elected neighborhood structures (within the municipal area)
- Local economic development: ranging from assisting small business to tax and rates incentives to formal business.

Party manifestos were generalised and "not articulated through a clear local political programme" according to the researchers.³⁴⁶ The researchers attributed this to the previous apartheid fragmentation of the city into five separate municipalities and the failure of the political parties to come to terms with a new citywide strategy that would address all issues. They also suggested that the negotiation process towards the formation of the Transitional Local Council had been fraught and that the business of council had continued to be shaped by past

routines and conventions. The LGTA determination of wards with its bias towards white and coloured areas was seen to entrench race-based politics and few parties had confronted the “uneven spatial distribution of wealth and resources across greater East London.”³⁴⁷

The conclusion reached by the researchers in 1995 may have seemed somewhat harsh at the time however it became increasingly symptomatic of local politics over the next seven years:

A new breed of South African populism appears to have emerged, with parties prioritising short-term tactical issues couched in the rhetoric of the Rainbow Nation and seemingly oblivious to their strategic context. The underlying political agendas remain disguised.³⁴⁸

It is sometimes suggested that the problems of Eastern Cape have to be seen in the context of a naïve and overly hopeful populace. This was not borne out by the Idasa survey which found that only 15 % of the respondents felt that local government could solve the problems mentioned in the party literature and 54% felt that local government could “do something about these problems”.³⁴⁹ Only 35% of Eastern Cape respondents thought that local government would solve their most important problems compared to 70% in the free State and 66% in the North West. Policy-makers would have done well to heed the moderation in these views and framed post 1995 policy and legislation accordingly.

In the Eastern Cape the long-recognised logistical problems of arranging and holding elections in the deep rural areas of the former Transkei came to a predictable head. The Bisho based provincial government lived up to its reputation for inefficiency by failing to establish the necessary provincial coordinating office until the 18 April “owing to the non-availability of telephone lines.”³⁵⁰ The rural local government model was particularly important to the Eastern Cape however halfway into the year the model was still not finalised and the Coordinating Committee reported that this was inhibiting registration in rural areas. Suggestions of inadequate registration procedures in the province were also generated by the fact that, despite a high officially reported registration rate, many unregistered voters presented themselves at the polls.⁷

⁷ Graham Gotz, a member of the EIRC suggests that the most likely explanation for low registration rates in urban areas of the Eastern Cape relate to conservative white disinterest in the process unwittingly abetted by provincial officialdom who failed to anticipate such a reaction (or, and this is my view rather than Gotz’s, were unconcerned by a white stayaway.)

As of April a modest rural registration of 28.5% of estimated voters was reported however this concealed the fact that in the Wild Coast district, by far the most populous district with an estimated 838 524 potential voters, less than 10% were registered while urban areas were reporting an average registration of 44.6%. How these figures came to be reversed in the final months before the election (80% in rural areas and 70% in urban areas) is a mystery and is cause for suspicion.³⁵¹

The demarcation of municipal boundaries was a hasty exercise, nearing completion by mid 1995 whilst the demarcation of wards had not yet started by midyear. Noting the challenge of training election officials for deployment in the rural areas of former Transkei, the Provincial Coordinating Committee estimated that full coverage would have required 1100 voting stations staffed by 15 000 officials.³⁵² The robust efforts of the South African National Defense Force could not solve the problem and polling was further hampered by adverse weather conditions even in East London. Many elections stations did not receive ballot papers at the voting stations on time and many voting stations opened late.³⁵³

The point of the preceding section is simply to demonstrate that IDP was introduced into a municipal situation where recent political transition had been a harsh and often faithless project. Community expectations of the new democratic local order nonetheless remained high, firstly because of the “learning period” afforded by the experimental phase of transitional councils and secondly because a very effective ‘transformation machine’ comprised of both state and civil society players, had mobilised communities behind the democratic and developmental promise of the new municipal system.

CHAPTER 6: BUFFALO CITY MUNICIPALITY INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FROM 2002 -2006

Buffalo City is a local municipality with its base in East London; a secondary city on the coast of the Eastern Cape.³⁵⁴ In 2002 the municipality had a total budget of approximately R1, 4 billion.³⁵⁵ The municipality is governed by a mayoral executive system combined with a ward participatory system. According to the 1996 census figures and municipal estimates, the population at the time was between 680 434 and 888 000 (municipal estimate) The inhabitants are spread over the settled urban conurbations of East London, King Williams Town and Bisho and the intersecting rural areas.³⁵⁶ The municipal area is represented in the IDP as a grouping of urban areas within a metropolitan corridor that stretches from the port city of East London in the east to the failed industrial township of Dimbaza in the west. The area is frequently characterized as an 'aspirant metro' in other words the municipality seeks to achieve Metropolitan status sometime in the future. Ward committees from 45 wards were elected during the period 19 November 2001 to 4 December 2001.³⁵⁷

The municipal vision of Buffalo City is a "a people-centered place of opportunity where the basic needs of all are met in a safe, healthy and sustainable environment".³⁵⁸ The municipality produced its first IDP in 2002. The Buffalo City Integrated Development Plan 2002 begins with a critique of past apartheid planning initiatives suggesting that these were "technically driven" and lacking in community participation.³⁵⁹ It also suggests that apartheid planning was overly concerned with land-use regulation, geared towards preserving 'white privilege' and neglectful of concern like the environment, poverty and the need for economic growth. The IDP then devotes 6 pages to more recent trends in local planning and the merits of the IDP process itself.³⁶⁰ The 'new principles' of planning are lauded and include democratisation, participation, municipal governance as an 'enabler' principally of local economic development, more integration between sectoral matters and sustainable development. The latter relates mainly to the values and benchmarks set out in the Agenda 21 plan framed at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.³⁶¹ Finally the introductory chapter of the IDP offers an interpretation of the purpose of IDP which relates mainly to overcoming apartheid inequalities and adopting a system of governance that better aligns the municipality's financial and human resources and achieves greater efficiency and effectiveness.³⁶² This 'new model of governance' is intended to improve legitimacy for the municipality's programme by using consultation with communities to "fast-track" decision-making and subject the municipality to a "barometer for political

accountability and a measuring tool for municipal performance.”³⁶³ It is worth noting that, while criticising previous planning approaches as over-regulated and dominated by national government prescript, the IDP goes on to list twelve new pieces of legislation with which it must comply.³⁶⁴

6.1 Institutional Approach

In terms of procedure the IDP programme was overseen by an IDP Steering Committee. This was an ‘ad hoc’ political committee of six councillors i.e. not an existing standing committee of council and was convened by the Executive Mayor. Logically and in the interests of *integration* it might have been expected that the responsibility would fall to the Development Planning Sub-committee however this was not the case and the IDP document provides no explanation for this apparent anomaly.⁸ Furthermore the IDP programme created a separate series of *Thematic Task Teams* in order to integrate various thematic concerns like social, cultural and ecological and economic aspects rather than relying on the core structures of council i.e. the standing committees.³⁶⁵ In terms of political decision-making and oversight therefore the IDP entailed an increased level of complexity with a greater number of structures and more complex lines of accountability. For reasons that are not clear, the administrative component responsible for IDP was also complex with an *IDP Technical Committee*, coordinated by the IDP manager and chaired by the City Manager, responsible for directing the various planning activities, commissioning research, considering inputs from internal structures of council and outside agencies, processing planning outputs and commenting on content.³⁶⁶ However there was also an *IDP Unit* also headed by the IDP manager and “under the direct oversight of the City Manager” and also consisting of senior managers. This unit was responsible for framing the process plan, coordinating day to day planning, preparing documents for meetings, chairing the technical committee and functioning as its secretariat, managing consultants and ensuring that follow-up tasks were completed viz. IDP reviews and amendments.³⁶⁷ On the basis of this breakdown of responsibilities it is apparent that there was scope for the overlap of tasks and responsibilities between the technical committee and the unit and, although implied, it was not clear that the unit reported to the committee.

⁸ Queries by the author into this revealed only rumors of dissension regarding senior managers and portfolio allocations i.e. a suggestion that certain structures were created to provide senior posts and that the final structure had been subject to departmental HoD negotiations – none of this could be reliably verified.

6.2 Process

Table 2: The Planning Process in Buffalo City

The 2002 Buffalo City IDP entailed the following steps:³⁶⁸

Process	Description
Public Consultation	Representative Forum: local civil society were invited to send nominees to this forum through press adverts. BCM and claims that 50 organisations responded. BCM claims that the forum met five times during which different aspects of the IDP process were discussed including emerging priorities and strategies.
	Community Needs Assessment: The IDP unit met with ward councillors in their neighborhoods to ascertain local needs and balance this against needs in adjoining wards. Unclear that local public was involved in these meetings.
	Mayor's Listening Campaign: Executive Mayor Sindisile Maclean held meetings from September – October 2001 in various areas to hear "first hand" the needs and frustrations of local citizens – the outcome of such meetings is not reported but BCM assures that "All of the recorded frustrations, needs and aspirations of the people articulated in these meetings were also generally consistent with the information gathered from other consultative processes."

Process	Description
Public Consultation	Quality of Life Study: A survey was conducted on 2500 households by Rhodes University. The results were 'synthesized' into the IDP data and was also used to establish baseline information on how BCM residents of various profiles perceived their quality of life in the municipality.
	Community Workshops: BCM claims that local workshops were held in all 45 of its wards facilitated by consultants. The aim was to explain the IDP process and review the emerging priority issues and have views and concerns recorded
Analysis Phase	Little information is available on this phase but it appears to have involved the balancing of inputs from the Public Consultation process with more technical assessments. The intended output was a vision and an outline of development objectives. (Curiously all the actions and outputs are reported as "intended" suggesting that not all the activities or objectives were realised.)
Strategies Phase	Again little information is provided on what was actually undertaken and it is simply indicated that this looked at how the municipality would achieve its objectives.
Formulation of Operational Programmes and Strategies	This phase was geared to producing an operational strategy covering a five-year financial plan and capital investment plan, a spatial development framework, integrated sectoral programmes, disaster management plans, institutional development plans and an institutional monitoring / performance management system. BCM notes that actual projects began to be designed during this phase.
Integration Phase	This involved the alignment of various sector plans and checking on legal compliance and was "seen as an opportunity for the municipality to harmonise the projects in terms of contents, location and timing." ³⁶⁹
Approval by Council	This simply notes that council must approve the IDP and does not report when or how this was done.
Provincial Assessment	Again this simply states the legal requirement to have the IDP assessed by the MEC of the province for its compliance with legislation and to ensure "that is its not in conflict with IDPs and strategies of other municipalities and organs of state." ³⁷⁰

The 2002 IDP document begins by describing what actually happened in the IDP process but then quickly reverts to a 'handbook' type description of what should have happened in terms of planning method. In its own assessment the municipality identified three key factors that impacted the quality of its planning namely:³⁷¹

1. unrealistic time-frames given the planning tasks required
2. the fact that the municipality had only recently been through a merger process involving the previous King William's town and East London councils and that roles and responsibilities had therefore not been finalised
3. uncertainty regarding the allocation of powers and functions related to potable water, domestic waste water and sewage, bulk electricity supply and municipal health.

6.3 Priority Issues

The IDP identifies poverty as the critical issue for Buffalo City with 71% of the municipal population earning less than the household subsistence rate of R1500.00 per month.³⁷² The 2005/2006 Buffalo City IDP Review uses the 2001 Census to present the following breakdown of access to services.

Table 3: Access to Services in Buffalo City

	Water (access to piped water in dwelling/ yard or within 200m)	Sanitation (flush toilet, septic tank, chemical toilet or ventilated pit latrine)	Electricity (supply that is adequate at least for lighting)	Refuse removal (at least once a week)
No. of households	148 894	135 672	122 872	136 316
% of households	78%	71%	63%	71%

[Source: Census 2001 as represented in the 2005/2006 Buffalo City IDP Review]

For the sake of practicality this paper looks mainly at health and housing issues, these obviously being key concerns for any municipality and inter-related.

Health

In the *Quality of Life* survey, 25% of respondents said that health services were most important to them.³⁷³ Whereas health functions were spread across provincial, district and municipal government and all three government spheres were active in BCM and the municipality reports the operation of 44 fixed clinics, 13 mobile clinics, a community health centre, a day hospital and an Aids training and information centre – without specifying which sphere of government is responsible for which facility. Using World Health Organisation prescribed ratios of nurses to patients (1:25), BCM argues that it has a critical shortage of staff i.e. one nurse apparently sees 60 patients per day and that access to health facilities in rural areas was particularly difficult.³⁷⁴

The municipality set itself two main objectives in this regard, firstly more accessible primary health care facilities “for all communities”³⁷⁵ and secondly, institutional integration of primary health care services by December 2003. The strategy that flowed from these objectives however was simply to institute two ‘programmes’, one to support and integrate health care and the other to “promote” and “build capacity” around community health.³⁷⁶ Given the effort and resources expended on the research and planning process, the framing of these strategies could be seen as lacking in detail and analysis – being little more than a reformulation of the objective.

Other environmental health issues included, poor rural infrastructure leading to high levels of water-borne diseases, rapid urbanisation placing pressure on informal settlements and unhealthy living conditions, generally unsafe settlement conditions both in residences and public facilities and equally unsafe work environments. The major water sources, namely the Buffalo and Nahoon Rivers are polluted by run-off from rural and urban settlements and industrial / agricultural pollutants. In relation to these issues, the municipality pledged to promote community awareness and participation in health issues, monitor the environment and the health status of communities with a view to making rapid intervention when required, prioritise integrated service delivery to high risk communities and enforce health legislation.³⁷⁷ The strategies invoked to this end were also fairly ‘generic’ i.e. implement an environmental health management programme with appropriate policies and by-laws, inform and build the capacity of communities and develop and coordinate networks and partnerships.³⁷⁸ The basic problem of expanding and improperly serviced settlements leading to the pollution of the main water sources is not the primary concern of the IDP at this point. These apparent priorities are

however not reflected as budget priorities. For example in the operating budget for July 2002 to June 2007, the budget provision for repairs and maintenance increases by R32m or about 35,6% however salaries increase by R129m (nearly 36%) over the same period.³⁷⁹ In terms of the *Capital Investment Programme* over the same period, the municipality's own investment in infrastructure and spatial projects actually decreases by R22m while anticipated infrastructure allocations from national government increases by only R4m i.e. there is a net decrease of planned expenditure on infrastructure of R18m from 2003 to 2007.³⁸⁰ Thus while the BCM IDP recognises the need to "maximise its investment in municipal infrastructure" it does not in reality do this and its aspiration to "encourage the maximum degree of private sector investment" is therefore unfounded.³⁸¹ The BCM was also not in a position to effect short-term adjustments to its spending priorities. While committing itself to responsible revenue and credit control the cash liquidity position of the municipality was precarious with a current ratio of assets to liabilities of 1.23:1 whereas the generally accepted 'healthy' ratio was in excess of 2:1.³⁸²

Housing

The 2002 IDP indicates that Buffalo City had a housing shortage of 85 000 units at the time of drafting³⁸³ and had 47 000 units planned as projects mainly within Mdantsane / Potsdam, Reeston, Newlands and King William's Town.³⁸⁴ Smaller projects were also planned at Gonubie, Beacon Bay, West bank, needs Cap, Mount Coke, Ndevana and Yellowlands.³⁸⁵ By 2005 this estimated backlog had dropped to 75 000 units suggesting that the municipality had made some progress in accelerating its housing provision.³⁸⁶ The IDP suggests that 80% of households fell within the income bracket of R0-R3500 per month and were therefore unable to independently provide for their own housing needs nor were they viable clients for the bond market.³⁸⁷ Apart from providing state subsidised housing, Buffalo City also planned to "...build partnerships with communities and developers aimed at mobilizing state, private or donor resources and exploring creative alternative models of housing delivery..."³⁸⁸ However land for new housing was not easily available due to slow and complex processes for its identification and release and a situation where bulk services infrastructure like roads, water, sewerage and storm-water were already over-extended and unable to cope with new settlement development. The municipality also noted that standards and regulations for housing and infrastructure were not appropriate for the low-income market and that there was inconsistency between national and provincial norms in this regard.³⁸⁹

The IDP cites the *Quality of Life Survey* in describing the main settlement types of the BCM population.⁹

⁹ There is no explanation of why the figures do not total 100% - presumably there was another form of housing that did not fit the identified categories.

Table 4: Settlement Types in Buffalo City

Type of Housing	% of the Buffalo City Population
Informal	20%
Formal housing – bonded or paid up	35%
Tribal tenure	20%
Government housing subsidy	14%

[Source: Buffalo City IDP 2002 p 60]

The servicing of these households varied greatly. Water for example was reticulated directly to the house or piped from a roof tank, obtained from communal or site-specific standpipes, drawn from boreholes or dams or collected from natural sources like rivers and springs.³⁹⁰ Issues with regard to urban settlement included over-crowding, both in informal areas and formal townships (Duncan Village, Buffalo Flats, Mdantsane and Cambridge) where 'backyard shacks' had been built on to existing formal dwellings.³⁹¹ 'Overspill' settlements from existing townships were impacting land required for community facilities in the same areas and West Bank. Areas peripheral to existing townships were also identified as a problem without specifying why but presumably because of unplanned settlement 'sprawl'. Apart from uneven levels of services in urban areas and the urban periphery, there were also a number of inadequately serviced rural settlements which BCM could not quantify or locate at this point.³⁹² The IDP acknowledges vast differences in the state of public infrastructure and facilities¹⁰ between urban and rural areas however the 'situation analysis' component of the IDP does not quantify these differences, suggesting that the purpose of the analysis itself is political rather than technical i.e. to signal where the BCM's primary social concerns lay. Certain key strategic challenges are repeated, for example:

The lack of bulk infrastructure in Buffalo City is a constraint to the planning and delivery of housing. The demand for housing exceeds the supply and there is also an information gap concerning the rural housing issues. Buffalo city does not have a defined housing delivery programme for the next 5-10 years.³⁹³

While this is clearly fundamental to any future provision of housing, it does not seem to register as the overriding concern nor does the municipality at this point indicate what its likely approach / constraints will be in dealing the problem. In the next paragraph however, the municipality hints that housing provision may be a *political issue* i.e. something more than simply a 'public need – state delivery' conundrum .

¹⁰ See pages 59-63

Furthermore the demands of housing delivery from the government and the community are unrealistic with regards to available funding and the lack of accessible land. The rapid in-migration, the politicisation of the housing process and the unclear rural tenure reform process pose potential threats.³⁹⁴

The IDP analysis of obstacles to housing provision includes issues that were within the municipality's control / responsibility (lack of data on existing housing stock and needs, slow inefficient release of land) and factors like HIV/Aids which had caused changing demographic profiles and shifts in household economies, for example the possibility of households headed by children and elderly people.³⁹⁵ Taking the issue of land identification and the related function of spatial planning as an example it is worth noting how the IDP provides the rationale for a veritable deluge of other plans including:³⁹⁶

- *A Detailed Buffalo City Spatial Development Framework*: this would extend the current spatial development framework and serve as the basis for a land use management system.
- *A Buffalo City Integrated Land use Management System*: proposed legislation made this mandatory.
- *An Integrated Rural Development Plan*: "intended to provide a coherent framework for development initiatives and support to the rural and peri-urban areas..."³⁹⁷
- *Coastal Development Plan*: for spatial development and environmental purposes this was considered necessary for the management of resources and natural assets along the coast.
- *Buffalo City Densification Policy*: it appears that this was a policy rather than a plan and was to guide the development of higher density and mixed land use areas in key parts of the municipality for greater efficiency and equity in land development.
- *Mdantsane Urban Renewal*: this project was derived from the *National Urban Renewable Strategy* and was intended to upgrade infrastructure and facilities in Mdantsane.
- *Ginsberg Planning Implementation*: this aimed to develop well-located land parcels close to the King William's Town central business district.

- *West Bank to Needs Camp Development Plan*: this was intended to correct historically distorted spatial development patterns along the route from the West Bank through Mount Coke and King William's Town. The aim was to create socio-economic linkages between Mdantsane and the West Bank industrial area.

Claims that housing was held up by slow or inadequate release of capital funding for infrastructure delivery need to be treated with some caution given that municipal infrastructure grant (MIG) programmes were being significantly overhauled and had increased their overall share of nationally generated revenue. Buffalo City cited the fact that such funding 'vested' with provincial government and was inadequate and resolved to become an 'accredited municipality' in order to allow it to receive funds directly from national government.³⁹⁸ The IDP makes little mention of the specific type of bulk infrastructure it would have attempted to develop, with additional grant funding, to prevent further pressure on the natural environment and its main water sources.

