

**KWAZAKELE**

**The Politics of Transition in South Africa:  
An Eastern Cape Case Study**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the transition to democracy in South Africa through the use of case study methodology. The nature of political participation and the form of democracy to emerge at the end of the transition process are the central subjects of inquiry. They are examined through an in-depth study of the African community of Kwazakele, a township in the Nelson Mandela metropolitan area in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa.

The study covers the period from 1993 to 2000, and uses as a primary data source five surveys conducted among residents of Kwazakele during that period. The emphasis of the study lies on the experience of political participation of 'ordinary people' – in particular, the African urban working-class in South Africa who make up the core support base for the governing African National Congress.

The primary findings of the thesis are as follows:

- Representative democracy has been successfully consolidated in the community under study.
- Levels of political participation by urban Africans in the Eastern Cape are consistently high, both in formal political institutions (primarily elections) and in institutions of civil society.
- As politics has normalised at the end of the transition period, forms of direct democratic participation have declined.



- Despite the structural constraints on development, there is still potential for a high level of participation by citizens in effecting change at local level.
- Drawing on the experience of ordinary people in structures of direct democracy, this level of participation can result in a deeper and stronger form of democracy than exists in many established representative democracies.

# Table of Contents

<u>Abstract</u>	ii
<u>Table of Contents</u>	iv
<u>List of Maps</u>	v
<u>List of Graphs</u>	vi
<u>Acknowledgements</u>	vii
<u>List of Acronyms</u>	viii
<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Chapter 1: Theories of Democracy and Political Participation</u> >	4
<u>Chapter 2: Methodology and Research Methods</u>	45
<u>Chapter 3: Kwazakele – Geography, Demography and a History of Struggle</u>	66
<u>Chapter 4: Kwazakele in the Era of Revolt: Lessons of the 1980s</u>	93
<u>Chapter 5: Kwazakele in the Interregnum, 1990 – 1993</u>	135
<u>Chapter 6: The Founding Election of 1994</u> >	167
<u>Chapter 7: Development in Kwazakele, 1994 – 1999: Participation and Conflict</u>	186
<u>Chapter 8: Democracy at Local Level – the Local Government Elections of 1995</u>	229
<u>Chapter 9: Five Years On - Democracy at the End of the Transition</u>	255
<u>Chapter 10: Strong Democracy in an African Society</u>	285
<u>Bibliography</u>	318
<u>List of Interviews</u>	327
<u>The Kwazakele Surveys</u>	330

## List of Maps

<u>Map 1. Port Elizabeth in relation to South Africa</u>	66
<u>Map 2. Kwazakele in relation to Port Elizabeth</u>	68
<u>Map 3. Kwazakele borders and areas</u>	76
<u>Map 4. Kwazakele ANC branches and units</u>	79
<u>Map 5. Kwazakele sites of resistance</u>	107
<u>Map 6. Kwazakele sites of development</u>	196
<u>Map 7. Old ward boundaries (1995)</u>	236
<u>Map 8. New ward boundaries (2000)</u>	237
<u>Map 9. Voting Districts (1999 election)</u>	259
<u>Map 10. Kwazakele survey 1 interview locations</u>	330
<u>Map 11. Kwazakele survey 2 interview locations</u>	334
<u>Map 12. Kwazakele survey 3 interview locations</u>	339
<u>Map 13. Kwazakele survey 4 interview locations</u>	345
<u>Map 14. Kwazakele survey 5 interview locations</u>	352

## List of Graphs

<u>Graph 1. Voting poll in Kwazakele elections</u>	293
<u>Graph 2. Membership of political parties</u>	294
<u>Graph 3. Membership of political civil society</u>	294
<u>Graph 4. Existence of civic organisation</u>	295
<u>Graph 5. Existence of street and area committees</u>	295

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## List of Acronyms

ACC	Anti Crime Committee
ANC WL	African National Congress Women's League
ANC YL	African National Congress Youth League
ANC	African National Congress
APLA	Azanian Peoples Liberation Army
AWO	Azanian Women's Organisation
AZANYU	Azanian Youth Unity
AZAPO	Azanian Peoples Organisation
AZASM	Azanian Students Movement
BAAB	Bantu Affairs Administration Board
BIFSA	Building Industries Federation of South Africa
BLA	Black Local Authority
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPA	Cape Provincial Administration
CPF	Community Police Forum
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
CRADORA	Cradock Residents Association
DA	Democratic Alliance
DP	Democratic Party
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IDAMASA	Interdenominational African Ministers Association of South Africa
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
ISU	Internal Stability Unit (riot police)
JMC	Joint Management Centre

JSC	Joint Steering Committee
LNG	Local Negotiating Group
LRA	Labour Relations Act
MACWUSA	Motor Assembly and Component Workers Union of South Africa
MEC	Member of the Executive Committee
MK	uMkhonto we Sizwe
MPL	Member of the Provincial Legislature
NEDLAC	National Economic, Development and Labour Council
NEHAWU	National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NP	National Party
NNP	New National Party
NUMARWOSA	National Union of Motor Assembly and Rubber Workers of South Africa
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PASO	Pan African Students Organisation
PEBCO	Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation
PEM	Port Elizabeth Municipality
PEPCO	Port Elizabeth Peoples Civic Organisation
POPCRU	Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union
PWV	Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSC	Regional Services Council
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADF	South African Defence Force (up to 1994)
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SANCO	South African National Civic Organisation
SAP	South African Police (before 1994)
SAPS	South African Police Service (after 1994)
SASM	South African Students Movement
SAYCO	South African Youth Congress

SBDC	Small Business Development Corporation
TLA	Transitional Local Authority
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UN	United Nations
WDC	Western District Council



# Introduction

Young activist-intellectuals were, in the 1980s in South Africa, inspired by a deep belief in a radical form of democracy. Through a time that will be characterised in history as one of violence and terror, they upheld what was seen by some as a naïve belief that what they were striving for was a society where, to put it in one of the popular phrases of political mobilisation, 'ordinary people would take control over all aspects of their lives'.

Fifteen years after the brief moment when that ideal was realised in part in some townships in the Eastern Cape – the brief moment of 'popular power' in South Africa in 1985-6 – this thesis is attempting to make sense of that moment, and to assess its impact on 'ordinary people'. Precisely how democratic was that moment of popular power? Is such a form of democracy appropriate only to periods of great social upheaval and mass mobilisation? Is it only able to exist alongside political hegemony rather than pluralism, and is it thus inherently intolerant? Does the process of political democratisation at national level, together with the implementation of representative democracy and the 'normalisation' of politics in other ways, inevitably mean the end of direct or participatory forms of democracy? Did people feel empowered by their experience of direct democracy, and if so, how do they feel now – have they carried any of their experience into the new democracy, or have they been ironically 'disempowered' by the advent of national democracy? How is the experience of direct democracy remembered? Was that time seen as positive and empowering, or was it seen as a time of fear, pain and intolerance? Or was it experienced, and is it now remembered, simultaneously as both? Was it experienced as a unique revolutionary moment? Was the belief that ordinary people can control their lives indeed naïve? Should ideas that 'ordinary people' can indeed wield power – at least to the extent of controlling their own lives – be consigned, along with socialism and other egalitarian ideals, to the dustbin of history? How democratic is South African society now, how do ordinary people participate in this new

democracy, and what is the relationship between power and democratic process?

The central thesis to be explored in this case study is that the experience of direct democracy is inherently limited to short periods of social upheaval. Once political normalisation - which involves the institutionalisation of representative democracy - takes place, structures of direct democracy no longer wield power, or cease to exist. However, the experience of direct democracy is carried, at least partially, into representative democracy; thus elements of the former can co-exist with the latter. This co-existence strengthens democratic participation and has the potential to empower ordinary people.

The thesis is tested through an examination of the political participation of ordinary residents of an urban African community during the period of transition and democratic consolidation in South Africa. Taking as a starting point the experience of popular participation in the 1980s, the study examines the changing nature of political participation in this community through the 1990s. It looks at participation during the traumatic transition process from 1990 to 1994, and then at how people relate to the institutions of formal or representative democracy as they are introduced from 1994 onwards. It examines participation in elections in 1994, 1995 and 1999; and participation in structures of civil society during the same period. It attempts to answer some of the above questions, through both qualitative and quantitative assessments of political participation in a society in transition.

The phrase 'take control of all aspects of their lives' relates to three concepts that are central to political sociology: political participation, power, and democracy. The forms of political participation and the measurement of the extent of such participation is one of the central concerns of political sociology. The quality of democracy and the nature of power in society are central to political philosophy. In this thesis, both the extent and the democratic nature of political participation are examined. Through a detailed case study of a particular community, the active involvement of ordinary people in political processes is examined. The extent and nature of their

involvement, and therefore the quality of the democracy that is being built in South Africa, is the subject of this thesis.

# Chapter 1: Theories of Democracy and Political Participation

South Africa is today a democratic country. We who were born here say this with some pride, for despite the social and economic problems which are characteristic of many societies of the 'South', we have a society which is relatively stable and has all the characteristics of what is considered 'normal democracy'. There is a universal franchise for all adult citizens. This is exercised through participation in regular elections at national, provincial and local government level. These elections are contested by political parties that are free to exist, campaign and recruit members as they wish. There is a constitution that includes a justiciable bill of rights, which guarantees the basic human rights of all citizens. There is a free and vigorous press, and perhaps even more importantly, there is a vibrant and vocal civil society. These are considered the characteristics of a democratic society – or the 'minimum conditions' for democracy to be said to exist. (Diamond, 1992; Huntington, 1991; Phillips, 1991)

## ***Democratization, democratic consolidation and popular mobilisation***

Unlike in countries where democracy has existed for decades or even centuries, the benefits of a stable democracy are not taken for granted in South Africa. For one, the transition from authoritarian rule was recent enough and traumatic enough that people are fiercely defensive of their newly won rights and freedoms. For another, many of South Africa's neighbours have not as successfully negotiated the transition to democracy. Angola, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, not to mention the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi are all either in a state of intermittent warfare, or have not been able to consolidate or implement a democratic electoral system. Mozambique and Namibia, though characterised by political stability at present, have undergone radically destructive wars of decolonisation in the

recent past. Thirdly, South Africa is seen as something of a 'special case' in Africa: a strong state, an industrial economy, and the extraordinary moral leadership which developed in the anti-apartheid struggle, combine to ensure that international expectations keep South Africa democratic.

But what does democracy mean to ordinary South Africans? What has their experience been of the transition to democracy, or the democratisation process as it is sometimes called? And what kind of democracy has emerged at the end of the transition? An exploration of these issues needs to be situated in a discussion of what is meant by democracy and democratisation.

### **Theories of democratisation and transition from authoritarian rule**

The end of the 'Cold War' saw transitions from authoritarian rule to democracy in a number of countries during the 1980s and early 1990s. The definitive studies of such processes of democratisation have been conducted within the field of political science, using a comparative methodology. Thus O'Donnell and Schmitter's four-volume collection – the 'Princeton Project' - compares the democratisation process in countries of Southern Europe and Latin America, from 1974 until 1984, and comes to some general conclusions as to the optimal conditions under which 'successful' transitions occur. Their comparative approach focuses on the process of democratisation, dividing the transition to democracy into various stages – authoritarian regime deterioration, liberalization, democratisation and democratic consolidation.

Diamond, Lipset and Lindz have also examined a number of case studies of Third World countries that democratised in the late 1980s. The countries of Eastern Europe that democratised in the late 1980s have also been included in such comparative studies; and more recently, these theories of democratisation have been applied to African countries including South Africa. Thus Du Toit, Van Zyl Slabbert, De Villiers and others have applied O'Donnell's model of the process of transition to the events in South Africa between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s. The emphasis of this approach to transition has been on liberal democracy as the desirable outcome, which has a number of implications as noted by Ginsburg et al (1995:1). Firstly, the

nation-state is the unit of analysis in such theories, and comparisons are made between nation-states. Secondly, human rights, elections and party competition are considered primary in the transition process. Thirdly, the role of elites is given more prominence than that of 'the masses'. Popular participation is either a secondary consideration, or is considered as a negative factor – one that potentially threatens the transition or the consolidation of democracy. Political stability is deemed necessary for the successful consolidation of liberal democracy, and in many cases there is thus a stress on a 'politics of compression'. This refers to the 'demobilisation of popular forces which in most cases were instrumental in propelling the transition.' (Ibid)

### **Democratic consolidation and popular mobilisation**

The concern of many of the theorists of democratisation, or processes of transition from authoritarian rule to democracy, was to identify the factors or variables that made for a successful transition – in other words, one that led to a permanent democracy and not a reversion to authoritarian rule or a counter-coup, either at the time of the transition or after one election. The transition is deemed to be complete when a democratic regime is inaugurated. The consolidation of democracy after the transition is measured by, among other things, the holding of the 'second election'. For some, alternation in power is a 'key indicator' of the consolidation of democracy (De Villiers 2000:18; Huntington 1991: 266).

For the purpose of this study, South Africa is considered to be one of those countries that has undergone a process of democratisation, as outlined above. While conforming in broad terms to the processes outlined by O'Donnell (and as applied to South Africa by Du Toit and others), the point of interest for this thesis is the role of popular mobilisation in the transition process. The transition itself involves the moment of 'popular upsurge' that is 'a euphoric moment when 'the people' rediscover their own freedom and power, and believe they are able to challenge and take over the state itself.' (Du Toit 1990:3). In South Africa, 'the popular insurrection during 1985-6

clearly constituted one such moment of popular upsurge.’ (ibid) According to the transition theorists, this ‘moment’ is critical, as it may result either in a reversion to authoritarian rule, or in sufficient pressure being placed on the regime that it cannot reverse the process of transition. For some of the ‘transition theorists’, the involvement of the masses is not a necessary part of the transition at all; thus Huntington (1991:146) notes that

A popular image of democratic transitions is that repressive governments are brought down by ‘people power’, the mass mobilization of outraged citizens demanding and eventually forcing a change of regime. Some form of mass action did take place in almost every third wave regime change. Mass demonstrations, protests and strikes played central roles, however, in only about six transitions completed or underway at the end of the 1980s

For Huntington as well as for O’Donnell et al, dissent within the military is viewed as a more significant factor than popular mobilisation. While non-violent forms of mass mobilisation are seen as ‘preferable’ to violent or armed resistance, in that they pose less of a threat to ‘elite pacting’, they are still seen as possibly resulting in a counter-coup and thus should not be taken ‘too far’. There is no mention of the democratic (or undemocratic) culture within such mass movements, or the legacy that such mass mobilisation leaves for the building of a new democratic society.

Moreover, although some of the transition theorists deem the moment of popular upsurge to be of ‘great importance’, it is still only a moment, and is inherently ephemeral:

Sooner or later the popular euphoria subsides; the intense political mobilisation cannot be sustained; there is a clampdown by the security forces; internal divisions of interest and policies begin to appear among ‘the people’ (Du Toit 1990:3)

The discovery by ordinary people of their own freedom and power does not – and should not, according to this analysis – result in any lasting legacy of political participation. While the pacted transition does involve the broadening of political participation, it also involves an acceptance of moderation by opposition movements. Such acceptance involves not only an agreement to end armed struggle or the abandoning of the notion of ‘seizure of state

power', but also an acceptance of liberal institutions such as private property and the market. (Huntington 1991: 169-170). An acceptance of a limited form of democracy can be added to this list of compromises; and so, 'transitions were thus helped by the deradicalization of new participants and former leftists.'(Huntington 1991:171)

The extremely high levels of participation manifested in the moments of popular upsurge are considered by liberal political scientists to be aberrant in a 'normal' democracy. This is based on assumptions about the time and inclination that most people have for political participation; there is an element of truth in this, as is explored in Chapter 9. But all too often, the experience of participation in such revolutionary moments or moments of popular upsurge is also considered to be inherently 'dangerous'. For, as Barber has noted, 'The People' always pose a danger to a limited notion of democracy – a danger that must be contained: 'Liberal democracies' sturdiest cages are reserved for The People.'(1984:20-21)

The danger of such participation by 'the people' is considered so great a threat that it is often 'written out' of history once the society has 'normalised' and the masses are 'demobilised'. Cultural critic Greil Marcus (1996:18) writes, in relation to those who participated in mass protests such as in Paris in 1968 or Tiananmen Square in 1989, that

There are people who act and speak but whose gestures and words do not translate out of their moments – and this exclusion, the sweep of the broom of this dustbin, is a movement that in its way is far more violent than any toppling of statues. It is an embarrassment, listening to these stories and these cries, these utopian cheers and laments, because the utopian is measured always by its failure, and failure, in our historiography, is shame.....shame is history's gift to those who lose, to those who lose because they ask too much of history.

If the popular mobilisation of the moment of upsurge cannot be maintained beyond the transition in terms of the level of political participation of ordinary people, it has even less chance of being sustained if it hopes to pose a challenge to inequalities or class relations in the society. Thus, as Przeworski argued, and as has been applied to South African labour movement by



Ginsburg et al, a successful 'pacted transition' necessarily involves compromises on economic democracy:

We cannot avoid the possibility that a transition to democracy can be made only at the cost of leaving economic relations intact, not only the structure of production but even the distribution of income. (Przeworsky 1986:63)

Du Toit's application of O'Donnell et al's analysis is broadly in agreement:

The recognition of liberal rights and the achievement of equal political rights for all citizens do not necessarily mean a transition to socialism. On the contrary, once the transition from authoritarian rule to political democracy has been achieved, this may well tend to 'freeze over' the remaining social and economic inequalities, and indeed serve to legitimise them. (Du Toit, 1990:2)

When a society that has undergone a transition process, such as South Africa, has strong social movements, they can pose a threat to the consolidation of the liberal democracy, as they are likely (especially if based in working class interests) to push for greater economic transformation – or 'fundamental change', as South African activists used to put it. Thus Ginsburg et al concluded (1995:4):

In such situations, governments are confronted with two options in relation to social movements. They can either work to undermine them, or they can work with them to garner support for their programme. Where there are strong social movements, the first path can only be pursued at great risk, as it threatens to compromise the democratic character of the transition. Consequently, most governments attempt to draw in social movements through corporatist type arrangements, on the assumption that these will demobilise and moderate popular movements.

Despite there not yet having been an alternation in power (a point which will be returned to in the final chapter), South Africa is considered here to be one of those countries that have successfully consolidated democracy. The concern of this thesis is not so much the conditions under which democratic consolidation is successful, but rather the quality of the democracy that is the end result of the process. The participation of ordinary people, the nature of the social movements and parties that emerged after the transition, and the relationship of social movements to government – including the 'demobilisation' of social movements – are of central concern to this thesis.

The process of 'normalisation' of politics is one element of the changing environment for political participation. Political philosopher Andre Du Toit summarises the 'transition theorists' on this question as follows:

A central feature of this final stage of the transition is the 'normalisation' of politics: political parties re-emerge as the key political agents...Liberation movements, civics and other quasi-political organisations have to transform themselves into regular political parties geared to participate in electoral and parliamentary politics. (1990:4)

However, the relationship between parties and social movements, state and civil society, the formal and informal forms of participation, is not as straightforward as Du Toit has described. Liberation movements and social movements in South Africa have not simply transformed themselves into 'regular political parties', although there are considerable pressures on them to do so. The relationship between the ruling African National Congress and its social movement allies is a tense and ambiguous one, as will be explored below. Thus Ginsburg et al (1995:7) concluded that at this moment of the transition – the negotiation of the 'pact' – 'It became imperative...that the ANC reassert its organisational and ideological hegemony over the radical and precocious grassroots social movements that emerged during the near insurrectionary period of the 1980s.'

Whether the ANC in South Africa has succeeded in reasserting its hegemony over the radical social movements of the 1980s and early 1990s will be examined below. But as regards transition theory, it should be remembered that 'the masses' played a significant role in the process of democratisation. This is why Diamond is critical of the emphasis on 'elite pacting' within mainstream political science, noting (1992: 5-6) that

Political scientists who conceive of democratic transitions in this way miss an important element. That element is struggle, personal risk-taking, mobilization and sustained, imaginative organisation on the part of a large number of citizens.....The democratic revolution is not the work of lone heroes. It is the cumulative achievement of tens and hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions of citizens who become actively involved in civic movements...

## ***What kind of democracy?***

In the overriding concern with the consolidation of democracy, the concept of democracy itself seemed to have been lost – or at least taken for granted. The content or quality of the democracy to be instituted in South Africa was not questioned. After 1994, there was an unspoken assumption that South African society was democratic, and that the liberal democracy that had been achieved was as much as could be hoped for. Indeed, the fine constitution that was drafted, incorporating some of the most progressive liberal thinking in the world in its justiciable bill of rights, has been rightly seen as a model in terms of entrenching the ideals of pluralism, tolerance of all and the protection of individual rights and freedoms. What it does not do is encompass the radical, participatory notion of democracy that was adopted by popular organisations in the 1980s. Those who had been sceptical of the limitations of liberal democracy were won over by its reality in 1994, and there is no doubt to those who were living under an oppressive system that the freedom it offers is real. Yet ten years after the beginning of the transition process, the question of the nature of democracy has once again come to the fore.

### **Representative democracy: The minimum**

Held (1987:4) divided his models of democracy into two broad types: direct or participatory democracy, and liberal or representative democracy. He defined the first as ‘a system of decision making about public affairs in which citizens are directly involved’ and the second as ‘a system of rule embracing elected ‘officers’ who undertake to ‘represent’ the interests and/or views of citizens within the framework of ‘the rule of law.’ This division and the definitions used by Held are used throughout this thesis. The two models are not mutually exclusive in the real world, of course, and most democratic societies contain elements of both models. The prevalent liberal hegemony, however, stresses the liberal or representative model, which is thus sometimes referred to in this thesis as ‘normal’ democracy; it is also often called the minimalist or limited definition of democracy by its critics.

Critics of the limitations of representative democracy – especially those whose criticism is based on the lack of participation by ‘ordinary people’ in the processes that characterise such democracies – often turn to direct or participatory democratic theory for alternatives. Yet these are seen not as a discrete model to be implemented, but rather as a variety of ideas that can be put into practice to supplement the existing representational processes. Because of the ‘weight’ given to the institutional processes of representation in liberal democracies – in other words, regular free elections of public representatives, a government which includes a parliament of representatives empowered to make laws, and so on – these are termed here ‘formal’ politics. Formal politics in this sense means those political processes relating to institutions of state and government, which are the traditional institutions that structure and channel political participation by citizens in a democracy. In contrast, ‘informal’ politics refers to those arenas of public participation that fall within the sphere of civil society – to use the broadest and most accepted definition, that sphere of society between the individual or household, and the state. Political parties, being the bodies that contest elections and hold power in government, are considered part of ‘formal’ politics. The social movements that emerged in liberal democracies are considered part of ‘informal’ politics. These social movements operate primarily within the sphere of civil society, and have not aimed at contesting state power, but rather at empowering people outside of formal institutions. In this thesis, both spheres of participation are considered, and the relation between the two is examined. The usefulness of these distinctions – both the distinction between formal and informal politics, and that between political and civil society – is not unquestionable, however. The ways in which they are contested in practice in South Africa, within the governing party and its alliance with social movements, will be explored below.

It is also worth outlining a procedural definition of democracy, as developed by Schumpeter and Dahl among others. The significance of the procedural definitions of democracy is that they are closely related to the question of political participation. Thus Diamond et al define democracy as meeting three conditions: meaningful and regular competition (between two or more political

parties) for positions of power in government; a 'highly inclusive' level of political participation, 'at least through regular and fair elections'; and a society where civil liberties such as freedom of affiliation and expression are protected so as to 'ensure the integrity of political competition and participation'. (De Villiers 2000:7) Such a definition of democracy allows 'one to determine the various attributes of democracy in practice empirically – ie they can be established and, to a greater or lesser degree, measured.' (Ibid 2000:7) Critics of liberal democracy argue, of course, that levels of participation in many societies defined as democratic cannot really be said to be 'highly inclusive'. However, even these critics agree that basic freedoms, political competition and regular elections are the bare minimum for a polity to be considered democratic.

Huntington, in his study of transitions to democracy in the late twentieth century, uses a procedural definition as outlined above. He acknowledges that such a definition of democracy, which limits participation primarily to elections, is a 'minimal definition.' However, he justifies using a procedural definition on the grounds that alternative ways of defining democracy raise too many problems: (1991:9)

To some people democracy has or should have much more sweeping and idealistic connotations. To them, 'true democracy' means *liberte, egalite, fraternite*, effective citizen control over policy, responsible government, honesty and openness in politics, informed and rational deliberation, equal participation and power, and various other civic virtues. These are, for the most part, good things and people can, if they wish, define democracy in these terms. Doing so, however, raises all the problems that come up with the definitions of democracy by source or purpose.

In an exploration of political participation in a transitional society, it is not necessary to be restricted to such a procedural definition, however. More radical and participatory conceptions of democracy, which have emerged in various contexts, also contribute to the exploration.

## The participatory ideal of social movements

In many of the established liberal democracies such as the United States of America, the late twentieth century saw the revival of the debate about the nature of democracy. This was in part inspired by the new social movements that emerged from the 1960s through to the end of the 1980s. Some of these movements were particularly concerned with democracy, and the practice of democracy within their movements. Thus the manifesto of the American student movement *Students for a Democratic Society*, published as 'A New Left' in 1962, was critical of both communist and capitalist models of democracy. They opposed the assumption, seen as underlying the existing models, that people are incompetent and 'inherently incapable of directing their own affairs.' They posited a different kind of democracy as an ideal (MacArthur 1999:273):

As a social system we seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation, governed by two central aims: that the individual share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life; that society be organized to encourage independence in men and provide the media for their common participation.

Central to this conception of democracy was the active participation of ordinary people, often phrased in terms very similar to those used by activists mobilising against apartheid in the 1980s, or development activists in Latin America in the 1990s. The language was one that emphasised the need for ordinary people to take charge, to take action, to overcome apathy – especially in areas where their lives are directly affected (ibid):

A new left must transform modern complexity into issues that can be understood and felt close-up by every human being. It must give form to the feelings of helplessness and indifference, so that people may see the political, social and economic sources of their private troubles and organise to change society.

The feminist movement made a particularly important contribution to democratic theory in this regard. Others were involved in expanding democracy to the economic or industrial sphere of society; democratic theory thus gained from the experience of workers in Italy, Spain and elsewhere. Lastly, the notion of citizenship and the expansion of rights that was linked to

movements of ethnic or indigenous minorities, gays and lesbians and other 'group interests', contributed to democratic theory. Bottomore (1993:27) notes that 'The idea of democratic citizenship as involving a substantial and growing body of civil, political and social rights has thus...become a central theme in recent political thought about democracy.'

The intellectuals of the social movements within Western democracies developed a radical critique of the minimalist democracy that was accepted as 'normal' by the societies they lived in. This liberal democracy was based on individual rights, including property rights, and representative government. Political participation is, in the main, limited to elections for national government, and levels of participation in elections are moreover often notoriously low.

Some critics of electoral democracy such as Turner (1972:55-6) argue that the reasons for low participation are not ignorance or apathy, but are more profound: the 'ordinary person' cannot make the connection between his or her daily life, and 'politics' as it is practiced in the national parliament:

At least part of the reason why public opinion surveys in the western democracies reveal such a low level of knowledge and understanding of social issues lies in the very nature of the political structures of these countries. I vote for a leader every four or five years. But in between elections I do not participate in decision-making. 'They' do it all for me. When election time comes around again I do not know what has been happening, for there is no incentive in my daily life for me to follow what has been happening. What parliament decides affects my life considerably, but when and how and where it affects me I cannot see, since there is no thread for me to follow from my own situation to the problems facing society as a whole.

While the radical critics of this form of democracy – in particular the low levels of active citizenship – advocated greater involvement in public affairs by ordinary citizens, in the main, they did not envisage a change in state power. Thus developmental activists from Latin America and other parts of the 'third world' began to develop a critique of such movements that emphasised 'popular participation' without challenging the existing power relations of society:

These 'new' social movements de-emphasised the struggle for state power. They seemed to be looking, instead, for their share of economic or political benefits of development and more autonomy. Few seemed to be aware of the insurmountable contradictions between these two purposes. (Esteva 1998:283)

## **Economic and worker democracy: The socialist ideal**

For other democrats of socialist bent, by contrast, the movement for greater democracy necessarily involved economic democracy. For some, this was embodied by experiments in worker control at the point of production; for others, nothing less than changing the class basis of state power – in other words, socialist revolution. Activists in the 1970s and 1980s were fond of quoting Lenin's critique of capitalist democracy, where he not only argued that true democracy could only be realised in a classless society, but also delivered a scathing attack on the limitations of representative democracy:

Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation the modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty that 'they cannot be bothered with democracy', 'they cannot be bothered with politics'; in the ordinary, peaceful course of events the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life....Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich – that is the democracy of capitalist society. If we look more closely into the machinery of capitalist democracy, we shall see everywhere – in the 'petty' – supposedly petty – details of the suffrage...in the techniques of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the right of assembly...we shall see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor seem slight....but in their sum total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics, from active participation in democracy. (From *State and Revolution*, 1917, quoted in MacArthur, 1998:67)

Marx and Lenin in turn both drew on Rousseau's critique of representative democracy. Rousseau, in his 'fulsome contempt' for parliamentary democracy, saw the brief moment of voting as the only point at which ordinary people experienced freedom:

The English people believes itself to be free; it is gravely mistaken; it is free only during the election of Members of Parliament; as soon as the Members are elected, the people is enslaved, it is nothing (1968:141 quoted in Phillips)

Lenin similarly used Marx in his attack on the electoral system:



Marx grasped the essence of capitalist democracy splendidly when, in analysing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament! (MacArthur 1998:67)

Rousseau and Lenin were thus broadly in agreement in their critique of the limitations of representative or bourgeois democracy. While Rousseau advocated as ideal a form of direct democracy, Lenin argued that true democracy was not possible under capitalism. During the era of the Cold War, socialists in Western Europe as well as in South Africa drew on this critique of 'bourgeois' democracy. For many communist parties, socialist revolution, followed by democratic centralism or the 'dictatorship of the proletariat,' was the only path to true democracy. In South Africa, the peculiar situation which was analysed as 'colonialism of a special type' meant that members or supporters of the South African Communist Party adopted a theory of 'two stage revolution': first national democracy was to be attained, and only later socialist revolution would follow. Yet from the late 1980s, as social movements in the Eastern bloc rose to challenge the undemocratic nature of those societies, the dream of alternative forms of state power and governance were abandoned.

In the case of South Africa, the struggle was in fact for state power; yet this was gained by the liberation movement at the cost of class power. As argued by Przeworski, the sacrifice of egalitarian policies – or social and economic democracy – is the price that has to be paid for political democracy in such transitions from authoritarian rule. The second stage of the 'two stage revolution' was to be indefinitely deferred.

In respect of the more limited notion of worker democracy or worker participation at the point of production, the research of Carol Pateman, Robert Putnam and others explored these experiments and their implications for democratic theory. In South Africa, Rick Turner attempted to apply the ideas of Pateman and others in the context of apartheid. Influential on students, trade unionists and community organisers in the 1970s and early 1980s, he expressed an idealistic vision of participatory democracy, which was aspired

to and believed in by those activists initiating labour and community organisations. This is expressed in the following quote from his 1972 essay 'The Eye of the Needle'. He is refuting the 'common-sense' idea that workers do not have the competence to choose their own managers (1972:35):

This argument seems *prima facie* silly. After all, the idea that it is the workers' interest, and in theirs alone under such a system, for an enterprise to stay in existence and to run efficiently, isn't really very difficult to grasp. And at elections they are not choosing between two impersonal candidates talking about abstractions on television, where perhaps all they have to go on is which one smiles more convincingly. They are choosing between individuals with whom they work day in and day out, and whose worth and reliability are made clear to them in many different situations. And the issues being dealt with are ones with which they are thoroughly familiar, and which affect them immediately and obviously and personally.

Although Turner focussed on worker's control of factories, his influence was felt more broadly within the democratic movement in South Africa. The militaristic and intolerant tendencies of the liberation movements, and the 'democratic centralist' tendencies of the SACP, were thus offset by a genuine and deeply held belief in the intrinsic value of democratic participation by 'ordinary people'. This was the fundamentally anti-Stalinist belief held by many activists that 'ordinary people' were worthy citizens, to be empowered to 'take control over all aspects of their lives' as was commonly expressed in the 1980s.

While Turner argues (1972:36) that 'it is only if the worker participates in the control of the central part of his/her life – his/her work – that he/she can develop the personal qualities of autonomy, initiative and self-confidence necessary for our human model' it can be argued that participation in community structures in South Africa during the 1980s enabled people to develop the same qualities. The 'educative value' of participation is once again stressed as an important part of developing a culture of active citizenship; thus Turner reflects the arguments of Phillips and others around the value of participatory democracy:

There is ample sociological evidence that participation in decision-making, whether in the family, in the school, in voluntary organisations or at work, increases the ability to

participate, and increases that sense of competence on the part of the individual which is vital for balanced and autonomous development. (1972:36)

Such ideas were taken very seriously by the progressive trade union movement in South Africa, and the extent of worker understanding of democratic practice has been documented by Johan Maree (1986) and others. However, changing structures of production and the labour market have weakened the traditional socialist appeal that 'real' democracy can come only from organised labour. It can also be argued that organised labour, although theoretically considered the strongest voice of working class interests, is structurally weaker in South Africa today. Thus in working class communities, few trade unionists are able to offer direction in terms of development initiatives, local politics and holding government to account. It can be argued that organised labour – though still influential in economic policy – is declining in power as the traditional structure of the labour force changes. With massive job losses in manufacturing, even in industrial cities such as the subject of this thesis, the organised working class has little influence on decisions in the local polity. Labour organisations are on the defensive, and even where they participate in decision making at factory level, this is usually from a defensive position, trying to protect their membership from restructuring of production that will lead to retrenchments.

While the issue of class power and worker democracy has by no means been resolved, it is not the subject for discussion in this thesis, although it shall be returned to briefly in the conclusion. Here, ideas about democracy and representation are tested in relation not to workplace democracy, but to community democracy.

### **Direct and participatory democracy: The contribution of the feminist movements**

Feminist theory has also made a significant contribution to the debate around political participation. Recent feminist theorists have argued far beyond the extension of the franchise to women, which is taken as a given. They have explored the limitations of liberal democracy and posited a radical notion of

participation that breaks down many of the distinctions held dear in liberal theory.

Phillips (1991:9) notes that the discussion of democratic theory in the late twentieth-century has been characterised by a 'hard-nosed realism that has tried to break us of utopian dreams'. Thus the concern has not been to pose alternatives, but to ask more self-limiting questions such as 'What is the basic minimum below which no political system must fall if it is to describe itself as democratic? And how far can we move above this minimum without setting in motion forces that will go on to defeat the democratic ideal?'

The constraints on women's participation in the traditional political sphere have been clearly outlined, and practical solutions have been put forward. Such solutions include the provision of childcare to 'equalize access to political life' (Phillips 1991:31); the sharing of housework and the bringing of men more into the private or household sphere, as women are able to move out of it into public life. But the significance of these feminist theories lie not so much in their practical implications for the political participation of women, although this is important. Rather, they have challenged at a conceptual level our notions of democracy and political participation.

One of the major contributions of feminist theory to debates around democracy is the challenging of the distinction between public and private. As women are often restricted to the household sphere, the separation of this sphere from both civil and political society leaves women with little room for meaningful participation. If, however, this separation is broken down, women's involvement in decision-making at the most local level of all – that of the household – becomes meaningful for democracy. Thus Phillips (1991:30) notes, 'For feminists, the failure to explore the nature of the (most) private sphere is a failure in the democratic debate.' In Chapter 9 it will be seen that the structures of direct democracy that are now part of the post-transitional civil society in South Africa are concerned with precisely these matters. Thus households in an immediate neighbourhood become, through street committees, a forum for women to be active participants in civil society. The gap between matters of household concern and matters of public concern is

bridged: a drain that is not covered, refuse that is not removed, a young man harassing a neighbour's daughter, the need for a burial society to support the elderly – all these concerns move between the private and public spheres, and are the stuff of neighbourhood level politics.

### **Developmental democracy:**

Another significant influence on democratic theory has been the development debate. At the end of the twentieth century, many development theorists and activists became disillusioned with the idea that either market or command economies were likely to enable the people of the 'third world' to develop in the radical sense of the word. In this body of theory, development means not just the meeting of basic material needs (although this is important), but the development of people's full potential, and an improvement in the quality of life. This notion of quality of life involves the notion of control over decisions that affect people directly, in particular 'development decisions'. There is also an emphasis on self-reliance, on no longer seeing the state as the 'bringer' of development to the 'underdeveloped'. There is thus a close relation between this body of theory and those theories that stress the importance of local or grassroots democratic participation.

David Korten, one of the proponents of such 'people centred development', has defined such development in essentially political terms (1990:218):

A people centred development seeks to return control over resources to the people and their communities to be used in meeting their own needs...

A people centred development seeks to broaden political participation, building from a base of strong people's organisations and participatory local government...Political and economic democracy are its cornerstone.

A people centred development model calls for active mutual self-help among people, working together in their common struggle to deal with their common problems

These ideas were adopted by the Manila Declaration on People's Participation and Sustainable Development, held in 1989 in the Philippines.

Korten goes on to identify three principles basic to this model of development, the first of which is the following:

Sovereignty resides with the people, the real social actors of positive change. Freedom and democracy are universal human aspirations. The sovereignty of the people is the foundation of democracy. The legitimate role of government is to enable the people to set and pursue their own agenda. (ibid)

Such notions of development as involving local, democratic, participatory control, have been applied to South Africa by Roodt (1996) among others, and informed the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme. Thus Pillay (1996:325) wrote that 'According to the RDP... a key indicator of democratisation will be the extent to which organs of civil society, in particular the social movements and non-governmental organisations that were central to the liberation process, play a role in shaping the new order.' These development theorists embrace the idea of localised control or participation in development implementation, within a larger national polity and global economy where inequalities in power and access to resources remain. The more optimistic among them assume a state that is committed to a developmental programme, and some form of partnership between state and civil society. The more sceptical urge people towards self-reliance rather than holding high expectations of the state. Such theories are generally suspicious of the state playing a highly centralised and controlling role in development; instead, they emphasis the need for decentralised development at the level of local government.

### **Local democracy: Local government and questions of scale**

It has been convincingly argued that the smaller the polity, the more accountable are elected leaders to their base. Conversely, the larger the polity and the fewer the elected representatives for that electorate, the greater the level of autonomy of the leaders from their supporters. Thus Mosca, in his study of elites, noted that 'the larger the political community, the smaller would be the proportion of the governing minority to the governed majority' (Bodley 1999:596). Kosse examines ethnographic studies of power and the scale of societies to show that in local settlements of fewer than 150 people, all adults

can participate in decision making. When numbers grow to between 150 and 500, some people are excluded from decision-making; he implies that it is usually women. Between 500 and 2 500, kinship comes into play as a means of selecting leaders; Kosse sees the limit to group size as being 2 500 when social power is organised by kinship and participatory democracy. Beyond this number, a formal political elite and a regional polity 'necessarily emerge'. (Bodley 1999:597) Bodley also notes that 500 people (or objects) is seen as the maximum that can be 'proficiently worked with' within a 'particular information domain' – and that this applies to political decision-making as much as to military units. So 'if members of a decision-making elite must interact with each other face to face, we would expect that it would never exceed 500 people, regardless of the total size of society, although it might direct a hierarchy of lower-level elites.' (1999:596)

This would seem to hold true in the most general sense when applied not only to parliaments, but to structures of civil society such as trade unions and civic organisations. Thus in polities larger than 500, some combination of representation with direct or participatory forms of participation is necessary. The ancient direct democracies were effective only when limited to a certain number of citizens. In the Athenian polity, posed as an ideal of civic participation, the quorum for the citizens assembly was 6 000. This assembly met at least forty times a year to deliberate issues of public concern. It elected a council of 500 to formulate policy proposals; members of this council in turn rotated serving on a committee of fifty, each president holding office for one day only. 'The emphasis was on active participation and on each being ruled and ruler in turn'.(Phillips 1991:24)

Arendt, in her discussion of the notion of civic republicanism, draws on the Greek idea of citizenship. She notes that 'governments are now judged primarily in terms of how well they serve our material interests and how careful they have been to leave us in peace. The idea that politics is about the pursuit of public happiness or the taste for public freedom has been tossed aside as an archaic ideal.' (Phillips 1991: 47) This is related to the issue of

scale, for 'The *polis*, with its emphasis on action and speech, could survive only if the number of citizens remained restricted' (Arendt 1958:43)

Given the above argument about scale, it is clear the direct democracy must be supplemented by some form of representation, whether we are dealing with a nation-state of fifty million, a city of one million, or a community of one hundred thousand people. Yet the holding of elections does not necessarily mean the abandonment of all participatory forms of democracy. One such means of holding representatives to account is through the use of mandates; the mandates are in turn developed through a participatory process. So Phillips (1991:40) argues that

The scale of contemporary society inevitably forces us to rely on representation, for we cannot hope to meet together in citizens' assemblies and take all decisions ourselves. We can however minimize the effects of size by bidding our representatives to pre-agreed policies and programmes. Thus instead of electing them to do what they think to be best, we can keep them still accountable to the meeting.

This notion relates closely to the conception and practice of trade union democracy in South Africa, where the labour federation COSATU has a legacy of holding elected worker leaders to account, and feels the same way about political leadership (see Ginsburg et al, 1995). The mandating of political or civic leaders has been practised in a more limited way and with less success in South Africa.

Given the size of national polities, the argument that democratic local government is necessary in order to bring government 'closer to the people' is hard to dispute. In South Africa, the elected parliament of four hundred represents a population of forty-four million people, with an electorate of around thirty million people. While the debate around the role of regional or provincial governments is not dealt with here, the role of local government is considered to be of particular importance. This is because the case study is one of a community situated within an urban polity, where local government has considerable power and has been the focus of political mobilisation and debate.



Local government is seen as an important forum for political participation, for a number of reasons, one of which is related to the argument about scale and accountability. As Hanekom (1988:19) argued, 'Democratic government is accountable government. Local government should therefore assume an important place in the ideas of democratically minded people. Its close relationship to the public makes it ideally suited for the purpose of broadening the base of democracy.' In addition to giving inhabitants of a town or city a say over local matters, and holding their elected representatives to account, participation in local government affairs has additional value for democracy. It provides important experience and education on 'the art of governing'; and it should promote greater efficiency through decentralised administration.

Atkinson has challenged the notion that local government is always 'closer to the people' and noted 'Local governments are notoriously susceptible to becoming local oligarchies' (1997:2). To prevent this, she suggests that certain institutional mechanisms can be adopted – in particular, certain types of electoral systems for local government. In a system where there are ward representatives, she notes that the councillors have 'several competing foci of representation, including the ward, the city as a whole, the party, or the pressure group. It should be noted that different foci are not necessarily mutually exclusive.' (1997:14)

The governing ANC in South Africa has acknowledged the importance of local government through its adoption of new legislation to grant local government greater autonomy, increased powers and an important developmental role. The way in which ordinary citizens participate in local government structures and hold elected representatives to account at this level has thus become increasingly important in a study of democratic participation.

### **Strong democracy and the active citizen**

Accepting reluctantly the combination of 'capitalism and democracy' not as the 'best possible political shell' (see Jessop 1978:39) but as the structural limitations within which these societies operate, there has been a revival of interest in how to expand or strengthen democracy within these limitations.

The minimum conditions for democracy are considered to be governments elected freely and fairly on the basis of a universal franchise; and as Phillips (1991:10) notes, this 'vitally important' right is 'enjoyed by only a minority in the world.' While agreeing that the 'minimal' version of democracy is important, she argues that it is not enough, and returning to Rousseau's critique of representative democracy she argues that 'the minimum is also so very minimal.'

Phillips (1991:17) has noted that in Europe, radical democracy was associated with socialist theory and with the ideals of participatory and economic democracy described above. In America, however, radical democracy was associated with 'small town democracy', and was not economic but civic in nature. Barber is one of the foremost exponents of such radical democratic thought, and has similarly developed a critique of liberal or 'thin' democracy, and developed the idea of 'strong' democracy based on an active citizenry; in his words (1984:227), 'Activity is power'. He argued that it was the experience of participation in direct rather than representative institutions of democracy that made for good and active citizens. (Mansbridge 1995:2) This notion of democracy as citizen participation has been applied by institutes such as the Centre for Living Democracy in the USA, where activists such as Frances Moore Lappe have designed manuals to encourage greater citizen participation. Lappe, (cited in Cloete 1998:19) using a similar notion of democracy to that being put forward by South African activists in the 1980s – that of ordinary people taking control of all aspects of their lives – argues that 'Democracy is not what we have, it is what we do.' ✕

Other American radical activists, including Saul Alinsky, have developed methods of participatory community activism for challenging power relations at local level and inspired organisations such as the Industrial Areas Network to do so (see Reitzes 1987). Other networks and institutions encouraging democratic and active citizenship in the United States include the Civic Practice Network, the New Citizenship Movement and the Movement for Civic Renewal. All are based on theories of democracy and participation such as expounded by Barber, Pateman and Mansbridge among others. Such

theories take the existence of a stable state with formal democratic procedures for election of government as a given, but understand the limitations of representative democracy as practiced. They put forward the ideal of citizen participation, through various forms of participatory democracy as complementing and enhancing representative democracy.

While ideas of citizen participation developed in the liberal democracies of the West, people of the still-colonised world, former colonies and countries of the Eastern bloc (in other words, many countries of both the 'second' and 'third' worlds) were still engaged in a struggle for basic democratic rights and freedoms. Struggles against apartheid in South Africa and authoritarian regimes in Latin America and Eastern Europe had in common the demand for the extension of democracy and basic human rights to all citizens. While the goal of such struggles was primarily for the limited or minimalist democracy of the 'first world', in the process of struggle there were many experiments with more radical forms of democracy. Whether or not such movements were 'demobilised' as a condition of democratic consolidation is a moot point, which is discussed in more depth below.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the critique of liberal democracy has not lost its relevance. Indeed, with the end of the Cold War, the hegemony of capital on a world scale has meant for many people – especially those in the 'second' and 'third' worlds – even greater loss of control over their lives at the social and economic level. In his argument for participatory democracy for South Africa, more than twenty years before representative democracy was attained, Turner asked the crucial question: 'How can the citizen be integrated into the political system? We have seen that the vote itself does not of itself do this.' With great prescience he anticipates the advent of representative democracy, and the potential for ordinary people to thereby lose power:

If I merely vote once every five years I have no meaningful control over decision-making. I am not involved in politics between elections, and therefore do not acquire the knowledge on which to base my decisions. The structural political relationships are much more important than is formal education in determining political knowledge. Nor am I in any position to prevent various organisational oligarchies from arising. There is a danger that the very political parties established to provide for mass political

participation will become such oligarchies. The leadership controls the financial and communications resources and is in a position to use these resources in bidding for personal power, rather than to ensure popular involvement. Once this happens, the individual, faced with steam-roller political vote-collecting machines over which she/he has no control, becomes even further alienated from the political process.(1972:70)

Dahl, Held and others question the assumption that political democracy in its liberal or representative variant alone can ever create conditions for real equality or social justice. Is it possible to 'reinforce' representative forms of democracy in some way with direct forms of participation by citizens – or will this pose too fundamental a challenge to power relations in our highly unequal global society? Held's radical model of cosmopolitan government, sensible as it seems, would meet iron resistance from the powerful elites in the global community – whether transnational corporations or nationalist regimes.

Are models of representative and direct democracy mutually exclusive, as in the old 'liberal versus Marxist' debates of the Cold War era? In this context, even in the popular movements in South Africa, where the majority were disenfranchised, the 'left' expressed scorn for the institutions of liberal democracy. 'Voting every five years is not enough!' we declared; 'we want control over all aspects of our lives!' Held suggests they are not mutually exclusive; the participatory democracy model contains elements of both. Phillips (1991) and Bottomore (1993) come to similar conclusions on the need to extend and deepen liberal democracy, not replace it in its entirety. The Italian socialist Norberto Bobbio has come to a similar conclusion as well. While agreeing with the critique of representative democracy, he argues that

There is no clear-cut distinction between direct democracy and representative democracy. Instead there is a continuum, in the sense that the one shades into the other by degrees. When it comes down to it, what is participation, based on the right to delegate and revoke a mandate, other than a form of democracy which is somewhere between representative and direct democracy?' (Bobbio 1986:112)

He goes further to argue that representative democracy is not equatable with, or confined to, the parliamentary system; and that extending democracy refers no longer to extending the suffrage. In this way, the demands for greater

democracy in contemporary society mean 'spreading participation in collective decision making to areas outside the strictly political sphere.'(1986:113-4)

In summary, the critique of representative democracy, and the ideal of a more participatory democracy, were taken up by Pateman and others in the idea of worker or workplace democracy. Others took it up in Western Europe and America in the ideals of the 'New Left' in the 1960s and 1970s. Feminists emphasised participation in political processes, access to such processes, and the breaking down of the barrier between state and civil society as a means to such participation. More recently, Barber and others have stressed the idea of the active citizen. Development activists and theorists from developing countries have stressed the notion of people-centred or people-driven participatory development. Various forms of mass mobilisation against authoritarian or colonial rule have embraced democratic participation by ordinary citizens. It is this notion of a critical, active, socially responsive citizenry that informs this thesis, and is explored in relation to the Kwazakele community.

Through this survey of various theories of democracy, democratisation and civil society, we arrive at a point where the relationship between the different democracies is what is at issue. To try and simplify the debate: what is the relationship between liberal and radical versions or practices of democracy, or between weak and strong democracy? Can representative democracy exist only if participatory democracy is weakened? Can it be supplemented or strengthened by participatory democracy – but in civil society, rather than in the state itself? Does it have to be replaced entirely by participatory democracy? In Held's (1987:263) critique of participatory democracy, he asks three crucial questions. The first relates to the organisation of the economy; and will not be addressed here. The second asks how institutions of representative democracy are to be combined with those of direct democracy – which remains an open question, to be addressed in the case study below. The third challenges the assumption that people want 'to extend the sphere of control over their lives' and asks 'What if they do not want to do so? What if they do not really want to participate in the management of social and

economic affairs? What if they do not wish to become creatures of democratic reason?' This assumption, which is integrally related to the issue of political participation, will also be tested in the case study below.

### ***Political participation***

Political participation is one of the key concerns of the discipline of political sociology. 'Traditional democratic theory generally regards participation by the individual in political activity as a virtue in its own right' wrote Dowse and Hughes in their textbook on political sociology. This view of democracy 'implied and encouraged a high level of popular involvement.' (Dowse and Hughes 1986:266) Participation has been seen as 'a civic duty, as a sign of political health, as the best method of ensuring that one's interests are not neglected and as a *sine qua non* of democracy.' (ibid)

Most of the theorists of democracy outlined above, including Held, Barber, Turner, Diamond, Pateman and Bobbio, would advocate or envisage a high level of citizen participation in their 'ideal' democracy. For Barber, 'strong' democracy is nothing less than 'politics in participatory mode' (1984:151) Indeed, any democracy which attempts to go beyond the minimum definitions requires a high level of involvement from its citizens. Held concludes that '...it would be a sorry outcome for democracy in general if the extraordinary political events of the 1980s and 1990s ushered in a period of unquestioning celebration of the limited democracy we currently enjoy' (Held 1993:109). Yet the reality is that within 'thin' democracies, participation within its institutions is often limited. Hence one of the chief concerns of political sociologists has been to measure and explain the varying levels of citizen participation in political institutions.

### **Assumptions about levels of political participation**

Dowse and Hughes note that despite the traditional understanding of political participation as being the *sine qua non* of democracy, 'it is difficult to believe people do display high rates of political participation and interest, except in general elections.' Even in elections, the level of voter participation is highly

variable. (Dowse and Hughes 1986:266). They conclude that citizen involvement in politics is 'invariably...far below that implicit in the classical models of democracy.' (ibid) While various explanations have been given for low levels of citizen participation in Western democracies – some of which have been mentioned by Turner above - they are not assumed to be of significance in a transitional society such as South Africa. In this thesis such assumptions as are made by Dowse and Hughes with reference to Western democracy are not accepted as being necessarily applicable to a country like South Africa. Rather, the level of political participation in this new democracy is measured in order to ascertain whether it is low or high, and to ascertain whether it increases or decreases over time as the democracy is consolidated. The method used to measure participation is described in Chapter 2.

Many of the other assumptions of Western political sociology are also not accepted in this case study. For example, studies of participation in Western liberal democracies have shown consistently that there is a correlation between class or social status and level of political participation, with people of lower class or status participating less than those of higher class or status. Similarly, status is linked to gender, with women – who have lower social status than men – participating to a lesser degree than men in politics. Participation levels are also linked to education, race, religion and ethnicity. (Dowse and Hughes 272-3) In this case study, the level of political participation of a previously unenfranchised, poor, black working class community is measured. Most members of this community have low levels of education; and just over half are women. Yet, it will be seen that levels of political participation are consistently high – both in the absolute measurement, and among groups which are usually considered to be 'low status' – uneducated elderly women, for example.

It can be argued, though, that women learnt to articulate their needs through participation. It has been argued that

... a key implication in terms of democracy is the transformative significance of meetings, discussion, talk. Interests are not already 'there', pre-given or fixed.

Democracy is not just about registering one's existing preferences and views....there is a prior and continuing process of creating one's identity, constructing one's interests and forming one's political views. (Held 1993:102).

In South Africa, black women were denied the opportunity to participate in representative forms of democracy. Thus the 'transformative significance' of participation in informal or civil society structures was even more essential for overcoming passivity, and for the realisation of self-confidence as citizens. Through this process came the creation of – not so much an identity – as a self-perception of being an empowered individual.

Another variable which is considered important for measuring political participation is the length of residence of an individual in the locality, or the stability of a particular community. This particular factor is seen to hold true for the case study in question, as will be described in Chapter 3.

Lastly, the issue of scale is also important in relation to political participation. Held (1987:162) has noted that people participate more extensively in decision-making when it is related to issues that 'directly affect people's lives' and in addition, when 'those affected can be confident that their input into decision making will actually count.' In this quote, he uses a phrase commonly used in the 1980s in South Africa – a phrase which informed the method of organising communities around very localised grievances or problems, as a means of not only getting people actively involved, but getting them to feel that their actions did 'matter'. Doing so at local level provided the basis for a national movement of opposition against the apartheid state.

### **Formal and informal political participation:**

Political sociology has traditionally made a distinction between institutional and non-institutional forms of political participation, which correlates broadly to the distinction between state and civil society. Formal or institutional participation involves participation in elections to those bodies that control government at various levels. As such elections are contested by political parties, such parties are considered the primary institutions of political participation by those who wish to be more involved than 'just voting'.