The municipality committed itself to three strategies in relation to housing:³⁹⁹

1. Developing a municipal housing policy;
2. Implementing a housing programme and;
3. Developing a housing financing system;

In the summary of the programmes and projects these strategies remain broad statements of intent with further planning exercises e.g. "establishment of benchmarks and performance indicators" simply mentioned rather than actually performed.⁴⁰⁰ Bulk sewerage infrastructure, arguably a critical priority is simply listed along with "sidewalk rehabilitation", "replacement of aged and domestic water meters".⁴⁰¹ A more careful scanning of the envisaged programme of bulk sewerage upgrade or rehabilitation suggests a task of huge proportions including upgrades of the Potsdam, Mdantsane West, Reeston and the central works and all related bulk transfer infrastructure.⁴⁰² Replacement of sewers in zone 7, 8 and 14 in Mdantsane. New or upgraded plant would be required to treat VIP generated sewerage, plant operated by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry would have to be taken over and upgraded.⁴⁰³ Sewers in Berlin, the East Bank and along Eastern Beach would have to be refurbished or replaced. In fact virtually all of the municipality's sewerage infrastructure needed to be upgraded or replaced.⁴⁰⁴

Taking Buffalo City as an example of how IDP was implemented, it emerges that by 2004, priorities had shifted further. Salary expenditure for 2005 projected as R419 million in the 2002 IDP had now risen to over R472m and would rise further to over

R 525m by 2007 as against the 2002 IDP projection of R489m i.e. an increase of R36m.⁴⁰⁵ Repairs and maintenance, clearly crucial to optimum functioning of over-extended infrastructure were projected in the 2002 IDP at R105m rising to R122m in 2007 however in the 2004/2005 IDP review this figure has dropped to R56,4m rising to only R59,5 million in 2007.⁴⁰⁶ This represents a massive variance of R65.6 million i.e. the projected expenditure had dropped by nearly 53.8%. The planned *Capital Investment Programme* however had increased significantly in terms of both the municipality's own investment and national government infrastructure grant investment.

Table 5: Buffalo City Capital Investment Programme (Rmillions)

		2005	2006	2007
BCM IDP 2002	Own funds	43	10	10
	Grant funds	33	35	37
Subtotal		76	45	47
BCM IDP Review 2004/2005	Own funds	90	73	82
	Grant funds	69	81	94
Subtotal		159	154	176
Revision: 2002 IDP – 2004/2005 IDP Review		+83	+109	+129

[Source: Buffalo City IDP 2002] ⁴⁰⁷

By 2004/2005 therefore the municipality had begun to reflect the backlog in infrastructure as a capital investment priority but had not made full provision for the maintenance and repair of such infrastructure. This despite the fact that the IDP review recognised that, "Current underexpenditure on maintenance budgets, as well as under provision (4%) for maintenance results in asset stripping that has a negative effect on service delivery."⁴⁰⁸ The 2004/2005 – 2005/2006 IDP reviews had in fact begun to estimate the size of the under spend that had resulted from deferred maintenance expenditure:

Table 6: Value of Buffalo City Service Backlogs 2004-2006

Type of backlog	2004/2005 Value	2005/2006 Value
Water: pipeline replacement, bulk equipment, treatment works	R216m	R190m
Electricity	R195m	R195m
Sewerage: pump stations, reticulation, treatment works, vacuum tanker	R329m	R230m
Roads: entire network	R230m	R373m
Buildings: offices, depots and City Hall	R40m	R40m
Vehicles: replacement	R25m	
Total	R1,035bn	R1,028

[Source: Buffalo City Municipality Review 2004/2005 Integrated Development Plan & Buffalo City Municipality Review 2005/2006 Integrated Development Plan]

The above figures suggest that the overall value of backlogs remained unchanged between 2004 and 2006 although the backlog in water services is reduced by R26m and sewerage by R99m and the value of the road network backlog increases by R143m. The last point seems incongruous given that the R143m increase in the value of the backlog occurred over just three years – suggesting that the original estimate may have been too low. The R40m backlog for *buildings and vehicles* reported in 2005/2006 must also be treated with some caution in that it combines two line items that were reported separately in 2004/2005 but remains fixed at the R40m value that was originally for vehicles alone. By 2005/2006 the IDP review process was delivering an increasingly blunt assessment of the consequences on on-going failure to maintain infrastructure.

The issue of maintenance is of particular concern. BCM now faces a critical situation with much of its infrastructure past its functional life and operating beyond its design capacity. This results in more frequent power outages, poor quality of electricity supply, increasing risk of environmental pollution because of sewer overflows and deteriorating sewage conveyance systems, increasing water losses because of bursts and leaks and increasing threats of water shortages because of conveyance bottlenecks.⁴⁰⁹

The municipality was also forced to concede that it had serious problems in terms of staff expenditure, disinvestments from trading services, expenditure on non-core functions, persistent pressure to make provision for bad debt and as already illustrated, severe under investment in infrastructure.⁴¹⁰ However if the IDP process had failed to resolve these issues, the municipality and its planning consultants were unshaken in their belief that planning held the solution. The problems set out above would therefore be resolved through a *Revitalisation Plan*. This plan had been adopted in 2003 and pledged to make the municipality more efficient and effective in management terms, to improve customer care, to ensure that services were more affordable and sustainable, to improve the accuracy of information that informed financial decisions, to better ensure the health of residents, to better manage the spatial and natural environment and finally “to facilitate and attract development-enhancing investment and local economic growth.”⁴¹¹ Obviously these pledges were nothing more than a set of aspirational statements. Each would require that the municipality significantly improve its performance across a range of functions but performance management was itself a key component of planning logic.

6.4 Managing Performance

Nearly four years after the enactment of the Municipal Systems Act (2000) and 3 years after the gazetting of the Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, this municipality, the largest of the Category B (local) municipalities in the province, is still planning the implementation of its performance management system. Section H of the Buffalo City Integrated Development Plan Review 2004/2005 is largely devoted to restating the policy intentions of municipal performance management and lauding the anticipated benefits of the yet to be implemented system. Comment on actual municipal performance is contained within a 24-page table titled the Institutional Scorecard⁴¹² that will be described in more detail later. Section H entitled Framework for the Performance management System restates the objectives of municipal performance management. In the local government context, a comprehensive and elaborate system of monitoring performance of municipalities has been legislated. The system is intended to continuously monitor the performance of municipalities in fulfilling their developmental mandate. Central to this system is the development of key performance indicators as instruments to assess performance. The indicators help to translate complex socio-economic development challenges into quantifiable and measurable outputs. They are therefore crucial if a proper assessment is to be done of the impact of government in improving the quality of life of all.⁴¹³

In describing the components of its Performance Management Framework, Buffalo City outlines the legislative provisions for performance management citing the South African Constitution of 1996, the Batho Pele White Paper (1998) the White Paper on Local Government (1998), the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 and the Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations (2001).⁴¹⁴ Quoting verbatim from some of the above legal and policy instruments, the IDP review is clearly concerned with legal and policy compliance. The actual description of what will be measured as an indication of performance is contained within a lengthy table titled the Institutional Scorecard.⁴¹⁵ Much of the chapter describes institutional systems, mechanisms and procedures and the roles of internal stakeholders (Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, City manager, staff etc) as well as external agencies (National Government, Auditor general, Provincial Government as well as private sector bodies, the media, organised labour, service providers etc). There is much reference to models and objectives. Buffalo City opted for something called the Hybrid Systems Model Approach "and applicable scorecards...incorporated with the South African Excellence Model (SAEM)." According to Buffalo City municipality, "The model is a non-prescriptive framework based on eleven criteria reflecting validating, leading edge management practices."⁴¹⁶ Key to this system was the use of institutional scorecards. Scorecards dominated the bureaucratic discourse on performance management but were in essence a re-worked system of logical planning and reporting - similar in many respects to the familiar log frame method much favored by donor agencies active in South Africa. The Buffalo City description of scorecards stipulated their alignment with the IDP process and the municipality's strategic plans.⁴¹⁷ Scorecards would allow performance to be represented in accurate and visual form by describing inputs, outputs, outcomes and required process. These would be applied at two levels, firstly at an institutional level where the performance of the institution as a whole would be described, and secondly at a directorate level where the performance of particular directorates or line functions would be set out.

The example of housing gives an indication of how the scorecard was applied:

Table 7: Buffalo City Housing Scorecard 2002

Priority Area / Issue	Objective	Strategy	Indicator	Measurement Source & Frequency	Base-line	Target	Target Date %	Target Date 04/05	Target Date 05/06+	Responsible Directorate
Insufficient and inappropriate housing provision especially for the poor, women, and people with Aids	All citizens especially the poor, women, the aged the disabled and people with Aids shall have access to appropriate on a renewal basis	Development of a Municipal Housing Policy	S9.7 A council policy document with clearly defined strategies to be implemented in addressing the housing backlog, by providing shelter and services to the poor, women, aged, disabled and people with aids.	Policy will be reviewed annually	0	Report to CM	–	Dec. 2004	–	Development planning
			S 9.15 Decrease in homelessness in informal dwellings.	Policy will be reviewed annually	0	20.00%	–	–	July 2005	Development planning
			S9.16 Eliminating the housing backlog	Policy will be reviewed annually	0	20.00%	–	–	July 2005	Development planning
			S 9.17 % of people having access to shelter, clean water, sanitation and other social services	Policy will be reviewed annually	0	100.00%	–	–	July 2005	Development planning
			S9.23 % tenants converted to proud home-owners with title deed	Policy will be reviewed annually	0	70.00%	–	July 2004	–	Development planning
			S9.31 Lead time on housing delivery	Policy will be reviewed annually	0	Improved by 30%	–	–	July 2005	Development planning

[Source: Buffalo City Municipality 2004, Review 2004/2005 Integrated Development Plan Buffalo City Municipality East London (unpublished) Annexure A pg 114]

The above section of the BCM scorecard illustrates the more measurable targets that IDPs were able to frame, for example the 20% decrease in homelessness by July 2005; 100% of people having access to shelter, clean water, sanitation and other social services by July 2005, the intention to convert 70% of tenants into 'proud' homeowners by July 2004 and the reduction of the lead time (start-up period) on housing delivery.⁴¹⁸

Batho Pele imperatives however required that a range of far less quantifiable targets be captured within the system, reducing what might simply have been conceived as reasonable practice to the realm of objectives, indicators, targets and results: For example - Environmental Health: "The participation of communities in the control (of) environmental health risks and conditions" and "Greater community and internal and external stakeholder participation."⁴¹⁹

Solid Waste management: "Identify, initiate and evaluate partnerships." The envisaged indicator to measure this was however disconnected and unclear i.e. "No (number) of public meetings to share information on levels of waste management service policy"⁴²⁰

Local Economic Development: BCM's objective was "Reduced poverty through the redistribution of economic resources and opportunities for the benefit of all citizens." The strategies included a programme to develop commerce and industry, a small business development network / programme, the Duncan Village manufacturing complex and to "develop partnerships: joint implementation". All of the above would be measured against a target of creating 600 small medium and micro enterprises by March 2005.⁴²¹

However public scrutiny or oversight related indicators are entirely lacking from the BCM finance scorecard⁴²² where the issue of public oversight and engagement might be considered crucial and where the Batho Pele principles required "value for money" i.e. that "Public service should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value-for-money."⁴²³ In addition, Batho Pele required that "Citizens should know how departments are run, how resources are spent, and who is in charge of particular services."⁴²⁴ Thus the municipality's performance scorecard system does not include the most basic requirement that the Auditor General's report on the municipality's financial situation is presented for public scrutiny or comment.

The working group within BCM known as the *Finance and Institutional Cluster* framed two objectives related to Batho Pele principles:

1. Improve Communication and access to information to both internal and external customers of Buffalo City Municipality
2. Establishment of a Customer Care oriented organisation (sic)

However the strategy adopted for achieving these objectives is “Adoption and Implementation of IT strategies” and “Development and Implementation of an integrated Customer Care strategy” respectively. It is hardly surprising therefore that the performance measures set out in the scorecard are not relevant to the objectives. Throughout all of these systems lies the worrying suggestion that the existence of ‘the system’ or ‘the procedure’ is more important than its actual function.

If planning is about “breaking with the past” as Escobar has noted then the IDP experience was also about re-inventing the planning challenge to justify what had and had not been achieved in terms of previous plans. In Buffalo City’s 2002 IDP the emphasis had been on massive roll-outs of services and infrastructure guided by the vision of Buffalo City as a: “People-centred place of opportunity where the basic needs of all are met in a safe, healthy and sustainable environment.”⁴²⁵ This led to the formulation of vast lists of infrastructure projects and service programmes which a few years later were found to be unaffordable:

Billions of rands worth of capital projects were identified as potential priorities. This huge challenge was beyond the conventional resources available to the Buffalo City Municipality and highlighted the need to formulate a more strategic approach to the way the Municipality approaches its core activities.⁴²⁶

However instead of looking to its likely revenue sources for the next three years and adjusting its 2002 IDP to fit the funds available BCM senior management decided instead to “...transform the municipality into a developmental organisation, as opposed to merely a one-dimensional ‘deliverer of services’.”⁴²⁷ Instead of having to admit that the 2002 IDP was overly ambitious and misguided, senior politicians and management could now proclaim the adoption of a new plan. Thus the municipality’s planning failure or weakness never had to be conceded. Instead a fresh start is proclaimed and once again the planners and politicians offer the public an opportunity to “break with the past”. Conveniently, the process conceals the fact that the council and its managers were responsible for that past.

The new plan, known as the *Revitalisation Plan*, has already been referred to and was adopted in April 2003. It focused the municipalities activities and resources on seven strategic programmes namely:

1. Effective Organisational management
2. Customer Care
3. Service Improvement
4. Financial management
5. Improving Health
6. A Sustainable City
7. Growth and Incomes⁴²⁸

Buffalo City also followed the example of Amatole District Municipality in producing a set of sector plans related to water services development, public transport, spatial development, housing, waste management, integrated environmental management, local economic development and the Mdantsane Urban Renewal programme. These plans, according to Buffalo City:

...focused on meeting the requirements of sectoral legislation , as it applies to the assigned powers and functions of the Municipality.⁴²⁹

In other words, the solution to problems within the 2002 Integrated development Plan was to produce more plans, namely the 2003 Revitalisation Plan and a set of nationally prescribed sector plans. Thus much of the structure and process of the 2004/2005 IDP review was dictated by the obligation to meet planning requirements set out in policy developed by national government and passed on via the district municipality as a planning framework. The other major component of the IDP review, the seven programmes, do not appear to address the main conclusion of the previous IDP review, namely that its projects and programmes of 2002 were “beyond the conventional resources available.” Whereas municipal overheads were clearly increasing, particularly in terms of staffing, as will be demonstrated later, the seven programmes addressed this only obliquely or not at all. Effective organisational management for example spoke of greater efficiency and effectiveness in very general terms. However in a series of workshops held at resorts within and outside of Buffalo City, the question of affordability is raised repeatedly by some managers and presumably, some of the planning consultants. For example at Mpongo park in November 2003 it was noted that:

It is clear that the current financial situation does not support much of the Municipality’s broader developmental ambitions. A bad debt provision of some R62million, for example, had to be addressed against the expenditure requirements of service delivery units and IDP related initiatives.⁴³⁰

Buffalo City's budgeting approach however led the municipality to look to maintenance costs rather than other overheads, for savings:

In addition the proposed approach to drafting the budget placed pressure on services and departments to cut maintenance expenditure , already suffering the effects of endemic asset stripping.⁴³¹

In capital expenditure terms, Buffalo City acknowledged that it had "relatively limited discretionary capital budget resources available for re-prioritisation " in fact about R127.3 million.⁴³² The weighting exercise that was subsequently undertaken to prioritise projects, did not deal with actual projects as such but with the "IDP themes" or clusters. In other words the IDP approach allowed reprioritisation to deal with broad and abstract concepts like "Social", "Environmental", "Economic", "Spatial and Infrastructure" and "Finance & Institutional". What was implied in assigning "Spatial and Infrastructure"⁴³³ a top rating of 50% and "Finance & Institutional" the lowest rating of 5%? Could staffing cuts be expected based on the low priority attached to institutional matters?

Buffalo City had the potential for a greater degree of financial independence due to its significant revenue base in the East London and King William's Town urban centres. However far from framing this as an objective, the IDP review process took the municipality further down the road to dependence on national grant funding (transfers) and other forms of external funding. In response to the problem that it had only R127.3 million for discretionary deployment to capital projects, the municipality decided to embark on a range of measures to "relieve the pressure on the discretionary amount available." One of these measures was "assessing the use of grants rather than internal funding."⁴³⁴ In the period 2001/2002 to 2003/2004 BCM budgeted R1130 million for capital expenditure however only R329 m (about 29%) was from its own funds and the major portion of R801 m (about 71%) would come from external funds.⁴³⁵ Between 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 grant income would increase by 5.47% whereas own income from assessment rates, water, refuse and sewerage would remain stable (with a small increase in 'other income' of 0.38%).⁴³⁶

In a section titled "Securing partnerships with recognised stakeholders", Buffalo City notes its subscription to the South African Excellence Foundation and its intention to draw support from Daimler Chrysler South Africa, the City of Tshwane, the Planning Implementation and Management Support Services (based at Amatole District Municipality) and the Department of Provincial and Local Government.⁴³⁷

This support plus that of a number of consultants⁴³⁸ is apparently needed despite the fact that the Buffalo City employees 21 people at executive and senior management level and a further 106 persons at middle or junior management level.⁴³⁹ Executive mayor and his mayoral Committee would receive over R3,5 m in salaries, allowances and benefits in the 2004/2005 financial year while senior management would receive nearly R4.4 m.⁴⁴⁰ The institutional backdrop for this included the fact that in 2002/2003 salaries would constitute 35.3% of operating expenditure.⁴⁴¹ In a 2003 budget revision council resolved to cut-back salaries, wages and allowances by R12,96 million however repairs and maintenance were also cut by R12,5m and general expenses by R19,7m thus the cuts to salaries, wages and allowances constituted a fairly minor component of overall cut-backs. It must also be recalled that staff budgets had been 'inflated' by the 7.85% increase agreed to by the South African Local Government Association during 2003.⁴⁴² Thus the cut-backs were nothing more than an attempt to bring the overall percentage increase in staffing costs back to the 5.5% inflation figure of the time.

What these figures do not reveal is the cost to the municipality of senior management and full-time senior councillors. The rationale for employing highly paid professional staff was clear ; " leading edge management practices" and the dictates of scientific management demanded these skills. However, having filled these posts, Buffalo City remained substantially dependent on consultant and partner support (see footnote 2.) The City Manager for example, was assisted by no less than three international special advisors.⁴⁴³ While international advisors were invariably donor funded, BCM's much proclaimed partnerships with agencies like the Swedish International development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and its twinning arrangement with Gavle in Sweden and Lieden (Netherlands) came at a price. "A Development Cooperation office has been established to support the City Manager with all international and inter-governmental activities of the municipality."⁴⁴⁴

The achievements of this office as set out in the *2004/2005-2006/2007 Operating and Capital Budget* are mostly related to securing donor support for further plans, policies and systems design including a coastal management plan, an integrated environmental management plan, the design of a land-use management system and a water and roads management system and the development of sanitation policy.⁴⁴⁵ In addition this office claimed as its successes, the hosting of the 2004 annual conference of the Institute for Local Government Management of South Africa and its on-going interaction with the Cities Network and "friendly and outcomes-based bilateral relations and working arrangements with other

municipalities throughout the country.” These activities were overseen by a dedicated *Manager for Development Co-operation* who worked alongside three other General Managers and an Office Manager.

The other five line Directorates (Corporate Services, Development Planning, Engineering Services, Social Services and Financial Services) were similarly structured, each employing 3 general managers and an office manager.⁴⁴⁶ The exception was Corporate Services which also employed a Chief of Staff and Development Planning which employed only two general managers under the Director. In total the various directorates plus the City Manager thus employed 18 general managers and one Chief of Staff. Under the respective general managers a total of 49 managers and one Senior Legal Advisor were responsible for line functions or specialised tasks.⁴⁴⁷

Despite this extensive management structure, Buffalo City still required the assistance of at least 3 other institutions each of which came with its own overheads and staff payroll.