Lobbying political parties or public representatives is also considered to be an integral part of the model of representative democracy. Other forms of political participation, such as the mobilisation of social movements and protest groups, are considered to be 'non-institutional' or 'informal' and outside the bounds of 'normal' politics. Thus textbooks on political sociology often have a chapter dealing with conventional forms of political participation, and another chapter dealing with 'social movements' or 'pressure groups' (See Dowse and Hughes, 1986; Orum, 1978.) Thus Orum (1978:339) notes that

Indeed...the arena of politics often looks as if it consists mainly of the established political institutions of a society – the status quo – and those small, sometimes informal groups that are attempting to wrest power from the establishment and to refashion the nature of the rules that govern the arena of politics.

Bottomore (1993:29), in a more recent volume on political sociology, avoids this crude division by analysing political action of both kinds in one chapter; yet even he makes the basic distinction between social movements and organised political formations. He comes to the conclusion that in Western democracies, social movements are

a more or less permanent feature of political life, reflecting a broader movement to extend democracy. Representative government, parties and elections are now seen increasingly as providing an essential framework but as inadequate by themselves to establish a democratic society in the more radical sense of government *by* the people. (Ibid 1993:41).

Without going into too much depth on the way in which forms of political participation have been further typologised or categorised, these constructs can be applied to South African society. It is particularly easy to make the distinction between formal and informal participation in the apartheid era, as the majority of the population were excluded from most forms of political participation in formal institutions; indeed, much of the struggle was around the demand for 'normal' citizen rights, to vote, to stand for election, to form political parties, to freedom of speech and association. Because of this exclusion, the focus – particularly among the disenfranchised majority – was on social movements or, as it was termed in the 1980s in South Africa, 'extra parliamentary politics'. Yet even given this division, a careful study of the

history of political participation in urban African communities in South Africa shows that a mixture of both forms of participation occurred. This is explored in Cherry 1999, where the intermingled 'traditions of inclusion and exclusion' of the African population in Port Elizabeth are detailed. This point is significant in relation to the case study, as it should not be assumed that all residents of a particular township had no prior experience of political participation in the formal or institutional sense. In addition, there is an important theoretical point to be made. This is that the distinction between the institutions or forms of political participation is not always as clear as it appears in American textbooks. Thus the transformation of the ANC from a liberation movement to a political party has been a gradual and contradictory process, with many arguing along the way that the more 'grassroots' and open style of a movement may be more appropriate to the type of democracy we are trying to build in South Africa. The tendency to bureaucratisation and centralisation is not confined to the new political parties, and extends to both trade union and civic organisations which become more leadership-driven as they are called on to participate in corporatist arrangements at national level.

Participation in the informal politics of civil society is more difficult to measure and analyse than that of participation in political parties and elections. It involves a range of structures and activities, and participation that may be in opposition to, or in a collaborative relationship with, government. Debates around corporatism and the influence of civil society in policy formulation form the framework within which ordinary citizens engage in political action to try and realise their own ends. While this debate is still of great importance in South Africa today, with institutional forums such as the National Economic Development and Labour Advisory Council (NEDLAC) and other forums providing a 'space' for labour, civic and other organisations to influence government, this will not be explored in detail here. The reason is that such corporatist arrangements, and policy formulation in general, are not usually accessible to 'ordinary people' and thus they do not have much chance to participate politically at this level. It can be argued, of course, that they should be able to influence policy, perhaps through participation either in their party branch or in one of the other branches of the organs of civil society – a trade

union or a local civic organisation – which in turn will reflect their views in the policy making forums at national level. Moreover, civil society in the liberal sense of the word does not demand a high level of participation from citizens: thus Gellner argues that ‘Civil Society is an order in which liberty....is available even to the timorous, non-vigilant and absent-minded.’ (Gellner 194:80)

Participation in social movements which are oppositional, as opposed to engaged in the collaborate arrangements described above, is viewed with ambiguity by the democratic government. While conservative or liberal critics (see, for example, Jeffery 1991) are fearful of social mobilisation, and have stressed the dangers of mass mobilisation, the governing ANC is torn between the desire for stability and the need to maintain an active support base. On the opposite extreme are those proponents of ‘new social movements’ (see, for example, Bond 1994) who argue that the mobilisation of the poor is the only way to pressure the state to respond to their needs, and prevent the state from acting simply in the interests of capital. Such arguments around mobilisation are reflected in the development debate, as dealt with elsewhere. Thus some activists on the left of the ANC (see Nzimande, 1995) argue that civil society should not be seen as oppositional, but as mobilised in partnership with the state.

### ***Democracy and civil society in South Africa***

The concern of this study is the post-transitional consolidation of democracy in South Africa, and the role of civil society in that consolidation process. There is an assumption that the consolidation of democracy in a minimal, process-definition sense of the concept, has been successful – although there are those who argue that the change of government is one of the crucial tests of the success of democratic consolidation. It is argued here that despite the fact that a change of government is unlikely, there are other ways in which a democratic culture has been consolidated in South Africa. This thesis goes further than the limited definitions of democracy used by the transition theorists, however, and asks how deep the new democracy really is.

## The civil society debate

In the analysis of processes of democratisation in the 1980s and 1990s, one variable was debated particularly heatedly: that of the role of civil society. The term 'civil society' has held two distinct meanings in the South African political vocabulary. The first meaning is related to the radical concepts of civil society and hegemony derived from the Marxist Antonio Gramsci. This meaning was used in the context of the 1980s to describe a process whereby the liberation movement established its moral authority and legitimacy over the majority of the population – a sort of popular consensus in opposition to the authoritarian state. This mass opposition was not a 'civil society' in the original, liberal sense; thus Reitzes (1995:100) and others argued that it was incorrect to identify many organisations which were attempting to seize state power or democratise the state, as being part of 'civil society'. This second meaning has become the normal usage in South Africa, in the sense in which political scientists such as Stadler (1992:29) have argued for the need for a strong civil society. A good 'operational' definition of civil society in this second sense is that used by Gellner (1994:5): the civil society is

that set of diverse non-governmental institutions which is strong enough to counterbalance the state and, while not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests, can nevertheless prevent it from dominating and atomising the rest of society.

While acknowledging that posing the Marxist and pluralist traditions as binary opposites is unhelpful in dealing with the complexity of the real world, Gellner argues that we need to use the above 'operational' definition of civil society, and give it a 'down to earth sociological meaning – institutional pluralism of a certain kind.' (ibid 1994:60) He defines it further by saying that civil society is a 'cluster of institutions and associations strong enough to prevent tyranny, but which are, none the less, entered and left freely, rather than imposed by birth or sustained by awesome ritual.' (1994: 103).

Gellner argues further that rather than understanding what happened in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s as a process of democratisation, it

should be understood as a process of building or creating a 'Civil Society' in his sense of the term.

Theorists of democracy who operate in the abstract, without reference to concrete social conditions, end up with a vindication of democracy as a general ideal, but are then obliged to concede that in many societies the ideal is not realizable. They end up with an ideal, universally vindicated in some bizarre sense, but one which at the same time is quite irrelevant to many, probably the very large majority of societies, because it is held to be inaccessible to them... So, although 'democracy' is indeed involved, it is the institutions and social context which alone make it possible and preferable that really matter. Without these institutional pre-conditions, democracy has little clear meaning or feasibility. If the term is simply used as a code name for that set of institutions, then of course no harm is done. Because it highlights those institutional pre-conditions and the necessary historical context, 'Civil Society' is probably a better, more illuminating slogan than 'democracy'. (1994:189)

While Gellner sees civil society as the outcome of the democratisation process, some of the 'transition theorists' have a different and more limited application of the idea of civil society. In relation to transitions to democracy, O'Donnell et al (1986:26) held that civil society was 'resurrected' during the *abertura* or liberalisation phase, after which it was 'demobilised'. This, he argued, was in the interests of a stable transition to 'normal' democracy, as too much pressure from civil society could result in a right-wing backlash or counter-coup. Diamond, on the other hand, saw a positive role for civil society within the context of building a culture of democracy. In his scenario, civil society strengthens and supplements 'normal' democracy. He examines the building of a political culture through civic education, a free press, and the activities of various institutions in civil society in promoting human rights and civic participation in countries such as the Philippines, Chile, Nigeria and Thailand. Far from threatening democratic consolidation, he argues that participation in civil society is essential for the consolidation of democracy:

The struggle for democracy must have as one of its primary goals the establishment of a viable and democratic political society (elections etc)... But democracy also requires the construction of a vibrant, vigorous and pluralistic civil society. Without such a civil society, democracy cannot become developed and secure. (Diamond, 1992:7)

Thus, in relation to the Phillipines, it is argued by contributing author Dette Pascual that '...democracy is social life informed by the *bayanihan* spirit, a traditional Filipino term suggesting communal co-operation, civic participation and social responsibility to family, neighbours and the community at large.' (Diamond, 1992, xiv). This is not far removed from the notion of *ubuntu*, which is used so loosely in the South African context.

The debate about civil society in South Africa was particularly heated in the early 1990s, during the initial stages of the transition. During the 1990s, the debate focussed on the relationship between civil society and the state, and examined the extent to which organs of civil society were, or should be, independent or brought into some form of institutionalised or corporatist arrangements with the state. This debate was seemingly resolved by default after 1994, when the relationship between the state and civil society was 'normalised'. However, such a 'normal' relationship may not be optimum for democratic participation. Constitutional lawyer Geoff Budlender has stressed that the South African constitution is one of the 'most civil society friendly' constitutions in the world, but that citizens are not taking advantage of it to pursue their causes; they rely on the state to act in their interests.<sup>1</sup> While some civic activists and intellectuals (see Bond and Mayekiso, 1994) began to apply radical social movement theory in the hope of keeping alive an agenda for radical social transformation, driven by 'the people', it became clear that Budlender was to some extent correct. The institutions of civil society were not making use of the space they had gained or had been given by the state. In the organisational decline of the civic movement after 1994, and the losing of ground in terms of participation to ANC branches, there seemed little role for a social movement conceived of in terms of opposition to the state. The debate around civil society is, however, still central to activists in South Africa, as evidenced by the debate around the future of the tripartite alliance in the pages of the ANC journal *Umrabulo*.

Some within the left of the ANC or the SACP have begun to reexamine the concept of state power and popular power, and to look at how people could

exercise power in conjunction with, rather than in opposition to, the state. Given the confusion over the term 'civil society' and the counterposing of pluralist notions of democracy in opposition to the idea of hegemony, some radical intellectuals have chosen instead to focus on the nature of power in society, and to ask: what is the balance of power between the state and 'the people'? How do 'the people' hold power, and does the notion of 'popular power' still hold any meaning in a representative democracy?

### **Notions of democracy in South Africa before the transition**

During the 1980s, activists involved in the struggle against apartheid adopted a radical definition of democracy. This was articulated publicly in UDF journals, as well as by intellectual activists like Raymond Suttner, Jeremy Cronin and Zwelakhe Sisulu. The distinction between this radical democracy and liberal or pluralistic conceptions of democracy was clearly understood, and expressed in the UDF journal *New Era* as follows:

Democracy means, in the first instance, the ability of the broad working masses to participate in and to control all dimensions of their lives. This, for us, is the essence of democracy, not some liberal, pluralistic debating society notion of a 'thousand schools contending.' (Quoted in Lodge and Nasson, 1991:131)

UDF national publicity secretary Murphy Morobe explained the UDF's democratic vision in similar terms in 1987:

When we speak of majority rule, we do not mean that black faces must simply replace white faces in the parliament. A democratic solution in South Africa involves all South Africans, and in particular the working class, having control over all areas of daily existence – from national policy to housing, from schooling to working conditions, from transport to consumption of food. This for us is the essence of democracy. When we say that the people shall govern, we mean at all levels and in all spheres, and we demand that there be real, effective control on a daily basis. (*UpFront*, 7, 1987:15)

Kwazakele activist Mike Xego reflected these sentiments at the end of 1993, not six months before the first democratic election in South Africa:

We are entering 'bourgeois politics' as the British Labour Party did. Parliamentary democracy is a 'trap' - involving social status, pension schemes, five years in a

bureaucracy. Your constituency in parliament is not the working class, but the nation, ie a combination of class interests. You will satisfy the national interest through a bourgeois parliament - you cannot be socialist in a capitalist arrangement. You have to deliver to other interest groups - you cannot come up as an exceptional working class or socialist leader. Politics is watered down by realities.<sup>2</sup>

There was thus a conscious understanding on the part of many of the left intellectuals in South Africa of the compromises involved in the negotiated settlement of the early 1990s. The 'liberal consensus' about the form of democracy would accompany the 'global consensus' about the economic structure of society. The transition theorists were, after all, correct in their finding that a successful political transition was usually accompanied by maintenance of economic inequality. This political transition was successful in its stability, in its guarantee of individual liberty, and in its institutionalisation of representative democracy. It was arguably less successful in changing the balance of power in the society. Yet the hard-won democracy may still provide the framework within which power relations and inequality can be challenged, despite the constraints posed by the global economy.

Linda McQuaig, in a book that looks at global economic policy and the influence that ordinary Canadians have over such policy, notes that in 'advanced democracies' people perceive democracy as impotent. In the private sphere, of economic power, she notes how fashionable it is to talk of 'empowerment' of the individual. Yet, she notes,

Somehow this enormous sense of empowerment, this belief in the endless possibilities of human initiative and creativity, disappears when we enter the domain of democracy. Somehow, the notion that we can collectively achieve great things, indeed, that we can achieve even basic things that were regularly achieved centuries ago – like providing work shelter and food for everyone in the community – these things are now considered beyond our reach! (1999:282)

Her conclusion is that 'The only hope is the only one we've ever had – democracy. No matter how tarnished, how distorted by consumerism and the TV culture, how remote it sometimes seems democracy is an enormously powerful tool....' (Ibid:284).



She quotes John Maynard Keynes, who suggested that ordinary people take action against the elite as follows: 'There is no reason why we should not feel ourselves free to be bold, to be open, to experiment, to take action, to try the possibilities of things.' (Quoted in McQuaig, 1999:283).

## **Democracy and revolution**

Lastly, what of the experience of people in revolutionary moments, when things that under normal circumstances are impossible, suddenly seem possible? The soviets of Red Petrograd in 1917-18; the student and worker forums in Paris in 1968; the workers committees of Chile in 1973; the liberated zones in Mozambique in 1974; the Solidarity movement in Poland in 1980-81; the street committees of Kwazakele in 1985-6: all were forms of popular representation or power which were products of such moments. Were all of these necessarily temporal, and bound to disband once society had 'normalised' and politics been institutionalised by elections or other forms of institutional representation – or alternatively, once democratic aspirations had been crushed by authoritarian regimes? Worse, is there an inherent conflict between these constructs, based on hegemony – and often the intolerance of others – and the normal, pluralist democracy of peaceful, post-transitional societies? When the question 'what aspects of the 1980s experience are taken into the new South Africa?' is asked, many people respond by questioning whether any aspect of democracy can come out of a revolutionary situation. High levels of participation, perhaps, in a highly mobilised society – but not democratic participation.

One of the starting points of this thesis is the experience that ordinary people had of the structures of popular power in the mid-1980s in South Africa. One way of responding to these structures in retrospect is to declare that not only were they the temporal product of a quasi-revolutionary situation, but that in addition they were fundamentally undemocratic. While they may have allowed for high levels of popular participation, this does not necessarily equate with democracy. The extent of democracy in such structures is indeed both varied and ambiguous, and is explored in Chapter 4 in relation to the township revolt

in South Africa. Here, it is important to stress that whatever the limitations of such structures, they did empower ordinary people in a very real way – and that, in itself, was an experience which contributed to the kind of society to be built. Thus Marcus (1996:16), writing about the Paris revolt of 1968, quotes an upholstery machine operator who said that when the strike began, ‘Ordinary people like me started to think that maybe somehow our lives might somehow change.’

Arendt attempted to explain the way in which the positive experiences of revolutionary moments were forgotten. Thus she wrote in *On Revolution*,

The failure of post-revolutionary thought to remember the revolutionary spirit and to understand it conceptually was preceded by the failure of the revolution to provide it with a lasting institution. (Quoted in Marcus 1996:19)

That institution, she thought, might be the revolutionary councils that had appeared spontaneously in the course of so many modern revolutions – but, as Marcus noted,

that was one more utopian echo, a dream of a politics freed from the social question, from the management of necessity, from hunger, or its terror. This institution of the spirit could be viable only so long as the energy of dissolution and transformation could, in an entirely positive sense, dominate every aspect of ordinary life (Marcus 1996:19-20)

Arendt noted cynically, reflecting on the experience of 1917, that ‘decentralised units of local democracy’ such as ‘the kind of soviets or councils or communes that are briefly thrown up by every revolution’ are usually ‘ruthlessly disbanded when they find themselves at odds with the party in control.’ She felt that to try and ‘agitate’ for institutions of workplace democracy, within a ‘normal democracy’, was quite different. (Phillips 1991:47). Yet she did not suggest what lasting institutions could come out of revolutionary situations. Here, it is not assumed that experiences of popular power lead to lasting institutional forms of democratic participation; nor that workplace democracy is the appropriate place for such manifestations of democratic participation. There is a more limited goal of trying to assess how the *experience* of participation by ordinary people in times of upheaval

contribute to their participation in political life once society has 'normalised.' This is not only an exercise in exploring the application of political theories of democracy; it is an acknowledgement of the role of ordinary people in creating history, so that their brief moments of experiencing power are not simply 'swept away' as Marcus noted above.

Held (1987:162) argues that 'it may well be that those who express lack of interest in politics do so precisely because they experience 'politics' as remote, because they feel it does not directly touch their lives and/or that they are powerless to affect its course.' In African working class communities in South Africa, where people have experienced politics as something empowering – yet outside the parliamentary system, as part of a liberation movement – are they now experiencing 'politics' – the exercise of power – retreating gradually away from them, becoming increasingly remote, as they become disempowered and increasingly sceptical about their ability to influence events or policies?

One method of exploring these questions is through looking at how people 'on the ground' participate in political processes and civic structures. South Africa is a good country to look at such issues, having a relatively strong state and a stable democracy, but having also a vibrant civil society and a history of authoritarian rule. In the context of authoritarian rule, the majority of citizens were disenfranchised and participated politically in structures outside of the state, in opposition to the state at various levels. Thus the exiled liberation movements conducted an armed struggle against the South African state at national and international level; national bodies such as the United Democratic Front co-ordinated extra-parliamentary opposition to the apartheid government during the 1980s; and ordinary black residents of townships participated in thousands of grassroots structures outside of, and usually in opposition to, the local authorities of the day. It is to this third level we turn for an in-depth examination of how ordinary people experience the transition to democracy, and participation in the structures of democracy in the 'new' South Africa.

The search for truly democratic alternatives to the present, and a commitment to social experimentation with them, is a worthy and fulfilling human enterprise, one which moves us, and, we hope, others today... (Manifesto of the New Left, 1962)

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<sup>1</sup> Geoff Budlender, address to Human Rights Trust conference, Port Elizabeth, 9 December 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Mike Xego, November 1993.

# Chapter 2: Methodology and Research

## Methods

In the process of researching and writing this thesis, I have attempted to apply the theories outlined in Chapter 1 to the South African context. The particular challenge has been to apply theories of political participation to a society in the process of transition to democracy. The focus is on the role of ordinary people during the period of the transition and the consolidation of democracy, and on what kind of democracy has emerged at the end of the transition.

### *The methodological challenge*

The methodological challenge posed here is how to analyse what kind of democracy has emerged, and how to assess the quality of, and measure the level of, political participation in this context. Firstly, I look at the institutions of representative democracy, in particular formal political participation in elections to both national and local government. Secondly, I look at non-institutional or informal types of political participation. Thirdly, this is related to development politics, and divided into oppositional and collaborative participation. There are social movements which are either working in opposition to, or in partnership with government; some may play both roles at different times. The forms of participation involve protest against the government as well as campaigns of protest or lobbying that the governing party itself runs.

So how is the strength or depth of a democracy to be tested? One way is to study the political participation of ordinary citizens – in the case of South Africa and other transitional societies, by those people who had least power under the old authoritarian regime. Such a study involves three elements: an analysis of the different forms or types of political participation, a measurement of the extent or level of participation, and an assessment of the quality or the democratic nature of such participation. Political participation is

necessarily examined in both the formal and informal spheres; or, in other terminology, in both political and civil society.

As regards representative democracy, human rights theory holds that freedom and democracy are inseparable. The protection of basic freedoms by the government, and the exercise of these freedoms by the citizens, together with a level of control over government that is thus responsive to citizens, are essential for democracy. Thus any attempt to assess or measure the quality of a democracy and the extent of participation therein, must take as a starting point those institutions that protect basic rights and offer participation in selection of government.

In the formal sphere, the institutions and processes of representative liberal democracy are the chief elements of analysis. Thus elections, which are the primary institutions for citizen participation, must be central to such a study. Participation in such processes includes not only voting, but understanding of political processes and participation in other ways such as attendance of party meetings and involvement in campaigns. Some forms of political participation, such as voting in elections, or attending meetings, are relatively easy to measure. Less easy to measure is participation in the informal sphere of politics. Here, it becomes necessary to go beyond election surveys; it is essential that the researcher goes down 'to the grassroots' in order to discover how people understand and participate in politics at local level.

### ***Interdisciplinary methodology and critical theory***

The thesis is inherently interdisciplinary, and in both research and writing traditional disciplinary boundaries have been crossed. Theories of democracy, civil society and political participation are discussed from within the disciplines of political philosophy and political sociology; theories of democratisation in the context of transitions from authoritarian rule are drawn from contemporary political science. The methodology of conventional political sociology has been used in gathering data, in a belief that one can – to some extent at least – quantify and measure political participation, especially in electoral processes. This has been done through the use of conventional survey

techniques, which are applied together with other research methods in a detailed case study approach. I would agree with Bottomore (1993:1) that it is 'impossible...to establish any significant theoretical distinction between political sociology and political science' as the distinction between the political and the social is based on the distinction between state and civil society. In this thesis, political participation in both state and non-state structures is discussed – in other words, the enquiry moves between the concerns of political science and those of political sociology.

In addition, the methodology of the historian, both conventional and radical, has been employed – through the use of archival material, newspaper clippings, and interviews with both activists and 'ordinary people' about their experiences of, and perceptions of, the period under discussion. The thesis takes as a starting point the experience of 'ordinary people' rather than leaders, and in doing so draws on the tradition of radical, social and oral history.<sup>1</sup> The debate around structure and causality goes back to the debates within historiography and economic history in South Africa and elsewhere from the 1970s through the 1980s. Feminist, socialist and human rights theory, and to a lesser extent radical theology, have also made an important theoretical and philosophical contribution to the approach adopted here. The research does not claim scientific neutrality, but is grounded in normative reflection, which interacts in a dynamic way with historical and social research. It is worth quoting feminist theorist Iris Young on the 'mode of critical theory' she employs. She defines critical theory as

...normative reflection that is historically and socially contextualised. Critical theory rejects as illusory the effort to construct a universal normative system insulated from a particular society. Normative reflection must begin from historically specific circumstances because there is nothing but what is, the given, the situated interest in justice from which to start. Reflecting from within a particular social context, good normative theorising cannot avoid social and political description and explanation. Without social theory, normative reflection is abstract, empty, and unable to guide criticism with a practical interest in emancipation...Critical theory is a mode of discourse which projects normative possibilities unrealised but felt in a particular given social reality. Each social reality presents its own unrealised possibilities, experienced as lacks and desires. Norms and ideals arise from the yearning that is an expression of

freedom: it does not have to be this way; it could be otherwise. Imagination is the faculty of transforming the experience of what is into a projection of what could be, the faculty that frees thought to form ideals and norms.(1990:5-6)

## ***Research on South Africa's transition to democracy***

The research for this thesis has been done over a number of years, and as part of three larger national research projects, all related to, and conducted in the course of, South Africa's political transition to democracy.

### **Political sociology: The 'Civics Project'**

The first was a project funded by the Albert Einstein Institute on Non-Violent Direct Action, entitled 'Civics and Civil Society'. This project involved a group of young researchers, mainly sociologists and political scientists, being commissioned to research civic organisation in South Africa. A case study conducted in 1993 involved a survey of how residents of Kwazakele township in Port Elizabeth understood the structures of popular democracy in the 1980s. In addition to the survey, a number of in-depth interviews with activists were conducted.<sup>2</sup> Participation in this project, along with people such as Glen Adler, Kehla Shubane, Jeremy Seekings, Jonny Steinberg, Mzwanele Mayekiso and Patrick Bond, resulted in vibrant debate on the issue of civil society in transitional societies. This debate was being reflected elsewhere, in the real world of politics, as the ANC and SANCO battled to come to grips with their new roles as governing political party and civil society 'watchdog'. This research thus served as a 'baseline' for measuring and understanding political participation in Kwazakele. The finding that there had been very high levels of political participation which were perceived in a positive way by residents, as being at least partially democratic in nature, was taken as a starting point for the examination of political participation during the transitional period of the 1990s.



## **Industrial sociology: The 'Trade Union Democracy Project'**

At the same time as the debate about democracy and civil society was being conducted by civic organisations and political parties, the labour movement was seeking to redefine its role as an ally of the governing party in the newly elected democratic government. A group of South African industrial sociologists engaged in a project on perceptions of democracy within the trade union movement. This research was done in collaboration with COSATU, the largest national labour federation in South Africa. Two surveys of worker attitudes to democracy – the first at the time of the first democratic election in 1994, the second just before the second democratic election in 1999 – were conducted.<sup>3</sup>

The survey techniques employed and the interview schedule used in the trade union democracy research project provided direction for this research, which examined similar questions in relation to residents of the community of Kwazakele. Essentially, both projects involved examining the nature of political participation in both structures of formal or parliamentary democracy, and informal or civil society formations. In addition, both surveys looked at expectations of ordinary people and how elected representatives are held to account.

## **Political culture and human rights: The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

The third major research project that has informed this thesis is research conducted for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission from 1996 to 1998. This research, while not directly related to the thesis, provided a rich source of information on events in the Eastern Cape in the 1980s. While I had begun working on my thesis by looking at – and making assumptions about – the largely positive experience of direct democracy of township residents in the 1980s, the TRC research forced me to look more closely at questions of tolerance, pluralism, fear and the nature of revolutionary or insurrectionary struggles. Work done for the TRC involved searching newspaper archives, court records, police files and minutes of state bodies such as the Joint

Management Centre of the Eastern Cape. These sources, plus testimony to the TRC by both victims and perpetrators of human rights violations, and some interviews conducted with activists and police, built up a detailed picture of politics in the Eastern Cape in the 1980s. In addition, a detailed research paper on the ANC, conducted in July 1999 for the Geneva-based human rights NGO International Council for Human Rights Policy, gave further background on the ANC and the nature of the popular movement inside South Africa in the 1980s. The TRC and the ICHRP research raised important ethical questions about human rights and democracy, violence and non-violence, tolerance and participation, which contributed to a more detailed understanding of the context of the experiment in radical democracy which is the subject of this thesis.<sup>4</sup>

### ***The case study as a research strategy***

Mark Swilling adopts a similarly interdisciplinary approach in his case study of Uitenhage townships in the mid-1980s. He notes that academic writing on South Africa has generally been characterised by disciplinary separation, and that

It was only in some of the rich case studies of contemporary processes that have evolved over the last decade and a half that some disciplinary and paradigmatic integration has occurred. It is in this unselfconscious and largely unexamined tradition (if it is possible to call it that now) that this study is located. (1994:8)

This thesis is another attempt to use a case study in order to understand a national or global process – that of political participation in a transitional society. The case study is thus designed not to test or generate a theory, but to understand the processes of political participation ‘by threading them through the eye of a local context’. (Swilling 1994:7)

### **Why a single case study?**

A case study is a research strategy rather than a methodology as such. It is a strategy that involves the use of a number of research methods. Such case studies have been conducted in various disciplines in South African social

science. Swilling, an urban sociologist, uses 'open systems theory' to understand power relations and political process within the interdisciplinary field of urban studies. He justifies the use of an 'analytically informed empirical case study' using primarily qualitative research methods on the grounds that the subject of study are 'contemporary events that the researcher has no actual control over' (1994:37).

Industrial sociologists have continued with the project on trade unions and democratisation, resulting in the volume edited by Glenn Adler and Eddie Webster entitled *Trade Unions and Democratization in South Africa, 1985-1997*. One of the contributors to this volume is Karl Von Holdt, whose doctoral thesis involved a case study of a particular steel company in Gauteng. Von Holdt, taking the period from 1980 to the mid-1990s, examines the impact of the political democratisation process on relations in the workplace. He thus examines the workplace and the role of the trade union in building a 'counter hegemonic movement' during the 1980s, and in the process of reconstruction of a new order in the workplace in the 1990s. While Von Holdt's research is situated within the discipline of industrial sociology and the study of workplace regimes, there are certain important similarities with the methodology employed in this study. Firstly, they are both case studies – his examining a particular South African workplace in the period of transition, and this study examining a particular residential area in the same period. The usefulness of employing case study methodology is that it allows for detailed and in-depth exploration of events and processes, while attempting to identify those processes which are characteristic of the society as a whole: in other words, to allow for generalisation. Such case studies are able to do so in the following ways: they may 'uncover hidden forms of behaviour; constitute critical cases for testing specific phenomena; explore the causal links between phenomena; investigate and explain variation; and facilitate an understanding of the nature and source of variation.' (Von Holdt 2000:381 quoting PK Edwards et al, 1994:9). In addition, single-case studies should be justified according to whether or not the particular case is a *critical* case, an *extreme or unique* case, or a *revelatory* case. (Swilling 1994:37)

The choice of case study methodology was felt appropriate in this study, in that the experience of political participation in a particular community which is in some respects 'typical' can be generalised. In other respects, the choice of locality for the case study is based on its particular characteristics which are conducive to a high level of political participation, and thus make it a critical case for the testing of theories of political participation.

### **The selection of the case**

The community selected in this case is the urban township of Kwazakele. While the location and history of Kwazakele are detailed in Chapter 3, it should be noted here that the selection of Kwazakele for the case study is not arbitrary. Kwazakele is typical, in many respects, of African<sup>5</sup> urban working class communities all over South Africa. In other respects it is 'special': in its homogeneity, in its stability, in its high degree of political participation. Because of this combination of factors it provides a particularly good case study for examining how ordinary people experience democracy.

In the Kwazakele case study, an examination of the practices of direct democracy in the 1980s is possible as Kwazakele is in many respects 'typical' of urban working-class townships. In other respects, Kwazakele is a 'critical case' for testing a specific phenomenon: that of what, if any, elements of democratic practice or democratic participation are 'carried over' from the experience of the 1980s into 'normal' representative democracy in the 1990s. It is a 'critical case' because, although typical in many ways, it also evidenced a particularly high level of political participation in the 1980s, and was one of the strongest examples of both the establishment of structures of 'grassroots democracy' or 'popular power' and at the same time of high levels of political violence and intolerance. Thus, in hoping to test the thesis that some elements of this political culture are retained in the transition to representative democracy, Kwazakele is selected as a 'critical case': if it did not happen in Kwazakele, it is unlikely to happen elsewhere.

## **The scope of the research and the size of the case study**

As regards size, it should be understood that for a nuanced case study of political participation by ordinary people, a whole country of 45 million is simply too large. A city such as Port Elizabeth, while of a manageable size of about one million, is too diverse for the focus of such a study. Given South Africa's past, the social divisions along race and class lines and the overcoming of such divisions in a city such as Port Elizabeth would be a topic of study in its own right. For a study of political participation, therefore, a community which is representative of the African majority is selected. It is this section of the population that was both excluded from the limited representative democracy of apartheid, and was most active in structures of direct or participatory democracy.

The selection of one particular African community in Port Elizabeth is also for practical reasons: it is geographically coherent and thus easier to analyse. In addition, it is a fairly homogeneous and cohesive community, with a history going back forty years. It is typical of a certain type of African community in South Africa, and its homogeneity enables a clearly defined focus on political participation. Because Kwazakele is an urban township that has been established for some decades, there is a strong sense of permanence among its residents. It is a matter of speculation that those who have more recently arrived to live in the urban townships, those who are 'peripheral' to the community and live on its fringes, participate less than those who are more established residents. Yet this particular issue is not the subject of this case study; the focus is on those established residents of a clearly defined working class community.

## **Research methods employed**

The methods of research used in case study methodology should be multiple, and can include interviews, observation, documentation and archival records, and surveys. Multiple sources of evidence are thus used to maintain a chain of evidence. (Swilling 1994:39; Yin:1984:79) While Von Holdt employs a purely qualitative research method, using in-depth interviews over a three-

year period, this study employs a combination of qualitative interviewing and quantitative survey methods. In addition to these two main sources of evidence, documentary and archival sources, including newspaper archives and testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, are used.

### **The period of study**

This case study is also a longitudinal one, analysing how attitudes and political participation have changed over a particular period of time – the time of the political transition in South Africa.<sup>6</sup> Surveys were conducted over the five-year period of transition to democracy, in 1994, 1995 and 1999. The earlier research, conducted in 1993 and related to the 1980s, is used as a ‘baseline’ on Kwazakele residents’ experience of, and opinions on democratic participation, but not for quantitative comparative purposes. Elsewhere in South Africa (though notably not in Kwazakele or in the townships of the Western part of the Eastern Cape) the period from 1990 to 1994 was characterised by extreme violence – higher levels of violence, in fact, than in the period characterised as insurrectionary in the mid-1980s. Thus it is practical to measure and describe formal political participation from 1994, when the first democratic elections were held and the first stage of transition was complete.

The primary period of study is the decade of political transition in South Africa. Taking as a reference point the experience of oppositional democracy in the mid-1980s, the study examines in depth political participation in the Kwazakele community during the 1990s. This covers firstly the ‘negotiation period’ between 1990 and 1994, and the first national election of April 1994 which signalled the end of the ‘negotiation phase’ of the transition to democracy. Secondly, it covers the first five years of democratic government in South Africa, the period from 1994 to 1999, which includes the first democratic local government elections in 1995 and the second national elections in 1999. This period is formally considered to be the ‘transition’ as the negotiated settlement allowed for a five-year period of a Government of National Unity. In this period, the majority ANC shared power in the executive

with the old ruling minority NP, and various transitional arrangements were made including the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the passing of the Local Government Transition Act in terms of which non-racial local authorities were elected in 1995. This period of transition can be seen to have come to an end either after the second election of 1999, which signals the successful consolidation of democracy. Alternatively, it can be viewed as coming to an end at the end of 2000, when the second local government elections were held and the transitional arrangements for local government representation came to an end. While a number of case studies have examined political participation and civil society in South Africa in the 'first' transition period up to 1994, few have focussed on the period of consolidation from 1994 to 1999.

### ***The Kwazakele surveys***

Swilling and Van Holdt have relied primarily on qualitative methods of data collection, noting (following Touraine's work on social movements) the inappropriateness of quantitative surveys when studying 'collectivities in action'. In Swilling's case study, social movements are central to the processes he is trying to understand. In Van Holdt's case, the unit of analysis – the factory – is small enough to allow qualitative interviews with most of the actors concerned. In this case study of Kwazakele, the use of surveys complements the in-depth interviews with key individuals in the community, as the surveys are used both in a limited quantitative sense for measuring political participation, and in a qualitative way for gaining opinions. While surveys are only one of the methods of research used in this case study, the way in which the surveys were conducted requires further elaboration.

Five separate surveys of Kwazakele residents were conducted, involving a total sample of five hundred respondents. The first 'baseline' survey was conducted in 1993, prior to the beginning of this research. The second Kwazakele survey was conducted in the month following the first democratic national election of 27 April 1994.<sup>7</sup> Previous historical research conducted on political and labour organisation in Port Elizabeth in the 1940s and 1950s was

drawn on to make comparisons and draw conclusions about democratic traditions.<sup>8</sup> The third survey was conducted in May 1995, one year after the elections, and an initial attempt was made to understand the response of residents to the democratic process, and to measure the change in the level of political participation by ordinary residents of a particular community over time.<sup>9</sup> A fourth survey was conducted in November 1995, in the month following the first local government election, to ascertain how residents of Kwazakele participated in local government, and how they perceived formal democracy at local level.<sup>10</sup> The fifth, and last, survey was conducted at the time of the second national election, in June 1999, to ascertain how people felt about democracy, five years after the first elections and at the end of the transition period.<sup>11</sup> The information from this survey, as well as additional in-depth interviews conducted with civic, political and local government leadership figures in Port Elizabeth, were also used in October 1999 to write up a study for the Cape Town-based non-government organisation Development Action Group. This study was entitled 'The Changing Role of Civic Organisation: An overview and case study of Kwazakele township.'

The surveys were conducted in such a way as to provide both quantitative and qualitative data – to provide some measurement of political participation, as well as obtain subjective perceptions of democracy from those interviewed. The timing of the surveys was related to the instigation of representative democracy in South Africa, in particular the elections to national and local government. Elections are acknowledged to be central institutions of representative democracy, and voting is the main form of political participation for most citizens in liberal democracies (De Villiers 2000:44). In addition, elections are of particular importance in new or transitional democracies; as Huntington (1991:174) noted 'Elections are the way democracy operates. In the third wave, they were also a way of weakening and ending authoritarian regimes. They were a vehicle of democratisation as well as the goal of democratisation.'

Political participation in elections is relatively simple to measure, and surveys can ascertain not only voting levels and voter preferences, but also the extent



of citizen understanding of electoral procedures, and reasons for non-participation. In addition, surveys in a particular community can also reveal with a certain degree of accuracy such trends as the extent of citizen participation in political parties and in election campaigns, as well as and their expectations of elected representatives. Surveys conducted in Kwazakele in May 1994, November 1995 and June 1999 were conducted to measure electoral participation in this way. In addition, the surveys tested levels of participation in non-formal institutions of civil society, in particular civic organisations and their grassroots structures. Lastly, the expectations and perceptions of citizens of their elected representatives, and the extent of their power in terms of decision making and holding elected leaders to account, are assessed.

In each of the first four surveys, fifty respondents were selected using a combination of purposive and quota sampling techniques. Bailey (1982:97) notes that 'Quota sampling is the nonprobability sampling equivalent of stratified sampling, with the added requirement that each stratum is generally represented in the sample in the same proportion as in the entire population.' Thus interviewers selected residents on the basis of even geographic distribution across the township, and even distribution of men and women and across age categories. The geographic distribution was important, as particular areas of the township were known to have concentrations of political support for minority parties; thus concentrating the sample in one area of the township would risk omitting minority opinions.

Prior knowledge of the demography of the community, which is the subject of the case study, enabled such a selection. As will be outlined in Chapter 3, Kwazakele has a population with roughly equal numbers of men and women, and an age distribution common to urban communities in developing countries that are not skewed by patterns of labour migration. As the focus of this research is not on the analysis of political participation according to gender or age differences, a detailed breakdown of the survey results according to these variables is not given – although it could be generated from the survey data. As regards age, all respondents had to be over the age of twenty-five, on the

understanding that part of the analysis was based on understanding the changes in political participation over time. Thus those who were twenty-five in 1993 would have been seventeen in 1985, just old enough to be involved in the militant youth and student organisations which were active in the townships; any younger and they would not have played a significant political role.

De Vaus notes (1990:77) that

Some research is not all that interested in working out what proportion of the population gives a particular response but rather in obtaining an idea of the range of responses or ideas that people have. In such cases we would simply try to get a wide variety of people in each sample without being too concerned about whether each type was represented in its correct proportion.

As much of the information required from the surveys was qualitative, relating to the perceptions of residents, and did not necessitate a high degree of statistical accuracy, it was felt that such a sampling method was appropriate.

Bailey notes (1982:99) that 'The advantage of purposive sampling is that the researcher can use his or her research skill and prior knowledge to choose respondents.' In this way, a 'typical' or 'average' sample can be selected, together with a few 'deviant cases' in order to understand the complexities and divisions within a particular community. De Vaus notes that purposive sampling is

a form of non-probability sampling where cases are judged as typical of some category of cases of interest to the researcher... *key electorates which generally reflect the national pattern...are paid special attention. While not using probability sampling techniques, such a method can provide cheap and surprisingly efficient predictions.* (De Vaus 1990:78; my emphasis)

In this case, predictions about voting preferences were not required; instead, the survey method was employed in conjunction with case study methodology to reveal general trends and patterns of political participation. While accurate in reflecting electoral choices, this was not the primary objective of the surveys. More significant is that the residents of Kwazakele can be considered

a 'key electorate' in the sense of being typical of the urban African community that provides the support base of the governing African National Congress.

The last survey, conducted in 1999, entailed a larger sample of one hundred residents. This sample was drawn using simple random sampling combined with a geographic distribution of households over the township and a distribution on the basis of age and sex within households (a form of stratified or multistage cluster sampling). Thus the township was divided into five areas. In each area, twenty co-ordinates were selected using a random number table. Households on the co-ordinates were found and one member of each household was interviewed. Again, interviewers were asked to ensure that men and women, old and young were included in the sample. This last survey, with a larger sample size and selected in a more systematic way, was anticipated to yield results that are statistically more accurate than the previous surveys. In addition, certain statistical results could be corroborated through comparison with official election results in particular voting districts. As will be seen in Chapter 9, the survey results for 1999 showed a high degree of accuracy and can be assumed to be representative of the population of Kwazakele as a whole. However, even if not as statistically accurate, the results of the previous surveys are also substantially accurate in their yielding of general trends in terms of political participation. In addition, they provide a rich source of oral testimony about the perceptions of residents.

As regards sample size, it should be noted that in a significantly homogeneous population, a small sample size is adequate; 'For a population in which most people will answer a question in a particular way or very few answer in a particular way, a smaller sample will do.' (De Vaus 1990:72) Given the prior knowledge of the homogeneity of the Kwazakele population – both in terms of demographic and cultural factors such as race, ethnicity, language and religion, and in terms of political loyalties – it is assumed that a sample of 100 will yield reasonably accurate results.<sup>12</sup>

The interview schedules were semi-structured questionnaires, designed to elicit both quantitative and qualitative results. Thus certain questions were

closed-ended and were designed to be analysed to reveal statistics on political participation and voting patterns (for example, the proportion of the population active in civic organisations; or the percentage of the population who vote for the ANC). Others were open-ended questions which allowed the respondent to speak in her or his own words (as translated and recorded by the interviewer). Such questions are deliberately not designed to categorise responses in advance; given the subjective nature of the responses required, this would be pre-emptive and would in all probability skew the results obtained. Bailey notes that 'Open ended questions are preferred wherever accuracy, detail and exhaustiveness are more important than time or simplification of coding and data processing' and are useful to 'elicit the respondents' unique views, philosophy and goals' (1982:127). The open questions are then analysed afterwards, and the responses grouped into broad categories where necessary. For example, the reasons give for individual residents' decrease or increase in political participation at the end of the transition, as described in Chapter 9, are various and complex. This approach is consistent with the methodology of social history, which gives a voice to ordinary people.

It is worth quoting Sennett and Cobb (1972: 43-4) on the problems of opinion polls, and the alternative methodology they employed, as a justification for this 'open ended question' approach:

We need...to show you why some measure of artful freedom has been necessary to us – why...we could not make a strictly scientific study of people's feelings about class and human dignity.

Any opinion poll or attitude survey with claims to scientific precision has to satisfy four conditions before it is put out in the field. The researcher first of all has to define some criterion by which he can judge the people he will interview as 'representative' of other people's feelings. Then, he must decide what kind of questions will be meaningful to a person as a representative of some larger group. Third, he must find some way of boiling down the responses he gets so that he can make a comparison between different groups of people. Finally, he has to find the means, by random selection or otherwise, to gain access to individuals who are in fact representative of the given group.

A poll thus requires the pollster to know in large part what he is doing and what he wants before he talks to anyone. The great value of this is that he can create evidence in this way, by taking an issue where the terms are known, and seeing to whom they apply. When he asks a group of white workers, 'Do you approve or disapprove of the way the President is handling the Vietnam war?' he is going to get concrete answers. If, however, he asks 'What do you feel the president should do about the Vietnam war?' without supplying alternative answers, he is taking some risk; he is going to learn more about the complexities of personal feeling, but the answers may be so varied that he won't be able to boil them down to three or four characteristic responses. If he asks, still more generally, 'What kind of a role should a President play in making war?' he might get great richness of feeling in response, but the more he follows these up with each person, the harder and harder it will be to codify the complexities as clear evidence.

This doesn't mean that poll-takers can't ask profound questions; it does mean they face difficult problems in dealing with the ambiguities, subtleties, and contradictions involved in answers made in the same spirit. In our investigations, however, it was just this kind of subtlety that we were after.

All survey interviews were conducted by Xhosa-speaking interviewers in the respondents' first language, which was in all cases Xhosa. The interviewers were graduate students or working people who were familiar with the Kwazakele area, although not politically active there. Interviewers were instructed to let the respondents 'speak for themselves' and to note their answers as accurately as possible, using their own words and translating them into English where necessary before writing them down. The interview schedules, names of interviewers and maps showing the location of households for all five surveys are attached as an annexure at the end of this thesis.

### ***Review of some existing research on related areas***

Related research on political participation in South Africa has used a comparative method, taking two or more townships or localities as objects of study. Thus White (1998) has used a similar methodology in measuring the democratic culture of participation in voluntary organisations of civil society in Soweto. She compares participation in three different types of residential area: an old established formal housing area, a migrant labour hostel, and an

informal settlement. One of her interesting findings is that it is in the recently legalized informal settlement of Powa Park that the most active participation in civic matters occurs. More significantly, she concludes that there is evidence that the new urban African electorate will attempt to hold leadership to account in a variety of ways. Cherry, Jones and Seekings (2000) have compared political participation in the urban townships of Guguletu and Kwazakele in order to understand changing patterns of participation in civic organisation. We concluded that while civic organisations are in crisis, there is still a high level of citizen participation at grassroots level. Such recent studies have attempted to assess levels of participation in particular localities at a particular point in time.

Single case studies of historical and political processes in particular South African townships include Tetelman's historical case study of the Cradock township of Lingelihle, which explores political culture and intergenerational conflict from the 1950s to the 1980s. Mayekiso and Bond have written a detailed case study of the political transition in Alexandra township, focussing on the role of civic organisation in the period up to 1994 and drawing on theories of revolutionary social movements. Lucas (2000) has also examined Alexandra township as part of the 'civil society' project mentioned above, while Jochelson (1990) has also conducted a case study of resistance and state repression in Alexandra during the 1980s. Other case studies of civic organisation as part of this project were Sean Needham's study of Mpekweni township (1993) and Bettina von Lieres' case study of Bellville South (1993), both in the Western Cape; both are fine examples of the use of a case study methodology to develop a nuanced understanding of political dynamics. Swilling's (1994) study of the Uitenhage township of Langa in the 1980s examines social movements and urban power relations, and Boraine (1987) has examined power relations and political processes in Mamelodi. Particular mention must be made of Steinberg's (2000) case study of the Saulsville-Atteridgeville Residents Association, as he raises a number of issues about participation and representative democracy which are addressed in my study of post-transitional township politics. Tom Lodge (1996:914) also quotes the research of Honours student Mkhabela, whose 1994 case study of Masite

examined the process of democratization in a rural South African village between 1986 and 1993. However, as with many of the case studies conducted at that point, these contributions were not taken beyond the advent of representative democracy in 1994.

In the field of industrial sociology, Adler (1994) has examined the trade union movement in Uitenhage, and Van Holdt's case study of changing labour relations in a particular industry has also been mentioned above. Sommer (1998) as well as documentary filmmakers York Zimmerman (2000) have examined the use of strategic non-violence in township struggles in the 1980s. Nina (1993), Scharf (1989) and Seekings (1989), among others, examined the structures of popular justice in particular townships in the 1980s and early 1990s, and Seekings has conducted extensive research, as have Shubane (1992) and Yeye (1999), on civic organisation in South Africa's black townships at national level.

Given the perceived importance of South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy, there has been considerable interest in South Africa on the part of scholars from various disciplines and international institutions. Some have conducted research that explores similar issues to the above study on Kwazakele, while others have conducted case studies of different townships, but with the focus on different issues. However, the specific combination of 'case study' methodology and the use of oral history and survey methods to explore political participation at 'grassroots' level in Kwazakele, as discussed above, offers a comprehensive and at the same time nuanced analysis. The breadth and depth of this study of changes in political participation over time in a particular community have also not been repeated elsewhere, and this research thus constitutes an original contribution to the field of political sociology.

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<sup>1</sup> This methodology is practised by the History Workshops both in Britain and in South Africa, at the University of the Witwatersrand. The focus on the lives of working people owes much to inspiration from historian EP Thompson and sociologist Studs Terkel.

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<sup>2</sup> This monograph has been published under the title 'Hegemony, democracy and civil society: Political participation in Kwazakele Township, 1980 – 1990', as part of the collection edited by Glen Adler and Johnny Steinberg, entitled *From Comrades to Citizens: The South African Civics Movement and the Transition to Democracy*.

<sup>3</sup> The results of the first 'worker democracy survey' were published under the title *Taking Democracy Seriously: Worker Expectations and Parliamentary Democracy in South Africa* by David Ginsburg, Eddie Webster et al, 1995. The results of the second survey have been written up in a number of monographs.

<sup>4</sup> I have also tentatively explored the field of political culture and identity in relation to Kwazakele, through a paper entitled 'Ethnicity, nationalism or neither? The culture of political mobilisation in the Eastern Cape' presented to the Biennial conference of the South African Political Studies Association in Bloemfontein in June 1993.

<sup>5</sup> The term 'African' is used throughout this thesis, instead of 'black' which is still understood by the author (following the Black Consciousness tradition) to include all 'people of colour' – in other words, those defined as Coloured, Indian or African in South Africa.

<sup>6</sup> Bailey (1982:34) notes that longitudinal studies are useful for studying trends or changes over time, and are usually conducted over a period of several years, using fewer respondents than a cross-sectional study. The respondents can either be the same (a panel study) or different (a trend study). These surveys thus constitute a longitudinal trend study.

<sup>7</sup> The May 1994 survey results were written up under the title 'The Politics of Hegemony and the Politics of Development: The 1994 Elections in South Africa's Eastern Cape', published in *Democratization* Volume 1 Number 3, Autumn 1994.

<sup>8</sup> This paper was presented to the Wits History Workshop in 1994 and published in 1999 under the title 'Traditions and transitions: African Political Participation in Port Elizabeth' as part of the collection edited by Jonathan Hyslop entitled *African Democracy in an Era of Globalisation*.

<sup>9</sup> The May 1995 survey results were written up under the title 'One Year On: Political Participation in a New Democracy - A Case Study of Kwazakele Township, Port Elizabeth' and presented to the Biennial Conference of the South African Political Studies Association, Stellenbosch, 27-29 September 1995.

<sup>10</sup> The results of this survey were included in an article co-authored with Jeremy Seekings and Chris Jones entitled 'Democratisation and Urban Politics in South African Townships' – forthcoming *IJURR*, 2000.



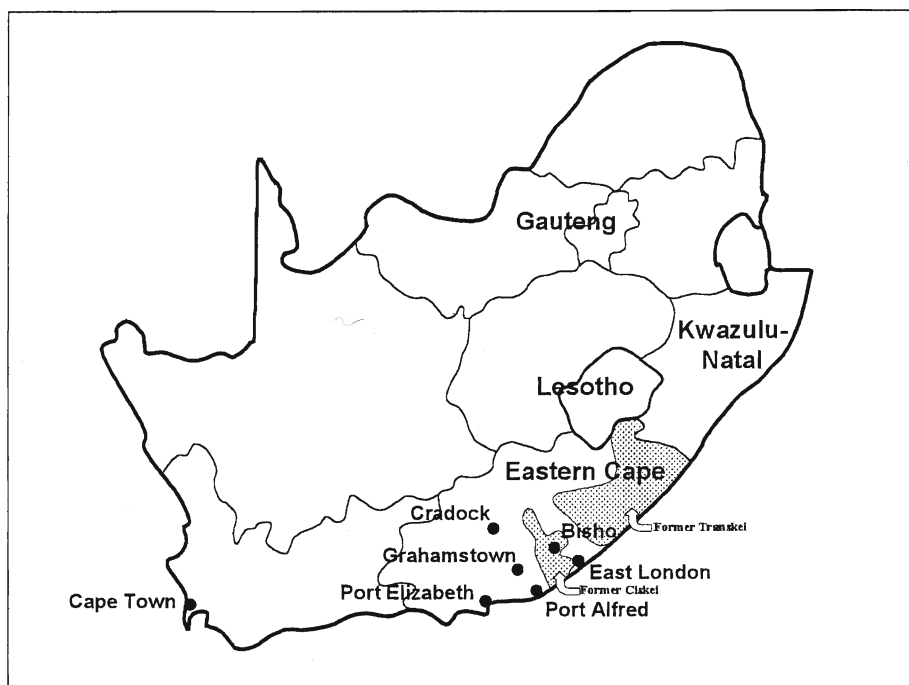
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<sup>11</sup> The preliminary results of this survey were published by Steve Orvis in *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* (Volume XXVII/2 1999) under the title 'Declining Democracy?'

<sup>12</sup> Bailey (1982:100-103) notes that 'many researchers regard 100 cases as the minimum'; but notes also that 'around 30 cases seems to be the bare minimum for studies in which statistical data analysis is to be done'. Given the political and cultural homogeneity of the Kwazakele population, the standard deviation for the population is very small and thus allows for a small sample size.

## Chapter 3: Kwazakele – Geography, Demography and a History of Struggle

Kwazakele<sup>1</sup> is a Xhosa name meaning ‘The place which we built by ourselves’ – a fitting name for a place to study levels of popular participation. It is, at first glance, an unremarkable township.<sup>2</sup> This township is situated outside of Port Elizabeth, an industrial city on the Southern coast of Africa (see MAP 1). Like many other townships that dot the South African landscape, Kwazakele is crowded, dusty, and poor. To put it in more academic discourse: It is a densely populated urban residential area, with few green open spaces, and a predominantly working-class population.