- Buffalo City Tourism: described as a “Section 21 Company, which is funded extensively by the Municipality and functions as a tourism-marketing agency for the area.”⁴⁴⁸
- East London Industrial Development Zone: BCM was one of six bodies represented on the board of the ELIDZ. This proprietary limited company was responsible for the developing and securing investors for an industrial area within East London.⁴⁴⁹
- Buffalo City Development Agency: this organisation was developed during 2004 and was based on the belief that under-utilised (and decaying) public land and infrastructure within the extended water front area and CBD of East London could be the ‘asset base’ that would attract partner investment from public and private institutions. Supported by the Industrial Development Corporation, the BCDA appears to have been launched on an exploratory basis i.e. without a finalised business plan or clearly stipulated mandate from Buffalo City except to trade and develop key pieces on land within the CBD and the extended esplanade. It is also not clear what strategic decisions regarding the core functions of the municipality and its competence to perform these, led to the formation of the BCDA. However BCM assured its public that “South Africa has adapted the concept of development agencies from examples found worldwide as efficient mechanism (sic) of integrated area-based development.”⁴⁵⁰

In summary then, Buffalo City drafted its first full-fledged IDP in 2002. In the period thereafter it operated an increasingly top-heavy management structure, drew more support from partnerships and consultants and set up additional institutions for core municipal functions like tourism marketing, industrial development and urban regeneration. Rather than streamlining the bureaucracy, personnel costs were to remain at 34-36 % of operational expenditure for the period 2000-2007⁴⁵¹ despite the additional outside support. Rather than seeking new efficiencies or economies of scale the IDP process itself became the generator of additional planning systems with new technocratic requirements and of course well-paid jobs for managers and bureaucrats. In the 2003/2004 financial year the salary of the BCM Municipal Manager was the highest in the province at R819 081⁴⁵² despite the fact that its budget was just over 42% of that of the most resourced municipality in the province, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan.⁴⁵³ Buffalo City also employed the highest number of senior managers (15) compared to Nelson Mandela Metropolitan's 11 despite the fact that its total budgeted revenue in 2004/2005 was R1,335bn¹¹ i.e. less than half of NMM's R3,134bn.⁴⁵⁴ Buffalo City's budgeted expenditure for salaries, wages and allowances in 2004/2005 was over R472m or nearly 35.4% of its operating budget.⁴⁵⁵

Sophisticated policy and scientific management practises therefore came at a price that could not be ignored. In his 2004/2005 budget speech Executive Mayor Sindisile Maclean seems to have belatedly recognised the political implications of escalating salary bills and took the unusual step of noting concerns about staff expenditure:

However our wages and salary bill remains too high . At the end of last year, we had 3 831 permanent and 814 non-permanent Employment Equity Act –compliant staff consuming some one third of budget in salaries and wages. The accepted norm is below 30% and the 284 municipalities in South Africa spent R19,8 billion in the 2002/2003 financial year on wages and salaries. It represents 32% OF BUDGET. Our spend (sic) is put at 36%.⁴⁵⁶

Complex and sophisticated management systems thus held the promise of better performance i.e. greater efficiency and effectiveness by the institution and its personnel. But the operation of these systems and compliance with a policy framework that demanded measurable outputs and rationality in all public service functions required more managers and increasingly sophisticated management systems. Operational costs were ratcheted up and real efficiency became ever

¹¹These figures are rounded

more difficult to achieve. In fact by 2005/2006 salaries constituted just over 35% of the operating budget while *repairs and maintenance* were just 5,7%.⁴⁵⁷

As a result of planning, interaction between municipalities and local citizens would move beyond the ambit of natural forces and well understood convention that were deemed to be unscientific and unreliable. Planners and systems consultants would now ensure that these high level values and principles were properly served because as Escobar notes, "Science and planning, on the other hand, are seen as neutral, desirable and universally applicable...."⁴⁵⁸

What broad social objective was served by this renewed enthusiasm for planning and its technological accompaniments? South African society impacted by the IDP roll-out of the mid to late 1990s was already significantly urbanised, had several years experience of emerging governance and democracy and was already well down the road to modernity. But South Africa had other traditions that could easily be construed as obstacles to 'development.' The legacy of apartheid government and administration was the most popular explanation cited for underdevelopment and within this it was easy to identify traditions, obstacles and irrationalities.⁴⁵⁹

The imperative was not so much the modern society alluded to by Escobar but a 'democratic and developmental' society – a construct of both the new state and its allies within civil society. Thus although the setting was not the developing Third World of the late 1940s referred to by Escobar⁴⁶⁰, the imperative remained much the same i.e. planning involved the overcoming or eradication of 'traditions', 'obstacles' and 'irrationalities', that is, the wholesale modification of existing human and social structures and their replacement with rational new ones.⁴⁶¹

CHAPTER 7: IDP PLANNING IN NGQUSHWA

If planning held the risk of unintended consequences in a large urban context like Buffalo City, its outcome were even more unpredictable in a predominantly rural context.

The document that is referred to extensively in this section was drafted by the NGO Afesis-corplan and is entitled *Situation Analysis: Peddie & Hamburg – Integrated Development Plans / Land Development Objectives September 1999*. The title itself, reflects a number of important factors that effected the planning process. Firstly the document mentions two adjacent but at this stage (1999) separate municipalities namely Peddie and Hamburg (destined to be amalgamated into the Ngqushwa municipality). The reason for this was that while the planning process was underway, the Municipal Demarcation Board had simultaneously begun a process of re-demarcating municipal boundaries with the purpose of reducing the 486 municipalities to about 283.

In the Eastern Cape the following change came into effect on 5 December 2000:

Table 8: Adjustment of Municipal Forms and Number of Municipalities 2000

Type of Municipality	No. in terms of the LG. Transition Act (Act No. 209 of 1993)	(After Dec. 2000) No. in terms of the LG Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998)	Comment
Transitional Local Councils (TLCs)	94	0	TLCs were merged into Category B (local Municipalities)
Local Municipalities (Category B)	0	38	
Other non-urban local authorities	102	0	These were mainly Transitional Representative Councils (TrepC) with no or minimal administrative components and without dedicated budgets. Their function was primarily to represent rural & small settlement needs to the DCs. ⁴⁶²
District Councils / Municipalities	6	6	There was minimal adjustment of the actual model. (New district municipalities are category C) ⁴⁶³
Metropolitan Councils	0	1	The Metropolitan model was a creation of the Municipal Structures Act
Total	202	45	

[Source: Auditor General 2003, Special Report of the Auditor-General to the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature on Local Authorities in the Eastern Cape Province for the Period 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002 (Pr 71/2003 ISBN 0-621-34405-2) page 3]

The restructuring of municipal types and categories and the re-delineation of municipal boundaries caused considerable disruption to the Integrated Development Planning process underway from 1998 –2000. The municipal re-demarcation process initially won much support from the NGO sector because it promised to create the spatial pre-conditions for a more equitable distribution of public resources between rich and poor or what Whelan refers to as 'vertical equity.'

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7.1 Municipal Demarcation 1998-2000

Before examining further the impact of IDPs in the Peddie / Hamburg area, it is necessary to briefly overview the intended and actual effect of re-demarcating municipal boundaries in the period 1998-1999. The aim is not simply to show how the re-demarcation process impacted the drafting of IDPs (which is already well accepted) but also to demonstrate that municipalities like Ngqushwa were caught up in interplay of powerful and often non-rational policy machinations that sent out mixed signals to weak municipalities. On the one hand municipalities were encouraged to increase their stature and institutional importance, on the other hand they could also anticipate a future of limited responsibility for municipal duties with considerable dependence on district government to 'do the job' and on national government to pay for it.

The possibility of merged urban-rural municipalities was posed in the Local Government White Paper as one of 3 possibilities for local (Category B municipalities) in areas covered by district municipalities (Category C).⁴⁶⁵ In addition to the possibility of separate urban and rural councils, the White Paper suggested that amalgamated urban and rural municipalities.

...are appropriate for small and medium-size towns which have clear social and economic linkages between urban and rural settlements. Many countries have pursued this option as a way both to cut the costs of multiple Councils operating in the same area and to enhance service delivery in rural areas."⁴⁶⁶

These constitute some of the basic benefits anticipated from the work of the MDB and South Africa's policy for developmental local government. The merger of racially separated municipalities and economically segregated areas during the pre-interim phase of transition had gone some way to improving vertical equity. However rural and urban imbalances persisted and this became a critical issue for municipal demarcation:

The impact of the demarcation process in rural areas has been that the boundaries of existing small towns have been expanded to include adjacent rural areas. The objective of this approach, in line with the recommendations of the White Paper, has been to achieve a degree of redistribution between the (relatively) rich urban areas and the poor rural areas and to reduce the total number of municipalities by having fewer, larger councils. It will also capture the functional and economic relationship that exists between small towns and their rural hinterlands within a single administrative and political structure.⁴⁶⁷

This policy imperative, combining a seductive mix of science and political vision, was to dominate the discourse on municipal boundaries and local government transformation. A contrasting reality unfolding in new municipalities like Ngqushwa, was conveniently ignored in the representation of the new municipal scenario by politicians and technocrats alike.

The Municipal Demarcation Board developed a powerful rationale for its ambitious, and some might argue, belated foray into local government restructuring. At district level and between predominantly rural and predominantly urban areas there was still much imbalance in the overall location of tax bases and municipalities were not regarded as having achieved the necessary economies of scale in their operations.⁴⁶⁸

The redistribution argument in respect of the re-demarcation process is somewhat more muted and relates mainly to pockets of dense peri-urban development that were not included in the first urban amalgamation process. The amalgamation of urban and rural areas was framed in terms of efficiency rather than equity.⁴⁶⁹

The types of efficiency that Whelan refers to, were set out as a number of key principles for rationalisation by the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB). The work of the MDB is often regarded as a task of hard science involving the irrefutable logic of economics, geography and ergonomics.

The Demarcation Board was responsible for redrawing municipal boundaries to achieve a balance between financial viability (through capturing sufficient income-generating capacity within each municipal boundary) and representation (be ensuring that each municipality is small enough to enable a sense of community to develop and to facilitate local participation in municipal decision-making processes.)⁴⁷⁰

A closer examination of the Board's guiding principles reveals much latitude for interpretation and in the final analysis, often having to make decisions on the basis of contradictory criteria.

The idea of geographical contiguity or 'nearest neighbor' – simply put, this meant that those municipalities that were already in close proximity should be considered for amalgamation provided that they were bound by some sense of shared identity, elected municipal representatives would still be accessible to local populations, service delivery improvements were feasible and a sense of civic purpose would not be undermined.⁴⁷¹

It was immediately evident that some of the MDB working criteria would be very difficult to reconcile. Geographical contiguity for example, invariably implied that municipalities existed under much the same socio-economic circumstances by virtue of their location in the same region. Peddie and Hamburg fitted this criteria in that they were adjacent with only about 40kms separating the two towns. A further principle of the MDB however was to "develop a minimum 'critical mass' of municipal capacity (staff, assets, finances), especially where vulnerable and under-capacitated TLCs and TRCs currently exist."⁴⁷² This section of the report will show that both Hamburg and Peddie shared a common and severe problem relating to staff capacity, assets and sources of income. In fact both towns were a virtual illustration of the MDB's characterisation of vulnerable small municipalities whose viability was in doubt:

Very small municipalities lack the potential to develop the specialised and dedicated capacity that is necessary to effect good town planning, engineering and development management and general service delivery, in a country which is undergoing significant modernisation.⁴⁷³

Despite its own warnings on viability, the MDB went ahead and amalgamated Peddie and Hamburg with the result that the Ngqushwa municipality shared all the problems of its formerly separate municipalities. The notable difference was that Ngqushwa's incapacity now affected a much larger rural area. The rural area served by the Peddie Transitional Representative Council had previously enjoyed administrative support from Amatola District Council. (Amatola DC with an own income of about R540m in 1999⁴⁷⁴ was the second wealthiest district in the province and therefore the main source of services and facilities for rural settlements within its jurisdiction.⁴⁷⁵) The MDB elaborated on the principle of combining weak and strong areas thus:

Wherever possible, current TLCs, TRCs and /or other areas should be combined with a view to realising fiscally sustainable units, with 'weaker' areas being paired with 'stronger' areas so as to achieve a sharing of existing or potential resources. Unless this is done there is every possibility that many of the smaller or weaker authorities will collapse or 'islands' of exclusive development may emerge...⁴⁷⁶

Therefore, if considered in isolation, the capacity principle should probably have resulted in both Peddie and Hamburg being absorbed into their stronger neighbors i.e. Port Alfred in the west (which became Ndlambe), Grahamstown in the north-west (which became Makana) or East London in the east (which became Buffalo City.) However such a step would have almost certainly been at odds with other demarcation criteria. One of those criteria was the notion of functionality i.e. that within the municipality there should be "significant internal functional linkages."⁴⁷⁷ These linkages, explained the MDB, related to "...shopping and work travel patterns, patterns of social integration, economic interdependencies, and shared transportation networks among other considerations."⁴⁷⁸ In terms of these criteria there were certainly strong linkages between Peddie, Hamburg and the surrounding rural settlements.

Peddie contains a large proportion of the region's services and facilities and fulfils the role of a regional service function for the entire municipal area. It is the administrative seat and performs economic and social functions for the region.⁴⁷⁹

However confronting these ties of functionality there were clear indications of financial non-viability, illustrated in the following passages of this paper. It is self evident that the most measurable criteria – local government finance and the question of economics and affordability, should have held precedence in the techno-scientific formulations of the MDB. How then did the MDB arrive at a decision to amalgamate two rural municipalities that both clearly lacked a revenue base? The Board itself stressed, "The financial viability of municipalities is a key criterion in the determination of municipal boundaries."⁴⁸⁰ The Board had also recognised that many local municipalities that existed prior to amalgamation were not viable:

It is evident that from the number of current municipalities, which are deemed unviable and the extent of social and economic disparities in South Africa, that the financing of category B municipalities requires close scrutiny.⁴⁸¹

One explanation for the merger of two financially non-viable municipalities is that

the MDB did not consider local revenue sources as the key factor in fiscal viability. Two assumptions seem to underpin the MDB reasoning. Firstly that the mandate of the MDB, or at least the manner in which the MDB interpreted that mandate, could be extended to a significant overhaul of the financial and fiscal system for local government with significant changes to the national mechanisms for redistributing local government finances. While following the general principle that 'finance should follow function' i.e. a municipality should have access to the necessary revenue sources that were linked to its service delivery obligations, the Board looked increasingly to the national fiscus as a revenue source for non-viable municipalities (a pattern that had developed under apartheid and contributed greatly to the on-going political control exercised by central government.)

The Demarcation Board's accepts however that many municipal powers and functions can be funded through intergovernmental transfers, with accountability then resting with the municipality that is given responsibility for the funds.⁴⁸²

To this end, the MDB prepared a discussion document for the Department of Provincial and Local Government and the Department of Finance.⁴⁸³ The Department of Finance however responded by reminding the Board that policies with regard to the restructuring of municipal finance including critical changes to the formula-driven and poverty targeted *Equitable Share* transfer were already well-advanced and being adequately dealt with through the assistance of the Finance and Fiscal Commission. The Department of Finance thus signaled its reluctance to simply accept a second revision of municipal fiscal policy at the behest of the MDB. Indeed the MDB's recommendations to the Department of Finance came shortly after the most significant shift in municipal financing in many decades. This saw operational grant policy to municipalities, shift from arbitrary 'bail-outs' by national government, invariably influenced by political considerations, to a less discretionary, predictable transfer system that attempted to measure actual municipal need through a formula defined allocation. The so-called *Equitable Share* system, introduced in 1998, could thus already claim to already have a significant redistributive element in that poorer municipalities received a preferential share of nationally generated revenue.

Nationally raised revenue used to fund government services is vertically divided into three sections, one for each sphere, (local , provincial and national government.) This vertical division is based largely on historical expenditure patterns. The local government share is then horizontally divided, through a formula, into individual municipal transfers such that each municipality receives

an amount. Horizontal allocations are divided into two sections. Firstly the basic services grant (S) is positively linked to population levels below a poverty threshold (Department of Constitutional Development 1999). Secondly, the institutional grant (I), aimed at addressing shortfalls in institutional capacity, only comes into operation after a population threshold has been reached (2000 people); it increases gradually with population size and decreases with per capita income...⁴⁸⁴

Secondly the Board assumed that its mandate could also be extended to any changes in municipal form, structure, powers and functions that would make the boundary changes instrumental in bringing about an improved system of local governance.⁴⁸⁵ Thus the Board signaled its intention to look into:

- The administrative reorganisation of municipalities
- Political structures to oversee such reorganisation (termed transformation committees)
- A re-evaluation of the system of allocating powers and functions to local and district municipalities based on the MDB's assessment of capacity at the respective levels.
- The incorporation of traditional leaders into the new municipalities.⁴⁸⁶

Using its authority to revisit the allocation of powers and functions between district and local municipalities (as set out in Chapter 5 of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998), the Board framed a vision of municipal governance that promised to remedy many of the dysfunctionalities in the somewhat chaotic system of transitional councils that had evolved. The principle direction of these changes in powers and functions was towards more powerful district municipalities. The MDB's new vision of redistributive and capable local government thus entailed an enhanced status of district government with respect to local municipalities.

Originally Chapter 5 of the Municipal Structures Act made provision for flexibility and pragmatism in the allocation of powers and functions between local and district municipalities based on the principle that some services were best provided at a local scale and others (bulk services of water for example) were best provided at district scale. Variations in the allocation of powers and functions were possible in terms of Section 85 of the Act that allowed provincial MECs for local government to adjust these powers and functions based on their own views of the relative capacity of district and local councils to deliver services. This recognised the important fact that the respective capacities of locals and districts varied greatly across the

country and could not be usefully served by a single national prescription that divided powers and functions rigidly between local and district municipalities.

Prior to its amendment in October 2000, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 divided municipal functional powers between local (Category B) and district (Category C) municipalities. Broadly it did so by allocating district-wide (bulk) functions to district municipalities under section 83 and 84 of the Act. In terms of section 85 of the Act, provincial MECs for local government could adjust these powers and functions in accordance with a municipality's ability to deliver services.⁴⁸⁷ By 2001 the prevailing wisdom or at least that peddled by the Board, was that these legal provisions made for an unclear assignment of powers and functions to district and local government respectively. "One of the key problems with section 84(1) (and for that matter, Parts B of Schedules 4 and 5 to the Constitution) is the lack of clear definitions of the functional powers assigned to municipalities."⁴⁸⁸ It could also be argued however that the fault lay not with the legislation which was deliberately flexible but with the inability of many MECs to develop a coherent and politically defensible measure of the capacity of district councils and their constituent local municipalities on a case by case basis. Nevertheless the alleged 'confusion' in the assignment of powers and functions provided the rationale for the MDB and the Department of Provincial and Local Government, to shift many basic municipal functions from local to district level.

In October 2000, Parliament amended section 84(1) of the Act by transferring the most significant powers and functions originally vested in local municipalities to district municipalities. These included the supply of water, the transmission and distribution of electricity, the removal of waste and the provision of municipal health services...⁴⁸⁹

Previous shifts in local government policy had been subject to considerable public and stakeholder consultation, including national conferences, workshops and public hearings by the relevant portfolio committees in parliament. By contrast there was remarkably little public debate about the shifting of basic municipal functions from local to district level. The Finance and Fiscal Commission for example, submitted that it had not been consulted on the amendments to section 84 of the Municipal Structures Act and that such inattention was contrary to section 229 of the Constitution of South Africa.⁴⁹⁰ The general attitude of the MDB and the Department was that there had been no major shift from the principles outlined in the 1998 Local Government White Paper. However the White Paper had directed that districts should assist local municipalities in developing their capacity to

perform proper municipal functions or temporarily assume responsibility for select functions but certainly not to remove such responsibilities. Furthermore districts were directed to only assume functions where there was no prospect of an effective local municipal presence:

While the capacity of Category (B) municipalities to deliver municipal services should be enhanced to meet local needs, there are some areas which do not warrant the building of fully-fledged municipal administrations...District government should supplement the administrative capacity of category (B) municipalities in these areas, by providing financial and administrative capacity where lacking, or directly providing municipal services where required.⁴⁹¹

This point is further underscored by the White Paper's acknowledgment that districts did not all exist in a uniform relationship with local municipalities thus making a standard breakdown of powers and functions impossible.