**Map 1. Port Elizabeth in relation to South Africa**

Seekings (1992:229) has noted that support for mass-based organisations, especially those involving residents in structures of direct democracy such as street committees, tended to be concentrated in the old municipal housing areas built in the 1950s and 1960s. Kwazakele is one such area, and as such is a good subject for this study of democracy precisely because of its typicality. Yet it has its own particular history, which distinguishes it from other townships and

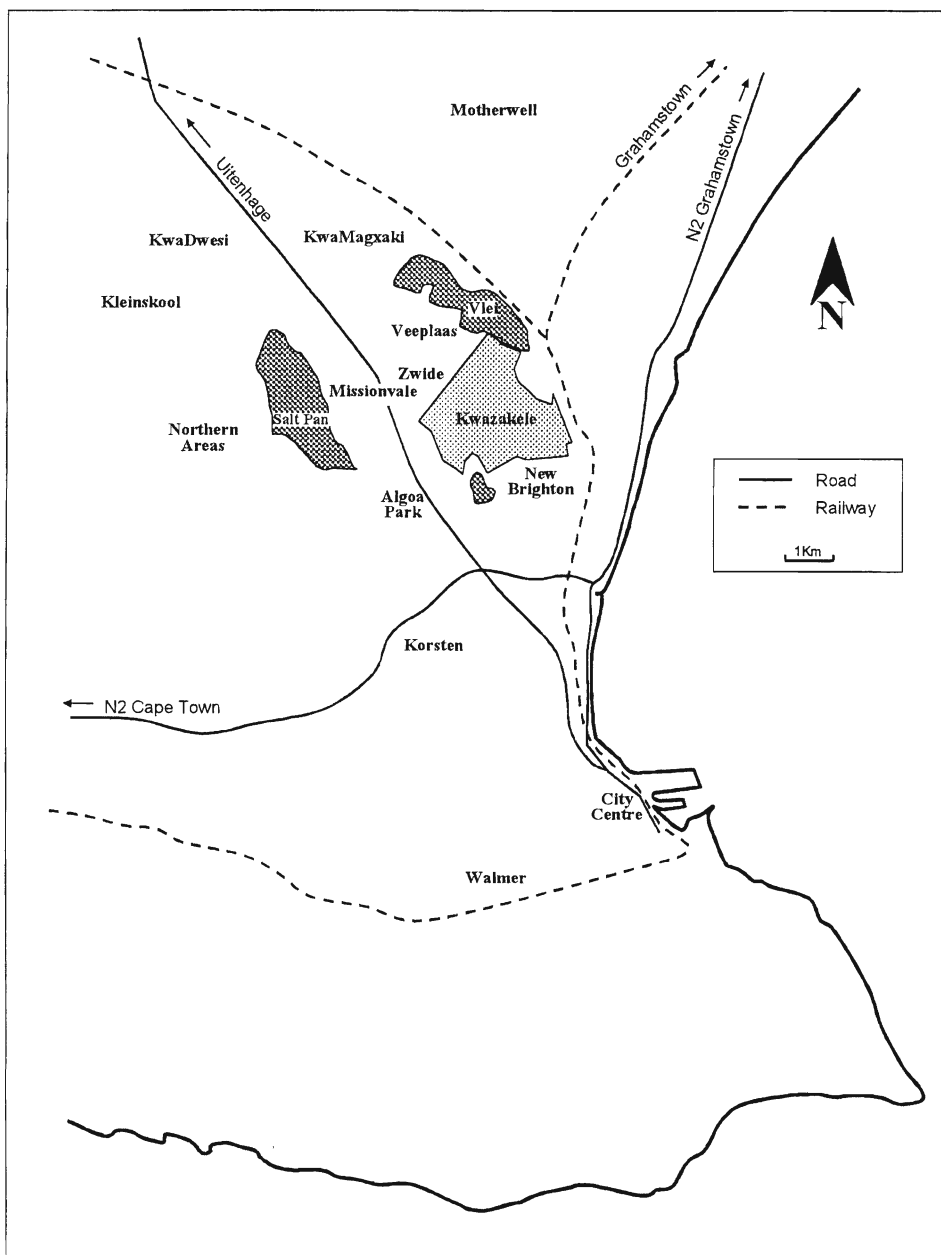
makes it unique. A nuanced case study of political participation needs to be situated within an understanding of the history, geography and demography of the particular community.

### ***The removal of Korsten and the establishment of Kwazakele***

Kwazakele is not the oldest township in Port Elizabeth. That honour goes to New Brighton, founded at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when black people were moved out of the locations in the centre of town. New Brighton thus has a considerably longer political and social history, which has been explored in detail by, among others, historian Gary Baines and political geographers AJ Christopher and Jenny Robinson. Kwazakele, by contrast, has been seldom researched. It was established at the height of the *apartheid* era, between 1956 and 1958, to accommodate Africans who were moved out of the Korsten area.

Korsten was a 'mixed' residential area and the only area in Port Elizabeth where African people had freehold tenure rights. Despite attempts in the 1930s to 'clear' this area of black people, the process of urbanisation resulted in an even greater flow of newly urbanised people into Korsten, the one area where they could rent backyard shacks or spaces free of official control, from the landowners. Thus resulted a sprawling informal settlement – called simply a slum in those days – which not only went against all the *apartheid* precepts of racial segregation and the exclusion of Africans from rights in 'white' urban areas, but also posed a considerably health hazard (or so it was argued by the municipal authorities). Thus the 'Special Slum Elimination Committee' was established by the Port Elizabeth Municipality, and the removal of the Korsten population got underway in 1956. The shack dwellers were moved first, and the place chosen for them to live was the new housing scheme called Site and Service. Site and Service, the initial part of the Kwazakele township, was set up on a large plot of land adjacent to New Brighton, and between the PE-Uitenhage road on the one hand, and the main railway line from New Brighton inland on the other hand (see MAP 2 showing situation of Kwazakele). The housing scheme was considered a revolutionary means of providing low cost

housing at the time, and in fact is not dissimilar to more recent 'site and service' housing schemes. A site was provided, and the first people to be moved simply erected their shacks on the site. A while later, a 'shell house' was built thereon. The residents could install floors, ceilings and interior walls as they wished, and build on additional rooms as they became financially able to do so. Between 1956 and 1958, 45 000 African people were moved from Korsten to Kwazakele, in one of the largest single removals in the history of apartheid. Between 1957 and 1961, 11 727 houses, at a cost of R 432 each, were built as part of the 'site and service' scheme, and Kwazakele expanded to the North and East.<sup>3</sup>



**Map 2. Kwazakele in relation to Port Elizabeth**

The process of removal from Korsten is vividly described by the earliest residents of Kwazakele. One of these was Mrs Hilda Tshaka, a stalwart of the ANC Women's League during the campaigns of the 1950s. She described the process of removals as follows:

I can't remember the year I moved, but I was one of the last group to move because I resisted being moved. There were a lot of people who did not want to leave Korsten; there were many people who said they are not going to Kwazakele, and they wanted the government to build houses in Korsten for them. There were discussions in the ANC about the people not wanting to go to Kwazakele, not wanting to be segregated, but they could not avoid this. The government was very clever – they knew there were people who came from the homelands, who needed homes, and they were not very much criticised (for moving) because they needed homes. The government started with these people because they had shack dwellings or they rented rooms, and they did not have plots; so they were happy because they had homes, they never realised that now they are being separated, all the blacks into one township...And they were happy because they were going to receive proper houses and be permanent residents... It was better to stay in Korsten because Korsten at that time was very free, people had their own plots, there was no control from any government department. It was not restricted like Kwazakele. People could make dwellings as much as they wanted, and they could accommodate people for meetings and so on...Here at Kwazakele we couldn't do that. Korsten was not controlled by the Native Affairs department. We could develop our houses, make them big, and have a big yard. It was a big area, not like today in Kwazakele where you can't bring people to your house for a meeting; here you can't do a thing without being watched by other people. There was a very good spirit in Korsten.<sup>4</sup>

Another of the early residents of Kwazakele, Mrs Dorothy Vumazonke came from Queenstown, and was only fifteen when she moved to Port Elizabeth to stay with her uncle and aunt. While Hilda Tshaka was one of the old Korsten residents, Dorothy Vumazonke was typical of those who urbanised during the 1950s. She arrived in PE around 1954, and was lucky to have family and then a husband to provide her with a secure urban home and protect her from deportation:

My uncle and aunt lived in Perl Road, Korsten, when I arrived. I moved with them to Kwazakele in 1957 or 1958, when they moved all the people from Korsten to Site and Service. My uncle was already dead, but my aunt got one of the sites in Site and Service. My aunt was lucky that she did not have a shack; the people she worked for

made it possible for her to move into a house straight away, instead of moving into a shack. People were all unhappy about moving to Kwazakele, but she moved because they had to. That house was at 54-87 Emagaleni. I stayed there with my aunt for about a year, then I happened to find my husband, and he married me in 1959. He had a shack, it was not built, at the place I am now staying – at 10194 Maqanda.

Others, like Shooter Mkongi's family, had to build their own homes in the bush:

Three neighbours in Korsten shacks decided to move together to Emagaleni. Emagaleni was not initially part of the Site and Service scheme – when we moved here, it was just bushes, with many animals like *amagala*<sup>5</sup> living here. This is why people called the area Emagaleni. The bush had to be cut, and shacks were erected.

'Oom Klaas' also moved with his parents in 1957 to their new home at 6211 Site and Service:

There were just shacks here; the houses were built in the early 1960s. There was no infrastructure. We were dumped at Tonjeni. There was resistance, but the shacks were just demolished. The last trip to Kwazakele was at about 10 at night. You arrived in the dark, you didn't know where you were going to, there were no lights, no building material. People brought their materials from Korsten, but some got broken or lost on the way.

Kwazakele developed slowly into a typical working-class residential area – not that different to housing estates built in post-war countries of Europe. It contained row upon row of small, nearly identical houses, built by the municipality and rented out to families. As Mrs Vumazonke explains, access to family housing was conditional upon having a 'proper marriage':

When people were supposed to have these houses, they were supposed to get married; other people didn't want to get married, they just married a sister, but it was not a proper marriage, it was a temporary marriage, and when you wanted a proper marriage you would have to get divorced. But I had a real marriage; my husband loved me.

## **Demography**

When Kwazakele was built there was some provision made for migrant workers, in the establishment of the single-men's quarters, built in the late

1950s to house migrant labourers from the Ciskei and Transkei. However, Port Elizabeth's industrial economy did not depend primarily on unskilled migrant labour. The motor industry and the factories that supplied it with components required a stable, semi-skilled workforce; initially the motor manufacturers employed only white and then coloured labour. African workers were employed in unskilled jobs on the docks, in food and textiles sectors, and as general labourers.<sup>6</sup> Gradually, increasing numbers of African men were absorbed into the motor industry in the late 1970s they came to challenge the predominantly coloured trade unions organising in the sector.<sup>7</sup> Some African women were employed in the textile industry; Mrs Vumazonke of Kwazakele again typified the experience of newly urbanised working class African women:

Oh those big machines! I thought to myself, wondering how was I to work with such a huge machine like that. At first I was given an apprentice card, because I was still imperfect. It was still difficult at first, as I say we had to rush for time, otherwise the production will slow down. There were big drums with cotton, which had some tree leaves that you had to thread in something like a needle, but not exactly the same as a needle. This was done on the whole wide machine; within minutes you press the machine to start. A thicker thread will come out. Then it is done on another machine until it is a small smooth thread which can make a towel and a cloth and many other different materials.

Kwazakele was typical in many respects of the municipal housing areas built in the post-war period in South Africa. However, it was demographically different from many of townships of the Western Cape and the PWV<sup>8</sup> area. Given the low number of migrant workers, and the failure of the PE local authorities to rigorously implement influx control (it was argued by some that this was a deliberate flouting of government policy, with the 'city fathers' prioritising the labour needs of industry over the ideological coherence of the apartheid policy) Kwazakele developed a 'normal' population in terms of sex distribution. The 11 000 houses built as part of the site and service scheme were built for family housing. The ratio of women to men living in Kwazakele was never distorted in the way that it was in townships where influx control was rigorously practiced; and in most cases people lived a 'normal' family life, albeit under *apartheid* laws.

As with other Port Elizabeth townships, the African population was ethnically nearly homogeneous, with almost all residents having Xhosa as a first language. There was a small Sotho population which lived in an area known as *Ebesuthwini*, but who soon became integrated with the Xhosa-speaking majority. Another area of the new township became known as *esiBayeni*, meaning 'Kraal'; this was where the Bhacas moved together, as a minority in the community.<sup>9</sup> Almost all residents spoke one or more second languages, being Afrikaans, Sotho or English. Moreover, there was not a great deal of inequality in the township: most people living in Kwazakele were, and are, working class people. A few professionals such as teachers and nurses live scattered among the wage-earners and the unemployed.

Population growth has been rapid in Kwazakele, as in other urban townships of the Eastern Cape. A rough estimate for the period under study would put the population at around 75 000 in 1985, growing to 85 000 in 1990 and to 120 000 in 2000. This may well be an underestimate, however; the population may have been as high as 100 000 in the mid-1980s, growing to over 150 000 at present.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Administration and conditions***

From its establishment, Kwazakele was administered by the government Bantu Affairs Administration Board and the Port Elizabeth Municipality. While the PEM was a relatively liberal local authority, the Kwazakele residents who had moved from Korsten were resentful of living under the control of 'Native Affairs', as expressed above. In the 1980s, Kwazakele came under the *Kayamandi*<sup>11</sup> Town Council, renamed in 1985 the *Ibhayi*<sup>12</sup> City Council. This body was formed in terms of the 1983 Black Local Authorities Act to govern the African townships of Port Elizabeth. New Brighton, Kwazakele, Zwide, and the newer townships of KwaDwesi and KwaMagxaki, built in the 1980s to accommodate the new black middle class promoted by PW Botha's reform strategy, all fell under Ibhayi. (See MAP 2) Low participation in elections meant that the seats on these councils were occupied by middle-class township residents, often businessmen, who had no mass base, no legitimacy



and were often deeply resented by poorer residents. However, they had little real power, as white administrators controlled the finances and the administration. Thus, in its governance and administration Kwazakele was typical of townships in the era of *apartheid*. A number of schools were established by the Bantu Education Department, and there were a few other facilities, such as a sports stadium.

Living conditions were not easy in the early decades. The authorities provided little infrastructure and few services; no houses had electricity, running water or flush toilets. The lanes between the houses were not tarred, and drainage was poor. There were no streetlights and few public facilities such as parks. Most residents of Kwazakele literally had to build their homes gradually for themselves, as Dorothy Vumazonke describes:

When I came back in 1962, the house was already built, it was a two-roomed house. Later he built another two rooms at the back, so it is now a four-roomed house. There was no floor, it was just ground, people had to put in cement themselves, and no doors except those iron doors which made such a noise; most people took them out. Most people were not very happy with the houses. There was bucket system sewerage, they used to collect them. At that time, we used to fetch water in a big bucket if we wanted to do washing or have a bath – you would just have to bring quite a lot of water to the house. We had to fetch water from a tap outside.

Shooter Mkongi explains the conditions and services at Emagaleni area in the early decades:

The area was convenient because it was the end of the bus route at the time, so transport was available. In around 1961 the government started putting up formal housing. There were communal taps installed for water for every twenty or thirty households – they were known as 'gap taps' because they were installed in the gaps between the houses. There was a bucket system for sewerage collection up until the 1980s, when sewerage was installed. Electricity came much later, as part of the electrification project in around 1993.

In addition to the poor living conditions, it took time for a sense of community to develop among the residents of the new township, as evidenced by Mrs Vumazonke's experience:

At Kwazakele people were fierce, they just used to steal washing from the line, and when you see someone taking wash from the line, you don't know each other, so you just believe it belongs to the person who takes it away.

After some years, residents grew to know their neighbours and relationships of trust and reciprocity were built. By the 1980s, most residents of Kwazakele had been living in their houses for twenty-odd years, and there was a relatively cohesive community. Families had invested considerable time and money in making gradual improvements to their homes. Despite the high level of poverty of the residents and the failure of the local authorities to provide services other than those described above, the 'site and service' scheme was a success in the sense that it gave residents security and thus an incentive to improve their dwellings.

Despite attempts at influx control after 1952, always implemented rather half-heartedly by the Port Elizabeth municipal authorities, the waves of urbanisation continued. The existing housing stock in Kwazakele soon became overcrowded, with no new houses being built in the two decades from 1961 to 1981. Thus by 1983, for an official population of just over 100 000, there were still 11 652 housing units – an average of 8.6 people per house. While accommodating eight or nine people in a two-roomed 'matchbox' house is certainly no mean feat, Kwazakele had a higher percentage of single households per housing unit than the other Port Elizabeth townships – indicating the relative stability of the community. Residents of Kwazakele were on average slightly poorer than those of New Brighton, but their income level was higher than that of residents of the newer township of Zwide, built in the 1970s, and the informal settlement of Soweto-on-Sea.<sup>13</sup>

By 1999, near the end of the research period for this thesis, little had changed in terms of demographic and development indicators. A survey conducted by students of community nursing showed that the population of Kwazakele was still largely stable and working class.<sup>14</sup> Still faced with extremely high levels of unemployment, those did have work were mainly domestic or factory workers. The levels of poverty in the community were indicated by the income of

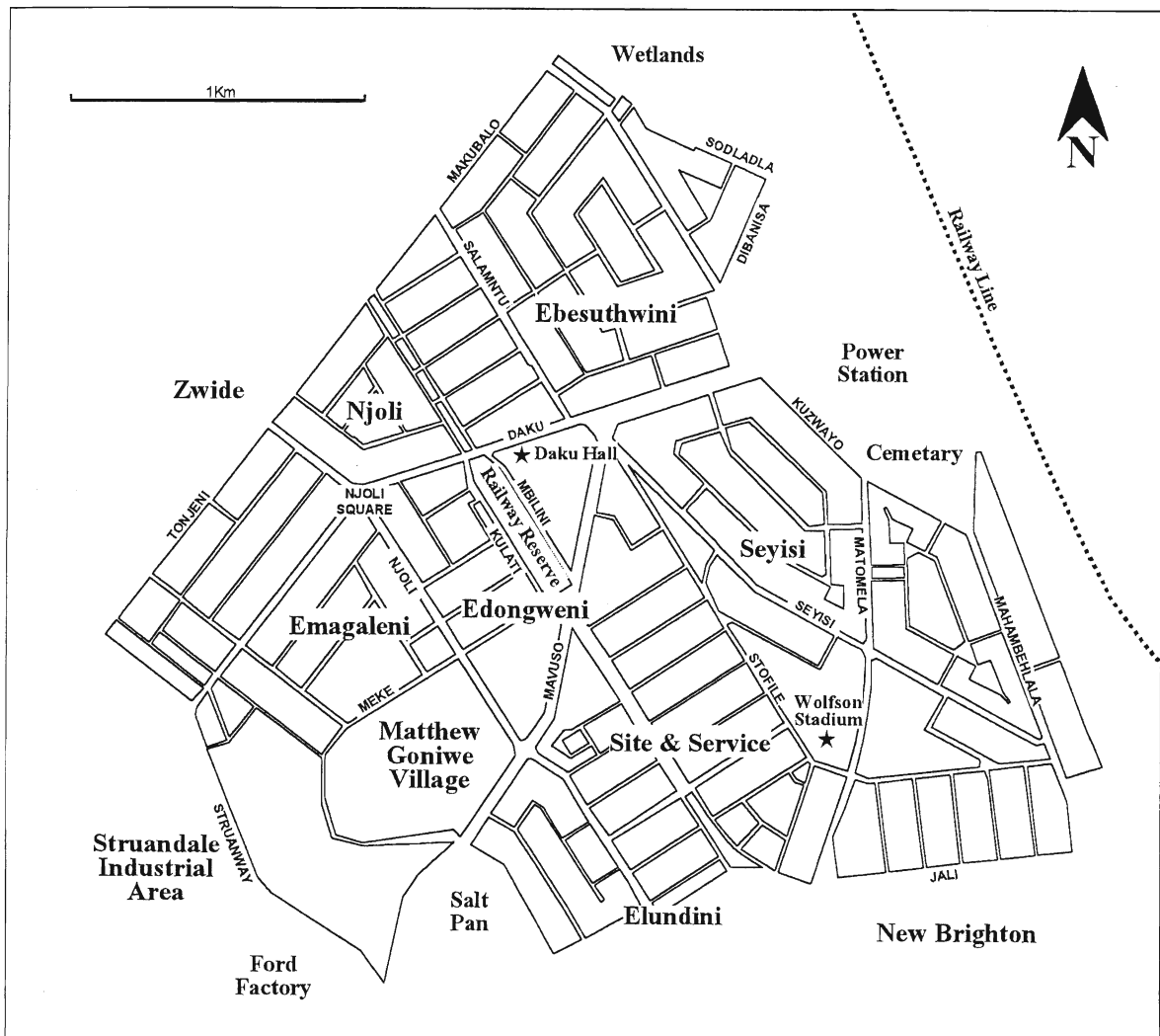
households, with only one tenth of those surveyed earning a living wage. The largest category of income was between R300 and R 600 per month – the top figure being roughly half of the living wage for a family of five in 2000.<sup>15</sup>

The typicality, combined with the relative homogeneity and cohesiveness of the population, makes Kwazakele a good township for the study of political participation. Conflicts over ethnic identity and mobilisation do not detract from the central political dynamics of ‘inclusion’ versus ‘liberation’ in the apartheid era. This demographic ‘normality’ – including the stability of the population and the lack of a large migrant population – also allows for greater continuity in families and households, and thus for comparisons of political behaviour over time. In other words, those who grew up in Kwazakele in the 1960s, and who became politically involved during the 1970s, are likely to have lived and participated there in the 1980s and the 1990s, unless they went into exile in the early period or into government in the latter period. The normal male-female ratio of the population means that women’s political participation can also be assessed, which is of interest to some of the central questions around participation and power.

### ***Political geography***

Kwazakele, although contiguous with both New Brighton and Zwide, is a distinct community. A rather odd shape, it is nevertheless clear to all residents where the borders of the township are. As can clearly be seen on MAP 3, the border with Zwide is formed by the straight road called Tonjeni on the west side, and Makubalo on the East side. Makubalo turns sharp right into Sodladla street, which together with Kuzwayo and Mahambehlala streets form the Eastern boundary. This formal boundary has, however, been obscured for some time now by the mushrooming of shack settlements on the borders of the township. Thus right along this Eastern border are informal settlements, starting from the lake and running right across the M17 to the old Kwazakele cemetery. These settlements are known by various names; those along Sodladla street, next to the *vlei*<sup>16</sup>, are called *Emacangeni* and *Yizo yizo*. The residents of these new settlements are new arrivals from rural areas, and tend

to be somewhat isolated from the mainstream of township life. Along Kuzwayo, close to the Power Station, are *Masakane* village, Mandela Village, *Buyambo* and Silvertown. The top East corner of Kwazakele – marked on some maps as part of New Brighton – turns left into Jali road, which forms the top or South border. The South – West corner is a bit harder to identify; the whole area around the salt pan area adjacent to the area called *Elundini* has become filled with shacks, and it is not longer clear where New Brighton ends and Kwazakele begins. For the purpose of this thesis, the border is taken as running down Ngene street, left into Mavuso, and then straight down Struanway to Daku Road.



**Map 3. Kwazakele borders and areas**

The township can be divided up in a number of different ways into areas. In order to understand how these divisions occur, the main roads and physical features of the township need to be understood. On MAP 3 are shown the

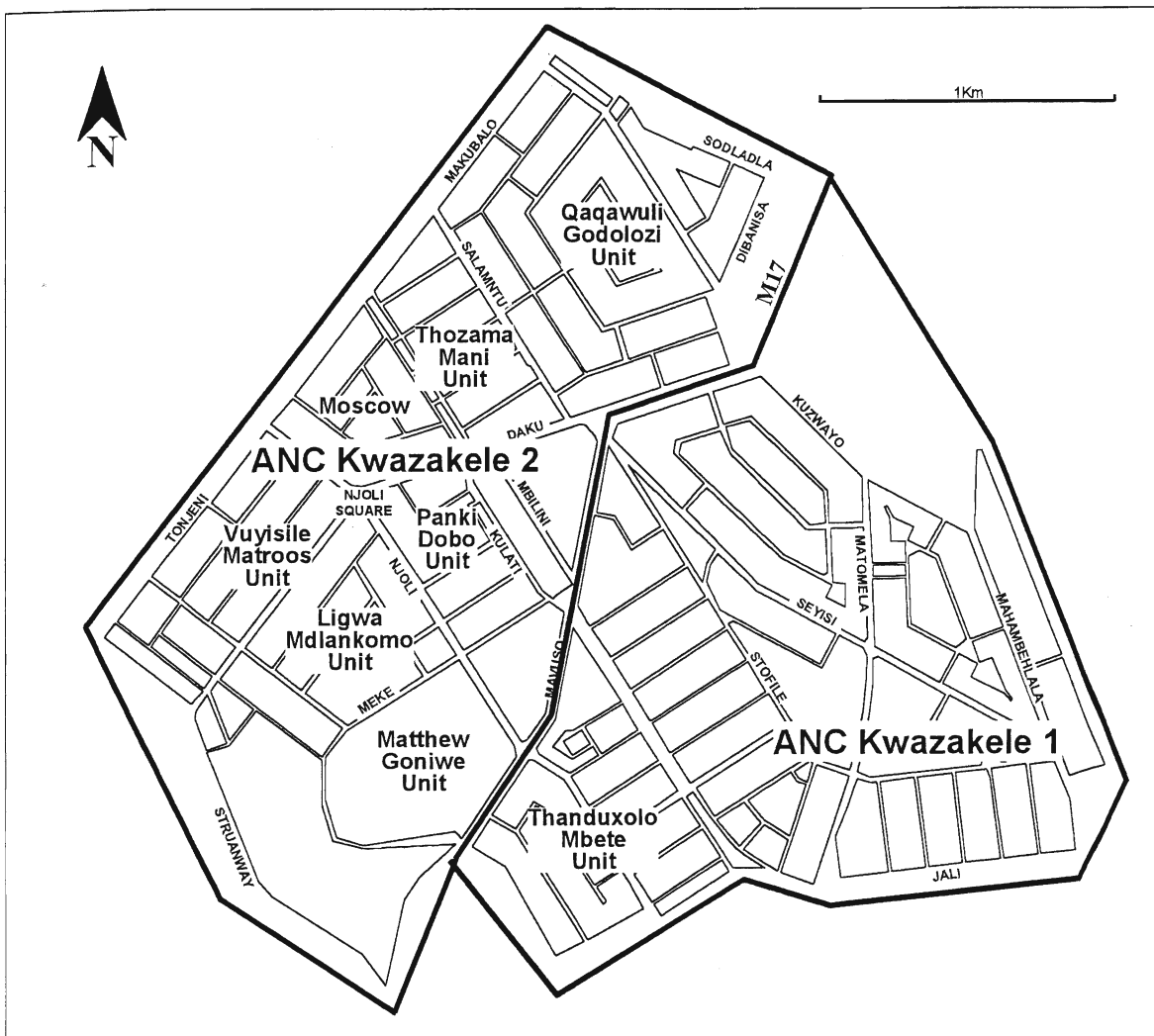
main roads, Njoli and Daku, which bisect the township something like the spokes of a kite. The intersection of Daku and Njoli roads is Njoli Square, a key point for township residents. It is a transport hub, a business hub for informal sector traders and service providers, and a meeting point. Parallel to Njoli road, and truly bisecting the township – but not as significant for transport – is the ‘railway reserve’ bounded by Kulati and Mbilini streets. This area was kept open for a railway line for urban commuters – which was never built. Now densely built up with shacks, there is no indication of the original planning. Also parallel to the railway reserve runs Stofile Street, another important route; and at an angle to Stofile runs Seyisi street. It is around these streets that township organisations create boundaries and subdivisions, and so the research for this thesis has used these streets for the purposes of subdividing the township and ensuring that all areas are covered by surveys.

Different areas of the township are known generally by colloquial names, which have historical origins, rather than by official ward names. Thus the bottom right hand corner is known as *Ebesuthwini* as it was an area where Sotho speaking people were given housing in the early 1960s. The bottom left hand corner, to the left of Njoli and between Daku and Meke roads, was one of the earliest parts of Kwazakele to be established. It is called *Emagaleni*, after the suricates found in the bush when the first shacks were erected. The part between Daku and Tonjeni, but closer to Njoli road is known simply as Njoli. Between Meke and Mavuso roads, on the left of Njoli, is the Matthew Goniwe Village area. This area includes the *Kwandokwenza* Hostel, or Single-Men’s Quarters. Between Meke and Struanway lies the old Golf Course, now converted into a new housing development called Struandale or Greenfields. Between Njoli and Kulati is the area known as *Edongweni*, for the deep mud surrounding the houses and shacks there. The long rows of matchbox houses running down the length of the township between Njoli and Stofile are known simply as Site and Service; all these houses are still numbered according to their original numbers, so people’s home addresses are given by number, for example ‘11 456 Site and Service’. The rows of houses are divided by dirt lanes, with open spaces called ‘gap taps’ at regular intervals. One part of this area, opposite the hostel on the other side of Njoli road, became known as

*esiBayeni*, and was where a Bhaca minority lived.<sup>17</sup> The area between Seyisi and Kuzwayo, where the roads are in a circular pattern, is just called *Seyisi*.

In 1990, when it began to build its new legal structures, the ANC established two branches in Kwazakele. These branches had (and still have) some of the highest memberships of political parties anywhere. The ANC divided the township simply into two, with the boundary between Kwazakele 1 and 2 branches going down Mavuso Road and right along Daku which becomes the M17. (See MAP 4) Kwazakele 1 branch covers four of the 'old' wards (as demarcated for the 1995 local elections) on the South-East side of the dividing line. These are Ward 22 from Seyisi to the Swartkops Power Station; part of Ward 20, which includes the informal settlement known as MK or Silvertown, the old 'dumping area' for the bucket system; Ward 21, which is partly in New Brighton and includes the Maqanda street area and part of Red Location; and part of Ward 23 – the 'centre' of Kwazakele, from Stofile street to the Enkuthazweni Community Centre. The ANC Kwazakele 2 branch covers the area on the West of Njoli road, and contained three and a bit of the 'old' wards: Part of Ward 23, in the centre of Kwazakele; all of Ward 24, including the MG Hostel; part of Ward 25, running from Njoli square to the Zwide boundary; and part of Ward 27, North of Daku road to Zwide. Each branch was subdivided into units; units in theory had street representatives. The branches in turn form part of larger zonal structure. The ANC is in the process of restructuring its branches, with the old Kwazakele 1 and 2 branches becoming zones, and the zones being divided into units which are the new branches. Thus Kwazakele 2 zone is divided into the Ligwa Mdlankomo branch, which includes Matthew Goniwe Village to Njoli Road; the Panki Dobo branch which includes the central area of Site and Service, where Oom Klaas lives; the Vuyisile Matroos branch, in the Njoli/Emagaleni area; the Moscow branch where Ivy Gcina's house is; the Thozama Mani branch, on the other side of Mbilini Road. The Thanduxolo Mbetse branch, in the Vuku Street area, falls into Kwazakele 1 zone. ANC branches are in the process of being redemarkated to be in alignment with the new ward boundaries, with the guiding idea being that there should be one branch per ward, with three units with each branch. One of the problems with the old branch structure was that

ward representatives were not clearly accountable to particular branches of the ANC. The old and new Ward Boundaries, and the councillors for the old wards, are detailed in Chapter 8 on local government.



**Map 4. Kwazakele ANC branches and units**

### ***A history of struggle***

Kwazakele itself had little political history before the 1960s, except for the power relations around the establishment of Site and Service as described above. The failure of the ANC to respond to the removal of Korsten is an interesting topic, and was explained by veteran ANC leader Govan Mbeki as well as by Hilda Tshaka as being a successful example of ‘divide and rule’ politics, with those who had property rights being left until last and isolated from the poorer shack dwellers and recent immigrants to the city. However, people from Korsten did bring their own political history to Kwazakele. While

many were newly-arrived in the city, products of the waves of urbanisation from the increasingly impoverished homelands during the 1930s and 1950s, many were also third or fourth generation urban residents. Thus by the 1960s, some, such as Hilda Tshaka, had moved to PE early in the century and had a long history of urban politics.<sup>18</sup> Some, like Simon Mkalipi, had participated as volunteers in the ANC's campaigns of the 1950s.<sup>19</sup> Others, like Dorothy Vumazonke, had moved to PE in the 1950s as youth, to become factory workers.

### **The legacy of struggle**

Residents of New Brighton had a long history of participation or non-participation in the structures of 'formal' politics that were available to Africans at various times. Members of the Communist Party, trade unionists and ANC members contested elections to the New Brighton Advisory Board from the 1930s until 1951, when they decided that it was no longer worthwhile to do so. Raymond Mhlaba<sup>20</sup> was elected in 1949, 1950 and 1951, resigning with the statement that 'as long as Africans had no real legislative powers, their struggle would be an ex[tra] parliamentary one.'<sup>21</sup> Shortly after this, extensive political mobilisation by the ANC involved black residents of Port Elizabeth in a series of campaigns, including the famous Defiance Campaign of 1952, the collection of demands for the Freedom Charter in 1955, and the Bantu Education Campaign of 1956.<sup>22</sup> They also involved two less well-known events that were also to provide precedents for later resistance to apartheid, at the beginning of the decade. The New Brighton Riots of 1952 provided the local police with a portent of what frustrated residents, not guided by strong organisation or leadership, were capable. At the end of the decade, the implementation of the 'M-Plan' envisaged strong grassroots structures that would withstand extensive state repression. By the time of its banning, the ANC had developed extensive support in the townships of Port Elizabeth, and among the working-class African people who were to become the backbone of the Kwazakele community.<sup>23</sup> This support drew on two traditions: one of participation in formal political structures; the other of mass organisation and protest.<sup>24</sup>



## The era of quiescence

The 1960s and early 1970s was a period of political quiescence in South Africa, and Kwazakele was no exception. As 'Oom Klaas' remembers,

The 1960s were very difficult, as the regime already had a list of people who were active in Korsten. The ANC had to start afresh, and recruit new leadership. Being dumped in the veld, and Bantu Education, gave some impetus to recruitment. But it was very difficult. There was a hell of a harassment, a lot of fear. Where I stayed, at my parents' home near Daku Hall, there was a man called Nogaya – a Treason Trialist. Police threw stones at his house while his family was inside. Anyone associated with the ANC, and his whole family, would not be employed.

As elsewhere in South Africa, independent black trade unions began to emerge during the 1970s, organising the increasing number of semi-skilled African workers in industry. As the Black Consciousness movement gained support – initially from a small group of black intellectuals – some cultural activities were initiated, such as the plays written by the Reverend Maqina who was to play a critical role in the violent conflict in Kwazakele in the 1980s.

It was at this time that the Nationalist government began to play with limited reforms, in particular with regard to the rights of urban Africans. From the mid-1970s, reforms to the apartheid system recognised the need to give certain rights to urban African people in order to promote stability and the growth of a black middle class. From 1975, Africans were allowed to own houses under a 30-year leasehold, but not to own the land. There was an acknowledgement that urban Africans were permanent residents of the cities, and were entitled to limited rights. However, socio-economic reforms were granted while any notion of political accommodation of the African majority was firmly squashed. During the 1970s, all critical and resistance-oriented activity was rapidly crushed as it emerged, through banning orders and other such mechanisms of the apartheid state. There were attempts to establish a branch of SASM at the Kwazakele High School in 1975, but few students were willing to risk involvement. (Riordan 1992: 3) There was dissatisfaction with many of the teachers, and in particular there was dissatisfaction with the lack of a matric maths and science teacher. Thus, when Soweto exploded on June 16 1976,

there were students at Kwazakele high schools who were sufficiently politicised to be ready to respond.

## **The 1976-7 uprising in Kwazakele**

The 1976 uprising, which began on 16 June 1976 in Soweto, Johannesburg, spread to Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage in mid July of that year. A Development Board truck was burnt at the Centenary Hall in New Brighton, following a clash between police and a crowd watching a boxing match. By 9 August there was extensive violence in New Brighton, and by 18 August ten people had been killed and over twenty injured by police in 'renewed clashes' in the townships of Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. Groups of youth targeted schools, police vehicles and municipal bottle stores for stoning and arson attacks. There were sporadic disruptions to classes, and meetings of pupils were broken up by riot police with teargas. 'Shooter' Mkongi, a pupil at Kwazakele High School at the time, described how students responded to the events in Soweto; see also MAP 5:

However, the principal accused us and warned us not to follow in the footsteps of the Soweto students, which made us furious. Mncedisi Siswana was our leader in 1976, organising the students to respond, and writing slogans on the board in the classrooms. The principal called the security police who took photographs of the blackboards. Then, there was the conflict at Centenary Hall in New Brighton. This was at a boxing match, and was not a political event as such; people couldn't get in, and so a police van with a police dog inside it was burnt. The police then responded with violence. Four people were arrested for this incident, and sentenced to 15, 14 or 7 years imprisonment. Siswana then rallied students at KHS together, and we met in the school grounds, singing freedom songs, writing placards, recording our grievances and so on, on 17-18 August. The teacher called the police, who teargassed the students assembled outside. Then all hell broke loose. The township people got involved. There was an interschool rugby tournament the next day at the Wolfson stadium, and we marched from KHS down Nobatana street, towards Wolfson stadium, to disrupt the tournament. We were joined by scholars from other schools, such as Loyiso, and the youth from the street. Matomela bottle store was targeted; we burnt that one, then went to Mendi, and to Red Location, and burnt all the bottle stores....So there was fire all over.

On 1 September, a stay-at-home began in PE; on 10 September there was a large demonstration by coloured schoolchildren, and 43 high school pupils

were arrested in Kwazakele, planning a march into the city centre. Riordan writes that Colonel Goosen, then head of the PE security police, saw the plotting by the Kwazakele High School pupils in a series of meetings convened between 16 August and 9 September, as being the 'epicentre of this riot.' Riordan describes the actual events vividly, basing his account on interviews with the participants:

On 9 September 1976 word went around the two matric classes that the boys should remain behind after school to plot a structured response to the Soweto events. That night 43 Kwazakele high school matric pupils met at the school. They, between them, hatched out a rather wild plot to do as follows: They would remain at the school that night, painting posters and debating. The next morning, when the balance of the school arrived, they would divide the school into 43 each led by one of the matrics. These groups would make their way to the Mayor's Garden in the centre of white Port Elizabeth, all by different routes, some by bus, some by train, some by taxi, to prevent apprehension. There they would carry their grievances to the awareness of white Port Elizabethans. Now the plot develops a different colour, for the youngsters were to carry petrol bombs and bombs made from the chemicals in their science laboratory (sodium and calcium) and, to make their exit possible in an anticipated rush of police, they anticipated torching a few shops as a distraction.

Through the night they plotted, painted, sang and slept, and at 5.00 am, with the dawn, came security policemen...and the riot squad. Whether they had been tipped off, or had followed up midnight calls on some students houses...we don't know. What we do know is that 43 frightened little students were bundled off to Algoa Park police station and rough justice. According to one of the 19-year-olds awaiting his fate, Michael Xego, (Brigadier) Neethling presented a devastating description of Port Elizabeth City Centre aflame, with white women trapped in lifts in burning buildings. 'When he had finished, we knew we were in for it' says Xego. Small matter that the petrol and chemical bombs never existed except in schoolboy's theories – it was a frightening time of revolt, and Neethling had the court's ear. (Riordan 1992: 9)

Of the forty-three youth arrested, ten became state witnesses. Thirty-one of them were charged under the Terrorism Act for 'conspiring to throw petrol bombs at shops and hinder the police during demonstrations'; they were sentenced in January 1977 to five year's imprisonment on Robben Island. Many of these youths, on release from Robben Island 'university' in 1982, became leaders of the next generation of resistance organisations.<sup>25</sup>

The arrest of the Kwazakele High School leaders did not stop the revolt, however, and on 14 September there was a protest march by African schoolchildren. During August and September 1976 in Port Elizabeth, 89 buses were stoned, there were arson attacks on 20 black schools, five bottle stores and 12 shops, and extensive damage - estimated by police at R 1.4 million - to 34 police vehicles and various government buildings. (Riordan 1992:3) What is significant here is that few, if any, attacks were made on people; however, the police response resulted in a large number of severe human rights violations.

The 'Soweto uprising', as it became known, was not contained in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage in 1976; it extended into 1977, and a particularly severe outbreak of violence followed the commemoration of the June 1976 events, and was exacerbated by the death in police custody of Steve Biko in September 1977. Schools came out on boycott again. From 12 - 13 October 1977, schools in the PE and Uitenhage townships were disrupted by an extensive boycott, and by November all 39 000 primary and secondary school students in PE were on boycott, with demands for the resignation of teachers; the houses of teachers and BAAB officials were attacked. All schools were closed in PE and in the Ciskei and Border corridor area.

The targets of anger during the 1977 unrest were both government buildings and individuals. Police vehicles were the most frequent target for stoning; and BAAB offices were also attacked. School principals or teachers who were opposed to the boycott had their houses and possessions attacked, and when police used force to get pupils to return to school, the schools were burnt down. In their application to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for amnesty for the assault of Steve Biko, security police testified about the 'gruesome unrest' in Kwazakele. Both government bottle stores and private shebeens were targets; the Salamntu Road bottle store in PE was attacked on three successive days in October 1977. 'Shooter' Mkongi explained why the youth targeted the bottle stores in 1976 and 1977:

We had heard from SASM, and also it was clear that problems were caused for our mothers, by these bottle stores. People spent a lot of money on beer, and the money

from the beer halls was used to run the townships, which received no money from industry. There was some political understanding of the problems of the beer halls, mixed together with a belief that a drug was put into the sorghum beer to make the African people not bear more children.

This particular bottle store was to be targeted again in the mid-1980s, with tragic consequences. There were also attacks on delivery vans and lorries of white businesses, during a boycott of white businesses; busses were also targets for stones and petrol bombs. In addition, 'Demonstrators were whipped to a frenzy by the indiscriminate firing from the police' (Jackson 1980:98-99). While unrest in most of South Africa had been contained by late 1977, it continued in the Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage area. In December 1977,

Port Elizabeth was described as the only area where police were not in control, and over the Christmas period a special task force of white police was drafted in to assist in keeping order. Conflict has been fuelled by aggressive police tactics in response to the successful and sustained call by the SRC for a total boycott of classes by all PE students...Police opened fire on crowds several times, killing at least eight in December-January and wounding many more. An indication of the prevailing atmosphere was the police statement made after the extra police were called in that 'not a single stone has been thrown in Port Elizabeth black townships today'. (IDAF *Focus* 15 March 1978)<sup>26</sup>

There were certain continuities between 1976-7 and the mid-1980s, such as the targets of popular protest: schools, bottle-stores, municipal policemen, local officials of BAAB or the BLA, and other individuals identified as collaborators. Many of those who were high-school students in 1977 went on to become the more sophisticated 'second generation' of youth and civic leaders in the 1980s. Yet there were important differences. Perhaps the most important was one that has been noted by many scholars and writers on South African resistance politics (see for example Seekings 1993) – that the 1976-7 uprising was a revolt by and of the youth. Few solid or lasting organisational structures were created, and the parents of these youth – the African middle-aged working class – were not involved. Those who began to rebuild organisations in the early 1980s learnt from these experiences, and ensured that the type of grassroots structures that they built were more durable and more inclusive.

## The re-emergence of popular organisation, 1979 – 1983

By 1979, Port Elizabeth's black townships began to see a re-emergence of locally based organisations. Feeding into this re-emergence were the newly formed independent black trade unions, the FOSATU-affiliated trade unions which organised both coloured and African workers in the motor industry, remnants of the Black Consciousness Movement, and the 'old guard' of the Congress movement. PEBCO, the civic organisation formed in 1979 to take up local grievances, was initially representative of these various strands – with the exclusion of the FOSATU tradition, as PEBCO activists were involved with the African workers who broke away from the FOSATU-affiliated NUMARWOSA to form the independent, militant 'community union' MACWUSA after the Ford strike of 1979.<sup>27</sup> An interesting process took place in the following two years, as the Congress tradition was steadily reasserted over locally based civic organisations such as PEBCO. This Congress tradition was consciously reasserted by three different groups of activists. The first was the 'old guard' of former Robben Island prisoners, some who had been involved in the ANC campaigns its legal days of mass mobilisation in the 1950s such as Simon Mkalipi, Sipho Hashe and Edgar Ngoyi. Others of the 'old guard' were MK members from the 1960s, who took part in the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns and were known as '*umGwenya*', such as Ernest Malgas and Henry Fazzie. The second group was the ANC underground, strongly influenced by the 'forward area' of Lesotho, where Chris Hani led a concerted attempt from 1979 to create an underground in the Eastern Cape charged with building mass organisations in line with the ANC's 'Green Book' strategy.<sup>28</sup> Influential activists through the Transkei, Border and broader Eastern Cape – including Arnold Stofile and Matthew Goniwe – were part of this strategy; as were younger activists involved with the building of COSAS, an organisation which mobilised high-school students with great effect in the early 1980s in Port Elizabeth. The third group were those young activists who had participated in the black consciousness-inspired revolt of 1976-7, some of whom had served time on Robben Island, and who were released in 1982 having been 'converted' to the ANC on the Island. This group were to effectively build mass organisations in the early 1980s, and 'take over'

existing organisations such as PEBCO, as part of the building of hegemony by the Congress movement. These three groups began to work together in the PE townships to build extremely effective mass-based organisations, the principal ones being PEBCO, PEWO, PEYCO and COSAS. In addition, individual activists such as Thozamile Botha, an 'organic intellectual' who had taught at Kwazakele High School from 1976 to 1978, returned in 1979 and got a job at the Ford factory. He became a key activist in the formation of MACWUSA and PEBCO.

Kwazakele thus differed from some townships in other parts of South Africa where the formation of mass-based organisations emerged only in response to the formation of the UDF and the upsurge in militant opposition to apartheid from late 1984 onwards. Seekings and others have written about how the UDF organised, moving into the townships adjacent to small towns all over the Western and Eastern Cape, establishing youth and civic organisations where none existed. Von Holdt has described this process in the township adjacent to Witbank on the Rand, where a UDF 'co-ordinating committee' was formed to facilitate the development of other organisations. As in some other townships, a strong civic organisation was never developed, and thus both trade union activists – especially the hostel residents - and the militant youth played a more dominant role in township politics than in Kwazakele, where in contrast there was an established civic organisation that involved middle-aged residents.

This civic organisation, PEBCO, was launched on 10 October 1979, out of an amalgamation of the Zwide and KwaFord Residents Associations. Shortly thereafter, a branch of PEBCO was established in Kwazakele. PEBCO responded initially to the housing crisis of Port Elizabeth's African townships, which was exacerbated in 1979 by the Eastern Cape Administration Board's implementation of a policy directive to destroy shacks and end rent subsidies. Thus in New Brighton, the KwaFord 'packing crate' houses were destroyed, and some of the families relocated to the Kwazakele Single Men's Quarters. Two families shared one room, and overcrowding was further exacerbated when, according to Mufson (1990:29), 'Because of a storm drainage problem,

the government also threatened to demolish a couple of hundred houses in Kwazakele without making new quarters available.' In addition, Walmer township was threatened with immediate demolition, the residents expected to be accommodated in the already overcrowded townships of New Brighton, Kwazakele and Zwide. The newly formed PEBCO intervened in this crisis, negotiating a reduction in rents, the dropping of service charges for water, and the reinstatement of some evicted residents. Furthermore, after threats of a consumer and bus boycott, the forced removal of Walmer township was cancelled. (Mufson 1990:30).

In this initial stage, PEBCO was led by Thozamile Botha, who was fired from Ford for his involvement in PEBCO. His dismissal led to the Ford strike, which led in turn to the formation of the Ford Workers Committee and then MACWUSA. After a threatened boycott by PEBCO, and the threat of a one-day general stayaway, the striking workers were reinstated. PEBCO gained a mass following, with up to ten thousand residents attending its meetings in the sports stadiums of Kwazakele and Zwide – a level of popular mobilisation unseen since the 1950s. However, the leadership of PEBCO were detained in January 1980, and it went into decline for a while. In its initial stages it was somewhat leadership-driven, and it was only later that it would develop the strong grassroots structures that would enable it to survive repression to some extent. It is significant, though, that PEBCO and the UDF are remembered as having been concerned with improving people's living conditions, and not only with conducting the struggle against the apartheid state:

The government didn't have much interest in improving the township; it was only after the UDF was formed, that improvements began. The UDF leadership campaigned for improvements in sanitation – taps, toilets, and electricity. (Oom Klaas).

Meanwhile, COSAS had developed a very strong branch in Port Elizabeth, and the schools boycott of 1980 was widely supported, resulting in the temporary closure of all primary and secondary schools in Kwazakele. COSAS activists combined with youth leaders released from Robben Island in 1982 to form the youth organisation PEYCO. Following this, PEBCO was



revived in the 1982-3 period, with the involvement of the youth activists and the 'old guard' mentioned above. In November 1983, an interim UDF committee was formed, and speakers from PEBCO and PEYCO explained why the new tricameral constitution and the 'Koornhof Bills', including the Black Local Authorities Act, should be rejected. (Riordan 1992:12) Elections to local authorities in African townships were held in November and December 1983, and saw a turnout of some 20 percent of registered voters; as most residents of townships were not registered, it is likely that the percentage poll was as low as between five and ten percent. (Mufson 54). The townships of New Brighton, Kwazakele and Zwide fell under the newly established *Kayamnandi* Town Council. The elections of 1 December 1983 were contested by two parties, the Zamukulingisa Party of Normal Khaulela, and the Asinamali Party. Of the 115 000 eligible voters, just under 17% voted. Khaulela's party 'won' all 21 wards, and Khaulela was inaugurated as Mayor with Thamsanqa Linda as his deputy in December. (Riordan 1988:13) Linda replaced Khaulela as Mayor, and he and his councillors were to become objects of popular anger and hatred in the years to come.

The extent of resistance and the building of organisation in this period has led some analysts to describe the period 1976-1983 as a 'Long Wave' of popular protest (Murray 1987:200). There is some evidence that the security police understood the continuity in organisation in the same way, which explains their targeting of key activists in COSAS in Port Elizabeth for assassination. They justified these 'early' assassinations (of Sizwe Kondile in 1981 and Sipiwo Mtimkulu and Topsy Madaka in 1982) on the basis of the 'revolutionary situation' they were instigating in the townships.<sup>29</sup> Yet to most residents of Port Elizabeth, the early 1980s were a time of development of mass organisations through patient organisation, political education, rudimentary media and the taking up of very local issues of direct concern to residents. While the formation of COSAS and the youth congresses, and indeed even PEBCO, may have been strategised by the ANC 'forward area' of Lesotho under Chris Hani's leadership, this link was not apparent to the thousands of residents who began to support these organisations in the early 1980s.

When the township revolt began in September 1984, residents of Kwazakele were ready to play their part in the historic drama that was about to unfold. Desperately poor, dissatisfied with conditions and angry at the authorities, Kwazakele residents constituted a relatively well-organised and politicised community, living in a densely settled neighbourhood with established social and political networks in place.

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<sup>1</sup> Sometimes it is spelt Kwazakhele; sometimes KwaZakhele. I am consistently using the common spelling Kwazakele.

<sup>2</sup> 'Township' is the colloquial term used in South Africa to describe the urban residential areas designated under apartheid for African people; they used to be called 'native locations' and many older township residents still refer to them as 'locations'. Although there are no longer restrictions on where people may live, the townships are still the home for the majority of the urban African population in South Africa.

<sup>3</sup> Cherry, 1988, examines the social and political history of Korsten and its destruction as a residential area in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Hilda Tshaka in Kwazakele, March 1988. Mrs Tshaka was moved to Kwazakele in 1959, then arrested in the early 1960s, and deported to Keiskammahoek in the former Ciskei before returning to Kwazakele where she lived until her death in 2000.

<sup>5</sup> *Amagala* (plural) or singular *igala* is Xhosa for a small animal known as a meerkat in Afrikaans or suricate in English.

<sup>6</sup> See Cherry 1992 for a detailed analysis of the Port Elizabeth African labour force in the 1940s and 1950s.

<sup>7</sup> Glenn Adler and Martheanne Finnemore have both written detailed studies of the changing labour force in the motor industry of the Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage area.

<sup>8</sup> PWV is the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging 'triangle', the industrial heartland of South Africa now known as the Gauteng Province.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with 'Oom Klaas'.

<sup>10</sup> The PEM Health Department gave a figure of 399 195 for Zwide, Kwazakele and New Brighton combined for 1995. Assuming the three townships to be of equal size, this gives a population size of 133 000 for 1995. Assuming a growth rate of around 4.5% per year, the

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population in 2000 can be estimated to be around 150 to 160 000. White (1984:8) notes that in 1983 the official population of Kwazakele was already just over 100 000, estimated on the basis of being one third of a total population of 330 000. Election statistics give a slightly lower figure: in the 1999 national election, there a voting-age population of 65 000 – 70 000; if roughly 50% of total population are youth under 18, this gives a population of 130 000 to 135 000. Statistics from Port Elizabeth IEC office, IEC website, Statistics SA website, and Adlai Davids of UPE Geography Department; Fezile Mavuso of the PEM, who obtained data from the PEM Health Department; and Jill von der Marwitz and Paddy Cloete of the UPE Health Sciences Faculty, who are involved in a programme of provision of health services to Kwazakele. Von der Marwitz uses the CIS statistics from the 1991 census, which give a total population of just over a quarter of a million for Ibhayi, which was the townships of Zwide, Kwazakele and New Brighton combined. Divided by three – assuming each township to have a roughly equal population - gives an estimated population of 85 684 for Kwazakele. At a growth rate of 4.5% per year, this gives a figure of 399 195 for the year 2001, which if divided by three, gives an estimated population of 133 065 for Kwazakele.

<sup>11</sup> *Kayamnandi* means 'beautiful home' – another of the ironic apartheid names given to their miserable constructs.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibhayi* means simple 'The Bay' and is the Xhosa name for the whole of Port Elizabeth, which since the 17<sup>th</sup> century has been known by sailors as 'the Bay' or 'De Baai', abbreviated from Algoa Bay on which the harbour town was situated.

<sup>13</sup> Figures from White, 1984:8 – 11; see also Cherry, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> I am grateful to Dr Jill Von der Marwitz of UPE Health Sciences faculty. A group of students conducted this survey in 1999 in order to ascertain the health status of residents of Kwazakele. This survey was of 350 households, involving a total of 1906 people. One person per household was interviewed. See Von der Marwitz, 1999 for further details.

<sup>15</sup> In Von der Marwitz' survey, nearly 40% of households said that their income was between R 300 and R 600 per month. The minimum living level for a family of five is estimated to be between R 1 000 and R 1 200 per month. The average Kwazakele household contains six or seven people, often more.

<sup>16</sup> *Vlei* is an Afrikaans term for a marsh or wetland.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with 'Oom Klaas'.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Joyce Kirk's thesis on the African middle class in Port Elizabeth at the turn of the century.

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<sup>19</sup> The ANC veteran Simon Mkalipi passed away in the early 1990s. I interviewed him in 1984 for a book commemorating the Freedom Charter by Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin. Mkalipi's son, 'Boy' Mkalipi, was one of the 1976 generation who became a PEYCO leader in the 1980s; he is now secretary of the Kwazakele 2 branch of the ANC.

<sup>20</sup> Raymond Mhlaba – known as 'Oom Ray' – was a trade unionist, a member of the Communist Party, and an ANC leader. After being sentenced in the Rivonia Trial in 1963 he served two-and-a-half decades imprisonment on Robben Island before his release in 1989. He was made Premier of the Eastern Cape province in 1994.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Baines 1994:95. For a detailed discussion of the strategy of participation in Advisory Boards, see Baines 1994.

<sup>22</sup> These campaigns in Port Elizabeth are documented in Baard 1986, Cherry 1992, Lodge 1983, and Robinson 1990, among others.

<sup>23</sup> Lodge (1983:51) has noted that African politics in Port Elizabeth was dominated by working-class leaders in a way which distinguished it from any other urban centre.

<sup>24</sup> See Cherry 1999 for an in-depth discussion of these two traditions in Port Elizabeth.

<sup>25</sup> Mike Xego and Alex Rala were two of these Kwazakele youth activists interviewed in the course of this research. Both were close friends of mine, working with me in various NGOs before the 1986 state of emergency when Alex went into exile and Mike was detained for three years. Both were severely tortured in 1985 and were applicants in the famous 'Wendy Orr interdict' against torture.

<sup>26</sup> The source of much of this information is a document drawn up by myself for the TRC Research Department entitled 'Western half Eastern Cape, 1975 – 1982' and dated January 1998. Secondary sources drawn on were Jackson, Riordan, and IDAF *Focus*.

<sup>27</sup> This trade union history is detailed elsewhere: see Evans (1980) among others.

<sup>28</sup> See Mbeki 1996:42-46 for a discussion of the implementation of the 'Green Book' strategy.

<sup>29</sup> This is debated in more depth in Cherry, 'No Easy Road to Truth: The TRC in the Eastern Cape', paper presented at the Wits History Workshop Conference, Johannesburg, June 1999

# Chapter 4: Kwazakele in the Era of Revolt: Lessons of the 1980s

Only if the new culture is embodied in the process of moving towards the new society will that society work when we get to it. (Rick Turner, 1972:81)

No one can come and teach us how to build democratic structures now, we know that very well ... We have built our own democratic government.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1980s we were so scared, at that time – there was a fence around the whole location, a razor wire fence to prevent you from going to New Brighton. We were not free at that time. There was violence – not in Kwazakele only, but in all the places there was unrest; people were being assaulted by policemen, and kicked, and they were revolting but had no weapons... I am not so sure about politics. I was not a member of any committee or organisation at that time; I was not involved because I was frightened, I used to stay in the house. I didn't go to the big funerals. I remember the meeting at Bantu Church of Christ, when teargas was sprayed into the church, and one old lady died. It was so frightening I never wanted to go anywhere: I thought I do not know how I will survive.<sup>2</sup>

The first two quotes above capture the central theme of this thesis: what experience of democracy did ordinary people gain during the struggle against apartheid, which could be taken into the new democracy? The third quote is in sharp contrast to the first two, and illustrates the other side of the struggle for democracy: the violence and fear that was prevalent in a time of great social turmoil.

Walking through Kwazakele today, it is hard to believe that in the mid-1980s an atmosphere of such tension and fear existed. It is difficult to imagine the streets filled with teargas, the young men running behind houses with their homemade weapons, scarves tied over their mouths. It is unpleasant to remember the armoured security force vehicles roaring up and down the dusty streets, firing teargas canisters, birdshot and buckshot at moving crowds. It is even more disturbing to recall the massive funerals where the enraged crowds dug up corpses, or turned on suspected informers and hacked them to death.

Kwazakele is a relatively peaceful place today. While there is a certain amount of crime, primarily domestic assault and theft, and one would hesitate to walk in the streets of certain areas late at night; there is not an all-pervasive atmosphere of violence. Daily life proceeds as one imagines it does in poor urban communities the world over: neighbours share their meagre resources, women chat as they hand-wash their clothes and hang them out on a wire in the backyard to dry. During the week, men go around looking for work, and women try to make a little cash by selling oranges at the terminus, or paraffin by the litre from their homes. Children are in school, the streets are quiet, and the daily struggle is against poverty, not against the state.

Many residents remember the 1980s with bitterness, as a time of fear and loss. It was a time when the community was divided by the AZAPO-UDF feud, and there is a sense of shame, perhaps embarrassment, about that particular conflict. Today, AZAPO and ANC supporters in Emagaleni area tolerate one another amicably, and sometimes cooperate around certain issues. If individual families feel bitter and still want an explanation for why one of their loved ones had to die, it is not something that is openly encouraged. Victims of the conflict from the UDF side testified to the TRC, and asked for explanations; Reverend Maqina and other AZAPO leaders from Uitenhage, gave testimony in an attempt to explain what had happened. Yet there is a sense of a lack of resolution of that particular conflict – that nobody really understands why and how they became caught up in such brutality.

It was also a time when young people had their brief lives ended by security force bullets, and when innocent children died in fires caused by arson. Yet it is hard to find any reminder of those times in Kwazakele today. There are no memorials, no museums, little public acknowledgement of those who died at the height of the anti-apartheid struggle except for the naming of ANC units after MK heroes such as Ligwa Mdlankomo<sup>3</sup> and Panki Dobo. Most of those who died were not even buried in Kwazakele, as the cemetery was full by 1970.<sup>4</sup>

Yet at the same time, there is a sense of pride in the strong history of resistance in the area, not only the pride of those whose children died as

heroes 'in battle', but the ordinary pride of people in their own achievement of defeating apartheid, through rendering the township 'ungovernable' and then through governing it themselves, in the brief moment of popular power – some even say 'dual power' – of the mid-1980s. It is this paradox that I try to understand in this chapter; and, following the exploration of the events of the 1980s, to understand what the legacy was for the type of democracy that emerged in the 1990s.

## ***Existing analyses of the 1980s revolt***

### **The role of mass mobilisation in bringing about change**

The pressures on the apartheid government to negotiate itself out of power at the end of the 1980s have been hotly debated. Many political analysts have emphasised the role of elites or even individuals in initiating the negotiation process. Others have argued that it was the structural crisis in the world economy that, combined with economic sanctions, placed enormous pressure on the South African state. Some politicians within the governing ANC continue to assert that the armed struggle of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* was crucial in bringing about the downfall of the apartheid state. Others who are more critical of the role of the armed wing of the liberation movement emphasise the importance of the internal resistance to apartheid, and argue that the ANC leadership has tended to 'remove the masses' from the history of the liberation struggle.<sup>5</sup>

It is not proposed here to undertake a detailed review of the literature on the South African struggle of the 1980s. Neither shall the extent of the role of mass mobilisation in forcing the state to accept a negotiated transition to democracy be debated here. Suffice to say that there is broad agreement among academic and political analysts that the mobilisation of the ordinary residents of the black townships in the mid-1980s did play a significant role in undermining the legitimacy of the state and creating the conditions for a negotiated transition to occur.<sup>6</sup> The main protagonists in the conflict, including the former security police of the South African state, accept this view.<sup>7</sup>

## Mass mobilisation as empowering or intolerant – or both

In relation to the process of mass mobilisation itself, and the question of political participation by ordinary residents of the black townships in this process, there are various interpretations. More radical scholars tend to emphasise the participatory, democratic or empowering nature of the struggle.<sup>8</sup> Some recent reflections on this period, such as the York Zimmerman documentary on strategic non-violent action, *A Force More Powerful*, emphasise the non-violent nature of the mobilization that took place; others are naïve in their assessment of mass mobilization as something inherently positive.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, analysts from the right or from a traditional liberal position emphasize the intolerance, territoriality and brutality of the struggle, and see a strategy of mass mobilisation as being inherently violent and undemocratic.<sup>10</sup>

In looking in some detail at Kwazakele township, it is clearly not possible to choose in an absolute sense between these two broad analyses. It is also true that a high level of participation does not necessarily entail the building of a democratic culture. Thus Lodge's observation, which describes the co-existence of aspects of direct democracy with intolerance for those outside of the 'territory', would seem to capture the political culture of Kwazakele.

If a democratic political culture depended only on high levels of popular political activity, then the habits and attitudes engendered by the township rebellion would hold out considerable hope for the future .....Any minimum definition of democracy, though, must include freedom of political choice and political association. The participatory bodies developed in the 1980s did not acknowledge the moral legitimacy of political differences; their pyramidal structure reflected a view of the community as an organic unity. Organisations sought to occupy territory and mobilise as many residents as possible within a single locality. Competition between the followers of different black political organisations has become extremely violent... (Lodge 1996:194)

Von Holdt, in a detailed analysis of workers at a steel factory and their relationship with the adjacent township in Gauteng in the 1980s, has come to a similar conclusion. He argues that the 'construction of a counter-hegemonic social order' involved contestation between different political cultures; thus the culture of democracy and accountability of the trade unions came into tension



with the militant, coercive culture of the townships. Yet it is not possible to see these two cultures as discreet. As Von Holdt points out, each influenced the other, and absorbed aspects of the other. He sees the culture of the liberation struggle as the 'overarching' or dominant discourse within which other elements emerged and struggled. Thus neither political culture was either entirely democratic or entirely coercive; the unions manifested the more intolerant and violent aspects of liberation politics (Von Holdt argues that 'revolutionary bullying' was widely perceived as legitimate) while the township organizations sometimes tried to implement democratic procedures.

Lodge wrote the above analysis of political culture in South African townships in a book published in 1996. Yet the violence and intolerance describing the political culture of the early 1990s in other parts of South Africa, applied primarily to Kwazakele in the 1985-7 period. This brief moment of 'quasi-insurrection' (the term used here is revolt or uprising, as it is not considered to be an insurrectionary situation in the true meaning of the word) was characterised in Kwazakele by both a political culture of direct democracy, and one of intolerance of those outside the 'pyramidal structures'. Thus one of the Kwazakele activists reflected on his awareness of the tension between the two:

Of course, it was difficult for those structures ...to be tolerant of views that are opposed to the ANC, because of the assumption that this area...was ANC based, and most structures in the democratic movement were dominated by people who either belonged to the ANC or supported the ANC. As a result our opposition, the PAC and AZAPO, did not find themselves comfortable within those structures. So from the onset the approach was conservative, because it was not representative of all political opinions within ourselves; it was representative of one opinion, which was the Freedom Charter opinion. The understanding was that no one was excluded, but because of the dominance of the ANC politics in the area, people thought that in our organizations they are going to be frustrated. So it was sort of a democratic structure, but the democracy was limited by the absence of other people. So the tolerance part of it became a problem...So we have never had that type of experience (of [pluralist – my note] democracy) in the broader sense, we have always dealt with people who were coming from the community and most of them being ANC-oriented individuals.<sup>11</sup>

The hegemonic and intolerant culture of a liberation movement thus co-existed uneasily with a grassroots culture of democracy and participation.

### **Descriptive accounts of the township revolt**

There have been a number of descriptive accounts of the 1980s 'uprising' in South Africa's black townships, and while they do not focus on Kwazakele per se, the process of mobilisation they describe applies equally well to Kwazakele. Thus Murray in *Time of Agony, Time of Destiny* gives a comprehensive account of the uprising, based primarily on newspaper sources, and notes the 'stubbornness and determination of township residents in the Eastern Cape' which 'seemed to confirm the longstanding reputation of the region as the cradle of national resistance to white minority rule' (Murray 1987:285). He describes how the BLA system 'disintegrated' and how the central state had lost control over most black townships in the Vaal Triangle and in the Eastern Cape; by mid-1985, he writes, 'Stretches of the Eastern Cape resembled an operational area on the brink of open civil war.' (1987:301) Mufson in *Fighting Years* vividly describes the role of Mkhuseleli Jack, the head of the PE Youth Congress and the spokesman for the Consumer Boycott Committee, as leader of the *amabutho*<sup>12</sup> in the PE townships. Jack's individual role is also the focus of the acclaimed documentary *A Force More Powerful*, made in 1999 by York Zimmerman, which explores the use of strategic non-violence to bring about change in South Africa and other countries. Mufson's powerful interview with journalist Mono Badela provides the Eastern Cape detail in Lodge and Nasson's account of the 1980s revolt, *All, Here and Now*. Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba, in *Comrades Against Apartheid*, while focusing on the ANC and SACP in exile, give an account of the township uprising that analyses the links between the ANC, its military and underground structures, and the mass movements. In relation to Port Elizabeth, they focus on the role of the ANC in the AZAPO-UDF conflict in particular. In another recent research project funded by UNICEF, Vivien Taylor draws on a wide range of interviews with activists and focus groups with participants from organizations all over the country, and tries to generalise about the lessons of mass mobilisation and

organisation from these interviews. Yet the focus is on activists' perceptions and experience, rather than that of 'ordinary people'. Jeremy Seekings' recently published history of the United Democratic Front similarly relied on extensive interviews with activists as well as documentary sources, but he acknowledges that he spoke to few 'ordinary people, people on the ground' (2000:28) and feels that 'there remains a clear need for further research into the political perceptions of people on the ground' (2000:24).

While many of these accounts convey the political turmoil of the time with accuracy, they tend to generalise about the nature of the revolt. They tend, too, to focus on the role of individual leaders or activists, and gain most of their information from interviews with such leaders – in the case of Port Elizabeth, with Mkhuseleli Jack and Mono Badela in particular. This is not surprising, as these individuals are highly articulate and have clearly expressed views on the subject. The focus of my research on the mid-1980s in Kwazakele, which provides a starting point for analysis of the transition, by contrast focused on the experiences and perceptions of ordinary residents of a particular township.

### **Analyses focusing on violence**

The intolerance and brutality of the uprising has been highlighted in many other accounts and processes. These include contemporary accounts in the daily newspapers of the time, and the cases brought before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission some ten years later. Kwazakele was undoubtedly an extremely violent place in the mid-1980s, as the narrative below will show. Yet as regards reconstructing these events, a reading of newspaper reports of the time is generally not helpful, as the 'unrest reports' of the police were the only information the media were permitted to convey. Thus one reads merely a litany of incidents of death and destruction, with little context or motive conveyed. Examples from typical newspaper reports based on police 'unrest statistics' from the period June–July 1985 read as follows:

The body of a 22-year old man was found on the Kwazakele golf course. He had been stabbed and axed. (*EP Herald* 11/6/85)

A 15-year-old boy was saved from the 'necklace' in Kwazakele. He had been accused of being an informer. (*EP Herald* 13/6/ 85)

Two burnt bodies were found, one in Zwide, one in Kwazakele. (*EP Herald* 21/6/85)

In Kwazakele, one man was hacked to death, and one man was shot by police. (*EP Herald* 3/7/85)

Four people were injured in a shooting incident involving policemen on their way to a funeral in Zwide. (*EP Herald* 22/7/85)

The evidence to the TRC, although more evocative, also has its limitations. One of the aims of the TRC was to give a voice to those who suffered gross human rights violations during the apartheid years. Those people from Kwazakele who testified at the Human Rights Violations hearings in New Brighton generally fell into one of two categories: either they were family members testifying about the death or disappearance of a loved one; or they were activists or leaders who spoke on behalf of an organisation or movement. Those individuals who testified were often not participants in the events; while the political leadership were concerned to explain the violence that was done to their members, rather than any involvement in violence by their own members.

Liberal analysts, notably Kane-Berman and Jeffery, have in contrast highlighted the inherently violent and intolerant nature of mass movements. Yet Kane-Berman relies heavily on the testimony of black journalists for his conclusions about the intolerance of the 'comrades'. Jeffery has concluded that it was the adoption of a strategy of mass mobilisation in itself that led to the violence of the 1980s, thus laying the blame for the human cost of 'the struggle' squarely on the shoulders of the ANC and the UDF.

The security police perceived – or portrayed – the situation in Kwazakele in the mid-1980s as 'chaos and anarchy'. This understanding, which encompassed the notion of lawlessness, justified the use of extra-legal measures to control violence and restore the 'rule of law'. Major Hermanus Barend Du Plessis argued as follows in his application to the TRC for amnesty for the assassination of PEBCO leaders Siphon Hashe, Qawawuli Godolozu

and Champion Galela. Du Plessis' evidence is being led by his legal representative, Advocate Booyens:

ADV BOOYENS: Did the situation ultimately become totally disruptive and chaotic?

MR DU PLESSIS: That is true, the whole area was ungovernable.

ADV BOOYENS: Just give us in your own words the situation at ground level at that stage in Port Elizabeth, how things were going here.

MR DU PLESSIS: At that stage I can just say at the outset that there was total anarchy in the black areas and I can give the following as examples. The Councillor's houses were burnt down, I won't say all of them but many of them were attacked. They had to resign, they were forced to resign and this created a vacuum, that is that the third tier of government collapsed. Petrol bomb attacks were made on the houses of policemen to such an extent that the policemen withdrew from the black areas, together with their families. There were school boycotts, schools were burnt down, schools were damaged, vandalised. All buildings that had anything to do with the government or with that government was destroyed or burnt down. There were rent boycotts, bus boycotts. Streets were blockaded. At a stage in certain areas trenches were dug in which the cassettes fell and then could not get out and petrol bombs were then thrown at the police. Soft cover vehicles were impossible to drive with and we had to do so in convoys. Delivery vehicles in the areas were burnt out. The consumer boycott was on and off. If I can remember correctly December 1984 we had the so-called **Black Christmas** where nobody was allowed to buy in these areas and those who did were forced to either drink or eat whatever they had bought.<sup>13</sup>

The security police understanding of the uprising combined a contradictory mixture of seeing the revolt as anarchic and chaotic, and as carefully orchestrated and imposed on ordinary people from above by a revolutionary elite. Initially they believed that they could contain the revolt by removing this elite, hence the selective assassinations. Then they discovered that the revolt went much deeper. By 1987 they had realised that the only way to contain the revolt was to detain every street committee member they could identify, and remove them from the community. Yet while the street and area committees were correctly understood by the state as being at the core of the strategy to 'render the townships ungovernable', they went beyond this, and began to take on aspects of self-governance or popular power as well.

It is thus possible to write two different histories of the 'uprising' as it occurred in Kwazakele in the mid-1980s. One such account is a litany of violence and brutality; another is an account that glorifies the liberation struggle. While elements of both can be drawn upon, it is more useful to integrate these elements into a coherent narrative of events. What is more significant for the purposes of this study is to see these events from the perspective of the 'ordinary residents' of the township.

### **Who took the initiative?**

This becomes even more necessary if recent analyses of the 1980s uprising are taken into account. Such analyses emphasise that, in contrast to the revolutionary beliefs and conspiracy theories of liberation movement leaders and security police, there was little leadership coming from 'above' during the turbulent mid-1980s. Thus Barrell has convincingly argued that the ANC was not able to respond quickly and effectively to the uprising, and 'lost' the 'revolutionary moment' when an integration of armed struggle with general uprising could have posed a threat to the state.<sup>14</sup> The ANC, based outside of South Africa, did not have a strong network of underground cells able to respond to the challenge; yet many activists involved in mass organizations and in the formation of the UDF were either formally or informally associated with the ANC. However, Seekings, in his history of the UDF, emphasizes that the UDF did not initiate the township revolt in late 1984; he quotes Popo Molefe, UDF secretary general, as saying that the UDF was forever 'trailing behind the masses'. (Seekings 2000: 121) Ellis wrote that 'But the exiles did not control the UDF....The UDF in turn did not control everything that was done in its name.'(Ellis 1992:159) Lodge concurs, writing that..' in reality, the momentum for the struggle came from local institutions... By mid-1985 it was becoming evident that the UDF hierarchy was unable to exert effective control over developments.... The momentum for action came from the bottom levels of the organisation and from its youngest members.' (1991:76) McKinley (1997:65), supporting this view, writes that 'Tellingly though, neither the ANC nor the UDF was able to exercise much control or direction over the often spontaneous expressions of resistance from the grassroots.' This is further

borne out in the testimony given by Murphy Morobe, former UDF leader, to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

We were also mindful (that as) the struggle intensifies and as has happened in struggles elsewhere in the world, you will have more and more independent action on the part of masses. That people more and more were displaying a characteristic that they did not need an instruction from anybody to fight the enemy but people felt duty bound to fight the enemy so they did not wait for an instruction to say: 'May we launch a campaign, may we march in our own area and may we organise a consumer boycott' or something of that sort. So there was quite a lot of independent action but even that generally organised independent action.<sup>15</sup>

If the UDF was 'trailing behind the masses' and 'leading from behind' and the ANC was 'confined largely to shouting from the sidelines' (Barrell quoted in Seekings 2000:125;132) or as Mufson puts it, 'keeping pace with, rather than inspiring' events in the townships, then from where was the initiative coming? It would be wrong to go to the opposite extreme, and see the township revolt as something entirely spontaneous, localized, and anarchic. Some have understood the revolt as being a millenarian movement.<sup>16</sup> How were 'the masses' organizing themselves to play such a central role in the history of the South African liberation struggle?

Thus it becomes necessary to examine on grassroots level the role of local activists and residents in the process of mass mobilization and organisation. Swilling (1994:13) refers to a number of studies of the structures of popular power in South African townships in the 1980s. However, in his review of the literature on people's power, it is clear that the emphasis has been on the systems or structures of popular justice that were established in various townships. Other studies focussed on the notion of 'people's education' developed at the same period, or on the local power dynamics reflected in negotiations between civic organisations and local authorities around material grievances and living conditions. Few of these studies within the 'people's power literature' focussed on the contribution of such structures to the building of a democratic culture.<sup>17</sup> The two central questions asked here are, what was the extent of participation in this process by ordinary residents, and how democratic was their participation?

## ***The progress of the township revolt in Kwazakele***

In order to understand the phenomenon of grassroots mobilisation in a township such as Kwazakele, it is necessary to situate the development of such mobilisation in the context of political campaigns and political violence. A brief narrative of events of the mid-1980s is given here as a framework within which to situate both political violence and the structures of popular power.

Up until late 1984 there was no political violence to speak of in PE. In August 1984 Tamsanqa Linda, who later became Mayor of the Kayamandi Town Council, became extremely unpopular when he evicted Mrs Alice Mavela from her home in Veeplaas. She regained the house with the support of PEBCO, but popular anger against Linda began to grow from this point. As the 'Vaal Uprising' began, in September the Kayamandi Council implemented increases in service charges in the Port Elizabeth townships. They backed down when PEBCO threatened boycotts of rent offices, liquor stores and Linda's shop. Linda and other members of the BLA became increasingly antagonistic to the UDF, and threatened churches that lent their halls to UDF-affiliated organisations. PEBCO responded by threatening further boycotts, and it was at this point that the conflict became violent.

Simultaneously, tension around education struggles was developing. The schools boycott, which had started in September, led to clashes between scholars and riot police in Kwazakele from 25 October. Journalist Mono Badela claimed that the security forces were responsible for the escalation of violence:

I would say the authorities helped spread the violence in the Eastern Cape as early as October 1984. The police were shooting students almost every week to force them to go back to classes. That is where the violence started. (Quoted in Lodge and Nasson, 1991:237)

The first victim of 'unrest' in PE was 14-year-old Thembinkosi Michael Wonci, a COSAS member shot dead by police with a shotgun. He disappeared on 31 October 1984, and his body was found two weeks later at the mortuary. Vusumzi Gcobo of Kwazakele was shot on 8 November by SAP Constable



Phillip Coetzee when he allegedly stoned a bus; he was charged with public violence but later acquitted, and his leg was amputated below the knee as a result of the shooting. In November 1984, nine COSAS members were detained and allegedly assaulted by security policemen at various places including a 'wooden house near the Kwazakele police station'.

Newspapers at the time claimed that the schools boycotts had sparked 'a wave of rioting' in the townships of Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Grahamstown, and that the township violence had 'reached a bloody climax' in what was termed the Eastern Cape's 'blackest week' (quoted in Murray 1987:261). Yet the initial wave of violence was mild compared to the sustained and brutal conflict that was to envelope Kwazakele early in the following year. Murray wrote that

Collective rage did not reach a boiling point until February-March 1985. However, when the Eastern Cape townships exploded, the masses leapfrogged the early phases that had characterised the political unrest in the Transvaal, imprinting what would eventually become a country-wide rebellion with their own signature. (Murray 1987:277)

1985 started with the resumption of the schools boycott, and clashes between police and youth continued, with police using rubber bullets and birdshot, injuring some protesting youth. The conflict with Linda escalated, with Linda shooting at four people stoning his house. Ford Motor Company shocked Port Elizabeth with the announcement in February that it was going to close its PE factory, one of the major employers in the city that already faced high unemployment.

UDF organisations planned a 'Black Weekend' for 16 - 18 March, with the weekend being a consumer boycott of white shops, and Monday 18 being a mass stay-at-home by workers. PEBCO called on township residents not only to stay at home from work, but to refrain from using buses and buying in the shops of the central business district. During the Black Weekend, at least nine people died in the Eastern Cape; Murray gives a figure of 'at least twelve', killed either by police fire into crowds or by the reaction of armed guards to arson attacks on the homes of councillors. (Murray 1987:279) It was at this time that petrol-bomb attacks on the homes of civic leaders began - Sipho

Hashe and Ernest Malgas of PEBCO were the first to have their homes attacked; Boy Mkalipi's Kwazakele home was attacked a few days later.

In the wake of the Langa massacre on 21 March in Uitenhage, violence escalated dramatically. Many councillors had their homes gutted by angry mobs of township youth, and eight of the Port Elizabeth councillors resigned.<sup>18</sup> Outdoor meetings were banned on 29 March in 18 magisterial districts in the Eastern Cape, including Port Elizabeth, and the SADF began to be deployed in the Eastern Cape's townships. In the context of the banning order, funerals of 'unrest victims' became the primary point of political mobilisation, with a massive funeral in Zwide on 1 April resulting in an escalation of clashes between youth and police in all the Port Elizabeth townships.<sup>19</sup> On 7 May 1985, the South African Police established a temporary base in Zwide to 'bring order' to the townships.

One strategic response to the escalation of violence and police repression was the calling of a consumer boycott. The boycott began on 15 July in the Port Elizabeth townships, and the demands included that the police make known the whereabouts of the PEBCO leaders who had disappeared in May.

The violent conflict between UDF and AZAPO, which began in April, reached its height at the same time as the violence between police and *amabutho*. It is often difficult to distinguish from superficial evidence who died as a result of which conflict: for example, at a funeral where eight UDF supporting victims of political violence were buried, some would have been killed by AZAPO, others by police. Thus in July 1985, a typical newspaper report read that 'the bodies of more people who had been burnt with tyres or set alight by crowds were found', and 'another man was shot dead by police in Kwazakele'. The AZAPO-UDF conflict was centred in New Brighton and Kwazakele, with the Emagaleni area becoming an AZAPO stronghold; local activists describe one particular soccer field as being a 'battleground' between the militant youth supporters of the two organisations. Vuyo Wilberforce Mfutwana was just one of the Kwazakele victims of the AZAPO-UDF conflict. A UDF supporter, he was beaten to death with iron bars and sticks by a group of balaclava-clad

men on 2 July 1985 in Kwazakele. The killing was reported to the police but no further action was taken.<sup>20</sup>



**Map 5. Kwazakele sites of resistance**

It was in this context that on 20 July 1985, the first partial State of Emergency was declared. Most of the UDF leadership in PE were detained and severely tortured, as testified to the courts at the time in an interdict brought by local district surgeon Wendy Orr.<sup>21</sup> This evidence was repeated many years later to hearings of the TRC. The detention of the leadership did not result in a decrease in violence, however. The consumer boycott was maintained, and a week into the State of Emergency, the list of demands was extended to include an end to the state of emergency, the release of emergency detainees, and the withdrawal of the SADF from the townships. The Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce responded to the devastating boycott by calling for black participation in central government.

In August Minister of Defence Magnus Malan visited the PE townships, accompanied by various SADF officers as well as the heads of the police counter-insurgency unit and the security police. On 26 August COSAS was banned. Some attempts were made by the security forces and Black Local Authorities to alleviate the situation and regain some legitimacy. During a visit by Minister Adrian Vlok to New Brighton in September, the SADF distributed food, while Thamsanqa Linda was present. But such efforts were futile in a context where incidents such as the beating to death of Thembile Sixoto by Ibhayi police in Kwazakele occurred.<sup>22</sup>

Tony Gilson, head of the local Chamber of Commerce, bravely lobbied for the release of UDF leaders and then successfully negotiated the suspension of the consumer boycott with them after their release on 11 November 1985. The decision was not uncontroversial, and some UDF leaders were threatened with the 'necklace' when they announced the lifting of the consumer boycott in Soweto-on-Sea, the stronghold of the *amabutho*. The SADF withdrew from the PE townships on 22 November; and with the lifting of the partial State of Emergency at the end of the year, the three 'added' demands of the consumer boycott had been met. While these demands had been added on to the initial list in response to repression, the ability of people to maintain the boycott despite their leaders' detention and torture, and the positive results gained through the negotiation process, resulted in a feeling of real popular empowerment. The original demands were retained in a memorandum stating that the boycott would be reimposed in April if the original demands were not met. An additional victory was seen with the departure of Ibhayi Mayor Thamsanqa Linda, who resigned from the Council and soon thereafter left Port Elizabeth altogether.

The initial wave of repression did not succeed in containing the mass mobilisation. The perceived success of the PE consumer boycott, leading to the release of the leadership of the township organisations and the suspension of the boycott in November 1985, provided a space wherein renewed organisation at grassroots level could take place. Thus early 1986 saw the expansion of participation in the structures of 'grassroots democracy',

the street and area committees. In the first half of 1986, UDF activists engaged in a concerted attempt to establish street and area committees in all townships in Port Elizabeth, to avoid repression and allow decision making around issues such as consumer boycotts possible. These structures were particularly successfully established in New Brighton, Kwazakele, Zwide and Veeplaas. Former civic leader Sipho Kohlakala explained how they functioned:

In 1986-7 the street committees were functioning well in PE. People didn't go to the police; the committees dealt with crime and theft etc. They also protected communities. There were waves of arrests by the police trying to get information on the functioning of street committees, and beating people up. Trenches and barricades were built to stop casspirs; and numbers were deleted from houses - for example in Kwazakele - to stop police from identifying people. Residents would protect each other. The street committees were also the pillars which made sure that any call by the leaders, or any decisions, were implemented; stayaways were monitored etc.<sup>23</sup>

These structures, sometimes in conjunction with the *amabutho*, established 'peoples courts' to deal with local problems and avoid dealing with the police. While street and area committees were generally composed of respectable middle-aged residents, there were instances where the committees used coercion to enforce decisions, and brutal violence to ensure compliance. One example of such a strategy was the UDF area committee decision that shebeens should not operate after 6 pm, which was enforced by 'comrades', sometimes with deadly results. Mrs Ethel Paye, who ran a shebeen at her home in Kwazakele, complained to the area committee when 'comrades' threw out her liquor in February 1986. She was assaulted by area committee members and accused of being an informer. The following day her house was stoned and petrol-bombed, and the following night it was attacked completely. Her mother and stepfather were stabbed and her friend and lodger Irene Loxomo was killed. Two weeks later her elder daughter Caroline, who had identified some of the attackers, was 'necklaced.'

The conflict around liquor sales continued, as it had in 1976, with attacks on bottlestores. On 25 March 1986 Mxolisi Lebeko and seven other youth were shot dead when police dispersed a crowd of 2 000 attacking a bottlestore in

Salamntu street in Kwazakele. On the same day a man was shot dead by police looting a bottlestore in Walmer. In total, 13 people died in Zwide, Kwazakele and Walmer in what seems to have been a concerted campaign against the bottlestores. 28 March 1986 saw the banning of all outdoor public gatherings, but yet another mass funeral was held on 21 April. 1 May saw an extensive stayaway and the renewal of the consumer boycott. On 10 May there was a funeral for eleven more youth killed by the police.

12 June 1986 saw the second general State of Emergency declared, and the detention of thousands of activists. Despite this, a total stayaway took place on 16 June, and another stayaway took place on 15 July. Yet the levels of mobilisation could not be sustained in the face of such extensive state repression. Not only organisational leadership and 'middle level' activists were detained, but ordinary members of street committees – especially young men – were systematically arrested and beaten up, often being held for two weeks before being released. Those identified as holding positions in organisations were held for longer periods, with the key leadership of PEYCO and PEBCO being held in jail without trial for the full three years that the state of emergency was in force. In September the consumer boycott was called off for the last time. On 2 October, President PW Botha visited Ibhayi Council accompanied by Ministers Malan, Heunis and Du Plessis. The following day, New Brighton was cordoned off. Mass raids and the systematic arrest of all young men in a particular area, followed by assault and torture, and the charging of many hundreds of people for crimes such as public violence, arson, attempted murder and murder, effectively decimated the ranks of the organisation's leadership. In the context of the long-term detention of many layers of activists, organisation began to collapse. It was in the wake of this collapse that real anarchy began to emerge.

By 1987, the consumer boycotts had been called off. The UDF leadership were in jail, and it was realised that while the state would make no concessions to any demands, the black community was accepting sacrifices for no good reason. (Riordan 1987:54) Only the rent boycott continued, resulting in evictions in some cases. Violence died down to some extent.

However, the deployment of *kitskonstabels*<sup>24</sup> led to further violence. In May 1987 there were reports of gangsters disguised as *kitskonstabels* terrorising residents of Kwazakele and New Brighton; in the months that followed, the *amabutho* attacked not only the *kitskonstabels* but those suspected of being associated with them in any way – including girlfriends. The *kitskonstabels* were based at Kwandokwenza hostel, and while they were ostracized by most township residents for their collaboration with the security forces, ‘women fell in love with them because they had money.’<sup>25</sup> There was no legitimate authority in the townships, and in January 1988 it was publicly admitted that there were only two Ibhayi councillors still serving.<sup>26</sup>

By 1988, the security forces felt that they had the situation in Kwazakele and other PE townships under control. It had taken them three years. Services were gradually restored to Kwazakele, including telephones, water, postal services and limited electricity. The Ibhayi Council approved a plan to spend R 58 million on Kwazakele, and an additional R 25 million to upgrade the Hostels, including the building of flats for municipal police to live in. In response to complaints by Kwazakele businessmen, the first announcement of the planned electrification of Kwazakele according to the Greater Algoa Bay Upgrading Project was made, indicating the electrification would begin in January 1989, at a cost of R71 million. At that stage there were no plans to electrify individual houses, and the municipality warned that the restoration of streetlights depended on ‘the co-operation of the residents’. Only high mast lighting, and electricity for businesses and institutions such as schools and clinics, was provided.<sup>27</sup>

There were two upsurges of violence in 1988. The first was in June, during a three-day stayaway called by COSATU in protest against the Labour Relations Amendment bill. Buses in Motherwell and Kwazakele were petrol-bombed, and private vehicles were stoned. Police reported that three people were killed and nine injured during the ‘unrest’ around the LRA in the PE townships. The second was around the elections to the Black Local Authority, which took place on 25 October 1988. These elections saw the houses of five candidates for the elections to the Ibhayi council being petrol-bombed, and

one candidate in Zwide being shot dead. The voting poll was very low, with between 6 and 9% of black residents voting.<sup>28</sup> It was apparent that in the absence of a legitimate authority, the state would have to maintain control by force. By 1989, the police had 'gained control of the unrest situation' and reported that 'alternative structures (were) under control' with 'street committees no longer in operation' and 'no peoples courts reported'. Having regained control, towards the end of 1988 and in early 1989 the police conducted *Operation Sateliet* in Kwazakele and Kleinskool, conducting interviews with residents in an attempt to find out what residents' grievances were. They reported that residents of Kwazakele were 'healthy, friendly; (with) little unemployment'.<sup>29</sup> The reality was that a stalemate existed between the forces of the popular movement and the forces of the state. It was in this context that the deadlock was broken at national level at the end of 1989, and negotiations were able to begin.

At local level, both local authorities and private sector organisations began to make attempts in the 1988-9 period to engage in development projects in Kwazakele. This was, at least on the part of the state, part of a strategy to contain the revolt by meeting some of the needs of the urban poor, as well as to legitimate the BLA elections. Hence the police's *Operation Sateliet*, and attempts to encourage home-ownership over the local Xhosa-language radio station. In early 1988, residents of Kwazakele had taps installed in their kitchens as part of an upgrading project, at a cost of R 604 000. However, no sinks or drains were provided, and they still had to use buckets for washing. The still dissatisfied residents 'requested' sinks inside the houses, and taps in the yards. Some roads were levelled and laid in August 1988, and the SBDC provided containers for the traders at Njoli Square. The Urban Foundation expanded the Kwazakele Advice Centre into a major community centre called Enkuthazweni, which became a 'home' for various community organisations and NGOs, including a printing press established by the church group IDAMASA. A Red Cross Centre was built behind the Roma Church, with development projects such as sewing, as well as first aid training, being planned.<sup>30</sup> However, the Ibhayi Council was owed some R 18 million in arrears for rent, electricity and services charges by 1989 – leaving a legacy of



debt and conflict around payment which would take another decade to resolve.<sup>31</sup>

Conflict around housing also continued during 1989. 350 emergency housing units were built in Kwazakele, at a cost of R 2 300 each. These houses were six by three metres, had one door and two windows, and 'rudimentary' services. They were provided by the Ibhayi Council for the residents of shacks set up in the Kwazakele cemetery, which were torn down by Ibhayi officials. An emergency housing camp was set up at the power station for victims of shack fires and these people. This crisis was one of the incentives for PEBCO to take up the UDF campaign for land seizures. The idea behind the campaign was that all available land space in townships was to be occupied. Thus in Kwazakele, public spaces like school grounds were occupied by shack dwellers.<sup>32</sup>

In 1989 the hunger strike by leaders in detention provided a moral inspiration for the remaining activists to start to remobilise the townships. PEBCO re-established its structures, rezoned the township into areas, revived street committees, and set up 'marshall' structures. These formations replaced the *amabutho* and provided a disciplined form of crowd control and monitoring at the mass actions which were part of the new 'defiance campaign' which aimed at putting pressure on the state to end the state of emergency. In Port Elizabeth, this included a number of actions such as mass demonstrations on the 'whites only' beaches of the city, a huge march into the city centre, and a 'March for Hope' by white residents of the city into New Brighton where they were greeted by thousands of township dwellers.<sup>33</sup> In December 1989, the core group of Port Elizabeth community leaders were released after nearly three years in detention under the State of Emergency.

### ***Structures of popular power in Kwazakele***

As outlined in the review of secondary sources, few of the existing analyses of the township revolt attempt to understand the perceptions of 'ordinary people' about the events of the mid-1980s. In this section, two related questions are explored: How democratic was the 'uprising', and how was it perceived by

ordinary township residents? This includes the question of intolerance, and how ordinary people reconciled the intolerance of mass mobilisation with the participatory democratic culture that was espoused by the leaders of the mass movements. It concludes by asking what understanding of democracy – if any - was 'taken through' to the process of transition in the 1990s.

A great deal has been written about the role of civic organisations in the 1980s in South Africa's townships. There is broad consensus among political analysts that the idea of popular control or direct democracy was put into practice in certain townships during the height of the 'struggle' in the mid-1980s, with the early 1986 period – before the imposition of the national State of Emergency in July of that year – being the time of most extensive organisation and mobilisation. Thus Swilling wrote (1988:48) that

The first five months of 1986 will go down in recent history as the most exhilarating and exciting period of struggle in the Eastern Cape as the structures of 'people's power' were built up and consolidated.

In the Eastern Cape, the formation of 'grassroots' structures such as street committees, area committees, 'people's courts' and youth militia known as *amabutho*, was widespread. The African townships of Cradock (*Lingelihle*), Uitenhage (*KwaNobuhle*), Port Alfred (*KwaNomzamo*) and Port Elizabeth (New Brighton, Kwazakele, Zwide and Veeplaas/Soweto-on-Sea) were especially well organised. The formation of these structures as part of the resistance to apartheid has been documented, to some extent, by sociologists and political scientists; one such project was funded by the Albert Einstein Institute for research on non-violent direct action. As part of this project, I studied the political participation of residents of the township of Kwazakele, and found that there had indeed been a remarkably high level of political participation by 'ordinary residents' during the 1980s.

The street and area committees formed in the 1980s were in many cases the brainchild and/or the active structures of the organisations that became known as 'civics'. These residents associations – such as PEBCO in Port Elizabeth's African townships, and CRADORA in Cradock's *Lingelihle* township – were at the forefront of organising residents around material or developmental

problems, such as high rentals, poor street lighting, and the general failure of the Black Local Authorities (as the designated local authorities from 1983) to deliver services efficiently to the residents of such townships. The mobilisation of residents around such issues was then linked to the political and financial bankruptcy of the BLA system and the political bankruptcy of the apartheid reforms, including the tricameral parliamentary system. In a wave of sometimes violent protest, from 1985 under the ANC's slogan of 'render the townships ungovernable, render apartheid unworkable', the BLAs collapsed and in some places the civics were the *de facto* governors of the townships.

### **Dual power?**

Some have thus analysed the mid-1980s as a period of 'dual power', where the state had lost control over particular localities, and 'the people' had established some form of control. ANC leader in exile and head of the political underground network within South Africa, Mac Maharaj viewed the development of street and area committees as 'remarkable developments' which illustrated 'moments of dual power'. He drew on the language of the democratic movement when he used the phrase 'black people control their own lives'. (Quoted in Mufson p 132). This concept of dual power was drawn from other revolutionary situations, and drew directly on those traditions; thus Mufson quoted Hannah Arendt in describing 'the enthusiasm of ordinary citizens for a parallel government under their control' (Mufson: 105).

What actually happened was a swift disintegration of the old power, the sudden loss of control over the means of violence, and, at the same time, the amazing formation of a new power structure which owed its existence to nothing but the organisational impulses of the people themselves. (Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 1963:257; quoted in Mufson:105)

It is debatable whether a situation of dual power really did exist in South Africa during the 1980s. Marais argues that while certain state functions were taken over by township structures, these were localised and had 'little if any spillover effect on the broader functioning of state administration'. (1998:57) Because of the localised and sporadic nature of these structures of popular power, and because they were not functioning all at one time, the state was able to isolate

and contain such townships. These structures did not, it is argued, constitute a 'proto-state' in the true sense of the term as understood in contexts of dual power where a 'liberated zone' is established. (Marais 1998:58) McKinley agrees that the idea of dual power – 'parallel institutions controlled by the masses' – was a hope rather than a reality; for 'although resistance had certainly made substantial inroads into the apartheid state's control of the townships...the national authority and coercive capacity of the apartheid state was nowhere near being threatened with disintegration.' (McKinley 1997:71). The key elements of a successful seizure of state power were absent. Marais writes that the organs of popular power were 'controlled by, and accountable to, the masses of power in each area' as claimed by Zwelakhe Sisulu, 'only in exceptional, shortlived cases.' (1997:58) In a footnote he further claims that 'Only in the small, compact towns of the Eastern Cape (especially the Karroo) did such claims contain even a small measure of accuracy, and then only for short periods.' (Footnote 53 p 80). He concludes that 'ungovernability' reflected not a situation of dual power, but of the dispersal rather than usurping of power. (1997:58)

While these analyses are accurate in that the period of 'ungovernability' in Kwazakele was short-lived, and in that the street and area committees were effectively destroyed by state intervention in 1987, it can be argued that Kwazakele was one of those townships where residents did experience power for the first time. However briefly, in Kwazakele and the other African townships under Ibhayi BLA, the security forces conceded that they had lost control. Thus Hermanus Du Plessis, the security policeman in charge of operations in the black townships in the mid-1980s, stated that PEBCO had 'won the war' with its alternative structures:

ADV BOOYENS: The **de facto** situation as a result of the street committees and area committees which replaced the government structures one often used the term 'ungovernable', will you say that that was applicable?

MR DU PLESSIS: I stood in that area and I can tell you quite honestly that Port Elizabeth was ungovernable and I want to go even further and say that PEBCO was in control here.

ADV BOOYENS: If one then wants to talk about a war which was going on that they won that?

MR DU PLESSIS: That is correct.<sup>34</sup>

This acknowledgement that the popular organisations had ‘won the war’ does not mean that there was an effective military challenge to the state’s security forces. Kwazakele did see the occasional instance of successful armed resistance – of SADF soldiers being trapped and killed by *amabutho*, or the digging of trenches to prevent armoured vehicles from entering certain areas. During the 1986-88 period, activist networks with links to the ANC in Lesotho attempted to get training and weapons to ‘arm the masses’ for a sustained confrontation with the state. Yet there was ambivalence about the viability of such a strategy, and despite the revolutionary commitment to the armed overthrow of the state, ultimately the political control achieved by the mass movement was more significant.<sup>35</sup>

### **The vision of popular power**

Yet the loss of state control did not mean a state of anarchy. As residents remember, despite the prevalent fear and violence, there were strong social structures in place which maintained some sort of order, even if imperfectly. Gugile Nkwinti, civic and UDF leader in Port Alfred, was thus able to claim that ‘We are establishing a People’s Democracy’ (Quoted in Mufson 108). One of the things that distinguished Kwazakele, Lingelihle and KwaNomzamo from townships described by Van Holdt or Lodge in other parts of the country, was the involvement of middle-aged residents, the parents of the militant youth, in structures such as street and area committees. Thus Lodge’s description of children taking the initiative is not entirely accurate with regard to these townships.<sup>36</sup> As pointed out in Chapter 2, the civic leadership and the ‘76 generation’ in Port Elizabeth were aware of the problems of the youth-led revolt of 1976-8, and determined to establish structures which would include the parents and make them feel at least a part of, if not in control of, decisions around the course of ‘the struggle.’ The vision of middle-aged civic leaders such as Matthew Goniwe, Gugile Nkwinti, Ernest Malgas and Mike Ndzotoyi

had a great deal to do with the implementation of such structures. As 'Oom Klaas', one of the elderly ANC leaders in Kwazakele explained:

There is a certain way in African culture that we treat people of different ages; elderly people and children. Through these committees, elderly people were aware of the revolution. Children wouldn't ask permission, but parents accepted that. We accepted that our kids must be sacrificed. Elderly people were hurt, but did not regret it, or reject the organization. People would salute the contribution of their children; they would not cry at funerals, but accepted the revolution.

This acceptance of the 'revolutionary imperative' of the liberation movement was the first step towards more active involvement by ordinary residents. The notion of popular power began to be articulated by the leadership of the UDF and its affiliates. The UDF's leadership and intellectuals consciously promoted a radical and participatory conception of democracy – a notion embodying the idea of 'controlling all aspects of our lives' as expressed by various UDF spokespeople. One UDF journal wrote that 'Ordinary township residents are given the opportunity to take initiative and control decision-making in a society where the state tries to render them powerless.'<sup>37</sup> The journal claimed that as 'masses of ordinary township residents' joined UDF affiliates during 1985, 'the character of township politics began to change. Residents insisted on their right to democratically control all political decisions, and began forming street committees to facilitate this.' Perhaps optimistically, the UDF journal stated that 'Organisations within the UDF do not just see democracy as an ingredient for a rosy future, but rather as part of the process central to the internal workings of the front and its affiliates.' It went on to outline the five 'organisational principles' of the front: elected leadership, collective leadership, mandates and accountability, report-backs, and criticism and self-criticism.<sup>38</sup>

Zwelakhe Sisulu urged that street committees and people's courts be seen as 'acting on a mandate from the community and under the democratic control of the community', used the phrase 'People are beginning to exert control over their own lives.'<sup>39</sup> Academic and trade unionist Mike Morris wrote that the ideal of people's power involved 'Control over every aspect of our lives – at work, at school, where we live, over the structures of national and local

government, over the army, police, courts, and prisons; the media; the church; financial institutions and the economy as a whole.’<sup>40</sup>

This vision was, of course, never to be realised. The structures of popular power in the 1980s can only be seen as taking control of very limited aspects of local government in very localised contexts. National institutions, the repressive forces of the state, and the economy – including financial institutions and the workplace - all remained well beyond the control of ordinary people. However, the rhetoric of revolution and the language of AK47s and *bazookas* was thus tempered to some extent by a language of democracy and empowerment. Did the language ever translate into political practice, even if it was only at localised level?

### **The nature of popular power in Kwazakele**

The residents of Kwazakele went further than a passive acceptance of the revolutionary imperative. They participated actively and proudly in the structures of popular power, and expressed a strong sense of ‘ownership’ of these structures. They also expressed a sense of self-empowerment in ‘governing’ the township themselves, in words such as the following:

We no longer worried about government officials

We ran our townships without the government

We relied on our own structures, not government structures<sup>41</sup>

What lay behind the initial building of these structures was not a long-term democratic vision, but a strategic imperative. In the case of Kwazakele, and in fact all of Port Elizabeth’s African townships, PEBCO was instrumental in organising the path breaking consumer boycott of 1985. It was realised by local civic activists that decision-making around sensitive tactical issues such as when to suspend the boycott, would have to be decentralised – both for security reasons and in order to ensure popular support and widespread compliance with decisions. The security forces recognised the power of such organisation. After the assassination of key PEBCO leaders, and after the detention and torture of other local leaders in terms of the 1985 partial state of

emergency did not serve to break down this organisation, the strategies of repression were refined for the next round of struggle. After the negotiated release of the PE leadership in November 1985, the street and area committees in Kwazakele and other townships were rebuilt, reaching the height of their power in early 1986. Former civic activist in Kwazakele, Siphon Kohlakala, explained how the structures were formed:

People in a street would call a meeting, and elect a committee of between 9 and 12 people. The leadership made calls at rallies. Activists in each area took initiative. General meetings would be called in areas; a core group of volunteers would be formed, who would then go around to the streets.

Former Area Committee chairman Oom Klaas explained the method of organising used in his area, together with the rationale behind it:

Four lanes were organized into a Street Committee. People were called to the Gap Taps, where it was explained that people must be directly involved, not only the leadership. There was a need to coordinate the consumer boycotts. And when the police would arrest the youth, then older household members would be seen as leaders.

The decision-making process is explained by Kohlakala as follows:

Decisions would be taken in general meetings - suggestions would be taken from the floor around strategies like consumer boycotts or stayaways. There would be arguments in general meetings then the popular view would be accepted - which was usually that militant strategies be adopted. Then the leadership would strategise in the forum. A rally would be called, where a call would be made; it would then be implemented by the street committees. Force was sometimes necessary to ensure compliance. For example, workers faced the threat of losing their jobs (if they stayed away) and the threat of being labelled a sellout (if they went to work); employers were very harsh, and dismissed people.

Despite the harshness of the treatment meted out to 'dissidents', enforcement of compliance was not the overriding function of the street committees, nor how their role was perceived by residents. Their role was seen as primarily a law-enforcement one – in the absence of state authority, residents felt that the structures were there to maintain some form of societal order and prevent lawlessness and random violence:



The street committees functioned to implement decisions taken; to maintain law and order - to prevent theft, break-ins, rape etc. Women would move freely in the townships at night. There was no time for gangsters. People want to go back to that time - civics are now moderate, developmentally oriented, not advocating the politics of confrontation. But at that time people were acting in defiance of the government - so that the government would fall; they were seeing freedom within one or two years.<sup>42</sup>

Interviews with residents<sup>43</sup> confirm that most residents perceived these structures in a positive light, and saw them as highly effective in controlling crime and resolving problems in their areas. While Kwazakele – in particular the area known as Emagaleni – was one of the townships hardest hit by the violent conflict between the UDF and AZAPO in early 1985, this did not destroy the social fabric of the community. If anything, it heightened the state of mobilisation in 'UDF areas' and isolated those who lived in 'AZAPO areas'. This is significant as it can still be seen today how residents in certain areas of Kwazakele reject the current civic structures as intolerant.

The political violence perpetrated in Kwazakele was extremely brutal. The youth involved in the *amabutho* responded with unrestrained brutality to the violence perpetrated by the security forces and all whom they perceived as being aligned to 'the enemy' – including black policemen and their families, AZAPO supporters, or the girlfriends of municipal policemen.

Just one such case of many extreme and untargeted acts of violence by comrades in Kwazakele is given here. On 6 July 1986, school principal Leonard Gcali, his wife Regina Ntombomzi Gcali, their 12-year-old daughter Pumeza, a relative Florence Nomaza Gcali and a small child were all necklaced and burnt to death by *amabutho*. Mrs Gcali had allegedly had an altercation with 'comrades' who had attempted to hijack her car. Mr Gcali was taken out of the truck he was driving, killed and his body taken to his house. The three adults were found in the burnt-out lounge and the children in the kitchen, with tyres around their necks.

The street and area committee structures, although seen by the security forces as a part of an anarchic campaign of violence, in general acted to modify the behaviour of the *amabutho*. The relationship between the two

structures was not straightforward, however; the *amabutho* were in general not directly accountable to the local street and area committee structures, which sometimes had an ambivalent relationship to the actions of the *amabutho*:

One lady was burnt, because she had an affair with a *kitskonstabel*. She was burnt in the yard of the Kwazakele High School. The Area Committees distanced themselves, and instructed the street committees not to get involved. Many condoned it in private but never publicly. But we would not condemn it or try to discipline those responsible. The *amabutho*... had their own structures of discipline.<sup>44</sup>

It can be argued that had these structures not been in existence, bringing older and more moderate members of the community into the struggle, that the level of violence would have been even higher. This is illustrated by an incident where an area committee leader intervened to prevent one of the *amabutho* from trying to shoot a policeman with a revolver. The policeman was not only a neighbour, but a member of the same rugby club and someone who had on occasion passed on information – presumably about police activities - to the area committee. Because of the older man's intervention, the policeman was not killed, and the *amabutho* moved away. Although most policemen left Kwazakele, there were those who chose to stay and aligned themselves with 'the people', and on occasion were expelled from the SAP because they were supported by 'the people'.<sup>45</sup>

In another instance, the *amabutho* planned to burn a prison warder's home in Emagaleneni. One of the PEYCO activists and area committee members, who knew that the warder was passing on information about comrades in prison, was able to intervene. As he recalls, 'I stopped them, saying 'Look guys, some of these people are working with us'. Fortunately, they understood.'<sup>46</sup> In general, though, the *amabutho* were not accountable to any structure, and did not adhere to liberal democratic ideals in the carrying out of their 'historic mission':

All those who defied the organisation's calls were physically manhandled or their properties destroyed. Civil servants especially the police and headmen had to leave the township. It was not a person's democratic right to engage or not in the people's call. To the *amabutho* it was a betrayal not to heed the call. And it was difficult for the

leadership to deal with these activities as the *amabutho* were accountable to no structure.<sup>47</sup>

When asked about the role of the structures of popular power,<sup>48</sup> ordinary residents were critical of the brutality and intolerance of the *amabutho*, and limited their enthusiasm for the street and area committee structures with a clear voicing of distaste for the accompanying violence and coercion:

I must not forget to mention that some of the *amabutho* had no political direction at all because they did not want to listen to the leadership

(There was) corruption amongst youth who were burning people's houses with no valid reason<sup>49</sup>

Thus Mufson was correct – at least in relation to Kwazakele - in his observation that 'Street committees generally did not resemble cells during the Jacobin Reign of Terror. On the contrary, they helped forge a moderate consensus that would have been lacking were South Africa's fighting years led only by the new teenage generation of comrades.' (Mufson 131).