District Councils are very different entities in various parts of the country. Given the numerous different settlement types within district jurisdictions, this is not a bad thing. While a measure of consistency is necessary across all district governments, a measure of flexibility needs to be built into the system. A variable district government system is envisaged in which districts exercise different sets of powers vis-à-vis their areas and the local municipalities that comprise them, depending in local circumstances.⁴⁹²

Above all the White Paper determined that district government was not intended to strip local government of its responsibilities; on the contrary it had an obligation to increase the capability of local government:

The ability of district government to provide on-demand assistance, as well as systematic capacity building to municipalities will be promoted. The capacity-building role of district government should be focused on increasing the capacity of category (B) municipalities to assume municipal functions.⁴⁹³

The influence of the MDB in this very significant policy shift to stronger district government and weaker local government, in contravention of the White Paper, is often overlooked. The Ministerial Advisory Committee on Local Government Transformation which reported to Minister Mufamadi in November 2001, at one point in its report, portrays the MDB as only incidentally and cautiously in favor of the shift in powers and functions:

Broadly speaking, the DPLG and the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) support the substantial changes made to section 84 of the Act by Act 32 of 2000 (the Amendment Act), provided that a process of incremental transformation is followed.⁴⁹⁴

Whereas the fact of the matter was that the changes had arisen directly from the Board's own recommendations; as Pycroft observes:

...the Demarcation Board's recommendations do entail a considerable reallocation of responsibility from local to district municipalities. This transfer is particularly pronounced in areas where local councils are financially or administratively weak and vulnerable.⁴⁹⁵

This precipitated a crisis for local governance that went curiously unnoticed at the time. Not only were local municipalities stripped of the basic functions that allowed them to have any meaningful role in the lives of citizens, it also transpired that most of the district municipalities that were to assume these functions, were hopelessly ill-equipped to do so. The crisis was temporarily resolved by a blanket proclamation by the Minister of Provincial and Local Government that temporarily returned these basic functions to local municipalities until 1 July 2002 – a date advised by the MDB.⁴⁹⁶

The fact that the amendment to the Municipal Structures Act was only temporarily suspended meant that local municipalities faced a sword of Damocles in figurative terms. Implied was a loss of political authority to local municipalities, in that they could ultimately relinquish all key municipal functions including the supply of water, the transmission and distribution of electricity, sewerage services and the removal of waste. Other 'lost' functions like municipal health were less clearly a municipal function in constitutional / legal terms. This down-scaling of local government competencies was glossed over by many commentators at the time including Pycroft who chose to de-link issues of democratic representation from actual municipal service functions. The distinction between full political authority, in the sense that a local council is able to make final decisions regarding the policies relating to local service provision, and a much weaker form of representation based on local councils acting as the conduit for articulating local needs, became blurred. Theoretically at least, the rendering of services became all important and municipal politics was reduced to the "channeling of needs" to the appropriate authorities.

Local elected municipal government and indirectly elected district level government,

were conflated as the same thing in order to defend any suggestion that local government had been subject to a down-scaling of its powers and responsibilities. One of the few agencies to openly confront this issue was the Free State Local Government Association (FRELOGA). In its submission to the Ministerial Advisory Committee; FRELOGA noted:

Retail water provision, sewerage removal and disposal, health services and electricity generation (and) distribution were traditionally local municipal services. In many cases, the reason for establishing a municipality for a particular settlement had been to provide water...The "delocalisation" of decision-making about these services creates the danger that the public, i.e. the consumers and potential consumers of these services may be removed from decision-making about the coverage, quality and cost of these services. Most of these consumers do not have access to transport or the communications media to voice their needs and complaints.⁴⁹⁷

The ensuing debate about allocating powers and functions seemed to be framed within two significantly different visions of the future of local government in South Africa. One, framed by the DPLG and MDB, comprised a limited number of strong district councils across the country taking control of all critical local functions and using their control over basic municipal services to ensure effective delivery and equitable redistribution of fiscal resources within the district boundary. Local council would still preside over less essential services and would make their constituencies needs known through indirect representation at district level. The other vision, framed within the White Paper and recalled partially in the responses of the National Treasury and the Finance and Fiscal Commission was of increasingly stronger local municipalities with broad powers and functions. Redistribution of fiscal resources would be primarily a national responsibility. By virtue of their important service functions (if necessary supported by non-discretionary grants from national government) local municipalities would have credibility and be directly answerable to local constituencies for service delivery and governance functions. In achieving this status they would gradually decrease their dependency on both district and national (financial) support.

Most of the other key role-players had reservations about the transfer of service authority. These reservations were expressed however in terms that were predominantly technical and financial, or related mainly to potential difficulties in the transition process. In making submissions to the Ministerial Advisory Committee, the Department of Provincial and Local Government and the

Demarcation Board focused on procedural and transition related problems relating to the issue of district and local powers and functions. Predictably the department and the MDB choose to ascribe these problems to the Ministerial authorisations rather than their own hasty amendments to section 84 of the Municipal Structures Act:⁴⁹⁸

- Difficulties in preparing IDPs and municipal budgets due to uncertainty regarding how powers and functions will finally be allocated
- Negative impact on creditworthiness for municipalities seeking loans or private investment for capital projects
- Uncertainty around finalising staffing organograms (in point of fact most municipalities choose to draft expanded organograms with little regard to the powers and functions they could realistically assume – the example of Ngqushwa is discussed later in this chapter.)
- Uncertainty and low municipal staff morale. This certainly proved a factor in many municipalities but its origins arguably had more to do with the generally protracted transition process and in particular the amalgamation of multiple municipal administrations and the often crude, nepotistic and ill-advised implementation of necessary affirmative action policies.
- Uncertainty related to the scheduled transfer of functions by provincial or national departments to municipalities, (DWAF water schemes were cited.)
- Divided geographical responsibility (due to wards being served by more than one authority) would complicate the assignment of equitable share allocations.

The Department and MDB also revealed a significant distrust of the motives of local municipalities in dealing with the powers and functions dilemma. They argued that municipalities might use the two-year period of the authorisations for “new officials to entrench the status quo thereby making the allocations of power and functions in 2002 based on capacity almost impossible.”⁴⁹⁹ Apparently it did not occur to Department and the MDB that their own capacity assessments could be usefully supplemented by a two-year re-appraisal period in which those same municipal officials demonstrated the real capacity of both local and district municipalities thus providing the basis for a more appropriate and flexible division of powers and functions on a case by case arrangement, (as section 84 of the Municipal

Structures Act had originally provided for.) Instead the Department and the MDB speculated in an ungenerous manner that municipalities might “cherry-pick” i.e. take on those functions that delivered revenue and shed (by “under-resourcing”) those functions that were unprofitable.⁵⁰⁰

Other submissions to the Ministerial Advisory Committee focused on the immediate impact of the amendment to the Municipal Structures Act and the resulting Ministerial proclamations on local government finance rather than the underlying and, arguably more serious political policy implications. Organisation Development Africa for example was concerned that the principle of finance following function had been compromised and that no stabilising mechanism existed to ensure that the necessary financial transfers could be affected between district and local government to reflect the actual pattern of functions allocated.⁵⁰¹ Rates accounts at local level would come under severe pressure as local municipalities relinquished the tariff income from those trading services transferred to district level, argued the ODA.⁵⁰²

In its submission the Msunduzi municipality in Kwa Zulu-Natal echoed this concern i.e. finance not following function, but related it more to the existing system which already saw significant levy income of R45 – R50 million going to the district council which “appears to be spending the majority of its income on administration.”⁵⁰³ Msunduzi noted that, contrary to the MDB’s vision of powerful and developmental district municipalities, its own district municipality had made no provision for new capital projects in the 2001 and 2002 financial year and “some previously committed projects and funding has been withdrawn...”⁵⁰⁴ Thus argued Msunduzi, not only did it need to retain its income from tariffs on trading services, it also needed to access the income from levies which currently accrued to the district, because as a local municipality, it was in fact providing those services.⁵⁰⁵

The National Treasury reaffirmed its principle that fiscal equalisation was a national concern and that redistribution of resources should be effected nationally.⁵⁰⁶ It also pointed to immediate short-term problems like municipal services funded by rates income which accrues to local municipalities rather than districts. Apart from its concern with fiscal stability, creditworthiness and protecting economies of scale, the Treasury also recognised that political accountability issues arose from the proposed shift in powers and functions:

The problem with the Amendment Act was that it would give rise to an ad hoc devolution of powers and would lead potentially to weak accountability and little

service delivery. In addition to weak accountability of district municipalities, it was difficult to see how strengthening district municipalities would strengthen local municipalities; in fact the converse was more likely.⁵⁰⁷

Perhaps not recognising the vastly ambitious plans of the Municipal Demarcation Board to completely re-engineer municipal finance, the Banking Council accused the MDB of misreading financial viability issues at local municipal level and not recognising the critical role of trading services in local municipal income.⁵⁰⁸ The Council noted that the loss of these services would negatively impact “current and future viability and the capacity to borrow of category B municipalities.”⁵⁰⁹

In its submission to the Ministerial Advisory Committee the FFC recalled the clear distinction in the White Paper and the original version of section 84 of the Municipal Structures Act between district service obligations related to district-wide matters and bulk services and local municipal obligations related to electricity, water and waste which should be “located as close as possible to the communities the services are meant to serve”.⁵¹⁰ The FFC touched on the political dimensions of the issue by noting that district municipalities did not operate mechanisms for citizens participation in decision-making – (ward committees) thus there would be no easy access to the decision-making process. The FFC echoed other submissions that the nonalignment of service obligations with revenue income would disrupt municipal government. More fundamentally the FFC came out strongly in support of the National Treasury’s position that:

Issues of redistribution should not influence the division of powers and functions between local and district municipalities given the primary role national government should play in funding redistribution;⁵¹¹

In summing up the arguments presented, the Ministerial Advisory Committee indicated its concurrence with virtually all of the reservations expressed about the amendments to section 84 of the Municipal Structures Act.⁵¹² In particular it was unimpressed with the idea that a legislatively undefined financial mechanism between district and local municipalities would constitute the best mechanism for fiscal redistribution. It noted that there had been no policy intention that district municipalities should provide local services. The MAC also cast doubt on the feasibility of a two-tier model of local government, noting that this created a “bifurcated system.”⁵¹³ The MAC drew parallels between the two –tiered system of metropolitan local government experienced by Johannesburg between 1995 and 2000 during the transition phase of local government. The MAC was of the

view that this system had been the cause of Johannesburg's liquidity crisis in 1996-1997 and warned against extending such a system to non-metropolitan local government.⁵¹⁴

The MAC's recommendations were very simple; restore the status quo i.e. separate functions and powers for local and district councils, that existed prior to the amendment to the Municipal Structures Act. Alternatively the MAC suggested that the 84(3) authorisations for local municipalities to retain the 4 key service functions should hold beyond 1 July 2002 and that any transfer of functions should be based on a "national capacity audit of all district municipalities."⁵¹⁵

In general however the powers and functions debate was ultimately glossed over. Government, including the supposedly independent South African Local Government Association (SALGA) insisted on treating the granting of basic service provision functions to district government as a minor administrative adjustment for more rationale service provision:

The outcome of this process will be that in rural areas where there is limited financial and administrative capacity, the local municipality will have fewer direct powers and functions. The small rural local councils will provide representation for their communities and channel the development demands of their constituencies to the district the district municipality, in a similar way to the existing TrepCs.⁵¹⁶

Pycroft and other supporters of the MDB's vision of more centralised local government through strong districts do not comment on the fact that public representatives at district level are not directly elected. District councillors are elected by local councils from within their own ranks. Once municipal voters have elected a local councillor, either through a party vote or a ward vote, they have little control over who is elected by council to district level. Thus passing municipal functions from local district level effectively means the removal of these functions from the influence of the local electorate. The Ministerial Advisory Committee that sat in 2000-2001 was one of the few bodies to acknowledge this impact on the political dimensions of local governance:

Accountability and democracy are not promoted by transferring the most significant municipal services to a level of local government in which there are no ward councillors and which sits above all local municipalities, and as such stand unaccountable to the people.⁵¹⁷

To understand the full impact of the proposed shift in powers and functions on municipal politics and government it is necessary to envisage the potential shift in powers and functions in combination with the results of re-demarcation in spatial terms where the principle of geographic contiguity was stretched to breaking point. By way of example, prior to demarcation Cradock and Middleburg were small-medium sized towns in the Karoo region of the Eastern Cape each with its own municipality. Separated by nearly 100kms of uninhabited farmland and arid wilderness the towns had distinctly different social and economic identities and different political traditions. In December 2000 both towns were amalgamated into the Inxuba Yethemba municipality. The seat of the municipality and all its major political and administrative facilities are now in Cradock. Any Middleburg resident wishing to attend a council or sub-committee meeting of Inxuba Yethemba must travel 100kms. Both municipalities initially challenged the new demarcation of boundaries but these challenges were later withdrawn, apparently as a result of political pressure from provincial level party structures.

By combining weak municipalities like Peddie and Hamburg the MDB created the pre-conditions for the long-term dependency of the Ngqushwa municipality on financial transfers from national government and on the Amatola District municipality for operational matters and capital projects. This is clearly illustrated in later sections of this chapter that deal with the composition of the Ngqushwa budget and the manner in which it performs (or does not perform) its functions. Where weak municipalities are combined, and these fall within the jurisdiction of a weak district municipality, the conditions for severe municipal failure are created. This is well illustrated by the combination of Nqgeleni and Libode into the Nyandeni municipality, now under the jurisdiction of the newly created and institutionally weak O.R. Tambo District Municipality. In fact after the 2000 establishment of new municipalities only one district municipality (Amatole District Municipality) could be said to be reasonably capable of performing its assigned functions.⁵¹⁸

The consequence for local government of the recent demarcation process appears not to have been adequately considered. The emphasis on creating very wide boundaries to effect redistribution of financial and administrative resources is directly linked to the transformation requirements to include functionally linked areas into one municipal area, but many municipalities cannot effectively implement redistribution. Both the institutions of local government and the personnel have been subject to repeated transformation initiatives at the workplace and in their private lives over the last six years. This appears to be having a major impact on the morale and quality of services delivered by municipalities.⁵¹⁹

It is worth noting how policy thinking was influenced by the MDB's vision of a municipal finance system increasingly reliant on inter-governmental transfers as a mechanism for redistribution –despite the fact that key stakeholders like the FFC and the Banking Council had severe reservations about the MDB's basic assumptions. What was surprising was the ease with which the Board set aside key principles like the importance of accessible local representation and local municipalities that could be empowered to eventually take full responsibility for governance and administration within their localities.

Through its powerful brief to re-determine municipal boundaries, the Board thus assumed the prerogative to revisit many of the changes in municipal form and function only recently finalised in the Municipal Structures Act No. 117 of 1998 and other draft provisions in the then unpromulgated Municipal Systems Act. The Board's hand was greatly strengthened by the Constitutional Court ruling in October 1999 on the application of criteria for metropolitan areas. The action was bought by the Provinces of the Western Cape and Kwa Zulu-Natal and challenged the constitutionality of sections of the Municipal Structures Act relating to boundary demarcation, citing the MDB as the respondent. The court ruled in respect of the metropolitan boundary issue that the authority for determining criteria lay with the Board and not the Minister of Provincial and Local Government.⁵²⁰

Local experiences of re-demarcation

In 1998 / 1999 Afesis-corporation, through its contact with the Demarcation Board and the provincial government, had prior knowledge that Peddie and Hamburg were likely to be amalgamated into a single municipality, Ngqushwa. In order not to render its planning services obsolete, Afesis-corporation had undertaken a planning process that covered both municipalities. In a further attempt to overcome blurred policy, planning documents were drafted which referred to both Integrated Development Plans and Land Development Objectives. This reflects the fact that municipal planning was governed by two separate pieces of national regulation at this stage – an issue that has already been discussed. An amendment to the 1993 Local Government Transition Act (209 of 1993) required municipalities to develop Integrated Development Plans and was overseen by the then Department of Constitutional Development. Land Development Objectives were a requirement of the Development Facilitation Act (67 of 1995), overseen by the Department of Land Affairs. While the new planning regime spoke to greater coordination, integration and inter-governmental cooperation, the fact was that these two departments engaged in a low-level battle to become the principal legislating authority with respect to municipal planning. In July 1997 Steven Beresford, then Director of Development Facilitation in the Department of Land Affairs warned:

A wide range of national departments have either passed – or are in the process of passing – legislation which requires planning processes from municipalities (e.g. housing, transport etc.) While all of these reflect an intention to promote integrated development planning their effect is often the exact opposite.⁵²¹

Some of the proposed planning laws that municipalities were required to abide by in 1997 included:

- The draft Housing Bill: set goals for housing delivery, identify land, oversee development, regulate land use and provide bulk infrastructure.
- National land Transport Bill 1997: designates municipalities as ‘transport authorities’ – required to produce integrated transport plans
- Water Services Bill: potentially designates a municipality as a ‘water service authority’ which must draft a water development plan including targets for service access, nature of the service, institutional and financial arrangements required to deliver and regulate the service.
- Proposed regulations in terms of the Environmental Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989).⁵²²

Despite the limited capacity of local municipalities, amply demonstrated since 1995, the municipal IDP process was supposed to gather these various planning provisions into a single coherent process coordinated by the municipality:

IDPs seek to address this problem (coordination of different planning laws) by providing a central co-ordination plan that includes the required sub-plans⁵²³.

In order to do this the municipality was required to refer to and interpret a broad range of national , provincial and district policies and plans which set out the broad parameters for development. These included:

- at the broadest national level, GEAR
- at provincial level, the Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP) and the Provincial Spatial Development Plan
- sub-regional investment and growth plans like spatial development initiatives (SDIs). (Ngqushwa municipality for example fell within the Fish River SDI)
- more locally Ngqushwa municipality was also expected to refer to the district level DPs being framed simultaneously by the Amatole District Municipality.

There is little indication of why the planners and policy-makers thought that small and even medium sized local municipalities would have the capacity to engage in such a complex task of coordination. In fact even understanding the distinction between Land Development Objectives (DFA) and Integrated Development Plans (LGTA) would have required considerable familiarity with the conventions of planning. Contrary to the implied literal meaning LDOs are not simply objectives related to the development and use of land. In 1997 Kojo Giyan, then Acting Director of town and Regional Planning in the Eastern cape provincial government described LDOs as follows, "...LDOs concentrate to a large extent on the spatial budgeting and development time-frames" while IDPs "go further to link action programs to budgets and human resource capacity."⁵²⁴ Beresford described a similar relationship between IDPs and LDOs:

The IDP is needed to ensure that the physical delivery objectives established in the LDOs are tied into an appropriate financial and institutional framework. Particularly important is the link between the objectives and the budgetary process of the municipality.⁵²⁵

The bureaucratic competition between the Department of Constitutional Development as overseer of the LGTA and the Department of Land Affairs as implementer of the DFA was downplayed by skilled planning technocrats like Beresford:

Because of the close relationship between the LGTA's requirement of IDPs and the DFA's requirement of LDOs, the Departments of Land Affairs and Constitutional Development have agreed to combine the satisfaction of these two requirements into one process.⁵²⁶

Despite these skilled attempts to explain away discord at the level of national oversight, by late 1999 it was still unclear whether local municipal plans should be drafted as LDOs or IDPs¹² thus Afesis-corplan framed the draft Ngqushwa municipal plan as both.¹³

¹² See for example the *Planning handbook for Eastern Cape Local Authorities* produced by the Eastern Cape Department of Housing and Local Government in 1998. Page 2 purports to explain the relationship between LDOs and IDPs but in fact re-states the origins of the planning requirements and the elements of the planning process.

¹³ Ultimately the IDP terminology was to prevail as the newly formed Department of Provincial and Local Government consolidated its policy grip over municipal affairs and introduced a chapter on IDP into the new Municipal Systems Act which replaced IDP provisions in the LGTA. (The DFA was never repealed however and strictly speaking its requirements for LDOs could still be applied to municipalities.)

7.2 IDP in action: Ngqushwa

The examples set out below help to describe a typical IDP procedure but also show how Integrated Development Plans relied upon an idyllic notion of municipal government. The overall IDP approach is to plan as if the newly formed municipalities were model institutions with normal levels of operational competence, or would shortly achieve such status. The structure of the planning process is rigid, as prescribed in various resource documents.

The Ngqushwa municipality, that forms much of the basis for subsequent comment in this chapter, conducted the following planning steps:

1. An **analysis phase** to 'scan the environment in order to identify the existing problems and opportunities facing the municipality.' The diagrammatic representation of this shows an interaction between the technical compilation of data on environmental, economic, social factors etc and the community that is represented through an IDP Representative Forum that should prioritise needs through an orientation workshop. These needs are then reconciled with the data presented by the IDP Steering Committee in its technical role. The IDP document observes that "The participation of all stakeholders was very important at this stage" but does not comment on the actual level of participation.⁵²⁷ The process was scheduled to be completed in 3 months and was directed largely by the Planning and Implementation Management Support Centre (PIMS) based at the Amatole District Municipality although the actual planning work was done by consultants.⁵²⁸
2. A **strategies phase** during which choices are made on the different options for addressing priority issues and contact is established with the district municipality to adopt a common approach to solving problems. The purpose of this phase was to find the "most appropriate ways and means of tackling priority issues."⁵²⁹ Policy guidelines and guiding principles are referred to and competing priorities are compared with an agreed vision. This 'vision' and its related objectives were to be formulated by the Ngqushwa public at *Representative Forum* meetings. However the vision and objectives are then taken to a 'joint strategy workshop at district level' for comparison with district objectives. Only after the local municipal level objectives are cleared at district municipal level, does the local IDP steering committee (officials and experts) get to adjust development strategies according to technical data and expert knowledge.⁵³⁰ "The

strategy debate helped to avoid the usual short cut from identified needs to sectoral projects. It helped to find more appropriate, innovative, cost effective solutions...”

3. During the **Project Phase** the Ngqushwa municipality claims to have ‘translated’ objectives and preferred strategies into projects and programmes. “This phase was considered as the ‘nuts and bolts’ phase. It was the phase of technical and financial experts – the phase in which municipal officers and their service providers were involved in preparing project proposals.”⁵³¹ The experts and officials apparently work in ‘cluster task teams’ to create criteria for project selection. Once these criteria are approved by the Representative Forum they are used to select priority projects in a ‘Projects Co-ordinating Workshop’ which ultimately create the basis for final project proposals.⁵³²

4. According to the IDP document the **Integration Phase** functions as a form of “double-check’ to ensure that the identified projects are in line with the municipalities objectives and strategies, are within the “resource framework” and are legally compliant. This is done by allowing the Representative Forum to assign projects “criteria and weights” i.e. to reassess relative importance and ranking in terms of priority. Once all projects and programmes are compliant with the criteria, the IDP document may be compiled and submitted for public comment and approval.⁵³³ The actual structuring of that document however is determined by national policy and legislation and it must contain certain elements like: *a five-year financial plan and capital investment programme, a monitoring and performance management system, a spatial development framework, an integrated poverty reduction / gender equity programme, an environmental management programme, a local economic development programme, an institutional programme, an HIV/ Aids programme and a disaster management plan.*⁵³⁴

5. The **Approval Phase** involved the eliciting of public comment on the IDP before it is adopted by the council, “...all relevant stakeholders and interested parties, including other spheres of government, have been given a chance to comment on the draft IDP. This was to assist in giving the approved plan a sound basis of legitimacy , support and relevance.”⁵³⁵ This section of the IDP outlines two slightly different processes that could be followed during the approval phase. The second option was specified

for those municipalities that could not meet the 31 March 2002 deadline for approval. The document does not specify which process was followed by Ngqushwa, lending further weight to the suspicion that some procedures were carried out as a 'paper exercise' only rather than a practical action.

The entire first chapter (20 pages) of the 2002 Ngqushwa IDP document, is given over to vaunting the expanded constitutional role of municipalities, the policy imperatives for better use of resources through IDP, accelerated service delivery, strengthening democracy and overcoming the apartheid legacy. It describes in highly generic terms an ideal planning process as prescribed by the DPLG / GTZ Guide Pack. The planning process is described largely in policy terms (what was prescribed) or what was intended rather than what actually occurred.⁵³⁶

In relation to small, medium and micro enterprises and what these can do for local economic development:

Skill development initiatives are aimed at providing unemployment people (sic) with skills and competencies that are likely to secure them with employment. Human capital is the critical ingredient for sustainable economic growth. While the development and maintenance of services and infrastructure is the foundation of an enabling environment for LED, it is also an integral component for improving the lives of poor citizens in the area.⁵³⁷

In relation to water infrastructure:

Ngqushwa municipality is blessed with dams and water treatment works that provide bulk services to the communities.⁵³⁸

In reality Ngqushwa had no control over this infrastructure because, as the very next sentence of the official IDP concedes, the water infrastructure was owned by the Amatole Water Board and operated by a private company (Amatole Water / Amanzi).

The IDP process tended to de-contextualise municipal operations by ignoring certain 'realities', for example why certain infrastructure operated by the municipality was under-utilized. The mechanical sewerage treatment facility in Peddie is described in the IDP as "more than adequate for the present inflow". In fact it serviced only 288 households (1.38% of total).⁵³⁹ The official IDP expresses

'surprise' about this situation, offering nothing by way of explanation. Earlier surveys by Afesis-corplan had in fact warned that a water-borne sewerage system had been introduced to Peddie with no consideration of affordability. While the CMIP had funded internal reticulation and the treatment works, the reality was that households could not afford the connection costs to the main sewer. Had this been overcome, a further problem of operating costs remained. The 1997 / 1998 budget for Peddie municipality indicated that only 55 households were provided with a sanitation service (water-borne or bucket collection) and even with this minimal service level, sanitation was projected to generate a loss of R38 000.⁵⁴⁰ This is precisely the kind of problem that IDP was supposed to resolve but as will be demonstrated in further looking at Ngqushwa, the issue of longer term operational costs was often overlooked. This problem was not limited to small rural municipalities:

In many cases the maintenance of the projects is not budgeted for, either by the local authority when it applies for funding, or by the national departments who cannot afford to maintain them. Alternatively, the skills to maintain them are not available in the municipality, which effectively means that the local authority is saddled with projects that are unsustainable. Without the continued support of national and provincial governments, these projects would not be maintained.⁵⁴¹

Similar issues emerge in relation to electricity. Planners typically represented the absence of electrical power supply simply as a 'development need' :

Table 9: Example of the representation of a 'Development Need' - Electricity

Key Issue	Objective
Inadequate provision of electricity in some rural settlements	To ensure that at least 90% of the population has access to electricity by 2005

[Source Ngqushwa IDP 2002, p52]

Afesis-corplan adopted a more circumspect approach to the generic rendering of 'needs' Noting the general absence of electricity for rural households, Afesis-corplan questions the common assumption that electricity supply will alleviate pressure on natural sources of energy:

The provision of electricity to rural areas (Eskom planned to electrify all villages

by the end of 1997) may not relieve pressure on the environment because few people could afford the service.⁵⁴²

Whereas planning documents for municipalities tended to process and analyse development challenges in terms of the state's capacity to respond, the NGO approach was more sensitive to the complexity of these challenges and the possibility that the state formed part of the problem:

Since most people live on state owned land, the obligation for resource management falls to the state. The functions of local government, district government and national ministries have become blurred in relation to environmental management and there are no clear institutional means for rural people to participate in this.⁵⁴³

Despite this more critical approach to the role of the government, the overall inference is that ultimately the key function, in this case natural resource management, belongs with the state and the obligation rests with the state to ensure citizens participation in this function. Planning is shaped by the assumption that the state and those responsibilities allocated to particular government line functions, will be the primary source of development.

The expectation that national government would bail-out weak local municipalities was something that the new municipal regime (the Department of Constitutional Development and the National Treasury in particular) set out to change. However a policy paradox occurred when, in re-demarcating new municipal boundaries, the Municipal Demarcation Board, as demonstrated in previous sections of this paper, explicitly acted on the assumption that some municipalities would remain entirely dependent on national government for the foreseeable future. This contradicted a key principle of municipal policy and in general terms, government tried to retain some link between local affordability and municipal expenditure. The Auditor-General's report of 30 June 1996 for example, warned of services being rendered at a loss in Peddie, "...the council's budget estimates for 95/96 provided for a deficit of R592 571. Budgeting for a deficit is contrary to statutory prescriptions and sound financial practise."⁵⁴⁴

The Quest for Data

The absence of reliable data and local knowledge is well acknowledged in literature on South African municipal planning.⁵⁴⁵

We need to understand the environment in which we operate. And that's local. What does it mean to live in Durban as opposed to 'Maritzburg?...We need to have some accurate information about the variables. At the moment we don't have that in our country. We only disaggregate everything down to provincial scale or down to just broad national kinds of comparisons. We simply don't have that information.⁵⁴⁶

Indeed the constant reference to this 'challenge' provided the rationale for many lucrative consulting contracts for planners and other consultants who argued that the generation of data would do much to solve the planning impasse. Little consideration was given to who would actually use that information in effective ways. Influential policy advisors like Sue Parnell noted:

Getting the information is important but it is not enough. We have got to be able to take it to the key decision-makers – the people who produce the IDPs and most importantly, the people who run the budget. If we cannot translate the information about our environment, about what we want to achieve, and why we are not there at the moment, into language that can be adopted and incorporated into budgets, we will never change the direction of this ship.⁵⁴⁷

Despite this call for the application of data to the municipal decision-making process, planners and policy-makers continued to overlook the limited ability of municipal staff and political leadership to process the limited data that was available and to combine this in useful ways with the very visible evidence of problems confronting the municipality. In the absence of this capacity, the actual formulation of strategies and appropriate municipal programs fell largely to the planning technocrats – greater complexity and volume of data inevitably meant less local 'ownership' and greater discretion for the planning professionals. The quote below refers to the offices and staff of the then Peddie municipality.

No records on housing are kept by the municipality except through rate(s) registers which show 256 wooden houses, 463 squatter houses(informal), and some undeveloped sites. Peddie has a hospital with an old age section, and one of the schools has a hostel (in an area called Durban.) The housing backlog for Peddie is unknown, although they were able to say that 1073 low-cost housing applications had been made, mainly for in-situ upgrading in Peddie extension.⁵⁴⁸

Despite these obvious and well-documented problems, the IDP process re-launched after the December 2000 local elections for the newly elected councils,

sought to generate further data with little consideration for what already existed and how it had been used. It is not contested that there was an absence of reliable technical data on housing and infrastructure in former homeland towns at this stage, however the repetition of situation analysis and data gathering became an ends in itself. As a statement of the problems confronting the municipality, the mention of *inadequate information and information systems* was virtually obligatory. It reflected a broad consensus of the status quo as reflected by professional planners formally in the service of government. The Afesis-corplan document (1999) for instance endorses the basic premise that the problem lay in the unavailability of the necessary data rather than the inability to process the data. In the Peddie experience, the information obtainable through the *rates register* and the register of applications for low-cost housing or in-situ upgrades is discounted or considered inadequate, despite the fact that there is considerable description of existing housing stock and some quantification of backlog. How was existing information being used or processed by the municipality? The 1997 property valuation in Peddie listed the assessed properties as 39 businesses, 90 government properties and 93 privately owned houses. As limited as the rates assessment may have been, in 1998 / 1999 the value of assessed rateable property was R19 031 480 however in 1997/1998 and again in 1998/1999 no rates income is factored under "income" in the municipal budget.

Hamburg TLC, having failed to produce a budget for the previous 3 years, produced a detailed budget (with consultant assistance) for 1998/1999 which was described in the 1999 Afesis-corplan IDP document as "a serious effort to implement proper budgeting in the municipality." Using a 1996 interim valuation of property in the town, the total value of land and improvements was calculated as R23 315 070. The municipality then correctly used the projected deficit in the budget (R241 120) to work out that it would need to tax property at 0,1 cent in the rand to recover the shortfall. This indicates how fairly modest systems may have had considerable impact on local revenue generation and poses the question as to why such small improvements did not feature prominently in subsequent planning, in particular the 'official' 2002 IDP.

The importance of property rates in local government fiscal policy had been clearly spelt out. Sections 229 and 230 of the Constitution of South Africa grant municipalities taxing powers and property taxes are the major source of tax revenue, accounting for about 20% of total revenue in 1998.⁵⁵⁰

Neglect of potential income from property rates was not limited to Ngqushwa – the

Auditor General notes that the second most prevalent shortcoming identified by his 2001/ 2002 audit is the absence of a general valuation of property according to the 4 year cycle required by section 8(1) of the Property Valuations Ordinance of 1993.⁵⁵¹ Despite the importance of this revenue power, the 2002 Ngqushwa IDP reflects no discussion or planning related to the matter of property rates or the state of the property valuation register. This despite the fact that the IDP repeatedly refers to the inadequate revenue base of the municipality. This reinforces the impression that the planners were indifferent to matters of local affordability and happy to support the expectation that the municipality remain dependent on national government financing in the long-term – a policy position the Municipal Demarcation Board did much to reinforce.

The fact that the responsible local officials were making very little use of the existing data on the rates base for example, to frame basic strategies for improving life in the town, is overlooked in the IDP process. The competence of local officials is pertinent. The Afesis-corporation report reflects the anticipation of a more technically sound process driven by some as yet unidentified but better qualified service provider. While the IDP program captured the imagination of local politicians and staff and imbued a sense of participation and ownership,⁵⁵² the technical and professional requirements of Integrated Development Planning were not matched by the necessary skills and experience in non-metropolitan local government:

A review of the interim IDPs (conducted by the IDT and the Sub-committee) revealed that the extent to which these interim IDPs were successful in meeting their objectives is questionable. While they helped to focus councillors and officials to identify key priority projects and to adjust their budgets accordingly in a relatively short time span, the extent to which they have been able to do so adequately depended largely on capacity within each municipality. Thus, better-resourced municipalities were able to respond quickly and effectively, while others deviated from the templates, focused on those infrastructure projects where funding could be accessed and had weak sectoral integration.⁵⁵³

In fact municipalities at small-town and predominantly rural level were ill-equipped to handle the enhanced developmental functions assigned to municipalities as Atkinson et al (2003) point out:

...given the revised conception of municipal functions, developmental municipalities need much higher levels of developmental staff than they have at present. Such staff should have some qualifications and experience in development management, programme management or project management...

It goes without saying that the appointment of development staff should avoid the pitfalls of political patronage.⁵⁵⁴

Limited Functionality

The Peddie municipality, like many predominantly rural municipalities, exercised limited control over some of the key infrastructure within its jurisdiction and even when it owned basic internal infrastructure, had insufficient knowledge of the operation thereof.

A private water company (Amatole Water) supplies bulk water. The main dam, which supplies water, is owned by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, and the TLC owns the reticulation system within the town. The exact number of standpipes is unknown, but it was estimated that there are 20.....There is no storm water drainage in Peddie, which causes flooding in rainy season.⁵⁵⁵

Infrastructure which the municipality had control over was frequently poorly maintained, even within the then limited municipal boundaries which ended at the periphery of the town.

The roads in Peddie are in a shocking state; there is one tarred road through the CBD that is very bad. The access roads leading off this were never properly gravelled. Many residents refuse to pay their rates and taxes, citing the poor roads as reason.⁵⁵⁶

In 1999 a sewerage spillage occurred from septic tanks / conservancy tanks on the hill above the Hamburg municipal offices. The response of the municipality was to hire consultants to *investigate and write a report* on the problem.⁵⁵⁷ Integrated development planning tended to overlook the fact that rural municipalities were 'hands-off' institutions when it came to operational matters. They functioned essentially as *client* bodies to other government institutions or the civil engineering / consulting industry. The IDP process tended to over-estimate the resources and finances over which municipalities were able to exercise discretion. The Peddie Transitional Local Council recovered minimal costs from its own functions and relied on inter-governmental grants and the newly instituted 'equitable share' transfer from national government:

The TLC has no other significant source on income, and has no reserve fund. It is clearly in a state of financial crisis, which is confirmed by the Auditor General's report.⁵⁵⁸

The dilemma of the Peddie municipality was not unusual amongst South African rural municipalities. A weak local economy provided limited livelihood opportunities with the result that even basic municipal services were unaffordable to most local residents. According to data used by the planners for the 2002 IDP, only 4.6% of the Ngqushwa population is employed, 16% are unemployed and 36.8% are 'not economically active'.⁵⁵⁹ Nevertheless the 2002 IDP document estimates that 54% of the population has access to either on-site taps or communal standpipes and 70% of settlements access electricity.⁵⁶⁰

The resulting shortfall in cost recovery on service provision caused a steady decline in the standard and coverage of all municipal services. This in turn provided the rationale for further non-payments by poor consumers but also by middle-class households who were unwilling to maintain payments on generally faltering communal services.

Hamburg municipality followed a similar pattern between 1994 and 1997 i.e. a steadily increasing reliance on inter-governmental transfers (IGTs):

Table 10: Intergovernmental Transfers as a Percentage of Total Income: Hamburg Transitional Local Council 1994-1997

Year	IGTs as a percentage of total income
1994	76,75%
1995	76,8%
1996	77%
1997	82,5%

[Source: Afesis-corplan 1999, p 28]

In parallel with this trend was an increasing reliance on the roll-out of national infrastructure programs to meet infrastructure needs. This placed local government planning in a subservient or client relationship with national government programs. The much lamented breakdown in coordination between national-level planning and IDPs was explained thus by the Ministerial Advisory Committee:

A possible explanation could be that these departments have approved budgets for projects and that their success or failure will be determined by the extent to which they have spent those budgets on the identified projects. This problem is especially evident in areas where municipalities are weak and the department

has a strong presence. DWAF, DLA and DoT appear to be the most common departments mentioned in this regard by local authorities.⁵⁶¹

These problems are clearly long-term and endemic however the 2002 IDP gives little hint that solutions may lie outside the control of the municipality. Instead the IDP talks of the need for qualified finance personnel and the need to “identify other internal sources” of finance. Thus the municipality’s financial predicament is portrayed as a manageable local problem requiring only the ‘tweaking’ of systems and some financial ‘topping-up’ from hitherto untapped revenue sources.⁵⁶² Apart from these observations, the remaining financial analysis consists of one or two sentences on budget systems, policies and strategies like credit control and tariffs, financial controls and information technology systems.⁵⁶³

7.3 Planning and Municipal Finances

The crisis of escalating municipal overheads and inadequate local revenue bases had been recognised in 1996 when local government received enhanced Constitutional status. The principle of finance following function was supposed to ensure adequate revenue sources for the increased powers and functions and service obligations that were passed over to municipal government⁵⁶⁴. This provided the rationale for the South African Local Government Association and others to lobby for expanded municipal institutions with more staff and full-time or at least well-paid, public representatives (councillors).

By taking on a larger share of the (token) responsibility for meeting national poverty reduction objectives, local government became eligible for a much larger slice of national revenue.⁵⁶⁵ However In small bankrupt municipalities much of the ‘equitably allocated share’ of national revenue was treated as ‘own revenue’ rather than being directed to the poor service consumers it was intended to subsidize. For the period February 1998 to November 1999 and for the following financial year the Auditor General noted of inter-governmental grants:

These grants are made to local governments for specific purposes. While in certain cases the grants received were not accompanied by directives from the donor department as to how the funds were to be applied, these and many of those received from the subsidisation of indigent consumers were appropriated as income. Furthermore many local authorities did not have an indigent policy which governs the subsidisation of indigent consumers.⁵⁶⁶

Under the previous municipal finance regime (limited and unreliable transfers to local government and representation based on local affordability) the internal costs of a small, poor municipality were determined by *discretionary* transfers from other spheres of government. Municipalities were therefore reluctant to incur recurring costs like wages and allowances where the revenue source could be 'turned off' or limited by provincial or national government. The institutional costs of the municipality therefore increased more slowly as a response to the expanded provision of services to poor communities.