By late 1987/1988, the street and area committees had been all but crushed, as systematic raids resulted in the detention of activists right down to the level of street committees. Kohlakala explains what happened to the structures of 'popular democracy' in Kwazakele:

By 1987 they collapsed; the core leaders were in prison; members of street committees were arrested; people on the ground were scared of mentioning street committees - they lived a life of 'wait and see'. The *amabuthos* were severely beaten and tortured; there were disappearances. It was claimed that they had escaped, fled the country; it is only now that we know that they are missing, as they have not returned from exile - that they were 'disappeared'.

In 1987-88 there was an ad-hoc forum which tried to maintain momentum. PEBCO was very weak. People would rally around a concrete issue, form a committee, but people were still scared to be associated with (street and area) committees.

Despite the repression, the BLA elections of 1988 did not result in a legitimate Ibhayi council. By 1989, PEBCO was re-established and street and area committees were running once again in many areas. PEBCO became

involved in negotiations with the PE City Council around the provision of electricity and the resumption of other services to the townships. With the collapse of the Ibhayi BLA, the council acknowledged that PEBCO held de facto power in the townships, and there was a stage at which nothing happened in Kwazakele or New Brighton without PEBCO's approval.

With hindsight, many people agree that the inability of the apartheid state to govern the townships due to the hegemony of civic and other popular organisations was a key factor contributing to its downfall. However, the legacy left by this period is a subject of debate. Some argue that the experience of participation in grassroots structures was one that gave ordinary people a 'taste of freedom' and a positive experience of democracy. Others argue that the 'democracy' of the time was extremely limited, and involved a high degree of coercion, intolerance and fear.

Are such high levels of participation possible only in times of heightened mobilisation against an agreed-upon enemy, and in the context of an uncontested hegemony by one political force or movement? Some activists look back to this period with nostalgia, or claim that residents have become disillusioned with 'liberal democracy' and desire a return to the feeling of power they experienced in those days. For most residents, however, the political liberation from apartheid has meant a great deal, not least in terms of the absence of fear, and they would not wish to return to the 'bad old days' of repression. Moreover, many express the view that they are no longer required to be in a state of 'permanent mobilisation', and that they are now, in the post-transition era, able to have long-hoped for 'time out' from political involvement to spend with their families, in studies or in pursuing private economic ends.

### ***Hegemony and democracy: Lessons of the 1980s***

By the end of 1989, as the possibility of a negotiated settlement came into view, the debate about the kind of democracy to be realised in South Africa was briefly aired. The frustration of the revolutionary or insurrectionist ideal of the seizure of state power followed by the institution of a 'proletarian dictatorship' was possibly one of the contributory factors in the violence that

raged in many townships in the years to follow. But among the liberation movement's senior leadership, the revolutionary vision was replaced with remarkable rapidity with an agreement on the principles of a liberal democracy.

While Seekings and Swilling were correct that civic organisations in the 1980s were more involved with 'the mechanics of organisation building' than with 'universal questions of national democracy' (Steinberg 2000:187), it is argued here that in certain cases, such as that of Kwazakele, they went beyond this. While building an understanding of democracy was not their primary concern, the grassroots structures of the mid 1980s did give ordinary township residents a real sense of empowerment, and invited their active participation in both decision-making and campaigning in a way that was significant and prefigurative. Steinberg argues that the experience of popular power in the 1980s was not 'crystallized into the idea of a specific institutional formation' but rather, generated 'rudimentary principles.' These rudimentary principles entailed the notion of the 'deepening of the political' and a democracy which involved greater participation than the ballot box:

...the notion that an array of social relations previously designated to lie either in the incontestable sphere of the private, or in the equally incontestable sphere of unilateral administrative action, were to be redefined and reshaped by the demand for participation. In other words, what was already rejected by the civic was the notion that the political consists of a narrow and localised space above society which citizens can access only by crossing a ballot. Instead, the discourses of equality and of participation must imprint themselves ubiquitously across the social through various forms of citizen action. (2000:190)

Steinberg goes on to argue that the experiences of the 1980s were prefigurative, in that 'the practices of civic organisation certainly spoke to the future, but only cryptically'. They generated principles that were open-ended; the idea of 'ubiquitous participation' could allow either for a Marxist-style hegemonic democracy or 'dictatorship of the proletariat'; or a pluralist democracy extended, as Robert Dahl envisaged, 'through opening more and more avenues to an indeterminate, unpredictable pluralist contestation in increasingly numerous spheres of life.' (Steinberg 2000:191)

Radical academic Daryl Glaser was one of the first to challenge the 'hegemonic democracy' vision of the left, arguing that a socialist democracy could be both pluralist and more participatory than liberal democracy allows. In 1989, he argued 'extra parliamentary mobilisation is crucial in prefiguring direct democracy and an active civil society, but the activism of an 'advanced' minority of the population cannot substitute for the consent of an electoral majority'. (Glaser 1989:28). In a response to Glaser, Fitzgerald noted Glaser's concern with the more undemocratic aspects of the 'direct democracy' of street and area committees. He noted that

Mechanisms of direct democracy, developed as part of anti-apartheid insurrectionary technique, are not seen by major groups as an appropriate framework for future constitutional development. Their heritage is more likely to be a concern for grassroots participation in the political process and the encouragement of strong community organisation within civil society. (1990:106)

He refers to constitutional lawyer Albie Sachs, who grappled with these questions during the process of the drafting of the new constitution and the Bill of Rights. Albie Sachs has commented on the legacy of the culture of struggle in the 1980s as follows:

Sometimes the very qualities of determination and sense of historic endeavour, that give freedom fighters the courage to raise the banner of liberty in the face of barbarous repression, transmute themselves into sources of authoritarianism and historical forced-marches later on. On other occasions, the habits of clandestinity and mistrust, of tight discipline and centralized control, without which the freedom-fighting nucleus would have been wiped out, continue with dire results in the new society. More profoundly, the forms of organization and guiding principles that triumphed in insurrectionary moments, on long marches, in high mountains, that solved problems in liberated zones, might simply not be appropriate for whole peoples and whole countries in conditions of peace. (1990:185-6).

Despite this he is convinced that the culture of the anti-apartheid struggle was democratic overall:

This is not only borne out by the number of organizations that support a document such as the Freedom Charter, but by the growth of a powerful, alternative, democratic culture in the country. The culture of democracy is strong precisely because people have had to struggle for it. (1990: 188)

Fitzgerald noted – it seems correctly – that the concerns of Glaser, Steinberg and others that the ‘direct democracy’ or ‘popular quasi-democratic form’ of democracy would become the standard for the future South Africa was ‘misplaced’. Very rapidly, the ‘direct democracy’ and ‘hegemonic democracy’ models gave way to more limited liberal and representative models. The notion of extending participation was relegated to the sphere of civil society – and even then, the new government was, from 1994, inclined to discourage extensive mobilisation of civil society – as will be seen below.

Mufson also noted the imperfections of democracy in the structures of popular power of the mid-1980s. He wrote that by the middle of 1986,

there was hardly a black in the country who was not caught up in some form of action and organisation. South African blacks had become what Thomas Jefferson called ‘participators in government’ within their own ‘little republics’. However, the community organisations that flowered during the first emergency often fell short of Jefferson’s democratic ideals. In its first flush, the romance of power ran away from its responsibilities, leading to abuses. (Mufson 129)

When the township of Kwazakele is considered in the light of the violent conflict described above, it is hard to imagine it being perceived as an empowering or democratic environment. One would imagine that the only democracy practiced was in the most limited, even cynical, sense of revolutionary ‘democratic’ centralism in order to effectively control residents. Yet what emerged from my study of Kwazakele is that residents did learn something about democracy during the tumultuous period of resistance in the 1980s. Levels of political consciousness and levels of political participation were very high, and were usually voluntary. What is interesting about the Kwazakele experience is that while it was so extremely violent and intolerant, it also gave ordinary residents some feeling of empowerment. Thus residents responded with some pride to questions about how they saw the structures of popular power in the 1980s:

We managed to build democratic structures without the help of the government

We have built our own democratic government

While understanding of the mechanisms of democracy was more limited, it was still apparent in the different aspects of democratic practice such as in the election of leaders, majority decision-making, and freedom of expression.

Thus one resident said

We served in community council structures that we never elected, but now we are serving in structures that are democratically elected by people in the street or area

Another resident explained how she learnt about elected leadership as a component of democracy:

They taught us democracy – in a meeting we elected our street leaders democratically by a show of hands

Yet another referred to the process of majoritarian decision making in a meeting – describing, in effect, Rousseau's vision of direct democracy:

In every meeting comrade chairperson allows democracy to prevail by listening to every view before s/he takes the position of the meeting....that is how they teach us democracy

For those within the areas controlled by the civic or UDF structures, they felt free to express their opinions and to dissent:

In any meeting everyone has a right to say what he or she feels and that is democracy

Yet this 'right of dissent' was limited to those who participated actively within the structures; dissent outside of these structures was not tolerated. Thus

Port Elizabeth lawyer Fikile Bam wrote that

the almost complete control that the UDF established over certain townships....made it intolerant even of passive opposition or dissent...The success of its most important programs, such as the setting up of alternative structures, implied mass conformity. Deviations or exemptions on the part of a few would not only undermine morale and solidarity, but promote opposing groups. A people's court needed to have complete jurisdiction within its allocated area to be seen to have authority....Accordingly, an element of coercion became part of the persuasive process from the beginning and fell into the hands of the younger comrades. (Quoted in Mufson, 130)



Ordinary residents, while critical of the use of violent coercion by the *amabutho*, generally approved of the decentralised street and area committee structures and saw them as serving their interests. These structures were flexible and responsive, and able to communicate the voice of the majority of residents to the leadership, and the decisions of the leadership to the residents. However, it was a particular experience of a particular type of democracy, which had its limitations. Territorial hegemony was central to the way in which these structures operated. Those outside the structures were not accommodated. Those inside were bound by the legitimacy that they conferred, through their own participation, on these structures. Majoritarian decision-making prevailed, and dissent from decisions once taken was not tolerated. The enforcing mechanisms, however, were usually primarily the residents themselves; operating a form of non-violent coercion through communal pressure on the individual to conform. Through this, the structures gained a real authority, based primarily on consent - although force was sometimes used by the *amabutho*. This was hegemony in the Gramscian sense of the opposition bloc obtaining 'moral authority', ideological and organisational leadership, which was recognised by the majority of residents.

UDF Eastern Cape publicity secretary Stone Sizani explained as follows:

In South Africa, people became very conscious of the right of an individual to make up his or her mind about what they or he wants to do, and respecting that. But what was more important during that time was to make people understand that the cause for all of us may be bigger than their own individual cause. And therefore, you were asked to be part of the movement, to remove the most immediate problem, the apartheid government, and create a democracy for all of us...We asked people to take those decision in each and every street...each block would take its own decisions and it will be communicated to people through a representative way of communication and decision making. Of course leaders would guide these decisions; of course leaders would see a bigger picture and be able to advise direction...or even new policies that are implemented by the decisions taken by the street and area committees...But it is important. It is slow and it's very awkward, yes, to many people, especially many people during the time when we started the implementation of the RDP in this country. It was used in most areas, in townships, and many people, engineers and local government officials, detested it because they thought they couldn't take decisions unless people were consulted. And it took ages before that happened. And they

thought it was a waste of their time. And felt that you can't run government, you can't run even organisations using this method. Hence, boardroom decisions now have become more of a vogue than mass decisions.

Ungovernability then, within that context, meant 'Nothing about us without us' – this is the slogan of the disabled now in South Africa, which I agree with. And we really believed during those years that why would we allow a government of a few take decisions on our behalf, which impacted negatively against us, whilst we are here and we say nothing about it....We wanted to remain among the people and move the people as a mass, so that they disobey the rule of the apartheid government whilst we postulate alternative policies and alternative rules that could govern the country. Hence it is much easier in those areas where the UDF was most active and structures were created. Even during our democratic time now, for the government to get people responsive. I'm sure you must have read today's *Herald*. There was a survey done by the HSRC where the Eastern Cape is seen to be the area which has the highest participation in government policy decision making processes in the country. And I'm sure it is reflective of the history of the Eastern Cape where the majority of people were participating in decision making from those days.<sup>50</sup>

The sense of loss felt by residents at the demise of these structures indicates that they were in some cases a qualitative development of democratic participation in the sense that people did feel, for the first time, that they had a voice in decision making. Mkhuseleli Jack, former PEYCO leader, explains:

These structures did serve a great purpose to a great degree. Because if you go into the townships today, the people are nostalgic for those days...and that speaks volumes. That is because they could use those structures to bring political activists, people who represented them, and people who acted on their behalf, to come and account to them, at short notice; and those who were entrusted with that responsibility respected the wishes of the people, and this view is what I hear whenever I walk in the township...so personally I would never be tempted to believe that these structures were a waste of time.

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<sup>1</sup> Quotes from residents of Kwazakele, asked in the 1993 survey whether the street and area committee structures helped people, and in what way. See also Cherry in Adler and Steinberg, *From Comrades to Citizens*, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Dorothy Vumazonke, 10 November 1999.

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<sup>3</sup> Ligwa Mdlankomo was shot dead in Maseru, Lesotho on 9 December 1982. In this raid, which the SADF claimed was on ANC bases in Maseru, 42 people died including 12 Lesotho citizens. Thandiwe Margaret Mdlankomo testified to the TRC HRV hearings in Port Elizabeth in June 1997 that her son, Ligwa, was an activist in Port Elizabeth who was repeatedly detained between 1975 and 1977, until he went into exile in August 1978. He was also shot dead in the massacre.

<sup>4</sup> 'Oom Klaas' read an early draft of this chapter and in response told me that the Ligwa Mdlankomo branch recently (December 2000) had a political event trying to recall and remember all those who had fallen in the struggle.

<sup>5</sup> This view was expressed to me by legal academic, ANC and SACP member Raymond Suttner, as well as by many Eastern Cape activists.

<sup>6</sup> For the multiple factors leading to the transition in South Africa at the end of the 1980s see, among others, Lodge, 1996; Lodge and Nasson, 1991; Schrire, 1991; Van Zyl Slabbert, 1990; Pampallis 1991. Swilling (1994:7-8) summarizes the 'great historical forces' shaping South African politics in the 1980s as a 'set of inter-linked processes': economic crisis, urbanisation, the nature of the state, and the growth of social movements in civil society which 'connected up with underground and exile-based liberation movements in a way that systematically deepened the economic crisis and delegitimised the state's reform initiatives'.

<sup>7</sup> This view was conveyed to me in interviews with security police, and in the testimony of security police to amnesty hearings in justification of their assassination of key UDF and civic activists

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, McKinley 1997; Marais 1998; Marx 1992.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Taylor 1997; Sommer 1998; York 2000.

<sup>10</sup> For this perspective, see various publications of the South African Institute of Race Relations, including Anthea Jeffery (ed), *Forum on Mass Mobilisation* and John Kane-Berman, *Political Violence in South Africa*. Kane Berman quotes the government as calling on the ANC to suspend mass mobilisation in the early 1990s, as it was considered to be 'disguised violence'. Kane Berman 1993:146. Jeffery wrote in her introduction to *Forum on Mass Mobilisation* that 'many political analysts' and 'senior state officials' saw mass mobilisation as inherently destructive: '...If mass mobilisation continues...even a democratic, non-racial constitution...may prove unworkable. For the fabric of society will have been fatally undermined and the new government will be left to 'govern over the ashes.' (Jeffery 1991:8)

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Mike Xego, PEYCO leader, 15 November 1993. This issue is explored in more detail in Cherry, 'Hegemony, democracy and civil society' in Adler and Steinberg, 2000.

<sup>12</sup> The *amabutho* (a Xhosa term meaning organisation or unit in the military sense) was a term that in the Eastern Cape referred to the youth militia which operated as a semi-autonomous paramilitary force, engaging in confrontations with security forces and acting as a coercive agency for the liberation movement in the townships.

<sup>13</sup> Testimony to South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, Port Elizabeth, 4 November 1997.

<sup>14</sup> Barrell 1993:436 writes that 'As the uprisings continued, the ANC failed to mount a breakthrough. 'Insurrectionary zones' which developed mainly under the ANC's banner in Alexandra township...could not be sustained. In each case the state was able to isolate, contain and eventually neutralise the local insurrectionary forces.'

<sup>15</sup> Testimony of Murphy Morobe to the special hearing on the role of the UDF in gross human rights violations, 6 May 1998, Cape Town.

<sup>16</sup> See Mufson 1990:326 – 'The millenarianism of the 1980s was palpably different from the great cattle killing. Though optimistic, black South Africans saw victory coming from their own efforts, not from some miracle or prophecy.' Belinda Bozzoli has also analysed the township struggles of the 1980s as millenarian (Von Holdt 1999:23)

<sup>17</sup> The exception to this was the collection of case studies researched as part of the 'Civics and Civil society' project of the Albert Einstein Institution. In particular, Jonny Steinberg's account of the Saulsville-Atteridgeville Civic Association in the early 1990s addresses the competing conceptions of democracy developed in civil society. Swilling gives a comprehensive review of the literature on the 1980s in South Africa. In note 25 on page 59 he details studies of popular justice and people's courts, and people's education; in note 27 on page 60 he lists studies of studies of political violence and policing.

<sup>18</sup> Murray gives a figure of 22 of the Kayamnandi town councillors having resigned at this point; 46 in the Eastern Cape as a whole resigning in the wake of the Langa massacre. (Murray 1987:283)

<sup>19</sup> Between 21 March and 29 May 1985 in the PEU area, 108 people died in political violence. Of these, 68 were killed by police, and 40 by rioters. In PE alone, 3 policemen were killed and 28 injured. 35 civilians were killed by police, and 25 injured; while rioters had killed 18 people and injured 14. For further statistics and details of events of the 1980s, see research documents for the SA Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Cherry 1997).

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<sup>20</sup> Testimony of Sandile Wellington Mfutwana to Human Rights Violations hearings of the SA Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Port Elizabeth, June 1997, about the murder of his brother.

<sup>21</sup> Among those Kwazakele activists tortured in 1985 were Mike Xego and the late Alex Rala, both key youth activists who were interviewed for this research.

<sup>22</sup> Mr Sixoto was killed by five municipal policemen on 9 August 1986. The policemen were charged in January 1988. (Riordan 1988:24)

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Sipho Kohlakala, 1993.

<sup>24</sup> The *kitskonstabels* (Afrikaans for 'instant constabels') were police auxiliaries, drawn from the black community, given rudimentary training and armed to go back into the townships and contain the 'unrest'.

<sup>25</sup> Interview, Shooter Mkongi, 2000.

<sup>26</sup> Riordan 1988:24

<sup>27</sup> *EP Herald Kwazakele* files, clippings dated 29/4/88;17/5/88;11/2/88 and Riordan 1988:24-5.

<sup>28</sup> The October 1988 report of the OP GBS gives municipal election poll of 9% in the Ibhayi townships; the GIK report dated 26/10/88 gives municipal election poll of 6.46% of black residents of PE. From minutes of the Eastern Cape JMC.

<sup>29</sup> Quotes from police documents including Annual Report of the OP GBS for 1989 and the VEIKOM Report for the period 18/11/88-15/1/89. From EP JMC minutes.

<sup>30</sup> *EP Herald* 25/3/88 and 28/7/89

<sup>31</sup> Riordan 1988:25

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Sipho Kohlakala of SANCO; and *EP Herald Kwazakele* files, 12/4/89; 18/5/89

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Sipho Kohlakala of SANCO; and memories of participation in the marches and beach protests.

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<sup>34</sup> Testimony of Hermanus Barend Du Plessis to the amnesty hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,

<sup>35</sup> For a more detailed examination of the role of the armed wing of the ANC, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, and the problems of guerrilla action in Port Elizabeth's townships, see Janet Cherry, 'No Easy Road to Truth: The TRC in the Eastern Cape', paper presented to Wits History Workshop 1999.

<sup>36</sup> Lodge (1991:76) wrote 'It was children who built the roadblocks, children who led the crowd to the administrative buildings, children who delegated spokespersons, and children who in 1984 told the older folk that things would be different, that people would not be able to run away as they had in 1960'

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in the UDF journal *Upfront* No 7 of 1987:15

<sup>38</sup> Quoted from *Isizwe* in *Upfront*, both are UDF journals

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Mufson 131-133.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in McKinley p 71.

<sup>41</sup> Kwazakele survey 1, 1993.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Siphso Kohlakala, 1993.

<sup>43</sup> Kwazakele survey 1, 1993. See also Cherry, 'Hegemony, democracy and civil society' in Adler and Steinberg, 2000.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Oom Klaas, 2000.

<sup>45</sup> The informant on this incident requested that his identity not be disclosed.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Shooter Mkongi, 2000.

<sup>47</sup> Notes made by Oom Klaas in response to draft of this chapter, December 2000.

<sup>48</sup> See Survey 1 form in Appendix for details of the questions asked of residents.

<sup>49</sup> Kwazakele survey 1, 1993. See also Cherry, December 1993.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Stone Sizani, 12 June 1999, by Steven York.

# Chapter 5: Kwazakele in the Interregnum, 1990 – 1993

When State President FW De Klerk made his historic announcement on 2 February 1990, residents of Kwazakele greeted the news with suspicion. Political analysts had been speculating that De Klerk was about to change the course of South African history, and so politicians and activists all over South Africa were watching the announcement with great interest. Even the analysts were surprised, however, when De Klerk took the dramatic step of unbanning not only the ANC and the PAC, but also the SACP.

People 'on the ground', who had not been anticipating any great political shift from the ruling elite, were initially mistrustful of the announcement. Their liberation movements had been banned for so many decades that the implications of this move were not at first clear. The *amabutho* did not run into the streets of Kwazakele and begin a celebratory *toyi-toyi*; the women activists who ran a co-operative laundry business did not shout for joy or ululate.<sup>1</sup> It was only when Nelson Mandela was released from prison a month later that the reality began to dawn for ordinary people: freedom was finally on its way.

The initial phase of political transition or democratisation affected different regions and communities of South African in different ways. In many of the townships of the former Transvaal, the negotiation process was accompanied by the most brutal political violence yet seen in South Africa. In many of the rural villages and towns of KwaZulu and Natal, the violent conflict between the UDF and Inkatha was transformed into an even more violent conflict between the ANC and the IFP. In some parts of the rural Eastern and Western Cape, white right-wing and black left-wing extremists engaged in bombing of public places and the killing of civilians of the opposite racial group. The tragic irony of South Africa's negotiated transition is that in the period after the principle protagonists had agreed to cease hostilities – after the Pretoria Minute of

August 1990 – more people died in political conflict than in the previous three decades of armed struggle.

In townships where the violence raged – Thokoza, KwaThema, Duduza and many others in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal in particular - it is hard to imagine that any 'normalisation' of political life occurred in this period. Communities became polarized, youth were mobilised into self-defence units, hostel-dwellers were armed, and political organisations focused on physical survival. The extension of democracy was difficult, if not impossible. Thus Mzwanele Mayekiso, civic activist in Alexandra township outside Johannesburg, described the situation in the early 1990s as follows:

Political violence was also partly responsible for our problems.....I think of the way our civic hostel committees were hounded out of the two men's hostels. I shudder in recalling the violent deaths of more than 200 of our residents during those conflagrations in 1991 and 1992. Death was very close to our door during the early 1990s, whether at the hands of the apartheid regime's Third Force or Inkatha.....What did all of this mean for ACO as an organisation? Most importantly, people were quite rightly frightened to come to meetings in the township during the worst periods of violence. And because of the violence, we had to take more care in running our campaigns in safe zones, away from the Beirut area, for instance. The most important priority on the ground was defence. This meant that our offensive strategies had to be put on hold. (Mayekiso 1996:272-272)

Elsewhere in the Eastern Cape, in particular in the areas still part of the Transkei and Ciskei homelands, extensive political violence took place in specific localities. Thus in Fort Beaufort a bitter 'feud' between ANC/COSAS students, and PAC/PASO students, resulted in a number of deaths. In the former Ciskei, conflict first with the old Sebe regime and after his demise, with Brigadier Gqozo's military regime, led to a number of deaths of ANC supporters. Closer to home, the violent conflict between the *amaAfrika* supporters and the ANC was rekindled in KwaNobuhle, Uitenhage. The townships of Port Elizabeth were, for the most part, excluded from this violence. The exception to this was the 'Northern Areas Riot' that occurred in August 1990 in the designated 'coloured' group areas of Port Elizabeth. These areas were characterised by low levels of civic organisation, and high levels of criminal activity and unemployment. In this context, a protest over



local government sparked off violent conflict between youth gangs, vigilantes and police, in which nearly fifty people died. Local ANC leaders, whose credibility was high in the African townships, were unable to intervene effectively.<sup>2</sup>

Kwazakele, however, having been one of the most violent townships during the years of uprising and repression of the 1980s, was relatively untouched by this violence. In the period termed by Mayekiso 'the interregnum' – presumably with reference to Gramsci's famous quote about the 'morbid symptoms' which appear in the period when 'the old is dying and the new cannot be born' – Kwazakele was fortunate to witness few such phenomena.

### ***The political transition in Kwazakele***

It is perhaps important to try and explain this absence of violence, rather than seeing it simply as 'fortunate'. One significant factor was the near-hegemony of the ANC in the African townships, which made it difficult for any party intent on undermining the transition process to gain a foothold. Although the IFP did establish an Eastern Cape branch based in Port Elizabeth, it failed to gain significant support among township residents. While there was a migrant labour hostel in Kwazakele, which was the site of fierce political contestation around both development issues and issues of representation, as shall be seen below, it never became the focal point for anti-ANC violence. In addition, there was simply not the basis in Port Elizabeth for ethno-nationalist mobilisation around Zulu identity, although the IFP claimed that it no longer organised on the basis of ethnic identity.

In contrast to the IFP, both AZAPO and the PAC were active in Kwazakele in this period, and AZAPO conducted a fierce anti-election campaign in late 1993-early 1994. However, this political competition was not able to escalate into sustained violent conflict, although there were moments of 'flare-up' – detailed below - when it seemed that it might. While a detailed examination of the theories of the presence of a 'third force' in instigating violence elsewhere in the country is not appropriate here, it should be noted that if indeed there was a government strategy to undermine the ANC's hegemonic position

through providing support of various kinds to 'third parties', it is clear that this was not a viable strategy in Kwazakele. The lessons of the AZAPO-UDF conflict of 1985 had been very bitter, and had been well learnt. The ANC, PAC and AZAPO learnt to tolerate each other, even if sometimes uneasily; it was not going to be possible to mobilise supporters of one party against the other in the same way as happened elsewhere in the country.

Another contributory factor was the relationship established between the security forces and the ANC leadership at local level. Again, this was not a smooth process, and the lack of trust between the ANC and the police was one of the reasons why the Northern Areas violence was not contained sooner in 1990. However, after the Pretoria Minute was signed in August 1990, there was an acceptance by both security forces and ANC cadres of the cessation of hostilities. The normalisation of relations between the state and its security forces, and the community of Kwazakele, took some time. There were a few incidences of attacks on security force members, and there were also incidents where the security forces used their old methods of repression. These are detailed below. Yet overall, the relatively low level of political violence in Kwazakele in this period of *interregnum* is significant in that it is for obvious reasons more feasible to build or maintain democratic structures and processes where the fear and intolerance associated with political violence are absent.

### **The 'normalisation' of politics and the establishment of political organisations in Kwazakele**

According to theories of transition from authoritarian rule, the *abertura* or liberalisation phase involves a process of political normalisation. Thus armed opposition groups sign ceasefire agreements, and liberation movements transform themselves into regular political parties. While decisions were being taken at the national level in the delicate negotiations of the CODESA forums, supporters of the liberation movements 'on the ground' were utilising the newly won space to reorganise in various ways. The ANC began to bring its leadership back from exile, and to set up preliminary structures in the various

regions of the country to establish itself as a legal entity with a mass membership.

The 'transition period', from 1990 to the election of the first democratic government in 1994, saw a great deal of confusion and change in the structures of grassroots democracy in South Africa. On the one hand, most activists and ordinary people prioritised bringing an end to the violent conflict sweeping the townships, and allowing their leadership to successfully conclude the negotiation process, which ushered in the transitional government of national unity in May 1994. On the other, the 'opening up' of political space saw in some cases such structures flourishing, sometimes as part of the newly-formed national movement of civic organisations SANCO, which saw itself as a 'watchdog' in relation to the ANC; sometimes as part of newly-formed legal ANC branches. In Kwazakele, as mentioned above, the violent conflict which engulfed many other townships did not occur. However, there was extensive mobilisation and contestation around political structures and competition for the loyalties of township residents.

1990 saw the establishment of two ANC branches in Kwazakele. The Kwazakele 2 branch grew quickly to be the largest branch in the region, having more than 13 000 members.<sup>3</sup> As branch chairman Oom Klaas recalls,

When Kwazakele 2 ANC branch was established the street and area committees had already done the ground work, because all the executive members of these structures were paid up members of the ANC.<sup>4</sup>

The ANC branches each had their own related structures of the ANC Youth League and the ANC Womens League. Those who had been activists or ordinary members of the UDF affiliates PEYCO and PEWO were channelled into these structures, as decisions were made by SAYCO and UDF-affiliated women's organisations to merge into the ANC. COSAS maintained its identity as an organisation for scholars, and PEBCO became a branch of SANCO, the national civic organisation, when it was formed in 1992. In addition, a Repatriation Co-ordinating Committee was established to assist in the process of welcoming and reintegrating returned exiles into the community, and later a structure for former MK members or 'veterans' was also

established. The PAC and AZAPO also established or revived branch structures in Kwazakele in this period, as well as youth and women's organisations such as AZANYU and AWO. AZAPO raised its public profile through commemoration services for fallen heroes in Kwazakele.<sup>5</sup> In the case of the PAC, the continued commitment of the PAC to armed struggle meant that its relationship with the police could not be 'normalised' until after 1994.

### **Changing relations between the police and the liberation movements**

While the ANC had suspended its armed struggle in terms of the Pretoria minute of August 1990, the PAC continued with its military campaign. It was in the period 1992-3 that its armed wing APLA was most effective, having been provided with bases for training in the Transkei under General Bantu Holomisa. APLA's targets were usually policemen or white farmers who had guns that could be stolen. Before such assistance was in place, however, and before APLA's declaration of the 'Year of the Great Storm' in 1993, there was at least one APLA unit operating in Kwazakele. APLA member Kwanele Msizi described to the TRC amnesty hearings how he and other members of his unit had 'patrolled' Kwazakele with the aim of killing policemen in November 1990. They had followed a police car from near Dora Nginza hospital to Matitibe street in Zwide. They had then waited and ambushed the police, shooting at their vehicle with AK47s and killing two policemen. They then left their car near the Kwazakele power station. He described how their 'base' was a scrap yard in Kwazakele, where the other two members of their cell, 'Jabu' and 'Mongezi' stayed (see MAP 5). On 2 January 1991, Nokuzola Filita, had her business premises – the Kwazakele scrapyards – surrounded by police and bulldozed with a *casspir*.<sup>6</sup> The police moved in with machine guns and a grenade, and killed the two APLA cadres hiding there. This particular tactic for killing 'terrorists' had been used with success by SAP units in PE townships in the mid-1980s; MK members had been killed in Veeplaas and New Brighton in similar incidents.<sup>7</sup>

In another incident, an off-duty municipal policeman, Constable TM Mzili, was stoned to death outside a Kwazakele shebeen in October 1990.<sup>8</sup> It was not clear whether there was any political intent in this murder; it was certainly not part of any agreed upon strategy by the ANC or civic structures at the time. There were other attacks on policemen during 1993-4, which are detailed below.

As the political and civic leaders became involved in local level negotiations with the municipality around service delivery, electrification and other development issues, they built up a generally good working relationship with the police. Structures such as Peace Committees and Anti Crime Committees were established in Kwazakele, and engaged in ongoing discussions with the local security forces. As will be seen below, the SAP and the Kwazakele Anti-Crime Committees gradually built up a relationship of co-operation and trust. In some instances, SANCO or ANC representatives were asked by police or municipal officials to safeguard their members. Thus when two municipal vehicles involved with the electrification project were hijacked, the stolen vehicles were recovered 'with the involvement of the community' as their theft was a threat to the electrification project.<sup>9</sup>

### **'Rolling Mass Action' and the death of Chris Hani**

Late in 1992, as violence escalated elsewhere in the country, the ANC in Kwazakele mobilised residents in support of its 'rolling mass action' campaign to put pressure on the government to make progress in the negotiation process, and force an end to the 'homeland' administrations. The ANC had called for a national campaign of 'heightened mass action' starting on 16 June 1992. This culminated in massive marches in many centres in August 1992, and in the Eastern Cape in the tragic 'Bisho Massacre' of 7 September 1992. Thus on 13 September 1992, hundreds of Kwazakele residents engaged in a protest march against the deteriorating standard of living and the escalation of violence. They marched to the Ibhayi Rent Office and to Kwazakele Police Station, where they called on the Minister of Law and Order to disband hit squads, and reveal the whereabouts of the PEBCO 3 who had disappeared in

1985. The old South African flag was lowered at the police station and replaced with an ANC flag. In addition, a petition was handed to the Ibhayi officials protesting the lack of proper services.<sup>10</sup>

While in some other small towns in the Eastern Cape, such actions had resulted in heavy-handed police action, in Kwazakele both the police and the 'comrades' seem to have acted with considerable restraint. No injuries or deaths in political demonstrations took place during this period in Kwazakele. Yet in Cradock – which was arguably equally well organised – a similar protest march ended in tragedy when a youth who was replacing the old flag with the ANC flag was shot dead by police. In Motherwell township outside Port Elizabeth, where the relationships between ANC structures, municipal structures and the police were strained, there were a number of instances of violence involving ANC-supporting 'comrades' and security forces. The Motherwell violence, which was at its height in the period June – November 1992 – in other words the period of the mass action campaign - involved the stoning and attacking of municipal vehicles, as well as instances of sabotage of electrical installations. In Kwazakele three schoolboys were charged with public violence in connection with stoning and petrol-bombing vehicles in August 1992. The violence in Motherwell escalated again in early 1993, in the period following the assassination of Chris Hani. Kwazakele was also not untouched by the public anger in reaction to Hani's death; yet the anger was vented on buildings, rather than on people, and no deaths or injuries were reported. The Kwazakele post office was destroyed by arsonists for the second time, having been destroyed in the 1986 uprising and rebuilt in 1988.<sup>11</sup>

Conflict took place in other areas in relation to the destruction of the old apartheid local authorities in this period; in some small towns, such as Patensie near Port Elizabeth, such conflicts became violent. In Port Elizabeth, SANCO led an extended occupation of the Ibhayi offices in New Brighton, as part of the campaign to force the issue of the creation of 'one city, one municipality' and demand the upgrading of the Red Location in New Brighton. What is remarkable, given the state of tension in this period, is that in Port Elizabeth such protests did not generally lead to violence.

## **Militant youth and transitional violence 1993-4**

Kwazakele did not escape the 'transitional violence' entirely, however. In three separate instances, violence erupted for brief periods. Yet the strength and legitimacy of local structures enabled such violence to be contained. In one such instance, in August 1993, a weekend of spontaneous violence by militant youth followed a demonstration at the New Law Courts. At the court, 49 NEHAWU<sup>12</sup> members were charged with disrupting traffic during an illegal march, and a number of demonstrating ANC Youth League members were arrested; two were convicted for contempt of court. These arrests and convictions on a Friday led to the outbreak of violence over the weekend in the Njoli and Emagaleni areas, in which attacks on police took place, and vehicles were stoned and burnt. Police estimated that R 300 000 damage was caused, and although there were no deaths, two policemen were injured.

ANC, SACP and SANCO leaders responded quickly to contain the violence, and held an impromptu meeting at Njoli Square where they addressed the youth. They listened to the grievances of the youth, which included the lack of jobs and the 'unstable education process' in addition to the immediate demands for the release of the arrested youth, and the unwelcome presence of the police Internal Stability Unit in the township. There were also claims they were 'hijacked' by a criminal element. Calm was quickly restored, and MK Eastern Cape Commander Dan Hatto (also ANC regional security head) was quoted as saying 'We've left some of our guys in there to try and get some sort of order.'<sup>13</sup> Five thousand people responded to a subsequent meeting at the Daku hall called by the Kwazakele 2 branch of the ANC. The violence was discussed and brought to an end, the focus turning immediately to the need for political education in preparation for elections the following year. The ANC branch decided to hold 'mock elections' as a form of voter education. This brief upsurge of violence was something of an embarrassment for the ANC leadership, in an area that the local media claimed had 'until now been described as a model area for peace and stability.'<sup>14</sup>

The ANC began its election campaign a few months later, but was to suffer minor disruption from AZAPO which vigorously opposed the elections and the negotiated settlement which had laid the basis for them. Only a month after the August 1993 violence, there was a remarkably similar outbreak of violence, but this time perpetrated by youth who were aligned to AZAPO. Once again, following a court case – this time a case of arson of a petrol station by an AZANLA member – there was a series of petrol bomb attacks on vehicles in Kwazakele, including delivery vans and Telkom<sup>15</sup> vehicles, but nobody was injured. Over the following week, petrol bomb attacks on buses led to the bus service being suspended and hundreds of commuters stranded.

SANCO claimed the attacks were to disrupt the process to democracy, as they occurred in Daku Road where the ANC Kwazakele 2 branch was conducting voter education through a ‘mock election’. The branch reported that there was apathy from the youth and the ‘educated’ residents, while the older people were enthusiastic. The ANC admitted that the campaign had failed in many areas, as it was hard to get youth volunteers.<sup>16</sup> Whatever worries the ANC had as a result of this ‘test-run’ must have spurred its activists on to greater election education efforts, as was seen during the participation in the first elections seven months later (as will be seen in Chapter 6). But the violence continued sporadically until the end of the year, and into the beginning of 1994. Meanwhile, SANCO called an urgent meeting in the Daku Hall to probe the violence, and condemned the burning of company vehicles and those involved in the upgrading of townships. They ‘sent officials to investigate’ and a SANCO spokesman commented that ‘If the violence was part of AZAPO’s anti-election campaign, as some had claimed, then SANCO had serious reservations about their methods.’ It was announced that all members of ACCs and the ANCYL were to be ‘deployed at flashpoints.’ In the case of a bakery van that had been robbed of its load of bread by a crowd of youth, the police and the ACC together traced the ‘hideout’ where the bread was being kept! The ANC condemned the violence at a meeting of more than 3 000 people at Njoli Square where its election manifesto was launched. In another announcement, Mike Xego of the ANC said the violence was interfering with electrification and other community



projects. The real need of residents to gain access to services such as refuse collection and electricity was a strong incentive not to engage in violence, as those who had the resources to effect 'delivery' of such services simply refused to enter the townships when there was any threat of rioting.

Despite the fact that the PAC condemned the violence as 'nothing but anarchy', the SAP ISU maintained its unpopular image by raiding the homes of PAC members in Kwazakele, breaking down doors in the process, and inviting criticism from PASO. It should be remembered, however, that APLA was at this point engaged in intensified armed attacks on civilian targets; and although no such attacks took place in PE, it is possible that police action was linked to APLA rather than to the AZAPO violence. AZAPO leadership denied responsibility for the violence, but said that to condemn it would be 'a sell-out to the enemy'; and that 'the struggle continues despite the April 27 elections'. At the launch of its anti-election campaign, AZAPO criticised SANCO for condemning the violence, when SANCO was supposed to be 'non-partisan'. By the end of January 1994, SANCO's Mike Ndzotoyi announced that the situation was back to normal.<sup>17</sup> Shortly thereafter, however, the Kwazakele ACC discovered stolen ID documents amid claims that balaclava-clad men had forced people in the Emagaleni area to hand over their ID documents. There was speculation that this was part of an AZAPO anti-election campaign, and that they had also tried to stop people from applying for ID documents. AZAPO, however, denied that they were engaged in any such campaign.<sup>18</sup>

The third incident of mob violence took place in August 1994, and involved an outbreak of stoning of vehicles in Kwazakele. There was general confusion among political leaders as to the reasons for this seemingly random violence. There was speculation that the stonings were in response to the cutting off of electricity to certain houses where bills had not been paid; SANCO condemned the incidents while the ACC intervened and arrested three youth. MK called a meeting to discuss the stonings, and resolved that its members were not involved. It was reported that the stoning was apparently being done by unemployed youth wanting to join the SANDF, not MK members.<sup>19</sup>

What is significant about the above outbursts of political violence in Kwazakele is that they did not escalate into the prolonged and deadly violence that was occurring elsewhere in the country. Leadership of all parties as well as the state security forces managed to overcome past hostilities and to contain the anger of their followers or members. Kwazakele residents were thus able to participate relatively freely in election campaigning and other political activity, in the run-up to the first democratic elections in April 1994.

### ***Civic organisation, local negotiations and mass mobilisation:***

In South Africa, the period between the unbanning of the liberation movements in 1990, and their election to power in 1994, was the period of the 'civics debate' and the parallel theoretical debate around the role of civil society. The 'civics debate' was at its height in the 1992-3 period, and coincided with the formation of SANCO as a national civic organisation.<sup>20</sup> While there has been a considerable amount of research and debate published reflecting the views of civic leadership and other intellectuals or political activists, there has been little which examines how people at grassroots level experienced this transition.

While the role of civic organisations at this point was still clearly to ensure the meeting of their primary goal of democratic local government, the tension between newly formed ANC branches, and civic organisations, began to emerge at township level. This took the form of the establishment of alternative power bases in some townships, competition over recruitment of membership and the issuing of membership cards, and the problem of ordinary residents needing to hold dual membership of both the local ANC branch and the local SANCO branch (and presumably attend twice as many meetings!). Two broad positions emerged within the intellectual leadership of the liberation movement. Some, like SACP leader Blade Nzimande, argued that civic structures should be absorbed into the ANC structures. ANC MP Raymond Suttner argued similarly that the ANC should become a social movement, and mobilise around local issues, which were considered the prerogative of 'civics'.<sup>21</sup> Others argued for the autonomy of civics, as both

instruments of development, and watchdogs over the consolidation of democracy. In future, they argued, such organs of civil society would be necessary as 'watchdogs' over the anticipated ANC government. Also on this 'side' of the debate was the argument that the ANC would increasingly become transformed into a 'normal' political party. As this happened, it was important for residents with different political allegiances to be represented by civic structures independent of political parties.

The debate around the role of SANCO ran parallel to the theoretical debate around the role of civil society that was waged at the national level. Some argued that organs of civil society were key to ensuring the transition: Thus Swilling (1991) argued that civil society, as a 'watchdog' over the state, would not only be the guarantor of democracy, but would also be the key to 'our associational socialism'. Mayekiso (1992) argued that not only should class-based 'organs of working class civil society' play a 'watchdog' function, but that they would also be the 'building blocks of socialism'. Nzimande contributed to the debate by arguing that political and civil society could not be separated, and concluding that the 'organs of peoples power' such as street and area committees should continue into the future to ensure the transition to socialism. Nzimande's radical position effectively lost the debate, however, and the broad consensus reached within the liberation alliance was that the notion of an independent sphere of civil society – in the liberal sense – was the 'correct' one, and that organs of civil society independent of political parties should be encouraged and maintained. The importance of the role of non-state actors in development was acknowledged by the ANC, partly because of its recognition of the limitations of its own capacity; partly because of a theoretical awareness of the problems of state-led development. This consensus did not resolve the problems in practice, however.

The period leading up to SANCO's formation was also the time of its greatest influence, in some respects, at national level. By 1991, many BLAs had effectively collapsed, and were financially bankrupt or unable to render services to the townships. Civic organisations led protests against the crisis in local government, and spearheaded rent boycotts that were highly effective in

sharpening the financial crisis and hastening the demise of the BLAs. The crisis eventually led to the 'Soweto Accord' of September 1990. SANCO however, went on to campaign against this record of understanding, as it was signed without SANCO's involvement. Conflict was openly expressed in the exchange of words between Nelson Mandela and Moses Mayekiso in 1992 over the boycott of bond repayments.

After February 1990, a complex process of debating and refining strategies and roles for civic and other mass-based organisations took place at local level. PEBCO held elections and put into place a new executive, which was surrounded by controversy, but survived. It also changed its name to PEPCO (Port Elizabeth Peoples Civic Organisation) to remove any vestiges of its association with Black Consciousness, and engaged in discussions with civic organisations in the 'Northern Areas' (the coloured residential areas of PE) towards forming a united, broad-based civic organisation for the whole of PE. These initiatives were overtaken by the discussions at national level around the formation of SANCO, and PEPCO became known as SANCO-PE, being the PE sub-regional structure of SANCO, with various zones or locals falling under it.

While the ANC began to recruit membership and form branch structures in various townships, PEPCO redefined its role and began to focus on particular constituency problems. It gained access to resources such as transport, offices and funding, and self-consciously began to recreate its structures and its mass base. With the formation of SANCO, PEPCO became a SANCO sub-region. By mid-1993 the restructuring of SANCO involved a complex process of zoning the township sub-region into locals, branches, areas and streets in a hierarchy of representation. Kwazakele was thus called a 'local' or 'zone', and was divided into four branches, with 26 area committees. An area consisted of fifty streets, and in a street, residents chose fifteen people to represent them. All streets in an area sent delegates to an area general council, which elected the area committee. These SANCO structures did not correspond to ANC branch structures, which 'caused confusion among many members of the organisation' according to local ANC leaders.<sup>22</sup>

At the same time, there was a parallel process of establishing 'departments' of SANCO at all levels, theoretically right down to street level. The 'departments' were established on the basis of 'issues' such as education, housing, transport, the environment, policing, local government, and culture. The idea was that the housing department, for example, would have a 'head of department' in each local, in each branch, in each area committee, and in each street. SANCO activists explained that this would function well for the purposes of co-ordinating campaigns around particular issues – to call all people involved in transport, or education, in one area together. However, there were two strong objections to this structure. Activists outside of SANCO argued that such structures were not succeeding in getting the participation of ordinary residents, and were instead just creating a bureaucracy of activists who benefited from the resources which had become available. One Kwazakele activist said,

Meetings of zones or area are active: people go to general meetings of the area or the ANC branch; but things are dead at street level – dead, dead, dead. Things are directed by organisations now; there is money around.<sup>23</sup>

The second objection, from a more theoretical perspective, was that SANCO's attempts to establish departments in this way was in effect an attempt at controlling all spheres of civil society – following the 'hegemonic' vision of democracy rather than allowing for a plurality of voices and interests to be expressed by a range of NGOs and CBOs.

PEPCO's, and then SANCO's priorities in the early 1990s were the formation of a new integrated local authority for PE, and the material improvement of the lives of residents of the townships. The new civic strategy involved four different strands: restructuring, anti-crime campaigns, local negotiations, and pressure around specific grievances of residents. When residents were asked in 1993 what issues SANCO was taking up, most responded that electrification and housing were the key issues (80% and 76% respectively). It was at this point that the electrification of Kwazakele was finally taking place, after extensive and well-publicised negotiations; residents' awareness of the issue, and the role of SANCO, was high. In addition to housing and electricity,

they identified a range of other issues that SANCO was involved in – tackling crime and addressing the poor provision of services were the two biggest categories, but a range of others such as job creation projects and recreational facilities were mentioned as well. The responses of residents reflected an understanding of SANCO's new 'developmental role' and its role in local-level negotiations; more political functions were clearly seen to be the domain of the ANC or other political parties.

### **Initial development efforts in Kwazakele<sup>24</sup>**

Some of the first attempts to improve conditions in the township related to safety, and involved the installation of street lighting in the Emagaleni area and the installation of lights and robots on the M17 route from Kwazakele to Motherwell. The former was a response to demands for action against the escalating crime rate; the latter in response to community concern because of the high accident rate on that road. In the latter case, SANCO intervened and approached the PEM and RSC to do something about the traffic lights. SANCO's Mike Ndzotoyi appealed to the community to 'get to know the white PEM employees, who would be going in and out of the townships to work on the street lighting project, and not to harass them'.<sup>25</sup>

One of the other initial steps in the improvement of Kwazakele related to another aspect of safety, which was the health and cleanliness of the area. This was the first 'Clean up Campaign'. A grant of one million rand was received from the RSC to clean up litter and repair sewerage pipes, and both ANC and civic structures involved their membership in supporting the campaign. Thus PEPCO secretary-general Mike Tofile appealed to people to co-operate in the clean-up campaign, while Ibhayi and PEPCO criticised residents who delayed the repair of sewerage pipes by dumping refuse in the sewers. It was a two-way process, with residents quick to criticise the council if a burst sewerage pipe was not fixed quickly.

The electrification of Kwazakele was the most significant improvement in people's living conditions in this period. After lengthy negotiations between the PEM, PEPCO and the ANC, led by Mike Xego of the ANC and Mike Ndzotoyi,

head of the PEPCO Housing Department, the planned electrification was announced in September 1992. The R 120 million electrification programme was funded by the Development Bank of South Africa. 21 000 homes were to be electrified over three years, with the first pylons and powerlines being erected on 1 October 1992 and with 'switch on' in the first houses taking place in early 1993. Community involvement in all stages of the process was seen as a 'vital element', and security guards at the new electricity substations were recruited by the street committees. Residents were informed of developments at a rally at Wolfson Stadium, where they were urged to keep an eye on the tools and equipment of those installing electricity.

Mike Xego was able to claim that it was a 'Model project because it is controlled by the community'. Yet the role of Xego and Ndzotoyi played no small part in enabling the electrification process to take place. Both were grassroots activists and residents of Kwazakele, whose 'street credibility' was very high and who had the respect not only of older residents but also of the *amabutho*. Once the installation of electricity began, it involved certain principles that were agreed upon in the negotiation process. For example, the parties agreed to employ residents where possible on the project. Thus 42 contractors from the community were selected, and they in turn employed local labour. Mark Jeffrey, consulting engineer, noted that 'Labour based contracts were essential in ensuring the community had psychological ownership of the project.' Skills training was also important. The first tenders were awarded in November 1992; the training of black subcontractors began shortly thereafter. An Electricity Liaison Committee – ELCO – was established, consisting of representatives of the PEM, ANC, PEPCO and the two firms of consultants. A 'unique level of co-operation and communication' was praised.

The electrification process was not without problems. One was the cost; resistance from residents meant that the connection fee was scrapped. The compulsory deposit of R 80 was also resented, however, and the wiring fee – which ran to about R 500 - proved to be a crippling burden for many poor residents, who struggled to pay for electricity which they used, and ended up

paying off the substantial wiring bill over a number of years. The PEM began a R 1000 loan scheme for wiring costs.

In addition, despite the appeals for co-operation to community meetings, there were some incidents of vandalism of equipment or theft of materials for electrification. Thus in December 1992 Xego and Ndzotoyi warned about a possible delay in electrification because of the stealing of cables. They announced that SANCO was mounting patrols to 'boost security'. In another incident, electrification was suspended temporarily in April 1993 when municipal staff had to withdraw from the township because of the violent reaction to the news of Chris Hanı's assassination. By the beginning of 1994, two thousand homes in the Tshezi area had been connected, and the areas of Emagaleni, Seyisi and Elundini areas were to follow.<sup>26</sup>(see MAP 6)

### **The role of grassroots structures in the interregnum**

As noted above, in contrast to many other townships in the transition period of the early 1990s, Kwazakele was relatively peaceful. This enabled the reorganisation of grassroots structures, many of which had ceased to exist as the State of Emergency took hold – as outlined in Section 2. Most of the structures, which had collapsed due to repression in the 1987-8 period, were revived as the *abertura* began in 1989 with the defiance campaign and the release of political detainees. This process of reorganisation was met with enthusiasm, as the fear engendered by the years of repression and violence subsided and ordinary residents became willing once again to participate in political structures. Such mobilisation is characteristic of transitions from authoritarian rule. Elsewhere in South Africa, this process of mobilisation, which is usually followed by political 'normalisation', was disrupted by extensive violence.

While the first survey conducted in Kwazakele was designed primarily to elicit the opinions and experiences of ordinary residents during and about the 1980s, the survey also contained questions relating to the then current situation, and asking residents to compare the state of organisation of the 1980s with that of the transition phase.<sup>27</sup>



Most of the respondents to the 1993 survey said that there were still street and area committees in existence in their streets and areas; they had been revived in the 1989-1990 period after having collapsed due to repression during the 1986-7 State of Emergency. All except one respondent said that SANCO operated in their area in 1993, and said the structures consisted of street and area committees and in addition, anti-crime committees (ACCs).

Despite the distinctly lower levels of participation by ordinary residents in street committees, these structures were still viewed positively. They were seen then as they are still seen now, as accessible local structures for residents to have their individual problems addressed – in other words, as access points to those in authority, who are not easily accessible to ordinary people. 40% of the respondents saw no change in the structure or role of street and area committees from the 1980s to the 1990s; they explained that there was continuity in terms of such structures being formed to deal with residents' problems at local level. Others, however, made the distinction between the era of confrontation and conflict, and that of negotiation. Thus over a third of the respondents talked about the involvement of such structures in the 1980s with the 'politics of confrontation' or 'defiance', and their engagement in conflict with the authorities – referred to variously as government officials, police, Ibhayi and PEM. As one respondent put it succinctly, 'We were hardlining then'. They contrasted the former 'conflict role' with the new 'negotiation role' of the 1990s, with over half of those interviewed saying that the role of the committees was to negotiate on behalf of residents. Negotiations were around upgrading of the township, including sports grounds and community halls, electrification, housing and rent problems, water provision and poor service provision. Others mentioned the involvement of such structures in general development issues, job-creation schemes such as the brick making project, and campaigns such as 'Operation Cleanup'.