In 1996-1997 the Hamburg Transitional Local Council, illustrated this pattern. It was almost entirely reliant on transfers from the provincial government:

Grants and funding totaling R979 509 received from the Provincial Administration represented 82,5% of the total income received by the Council. This indicates a disproportionate reliance on Provincial Government funding and it appears that the continued operations of the Council are wholly dependent on continued support from this source.⁵⁶⁷

Nationally, in the same period, (1996 / 1997) a fragmented system of inter-governmental transfers to local government comprised R1,2billion for agency payments, R1,2 billion for capital grants (excluding any receipts from the housing subsidy programme), only 2,2billion went to operating subsidies and with other non-cash subsidies the total national transfer to local government was R5,2 billion.⁵⁶⁸ In 1997 / 1998 immediately prior to the implementation of the *equitable share* system, the overall transfer amounted to R5,9bn. The advent of significant and constitutionally assured financial transfers (the *equitable share* system) in 1999 / 2000 was based on Section 227 of the South African Constitution which provided that the local sphere of government is entitled to an equitable share of nationally raised revenue. The key policy principle is explained thus:

In other words, nationally generated income must be shared fairly between national, provincial and local government, based on the functions each has to fulfill, and the amount of revenue they are able to generate on their own.⁵⁶⁹

The equitable share transfer was supposed to ensure that local government could " provide basic services and perform the functions allocated to it"⁵⁷⁰. The White Paper tried to introduce the notion of revenue *adequacy and certainty* i.e. both their own revenue and transfer revenue should be certain and predictable to allow for realistic planning. Municipalities were encouraged to ensure that services were provided at affordable levels and that the costs of service delivery should be recovered.⁵⁷¹

No bailout will be provided to a municipality that overspends its budget and / or fails to put in place proper financial management controls. It is the responsibility of political leaders to ensure that they set realistic budgets.⁵⁷²

Subsidisation (the equitable share transfer) was intended to ensure that poor households, who are unable to pay even a proportion of service costs, have access to basic services. Instead the significantly increased and formula defined ES opened the door to escalated salary bills and councillor remuneration that was de-linked from local affordability.

Clearly salary increases have exceeded increases in bulk services spending over the period 1999-2003:

Table 11: Comparison of Increases: Bulk Services and Salaries 1999-2003

R Billions	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Salaries	13.8	15.9	17.9	19.8
Bulk Services	13.8	14.9	13.7	15.3
Others	16.9	17.3	21.1	29.3

[Source: Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2003]

Municipalities like Ngqushwa had battled with inadequate own revenue (even during the brief periods when tariff setting, billing and debt collection were taken seriously) and undependable and discretionary financial transfers were not.

The main reasons identified for this crisis were consumers not paying for services, and the municipality having poor facilities, like the two tractors and one refuse trailer that is in need of repair....The revolving fund and capital accounts are in a bad state, with 80% having been spent on salaries.⁵⁷³

By April 2002 the analysis of Ngqushwa municipal income, as reflected in the official IDP document indicated as follows:⁵⁷⁴

Table 12: Sources of Funding Ngqushwa Municipality 2002

Source of funding	Amount @	%
Department of Local Govt. (National Fiscus)	11 240 052	56.63
Rates and services	2 057 999	10.73
Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme	3 424 300	17.86
Amatole District Municipality	2 450 000	12.78
Total	19 172 351	100.00

[Source: Ngqushwa Municipality 2002, Integrated Development Plan, p 45]

Only 10.73% of municipal income was generated locally through service charges and property rates and a massive 87.27% coming as transfers from other spheres of government. This highly dependent state of the municipality does not seem to have worried the planners in any broad sense. While noting that internal generated income is very low, the IDP does not appear overly concerned by this, noting only and somewhat confusedly that "...the need to identify other internal sources should be identified."⁵⁷⁵

The drafters of the 2002 Ngqushwa IDP chose to ignore ample evidence that in addition to spending irresponsibly, municipalities were poor debt collectors. Credit control and debt collection were treated as a 'systems' issue, the objective being to show that there was a policy in place and not that the policy was necessarily workable. In July 1998 the Hamburg TLC adopted a debt collection and indigent support policy. The debt collection policy was based on the Municipal Act 17 of 1987 and applied to rates and taxes, refuse collection, water and rentals on municipal owned property.⁵⁷⁶ The policy relies on the legal systems to deal with defaulters with the legal costs of recovering the arrears to be paid by the service consumer.⁵⁷⁷ Having experienced similar policies at work (or more accurately not working) in a number of small Transitional Local Councils at the time, Afesis-corplan noted:

This policy is perhaps a little unrealistic for a town like Hamburg, and may have been borrowed from larger towns like East London. Needless to say that the implementation of this policy has been difficult.⁵⁷⁸

Hamburg's indigent policy provided that indigent users of refuse and water services (to a value of less than R166) with a household income of less than R2500 per month would qualify for a staggered system of subsidies inversely related to the level of income:

Table 13: Services Subsidies: Hamburg Transitional Local Council 1999

Level of income @	% subsidy
0-800	70
801-1200	60
1201-2500	40

[Source: Afesis-corplan 1999; p30]

Indigent households would have to apply for this subsidy and council undertook to check a *sample of the applications* to verify that the households did in fact qualify. Remarking on the R166 subsidy targeted at water and refuse services, Afesis-corplan noted, "Given that only water and refuse are charged for, this is quite high."⁵⁷⁹ Despite the centrality of these issues to the Ngqushwa municipality's financial predicament, *indigent policy and credit control* are barely mentioned in the 2002 IDP:

Concern was expressed regarding the application of the indigent policy and assistance. The Council resolution 19 of 2001 stressed the need to amalgamate the Hamburg and Peddie indigent policies into one policy.

Credit Control Policy / Debt Control Policy: Analysis of debtors and creditors has not been properly undertaken.⁵⁸⁰

7.4 Affordable Staffing

In the era of transitional local councils preceding the establishment of Ngqushwa municipality, the Peddie municipality employed 20 full-time employees while the Hamburg municipality employed 14 staff.⁵⁸¹ The most senior employee (the town clerk) had a national diploma in public administration and limited experience as an assistant town clerk in the Flagstaff municipality.

By 2002 this situation had changed significantly. While no new skills or qualifications had entered the top management positions, the Ngqushwa municipality, now incorporating Peddie and Hamburg, had 27 councillors and employed 46 staff. As this paper has already demonstrated, one of the key policy objectives of the 1999/2000 re-demarcation of municipal boundaries was to rationalise costs associated with staffing and councillor remuneration.

In the case of Ngqushwa, the newly amalgamated municipality employed 12 more staff than the combined staff complement of its previous constituent municipalities.¹⁴

Furthermore the 2002 Ngqushwa IDP notes that many posts were not filled at the time of drafting the IDP and the *staffing organogram* in fact made provision for 87 posts.⁵⁸² (The post of Municipal Manager had become an issue of dispute involving both town clerks of the former TLCs and the mayor.) Ngqushwa staffing levels are unexceptional when compared with the 2003 survey by Atkinson et al where the average staff complement of a sample of six “small town” municipalities was 147.⁵⁸³ Interestingly the ratio of “white collar” staff to “blue collar staff” ranged from nearly 1 : 1 to 1 : 2,7. Although Atkinson et al do not comment on this, it suggests that municipalities have nearly as many administrative and managerial staff as labourers and artisans.

Quoting from a 2002 report by Sakhisizwe Consulting Services, the IDP raises concerns about the non-delegation of powers, non-enforcement of the councillors code of conduct, the review and ‘issue’ (sic) of by-laws, the absence of resources to handle certain functions, the absence of human resources policy and the absence of training strategies. No concern is expressed about the affordability of the new staff complement, despite the fact that it was scheduled to increase by 255%, indeed it is noted that with 5 staff, the finance section of the municipality “... is understaffed.”⁵⁸⁴ Under *Institutional and Finance* (section 3.3.2) the IDP finds that

¹⁴ It might be argued that this does not include the previous Peddie transitional representative council (TrepC) however this council had no employees and although Ngqushwa is formally responsible for the rural area, it performs minimal functions in rural areas.

there are, "Inadequate staff in the municipality to effectively provide the required services in the municipality."⁵⁸⁵

And "There is a lack of other important components within the organogram to effectively deal with IDP issues." Thus one of the objectives identified is to, "... restructure the organogram to include other important components by 2003."⁵⁸⁷ As a result the IDP Financial Plan (Table 30) projects that the municipality will spend more than R4,8m on salaries wages and allowances in 2003 or slightly over 14% of its nett expenditure (R34,04m). However, if infrastructure expenditure and contributions to capital outlay are excluded from expenditure, (as they should be in determining operational costs) the salary, wage and allowance component rises to just under 44% of expenditure – the Auditor General regards wage/allowance expenditure in excess of 30% as unacceptable.⁵⁸⁸

Comparing this expenditure to income is difficult as the financial plan lists only "subsidies" (R32m) and "other income" (R34,04m) however since the difference is about R2.2m (and this figure constitutes roughly the 'own income' of Ngqushwa) it would appear that the R34,04m 'other income' is in fact the *total income* (and balances exactly with expenditure) of which just under 94% is comprised of transfers or 'subsidies.' Bearing in mind that municipalities like Ngqushwa play very little role in the implementation of infrastructure projects (where most of the non-salary/ allowance expenditure goes), in financial terms, it would appear that the main function of the municipality is to provide income for staff and allowances to councillors. This clearly contradicts the policy imperative for increased technical efficiency at municipal level;

Macroeconomic management measures to keep money creation and the public deficit at target levels have also been conceived of as ways of squeezing greater efficiencies from municipalities.⁵⁸⁹

Apart from direct staffing costs, there were other 'institutional' costs associated with ensuring that staff became more effective and organised in their jobs. Considerable faith is placed in 'capacity-building' and the development of systems and policies in order to meet this objective. Indeed at one point the drafters of the Ngqushwa 2002 IDP suggest that municipalities were created to "empower" municipal staff and councillors:

One of the most important objectives of the municipality is to empower councillors and municipal staff through institutional capacity building and training.⁵⁹⁰

This was more than simply an 'in principle' commitment as the institutional plan and assigned budget shows:

Table 14: Ngqushwa Municipality 5-year Institutional Action Plan

Activity	Cost Over 5 yrs
Capacity building for staff and councillors	R750 000
Instituting a skills development and training plan	R100 000
Formulation and implementation of Employment Equity and Affirmative Action Plans	R80 000
Formulation of HR and administrative policies	R80 000
Install computerised administrative system	R475 000
Develop and implement communication plan	R500 000
Total :	R 1985 000

[Source: Ngqushwa IDP 2002 p88]

Thus Ngqushwa municipality, with an own income of just R 2057 999 in 2002, planned to spend nearly R2m over the next 5 years purely on staff and councillor development and associated administrative systems and policies. In addition, its expanded staff complement and administrative systems would require new office and workshop accommodation at the cost of R3,5m.⁵⁹¹ Significantly, the need for this expenditure is created through policy - a policy framework that places unprecedented reliance on the formulation of plans. Thus the municipality is confronted with the legal requirements to have skills development and training plans, employment equity plans and communication plans . The only certain outcome of which was that planners and consultants would continue to gain further income from the Ngqushwa municipality for the next five years.

Thus the planning process itself served to defeat one of its main objectives; that of using limited financial resources within the system to maximum public benefit;

In a 1999 Department of Finance circular, municipalities were directed to define and stick to their 'core' activities (Department of Finance 1999). The IDP process has been suggested as a means of defining that core, with cost benefit analysis playing a key role within the process. The linkage between the IDP and the budget, obliged in legislation, is an attempt to facilitate the shift in expenditure patterns.⁵⁹²

What could explain the planners reckless endorsement of further inflated internal costs in a context where the municipality was already expending an unreasonable percentage of grant income on staffing overheads? One obvious explanation is that planners did not regard the financial sustainability of Ngqushwa municipality as pertinent to the planning brief. With the formula driven, non-discretionary *equitable share* transfers in place, the National Treasury was able to exercise little control over how municipalities used these transfers. The main instrument available to the treasury to curb municipal expenditure was the *budget cap*. Although these ceilings on increases in municipal budgets became tighter between 1997-1999, the 'cap' did not effect the internal allocation of expenditure within the budget.⁵⁹³

It is also evident that the respective national departments did not share the same imperatives. In contrast to the abovementioned position of the Treasury, the Department of Provincial and Local Government did little to prevent the ratcheting up of municipal salary bills during the 1999 / 2000 transitional period when virtually all municipalities were disestablished and re-established. Anticipating the need to make 'acting' appointments in the case of municipal managers and other senior posts, the Special Task Team on the Establishment of municipalities recommended:

...that employees be compensated on the basis (of) the highest graded administration in the newly established municipality.⁵⁹⁴

The Task Team favored the appointment of senior managers on performance linked contract rather than fixed salaries.⁵⁹⁵ The Team argued for private sector linked salaries and that municipalities were "part of the wider Human Resources market and must compete therein for suitably qualified and experienced personnel."⁵⁹⁶ Given the lack of staffing capacity already outlined, these comparisons were inapt. Another factor may have been the reluctance at provincial level to confront problems of municipal staffing arising from the perceived political risks of standing in the way of informal '*job creation strategies*.' This crude interpretation of *job*

creation was based entirely on the expansion of municipal bureaucracies. On the face of it, this could be interpreted as a strategy whereby, local elites were 'bought off' to retain their loyalty to the party and the 6-year old government. This was matched by a reluctance to confront organised labour on the need for retrenchments. Whelan interprets escalating salary bills as yet a further indication of incapacity in local government:

The capacity of employer representatives to negotiate affordable salary increases is critical, as municipal services are currently labour intensive and labour costs make up a large component of the costs of services (Van Rhyneveld 1998). Salaries are also one of the elements that constitute transitions costs. Judging from the inflation increases in personnel costs that have occurred since 1996, it would appear that local government has limited capacity in negotiating affordable wages.

However inflated wage scales were only one element of the problem as the massive increase in the *number* of posts for Ngqushwa illustrates – a problem that emanates at a fairly high policy-making and political level and which is not simply due to poor negotiating skills by the employer body (SALGA).

Why was planning unable to reveal and reverse these irrationalities? One obvious explanation is that the planners themselves were in a client relationship with the new municipal elite. A planning consultant who suggested that the municipality was overstaffed, was paying salaries not commensurate with skill levels and in addition had too many full-time councillors on the pay roll, could not look forward to future appointments. Eastern Cape IDPs generally reflect a situation where the planners are dictated to by council and thus endorsed populist strategies that avoided the hard questions that lie at the root of planning ie rationality and affordability. Whatever the motivation, the effect was clear. With all its claims to rationality and financial prudence, the IDP served to regularise very doubtful practices in the deployment of public finance. The Ngqushwa IDP developed a technical planning rationale for short-sighted policies that were mainly in the interests of staff and municipal councillors.

Local and regional political forces and their impact on planning services and consultants is an under-researched topic and the comment reflected in this paper is based on the experiences of a participant-observer rather than a formal research process. It is possible that an investigation into this relationship between planning and politics could do much to explain why planners simply omitted to deal with

certain fundamental municipal issues. Instead the IDP program continued to focus on data and its extrapolation. The implied need is for a more comprehensive and scientific assemblage of data which would quantify the municipality's development priorities in technical terms thus creating the opportunity for *professional / technical* solutions. In many cases the planner's call for *specialist support* masked the fact that municipal officials were not doing their job either due to incapacity or due to weak performance. The Auditor General shared this concern:

Cognisance is taken of the action taken in employing consultants to assist failing municipalities. However, this in itself is seen as a short-term solution that could result in fruitless expenditure, especially where existing financial staff are already remunerated to do the task.⁵⁹⁷

The example of the Hamburg town clerk during the time of the Afesis-corplan (1999) IDP report gives some indication of how 'incapacity' arises. The Town Clerk had been in his post from 17 March 1997 to April 1999 and was suspended at the time of the research. He had no professional qualification and no training or experience as a town clerk.⁵⁹⁸

7.5 Public Scrutiny of Municipal Finance

In policy terms, integrity and efficiency in public spending were to be safeguarded by local residents who would provide "the necessary checks and balances"⁵⁹⁹ principally by participating in the budgetary process. However the Auditor – General's report for the years 1994 – 1996 for Hamburg indicate that no budget was drawn up for these years.⁶⁰⁰ According to local government policy, the participatory aspects of planning were to be matched by the right of citizens to exercise oversight of municipal spending to ensure that spending patterns reflected the aims, objectives and priorities of the integrated development plan. A critical link in this chain is the role of the Auditor – General⁶⁰¹ who must:

...transmit a report in respect of the accounts of a local government to the chairperson / mayor of the council of the local government concerned and if necessary to the Director General of the province.

However the percentage of Eastern Cape local government books and accounts that were not ready for signing or where signed financial statements had not been submitted to the Auditor General on the due date, rose from 17,6% in the 1994-1995 financial year to 45 % in the 1998-1999 financial year⁶⁰² and to 79%

for 2000-2001.⁶⁰³ Twenty months after the due date (ie by 31 May 2003), 57% of municipalities were still regarded as being 'at default' by the Auditor General.⁶⁰⁴

The fact the books and financial statements of local authorities are not timeously available for auditing has a negative effect on public accountability. A serious source of concern to my office is the fact that effective financial control over transactions is not possible in the absence of books and accounts or where records are incomplete.⁶⁰⁵

Public oversight in respect of municipal spending hinges in turn of having access to the AG's reports through the annual reporting obligations of the municipality set out in the Local Government Transition Act of 1993 and more recently the Municipal Systems Act of 2000. Under the circumstances described above, the Auditor General was unable to service the rights of ordinary citizens by furnishing them with a clear picture of how public funds were being managed and expended by the municipality.

7.6 Borrowing the Jargon of Space and System

Unlike the consultants who compiled the 2002 IDP, none of the NGO staff who compiled the 1999 IDP report were qualified town and regional planners (although they were able to draw advice from professional planners.)¹⁵ Nonetheless, the NGO report tries to include comments related more to the spatial and more technical aspects of planning. This reflects the pressure on NGO's to legitimate their planning support services by 'borrowing' the conventions of the planning industry.

Planning through the town varies; Peddie extension is planned and surveyed, as is the town centre. German Village and Durban have not been properly laid out and planned for at all times. There is plenty of unused land in and around the town, much of it is state –owned though the municipality is still negotiating with the government to transfer this land.....This area is laid out on a gridiron pattern.

And at a broader scale:

Traditional settlement patterns like those found in Tyefu villages tend to be sprawling and therefore not conducive to good resource management measures.⁶⁰⁶ In the Afesis-corporplan document these concessions to the language of space and science are fairly modest. Some attempt is made to retain the simple observations

¹⁵ A situation that was not unusual amongst the many consultants who lined up to get some of the considerable work generated by the IDP programme.

that any reasonably skilled municipal official might make when considering the physical appearance of the municipal area. In subsequent drafts of the IDP document for Ngqushwa municipality, produced by planning professionals the jargon of space and science become more technical.

The 2002 IDP for example describes four different rural settlement types, namely “traditional rural villages established in response to localised agricultural resource base” , “Rural villages established in response to commercial-orientated agriculture”, newly established holiday resorts “based on the localised resort potential of the coastal area” and “minor and isolated farm communities scattered within the municipal area.” The IDP notes that these rural areas are characterised by:

The absence of settlement hierarchy, that is , nodal and consolidated settlements where the provision of better infrastructure and facilities will be targeted to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

The small size of most of the individual settlements with associated low functional thresholds.⁶⁰⁷

The IDP report very usefully describes in some detail, the various land tenure systems being operated in Ngqushwa, particularly those systems that had evolved in a rural setting i.e. freehold, quitrent, communal and permission to occupy. However there is little attempt to relate this complex pattern of land tenure to the municipality’s likely land administration functions including the fundamental and exclusive municipal right to levy property taxes (rates.)

Little consideration is given to the fact that the Ngqushwa municipality had demonstrated little ability to cope with its existing service and public administration commitments in the two small urban areas of Peddie and Hamburg. What exactly did the planners think that Ngqushwa officials would do with this technical description of the vast rural areas that the municipality had failed to impact in any significant way? Indeed the implication that the municipality had any form of beneficial public service function in the rural areas was patently disingenuous. Despite much packaging of data and statistics from Statistics South Africa and the Municipal Demarcation Board, it is doubtful that the new IDP document would allow any of the municipal staff or councillors to undertake any new analysis or formulation of local data that would significantly change the manner in which the municipal area was serviced and managed. Indeed the much vaunted promise of

all embracing IDPs ignored the fact that previous planning for small towns had gone largely ignored even when it broke with the limitations of space and infrastructure and tried to include human agency:

Consultants have drawn up Structure Plans in the past. The most recent Structure plan that was located was the Proposed Draft Peddie Structure Plan drawn up by Urban Dynamics in February 1995. The Department of Local Government and Housing commissioned the Structure Plan. Urban Dynamics was requested to revise a 1985 Peddie Development Plan. The plan therefore includes a “development strategy” which resembles in part the IDP requirement for action plans based on institutional capacities. Although the plan contains much useful data and development insights, it was not available in the municipal offices, and does not appear to have been used in any significant way by the current administration.⁶⁰⁸

Similarly there was very little evidence that the Hamburg municipality had made constructive use of a *Structure plan* prepared by Wanklin and Associates in 1996 or of the Zoning Scheme / land use plan that was being prepared by Theart Mgiijima and Associates during 1999. The IDP process not only undertook to produce more effective plans, it also undertook to remedy the very limited capacity within municipalities for strategic thinking. Before effective plans could be produced, the planning exercise had to be valued and appreciated for its strategic benefits. This proved to be a naïve undertaking. At its March 1999 conference on IDPs the Cape Town based NGO, FCR noted:

It assumes that municipalities have the capacity to analyse and calculate, define, internalise and respond to the full range of community needs. Most of the municipalities surveyed, however clearly lacked the strategic capacity to do so. The current policy framework assumes that municipalities have at least a limited capacity to oversee (and authority to guide) development activity in their jurisdictions. In practise they have not succeeded in exercising it.⁶¹⁰

7.7 Local Perceptions and Understanding versus Scientific Information

By way of contrast, the Afesis-corplan approach to planning embodied the idea of valuing and using local knowledge or opinion to frame the development challenges that confronted a municipality. These *participatory* efforts at planning were not without their own problems. Indeed there were often instances where local knowledge or the *collective consensus* on a particular issue was entirely at

odds with reliable data and records. Nevertheless the NGO approach, drawing partly upon Fals-Borda's Participatory Action Research conventions, attempted to reconcile the participatory with the *scientific*. Local knowledge and understanding was valued and included but was subject to critical inquiry and the basis for criticism was invariably the more extractive and 'scientific' methods of planning. Bart Pijnenburg outlines Fals-Borda's explanation of how the two systems come together and supplement each other:

Knowledge is seen as the key to empowerment. The objective of PAR is to foster a critical and reflective attitude on the part of local people. There is also a need to merge scientific, outside knowledge with local knowledge; "combining academic and empirical rationalities appears indispensable to proceed from common sense to good sense".⁶¹¹

Participatory Action Research, adapted with a mix of anthropological and sociological conventions, was much favoured by those NGOs who were suspicious of IDP as pure *techno-science*. The method ultimately tried to reflect people's understanding and interpretation of their environment as more important than a scientifically accurate and statistically defensible representation. In some instances this led to 'hopeful' or even naïve observations like:

Employment levels are reportedly up over the last five years in Peddie, mostly due to development projects, which employ locals.⁶¹²

Participatory Action Research embodies the idea of *critical reflection* applied both to scientific data (*outside knowledge*) and local knowledge. In the IDP experience the NGO often found it difficult to apply criticism to the perceptions of *local reality*, particularly when that 'reality' had assumed the status of a popular local belief. In Peddie for example crime could not be denied as a social factor however the local officials and politicians down-played this insisting that the crime was 'non-violent' in nature. Afesis-corplan felt constrained to reflect this version in the IDP documentation but it introduced a very ambiguous dimension to the report:

Crime is a problem in Peddie, breaking into and stealing from shops is particularly common, and is on the increase. Not much of the crime is violent however. The local First National Bank (the only bank in town) was robbed at gunpoint twice in 1998.⁶¹³

Planners might have been expected to bring more rigor to the exercise by clearly categorising armed robbery, for instance, as a violent crime and presenting

statistics to quantify the prevalence of such incidents. However in matters of safety and security the approach of the planning industry, as represented in the Ngqushwa Municipality 2002 IDP is even less useful. *Safety and security* is analysed almost entirely in terms of the provision of police stations and about two sentences on local efforts at community policing:

Currently there are 9 police stations and one magistrates court in the study area to handle safety and security issues. These are Punzana, Tamara, Nonibe, Bell, Hamburg, Qamnyana, Tyefu, Peddie and Moyeni. Concerns were raised at Representative Forum meetings about the relocation of Moyeni police station to Mpekweni as its current location is far from the catchment communities.

In addition to the police stations, community policing was also established in 1997, in an attempt to involve community members in crime prevention and conflict resolution. These community policing (sic) are confined to major centres and the need to spread them out to the rural settlements was highlighted during our Representative Forum meetings. Peddie police station needs to be upgraded to a fully –fledged police station to incorporate all units that existed before in order to be effective to the entire area.⁶¹⁴

This illustrates how planning can misrepresent a particular reality. In this instance the problem of crime, which at the time included taxi violence, domestic violence, armed robbery etc is reduced down to a manageable problem of providing a form of infrastructure (police stations). The problem can thus be ‘solved’ because it falls within the ambit of the resources and services that the state can provide. Government’s National Crime Prevention strategy was yielding inconclusive results at this time but government **was** able to build, equip and locate facilities like police stations. Thus the IDP addresses itself to the need for these resources. In rural terms 9 police stations serving 2246 square kilometres with each station serving an average of 10 444 people does not seem unreasonable. (By comparison for example, the Duncan Village police station in Buffalo City serves about 70 000 people).⁶¹⁵

Local Observation and Narrative

An alternative approach is simply to record the observable and offer *suggestions* for improvement de-linked from assumptions about the role of the state and the potential of its development programmes. Afesis-corplan placed some importance on simple observation of obvious local activities, based on the (perhaps naïve) idea that the local stakeholders could be empowered to find solutions to their problems, once these were presented in clear and insightful ways:

Many households have small vegetable gardens, and there is a church-run vegetable project called Masibambane...farming includes pineapples, oranges, cattle, sheep, goats, chickens etc. This is mostly subsistence farming.⁶¹⁶

In contrast the 2002 IDP presented a more 'scientific' and quantified picture of economic activities:

Although agriculture appears to be the main primary activity in the municipal area, it accounts for only 11,14%. The agricultural economy of the region includes an unproductive extensive subsistence agriculture commonly found in the traditionally settled Tribal areas and freehold farms.

While the latter description presents a sounder basis for planning, it is by no means clear that the relevant municipal stakeholders would have been able to make any more sense of this data than they would of the somewhat pedestrian observations of Afesis-corporation. Unlike later planning documents, Afesis-corporation's simple description of the recent history and assets of the Peddie municipality create a strong sense of the plight of a municipality in a former homeland town and are arguably therefore more relevant to the limited capabilities of such a municipality:

There is currently no assets register; it was destroyed in October 1991 when the municipal offices burnt down.¹⁶ Many municipal records and assets were lost in the fire. During 1999 the municipality was temporarily housed in an old house but later moved to new offices that have been renovated. Funding for a new building has been received and will probably be combined with the community hall across the N2

Current assets were verbally described as:

Vehicles: 1 bakkie (LDV), 2 tractors, 3 trailers (1 refuse, 1 sewerage, 1 delivery)

Buildings: 1 community hall, 1 library

Equipment: 1 brush cutter, 1 plough,

Installations: 1 sewerage purification plant, 1 solid waste tip-site, and 1 sports field.

Office Equipment: 1 computer, 1 fax machine, 1 typewriter, 1 photostat machine, 1 telephone and 1 printer, the usual office furniture (filing cabinets, desks, chairs etc.) are also evident.⁶¹⁷

¹⁶ Note that A-C does not presume to comment on the fact that the register has not been re-created over the past 8 years.

Planning and De-politicisation

The IDP habit of treating municipal councils and administrations as apolitical entities was integral to the approach that represented local government in idealised mode, devoid of any particular social or political context. This proved to be particularly shortsighted in places like Ngqushwa where council and the administration were caught up in their own conflicts which would inevitably effect the implementation of any plan. Unlike most IDP documentation of the time, the Afesis-corplan report refers directly to the political situation of the municipality i.e. council's internal rifts and conflicts— an aspect that is largely absent in other planning documents of the time. Even in the Afesis-corplan report, the political dimension arises only from a need to explain why the municipal administration appeared to seek contact and guidance from outside the municipality:

External relations are mostly with LG&H (the provincial Department of Local Government and Housing) in the form of grants and funding, as well as monitoring, and the odd bit of training. The Town Clerk feels that this is useful, and that they (the department) are accessible. At the time of the interviews, the officials seemed to need external contact to make up for the serious problems within council, which led to poor management in the municipality.⁶¹⁸

At the time of the interviews only 3 of the 8 Peddie councillors were active and “there was considerable conflict within council” despite the fact that ANC candidates were unopposed in the 1995 elections (the fact that no other parties received sufficient nominations to qualify for the role, meant that no polling was actually undertaken.)⁶¹⁹

The matter (the inactive council) was effecting the morale of municipal staff who found it hard to be positive and (to) move forward when decisions and directives from council were absent.⁶²⁰

At the end of 1999 Afesis-corplan had begun to test a research tool which would track certain measures of political governance in the municipality. Entitled a “Good Governance Survey” the research tried to examine the relationship between the municipality and local civil society by developing and refining a set of questions which could be posed to 3 different groupings i.e. councillors / officials, organised civil society and the public. These questions were designed to act as ‘indicators’ of good governance as defined by the Local Government White Paper, the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 and the Municipal Systems Act of 2000. In the phase of the survey which included Hamburg and Peddie, East London and King William’s Town

were also included. In total the survey covered 338 randomly selected respondents from the 3 groupings across all four towns. The survey did not purport to offer a representative sample.

Table 15: Respondents to Afesis-corplan Governance Survey 1999

Town	Cllrs & Officilas	CBO members	Public
Hamburg	5	8	17
Peddie	4	13	12

The interviews with the above respondents are not proffered as a formal survey but simply an indication of the type of political governance issues that might be considered when attempting to present the strengths and weakness of a municipality for planning purposes– while most and while the merits and validity of the survey method cannot be examined at length here, some of the findings are at least indicative of problems at a political level.

In Peddie 3 of the 4 councillors / officials believed that council and community had distinctive roles which complemented each other i.e. there is no confusion of roles between non-elected civil leadership and elected public representatives. Only 2 of the respondents from community-based organisations held this view. In Hamburg there were similar gaps in perception with 4 of the 5 councillors and officials affirming the distinction and only 3 of the 8 CBO members.⁶²¹ In Peddie 3 of the 4 of councillors and officials claimed that council meetings were open to the public (a stipulation of the Municipal Systems Act). Only 3 of the 13 CBO members concurred and 46% of the public assented to this view. In Hamburg roughly 50% of both the councillor/ official and the civil leadership groupings agreed that council meetings were open but only 18% of the public held this view.⁶²² In Peddie about 50% of councillors and officials felt that the municipality reports to the public how public funds are spent (40% said this did happen and 10% did not know). Within the civil leadership / general public group only 16% assented to this view (56% said it did not happen and 22% did not know)⁶²³ and none of the public held this view (54% said it did not happen and 46% did not know) In Hamburg the pattern was similar for councillors and officials (50% split) most civil leaders (about 68%) did not know and only 9% of the public believed such reports were made.⁶²⁴

Despite clear evidence of divergent views on the state of local democracy between councillors and officials and the constituencies they serve, the majority of CBO and public respondents (about 77%) felt that councillors have sound motives for standing for public office i.e. the good of the community rather than personal advancement.⁶²⁵

The survey cited above is more an example of the kinds of issues that are lacking from planning than a definitive 'snapshot' of the municipality. The survey did point towards factors that would need to be considered in the formulation and implementation of any bold new municipal plan. The blurring of roles as leadership moved backwards and forwards between informal civic roles and formal political functions was apparent to civil organisations and the public but not to those in leadership. Basic provisions for the transparent functioning of council, for example open council meetings, and the public presentation of reports, were probably not being implemented. Despite these lapses, civil society still held considerable faith in the good intentions of their local public representatives. By 2000 / 2001 the amalgamation of municipalities and the growth of municipal administrations, already outlined, had introduced further political complexity into the Ngqushwa municipality.

7.8 Corruption

Municipal corruption is clearly a factor in explaining why sound policies are sometimes unable to achieve their practical objectives. Pieterse writes that while the developing world has "a long road to travel before we witness the emergence of empowered capable, democratic and efficient local government", South African local government policy is potentially different in four key respects.⁶²⁶ Pieterse cites firstly the power of municipalities to influence the political systems in respect of control over development resources, secondly, the existence of adequate financial resources, thirdly capable administration and finally "reliable accountability mechanisms" in respect of the conduct of both elected politicians and bureaucrats.⁶²⁷ While the first three assertions have always been subject to vigorous debate, it is this last assertion, usually regarded as the forte of South African governance, that is increasingly in doubt, despite the strong legal framework for public accounting and the existence of Constitutionally entrenched watchdog institutions like the Auditor General, the Public Protector and the National Prosecuting Authority.

The preceding chapters of this paper have shown that IDPs have had little impact on irrational and irregular deployment of public resources. Two years after the first official IDPs came into being there is little evidence that the IDP framework will fulfil Pieterse's expectation that it:

...pull(s) institutional practise towards popular democratic control in a system with clear norms and rules and respect for financial durability.⁶²⁸

Whereas IDPs purport to govern budgets and expenditure, to entrench public oversight and pay lip service to principles of corporate governance, they seldom address issues of existing nepotism or political influence over the appointment of senior managers for example. For obvious reasons, municipalities are unlikely to address corruption as a strategic issue in their IDPs. Nonetheless corruption / irregular financial management was a significant issue within Eastern Cape municipalities in the period under discussion. For the period February 1999 to June 2002 for example the Special Reports of the Auditor General on Eastern Cape municipalities have consistently reflected a range of *irregularities* related to collection of debts, tender procedures, fixed assets registers, leave registers, banking, tax payment, management of the revolving fund, stock counts and payment of creditors. The Eastern Cape Department of Housing, local Government and Traditional Affairs indicated in 2001 that in terms of its monitoring function in respect of corruption at municipal level, it had carried out investigations and inspected accounting records in 3 municipalities (Tsomo, Mount Fletcher and Cookhouse). It had also conducted investigations at a further 14 municipalities (Steytlerville, Whittlesea, Cofimvaba, Maclear, Tsolo, Butterworth, Mount Ayliff, Ngqeleni, Umatata, Lusikisiki, Aliwal North, Mqanduli, Klipplaat, Elliot and Molteno.) Further the Department had taken note of the Auditor-General's report and made internal investigations in the case of 3 municipalities (Lady Frere, Bedford and, Seymour). Thus 20 or 21% of the provinces 94 transitional local councils had undergone some level of corruption inquiry during the 2000 / 2001 financial year.⁶²⁹

The provincial strategy that flowed from these investigations are not always clear. Nyandeni municipality (incorporates former Ngqeleni and Libode) for example, has featured in repeated investigations (see above) and adverse media coverage, is a case in point. The municipality was visited by a delegation of the Provincial standing Committee on Housing and Local Government of the Eastern Cape Legislature on 20 June 2001 as part of its routine visit to all municipalities.⁶³⁰ The delegation notes its concern with:

- the lack of uniformity in tariffs and rates between the two former municipal areas of Ngqeleni and Libode
- continued separation of financial systems between the two towns
- outstanding debts by other government departments
- a 180 day-old debt to the department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF)
- a dispute around contributions to the pension scheme

The delegation was clearly not looking to find fault. The absence of financial controls and regulations for example is ascribed to “shortage of personnel”⁶³¹ with the assurance that assistance from the Municipal Support Programme (MSP) and the establishment of a *treasury department* in the new organogram will remedy the matter. The existence of a credit control policy and an indigent policy is noted but “There is no register as the people who are qualifying are not identified as yet. The municipality is waiting for equitable share.”⁶³² The municipality has no procurement policy or asset register; “the municipality get (sic) quotations and select the cheapest...for roads they go to tender. Tendering is done by consultants employed by the municipality; the consultants do the adjudication and submit recommendations to council. There are no leave or recruitment policies but the assurance is that the MSP will deal with the matter.”⁶³³ Municipal vehicles are not controlled through logbooks and even though there are only 3 vehicles, the MSP has been tasked to set up the system. The delegation reports and therefore tacitly accepts the assertion that council meetings are held and that the public participate in municipal affairs, including budgeting via ward committee meetings.⁶³⁴

The general comment of the delegation does not include any reference to corruption or irregularity. In the case where R343 000 has been misappropriated from housing subsidies to pay salaries, the delegation simply recommends that this should be paid back. Whereas its own provincial department has listed the municipality as under investigation, the delegation simply reports to the legislature that the municipality should be reimbursed for traffic fines paid to the Department of Transport, that it needs to be ‘workshopped’ on the guidelines for ward committees and that the Department of Housing and Local Government should provide financial assistance to pay pensions to municipal staff “who qualify for pension.”⁶³⁵

Thus in the face of a municipality clearly not in full control of its core functions and with virtually no financial and administrative controls in place and acknowledged allegations of corruption, the legislature’s prescribed solution is to bail the

municipality out of its financial predicament and to provide some consultant assistance and training on core functions. The value of the provincial government's political oversight and monitoring mandate would therefore seem to be quite limited. It would seem futile therefore to attaché much importance to the avowed monitoring function of the province. In this instance the requirement for clean and efficient local administration is subverted by the provincial legislature doing the bare minimum in terms of performing its oversight and monitoring obligations and recommending actions (bail-outs for example) that may actually encourage corruption.

What accounts for this situation? Eastern Cape politicians and civil servants regularly condemn corruption and are always anxious to present themselves as willing to take strong steps to curb it. The Public Service Accountability Monitor is an NGO based at Rhodes University that monitors transparency and accountability in the public sector. Its main focus to date has been the Eastern Cape Provincial Government. In a 2002 survey of 169 provincial officials from different departments the PSAM discovered highly nuanced attitudes to the definition of corruption:⁶³⁶

- Whereas 895 of respondents thought it was “wrong and punishable” to proactively demand bribes or abuse funds, 48% said it was not wrong or ‘wrong but understandable” to accept gifts from citizens for performing services which are part of their jobs.⁶³⁷
- Between 21 – 23% of respondents tended to rationalize corruption on the basis that extra payment was required because government officials are poorly paid or extra payments and favours help government to function more effectively or simply that corruption was unimportant as there are more important things to worry about.⁶³⁸
- Of particular relevance to local government was the fact that 27 reported having witness to political patronage (favoring political allies) and 33 % said they had witnessed nepotism (awarding jobs or contracts to relatives)⁶³⁹
- A particularly gloomy finding for policy-makers was the perception that corruption had increased since liberation. Most respondents (75%) had working experience within the public service of the notoriously corrupt former homeland regimes. Based on this 42% felt that corruption had increased since the “coming of democracy.”⁶⁴⁰

Only 52% of respondents were confident that action would be taken if they reported corruption and 68% were concerned about being legally protected if they reported corruption.⁶⁴¹ The PSAM noted cases that seemed to support the veracity of these fears, for example the ex-head of the Eastern Cape Education Department, Modidima Mannya was tasked with ridding the department of corruption and duly suspended more than 11 officials over a 3-month period. Mannya then received numerous death threats and required a bodyguard, however provincial authorities withdrew his bodyguard and Mannya and his family were forced to flee the province in January 2001.⁶⁴²

The IDP process was consciously or unwittingly blind to these basic shortfalls in the institutions of local and provincial government. The remedy it offered was one of systems creation and procedure while there was ample evidence that these solutions were either to be endlessly delayed or subverted. The political and administrative culture of municipalities was easily able to incorporate the visionary elements of development and democracy while remaining stubbornly resistant to its practice at the most modest level. Planning and related procedures were in fact readily adopted by those who wished to divert attention away from their fundamental abuse of municipal politics for personal gain.

7.9 Conclusion

It is perhaps unfair to the broad project of Integrated Development Planning to select case studies from the Eastern Cape to test the model. The Eastern Cape is not a typical province within the South African nation. As provinces go, it is overburdened with development challenges like poverty and its history has set its inhabitants some way back of the starting line in the race to the nation anticipated in our Constitution. But if IDP success is less likely in the Eastern Cape, it is also more important. Not just in the sense that the poor of the province need the miraculous outcomes that planning promises but also because planning and IDP in particular claim to be able to conquer the worst outcomes of history and tradition. In didactic terms therefore the Eastern Cape is the ideal testing ground for IDP.