The language of negotiation thus replaced the language of revolution for the highly politicised residents of Kwazakele. The local negotiations around both the formation of a non-racial municipality for Port Elizabeth, and around the supply of services such as electricity to the townships, reflected the

negotiations over a new political dispensation that were taking place at national level at CODESA. SANCO and the ANC at local level vied for political leadership of the local level struggles, but at national level the ANC's leadership was not contested by 'civil society' formations. Actions of SANCO around local issues were complemented by mobilisation by particular groups of public sector workers affiliated to COSATU; thus Kwazakele was affected in this period by strike action by municipal workers in November 1991, by teachers affiliated to SADTU in August 1991, and by public sector workers involved in NEHAWU as described above in 1993.

Taking up local grievances involved specific constituencies of residents in actions to pressurise the local authorities. During this transition phase, the Ibhayi Council was still in existence, but the CPA had taken over responsibility for service provision. Negotiations then led to the PEM taking over the provision of most services directly to the township residents, bypassing Ibhayi. SANCO facilitated this process by applying pressure at every turn. The sit-in at the Ibhayi council offices was to pressurise the authorities to move quickly on the upgrading of Red Location and the building of houses in Masangwanaville in New Brighton. Another example of such action was the dumping of rubbish on Ibhayi council premises to pressurise them to bring in refuse trucks and clean up the townships. This 'direct action' was combined with the 'clean-up campaign' which involved residents of Kwazakele in cleaning up their own areas. Overall, however, the emphasis shifted from a strategy of seeing residents taking direct control of such problems (creating parks, cleaning the streets, handling crime) to a strategy of demanding that the existing authorities provide the services that they were meant to. Thus the Ibhayi council, (which was in fact the CPA) and then the PEM, gradually became more responsive and service provision to Kwazakele improved remarkably in this period. In another example, residents of Emagaleni approached the RSC through the SANCO Ligwa Mdlankomo Unit and requested a crèche. The crèche was built in October 1993.

More often, such strategies to demand service provision were implemented by a sophisticated team of ANC and SANCO officials who entered into

negotiations with the various authorities, specifically the PEM and the CPA, with the demand that they take over the provision of services in the light of Ibhayi's inability to do so. While there were notable successes in this regard – the scrapping of rent arrears, the transference of rented housing to ownership, and the electrification of Kwazakele – these campaigns primarily involved negotiations rather than mobilisation. The results of negotiations over issues that affect particular communities were reported to general meetings in the area, the meetings being called by loudhailer. As one Kwazakele activist rather cynically noted,

The only means of communication is by loudhailer. If you don't mention food or electricity, attendance at meetings is poor. We used to have large numbers of people attending political meetings, but not any more.<sup>28</sup>

The mention of food refers to the contentious distribution of the 'Rina Venter food aid' parcels by SANCO structures in PE townships.

What emerges from the changing role of the civic organisations is a change in the form of participation in street and area committee structures in this period. The SANCO leadership began to stress that the structures were apolitical: 'The structures of SANCO are apolitical, they are representative of residents, not political parties – how can you say 'this is an ANC street? Or 'this is a PAC street'?'<sup>29</sup> This is confirmed by another SANCO activist, who argued 'The area committees now concentrate on normalising the situation, on development, on the provision of services. They are not politicised.'<sup>30</sup> Despite this agreement on the principle of non-alliance of civic structures, in practice it was often hard to distinguish between SANCO and ANC structures, and old habits of intolerance of political opponents did not die immediately. Thus the statements of the SANCO leadership are contradicted by AZAPO activists, as well as by some ANC activists who recognised that the politics of hegemony had not been entirely transformed by this stage:

...the tolerance part of it became a problem. And it has become a problem throughout. How do we deal with a problem that is brought to us by a PAC or AZAPO member, or by another political party – how are we going to deal with those issues? Are we going to be biased?<sup>31</sup>

There was also confusion among residents, especially youth, around what were ANC and what were civic structures. In some areas, one in Kwazakele and one in Veeplaas, there was controversy over people demanding that ANC membership cards be produced in area committee meetings. Some activists felt that the 'depoliticisation' of the street and area committee structures was a problem – 'Today street and area committees don't deal with political issues such as negotiations; they don't rise above disputes'<sup>32</sup>. In general, though, residents continued to feel positively about the role of such committees, and although they participated less actively than before, they did take an active interest in campaigns around issues which affected them directly. One of the most important, and contentious of such issues, was crime.<sup>33</sup>

### **Community mobilisation against crime in Kwazakele**

Now, area committees are strong in parts of New Brighton, Kwazakele - areas with an old history, and relatively well-off population; and also in parts of Motherwell and Veeplaas/Soweto. But in poor shack areas they are sometimes very militant, and go under the name of anti-crime committees; sometimes horrible things happen. They are also (officially) civic structures.<sup>34</sup>

Although the levels of political violence had dropped dramatically from 1988, there was a widespread perception, corroborated by newspaper reports at the time, that there was an upsurge in violent crime in the Port Elizabeth townships in this period. Residents consistently identified crime and unemployment as the two major social problems to be addressed, and activists spoke of the 'mushrooming of organised crime, of gangsterism, of armed robberies, or rape.'<sup>35</sup> Black journalists such as Jimmy Matyu noted the increase in crime in the townships, and in the 1991-2 period wrote articles expressing an 'urgent need for anti-crime committees in the black townships.'<sup>36</sup> While in the 1980s, residents felt that their structures of popular power – including the people's courts – had effectively contained crime, their understanding was that since these structures had gone into demise, criminals had had a 'free rein' to do as they wished. At the same time, the police were both under-resourced, and politically wary of taking harsh action in the townships where they had acted so repressively in the past –at least

until a reasonable relationship with the structures of civil society had been established. As noted by Nina (1993:12), 'at that stage the conditions for mutual understanding between the police and the civics were not ready.'

Thus one of the features of mobilisation and organisation in this transitional period in Kwazakele was the formation of the Anti Crime Committees (ACCs) and the relationship between these structures, the police and other political or civil society organisations in the township. These structures embodied one of the most contentious roles of civic organisations. Nina (1993:3) noted that the ACCs were a 'distinctive expression of popular justice' found only in the Eastern Cape, and qualitatively different from the Self Defence Units found elsewhere. He notes also that the ACCs, although linked to civic organisation and in particular to the street committee structures, operated autonomously.<sup>37</sup> They were set up in the early 1990s in the PE townships – in particular in Zwide, Kwazakele, Veeplaas and New Brighton – after PEPCO conducted an anti-crime campaign in around 1991. In some cases, the ACCs were simply the *amabutho* who were 'upgraded to deal with security for the community.'<sup>38</sup> The role of these committees was then 'defined more clearly' which involved them 'taking people to the police in cases of serious crime and theft'.<sup>39</sup> There were numerous problems with this process. On the one hand, the police reacted negatively to the emergence of these structures, and initially did not recognise their authority. Thus during 1991, twelve community members were arrested by the police for beating 'alleged culprits', and PEPCO launched a campaign to demand their release. Thus one civic activist explained later that

There are frustrations: police don't recognise citizen's arrests; criminals allege beatings by street committees. In 1991-2 anti-crime committee members were being arrested, and had to be defended by the civics; they were structures of the civics.<sup>40</sup>

PEPCO used this campaign to try and 'establish guidelines for the street and area committees to deal with the case of crime prevention' – which Nina (1993:12) saw as the 'beginning of a process of self-regulating its organs of popular justice'. In October 1992, at an anti-crime rally held at the Wolfson Stadium in Kwazakele, some alleged criminals were 'paraded in front of the

masses' but were not punished if they 'publicly promised not to get involved in criminal activities any more.'<sup>41</sup>

The chairman of the PE Anti-Crime Committee was initially Ernest Malgas, a PEPCO executive member and long-standing civic leader, who was also an MK veteran and former Robben Island prisoner. He stressed that the ACCs were meant to be accountable to the street and area committees, with each area committee electing ten members to work in the ACC. These representatives were meant to register at the PEPCO office with Malgas. During 1992, a concerted effort was made by PEPCO to establish ACCs in all the townships and provide guidelines for their operation. Some successful training was held, and in early 1993 the SAP established a Community Relations Department and began to engage in cautious dialogue with the ACCs. (Nina 1993:15) However, the distinction between area committees and ACCs sometimes became blurred, and coercion and intolerance re-emerged. Moreover, there was confusion over which structures were under ANC discipline, and which fell under SANCO.

There was undisputedly a political dimension to the ACCs, as they were perceived (accurately) as being aligned to the ANC. The Chairman of the ACC from mid-1993 was Sicelo Apleni, a long-term civic activist who had suffered considerably at the hands of police and vigilantes during the 1980s. Although a frail-looking and quietly-spoken man, he takes pride in being a karate expert and a highly disciplined fighter. He was president of the executive of the ACCs for Kwazakele, as well as for other townships and established the headquarters of the PE ACC executive at the Daku Hall. The relationship of the PE ACC to SANCO-PE became less clear, with some SANCO-PE claims that they had control over the ACC, while those involved in the ACC denied this. (Nina 1993:19) Under this executive were a number of local structures, which it seemed, were not always so disciplined.

In addition, the old cultures of political intolerance, especially when it came to Africanist and Black Consciousness supporters, re-emerged in mid-1993. Thus in one case, four AZANYU and PASO members were assaulted by Kwazakele residents who they claimed were members of the ANC Youth

League, the ACC or MK – or all three. In addition, the Africanists claimed that there were 'kangaroo courts' operating once again in Kwazakele. The Kwazakele branch of AZANYU alleged that 'ANC street and area committees, together with MK cadres, had for the past two months beaten, stabbed, arraigned before 'Kangaroo courts' and raided the homes of AZANYU members in the area.'<sup>42</sup> While the AZANYU Kwazakele chairman put this down to 'the tendency within the liberation movement of not accepting the inevitable existence of different schools of thought' the ANC regional chairman responded that 'the ANC condemned political intolerance. While it was true that street committees were engaged in combating crime....the fight was apolitical and street committees were directed to suspected criminals by the community'<sup>43</sup> The ANC thus tried to distance itself from the ACCs, and argued that they should fall under civic structures which were technically meant to be politically non-aligned.

The ANC could not entirely dismiss the claims of the opposition, however – especially given the overlapping membership at local level between ANC and SANCO, and the understandable inability of residents to distinguish between different structures. In recognition of the intolerance displayed by its supporters, the ANC called for its members to stop harassing other organisations, and to 'respect the right of other organisations to exist and operate freely, and strive for a South Africa free of political intolerance'<sup>44</sup>. It should be noted that these events occurred at the same time as the ANC's 'mock election' campaign, and the ANC leadership was not keen for ANC supporters to be seen to be intolerant of other organisations. However, the ACC denied involvement in this incident, and MK said it would investigate.

Shortly after this incident, the Kwazakele ACC was criticised by the PAC-aligned African Women's Organisation. They claimed that the ACC had been involved in an assault on two youths who were alleged to have stolen a television set. 'We do not want a repetition of the atrocities conducted in the 1980s on innocent people' said Mrs Nombulelo Kila, AWO branch chairman. She appealed to ANC women to join in 'condemning the thugs'.<sup>45</sup> Such actions by ACCs had a number of repercussions. The police did not hesitate

to take action against ACC members, in this case arresting a youth who was alleged to have been involved in the assaults; and possibly fearing a recurrence of extensive inter-organisational violence, the police briefly reverted to repressive legislation, invoking a ban on all meetings in PE for 24 hours.<sup>46</sup> The PAC arranged to meet with SANCO leadership about the existence of 'kangaroo courts', and put pressure on SANCO to be politically non-aligned, claiming that SANCO was 'not fully representative of all political organisations.' Four youth were assaulted by a group of older men, and both SANCO and the ACC warned against the re-emergence of vigilante groups.<sup>47</sup> There were thus a number of pressures against the ACC using force in an undisciplined or intolerant way, and such occurrences were prevented from escalating. These events occurred shortly after the brief outbreak of rioting in August 1993, and the ANC as well as other political and civic structures were keenly aware of the need to prevent the escalation of violence. This period was one of great tension, when violence flared up in Kwazakele on a number of occasions, as detailed above. It took considerable effort on the part of political and community leaders to prevent the escalation of violence in Kwazakele.

However, early in 1994, as election campaigning got underway, there was another brief upsurge of violence around the ACCs. It seems that residents were willing to take direct action against ACC local structures which were seen as unaccountable or corrupt, and the homes of prominent street committee members in Kwazakele were stoned by an angry mob. Both SANCO and the ACC condemned the action, and called for discipline and tolerance.<sup>48</sup> Shortly after this event the sub-structures of the PE ACC had their activities suspended because of allegations of corruption and agent provocateurs; and the allegation that a PAC man had been murdered by Zwide ACC members. The ACC executive, however, continued to operate.<sup>49</sup>

As regards the relationship between the police and the ACCs, the old mistrust between both residents and activists, and the police, was not easily overcome. During the years of the interregnum, there were instances where the police still adopted their 'old' repressive style of policing while attempting



to reform and build better relations with community structures. In one instance, SANCO publicly criticised the police for breaking down a door in order to effect an arrest; members of the local street committee and neighbours agreed to look after the blind woman who lived in the house, and protected her belongings. In another allegation of police brutality, Mncedisi Qwabe claimed to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that he was brutally assaulted by police on 8 April 1993 in Kwazakele, after being arrested and falsely accused of being in possession of dagga.<sup>50</sup> In some cases, political and civic bodies put pressure on the police to transform and be more responsive to the needs of the community. After a shooting incident at a shebeen in the Matthew Goniwe Hostel, residents of the hostel represented by the ANC and the Residents Civic Organisation demanded the removal of municipal police from the area.<sup>51</sup> The local ANC and SANCO branch representatives, as well as the UN and Peace Committee members, met with the police, and took down complaints against the police.<sup>52</sup>

Once the ACCs were established, there were instances in which they proved very effective in containing crime, and proved their willingness to co-operate with the police by handing over the wrongdoers. In some cases they even protected such criminals from 'mob justice', as anger among residents of Kwazakele ran so high that they were keen to take matters into their own hands. Sometimes public anger flared up into violence, such as on instance where a minibus taxi knocked down a pedestrian. A crowd of about two hundred residents quickly surrounded the taxi, and the terrified driver managed to flee while the crowd set the vehicle alight.<sup>53</sup> In other cases only the intervention of the ACC prevented the residents from taking violent action, especially when rape, assault or murder of children was involved. When the body of a 10-year-old girl who had been sexually molested and killed was found in Kwazakele by the ACC/ANC Kwazakele Unit 2 members, a *toyitoying* mob threatened to kill the man suspected as being responsible. The ACC apprehended the man, protected him from the mob, and took him to the police station. In an acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the ACC structures, a SAP representative said 'He should thank the ACC that he was handed over to us alive.'<sup>54</sup>

In another such instance of co-operation, the Seyisi Anti-Crime Committee arrested a youth gang alleged to be involved in theft and murder. SANCO announced that the arrests were 'a breakthrough' and explained that police were now going to investigate the murders. Residents came to a meeting of 300 people where the youth were 'paraded', presumably as a form of public humiliation; some of the youth even handed themselves over to the police to avoid the 'wrath of the residents'. The ACC also recovered goods stolen from the residents, and made an announcement whereby they urged residents to give their full co-operation to the ACCs, to refuse to buy stolen goods, and to report such activities to the street committees.<sup>55</sup>

In other instances, the ACCs became engaged in dangerous confrontations with criminal gangs. In one case, the Kwazakele 1 ACC and street committees traced and apprehended a group of burglars. The ACC chairman, Sicelo Apleni, agreed to hand the men over to the police. The ACC also managed to recover the stolen goods from the Enkuthazweni community centre, and a mattress from another youth. However, these actions resulted in a physical attack by remaining gang members on ACC member Bulwane Ngwendu at the ACC Executive's offices in the Daku Hall.<sup>56</sup>

The ACCs became seen as a 'civic problem' rather than an ANC structure. There were conscious attempts on SANCO's part to 'regulate' the ACCs, but by the end of 1993, the 'process was moving slowly and the ACC's are still not totally regulated or accountable'; the effect of the conflicts of mid-1983 was to 'shake the previously positive attitude of the Port Elizabeth community to the ACC structures.'<sup>57</sup>

The ACC, which had initially been set up in antagonistic relationship to the police, gradually shifted to a relationship of co-operation with the police, as the police's legitimacy was re-established. After 1994, these structures were transformed into Community Policing Forums, where the co-operative relationship with the newly legitimised police service was institutionalised. Thus it was reported in September 1994 that POPCRU had welcomed the establishment of a community police forum (CPF) based at the Kwazakele

Police Station. Relations between a legitimate police force and community structures had 'normalised'.

By the time of the first democratic elections in South Africa, in April 1994, Kwazakele had successfully completed the process of political 'normalisation'. At the end of the initial phase of transition, residents of Kwazakele had been through a process of considerable social disruption and readjustment, but minimal violence.

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<sup>1</sup> This observation is based on my own memory of watching De Klerk's announcement on television, and then going to Kwazakele to celebrate the unbanning of the ANC with 'comrades'. I was surprised with the cautious response of people there to the announcement.

<sup>2</sup> Information on this period is taken from documents researched by me for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including the document 'Regional Profiles: Western Eastern Cape, 1990-1994' and the document 'Memo on August 1990 Violence in Port Elizabeth, 25 June 1997'

<sup>3</sup> *Eastern Province Herald* 18/9/92

<sup>4</sup> Notes made by Oom Klaas on the draft of this chapter, December 2000.

<sup>5</sup> At these meetings, they remembered those who had died between 1984 and 1993. Those who had died at the hands of either the police or the 'comrades' included Fezile Tshume (founder of AZAPO in E Cape); Sonwabo Ngxale (regional chairman of AZAPO); Xolisile Mnyaka (AZASM organiser), and Mongameli Gxowa and Mzwandile Mcoseli (AZANLA cadres). (*Evening Post* 3/12/93)

<sup>6</sup> A *casspir* is an armoured anti-riot vehicle which was widely used by the South African police in the townships in the 1980s.

<sup>7</sup> TRC case C1506/97PLZ, related to the TRC Human Rights Violations committee.

<sup>8</sup> *EP Herald* 2/10/90

<sup>9</sup> *EP Herald* 20/1/93

<sup>10</sup> *EP Herald* 14/9/92

<sup>11</sup> *EP Herald* 8/10/92; 26/4/93

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<sup>12</sup> NEHAWU is the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union, a COSATU affiliate representing public-sector workers primarily in hospitals and educational institutions.

<sup>13</sup> *EP Herald* 24/8/93

<sup>14</sup> Information about these riots is from Eastern Province Herald archives, Kwazakele File 3, 1993, pressclippings dated 23 – 26 August 1993.

<sup>15</sup> Telkom is the South African telephone company; telephone services used to be supplied by the government postal and telecommunications department; since 1994 the telephone and postal services have been partially privatised, although Telkom still has a monopoly on the provision of this service.

<sup>16</sup> *EP Herald* 21/9/93 and 23/9/93.

<sup>17</sup> This information is taken from the Eastern Province Herald archives, Kwazakele File 4; pressclippings dated 20/1/94, 21/1/94, 22/1/94; 27 – 31/1/94, and 2/2/94.

<sup>18</sup> *EP Herald* 21/2/94.

<sup>19</sup> *EP Herald* 24/8/94 and 25/8/94.

<sup>20</sup> See for example, Mayekiso 1996, Chapter 13, which deals with intellectual attacks on the civic movement in 1992-3.

<sup>21</sup> See Nzimande 1995. A variation of this position articulated by some leaders of PE ANC township branches was that branches should take up 'working class' issues and ensure that the interests of working class members were represented in ANC policy-making forums.

<sup>22</sup> Comments of Oom Klaas on the draft of this chapter, December 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Alex Rala, 1993.

<sup>24</sup> Much of the research for this section was done in 1999 for the Cape-Town based NGO Development Action Group. See Cherry 1999, unpublished.

<sup>25</sup> *EP Herald* 23/7/93

<sup>26</sup> Information on electrification is drawn from the Eastern Province Herald archives, Kwazakele Files, dated 26/9/92, 28/10/92, 29/12/92, 23/4/93 and 24/2/94.

<sup>27</sup> See Survey questions for Survey 1, 1993, in Appendix 5.

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Alex Rala, 1993.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Mike Ndzotoyi, 1993.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Siphoh Kohlakala, 1993.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Mike Xego, 1993.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Alex Rala, 1993.

<sup>33</sup> The perceptions and opinions of residents, as well as quotes from activists, are drawn from interviews conducted in 1993 for the Albert Einstein funded research project on 'Civics and Civil society'; see Cherry 2000 in Adler and Steinberg's collection based on this research project.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Kholi Mhana, 1993.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Siphoh Kohlakala, 1993.

<sup>36</sup> *Evening Post* 23 January 1992; quoted in Nina 1993:11-12.

<sup>37</sup> Nina trained the ACCs in the Zwide 1 area of PEPCO/SANCO in the 1992-3 period, and wrote up a research paper for the Albert Einstein Institute on Non-Violent Direct Action 'Civics and Civil Society' project based on this training and research.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Mike Ndzotoyi, 1993.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Siphoh Kohlakala, 1993.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted from *EP Herald* 1992 in Nina 1993:12.

<sup>42</sup> *EP Herald* 16/9/93

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Phila Nkayi ANC Regional media officer, quoted in *EP Herald* 15/9/93.

<sup>45</sup> *EP Herald* 23/9/93

<sup>46</sup> *EP Herald* 24 - 25/9/93

<sup>47</sup> *EP Herald* 29/9/93

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<sup>48</sup> *EP Herald* 9/3/94.

<sup>49</sup> *EP Herald* 21/4/94.

<sup>50</sup> This case is from the TRC database, Case number EC1848/97PLZ.

<sup>51</sup> *EP Herald* 25/3/92

<sup>52</sup> *EP Herald* 3/12/92

<sup>53</sup> *EP Herald* 28/6/93

<sup>54</sup> *EP Herald* 14/3/94. In Chapter 10 I discuss the problems of renewed vigilante or mob action against violent criminals, in a context in which the anti-crime committees are no longer functioning.

<sup>55</sup> *EP Herald* 11/1/93

<sup>56</sup> *EP Herald* 26 - 27/7/93

<sup>57</sup> Nina quoted in the *Weekly Mail*, 10/12/93

## Chapter 6: The Founding Election of 1994

While guests at the inauguration of the new president, Nelson Mandela, sat down to a celebratory meal of fine food and wines in Pretoria on May 10 1994, members of the street committees of Kwazakele dealt out portions of cabbage stew to supporters of the African National Congress. How did the residents of Kwazakele feel about this 'day of liberation' following the historic elections of 26-28 April?

Mike Mabusela wrote that when election results were announced in Kwazakele,

...election celebrations rolled on through the night and into the morning. Some shed tears of joy; others danced, jived and *toyi-toyied*. Some took to the streets in their cars and drove around with hooters blaring and music playing.<sup>1</sup>

Voters in Kwazakele expressed how they felt about participation in the historic elections of 26-28 April variously as 'very happy', 'excited', 'proud', 'confident' and 'strong'.<sup>2</sup> These emotions were unsurprising in a 'liberation election', and were expressed by most of the new electorate around the country. What was more interesting than the general enthusiasm for a new experience was the sense of historical destiny expressed by residents. This was sometimes expressed as a sense of very personal involvement in contributing to the realisation of democracy - expressed in quotes such as

My dream of voting for the government I want had finally come true

I have been waiting for that day all my life

It was not a surprise because it was what I have fought for.<sup>3</sup>

While some intellectuals on the left retained, at least theoretically, a suspicion of 'mere liberal democracy',<sup>4</sup> there was no doubt, in the heady days of April and May 1994, that democracy in the form of a universal franchise was greeted with appreciation. Appreciation is too mild a word for the joy that was expressed by so many of those who had not had a chance to vote for the government for their whole adult life. Elderly people, those who had borne the brunt of apartheid policies, were the most appreciative of a right that had been won at considerable cost. Even experienced old revolutionaries, some of whom were in the

Kwazakele leadership of the SACP, could not deny the sense of victory at the triumph of the 'first stage' of the revolution – the attainment of 'national democracy.'

In this section, the initial response of residents of Kwazakele to the advent of representative democracy in South Africa are explored. The research is based on the 'founding election' of April 1994, and a survey conducted in Kwazakele in the month after that election. According to the survey, 90% or more of the residents of Kwazakele voted for the ANC. Minorities of around 2% of the electorate either voted for other parties or abstained from voting. The hegemony of the ANC among Africans in the Eastern Cape was not in dispute; the election results merely confirmed what historians and political analysts had long believed to be the case. The questions arising from the founding election for this study are related not so much to voting patterns as to how ordinary township residents – most of whom were ANC supporters - understood the new form of democracy.

### ***The election campaign: Voter education and issues of tolerance***

As noted in Chapter 5, the ANC began its voter education programme in 1993, once it was certain that elections would definitely take place in 1994. While the ANC in Kwazakele expressed concern at a report-back meeting at the difficulty in finding volunteers to conduct voter education, it became clear during the election that the voter education programme had been a success.

The form that the ANC's voter education took was the holding of mock elections, to familiarise those who had never had a vote with the procedures of the ballot box. The need for ballot papers which had to be marked, as opposed to the 'show of hands' voting with which people were familiar, had to be explained. The importance of secrecy and the principle that there was no obligation on individuals to disclose their voting preference was also a new idea for many. In addition, the voting involved a proportional representation system, with voting for two tiers of government. Thus both political activists and ordinary citizens had to become familiar with the idea of 'party lists' and voting for a party rather than for an individual.



ANC Eastern Cape regional secretary, Gugile Nkwinti, said after the August 1993 mock elections that

people in the area had a lot to learn, but he was satisfied with what had been achieved and was confident that people in the townships and rural areas, who had never voted, would be ready for the April 27 election.<sup>5</sup>

Nkwinti, one of the civic leaders within the UDF who had led the building of structures of 'grassroots democracy' in the Port Alfred township of *KwaNomzamo*, is a committed democrat who was aware of the need to assist people in making the transition to the new institutions of representative, liberal and pluralist democracy. At the same time, he did not discount the experience that people had gained through participation in civic structures.<sup>6</sup> Thus Nkwinti stressed the need for education around the secrecy of the ballot, noting that 'Our people are used to voting in annual general meetings and conferences where we use a show of hands. It is the first time they have been faced with secret ballot'.<sup>7</sup> The ANC committed itself to visiting each African household three times before election day.

The second mock election campaign held by the ANC took place in January 1994. Some of the elderly residents of Kwazakele who walked to the Daku Hall to cast their ballots were under the impression that these were the 'real' elections. Thus 84-year-old pensioner Johnson Ngqoyiya said 'I walked all the way from my home here to vote, thinking it was voting day, and was told it was voter education.'<sup>8</sup>

Local ANC leaders stressed that all structures of the 'mass democratic movement', including COSATU, SANCO, student bodies, the Youth and Women's Leagues, and the SACP, were involved together with the ANC in establishing structures for voter education. As Oom Klaas explained,

These events were very important because our people never voted before and the majority were illiterate, so we were trying to eliminate huge spoilt papers during elections. We also encouraged our people to obtain identity documents as this was the only recognised document for the election. These efforts paid dividends at the end as the ANC was voted in as the government.<sup>9</sup>

A third mock election campaign was held by the ANC in the Eastern Cape in mid-March 1994. Over a hundred polling stations were set up in Port Elizabeth, including a number in Kwazakele. The emphasis in this exercise was on explaining the 'two-ballot system' and ensuring that illiterate people understood the ballot form. 1.2 million mock ballot papers were printed, and people were required to produce their identity documents when they reported at the polling stations, which only opened between 8 am and 8 pm. ANC elections director for the Eastern Cape, Ben Fihla, stressed that 'strict monitoring will be enforced and no intimidation allowed.'<sup>10</sup>

While the notion of a secret ballot was very effectively communicated to voters, it proved to be less straightforward to instil the notion of tolerance for other political parties in Kwazakele, as well as in other townships of the Eastern Cape. The hegemony of the ANC was so well established that ANC leadership had to make considerable efforts to encourage tolerance for other parties. As seen above, there was still considerable tension in Kwazakele between supporters of AZAPO and the PAC, and supporters of the ANC; this tension was evident in the brief outbursts of violence that occurred in late 1993. The tension was also evident in conflicts between ANC-aligned ACCs and PAC supporting youth, as described in Chapter 5.

The ANC, having participated in the formulation of the interim constitution, saw it as important to encourage their members and supporters to embrace the principle of political pluralism. In Kwazakele, this meant as a first step the tolerance of the other parties which had been involved in the liberation struggle, and which had a support base in the township – namely the PAC and AZAPO. Up until early 1994, both the PAC and AZAPO were firmly opposed to the elections and the negotiated compromise that they represented. While the PAC continued its armed struggle until January 1994, eventually agreeing to participate in the elections at the last moment, AZAPO maintained their principled opposition to electoral democracy. The elections, as the culmination of the negotiation process, were understood to be a betrayal of the black working class, and a relinquishing of the possibilities of revolutionary change. AZAPO rejected the negotiation process in its entirety and called for a boycott of

the elections. AZAPO thus launched their 'anti-election campaign' in Kwazakele in January 1994, with about hundred supporters holding a public demonstration at Njoli Square where they chanted 'Down with Votes!' AZAPO regional leader Ngcobo Nguna stressed that their campaign was not violent or disruptive in intent, arguing that 'The campaign is not meant for any confrontation with those who will be voting, but we are registering our position. We are disgruntled with our liberation movements'<sup>11</sup> But AZAPO, despite its revolutionary posturing, did not have the popular support base to assert such a radical position. The ANC, which was able to draw on the support of thousands of township residents who had been active in grassroots structures, was able to convince them of the value of the new democracy. The high percentage poll in the elections confirmed the ANC's hegemony in the acceptance of the electoral process by most residents.

The second step, for the ANC, was to encourage tolerance of other political parties, including those perceived as having been in the 'enemy camp' during the years of struggle – in particular the IFP and the NP – or those perceived, if not as 'the enemy', then as representing the interests of whites, such as the DP.

This process did not always run smoothly, and the run-up to the elections in Kwazakele was not entirely free of political intolerance. In one ugly incident, a Democratic Party campaign bus was stoned by youth in Ntshekisa road in New Brighton. Both Democratic and National Party MPs challenged the ANC to allow their parties to campaign freely in the townships of the Eastern Cape.

Democratic Party MP Eddie Trent challenged the ANC to share a platform at the Dan Qeque stadium in Zwide, to give the Democratic Party the opportunity to campaign in the townships as a 'good way to demonstrate political tolerance'. He said that while it was unreasonable to expect political leaders to control all their followers, they could be told to 'refrain from inciting their members and using inflammatory language.'<sup>12</sup> The National Party, too, did not feel comfortable holding meetings in the townships, and the ANC acknowledged that it was a reality that the traditionally 'white' parties were being prevented from campaigning in the townships. ANC leader Gugile Nkwinti said that it was 'to the country's shame' that such a situation existed, and was part of the legacy of apartheid; the ANC had 'no answer' to the question.<sup>13</sup> The following month, Mike

Xego of the ANC said that while it could not guarantee the safety of other political parties by 'policing meetings', the ANC would give an undertaking that they would not encourage the disruption of meetings held by other political parties in 'black areas'. Political commentator Patrick Cull interpreted this undertaking as a positive sign that the ANC would 'encourage its constituents to allow other parties to campaign freely in black residential areas' and that 'it would be unreasonable to expect the ANC to ensure the safety of other political party representatives. After all the ANC does not claim to have 100 percent support in any area, and cannot be asked to police those who back other political organisations.'<sup>14</sup> The NP's Tertius Delpont responded by saying

We will see if the ANC is genuine about free and fair elections. I will be going into the townships. I want the ANC members there to hear what I say. If the ANC believes in free and fair elections, they will allow me to campaign there and ensure their supporters do not disrupt the meeting.<sup>15</sup>

In the weeks before the election, the ANC stirred the emotions of its many supporters through week-long commemorations of the deaths of Chris Hani and Oliver Tambo. Yet there is no evidence that even these highly charged events generated an atmosphere of intolerance or violence. Despite the verbal interchanges between party leaders, there was remarkably little violence around the election campaign in Kwazakele. As Patrick Cull noted in March 1994,

A culture of tolerance has been allowed to develop (in the Eastern Cape) and political leaders happily share platforms without a sign of acrimony. Certainly, there is a solid amount of criticism and political rivalry – it would be worrying if there was not. But the assaults are verbal, and that bodes well for the future<sup>16</sup>

### ***Participation in the election: Logistical problems, irregularities and mistakes***

Of those interviewed in Kwazakele after the election, all except two did cast their votes. The two who did not were AZAPO members, who understood clearly why they were not voting: one explained that 'Elections will bring no changes for black people, but hunger and slavery'; while the other explained his non-participation in terms of party discipline: 'Our manifesto does not allow us to

participate in the elections.’<sup>17</sup> The overwhelming majority of eligible voters of Kwazakele did participate in the election, indicating an unusually high level of political participation even for a ‘liberation election’.

Of those who voted, only two answered ‘Yes’ to the question, ‘Did you have any problems voting?’ When asked to elaborate, one elderly man ticked the box ‘Illiteracy’ and explained as follows:

It was very difficult for me, I could not read properly so I asked one IEC official to show me (ANC leader) Mandela’s party, then I vote for his party.

The other explained

When I entered the voting station, I was confused to identify the two leaders, Mandela and (PAC leader) Makwetu, so I went to the officials for assistance.<sup>18</sup>

There did not seem to be any confusion over the two-ballot system although most residents, being ANC supporters, voted for ANC at both provincial and national government level. Thus despite low levels of education and little experience of elections, most Kwazakele residents were able to cast their votes effectively. The ANC’s extensive election education campaigns were no doubt in part responsible for this. Yet it should also be acknowledged that these ‘new’ voters were already familiar with some of the processes of democratic participation, and had been anticipating voting in a ‘real’ election for some time.

There were considerable logistical problems in Kwazakele, with extremely long queues forming and polling stations experiencing serious delays in receiving necessary equipment, such as ballot papers, ink, IFP stickers<sup>19</sup> or stationery. On the morning of 26 April, there was ‘chaos’ at the polling stations at KK Ncwana school and the Presbyterian Church, and the Red Cross was deployed to assist those who needed medical care. People had to wait for over two hours to cast their votes, and a number of elderly people fainted in the heat. Yet none of those interviewed complained of problems with the voting process, and their delight in casting their ballots for the first time outweighed whatever stress was involved in the voting process. While Kwazakele experienced what the IEC classified as ‘minor systems failures’ rather than ‘major systems failures’, Kwazakele was also the site of two serious allegations of tampering with ballot boxes.<sup>20</sup> On the

second day of voting, 27 April, the police made an announcement that they had caught IEC officials tampering with ballot boxes. The boxes came from sixteen different Kwazakele voting stations, and had been transported to a church in the township by IEC officials. The police claimed that they went into the church to find that several boxes had been opened, and that IEC officials were sorting through the ballots. The IEC claimed that the officials had stopped at the church to complete documentation before taking the boxes to the central storage depot, simply because there was no electricity at other places where they could complete the task. Some thirty boxes containing around 30 000 ballot papers were apparently not properly sealed, and were sent for further investigation.<sup>21</sup>

Another complaint in the Eastern Cape was that some ballot papers were distributed without IFP stickers on them, after the IFP entered the election at the last minute. In another incident, Peace Monitors resolved a tense situation with the IEC workers at the St Cyprians Church polling station in Kwazakele who were protesting against a problem with the payment of IEC monitors.<sup>22</sup>

The vote-counting process was slow in Port Elizabeth, as elsewhere; at one stage during the process, counting was suspended when it was found that ballot papers from a particular Kwazakele polling station were neatly folded inside the boxes. There were suspicions from opposition parties that the vote had been 'rigged', and the NP made a complaint, in the hope that the contested votes – which were overwhelmingly for the ANC - should not be counted. The situation was very tense, as explained by IEC Regional Director of Monitoring, Professor Mark Anstey:

When the crisis arose in Kwazakele, I flew down from East London to Port Elizabeth. I came into the counting hall at UPE. The atmosphere was explosive. I opened a box, and the votes were all lying in neat rows, packed into one another. All the boxes I opened were the same. I couldn't think what to do. Tertius Delport, the NP observer, would have liked to get rid of the Kwazakele vote. Linda Mti of the ANC was explosively angry. I went outside and walked around for a bit. I asked who the monitors were at the polling stations in Kwazakele. One woman came forward. She was a teacher, who was an IEC official at the polling station at the Kwazakele school. She recounted to us that in the morning of voting, she saw that the queues outside the school were endless. She anticipated that the votes would not fit into the ballot boxes. She said that she had lined the voters up like children at school, and got her ruler. She had then packed each vote

in with the ruler as the voter put it in the ballot box. Nobody was convinced. We called her up to the back room and brought the boxes from that polling station. We emptied the boxes in front of the party monitors. They then revoted three of the boxes with the schoolteacher 'monitoring' with her ruler as she claimed she had done on election day. We opened the boxes, and the votes were packed exactly as they had been. Delpont said that if he had not seen it with his own eyes, he wouldn't have believed it possible.<sup>23</sup>

The NP had to withdraw its complaint, and the votes were declared valid after all, much to the relief of the ANC.

When the provisional results were finally released on 3 May, celebrations in Kwazakele and the other PE townships went on late into the night. Although police took precautions to stop any celebrations from 'spilling over' into other areas, there were no reports of violence or damage to property.

### ***The electoral system and party accountability***

While the first survey of Kwazakele residents showed that a very high percentage of people were members of civic and youth organisations in the 1980s, in the second survey, conducted in the week after the election, residents claimed to be members of the ANC rather than of civics; while they were still members of other organisations, these were identified as church or sports organisations, or trade unions.<sup>24</sup> The political allegiances and active participation of residents were thus 'transferred' to the ANC. In May 1994, this may reflect little more than a form of post-election euphoria, in that people identified strongly with the political party they had voted for rather than with other organisations. Yet it does raise more long-term questions about the future of liberation movements, political parties and civic organisations.

The ANC was elected into power in April 1994 with the idea of building a strong, participatory democracy. Thus Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the ANC regional general council meeting in the Eastern Cape in June 1994 with these words: 'The ANC has embarked on a new period of struggle following the election; We have to ensure that democracy is deepened'<sup>25</sup> In a similar vein, SACP leader Jeremy Cronin (1994:41) argued that 'We need to deepen the democratic involvement of the broadest spectrum of South Africans through a wide network of formations (rural movements, hostel residents associations, churches, and many more) drawn into

participatory forums.' The question being posed by radical democrats like Cronin and Ramaphosa was whether the ANC had the ability to function as a forum for mass participatory democracy. In 1994, indications already were that it was transforming into a more conventional political party, producing leadership for different levels of government rather than creating space for mass participation. The ANC was to return to this debate at the end of the transition, in 1999.

While most political leadership emphasised the importance of retaining strong, independent organs of civil society in building a type of democracy that transcends the limitations of representative democracy, the reality is that mass participation in the political process diminished sharply after the 1994 elections. A similar process to that which occurred in the civic organisations and trade unions occurred at the political level, and the process of turning liberation movements into political parties resulted in the bureaucratisation of the ANC. As Mike Xego, Eastern Cape ANC leader predicted before the election, in 1993,

There will be a change in relations between those in parliament and the 'street politicians'. There is a different political 'code' - a managerial code; a bureaucratic code. SANCO and the trade unions will 'lose' leaders to parliament; the danger is that they will be perceived as 'selling out'<sup>26</sup>

It was clear that the participation of ordinary residents in grassroots structures had diminished significantly by May 1994. It can be argued that such high levels of participation as were evidenced in the survey on the 1980s are possible only in periods of intense mobilisation and heightened oppositional politics. Yet those concerned with building a thoroughly democratic society assert the need for 'independent organs of civil society' which can in future provide a voice for those who do not have access to power through political party structures, which tend towards elitism. One of the most interesting findings of the first survey of Kwazakele residents is how political consciousness among ordinary residents changed to reflect the debates that raged at the time around the role of civics, political parties and civil society. Respondents were deeply divided around two key questions: Do you think these structures (street and area committees) will still be needed when we have a democratic government? and What is the difference between political organisations (like the ANC) and civic organisations (like SANCO)? The response to both questions was fairly evenly divided. To the first question, 44% said that there will not be a need for these structures, explaining this



simply in terms of the new government being democratic. This indicated a widespread perception that representative democracy is an adequate mechanism for the voice of ordinary people to be heard, and the conviction that a democratically elected government will be responsive to people's needs. It could also be construed as reflecting weariness with constant political participation, and a desire for normalisation. However, 56% of respondents saw a continuing need for civic structures, and their reasons for this reflected a range of opinions about the future role of civics. Some saw the civics as being the channel for ensuring that their needs reached the new structures of government; others saw them as being directly involved in implementing the provision of services. Others expressed a healthy scepticism about the ability of the new government to deal speedily with problems, and saw the role of civics as remaining a pressure group. 22% expressed the view that 'problems will remain the same, even with a democratic government.'

There was also a division in the way people understood the difference between the ANC and SANCO, with 52% saying there was no difference. Of those who said there was a difference, there were again different understandings of why this was the case. A small group said that the difference was that SANCO was representative of all residents, and was not biased in terms of political affiliation. Another small group explained it in terms of participation in the 1994 general election, having a clear understanding the SANCO as a civic organisation would not be putting up candidates for election, while the ANC would; SANCO would not be part of government structures in the future. A larger group explained that the key difference was that the ANC had an armed wing, and had fought an armed struggle, while SANCO had none. By far the largest group (30%) explained the difference in broad terms, with the ANC being understood to be a national liberation movement with an ideology of African nationalism, while SANCO was understood to have 'no ideology' and not being a liberation movement.<sup>27</sup>

By the middle of 1994, when the election was over, people seemed to have gained some clarity on the role of civil society. This was expressed in the

percentage of resident who answered 'yes' to the question 'Do you think people will still need trade unions or civic organisations after the election?' Although membership of civic organisations had dropped, and the popularity of the ANC was at an all-time high, 70% of respondents answered this question in the affirmative. When asked for reasons, some explained the need for civics in terms of the peacekeeping and anti-crime roles they had played; this was expressed as 'Civic organisations are also right to keep order and peace in the township' or 'They are the voice of the people; they are the mediators in order to keep peace.'

Other residents stressed the need for civic organisations to work together with the new local authority to address development needs and service problems, expressed as 'Civic organisations will play a crucial role in negotiating with local authorities on issues that are affecting the communities like poor services' or 'Civic structures will work hand in hand with local government officials in developing the township.' Some saw a more oppositional role for civics in the future, such as 'Civic organisations will continue to fight for services for the people in the townships' or they will be needed after the election 'To see to it that this new government fulfils its promises.' One resident stressed the need to maintain grassroots structures:

From grassroots level there should be structures in the form of civics that on a consistent basis liase with local authorities with regard to problems or programmes that need to be developed in communities, like rendering of essential services and so on.<sup>28</sup>

The surveys of Kwazakele residents in 1993 and 1994 illustrated the dynamic way in which the political consciousness of 'ordinary people' changed over the transition period. As political leadership debated such issues as the autonomy of civil society and the participation of SANCO in ANC electoral processes, township residents developed an understanding of how the new politics worked. The tension between the old 'hegemonic' political culture, and the development of a more sophisticated understanding of representative government and civil society, was evident. Moreover, the hegemony of the liberation movements in the region - and their certainty of winning an overwhelming majority of votes in the election - meant that they could afford to practise tolerance.

While this 'hegemonic' culture was not strong on pluralist tolerance, it did encourage political leadership to be directly accountable to their base. After the 1994 elections, the opposite tendency began to emerge, in that elected leadership became increasingly distant from their grassroots support base. The limitations of representative democracy became especially apparent in the electoral system that was adopted. Proportional representation on lists places greater power in the hands of party elites, and allows for less involvement by ordinary citizens. Although the organs of civil society such as COSATU and SANCO were not slow to see the implications of this system, and lobbied effectively for their leadership to be represented in the electoral lists, those who were elected are no longer directly accountable to their constituencies. While all ANC branches initially put forward their choice of candidates for the lists, the final list for the region was decided upon by a process of lobbying and strategic incorporation of various sectors (unions, Communist party members, civic leaders, women), minorities (non-Africans, members of the Labour party) and sub-regional interests (such as Major Holomisa from the Transkei). Ordinary ANC members' democratic participation in the process of selection of candidates lost out; and elected members of the provincial legislature are not accountable to specific geographic constituencies as they would be under a different electoral system. In such a situation there is greater room for non-accountability and corruption within political parties.

Thus, on the one hand there still existed what Glaser refers to as the 'authoritarian subtext of national democracy' and the need to replace the old hegemonic politics with pluralism, tolerance and individual freedom. On the other hand, a 'new politics' emerged – a politics of lobbying between elites, and a decline in democratic participation and accountability that occurred as the 'old politics' changed.

### ***Expectations of the new government***

While in the 1994 elections there was overwhelming support for the ANC, this was not unconditional, and expectations of 'delivery' were high among residents of Kwazakele. After decades of apartheid-induced socio-economic deprivation, these expectations were understandably for material improvements in their lives.

This was expressed primarily in terms of access to jobs, housing, and education. The expectations were not confined to material needs, however, and also showed that ordinary people had a vision of a free society. They talked with considerable political sophistication about basic human rights and about a desire for real empowerment, as in the following examples where residents were asked how they thought South Africa will be different after the election:

Since we are going to be ruled by the government we have elected everything will be different

I'll be able to voice out my views, there will be free political activities and respect of human dignity

Under the ANC government I hope people will be equal and sovereignty will rest on the will of the people, and that law will be the expression of the general will<sup>29</sup>

Reinforcing these expectations was, on the one hand, a spirit of reconciliation -

I appeal to all blacks to forget the past and think about the future and contribute to the building of the new South Africa<sup>30</sup>

together with a strong loyalty to the government - expressed as

The party we have elected knows the struggle of the people; they also know what we need

or, in this quote from a resident asked what he can do if the new government does not meet expectations:

Honestly I don't think it will do such a thing because it has sacrificed a lot for the oppressed people of SA. I will be shocked and I won't vote for any party next time.<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand, there is a commitment to ensuring their expectations are met through pressurising of government structures: to the same question, some residents responded by saying

We will strike, making sit-ins and boycotts... There will be strikes, boycotts and mass actions against it.<sup>32</sup>

This tension between the empowerment of ordinary people and their sometimes unquestioning loyalty is also reflected in the contradictory statements of their leaders; so while Cyril Ramaphosa called for the 'deepening of democracy' in the 'new period of struggle'<sup>33</sup> and the RDP proclaimed that the 'collective

heritage of struggle...is our greatest strength',<sup>34</sup> Raymond Mhlaba and Nelson Mandela began to issue warnings that that 'the time for mass action is over'.<sup>35</sup>

How was the political history and experience of Kwazakele residents reflected in the changed circumstances of 1994? On the one hand, the very high percentage poll in the Eastern Cape (92%) and the low number of spoilt papers indicate a high level of political awareness, and an overwhelming acceptance of the institutions of representative democracy. This reflects the prior experience of the majority of Africans of participation in either 'formal' political institutions (the older generation who remember the Native franchise and the Advisory Boards) and in informally electing leadership (the younger generation who participated in civic structures, street and area committees, or trade unions).

The tradition of participation and the desire for inclusion are reflected in the widespread and joyous embracing of parliamentary democracy, as illustrated in the quotes at the beginning of this chapter. The legitimacy of the elections was based in part on the real sense of personal pride felt by many residents, and the understanding that what they had struggled for over many decades had been achieved. The relative facility with which the non-racial transitional local authority was established reflected not only the sophistication of the negotiators, who had been mobilizing under the slogan of 'One City, One Municipality' since the mid-1980s, but also the re-embracing of the old liberal tradition on the part of the white municipal officials and of the principle of non-racialism on the part of all participants.

On the other hand, there was confusion when it came to ordinary people's experience of institutions of direct democracy, and the future role of civil society. Strong loyalty to the ANC and trust in the new government were combined with high expectations and the understanding on the part of many residents of Kwazakele that they might have to engage in mass action to ensure delivery. Others, accepting the limitations of representative democracy, said they would simply have to vote for another party if the ANC does not meet their needs.

The ways in which residents were involved in practice in the implementation of development programmes, and the tensions between civics and government bodies, are explored in the following chapters. It should just be noted here that the Reconstruction and Development Programme – which was the ANC's election programme – received widespread support from township residents. It embraced the rhetoric of participatory democracy through the idea of participation at grassroots level in all stages of development: in decision-making,

prioritisation of needs, and in implementation. Yet the rhetoric and practice of leadership was to become increasingly at odds with this radical notion of participation. What role people at grassroots level would play in the 'new politics' of reconstruction was by no means clear. A process of demobilization at street level was already clear; the civic organisations having redefined their role in terms of negotiations over the provision of housing and services, job-creation projects, and the distribution of food aid. Thus, one rather cynical activist described the demobilization process:

Today street and area committees don't deal with political issues such as negotiations; they don't rise above disputes. Meetings of zones or areas are active - but people go to general meetings of the area or the ANC branch; things are dead at street level. Things are directed by organisations now; there is money around. The only means of communication is by loudhailer. If you don't mention food or electricity, attendance at meetings is poor. We used to have large numbers of people attending political meetings, but not any more.<sup>36</sup>

Yet, in the months after the election, it was apparent that the tradition of militant mass mobilization remained strong in Port Elizabeth. If the new authorities were unable to respond to people's demands, they did not meekly accept the situation. A number of strikes took place in Port Elizabeth in the weeks after the elections, despite the pleas from the leadership for labour discipline, and admonishments that the time for mass action was over. The tensions between the old militant political culture and the 'normalized' politics of representative democracy became apparent.

The tradition of 'inclusion', combined with the hegemonic ideology of the ANC, led comfortably to the legitimacy of the ANC government and the consensus politics of the RDP, with the class compromises that that necessarily entailed. However, where people's needs were not met, or where the new authorities were insensitive or in conflict with many people's more radical idea of democracy, this tradition would come increasingly into tension with the second tradition of militant mass political participation. While the hegemony of the ANC gave it some space to govern its supporters, this space was not unconditional; it was restrained by the same tradition that built it. It is these tensions and restraints that are explored in the next chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> *EP Herald* 4 May 1994

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<sup>2</sup> These quotes are all from Kwazakele Survey 2, interviews conducted in the first week of May 1994 by Feya Njokweni, a resident of Kwazakele. See Appendix

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> This sentiment is expressed clearly in the title of SACP leader Jeremy Cronin's article in *Work In Progress* 25, 1994 – 'It takes more than an X to make democracy'

<sup>5</sup> *EP Herald* 30 August 1993

<sup>6</sup> After the election, Nkwinti was made Speaker of the Eastern Cape legislature and put considerable effort into making the legislature an accountable, transparent and participatory institution. He was not entirely successful in this endeavour!

<sup>7</sup> *EP Herald* 30 August 1993

<sup>8</sup> Brian Sokutu, 'ANC reaps seeds of resistance in Eastern Cape', in *Sunday Times* 30 January 1994

<sup>9</sup> Comments by Oom Klaas on the draft of this chapter, December 2000. The Identity Document was introduced to replace previous forms of identification for all South Africans, including the hated 'pass book' which had to be carried by all African citizens.

<sup>10</sup> *EP Herald* 17 March 1994

<sup>11</sup> Brian Sokutu op cit. I tried, through students of mine, to obtain interviews with AZAPO members in Port Elizabeth, but had no success.

<sup>12</sup> *EP Herald* 24 February 1994.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> *EP Herald* 19 March 1994

<sup>15</sup> *EP Herald* 17 March 1994

<sup>16</sup> *EP Herald* 19 March 1994

<sup>17</sup> Interviews 11 and 33, Kwazakele Survey 2, May 1994. Residents of Ndongeni and Kalipa streets.

<sup>18</sup> Kwazakele Survey 2, May 1994.

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<sup>19</sup> The IFP had agreed to participate in the election at the last minute, and so stickers had to be printed and stuck on to every ballot paper by the IEC. This added to the already considerable logistical problems experienced by the IEC.

<sup>20</sup> Some of this information is drawn from IEC documents such as 'Voting day activity reports: Analysis of Data – Eastern Cape sub-region, 26 April 1994'. I was assisting the Analysis Unit of the IEC in the PE IEC office during voting days. Professor Mark Anstey, who was the Director of Monitoring for the IEC in the Eastern Cape, also gave me some information in a discussion in November 2000.

<sup>21</sup> IEC official Rob Midgley of Rhodes University was called to settle this dispute, and said that it was clear that the lids of the boxes were not properly sealed and in one case the lid was damaged. The final decision would have been taken by the Chief Electoral Officer, but he remembers that the votes from the damaged boxes were not counted. Conversation with Rob Midgely, 23/11/2000.

<sup>22</sup> *EP Herald* 30/4/94

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Mark Anstey, 22/11/2000

<sup>24</sup> Kwazakele Survey 2, May 1994. While 52% of those interviewed in 1993 said they had been members of a civic organisation in the 1980s, and an even higher % were members of SANCO in 1993, in the 1994 survey no respondent claimed to be a member of SANCO.

<sup>25</sup> *EP Herald* 13 June 1994.

<sup>26</sup> Interview, 1993.

<sup>27</sup> These statistics and quotes come from Kwazakele Survey 1, conducted in 1993; see also Cherry 1994a, and Cherry 2000.

<sup>28</sup> Interview 28, a 32-year-old male graduate living in Mbilini Street. All other quotes above are also from Kwazakele Survey 2, May 1994.

<sup>29</sup> First two quotes from Kwazakele Survey 2, May 1994; third quote from Noxolo Dlabantu, resident of Kwazakele, quoted in the *EP Herald* 4 May 1994.

<sup>30</sup> Nelson Bopani, resident of Block 4A, Kwazakele Single Mens' Quarters, quoted in *EP Herald* 4 May 1994.

<sup>31</sup> Kwazakele Survey 2, May 1994.



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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Cyril Ramaphosa, who was General Secretary of the ANC at the time, addressing the press before the opening of the ANC's Regional General Council in the Eastern Cape, quoted in *EP Herald* 13 June 1994.

<sup>34</sup> ANC, 1994, *Reconstruction and Development Programme*, p 3.

<sup>35</sup> Nelson Mandela quoted in *EP Herald* of 21 April 1994, addressing an election rally in Graaff-Reinnett, Eastern Cape; Raymond Mhlaba quoted in *EP Herald* 8 June 1994. Mhlaba is an ANC veteran, one of the Rivonia Trialists from Port Elizabeth, who was elected in 1994 and served as Premier of the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature from 1994-1999.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Alex Rala, 14 July 1993.