At the start of this chapter there is an attempt to acknowledge the specificity of the region and how its experience of colonialism, apartheid and a complex transitional era may have shaped the subsequent political behaviour of its main players. In other words, it is acknowledged that in local politics and the emergence of governance traditions, the Eastern Cape is probably the equivalent of a "school of hard knocks." It is unsurprising therefore that the province has received the

preferential allocation of public infrastructure funding, besides the fact that it is a political priority for the ANC. And this is where the limitations of planning and technical programmes of intervention are revealed. The vast resources ploughed into the province almost never realise a concomitant return in the quality of life of its citizens. The ruling ANC seems to have a particular problem here. Clearly it needs interventions of superior effectiveness to retain the loyalties of its poorest constituency however the regional and local elites charged with leading and managing those programmes are probably the least skilled and the most prone to corruption in the country. Furthermore, should they be challenged, they may call upon complicated networks of patronage and loyalty involving tradition, urban/rural divides, party hierarchies and even the remnants of the former Bantustan civil service.

The ANC also seems to suffer a particular insecurity about the province perhaps believing that if the edifice were to crack in the “home region” then it would only be a matter of time before the rest of party machinery around the country begins to break up. This in itself may begin to explain the reluctance to take action against regional power cliques and the bizarre choices made for leadership of the province.

At the level of IDP is obviously the political behaviour of local leaders that is important and here the chapter has tried to set out some of the experiences of transition and negotiated change that may have influenced municipal leadership. This needs to be viewed against the attempt to interrogate (superficially) the idea that the shortfalls in the new local government system are traceable to weak foundations of local democracy. This paper is critical of such a view and attempts to show that such a weakness, if indeed it does exist, originates from the failure of formalised party systems to build upon what were fairly strong democratic tendencies in civil society during the anti-apartheid struggle and even during the transition phase.

Overall the two municipal case studies that are presented raise a number of questions about the process of planning. Firstly in a brief look at needs prioritization, budgeting patterns and performance management systems in Buffalo City, the technicist imperative in IDP is revealed with its paper-thin claim to rationality. In this instance IDP functions more as a vehicle for public marketing or winning citizens' compliance. Far from the brutal economic rationality that the radical critique would anticipate from planning, the Buffalo City IDP provides the rationale for expanded programmes and institutional costs that have less and less to do with service delivery. Apart from the use of plans to justify inflated institutional costs, Buffalo City also reveals how plans are reinvented or revised to justify any

level of performance. Provided the planning agency retains control and successfully vends the promise of change or to paraphrase Escobar, “breaks with the past” then the IDP may be said to be successful.

Similar trends are discussed in the deeply rural municipality of Ngqushwa. The Ngqushwa IDP process is significant because it illustrates the impact of other planning-related events like the municipal re-demarcation of 1999-2001. The paper therefore is obliged to examine the extent to which the Municipal Demarcation Board juggled its own criteria and stretched its mandate to produce ‘unprecedented’ outcomes – a feature that is typical of what John Friedman terms the “engineering model of planning” i.e. that which claims a scientific character and a superiority over other forms of decision-making.⁶⁴³ This section shows how a partially defined and completely untested vision of what South African local government could become, drove a series of hasty decisions about municipal boundaries. The effects of these decisions are then traced through the Ngqushwa IDP experience and more briefly to other municipal developments around the country. In the work of the MDB we begin to find traces of the “authoritarian high modernism” referred to by James C. Scott and we see why the supposedly independent Board was so useful to political interests within the South African state and how one of the most powerful demonstrations of state power or high modernism since apartheid, went largely unchallenged. The Ngqushwa IDP is also examined in some depth and the methodology of formal IDP is compared with a less formal NGO project in the same municipality. Again the focus is mainly rationality and questions of resource allocation and it emerges that the 2002 Ngqushwa IDP is mainly a plan for accumulation by the local municipal elite based on a model of local government that entails long-term dependence on national government. This section also looks into those non-rational aspects, corruption for example, of social and political life that planning cannot factor and invariably addresses (always ineffectually) through systems and procedures.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

This paper has attempted to show that a broad consideration of planning theory is useful when reviewing the IDP programme in South Africa. Reliance on the technical literature, the planning handbooks, government dogma and the planning legislation, would lead to the conclusion that IDP is simply about better infrastructure, growing local economies, more functional human settlements and above all the prioritisation of services for poor people. However as Klosterman reminds us in the introductory chapter, this concern with public services, health, safety and better amenities is only part of what concerns planning. Planning is always about something more and is invariably focused on the vision of a *better society*. Like Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier, the drivers of the IDP programme believed that post apartheid South Africa, encumbered with its peculiar legacy of skewed service infrastructure and dysfunctional urban settlements, could not rely on the groups, individuals and institutions that would ordinarily direct societal change. Integrated development planning, socially aware and technically precise but most importantly, omnipotent and infused with the authority of experts, was the institution to direct that change and ensure that its outcome was consistent with the values of the *new* South Africa.

The smooth transition from grand apartheid planning to grand post-apartheid planning needs to be regarded with wariness. Planning's ability to serve ideologically diverse agenda's is frequently overlooked despite the fact that this has been one of the enduring lessons of the discipline, reaching as far back as the three "iconic" planners discussed in chapter one. This paper has shown for example that urban settlement forms under apartheid were elaborately planned and that the undoing of these spatial patterns formed much of the rationale for post-apartheid planning, namely the IDP process. One of the problems with the neo-Marxist view of the instrumentality of planning is the fact that, apart from downplaying the historical role of planning in socialist societies, it tends to underestimate the adaptable functionality of planning in serving groups whose interests are less clearly tied to a neoliberal agenda. Fishman's discussion of the three iconic planners is also important in that it reminds us that societies become 'ripe for planning' through a set of social, economic and political circumstances. South African planner Allan Mabin acknowledgement of this is worth repeating:

Over the past century South Africa has been no stranger to reconstruction efforts, or to planning as a component of reconstructions. New planning systems were created after several major disruptions of society. ⁶⁴⁵

A remarkable degree of continuity is encountered in the visionary roll of planning under apartheid and the post liberation planning experience. Whereas the broad objectives of planning may change radically, the demonstration and use of the power of planning is constant. The allure of planning is the constant theme as its power to draw in potentially dissident perspectives (the example used is the NGO sector) is demonstrated time and again. The ambitions of planning are an equally important theme. The integrative function of planning is invariably overestimated and its social transformation promise is endlessly expounded but seldom realised.

Broad ranging local strategic planning like IDP suggests a high degree of decentralized state authority. However the ambiguity between the local autonomy implied in the right to formulate municipal IDPs and the restrictive terms of the overall IDP legal and policy framework needs to be critically understood. Persuasive notions of entrenched autonomy, as advanced by Oldfield need to be treated with a healthy degree of skepticism. The latter it seems can justify increasing levels of national oversight provided this is based on 'irrefutable' national development principles typically set out in macro policy instruments like the National Spatial Development Programme, GEAR and in the Eastern Cape, the Provincial Growth and Development Programme. The obvious problem in such thinking is the implied existence of a set of incontrovertible principles. However it is the interpretation of these principles through the professional and sometimes authoritarian logic of planning that should cause real concern and previous critiques of IDP have tended to neglect the possibility that planning is in itself is a powerful means of capturing and directing development discourse. One instance of this examined in this paper, is the manner in which IDP cleverly 'dips into' radical critiques of planning and pre-empts much of the criticism – only to draw heavily on the basic principles of technical rationality and the crushing logic of the economy.

In practical terms IDP in South Africa may be regarded as being confronted by problems of application. Government began to experience a growing gap between its policy ideals and its real administrative and governing capabilities at local government level. The ubiquity of planning helps to explain why the municipal government transformation programme remained fixated with high order policy matters at a time when its fundamental incapacity to ensure basic service delivery and governance were obviously lacking. This can only be further understood if the purposes of policy are not taken at their economic and political face value. Clearly modern government, and particularly weak government, does not always subscribe to the principle that policy complexity should reflect proven administrative capability. This paper explores the disconcerting possibility that the state may be

trying to govern *through* policy rather than *with* policy i.e. policy replaces good administration.

The intellectual exercise of municipal policy design in a middle-income, developing country like South Africa has been widely acclaimed. Apart from international recognition and consequently donor support, IDP provided government with a strong vision to direct and focus the minds of local politicians and municipal staff. More importantly the IDP programme proved effective in capturing the imagination of civil society. Initially the policy ideals and intentions managed to dispel criticism however the danger of any high-order policy framework is the disjunction it creates when practice and implementation invariably occur at a more modest level. Thus an excessively idealistic policy framework poses a real problem for a new, inexperienced and under-capacitated municipal bureaucracy. Their faltering performance is almost inevitably short of the administrative and governance standards contained in the policy.

For political leadership the IDP programme is a double-edged sword as it provides both the substance of vote-garnering political rhetoric but also the benchmarks against which their administrations will be measured, if not by citizens' than at least by their political bosses or other powerful interests like banks and developers. Where local public service consistently falls short of the political promises inherent in the policy, the glaring gap between policy and practice eats away at the legitimacy of the local state and its office-holders. The public not only perceives a growing gap between municipal objectives and actual outputs but may see their local officials as focused on irrelevant and unreachable goals rather than local needs. This dilemma is not unique to the local sphere of government and there are a number of factors such as citizen's allegiance to government based on identity and political history, which suggest that South African local government may be immune to this form of delivery audit or at least the consequences in terms of political loyalties.

Focusing on the gap between policy and practice nonetheless remains useful because it shifts away from a more conventional approach that suggests that the merit of policy can be assessed separately to that of bureaucratic and administrative capacity. Charles Lindblom⁶⁴⁶ notes that the latter convention, assumes that the broad frameworks of values and intent that occupy the world of policy-makers can be assessed on their own merit. The administrator's task is simply to see that the policy is implemented as the drafter intended and the policy designer takes no responsibility for the shortfalls of the policy implementer /

administrator. As Lindblom warns, the relationship between policy and technocratic decision-making is far more complex and it seems inevitable that policy must finally be evaluated on its outcomes.

Administrative competence is however seldom a hard consideration when assessing policy. Edgar Pieterse, while conceding less than ideal and uneven capacity across the country, suggests that South African municipalities as a whole were relatively well equipped in resource and human capability terms to take on the challenge of implementing a policy embodying participatory local government:

...South Africa seems potentially different because the new local government policy framework appears to satisfy four conditions associated with successful decentralisation: 'sufficient powers to exercise substantial influence within the political system and over significant development activities; sufficient financial resources to accomplish tasks; adequate administrative capacity to accomplish those tasks; and reliable accountability mechanisms...' ⁶⁴⁷

Ten years after the advent of democratic municipal government, a retrospective view might suggest that policy should have been 'tailored' to fit the demonstrated or proven capabilities of the bureaucracy and its political leadership. The conventional analysis of implementation strategy tends to focus exclusively on constraints in resources, human capacity and institutions plus the need to have properly 'orientated' staff. It is invariably assumed that that these must be improved, redeployed or realigned to meet the demands of policy. This perspective is invariably one of linear and inevitable progression. ⁶⁴⁸

The third structural change is to ensure sufficient administrative capacity. Government policy documents, including the White Paper on Local Government, acknowledge that the transitional municipal structures lack sufficient administrative and financial capacity to undertake their mandated responsibilities. Effective developmental local government will require appropriate staff in each municipality. The transitional municipal structures had too many of the wrong (inappropriately trained and inexperienced) staff and too few of the right staff. As national and provincial departments look to devolve new powers and functions to municipalities, the correct administrative capacity must also be built, through the devolution of appropriate staff. As well as capacity building at municipal level. ⁶⁴⁹

Attempts to understand the real relationship between policy and administrative output seem half-hearted. In February 2003 Dr Meshack M Khosa authored a report on behalf of the Centre for Policy Studies which tried to understand the relationship between policy-making and implementation by examining eight areas of social policy formulation and implementation namely: education, health, water, justice, the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) and the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS).⁶⁵⁰ Khosa quoted from State President, Thabo Mbeki's speech in mid 2002 where Mbeki suggested that government had good policies and institutions to enact these policies but that the real challenge lay in proper implementation. Why the state bureaucracy cannot simply implement policies as they were intended, seems to genuinely perplex government.⁶⁵¹ Khosa identifies two issues implicit in government's thinking:

1. policies adopted since 1994 are appropriate and sound
2. these policies are being imperfectly implemented

Khosa suggests that the relationship between policy and implementation is "complex and sometimes contradictory, and that it is the articulation of policy-making and implementation that often results in crises in policy implementation."⁶⁵² The report is a rare attempt to understand the relationship between policy-making and implementation and the institutions that undertake these activities, however it stops short of commenting on the possibility that the gap between policy and implementation may have an effect on the credibility of the policy itself and thus its efficacy. Inevitably the key conclusions are that "Implementation problems result from unrealistic and optimistic policies; in other words that implementation problems flow from the policies themselves" and that even when policies are sound, problems arise from the logistical aspects of implementation.⁶⁵³ The problem with this critique is the implied remedy through more modest or less ambitious policy – while certainly useful to administrators such policies would lack the bold '*breaking with the past*' element that is required to ensure their political support.

What distinguishes the South African IDP programme from 19th century planning and more recent market driven programmes was that IDP did not "almost always assumed the continued poverty of the poor and the privileges of the rich."⁶⁵⁴ In fact the abiding rationale for IDP was for more state resources to be directed to pro-poor strategies through clearly formulated targets and greater efficiencies. However the outcomes and financial impact of planning as illustrated by the Ngqushwa and Buffalo City case studies, suggest a new form of accumulation and self-beneficence that appears to lie behind the façade of the new model of 'democratic

and developmental' municipalities. One of the important techniques employed in such planning exercises is the manipulation of rationality that Flyvbjerg identified in the Aalborg experience. In Buffalo City's this entailed manipulation of the planning process to validate previous plans that had gone awry and to justify the building of a vast managerial empire within the municipal administration.

In point of fact, it is this manipulation of rationality with varying degrees of sophistication, that forms the common thread in both the Buffalo City and Ngqushwa case studies. In contradiction to stated policy intentions both IDPs provided a rationale for increasing staffing and associated costs while critical aspects of service provision like operation and maintenance were neglected and in general budgets did not match stated principles or strategies. Increasing numbers of senior managers and the establishment of entities like development agencies and non-profit companies did little to reduce the municipality's reliance on paid consultants and advisors provided by donor agencies. This occurred against a background of the planned nett decrease of R18m in infrastructure spending in Buffalo City between 2003 and 2007. The IDP notes and discusses this key issue but does not translate its rhetoric into preferential resource allocation. Only in 2004 / 2005 was the need to upgrade or replace most of the sewerage infrastructure fully reflected in the budget and by then it was arguably, too late as the space for discretionary spending had been greatly reduced. Buffalo City makes reference to intergovernmental agreements and planning frameworks that are ostensibly cooperative and supportive but in the final analysis, and when actually attempting to resolve problems like the release of land for new settlements, these frameworks become contradictory and restrictive. This problem is also illustrated in grand scale by the Ngqushwa study where policy incoherence resulted from an un-declared dispute between the National Treasury / Department of Finance and the Municipal Demarcation Board. While the former had framed a long-term policy of reduced local government dependence on the national fiscus, the MDB was framing a model that included a strata of small municipalities existing primarily as 'welfare' entities. Buffalo City, arguably more viable and self-sustaining as a local organ of state, found within this new vision an excuse for less financial prudence. Whereas the 2002 IDP framed over ambitious development objectives completely beyond the means of Buffalo City, new plans tried to justify the resulting lack of achievement and created a rationale for further planning. The looming crisis of a R62 million bad debt provision was not resolved and the pattern of potentially disastrous cutbacks on maintenance and the stripping of assets continued. At the same time Buffalo City looked increasingly to national government to cover its financial shortfalls.

Ngqushwa illustrates many of the same issues as Buffalo City but also includes the questionable outcomes of the demarcation process where two small under-performing municipalities were merged on the basis of an untested assumption that a newly empowered district sphere of government would fill capacity and resource gaps. The Ngqushwa IDP thus set the municipality on a path to increasing dependency on national government accompanied by a progressive de-linking of affordability issues from local socio-economic patterns and concerns. Like Buffalo City, the Ngqushwa IDP comprises a narrative where policy intention and actual practice merge or become very blurred. Intention is equated with reality but certain 'realities' e.g. the fact that the bulk sewerage treatment works services a tiny percentage of the population, are filtered out in order not to negate the master narrative of the plan. The IDP failed to factor recent administrative history into its formulations for the future. It failed to acknowledge for example that even minimal municipal service provision by the previous transitional local councils of Hamburg and Peddie had generated public debt and that larger projects flowing from the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme would deepen the debt trap. Most of the IDP strategy is formulated around and limited to an anticipated state response and where citizens are supposed to participate, it is strictly within the context of the hegemony of the local state. The local state, in the form of the municipality, was in fact largely absent. Its service obligations, apart from refuse collection, were mostly performed by the private sector and paid for with revenue it had not collected. The 2002 IDP entirely avoided this issue and set in place policies and measures that would further escalate financial overheads and said nothing to the long-standing problem of debt collection. It specifically ignored those brief but telling periods where more financially responsible policies had prevailed resulting for example in a not insignificant collection of property rates.

In more pedagogical terms Bond might simply assign these failures to the inevitable *capture by neoliberalism* while Pieter Le Roux⁶⁵⁵ might suggest that these were simply the result of the new ANC government's imperfect attempts to find a balance between redistributive economic policy (the RDP) and pressure from capital for fiscal discipline⁶⁵⁶ Leroke⁶⁵⁷ drawing upon the seminal argument of Fanon, might point out that this is simply another 'grave train' phenomenon and strongly resonant with the emergence of a new 'national elite' anticipated by Fanon for the postcolonial state in Africa. Denied the opportunity to accumulate capital under colonial rule, the national middle class is forced to use the organs of the new state to fight their way back into the capitalist order.

However it is Swilling et al writing in an earlier decade to the Buffalo City and Ngqushwa case studies, who best capture the spirit of what was to become a chronic and seemingly irresistible trend in local government. Planning and IDP specifically not only failed to prevent this trend but helped carry it to its logical conclusion:

There is undoubtedly much absurdity when it comes to 'majestic' displays of authority and pomp, to say nothing of the time and resources consumed. The efforts that communities make to address their own understanding of globalisation often get stuck in a disembodied theatrical performance of what passes for power, authority and modernity. The appearance of majesty, importance and efficacy, as manifested through spectacle, formality, bureaucracy, ceremony and the façade of urban modernity (mansions, luxury cars), is corrupted and made banal as it now can be applied to countless occasions and locations. Grandiose but empty ceremonies attended by excessive consumption have become all too familiar. These, however are easily seen through by everyone....the spectacle is supported because in the absence of viable alternatives, the collective mockery of the caricature is an act of self-recognition."⁶⁵⁸

END NOTES

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- Mrs Gloria Stuurman, resident and community leader in Hamburg 4 May 1998
- Mr M. Kota, mayor of Seymour Municipality, Seymour 16 July 1998
- Mr M. Sigabi mayor of the Stormberg District Council, Queenstown, 3 September 1998
- Mrs N. Ncawe, mayor of Hamburg Municipality in Hamburg 10 December 1999
- Dr S. Noruka, Director Environmental Services, East London Municipality, East London 29 May 1998
- Mrs N. Ncawe, mayor of Ngqushwa Municipality in Hamburg 13 March 2000
- Mr J. Badenhorst, ward councillor, Buffalo City Municipality, East London 12 December 2000
- Mr D. Xlotyeni, ward councillor of Ngqushwa Municipality in Hamburg 24 November 2001
- Mr J. Gauche acting general manager: administration, Buffalo City Municipality 2 February 2002
- Ms T. Mengezeleli, Afesis-corplan researcher, East London, 29 January 2002
- Mr H. Scott, consulting engineer, East London 21 February 2003
- Mr M. Gatyeni, fieldworker for Project for Conflict Resolution and Development 7 April 2003
- Mr L. Kanzi, municipal manager, Ngqushwa Municipality, Peddie 23 April 2003
- Ms D. Atkinson, development consultant, telephone interview 10 May 2003
- Mr M. Nkula, ward councillor Buffalo City Municipality, East London 16 July 2003
- Mr D. Odendaal deputy treasurer Buffalo City Municipality, East London 12 August 2003
- Mr D. Murray manager in finance department, Buffalo City Municipality, East London 15 August 2003
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