# Chapter 7: Development in Kwazakele, 1994 – 1999: Participation and Conflict

There are lots of promises being made which have not been fulfilled, and the future is filled with uncertainty<sup>1</sup>

## ***Democracy and development***

The debate about radical, participatory or 'strong' forms of democracy did not cease with the advent of representative democracy in South Africa in 1994. It moved from being central to the public political arena (which became the terrain of elected public representatives from conventional political parties) to the arena of labour and civic activists as well as development practitioners. The development practitioners, drawing on theories of 'people-centred' or 'people-driven' development such as those of David Korten, began to try to influence the debate around socio-economic policy in a certain direction. Vivienne Taylor, for example, in *Lessons of the MDM* drew lessons from the practices of mass struggle or mobilisation of the 1980s, in an attempt to ensure that the new government responded to the interests of the poor. In the process of so doing, she used the critique of representative democracy as discussed in Chapter 1, and urged a more participatory form of politics as the only way of ensuring that the interests of the poor were represented in the formulation of policy.

The first attempt by the mass-based organisations of civil society to influence this debate was prior to the 1994 elections, with the formation of the Tripartite Alliance.<sup>2</sup> The labour and civic movements employed policy researchers to give input into the debate around economic and development policy. The result was the adoption by the ANC of a popular programme for the 1994 elections that was supported by its more radical alliance partners, the SACP and COSATU, as well as by SANCO. This was, of course, the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The particular vision of development as empowering ordinary people, and giving them 'control over their lives', is

directly reflected in the document which attained widespread popularity and acceptance among ordinary South Africans, including residents of Kwazakele.

Another place where the radical democracy discourse resurfaced was in the civic movement. SANCO embraced the same concept of 'people-driven development' as its 'primary slogan' in a strategy paper of 1997. In this paper, SANCO president Mlungisi Hlongwane argued that SANCO played a 'vital role' in the 'harnessing of grassroots support to assist the authorities and other agencies to implement development programmes'. He defined SANCO's role as twofold: strengthening the 'embryonic democracy' in South Africa, and agitating for 'real change for the poor'. (Hlongwane 1997:5-6).

Many NGOs and development consultancies have tried to apply these ideas in practice, at a local level, with greater or lesser degrees of success. One potentially successful example of such is the Delta Foundation's Missionvale housing scheme, a radical low-cost housing scheme in an informal settlement outside of Port Elizabeth. This scheme even embraces (in principle) one of the core structures of direct democracy, the street committee, in order to ensure community control over the development process. However, it has not been implemented in full at the time of writing, and so it is hard to evaluate the success or otherwise of such a project.

In Kwazakele, there were various attempts to address development needs in the first period of democratic governance. None came close to the radical vision of developmental democracy espoused by civic leaders. Yet the implementation of development policies raised important issues of representation, democracy and development strategy. In this chapter, we look at the ANC's first term of government, and examine whether and how this radical discourse of developmental democracy was implemented.

### ***Expectations and material improvements***

As noted in Chapter 8, expectations of the new government at the time of the first democratic elections in 1994 were high. 96% of residents surveyed – in other words, all those who voted for the ANC – thought that their lives would

be better under the new government. When asked in what way they thought they would improve, many responded that there would be more jobs, more houses would be built, and free education of better quality would be provided. Additional expectations mentioned by some residents were for free health care, improved sports facilities, and the electrification of existing houses. As regards job creation, some residents explained further that sanctions would be lifted and the democratic government would allow for foreign investment that would create employment. Others saw the end to job reservation and the implementation of affirmative action as the means whereby they would obtain access to employment.

While there were a few residents who responded with more abstract or political expectations, as noted in Chapter 6 above, it is clear that for most poor people the democratic government was seen as being able to effect real change in their standard of living and quality of life. In this chapter, the issue of whether or not these expectations have been met is addressed. Through the surveys conducted in 1995 and 1999, it has been possible to measure the extent to which the residents of Kwazakele have had their expectations met. In addition, a number of related issues are addressed: given their overwhelming loyalty to the ANC, how long are people prepared to wait for 'their' government to implement policies which meet their needs? How will they respond if the government does not do so effectively? How do ordinary people hold their democratically elected government to account? And finally, what is their role in the meeting of their own needs?

A year after the founding election, another survey was conducted in Kwazakele. This survey was designed to test how residents of Kwazakele felt about the new democracy, after the initial euphoria of the 'liberation election' had worn off. While the results were inconclusive and seemed disappointing at first glance, in the context of the longer-term research project they are less unsatisfactory. While academic researchers prefer a clear-cut response – have people accepted representative democracy or not? Have organs of 'popular democracy' collapsed or not? – the reality is that people were gradually 'coming to grips' with the new form of democracy. Their divided

responses thus represented an accurate reflection of opinions within the community.

The third Kwazakele survey was conducted in May 1995, exactly a year after the previous survey was conducted in the aftermath of the April 1994 election.<sup>3</sup> While it can be argued that a year is too short a time in which to expect a newly-elected government to 'deliver' on its promises, it was a crucial period in which to try and assess the response of ordinary people to the advent of democracy, and to look at whether civil society was being demobilised or 'decompressed'.

In May-June 1995, when residents of Kwazakele were asked, 'Has your life changed since the election?' 48% responded that their lives were better, and 47% that their lives were the same, while 5% said that their lives were worse. This indicated the slow pace at which the government was meeting people's expectations:

Not much (has changed) to my expectations – it is still all promises at this juncture; nevertheless the government must be given time

We are still without houses

I am still jobless

It also indicated the understanding, which was made explicit by some respondents, that political democracy did not always equate with socio-economic improvements – or, in the terminology of political scientists, that democratisation is not equivalent to equalisation:

A few people gain by this new democracy, while those who still have, have, and those who had not, still have not got

This was further borne out by the answers to the question of how people thought South Africa had changed since the election. 56% were dubious about the nature of the changes that had taken place, and the pace of change. However, many expressed patience and the view that one could not reasonably expect change 'overnight':

It is changing though not to everyone's expectations; people tend to expect miracles overnight

We have not seen any changes so far. The government is still to fulfil its promises. In 1948 when the NP took over from the UP, it took them nearly a decade to satisfy all its supporters

Those who said that their lives had changed for the better mentioned the installation of domestic electricity in Kwazakele:

There is no more darkness at night

Life is more comfortable

This electrification process had begun in the 'interregnum' period before 1994, as explained in Chapter 5; it cannot thus really be seen as an achievement of the newly-elected government. Yet it is widely perceived by residents of Kwazakele to be the main achievement of the ANC. Residents also mentioned an improvement in sewerage and water services, also due to the PE Municipality taking over the provision of services from the defunct Ibhayi council; and improvements in sports and recreation facilities such as the renovation of halls and sports stadiums. Other changes which made an enormous difference to the lives of poor people were the equalisation (on racial grounds) of all state pension payments. Thus a disabled 44-year old resident of an informal housing area, although still in need of housing and employment, felt that his life had changed since the election of 1994:

It has changed – my disability grant has rapidly increased since the elections

Some Kwazakele residents knew that the elected government was in most cases not directly responsible for the changes; thus a perceptive prostitute noted that

South Africa has not really changed since the election, because the changes taking place are not the direct result of the elections

She felt that her life had not changed since the election, and had a very clear idea of what she expected from the new government:

Equality for all – gays, lesbians and prostitutes have a **right to live** and must be treated as human beings. Police must stop harassing my colleagues while still on duty

Whether or not the newly elected government was in fact responsible for the improvements that occurred in Kwazakele, the important point for this study is that residents of Kwazakele perceived such changes in their lives as resulting from the democratisation process. They perceived that they had, for the first time, a government that was accountable to them and responsive to their needs. The electrification of Kwazakele undoubtedly made a big difference in people's lives, as evidenced by the following quotes:

Our homes have now electricity – this means to me that an elected government gave me a better life which is comfortable.

Other residents felt that their lives had changed less in a material sense than in the sense of having a responsive government:

We know what is happening around us because we have direct representation in the local government; all projects are community driven

I have hope for the future; I have a right to cast my vote and therefore I have an input in the constitution-making [process].

When asked what they still expected from the new government, residents of Kwazakele responded in the main by indicating their awareness that the socio-economic disparities in South African society still needed to be addressed:

Bridge the existing gap between the underprivileged and the privileged

Address the imbalances caused by apartheid and empower black people

See that the RDP is implemented because presently it is a theory

They (the government) must stop making statements about certain issues when they know that they cannot do justice to the people's expectations

When asked within what time period they thought the government would need to meet these expectations, 62% said before the following general election (in

four years' time). A further 19% gave the government ten years, while a smaller group of 14% expected to see their expectations met within a year.

Given the generally high level of loyalty to the ANC, and the preparedness of residents to wait for socio-economic policies to be implemented, it would be reasonable to expect a process of 'demobilisation' in this period. The survey did in fact show a marked decline from the 1980s in the involvement of residents in grassroots organs of 'politicised civil society'. However, the survey immediately after the 1994 election showed very low membership of civic organisation, and the survey in 1995 showed a higher membership, with around a quarter of respondents claiming to be members of civic organisations. This may not be conclusive, as the 1994 survey reflected an overriding concern with political party loyalties, which is understandable given the recently held election. But the rising awareness of the role of civic organisations was combined during 1995 with a serious tension between SANCO and the ANC in Port Elizabeth, as will be seen below. This tension was an inevitable outcome of the democratisation process, and is explored in some detail here along with other development issues, which reflect the question of party and civil society tensions.

### ***Mobilisation and conflict around development***

As outlined in Chapter 1, the relationship of civil society to the state is variable. The ANC saw itself during this period as governing a 'developmental state' and in so doing harnessing its mass constituency as partners in implementing development programmes. It attempted to do so through establishing RDP forums in townships such as Kwazakele, where the interests of political parties and civil society would be combined to co-ordinate development efforts with the relevant state organs and the private sector. In practice, however, the organs of the local and provincial state have implemented many development projects without extensive involvement of civil society or even the 'grassroots' supporters of the ANC. In this context, SANCO has often taken up the position of 'watchdog', monitoring the actions of the state and organising protests where they deem it necessary, either to



keep the state 'on course' in terms of 'delivery', or to oppose measures which are seen as counter to the interests of its constituency.

What can be seen in an examination of certain development projects in Kwazakele in this period is the ambivalent relationship that ordinary people have to the development efforts of the local state. In some instances, people are mobilised on the basis of their local interests to oppose the local state. In other instances, they actively participate in implementing development projects, with or without the involvement of the state. While SANCO structures became increasingly oppositional in their role, most residents of Kwazakele, although still loyal to the ANC, found their political loyalties did not always correspond to their material or developmental needs. The following examples explore some of these issues; they are not intended as an exhaustive exploration of all developments in Kwazakele. Rather, they illustrate some of the tensions around the relationship between state and civil society in a 'developmental democracy'.

### **The upgrading and sale of housing**

Kwazakele, as explained in Chapter 4, was built in the late 1950s using a 'site-and-service' scheme that was considered revolutionary at the time. As Dorothy Vumazonke described,

I have lived in that house in Kwazakele for a long time, nearly forty years. I am the head of the household, living with my two minor children and three grandchildren. Things have changed now, really; things are not as difficult as they used to be. At that time, we used to fetch water in a big bucket if we wanted to do washing or have a bath – you would just have to bring quite a lot of water to the house. Now, still some of us don't have sink, but we have a tap nearby, at the toilet but not in the toilet. We have got running water at our house, but no bath or sink. We also have electricity, since not too long ago – not more than five years ago, just before Mandela was President, maybe a year before that – about 1993.

Her experience is characteristic of most of the more long-term residents of Kwazakele. They have formal housing, which is small and cramped, but generally in reasonable condition. Residents have made substantial improvements over the years through building ceilings, floors, interior walls or

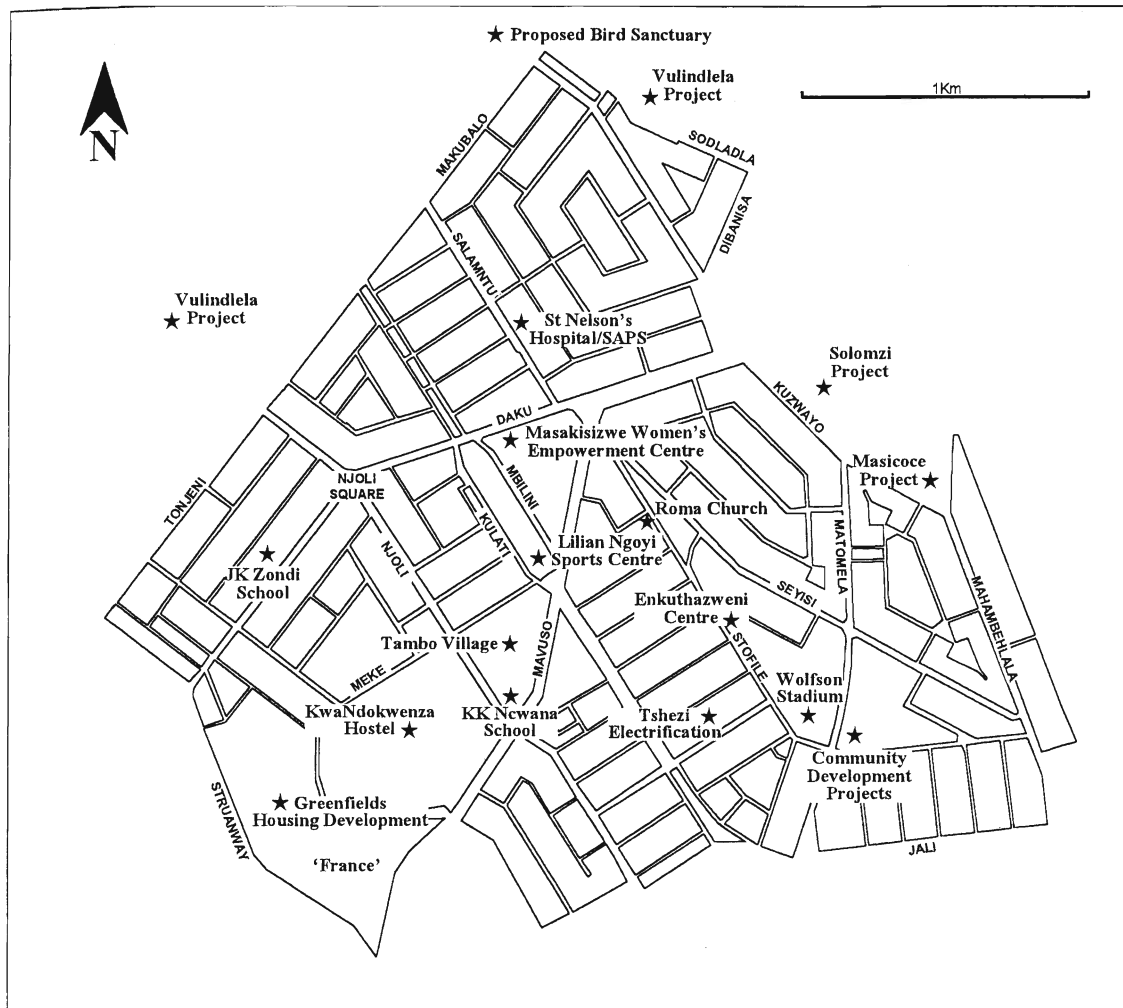
partitions, and extra rooms. The 'site and service' idea has proved to be very successful in the long term, despite initial dissatisfaction with the houses. Other improvements such as water-borne sewerage, running water, and electricity, were gradually added by the local authorities. Some of this upgrading began in the late 1980s, as part of the government's strategy to give legitimacy to the Black Local Authorities through the provision of substantial resources to the older, more established townships, as outlined in Chapter 4. Also in the late 1980s, the transfer of the old municipal housing into the private ownership of long-standing tenants was begun in Kwazakele. The 11 537 houses which were built in 1956, at a cost of R 432 each, were sold from 1988 onwards to residents for the reasonable price of R 1 908. This was calculated as being at a discount of 40% on the 'real' price, given inflation over the decades and improvements to the housing stock. As noted by Dorothy Vumazonke above, tenants had put in ceilings and floors themselves, painted the houses and added on rooms. From May 1975, Africans had been allowed to own houses under a 30-year leasehold, but not to own the land. When the transfer of the Kwazakele properties was encouraged in 1988, some owners took the opportunity to sell their 'old' houses for between three and ten thousand rand. They then bought houses in the new middle-class 'suburbs' of KwaMagxaki, KwaDwesi and Swartkops Valley.<sup>4</sup> From 1993, residents became eligible for the government housing subsidy of R 7 500 for the buying of previously rented homes.<sup>5</sup> Most residents of Kwazakele took advantage of this scheme. However, two problems remained: one was the cost of rates and services, which escalated as the service provision improved and was supplemented by electrification. As in other townships around South Africa, residents responded to the attempts by illegitimate local authorities to obtain revenue for services offered, by simply refusing (or failing) to pay their accounts. This led to the crisis of financial viability for many local authorities in the transition period. The ANC responded with an attempt to change the 'culture of non-payment' for services through the mobilisation of populist sentiment, in the form of the 'Masakhane' campaign.

The other major problem was the continued shortage of housing for the thousands of shack-dwellers in Kwazakele. During the 1980s and 1990s,

urban influx escalated and all open areas between formal housing areas were rapidly filled in with shacks.<sup>6</sup> The housing shortage, the problem with payment for services, and the ongoing problem of appalling conditions at the Kwazakele hostel, were to result in ongoing conflict between residents (often represented by SANCO) and the municipal authorities. This was particularly acute in the period from 1994 to November 1995. In this period Port Elizabeth was the first city to put in place an interim non-racial local authority; but it was not elected until November 1995, as outlined in Chapter 8.

### **The Kwazakele Hostel upgrade**

The area between Meke and Mavuso streets (see MAP 6) in Kwazakele is known as Matthew Goniwe Village. It is one of the most interesting parts of Kwazakele in terms of development struggles, as it is the site of the only migrant labour hostels in Port Elizabeth's townships. These hostels became an area not of ethnic mobilisation, as was common in migrant labour hostels elsewhere in South Africa, but of mobilisation around the need for family accommodation and a decent standard of living.



**Map 6. Kwazakele sites of development**

The Single Men's Quarters – as the area was originally known – were built in the late 1950s as accommodation for single migrants from the rural areas of Transkei and Ciskei. They became known by the local residents as Kwandokwenza – a rather rude colloquialism with the literal meaning 'Where you get done'. As the hostels were for single male migrant workers, and women were not allowed inside, they became known as a place where you would be 'sexed up' or 'done' (presumably if you were a woman.) This is still the colloquial name. After 1990, the area containing the hostel was renamed Matthew Goniwe Village, after the Cradock teacher and civic activist assassinated by the security police in 1985.

As in other cities at the height of apartheid, the hostels were designed as single men's quarters and it was not envisaged that they would have to house families. However, in 1979 families were moved from the wooden packing

crate houses, known as emaplankeni, at KwaFord, New Brighton, to the hostel. In 1979 the hostel housed 5 000 people, and the rent was set at R 11.20, where it stayed for the next decade. By 1989, the number of residents had increased by 50% to 7 500 people.<sup>7</sup> In September 1989, 200 residents protested against the conditions of the hostel, demanding their renovation. The hostels were terribly overcrowded, with most units being home to two families, sharing three rooms of eight by seven metres square. There was no indoor plumbing, and the communal toilets and taps were overused and poorly maintained. Despite the overcrowding, the Ibhayi Council wanted to move more families in, this time from Red Location in New Brighton. Two years later, when no improvements had been made, another protest took place. Hostel residents marched to the Ibhayi Council offices in April 1992 with a petition demanding 'houses, toilets, security and comfort' – in a slogan drawing on the famous phrase from the Freedom Charter, with 'toilets' added in for good measure.<sup>8</sup>

This was during the 'interregnum', a period in which the Ibhayi Council had little power to effect change, but came under enormous pressure from civic organisations. Under this sort of public pressure, and with the support of a local press sympathetic to the plight of people living in appalling conditions in the hostels, the Ibhayi Council gave in and accepted in principle the conversion of the single men's quarters into family accommodation. By this stage, it was reported that 14 500 people were living in the hostels which were 'filthy and overcrowded'<sup>9</sup>

In response, Housing Committee chairman and ANC Political Commissar Maxwell Tengo announced that R 40 million had been made available for the conversion of the hostels into family housing.<sup>10</sup> Shortly thereafter a Joint Steering Committee of representatives of the CPA, PEPCO, Matthew Goniwe Village Area Committee, and ANC was created. This JSC was appointed after negotiations with 'various community groups'. Mike Ndzotoyi of PEPCO stressed that 'participation of residents is of vital importance and nothing will be done without consulting them.'<sup>11</sup> The conversion process was not to go smoothly, however. Not only would the developers discover the importance of

consulting 'the community'; divisions within the hostel community, competition for tenders, and incompetence combined with lack of funds on the part of the local authorities contributed to the slow unfolding of the upgrade drama.

The first conflict was around the appointment of the private company to do the upgrading of the hostel. Some Kwazakele SMQ residents rejected the involvement of PEPCO and Unifound Housing, and expressed their opposition to the ANC leadership, Linda Mti and Thobile Mhlahlo (who was to become MEC for local government in the Eastern Cape after 1994). A 40-strong delegation from all area committees at the hostel marched to the BIFSA auditorium and halted the proceedings of the JSC, demanding the minutes of previous meetings. The MG Village Committee chairman Herewith Gcilitshane told the meeting that residents were members of the ANC-SACP-SANCO alliance, but were totally opposed to Unifound carrying out the construction work. They claimed they had not been consulted, and had chosen a company called Group Five to handle the upgrading. The CPA was then 'suddenly dealing with PEPCO', they found. The residents had approached the CPA without assistance from PEPCO. PEPCO was only supported by 5% of the residents, they claimed, mostly those who resettled in the hostel in 1979 from KwaFord.<sup>12</sup>

CPA responded that PEPCO and the Kwazakele Hostel Dwellers Association were directly involved in the decisions about upgrading, and that there was 'full community participation on a labour-intensive basis'. They emphasized that the JSC, which had been formed in April, had representatives on it from PEPCO, ANC, CPA and the Hostel Dwellers Association. They went on to explain that on 25 August, PEPCO had held a regional meeting and informed the CPA that the 'hostel dwellers had agreed that PEPCO be their lawful representative on the Steering Committee'. It was claimed by the CPA that the decision to use Unifound had been a 'joint decision' made at a meeting on 21 September, yet because of 'internal strife' between the organisations representing the communities, a workshop with Unifound on 21 October never happened.<sup>13</sup>

The dispute was resolved, and a 16-member committee was formed, consisting of 4 members each from PEPCO, ANC, SACP and the Hostel Committees. Monde Mtanga of PEPCO apologised for the 'misunderstanding', explaining that it had happened because PEPCO had not updated residents of the hostel on developments since March.<sup>14</sup> The upgrading of hostel was then rediscussed, and by the end of 1992 agreement had been reached.<sup>15</sup>

While residents and civic organisations squabbled about issues of representation, upgrading did not take place. The new year began with more reports on the horrific conditions at the hostel, with three deaths taking place due to tuberculosis and other diseases related to the unsanitary conditions. The hostel was dubbed 'The Death Camp' but by the end of January no progress had been made. Ibhayi Council blamed residents for the lack of progress in upgrading, accusing them of a 'lack of co-operation, internal strife and wrangling'.<sup>16</sup> But when the death toll rose to four, including that of a three-year-old girl, the Cape Provincial Administration was forced to intervene to ensure that some progress was made. The ANC Matthew Goniwe Unit held a service on 28 January 1993 for the four deceased, and the CPA announced the immediate upgrading of the hostel. The Joint Steering Committee held a follow-up meeting and agreed that upgrading must start immediately. The conflict within the hostel was resolved eventually; Zones 2,3 and 4 of hostel agreed to the upgrading, and Zone 1 agreed after consulting residents and having the tender process clarified. Xolani Tengo, hostel branch SANCO official, also agreed.<sup>17</sup>

The upgrading of the hostels finally began in April 1993. Yet even so, the initial work consisted simply of 'emergency work' – the cleaning and repair of the existing ablution blocks, the installation of new ablution units, the provision of washing troughs, water and the cleaning of sewer lines. This first stage was meant to take six weeks, involving mainly labour intensive work that would provide temporary jobs for 150 hostel dwellers. Yet by June of that year, the residents were becoming impatient at the slow progress being made. Some two hundred residents engaged in a 'sit in' which became a 'sleep over' at the

Ibhayi Council offices in Struandale. The action lasted for two days, after which an urgent meeting with representatives of the CPA was convened.

After another meeting in July of around five hundred residents, chaired by PE SANCO Vice President Ernest Malgas, it was announced that the hostel upgrade was to continue. By September, although some progress in the 'cleanup' process was reported, it was announced – to some puzzlement – that approval was 'still awaited' for the upgrading of the single men's quarters into family units. Six months later, in March 1994, it was reported that the 'third phase' was in progress – yet this third phase involved only the installation of communal toilets and the necessary sewerage pipes. Even this was not satisfactorily completed, as a five-year-old child drowned in standing water in April. By October 1994, four years after the initial decision and two and a half years after the final decision to upgrade, conditions at the hostel were still reported to be overcrowded and unhygienic; there were burst sewers and water pipes, faulty toilets and pools of water between the hostel buildings. Despite the protracted wrangling over who would control the development, the problem was that there was still a shortage of funds. In addition, because Ibhayi was considered illegitimate by the inhabitants of the single men's quarters, no rentals were being paid. Ibhayi had in response simply stopped service provision to the hostels. Conditions at the hostel, far from improving, were actually deteriorating.

Now, with a democratically elected government in place, residents of MG Village attempted to put pressure on various public representatives to speed up the upgrade process. One of those approached was Max Mamase, an old Port Elizabeth civic activist who was elected in April 1994 to the provincial legislature and appointed as MEC for Housing in the first provincial government of the Eastern Cape. By 1995, although not yet elected, there was a Transitional Local Council in place for Port Elizabeth which had more legitimacy among residents. TLC chairman Nceba Faku, a popular ANC and SACP member who had grown up in New Brighton, was more accessible than the Bisho-based provincial government. He personally came to address the 13 000 residents of MG Hostel, who demanded that the TLC immediately



respond to conditions there. The TLC's response to the residents' demands was that while R 40 million had been allocated, the PEM needed the money from Bisho; the PEM could only clean up the hostel, but could not do the upgrading.<sup>18</sup>

Another six months later, in March 1995, it was reported that 'some work' had been done – rubbish had been removed, blocked sewers cleared, and electricity made safe. But there was an acknowledgement that there had been 'appalling administration' of the process. In many respects this appalling administration was a result of the transition, where the old local state bodies were not considered legitimate, but the transitional bodies did not have the authority or funds to implement change. Thus the old CPA was appointed by Ibhayi Council to act as its agent, and NEWHCO to act as project manager. After this initial phase, NEWHCO demanded payment of three million rand, and there were rumours that the contract with NEWHCO would be cancelled. With the formation of the TLC, there was a legitimate local government body to enter into agreements. A new 'social compact' was then formed between the TLC and the JSC in March 1995, and a new housing committee appointed as agents by the JSC. It was announced that on completion of the upgrade, there would be 2280 family units to accommodate 13 000 residents

After three months of negotiation in late 1995 and early 1996, an agreement was signed to upgrade and redevelop the hostel. By this stage, the new Council had been elected (see Chapter 8), and so the upgrading became the responsibility of the Ward councillor for that part of Kwazakele. A Local Negotiating Council or Group (LNG) was constituted to be responsible for the redevelopment, with Mncedisi Lushaba as chairman and Maxwell Tengo as his deputy. The Provincial Housing Board allocated R 60 m for the project, and Elwyn Harlech Jones was appointed as project manager to ensure completion of the project. Construction was to begin in May 1996 and was expected to take 4 years. A 'large delegation' of residents celebrated outside the City Hall in January 1996, illustrating that mobilisation was not only a negative pressure on local or provincial government.<sup>19</sup> Yet, by the end of that year, no progress had been made. In October there was a report in the press

that the MG hostel 'could soon be upgraded'<sup>20</sup>; in December there was another report that the MG hostel was 'still to be discussed' by the Council Housing Committee.<sup>21</sup> The delay was in part because of conflict over the awarding of the upgrading contract to Uzume Trust, an 'empowerment consortium' headed by Stunkie Maqhagi, a hostel resident and businessman. Mr Nondumo, of Masizakhe Trust, lost the contract to the Uzume Trust. The decision to award the contract to Uzume was made by the LNG at the City Hall, apparently ignoring the opposition of a group of about fifty hostel residents. This group demanded to see Ward 24 Councillor Mbuyiselo Madaka to state their grievances, as they disapproved of the LNG's choice of Maxwell Tengo as Hostel Community Liaison Officer, who they claimed was inaccessible.<sup>22</sup> Despite these conflicts, the project managers were still optimistic, reporting that the 'pioneering upgrade' of the hostel – which was worth R 50 million – was to include building new houses on the old golf course, the upgrading of the existing complex and the building of a clinic, library and preschool. Project manager Harlech Jones said that the planning with the community through workshops had taken 18 months.<sup>23</sup>

The conflict continued into 1998. In March, Ward Councillor Madaka, together with Mncedisi Lushaba, were held hostage in their office by the hostel's Concerned Residents' Group. The residents were objecting to Lushaba's application for the post of hostel manager. The hostel residents forced their representatives to walk out of a meeting with councillors, objecting to Lushaba's presence. Madaka claimed the protestors were UDM members, opposed to the hostel upgrade. Lushaba withdrew his application under duress, and reported the matter to the ANC.<sup>24</sup> Mayor Nceba Faku was called on to address the MG Hostel ANC members in order to resolve the impasse between 'sharply divided residents'.<sup>25</sup> It was reported that the implementation of municipal projects at the MG hostel was 'blocked' after allegations of political interference by ward councillors in the awarding of contracts. Some groups – alleged to be aligned to the UDM – called for the removal of the councillor, and refused to co-operate with the Uhlaza company which had been awarded the cleaning contract. However, Councillor Madaka had been mandated by the LNG to be part of the panel which awarded the contract.<sup>26</sup>

By July 2000, the conversion into family housing had begun, but at the time of writing has not yet been completed. The conversion involves allocating one family per dwelling unit; each unit has two bedrooms, a kitchen, and plumbing with geysers for hot water and showers. Water-borne sewerage and toilets are also being installed. The family housing is allocated first to those who moved in 1979 from KwaFord. Subcontractors employed by the consortium in turn employ residents of the MG Village to do the work. Some residents complain that the walls and the plastering are of poor quality, and see this as resulting from the tenders being given to 'empowerment groups' which then hire the cheapest labour they can get away with. The companies and subcontractors are not adequately monitored. One resident explained cynically that the conflict was in essence about the fact that 'different civic leaders favour different companies, and get kickbacks from them.'

One old lady in the hostel moved into a newly renovated family unit in 1999, and had been living there for a year. She explained that now the house had a cement floor, which was better than the mud floors that used to be there, although very cold. There was still no ceiling, and she could not afford to install one herself, being a pensioner. No sewerage had yet been installed, and so she still had to walk outside to the communal toilets. The house was very cold. All fixtures were provided by the upgrade contractors: new doors, windows, toilets and other plumbing fixtures. But it is not yet finished – others still complained about the quality of the work, and that they were still 'living among the animals'. Residents do, however, now own these houses, and do not pay rent.

Apart from the upgrading of the hostel, there has been a major housing delivery project in the area along Struandale (see MAP 6). This development, termed 'Greenfields', is on top of the old golf course. Tiny, regular rectangular cement block houses have been built, with asbestos roofs painted in various colours. Most of these houses have sewerage and running water, and electricity and telephone poles have been erected, although it is not clear whether they are in use. One section of this low-income housing scheme is known as 'France'. 'France' consists of the same tiny breezeblock houses –

one room, no interior walls, no ceilings, concrete floors, and asbestos roofs painted in blue and red (hence the name). These houses are for the lowest income group – the unemployed, pensioners, and single mothers, families with an income of less than R 800 per month. These houses are meant to take up the 'overflow' from the upgraded family units of the hostel, and provide affordable accommodation for those who could not be accommodated in the family units. There is no water or sewerage as yet, and no electricity although the poles have been erected. There are storm water drains but the roads between the houses have not yet been tarred.

How is adequate housing to be provided for people in such extreme poverty? A single mother with seven children and no income at all complained of the lack of space. An old woman complained of the lack of water or sewerage; they still had to walk to the hostel and use the toilets and water taps there, she said. Residents of these houses were distinctly unhappy with the housing they have received, and expressed deep concern that the development would never be completed. They complained that there has been no response from the Ward Councillor (who has an office in the Hostel, just down the road). It turns out, however, that in this particular section of the housing development, the residents are illegally occupying the newly built houses. Some of them just moved in and occupied the houses without permission, claiming that the houses were empty and being vandalised. They explained that they were the 'latecomers' at the hostel, renting accommodation, and not allocated family houses, which were given to the first residents from Emaplankeni. They were afraid that when the upgrade was finished, they would be kicked out – so they took the opportunity to occupy the houses standing empty. These residents had elected their own committee, but the councillor refuses to speak to them, as they occupied the houses without permission.<sup>27</sup>

The hostel upgrade (which is still in progress at the time of writing, in July 2000) has been a tortuous process, illustrating the dilemmas of implementing desperately needed development in a context where resources are scarce and authority is not clearly held. Yet it has also demonstrated the ability of residents to organise and apply pressure through their actions to ensure that

things eventually get done. Judging from recent discussions with residents of the family accommodation and the houses in 'France', the struggle is not yet over.

### **The Masakhane crisis – 'Marching Against Ourselves'**

If the conflict around the hostel upgrade had begun before the transition period, the crisis of payment for services also had its roots in the illegitimacy of the Ibhayi Council. Yet it was in the period of the TLC, before the first democratic local government elections, that the crisis came to a head. In Port Elizabeth townships as a whole, the tensions around the Masakhane campaign erupted in mid-1995.

At the end of 1994, SANCO was involved in developing a strategy to end the boycott of service payments in the PE townships. The PEM at the time was experiencing arrears of R 30 million, just for electricity and water. A lengthy negotiation process began around the payment of arrears. Agreement was eventually reached that it was acceptable to disconnect electricity to defaulters. A task team of civic leaders was established to visit people 'on the ground' and urge them to resume payments. Although SANCO was party to the agreement, the 'souring' of the relationship between residents and the council was illustrated by the conflict in Motherwell which escalated in February 1995, when municipal officials claimed that they were being threatened and having their vehicles stoned when they tried to enter the township to disconnect electricity among other things. The TLC called for action to be taken against SANCO, which was seen as being behind the threats. City Treasurer Chris Kapp even went so far as to threaten that 'The TLC might have to re-evaluate its relationship with SANCO' as SANCO was 'preventing the TLC from carrying out its duties.' In response, SANCO dismissed the PE TLC accusations that it was responsible for the non-payment of services by township residents.<sup>28</sup> SANCO then put forward a proposal as regards the subsidization of rates and services for those unable to pay; the cross-subsidisation was to be negotiated at local authority level. SANCO held two points of disagreement with government: that residents

should not pay arrears back to January 1994 (when the government was not yet legitimate); and that community based organisations rather than the Department of Welfare, should be involved in the identification of those indigent and thus qualifying for subsidy. A few weeks later, a 'breakthrough' agreement was reached in Motherwell, and SANCO expressed its confidence that PE township residents would start to pay their service bills. This came just at the time of the launch of the Masakhane Campaign by President Mandela.<sup>29</sup>

Yet, only one year after the election of a representative government in South Africa, tensions between the governing ANC and its civic ally SANCO came to a head in Port Elizabeth. On 20 July 1995, SANCO organised a march into the city centre to protest against the service charges levied by the ANC-dominated Transitional Local Council. TLC chairman Nceba Faku was 'booed and heckled' by a crowd reported to be between four hundred and one thousand SANCO members.<sup>30</sup>

The march took place after a lengthy process of meetings to find a solution to the problem of payment for services in PE. SANCO had proposed that the basic charge should be reduced to R 25 for formal housing, R15 for informal serviced housing, and R 5 for informal unserviced plots. The council had decided on a set rate of R 58. This march was significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, it indicated the - some would say healthy - tension between state and civil society at local level, and showed that civil society, specifically in the form of civic organisation, still had a degree of autonomy. This was a positive sign in the context of a post-liberation society. In some neighbouring countries, notably Zimbabwe, the hegemonic political parties have often seen it as in their interests to subsume all independent organs of civil society under the state's umbrella. The ANC by contrast encouraged such organs of civil society to be independent – at least initially. SANCO PE took up the challenge, and seemed intent on proving that it was not a 'toothless watchdog of the community'. The indomitable Mike Tofile stated further that 'We are not dummies or puppets manipulated by Mr Faku. That must be clear to the residents. We are still their watchdogs even during this transitional period'.<sup>31</sup>

Yet this assertion of the independence of civil society was offset by two other significant factors. The march did not receive a great deal of support, despite the strong tradition of mass mobilisation in the city, and the success of previous marches, which had attracted tens of thousands of township residents. One would imagine that with street and area committees still being in place in townships such as Kwazakele, thousands of residents could be mobilised at relatively short notice – yet this did not occur. This can be interpreted in various ways - as indicating the ‘demobilisation’ of civic organisations, the ‘depoliticisation’ of civil society, or the ‘normalisation’ of politics. Perhaps a more significant factor – which contributed to the small turnout – was that the ANC came out strongly against the march. This was despite previous assertions by ANC leadership of the importance of the role of civil society, the need to maintain mass organisation, and acceptance of the idea that the ANC could ‘march against itself’. These assertions had been made in recognition of the need for ‘the people’ to maintain pressure on the new government for ‘delivery’ - the implied self-criticism being that the ANC had the potential to become a new elite, unresponsive to the needs of the poor. Yet, when it came to the crunch, the ANC in Port Elizabeth appealed to SANCO to call off the march as being ‘against the spirit of the Masakhane campaign’ which appealed to township residents to pay for services. Moreover, members of the Kwazakele branch of the ANC went around the townships the night before the march, calling on residents not to participate, and appealing to them to be loyal to the ANC.<sup>32</sup> Deep ANC loyalty won out over SANCO’s mobilisation around material interests, and Kwazakele residents stayed at home.

The criticism of the march by the ANC indicated a growing reluctance, after a year in power, to allow such open dissent to be displayed by another organisation, albeit one of its allies. SANCO, although it proclaimed itself to be representing the interests of all residents and not just those loyal to the ANC, had a very close relationship with the ANC in Kwazakele. For many residents, the two organisations were indistinguishable, and their leadership interchangeable – for example, ANC MPL Mike Xego and SANCO leader Mike Ndzotoyi had together negotiated the electrification of the township.

SANCO agreed that it would not put up candidates for the November 1995 local government elections, but that that it would support ANC candidates. This was a promise that SANCO was not prepared to keep, as will be seen in Chapter 8. Simultaneously it held that it would continue to play the role of 'watchdog' at local level, in order to ensure that the newly elected local governments fulfilled their promises.

The ANC's criticism of the march indicated the beginning of a reluctance to tolerate dissent from any organisation not playing the party political game. In other words, the march signalled, for Port Elizabeth's militant townships, the beginning of the deliberate 'decompression' of politicised civil society. The ANC had adapted to the requirements of liberal democracy, and was willing to tolerate opposition expressed within the parliamentary framework, or from other political parties. At the same time, it was becoming increasingly unwilling to tolerate opposition from the more radical informal political spectrum. The response of the ANC to the Masakhane crisis in 1995 reflected their response to the wave of strike action that occurred after the 1994 elections, when public exhortations were made that 'the time for mass action is over' – as outlined in Chapter 6.

An attempt to find a resolution to the crisis was made in August 1995, when SANCO president Mlungisi Hlongwane came down to PE and, together with local SANCO leaders, met with the ANC including TLC chairman Nceba Faku. In a memorandum of understanding on the Masakhane Campaign and the Local Government elections, the ANC and SANCO committed themselves to cooperating fully towards the success of Masakhane both on delivery of, and payment for, services in the PE region. There was an initial disagreement on the interpretation of the details of the record of understanding, however: at a SANCO rally at the Wolfson Stadium in Kwazakele, it was announced that the service charge had been reduced from R 49 to R 25. Faku countered this, saying that there had not been an agreement of the reduction. SANCO then accused Faku of 'going back on his word'; the matter was left to be resolved by an Alliance summit on the Masakhane campaign, which would work out the details of the breakdown on payment categories. In addition, it was agreed



that all mass report-backs on the subject would in future be done jointly 'to avoid further differences of emphasis and interpretation.' The memorandum, in addition, noted that the 'non-appearance of SANCO candidates in the ANC proportional representation list should be rectified'.<sup>33</sup> SANCO in PE finally resolved the issue of service payments, and launched a campaign in September 1995 to encourage residents to pay. Residents of Kwazakele and New Brighton were urged to pay the rates demanded by SANCO – R25, R 15 and R 5 – at a specified pay point.<sup>34</sup>

In early 1996, SANCO in PE announced that it was embarking in a campaign to revive its structures and 'transform it into a fully representative body for all communities'. It acknowledged that it had been negatively affected by the 1994 elections, and the loss of officials; their replacement had not been 'as smooth as expected'. However, SANCO argued that the new TLC in PE needed to 'work hand in hand with organisations such as SANCO to ensure that programmes such as Masakhane are fully understood and accepted by communities'.<sup>35</sup> By 1997, when SANCO held a report-back to residents of Kwazakele on the review of rent and service payments, the crisis was over.

### **The Tambo Village controversy**

The housing shortage, combined with ongoing and rapid urbanisation, escalated in the late 1980s in the period when local authorities were at their lowest in terms of legitimacy; the PEBCO campaign around land seizures has been briefly discussed in Chapter 4. The problem of illegal squatting on open land in Kwazakele became more acute in the mid-1990s, as the desperate need for housing came into conflict with the attempts by the now-legitimate local authority to clean up the townships and improve services to formal housing. One example of this conflict of interests in Kwazakele was in the informal settlement known as Tamboville or Tambo Village, named by residents after the late President of the ANC, Oliver Reginald Tambo. Tambo Village (see MAP 6) fell under Ward 23 and from November 1995 Councillor Mcebisi Msizi was the public representative held responsible for the upgrade.

The priority given to the improvement of conditions in the informal settlements of Kwazakele became clear in early 1996, when it was announced that R 11.9 million in Swiss donor money had been allocated for a Municipal Extension Programme by the PEM. This was to be used to help 277 families in Kwazakele and 500 families in Walmer township. Among these were families living in the 'storm water pond' area in Ward 27, Kwazakele, who were also to be relocated to Bloemendal.<sup>36</sup> Water, flush toilets, roads and storm water drains were to be provided for those residents who would stay in the area. A further announcement classified the Tamboville upgrade as the first of the RDP Presidential Projects to take place in PE. R 1.2 million of the RDP money was to be used for the upgrade. The first phase would involve the provision of water, water-borne sewerage pipes, and roads. Phase two would involve the installation of toilets and site reticulation. Even before the upgrade had got underway, TLC Mayor Nceba Faku stressed that residents must pay for services.<sup>37</sup>

The difficulty of being responsible for such development efforts became clear as the upgrade progressed. Some residents were dissatisfied about the process of removal to Bloemendal as Tambo Village developed, with allegations being made that street committee members were not being moved. Despite claims by Councillor Msizi that there had been there had been widespread consultation before the project started, some residents said they only became aware of removals when S (stay), M (move) and R (relocate) was painted onto their shacks. Eight shacks were demolished shortly thereafter, and one of the residents whose shack was demolished accused Msizi of being autocratic with people who didn't want to move. Councillor Msizi denied that there had been any favouritism or political clientilism in the process of determining who would remain in the newly serviced section of the township, stressing that an aerial photograph had been used to determine who would move. From an aerial photograph it was certainly not possible to identify particular residents, and there was no knowledge of where street committee members lived. Msizi justified the removal of some of the residents by arguing that most people were willing to move, and that most residents occupied the land illegally. The plan was that

only 96 of the entire village would be allowed to stay there permanently. By the time the objections were received, two-thirds of the community had already moved. One street committee member contradicted the claim that street committee members were not affected by the upgrade, saying that her house was moved to make way for a roadway. By April 1997, 500 shack dwellers had been relocated to Bloemendal, and there were plans to relocate residents of the nearby shack areas Emdongweni, *Ezikweni* and *Nontshinga* to Motherwell. Msizi claimed that he maintained 'close ties' with those who had moved to Bloemendal, and that he held public meetings with them and was involved in the provision of electricity, a school and a community hall for those who had been relocated.<sup>38</sup>

That the unhappiness about the development process was not confined to one or two residents was illustrated by a SANCO meeting where residents of Ward 23 discussed a vote of no confidence in Councillor Msizi. They also decided to enforce a resolution of SANCO to withdraw from the ANC-SACP-COSATU structures, including yard, street, area and branch committees, and anti-crime committees, and to oppose the ANC provincial conference resolution to decentralise SANCO.<sup>39</sup> This radical decision was clearly an attempt by SANCO to mobilise around dissatisfaction with a development process that had not been entirely democratic. It also indicated that in certain areas of the township, there was direct competition between parallel grassroots structures of the civic and the ANC. However, the development went ahead, despite these murmurings of dissent. On 19 October 1998 it was reported that electricity had been switched on for 500 homes in Tambo Village. This was the end of the two-year project under Councillor Msizi to provide running water, tarred roads, sewerage and electricity to residents of the area.<sup>40</sup>

The ANC branch secretary for Kwazakele Two observed that the ANC had to take note of the particular interests of residents of informal settlements, and said that they were trying to restructure their branch so as to reflect this. Thus he noted that many residents of the informal settlement in Ward 23 had their

own concerns, and sometimes did not trust the residents of the formal settlements to address their concerns. Thus he says,

There is a need to meet and address these issues separately. Previously we thought they belonged together with other representatives – so they do not have separate representation on structures at present. But we had a council meeting and agreed on the need to cluster units with common factors – eg shack areas, or areas with a particular councillor. For example, the three units under the Ward 22 councillor have been clustered together, and should meet and discuss matters of common interest. Each councillor should be 'attached to a cluster' to make them more directly accountable to that community.<sup>41</sup>

In October 1997, SANCO's Mike Tofile announced that SANCO was involved in a 'review' of certain councillors in the PECC. They would be requested to compile a report on their council work, and submit it to SANCO by 7 October. Tofile explained that SANCO had submitted six names to the ANC for inclusion on the Council, but were now withdrawing these councillors as they were 'in it for the money'. SANCO threatened to 'mobilize the respective councillors' wards to destroy their political base and automatically their support so as to remove them from Council. We are going to expose them. We have influence.<sup>42</sup>

Local Government MEC Max Mamase then clarified the issue, stating that 'There is nothing like a SANCO councillor or MPL, because it was the ANC that nominated candidates during the 1994 and 1995 elections to represent the party in government.' Tofile then threatened a SANCO programme to 'render all corrupt TLAs in the Western Region ungovernable.'<sup>43</sup>

One aspect of the conflict between SANCO and the ANC was a dispute over the position of Dan Sandi, SANCO Eastern Cape president, in the Western District Council. In early 1995, Sandi had come out with a stinging attack on the ANC, claiming that SANCO had been 'neglected', 'sidelined', 'abused and misused' by the government. He claimed that the ANC was 'taking SANCO for a ride' and threatened to break with the ANC before the local government elections; as he succinctly put it, 'If the present government doesn't need the civics, then the civics do not need it'. Sandi claimed that the Eastern Cape government had failed to respond to SANCO's vision of economic

development for the region, and threatened that SANCO would be forced to 'review its position of co-operation to that of being opposition'. This 'souring relationship' between SANCO and the ANC was construed by some commentators to be a threat to the successful implementation of the RDP.<sup>44</sup> Sandi was subsequently removed from his position as chairman of the WDC, which exacerbated the already tense relationship between the ANC and SANCO.

The other aspect of the conflict concerned two Kwazakele councillors, Msizi and Myoli. Msizi, Ward 23 councillor, had already become unpopular with some people for his handling of the Tambo Village upgrade. An activist who had gone into exile in 1983, he worked for the ANC in Zambia, Denmark and France. Also involved in the labour movement – first internationally and then with COSATU in Johannesburg – he got involved in the PE TLC through his SANCO involvement in 1994. Although some residents criticised him as being a 'returned exile' rather than a local activist, it is clear that he has a background in 'civil society' as well as liberation movement politics.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps a stronger grounds for criticism was that he lived in Motherwell, rather than Kwazakele, and thus his deployment by the ANC to this ward was somewhat ill-conceived. He was rather arrogantly summonsed to a meeting in Kwazakele by SANCO to 'discuss his position'. He walked out, saying that the SANCO executive had tried to ridicule him by claiming that he was inaccessible. He claimed that this was because he had refused to support the call for the reinstatement of Sandi. Protests against Msizi continued in December 1997, when a group of residents handed a petition demanding Msizi's resignation to Town Clerk Graham Richards. Residents also pleaded with the Mayor to stop 'defending dead wood councillors'; and SANCO Kwazakele 2 branch secretary Thembekile Jonga went so far as to threaten that there would be a 'second phase' of mass action in January 1998. SANCO qualified its militant statements by stating that it was not fighting the ANC, but 'individuals sabotaging the RDP'; and said that Msizi should 'tell Ward 23 residents whether he was elected by them or by the ANC as he often said it was the ANC which placed him in Council'. They called for his resignation, claiming that he was unwilling to attend and address meetings of Ward 23.

SANCO backed down, however, and despite the criticisms of Msizi he was again selected by the ANC to stand for election as a ward councillor in Kwazakele in 2000 (see Chapters 8 and 10).

### **The schools accommodation crisis**

The education crisis in Kwazakele was another source of continued mobilisation in this period. Since the early 1990s, there had been an urgent shortage of accommodation for scholars in the Kwazakele area. In January 1993, the Aaron Gqadu Higher Primary School was handed over to the people of Kwazakele. It was the last of eleven schools destroyed in the 'unrest' of the 1980s to be rebuilt by the Vusisizwe Trust. The people of Kwazakele looked after the school premises while they were under construction.<sup>46</sup> Despite this renovation of schools destroyed during the State of Emergency, there were simply not enough places for pupils in the schools which were functional and had adequate facilities and committed teachers. Thus every January, the Enkuthazweni Community Centre saw hundreds, sometimes thousands, of pupils queuing up to find places. The DET relied heavily on the assistance of community structures, in particular the local NECC structure, to resolve this crisis in the early 1990s. But by 1995, a year after the new government had come to power, the crisis had not been resolved.

The crisis came to a head in early 1995, when scholars decided to resort to mass action as the only way they knew of to get some official response to their grievances. In June 1995, the conflict around the use of school buildings escalated. Pupils locked out teachers and *toyitoyied*, with a list of demands that included the renovation of schools that had no ceilings and no electricity. They also noted the vandalism of schools as a serious concern.<sup>47</sup> Pupils, parents and teachers marched together, demanding the repair of schools. Pupils occupied an unused school; and were locked out the next day. Then 900 people stormed the education department offices, demanding the keys to the empty school<sup>48</sup> Another protest of over 1000 pupils and teachers at Qaphelani School took place in July, demanding better conditions<sup>49</sup> A conflict

management team led by NECC and former COSAS leader Mncedisi Captain was set up to attend to the school conflict.

It appears that the militant action brought the conditions of Kwazakele schools to the attention of the authorities, and ensured that some action was finally taken to resolve the crisis. A month later, a R 25 million Premier's Community Project was announced, that would benefit five schools in Kwazakele.<sup>50</sup>

The conflict was not yet over, however. Two 'schools' – in reality, the pupils of two different schools, Qaphelani and JK Zondi – were fighting over who could use one of the new buildings that had been built by the Vusisizwe Trust. The conflict between the two groups of scholars became violent, and the SAP ISU intervened to prevent further conflict. Pupils from JK Zondi occupied the new building, while the pupils from Qaphelani school waited for their school to be rebuilt. Pupils at Qaphelani later barred the principal from the school over allegations of financial mismanagement.<sup>51</sup>

In other cases, pupils and teachers did not wait for government to provide education, but took the initiative themselves to ensure that there was schooling for them. At Matodlana Higher Primary, for example, pupils got involved in DIY upgrading.<sup>52</sup> In an even more desperate move, unemployed teachers started their own school in Kwazakele and called it *Masifunde* ('Let us Learn'). This school, which occupied the abandoned building of the old Sakhisizwe Secondary School, had 1 100 pupils.<sup>53</sup> The building was a prefabricated structure that was used initially by pupils from the Masibambane school which was destroyed in the 1985-6 uprising. After Masibambane was accommodated elsewhere, the building was used by the Sakhisizwe Secondary School until it too was accommodated in a new building.<sup>54</sup> The DEC ruled that Masifunde had to close, and the old prefab structure be destroyed. This was opposed by pupils, teachers and parents, who resorted once more to the only method they knew of ensuring that their demands were heeded - mass action. They began by marching to the local DEC manager, and handing in a memorandum. Two weeks later, they sent a delegation to the Department of Education in Bisho. After negotiation, an agreement was

reached by which the Masifunde pupils would be accommodated in other schools. Masifunde was closed, and the prefab structure demolished.<sup>55</sup>

The long-standing activism of teachers, pupils and parents in Kwazakele was not easily abandoned. Teachers aligned with SADTU complained that 'the culture of learning had disappeared' from schools.<sup>56</sup> In another incident, 1 400 pupils at the famous Kwazakele High School walked out of class in protest against the use of corporal punishment, which had been banned two years previously.<sup>57</sup> They thereby demonstrated their awareness of human rights and their willingness to take action to ensure that government policy was implemented. In yet another attempt to hasten development, in 1997 1 200 pupils, teachers and parents *toyi-toyied* to protest the failure to renovate the Ulitha Public School, for which money had been allocated five years previously.<sup>58</sup>

### **The strange use of the burnt-out bottlestore, and other development concerns**

The above examples were not the only issues relating to development and political transformation in Kwazakele during the second half of the 1990s. They are detailed above because of the nature of participation by ordinary residents and grassroots structures in either negotiation, or protest, or both. Other developments were the upgrading of the Wolfson Stadium, co-ordinated by former PEYCO activist and WDC development officer Mpumi Odolo; the building of the controversial new sports complex; the renovation and upgrading of the Kwazakele Police Station; the renovation of the Daku Hall and the building of a new Women's Centre.

The Masakhisizwe Womens Empowerment Trust is currently involved in the development of a major Women's Centre near the Daku Hall. The sod-turning of the R 3.6 million Masakhisizwe Centre took place in May 1999, and by the end of 2000 the building was complete. It contains offices for NGOs and CBOs such as Rape Crisis and the National Association of People with Aids. In addition, the trust aims to empower poor women through giving them skills training so as to become financially independent. The first group of women to



be sent by the Trust for skills training graduated in October 2000. The development of the woman's centre has ostensibly been a democratic process, under the auspices of the Kwazakele Ward 23 Development Forum General Council, and Councillors Benedicta Godolozzi and Nancy Sihlwayi. This Centre is next to the old Daku Hall, which is also in the process of being upgraded by the TLC with a R 2 million grant from the Special Presidential Fund. The upgraded complex – which was due to be finished in July 2000 – contains new offices, a new small hall, and an informal trading area.<sup>59</sup> Another expensive development has been the Lilian Ngoyi Sports Centre, on Mbilini Road next to Tambo Village (see MAP 6).

Yet these developments, perceived by many as positive, are in many ways examples of the continuing dominance of 'old style' development practices. They were built with little consultation or involvement with grassroots structures in the area, and involved massive injections of outside funding from overseas donors or government sources that would make a 'visible impact' in the form of large structures. Whether they will in future involve residents more actively or benefit their lives remains to be seen.

The formal relationship between the ANC and SANCO around development issues takes place mainly through the local Development Forum, which has in effect replaced the RDP Committees established after 1994. The Forum covers the whole of Kwazakele – the ANC Kwazakele 1 and 2 branches – and is the alliance structure where development issues are discussed. It is made up of six representatives, two from each organisation, who are then mandated to take decisions. Thus the ANC sends two representatives, one from each branch; the SACP does the same; and SANCO, which has more than two branches in Kwazakele, decides on its two representatives to the forum. As ANC Kwazakele 1 branch secretary explained,

The local development forum is in fact an alliance structure. The alliance is alive because we discuss development issues.

In addition, there is an active Health and Welfare Forum in Kwazakele which co-ordinates the various bodies with an interest in welfare provision. Despite the existence of these forums, there are still major problems with the system

of welfare grants and old age pensions in Kwazakele; and development initiatives do not seem to be involving the very poorest sections of the population to any degree.

Development efforts initiated by the private sector have not had any greater success. One unsuccessful development has been the Njoli Square Redevelopment Programme. Announced in early 1994, this programme was initiated by civic leaders Mike Ndzotoyi, Thembekile Jonga, Ernest Malgas and SANCO Local Chairman Duma Makanda.<sup>60</sup> It fell through when some informal traders were threatened by the proposed development, and refused to support it. While Njoli Square remains a commercial and transport hub for the township, and has seen some major improvements in terms of road safety, it is still essentially an informal sector business area. Another unsuccessful private sector initiative was the transformation of the Salamntu Road bottlestore into a private hospital.

Salamntu Road, in the Ebesuthwini area (see MAP 6), was the site of the infamous bottle store which was burnt down in 1977 and where seven youth were shot dead in 1986. In the early 1990s, a decision was made by private investors, including a group of medical practitioners in the township, to build a private hospital. The site chosen was the site of the old bottle store. The new St Nelsons Hospital was opened in December 1994. Yet it was a controversial initiative from the start. Its first year of operation kicked off with a demonstration by ANC Kwazakele 2 branch and SANCO members (Ebesuthwini Section), demanding the dismissal of four workers. It was reported that the dispute was 'amicably resolved.'<sup>61</sup> Yet it seemed an unviable venture from the start, as most residents had neither medical aid funds nor the money to afford private treatment.<sup>62</sup> Despite the investment in the facility, it became financially unviable after a few years and the building was rented out to the police. The SAPS crime intelligence service – the 'after runner' of the security police – are now operating from this building, complaining that it is poorly maintained, dirty and with holes in the ceiling.

The other old bottle store site in Kwazakele has been put to more creative, though also controversial, use. On the corner of Matomela Road and Stofile

Street is the site of another bottle store, attacked first in 1976 and again destroyed in 1986. This is now the site of the PE Community Development Trust centre. Here, the Ex-Political Prisoners Trust runs a coffin-making project. Despite extensive funding from the Swedish government, the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape, and the Western District Council, the project is not functioning at present. State-of-the-art carpentry equipment was purchased, and the fourteen members of the project were given training at Emthonjeni Training Centre; yet they were laid off early in 2000. Apparently the project has collapsed due to conflict over management styles and accusations of misuse of funds. The AGM, which was meant to resolve the problems, was postponed in 1999 and has not happened since. The same centre also contains a private doctors's surgery, and women's sewing co-operative which makes choir uniforms which are sold on contract to schools and churches.

Another issue that has concerned residents of Kwazakele is the role of the police, transformed after 1994 from the South African Police into the South African Police Service (SAPS). Some of the complaints levelled against the police in the 'interregnum period' have been dealt with in Chapter 5. In the period after 1994, relationships between the SAPS and residents of Kwazakele improved considerably. It is clear that the police have a tough job in Kwazakele, facing not only the struggle to transform themselves from a body perceived by most residents as 'the enemy', but a lack of personnel and resources. There are not enough policemen to patrol Kwazakele, and only four vehicles for the whole township.<sup>63</sup> When crime escalated in the early 1990s, there was a concerted effort by the SAPS, including a three-week 'crime hunt' in August 1995, to contain the situation. At the same time, the ANC Kwazakele 1 branch discussed the 'escalating crime wave', and the ANC branches ran a fairly far-reaching anti-crime campaign. These separate initiatives, combined with the formation of the Community Police Forum that co-ordinated the actions of community organisations with the SAPS, resulted in a significant drop in the crime rate.<sup>64</sup> However, there were still problems within the police service. Towards the end of that year there was a crisis at the Kwazakele police station, with members of POPCRU refusing to speak

Afrikaans and claiming that the command structures were racist.<sup>65</sup> Crime also continued to pose problems for the implementation of development projects, and in 1998 the ANC had to come out publicly and condemn attacks on construction companies engaged in development projects in Kwazakele. The 'worst hit area' was around Vuku Street/Emagaleni, where many contractors were engaged in the upgrade process. The 'Broad Forum' met to discuss the problem jointly with the SAPS and the ACCs.<sup>66</sup> The ACC continues to deploy civic 'guards' to protect municipal officials, wherever in Kwazakele they are working.<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately, the rise in violent crime in Port Elizabeth over the past year has impacted severely on Kwazakele. While the SAPS are now considered legitimate, they are ineffective and under resourced. Residents have thus resorted to 'mob justice' on a number of recent occasions. It can be argued that if grassroots anti-crime structures had been maintained, given proper training and built a working relationship with the police, people would be in a better position to deal with criminals without 'taking the law into their own hands.' This is just one example of the necessity for an effective partnership between the state and civil society.

### ***Grassroots development initiatives***

The need for a 'vibrant' or 'strong', autonomous or independent civil society in development is not generally contested in South Africa. It can, however, be interpreted in different ways. Fitzgerald, for example, argues that 'this autonomy of civil society ...need not exclude joint state/civil society initiatives freely entered into' (Fitzgerald 1991: 105). Similar arguments put forward by SACP leader Jeremy Cronin, and by development activist Devan Pillay, assert that it is possible for civil society to both pressurise the state and work together with the state towards developmental ends. In practice, joint state-civil society initiatives in Kwazakele in this period – which should have been an optimum time for such initiatives - were few and far between. Residents were not usually empowered through development projects; more often, residents engaged in actions to put pressure on the state to 'deliver'. Such pressure was sometimes supportive, but more often oppositional.

What becomes clear in a study of the period of transition in Kwazakele is that people were still prepared to engage in a variety of forms of action to apply pressure to the relevant authorities or political representatives to meet their development needs. Whether organised under the banner of SANCO, or just a local interest group such as the pupils of a school or the residents of an informal settlement, residents of Kwazakele had not, in the second half of the 1990s, been 'demobilised' by the advent of representative democracy. While participating actively in electoral politics, they also remained active in civil society, especially where it related to material issues of development and education.

Moreover, in contrast to these 'top down' infrastructural development initiatives, are the many localised, 'grassroots' development initiatives by residents. Often not linked to either SANCO or the ANC, they involve groups of women in projects such as cleaning up litter, or baking bread rolls for sale on the street. There have been a number of local-level initiatives reflecting the involvement of residents – women in particular – in sustainable development projects. Many of these projects reflect the tension between the need for local initiative to control development, and demand for the local government to provide resources or fulfil its commitment to service provision itself. Local women's groups involved in 'clean up' work, for example, have demanded payment from the council for doing a job that the council workers should be doing. One such initiative is the Solomzi Women's Clean Up Project, which involves 300 women engaged in regular picking up of rubbish in the streets of Ward 27.<sup>68</sup> Another is the Vulindlela<sup>69</sup> Project, which consists of about forty women who are 'churchgoers or immediate neighbours' involved in cleaning up the wetlands area along Mahambehlala and Kuzwayo streets. They have been given gloves and plastic bags by the municipality, but their work is entirely voluntary.<sup>70</sup> Other 'clean up' projects involved the ANC Womens League in conducting a clean-up of the notoriously filthy Kwazakele Cemetery in Ward 22.<sup>71</sup> This was continued by the Masakhisizwe Womens Empowerment Trust in the form of the Masicoco<sup>72</sup> Project.

Among other community projects which fall under the broad category of 'sustainable development' is the 'Greening of Kwazakele' project implemented by the Community Environment Network. This programme, which employs local youth, had by 1998 created five parks, planted numerous trees in public places, and engaged in self-employment projects such as food-gardening created. In addition, the Community Food Garden Project was launched in Kwazakele in August 1998, by the Kwazakele Health and Welfare Forum.

A more ambitious long-term plan for Wards 21 and 22, initiated by Councillors Kani and Khayingo, is to convert 'East End Lake' into a tourist attraction and bird sanctuary. At present this area (see MAP 2) is home to thousands of shackdwellers. These informal settlements, along the railway fence on the banks of the polluted lake, near the old Swartkops power station, are poorly organised and house some of the most acute poverty in Kwazakele.<sup>73</sup> It will be interesting to see whether anything comes of this idea, in particular with SANCO's entering the terrain of sustainable development. As any such development will of necessity involve the relocation of residents of the informal settlement, it will bring into sharp relief the conflict of interests between the desperate need for living space, and development based on ecotourism and environmental sustainability.

Other initiatives by women involve the establishment of sewing co-operatives or co-operatives that make and sell edible goods on the street. Some support is provided for such initiatives – for example, the Zikhuliseni Skills Training Centre in Enkuthazweni reported that it was setting up sewing classes in 1998. However, many such initiatives seem unable to access public funds or resources; they are initiatives taken by extremely poor people whose need for employment or self-employment is desperate. Such initiatives show the creativity of Kwazakele residents in responding themselves – without any outside development agency or government assistance – to try and meet their own needs.

Dorothy Vumazonke was involved in one such initiative. She and a group of neighbours established a women's co-operative which baked *rostle koek*<sup>74</sup> on paraffin tins cut in half, and sold them to commuters at taxi-ranks. She

explains how this co-operative, *Siyaphambili*<sup>75</sup> Women's Association, was formed:

The project was formed out of nothing, we had nothing on top of the other. One of the ladies requested the school principal to tell children at school that all women who are not working are called to come to the Pentecostal Church. They were given the date and time. They came out like pouring rain. She raised the idea that people are not working. She asked us 'Who can think of something that we can do?' People said many different things, like sewing, knitting, carpet cleaning, selling of fruit and veg, beadwork, flower arranging.

Some of us wanted the Association, others were individuals. We wanted the project which needs the Association because most of us were not working, and we were tired of watching the sun in the early morning until it sets in the evening. Someone came up with an idea of bread, which is needed by everybody. But we had not even a brass penny.

The next meeting was held, one of the members brought fruit – apples and pears – they were sold at R1 each in order to raise the funds. Each and everyone had to bring 2/5 flour so that we could make rostle koek with the money, we raised by selling fruit we bought a Primus stove, paraffin, and spirits, and we borrowed the other things like bowls to knead flour.

We divided ourselves into groups, others had to knead flour, others had to bake rostle koeks, other had to sell them. The Committee was elected, Chairlady and Vice Treasurer and Secretary. We decided that we should make the joining fee of R 25. Some paid, others left. We made R 1 000 in the Bank in October and November 1998. We closed from December to January 1999, and opened on February 1 1999, but by January we were only a few.

I am very much proud of *Siyaphambili*, and wish to go forward up to the sky with it. Our aim is to make a bakery. If we had wings to fly, like a good sponsorship, we could fly above the sky. We as members of the project must respect each other. We always pray every time we meet, because without God nothing can be successful.

According to the rule, if a person does not come to the project for three months without any report, she will be expelled. She has no right to demand any joining fee or anything.

Our aim as *Siyaphambili* Womens Association, as I've written above, is to make a bakery, if we had equipment and accommodation.

We want to promote self development among women

We want to enable women to participate in the transformation of society

We want to assist women to heal themselves in order to heal their families and society

We want to create a culture of respect and tolerance

We want to end corruption, in order to play a meaningful role.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kwazakele Survey 3. 45-year-old male resident of the Kwazakele single men's quarters, May 1995.

<sup>2</sup> The Tripartite Alliance was formed between the ANC, the SACP and COSATU. The SACP agreed that as an ally of the ANC it would not contest elections separately, but would ensure that some of its members were among the ANC candidates to be elected to government. COSATU, as a trade union federation, entered the alliance with the idea that the best interests of the working class would be served by COSATU ensuring that its leaders were represented in government. This alliance came increasingly into tension with the ANC as the decade progressed. See Ginsburg and Webster (1995) and Adler and Webster (2000) among others for further discussion of the relationship between COSATU and the government. SANCO was not officially part of the alliance but it became known as the 'tripartite plus one' alliance, with SANCO considered in effect to be the 'fourth leg' of the alliance.

<sup>3</sup> Kwazakele Survey 3 was conducted in May and June 1995. The respondents were interviewed by a resident of the area, and were randomly selected across a broad geographic distribution of street, roughly evenly covering the whole township (see Map in Appendix). The first pilot group of ten residents were interviewed between 9 and 18 May, just over a year after the first democratic election (27 April 1994) and the inauguration of the new State President (10 May 1994). The survey was then clarified slightly and revised, and a further fifty residents were interviewed between 24 May and 23 June 1995. Two interviews were discarded; a total of 58 (including the pilot ten) were found to be valid. Statistics are based on percentages of 58 unless otherwise stated.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Swartkops Valley is the middle-class section of the new sprawling township of Motherwell (see MAP 3). See also the pamphlet 'Port Elizabeth TLC: Housing Action Month, May-June 1998'

<sup>5</sup> *EP Herald* 10/5/93



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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the area on MAP 3 known as the Railway Reserve or RaRa. From aerial photographs it is clear that this strip of land, which officially has no housing on it, is densely settled with shacks.

<sup>7</sup> The information for this section comes from three sources: The files of the *Eastern Province Herald* and *Evening Post* newspapers, files entitled 'Kwazakele'; an interview with TLC Ward Councillor Mbuyiselo Madaka in November 1999; and a visit to Matthew Goniwe village in July 2000 with Kwazakele resident 'Shooter' Mkongi. We visited a few of the hostels in the process of upgrading to family units, and some of the new houses in the area known as 'France', and spoke to some of the residents about their views of the upgrading process.

<sup>8</sup> *EP Herald* 23/4/92. The Freedom Charter was a document drawn up by the ANC-led Congress Alliance, adopted at the Congress of the People in Kliptown in 1955. It contained a beautifully-written list of demands for basic human and democratic rights for all South Africans. The phrase referred to here is 'There shall be houses, security and comfort.' For more information, see Cronin and Suttner, *Thirty Years of the Freedom Charter*.

<sup>9</sup> *EP Herald* 27/3/92 and 23/4/92

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid* 23/4/92

<sup>11</sup> *EP Herald* 25/7/92

<sup>12</sup> *EP Herald* 22/10/92

<sup>13</sup> *EP Herald* 23/10/92 and 27/10/92

<sup>14</sup> *EP Herald* 31/10/92

<sup>15</sup> *EP Herald* 2/12/92

<sup>16</sup> *EP Herald* 21/1/93 and 25/1/93

<sup>17</sup> *EP Herald* 9/2/93

<sup>18</sup> *EP Herald* 19/9/94

<sup>19</sup> *EP Herald* 26/1/96

<sup>20</sup> *EP Herald* 31/10/96

<sup>21</sup> *EP Herald* 10/12/97; see also 14/2/97.

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<sup>22</sup> *EP Herald* 24/10/97 and 27/10/97

<sup>23</sup> *EP Herald* 29/10/97

<sup>24</sup> *EP Herald* 23/3/98

<sup>25</sup> *EP Herald* 2/4/98

<sup>26</sup> *EP Herald* 9/7/98

<sup>27</sup> Information from discussions with residents, July 2000.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Glen Goosen, former chairman of the TLC executive, and *EP Herald* 16/2/95

<sup>29</sup> Masakhane means 'let us build together', and was the slogan adopted by the national campaign to change the 'culture of non-payment' for municipal rent and services which had led many local authorities into bankruptcy by 1994.

<sup>30</sup> *EP Herald* 21/7/95 and 22/7/95

<sup>31</sup> *Evening Post* 18/7/95

<sup>32</sup> *EP Herald* 21/7/95 and 22/7/95

<sup>33</sup> *Evening Post* 31/8/95

<sup>34</sup> *EP Herald* 20/9/95

<sup>35</sup> *EP Herald* 6/2/96

<sup>36</sup> Bloemendal is a new low-cost housing area in the Northern Suburbs of Port Elizabeth.

<sup>37</sup> *EP Herald* 22/2/96; 21/3/96; 4/3/97; 15/4/97; 12/8/97.

<sup>38</sup> *Evening Post* 9/4/97

<sup>39</sup> *EP Herald* 22/10/97

<sup>40</sup> *EP Herald* 19/10/98

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Monwabisi Gomomo, 28 October 1999.

<sup>42</sup> *Evening Post* 2/10/97

<sup>43</sup> *Evening Post* 16/10/97

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<sup>44</sup> *EP Herald* 4/1/95 and 5/1/95

<sup>45</sup> *Evening Post* 9/4/97

<sup>46</sup> *EP Herald* 16/1/93

<sup>47</sup> *EP Herald* 15/6/95 and 21/6/95

<sup>48</sup> *EP Herald* 22/6/95 and 28/6/95

<sup>49</sup> *EP Herald* 26/7/95

<sup>50</sup> *EP Herald* 3/8/95

<sup>51</sup> *EP Herald* 8/8/95 and 22/3/96

<sup>52</sup> *EP Herald* 28/9/95

<sup>53</sup> *EP Herald* 25/3/96

<sup>54</sup> *EP Herald* 31/5/96

<sup>55</sup> *EP Herald* 6/5/96 and 14/5/96

<sup>56</sup> *EP Herald* 10/6/96

<sup>57</sup> *EP Herald* 13/3/97

<sup>58</sup> *EP Herald* 29/8/97

<sup>59</sup> *EP Herald* 26/10/00

<sup>60</sup> *EP Herald* 30/3/94

<sup>61</sup> *EP Herald* 19/1/95

<sup>62</sup> This is corroborated by Von der Marwitz's 1999 study of health status of Kwazakele households, in which fewer than 10% of households had a medical aid, and the vast majority made use of the local clinic for all their health needs. See Von der Marwitz, 1999, p 16.

<sup>63</sup> *Evening Post* 2/2/95

<sup>64</sup> *EP Herald* 11/8/95

<sup>65</sup> *EP Herald* 24/10/95 and 3/1/95

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<sup>66</sup> *EP Herald* 3/3/98

<sup>67</sup> I met some of these 'community guards' when visiting Kwazakele with Shooter Mkongi July 2000. They were former PEYCO comrades, now members of an Anti Crime Unit, and they were tasked with guarding the car of developers putting up electricity substation next to Matomela Road centre.

<sup>68</sup> This initiative is led by a dynamic woman named Pauline Pike. See *EP Herald* 9/6/99 and 25/8/99.

<sup>69</sup> Vulindlela means 'open the way' in Xhosa

<sup>70</sup> This initiative is led by another dynamic woman named Xoliswa Dwane. The project began in January 1999 and is still in progress at the end of 2000. Nature conservation is providing information on recycling rubbish. See Debbie Derry, 'The Green Team' in *La Femme*, supplement to the *EP Herald*, 25/10/2000.

<sup>71</sup> *EP Herald* 15/11/96.

<sup>72</sup> Masicoce means 'Let us clean' in Xhosa

<sup>73</sup> This was reported in the *EP Herald* of 1/10/98. However, when I visited the area in July 2000, there was no sign of the shacks having moved or the area having been cleaned up in any way.

<sup>74</sup> *Rostle koek* is a variation of the Afrikaans term *rosterbrood* which describes bread rolls made of a simple dough and cooked on hot coals.

<sup>75</sup> *Siyaphambili* means 'We are going forward' in Xhosa

<sup>76</sup> Document written by Dorothy Vumazonke and members of the Siyaphambili Womens Association in 1999.

## **Chapter 8: Democracy at Local Level – the Local Government Elections of 1995**

Constitutional Court Judge Albie Sachs wrote (1990:188-9) that

Thousands of community organisations were established throughout the country with a view to creating democracy at the grassroots level. A great deal of experience was gained during this period, a great part of it positive, some of it negative. It has all been discussed, theorised about, argued over. People are more aware than before of the immense possibilities and also the dangers of exercising power at the local level.

From the time of the introduction of the Black Local Authorities Act in 1983, the debate around democratic local government began to be waged within urban African communities. In fact, the debate had begun some decades before, when the ANC put up candidates for election to the Native Advisory Boards in townships such as New Brighton in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>1</sup> The implementation of apartheid policy from 1948 meant that the space for participation in local government structures was effectively closed off to African citizens; this was the case with Kwazakele, which was built in 1956. Townships were administered by white government officials, usually in either an authoritarian or a paternalistic manner.<sup>2</sup> Thus during the 1976-7 protests, the BAAB offices, municipal policemen and income-generating institutions such as bottle-stores, became the focus of community anger – as seen in Kwazakele in earlier chapters.

In the early 1980s, at least partially in response to the crisis of 1976, the government of PW Botha began to implement a far-reaching reform programme. At the core of this programme was the acknowledgement that at least some African people were permanent residents of urban areas outside the 'homelands'. These Africans would need, in addition to limited property rights and the right to have their families living with them, some form of representation at local government level. Full political citizenship was not contemplated, however, and the meagre sop that was offered was the creation of elected Black Local Authorities. The existing Community Councils

were reconstituted as BLAs in terms of the new legislation, and elections were held in late 1983. These councils had little legitimacy, but protest at the time of their election was muted – partly because they were seen as having little real power to affect people's lives; partly because organisation was still in a preliminary stage in many townships.<sup>3</sup> However, the formation of the UDF in late 1983 highlighted the need to co-ordinate protests against both the constitutional proposals providing for a tricameral national parliament which excluded the African majority, as well as the trio of laws which directly affected Africans: the Black Local Authorities Act of 1982, as well as the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons bill, and the Black Community Development bill. In this way, the illegitimacy of local government structures and their inability to address people's needs became the focal point of the period of revolt of the mid-1980s.

It was in 1984, after the elections to the tricameral parliament, that dissatisfaction with the BLAs began to surface. As is well known, it began in September 1984 in the Vaal Triangle township of Sebokeng, in protests against the local council's implementation of rent increases. In Port Elizabeth, the townships of New Brighton, Kwazakele and Zwide had been pushed together under the local authority which was known first as the *Kayamandi* Town Council, and which later became the *Ibhayi* Council.<sup>4</sup> Conflict between residents of these townships and the Ibhayi Council began in 1984, as detailed in Chapter 4 above. The focus was not on rent increases, but on the misuse of power by certain councillors in controlling access to housing. In KwaNobuhle, Uitenhage, the focus of anger was the councillors' control of keys to the community hall. The similarity in all cases was that the local authorities were not perceived as legitimate, that they had control over resources which made a difference to people's everyday lives, and they used this power in an undemocratic or corrupt way. There was thus a very real sense in which people were challenging undemocratic and unaccountable government at local level.

This challenge resulted in the demise of most of the BLAs in the Eastern Cape as councillors either resigned or were physically attacked and chased

out of the townships. The councils were reinstated in 1988, after the government had brought protest under control through four years of 'emergency rule'. Services began to be administered in Kwazakele again in 1988; schools began to be rebuilt, and infrastructure, such as the post office, became functional again. Yet the period of challenge to the local authorities had raised many questions about the desired form of local government. The experience of exercising power at local level, yet not having the resources to effect material changes in people's lives, gave civic activists a taste of the problems of local government. The consumer boycotts of the mid-1980s, which resulted in the beginnings of negotiation between various parties at local level, pushed this debate further. From 1989, the creation of democratic local government structures became the goal of many activists in urban townships, including Kwazakele.

### ***Local government negotiations in Port Elizabeth***

From 1989, as the balance of power shifted at national level, players at the local level in Port Elizabeth began to engage in discussions about the future of local government. As PEBCO, then PEPCO, then SANCO revived and re-established structures in the townships, they began to take the lead in negotiations with the PEM over the provision of services, in particular the electrification of Kwazakele. During the 'interregnum' period, PEPCO was recognised as the *de facto* leadership of the township, in terms of their legitimacy and ability to control the implementation of local government programmes at grassroots level. Thus PEPCO leadership was able to call on the *amabutho* to leave municipal officials alone, to ensure that the delivery of services was not interrupted by violence or harassment. As the relationship with the police and municipal officials improved, the role of PEPCO became more pro-active: setting up community policing forums, allocating youth to 'guard' electricity installations so that vandalism or theft could be prevented; even acting as 'gatekeepers' in the appointment of engineering firms to fulfil development contracts, as seen in the case of the Kwazakele hostel.

In 1992, when PEPCO activists occupied the Ibhayi offices in a lengthy sit-in demanding the transformation of local government, Ibhayi council officials had already ceased to have any real control over the transition at local government level. Ibhayi had no councillors by that stage; moreover, they were in financial crisis, unable to pay their debts, and their functions had been taken over by the CPA. SANCO leaders then 'moved in' on the CPA when it took over from Ibhayi, and a strong relationship was built up between particular individuals. Agreements were reached over the provision of electricity and the delivery of services. When the PEM took over the provision of services to the townships from the CPA, some SANCO leaders then made their political 'base' in the WDC, which covered the administration of rural areas outside of the municipality's jurisdiction. They maintained a powerful position in the negotiating forum initially, however.

PEM and the CPA effectively agreed to bypass the official authorities in the African townships of Port Elizabeth, dealing directly with SANCO or the ANC. They accepted, although not officially, that the Ibhayi administration was illegitimate and unable to respond adequately to people's needs. Moreover, neither Ibhayi nor PEM or CPA officials and workers could engage in any practical work in the township without the approval of the civic and political structures.

It was in this period of 'interregnum', when there was in reality no local authority for Kwazakele (or the other Ibhayi townships), and the PEM had taken over the provision of services while the ANC and SANCO controlled the process, that great improvements were seen by residents. The ANC-SANCO team of negotiators, headed by Kwazakele activists Mike Xego of the ANC and Mike Ndzotoyi of SANCO, gained enormous respect from their former adversaries as well as great popularity among their own support base. The provision of electricity, as detailed in Chapter 5, was probably the single biggest infrastructural development in the township in thirty years, leading to the greatest change in the lives of ordinary people.

In addition to the provision of services, negotiations around the nature of a new, democratic municipal council could now begin. PEBCO had, since its



inception in 1979, held to the slogan of 'One City, One Municipality', and it was this concept of a single, non-racial council with a single tax-base that guided the negotiations. SANCO, however, lost the initiative in this process as the ANC, drawing on more extensive political resources, took the lead in negotiations. After a lengthy process of delicate negotiation and compromise, Port Elizabeth ended up being the first city in South Africa to put into place a transitional non-racial local council. The Transition Local Council was made up of fifty councillors from the statutory sector, and fifty from the non-statutory sector. The 'non-statutory councillors' were delegated from the tripartite alliance forum, and included SANCO and ANC members. This TLC, with an executive dominated by the ANC, effectively governed Port Elizabeth from its inception in early 1994 until the elections to the Transitional Local Council took place nation-wide on 1 November 1995.<sup>5</sup>

The TLC councillors from townships, who had no previous experience of local government in the formal sense, were given training through programmes run by IDASA and by the PE Technikon Public Administration department. These courses explained various democratic procedures, the functions of local government, and the structures and workings of the various administrative departments that made up the PEM.<sup>6</sup>

### ***The 1995 local government elections in Kwazakele***

From early in 1995, the ANC began preparing its supporters in Kwazakele for the local government elections. In March, the ANC branch engaged in a registration campaign where a particular emphasis was placed on encouraging women to register. The Kwazakele ANC branches also undertook voter education around the nature of the new local government and the election process.<sup>7</sup>

### **Election results for Port Elizabeth**

The elections were held on 1 November 1995 as part of the 'first round' of elections under the Local Government Transition Act of 1993. The Act provided for a mixture of first-past-the-post elections of ward representatives,

and proportional representation of political party representatives. This form of electoral system was designed to accommodate racial minorities and ensure that at local government level the ANC did not completely dominate government. Thus for the Port Elizabeth TLC, a total of 55 councillors were elected in 1995. There were 34 ward representatives, and 21 councillors representing parties on a proportional representation basis. The wards were worked out on the basis of the 1994 census and enumerated areas for the general election, with a number of voting districts being put together to form the TLC wards.<sup>8</sup> As expected, the local government elections were dominated by the ANC, which won all the ward seats in the wards containing the African townships, and 97.5% of the PR vote in the township wards. Six ward councillors and one PR councillor, all from the ANC, represented Kwazakele in the Council.

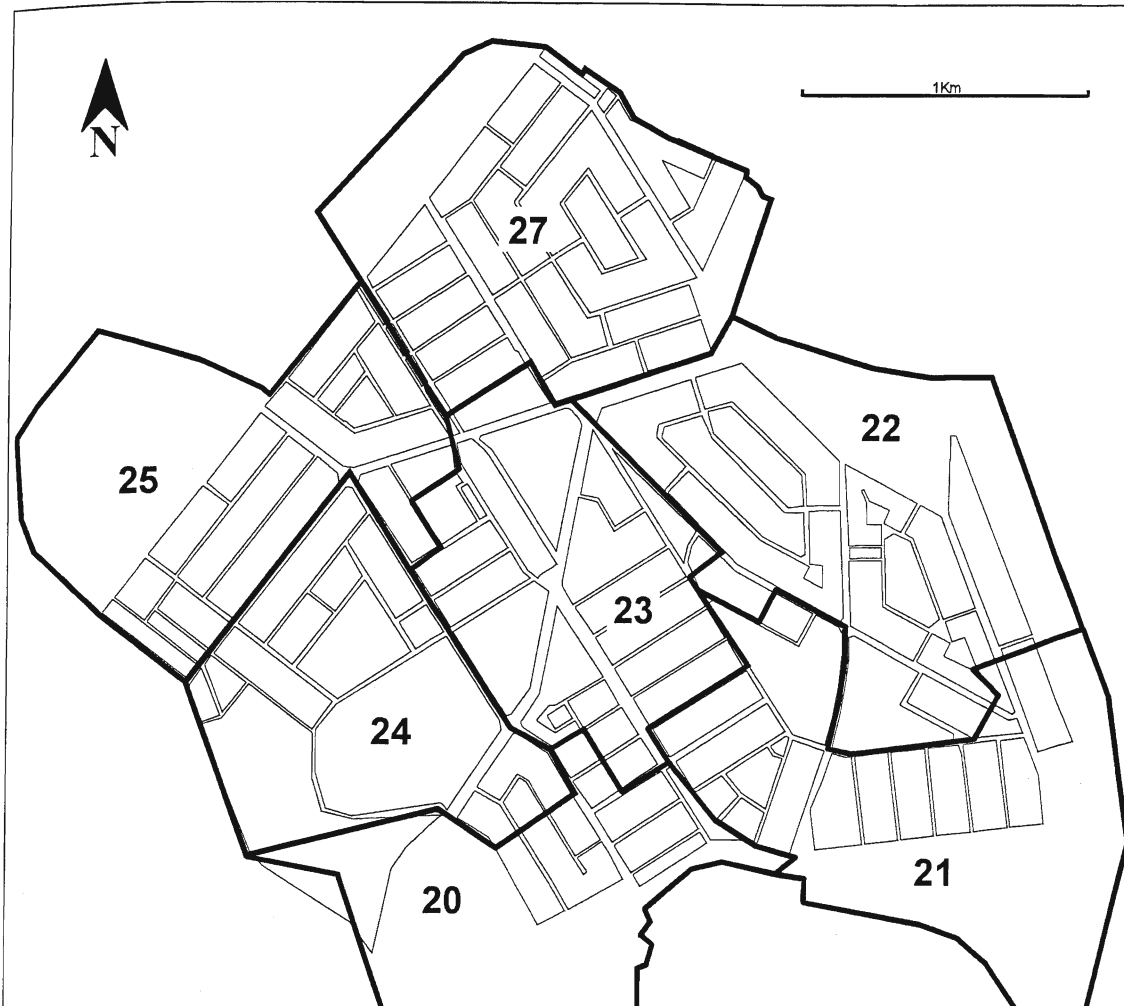
In Kwazakele, what was interesting about the elections was not the opposition from other parties, but the contestation within the ANC over who was to be put forward as a local government representative. In a number of wards in both the Northern Areas (the 'coloured' residential areas of PE) and the African townships, independent candidates were put forward for election against the official ANC candidates. This meant that the ANC vote was split, resulting in an NP victory in four Northern Areas wards. In Ward 30, which covered the township areas of KwaDwesi and Veeplaas, the independent ANC candidate, NM Boyce, won the seat against the official ANC candidate D Lamani. These independent candidates were in some cases SANCO activists who felt excluded from the ANC selection process, as a result of the tensions described in previous chapters.

### **Election results and electoral politics in Kwazakele**

I voted (in the local government elections) because I think my vote is my community's voice. That I can complain about bad services and corruption is not enough. By voting we are putting people in charge whom we can control and hold accountable.<sup>9</sup>

Kwazakele is divided into a number of different wards, some of which overlap with parts of the adjacent townships of New Brighton and Zwide. Here the old

ward boundaries, as used for elections to the TLC in November 1995, are used. In Ward 20, which falls mainly within New Brighton but includes a corner of the top section of Kwazakele, ANC candidate Bandile Ngoqo was elected unopposed. Ward 21, which falls partly in New Brighton, partly in Kwazakele, saw ANC candidate Harry Kani winning the seat with an overwhelming 98.5% of the vote. Kani is an ANC veteran and Port Elizabeth civic activist of long standing. In Ward 22, the Eastern side of Kwazakele, another ANC veteran Wilson Khayingo won with 80% of the vote. Khayingo appealed to residents to 'play a role' in development projects, and in the spirit of the RDP he advised that 'People should come up with plans and initiate self-help projects so that they can be assisted.'<sup>10</sup> However, for those who did try to initiate such projects, as detailed in the previous chapter, it proved difficult to obtain the promised assistance. In Ward 23, which is the centre of Kwazakele, the ANC's Mcebisi Msizi won the seat with an even more resounding 99% of the vote. Ward 25, which also includes part of Zwide and most of the Emagaleni area saw Eric Monwabisi Myoli gaining an overwhelming victory with 99.7% of the vote. June Johnson, the PAC candidate, won just 26 votes out of 7597 cast. Ward 27, which falls mostly within Kwazakele but also includes a 'corner' of Zwide, is closest to the power station and the informal settlements along the river banks. ANC candidate Andile Yawa won 75% of the vote, but was redeployed to the provincial government in Bisho shortly thereafter, and was replaced by Mawethu Poni. Mrs Benedicta Godolozzi, another long-standing activist from the area, was elected as one of the ANC's candidates on the PR list, and designated as representing Kwazakele in the council as well.



**Map 7. Old ward boundaries (1995)**

These ward boundaries changed with the implementation of the new demarcations in preparation for the December 2000 municipal elections and the creation of the Nelson Mandela Metropole. Ward 27 became Ward 24, which includes part of Soweto-on Sea. Ward 25 covers the Tonjeni Road border between Zwide and Kwazakele, but includes a slightly different part of the Emagaleni area, with Njoli going into Ward 22 which is now the centre of Kwazakele. Ward 20, which includes Matthew Goniwe Village, takes over most of the old Ward 24. A small part of the old Ward 22 becomes part of the new Ward 24.



**Map 8. New ward boundaries (2000)**

The most interesting Ward in Kwazakele in relation to local government elections was old Ward 24 (now Ward 20). This Ward included three areas: The Matthew Goniwe Village area, including the KwaNdokwenza hostel; the Vuku street area (along Njoli road above the hostel), and the Emagaleni housing area (from Daku to Njoli, below Struanway). There is very little other available space, so housing development is limited. Despite this being one of the most strongly organised ANC areas, this Ward has also been the site of the most controversy and opposition to certain ANC leaders. Perhaps this is not a contradiction, but rather reflects a healthy level of democratic contestation – where politically active residents are able to articulate their demands and oppose decisions by ANC leadership which they perceive as not being in their interests.

Mnyamezeli Jeremiah Sulelo, the official ANC candidate, won the 1995 ward election with just 62% of the vote – a significantly lower margin than any of the

other ANC candidates. This was not because of opposition to the ANC, however, but rather opposition within the alliance and division within the community of Matthew Goniwe Village. Sulelo, a prominent SANCO activist, was selected as the ANC representative but was perceived by some residents as not being 'from their area' as he was from the Ebesuthwini area. More significant than Sulelo's background, however, was that this electoral conflict took place in the context of the conflict around the development of the KwaNdokwenza hostel, as outlined in Chapter 7. Mncedisi Lushaba, the 'independent' candidate, received 33% of the vote, indicating a substantial level of support for him from a particular segment of the hostel community, based on his campaigns to upgrade the hostel. The ANC tried to counter his influence by organising motorcades to drive around the hostel to convince people to vote for Sulelo. The conflict around the hostel did not end with the 1995 election, however.

In January 1997, Sulelo was appointed as Regional Director of Local Government and Housing. In line with SANCO policy, he resigned from his position as Councillor, and was replaced by Mbuyiselo Madaka. Madaka came back from a long period in exile after 1990, his brother Topsy having been assassinated in 1982 with COSAS activist Siphiso Mtimkulu. Madaka served as (unelected) TLC councillor for Kwazakele 2 in the 1994-5 period, until the 1995 local government elections. He had bought a house in town, and his selection as a councillor by the ANC was seen by some residents as a 'top-down' decision to provide political positions for loyal comrades, rather than representatives who were accountable to a particular constituency. Some residents claimed that at the ANC meeting in 1997 where the choice of replacement was made, those who favoured SANCO leader Mike Ndzotoyi's selection over that of Madaka were 'ignored' or 'had their names deleted from the voting list' or were 'locked out of the hall'.<sup>11</sup> Madaka was put in the invidious position of having to take over the messy hostel upgrade process, and his role as councillor for this ward was thus inevitably controversial, as seen in the previous chapter.

## **The 1995 election survey in Kwazakele**

The third survey of Kwazakele residents was conducted during November 1995, in the month after the local government elections. The survey was designed to understand levels of political participation of residents in two respects. Firstly, it examined their participation in, understanding of, and expectations of, the new local government. Secondly, it asked questions about their continued participation in, and understanding of, organs of 'civil society' at local level – primarily civic organisations and their grassroots structures such as street and area committees.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Participation in 'formal' politics at local level***

The presence of political parties in Kwazakele – or rather, residents' awareness of their presence – had not changed significantly between 1994 and the end of 1995. Thus the ANC, PAC and AZAPO were the only three political parties to be seen to be active in the area. Nearly 94% claimed membership of a political party, with 87% supporting the ANC and a significant minority of 11% supporting the PAC. While this is an overrepresentation of PAC membership, as election results showed that the PAC candidates received only a handful of votes, it does reflect the influence of the PAC as a 'significant minority voice' in Kwazakele. This became significant in the 1999 elections, when the UDM began to attract support in the area, sometimes drawing on PAC activists (see chapter 9). These residents of Kwazakele claimed that they were not merely passive supporters of political leaders. In addition to being members of political parties, and voting in national and local government elections, fully 45% said they participated in political party activities such as campaigns and marches, and 72% claimed to attend meetings of their chosen party.

In terms of the election process itself, the survey indicated that there were more logistical problems experienced than in the national government elections. Thus while 85% of respondents did vote, the reasons given by the 15% who didn't were related mainly to logistical problems. Three respondents mentioned insufficient ballot papers, and one that her 'name did not appear on

the computer'. One respondent did not have an ID document, and two chose not to vote – one because s/he was a PAC supporter, the other because s/he was not aligned to any party and did not know who to vote for.

While the level of participation in the local elections was high in Kwazakele, with 85% of the sample voting, this was unsurprising, as it was consistent with the national government elections and with the generally high level of political participation in Kwazakele as indicated in previous surveys<sup>13</sup>. While unsurprising, this high level of participation in a local government election is in sharp contrast to the usually low voter turnout in council elections in the non-African residential areas of the city. One Kwazakele resident – a taxi driver who was also a member of SANCO - explained how he saw the local government elections as part of the transition to democracy in South Africa:

I am a peace loving person and hence South Africa is changing so there was a need for me to participate in voting in order to bring the government closer to the people and have a better life in our communities<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps more interesting than the high level of participation was that a much higher number of people experienced logistical problems with these elections than with the national elections of 1994. Nearly 25% of the sample experienced some or other problem in voting; this statistic includes those who did not vote because of problems, as well as those who did vote but experienced difficulties in doing so. The problems mentioned were related mainly to ID documents, or to their being no voters' role or insufficient materials at the polling stations. Other problems experienced by a few voters were reading the ballot paper (both of the respondents who mentioned this had only primary school education); and a lack of information about candidates. However, these problems were not generally indicative of ignorance about the voting process itself, as the number of spoilt ballots was not particularly high.<sup>15</sup>

The survey also made clear that most of the respondents had some knowledge of the candidates in their area. In the areas that were more hotly contested, with either opposition candidates from other parties, or 'independent' ANC candidates, such as in Sulelo and Myoli's wards,



respondents knew the names of the opposition candidates as well as the candidates they voted for. It was also clear from the survey that most residents understood the new local government electoral system, or at least had had it explained to them prior to the election, so that they understood the distinction between ward candidates and proportional representation seats.

When asked if the new Council would represent their interests, all except two respondents replied in the affirmative, indicating a high level of legitimacy for the elected TLC. Even more significantly, all respondents replied in the affirmative to a question asking whether the new TLC was democratic. When asked why they thought so, there were two main groups of responses. Firstly, there were those who referred to the end of apartheid, separate amenities and racism in general, and to the formation of a single, non-racial municipal council. This group, which constituted nearly half of respondents, said things such as 'There is no racism, we are all equal', 'We share things together now' and 'We enter now in the places where they allow whites only.' One critical respondent felt that there was still racism, although the council was 'marked as democratic'. Another, smaller group (just under 30%) felt that the new council was democratic because it had received a mandate through the electoral process. This was reflected in comments such as 'It was elected in an open process' and 'Because we were free to vote for the person we like, we think is best'. Other responses indicated an appreciation of an inclusive democracy in which all could participate, and where 'ordinary people' could have a say: 'At least you can give your advice freely' and 'Blacks and women are participating' indicated such views.

To the question of whether local government is more or less important than national government, the majority (57%) said that local government is as important as national government. Some respondents added that the two levels of government are interdependent, and that one cannot function properly without the other. Those who said that local government was more important, and those who said it was less important, than national government, were equal in number. One respondent argued that local

government is more important because 'local government resides in the community'

## Changes and expectations

Freedom of speech, walk, are now better to me as compared before. I am so splendid that I have achieved these and feel free in my own country.<sup>16</sup>

Residents were asked whether their lives had changed over the past two years, in the period between 1993 and 1995 when the TEC was taking over local government in PE. While slightly more of those surveyed said that their own lives had not changed (43% said 'yes it is better' against 55% who said 'No it is the same'), an overwhelming majority (90%) said that conditions in their area had changed. This indicated the distinction being made by people between changes in their personal life, and changes that were of benefit to the community as a whole. Most people suffering from long-term poverty and unemployment did not experience an improvement in their standard of living in this period; yet they appreciated what was done by the Council and by civic leaders in the improvements to the townships. Of course, the main change in this regard in Kwazakele was the supply of electricity to people's homes; this alone was mentioned by 45% of residents. But other improvements had also been noticed: the installation of street lights, the tarring of roads, the installation of water taps – either inside houses, where before they were in the yard; or in yards where there was no water previously. Better service provision, including the regular cleaning of streets and of the hostel, and the mending of drains and repair to leaking toilets, were important to individuals. The renovation of schools and sports stadiums, the free assistance to pregnant women in hospitals, and flushing toilets were all mentioned. But the second largest change mentioned, next to electricity, was the introduction of playgrounds or parks for children. Nearly 30% of residents mentioned this as a beneficial change in their area; the novelty of such an idea is captured in this quote:

There is a playground for the children to play and its our first time in a black area to have this

When asked about their expectations of the new council, a few responses indicated an expectation related to equality and non-racialism, such as

I expect them to take (treat) all the people the same way

and to

Bury racial prejudice in our city.

Others indicated a general expectation of the Council to be accountable and responsive to people's needs.

I expect the new PE Local Council to listen to our problems and solve them where possible

I expect the council to fulfil their promises

are examples of such views.

Not surprisingly, however, the largest group of respondents had expectations of the council relating to the development of the township and for a higher standard of living. Thus nearly 30% expressed the view that

I expect them to put the development of our areas high on the agenda

and

To uplift the standard of living in our areas

or some other version of this general intent. More detailed expectations within the broad area of development were for the renovation or building of stadiums and sports fields, playgrounds and parks, libraries, preschools and crèches. There were a number of expectations relating to education, including the supplying of schools with equipment like science kits and playgrounds. The building of more schools, the need for more colleges and bursaries for tertiary education, and the renovation of existing schools were also mentioned, with a large number having a general expectation of a 'good education for our children'. This reflects both the lack of understanding about the capacities and responsibilities of local government, and an appreciation for some of the efforts made by local leaders in the transition period to solve the crisis of

places at schools and secure funding for the renovation of schools, as shown in Chapter 7.

Another major expectation of the council was in the area of housing delivery, with some sixteen respondents having expectations of the renovation of existing housing stock, the building of new houses for those who live in shacks, or at least better service provision for those in informal housing. This sentiment is captured most eloquently in the words of the resident who said

I expect them to serve our interests like building houses that will suit the living wages of the people.

One of the first programmes of the new council was the extension of housing loans. Also unsurprisingly, one of the expectations expressed by a large number of people was for employment – although it is difficult to see how the local council can be held directly responsible for job creation.

Only one resident mentioned fighting crime –

To come together with the citizens and fight crime which is rising in our areas

indicating perhaps that the local council was understood not to be the primary body responsible for crime prevention. An alternative interpretation is that at that stage, crime was not seen to be as extensive a problem as experienced previously or in other areas.

About a third of the respondents expected change within the next year, while the majority (53%) gave the council four years to meet their expectations. A smaller group felt that it would take longer than four years. The expression of dissatisfaction with councillors who do not 'deliver' was thus anticipated in the run-up to the second local government elections in December 2000. How this is played out is explored below.

Residents were also asked 'If the council does not meet your expectations, what can you do about it?' Nearly a third of respondents indicated in some way that they would withdraw from electoral politics, and would not vote or participate in local government elections again. Another quarter said they

would respond by voting out the 'non-performing councillors' and voting in different councillors. This was tempered in a number of cases with the view that councillors could possibly be held to account by their constituents – in other words, that voting every four years was not the only way to hold representatives to account, but was rather a 'last resort' if all else failed:

Will warn him strongly, tell him about the agreement, but if things are not improving will vote for the person deserving the position

We will first consult him and ask him about the agreements and then if things are not better, vote him out

I think the right way to act is to talk to them and see what's wrong from there if there's no change they must step down and elect other candidates

He must be warned first and then maybe he can recover but if not will be voted out

A number of other responses also related to persuasion:

We can attend meetings where we can take a decision, that of overthrowing it or any other appropriate steps

We will consult him first before taking drastic measures

We must have a mass meeting where we must have a chance to talk to them and they told us what's go wrong

I'll try and talk to them and change their behaviour so that they can help the people's expectations

To remind them they promise to do everything for us

Consult him and solve the problem

We can call the meeting with other councillors and discuss the matter or call the council to order. If there are no changes the council can be asked to step down

We will try to talk to them but if they seem to not listen, we will ask them to step down

What is interesting about these responses is that they indicate that residents felt – at least at that stage - strongly connected to 'their' councillor, and that the councillor was accessible to them personally. These responses indicate a citizenry which feels able to contact and consult their public representative,

and hold him or her to account. This is in sharp contrast to the findings made by Mattes in the run-up to the 2000 elections, where he reached the conclusion that South African citizens have very little contact with their public representatives. In Chapter 10, I explore whether this is a result of a decline in citizen participation, or an indication of dissatisfaction with individual representatives.

These responses also indicate that in 1995, residents of Kwazakele felt able – at least in some cases – to influence the selection of candidates by their political party (in most cases the ANC). Thus in addition to voting, they felt able to be involved in the political process at party branch level – which is particularly important in an electoral system based on party-list proportional representation. Residents thus talked not about voting for another party (as in the general election), but ensuring that the individual councillor would have to ‘step down’ and be replaced. Five years later, they would get a chance to do precisely this, in the run-up to the second local government elections of 2000.

Only four respondents talked about taking direct or collective action to remove the councillors, such as ‘We will remove them through mass action’ or ‘We will demonstrate (*toyi-toyi*)’. One of the more articulate, a trade unionist, not surprisingly gave the most strongly held views on the continuing need for collective action. In response to the question, ‘What can you do if the council doesn’t meet your expectations?’ he answered

Put pressure as people through demonstration, representation and pickets, and other legal options<sup>17</sup>

The same number as those who would resort to mass action, indicated a sense of complete disillusionment and loss of faith in politicians:

I will never take them as people who think about those who suffer

I won’t trust ANC again

### ***The role of civil society and participation in civic structures:***

By the end of 1995, SANCO had lost some ground to the ANC, as detailed in the conflict over the Masakhane campaign and other issues dealt with in Chapter 7. However, levels of involvement in civic structures were still relatively high. Nearly two-thirds of respondents said that there was still a civic organisation in their area, and an impressive 90% of respondents said that there were street and area committee structures in their area. The discrepancy between these two figures is in itself interesting, indicating that while SANCO had lost some influence at 'leadership level', the grassroots structures which represented residents in their street were still in existence and widely known about by residents, even if they did not participate actively in the committees. As regards membership of organisations, nearly a third of respondents claimed to be members of civic organisations. As with the 1994 elections, membership of civic organisations was significantly lower than of political parties – understandable in a context in which elections are run on party political lines, and political awareness is channelled into the 'formal' politics of parties. It is also understandable in the specific context of the tension between SANCO and the ANC in this period. Yet despite the membership of civic organisations being much lower than that of political parties, residents still believed that civic organisations were important. Levels of active involvement were much higher than in other parts of the city, with over 70% of respondents claiming to attend general meetings of the civic in their area. In addition, nearly three-quarters of respondents felt that despite the election of a democratic and representative local government, civic organisations were still necessary.

The minority who said that civic organisations were no longer necessary gave as reasons that the council can take responsibility or take care of the problems that were handled by civics in the past, and will be responsible for the needs of the people. Of those who said civic organisations were still necessary, over half said that they should be involved in crime prevention through assisting the police. This response reflected the high profile that SANCO had developed through its Community Police Forum initiative, as well

as the real involvement of ordinary residents with such structures at street or area level. Smaller groups of responses (13%) including putting pressure on the council to meet peoples' needs – expressed in such statements as

They (ie civics) are of great importance, they are needed to pressurise the local councillors when a problem arises

and assisting the council in implementing its programmes (11%). That the two groups were nearly equal reflects in an interesting way the tension felt within SANCO about its contradictory roles – on the one hand, a 'watchdog' which would come into conflict with the local government; on the other, a 'development partner' to assist local government with the implementation of programmes. One respondent expressed the need for civics in terms of maintaining the culture of political participation in Kwazakele as follows:

In order to keep the political light on in the locations

### ***The second local government elections and the future of local-level democracy***

The ANC has responded to some of the problems experienced at local government level in a seemingly contradictory manner. On the one hand, the government's new policy on local government embodies the concept of extensive participation by ordinary people at local government level. The Local Government White Paper developed the government's vision of 'developmental local government'. This is to be put into effect through various pieces of legislation. The Municipal Structures Act of 1998 provided for the electoral systems and structures of municipal councils, with provision for both proportional representation and ward representation on councils. In addition, a Code of Conduct for councillors was included. The Municipal Systems Bill of 1999 is more significant in relation to 'explicitly seeks to empower the poor' and to 'create a bottom-up process of driving development.'<sup>18</sup> Chapter 3 of the bill commits local councils to a 'culture of municipal governance that shifts from strict representative government to participatory governance' and puts into place certain measures to facilitate this shift. One is advisory committees of non-councillors; another is building the capacity of residents to participate



in local affairs. Chapter 5 also provides for a central role for municipal councils in integrated development planning. This is to work in conjunction with the Development Facilitation Act, which provides for extensive public participation in the formulation of integrated development plans for each municipal area.<sup>19</sup>

Friedman argues that the ANC, instead of centralising decision making and trying to manage local councils better, should decentralise power and make councillors more accountable to their local constituencies. The ANC solution of creating ward councils is flawed, in that these ward councils are neither democratically elected nor empowered to make decisions. He argues that they are a 'poor substitute for councils closer to voters.' Friedman (2000a:29) argues that the problems of local government are caused by 'weak democracy' rather than by lack of management skills or financial and technical constraints:

We need councillors in touch with, and able to work with, local residents so that they can identify the needs to which officials must respond and ensure that local conflicts which prevent councils achieving their goals are sorted out democratically and productively. We have often lacked them since 1995. The problem has not been that not enough councillors are skilled managers – it has been that most are not in touch with their voters.

This is because, he argues, many councillors were chosen in 1995 because they were 'owed a post by their parties'. This accounted for why local activists were 'passed over for nomination in favour of people, often from outside an area, favoured by party leaders.' Such was the case with certain Kwazakele councillors in 1995; it remains to be seen whether those selected by the ANC to stand in 2000 will develop closer links to their constituencies.

The same problem of accountability and internal opposition is illustrated by the contestation of the local elections within the ANC in Kwazakele both in 1995 and in 2000. Although the official ANC candidates did win the majority of votes in the contested wards in 1995 and 2000, the exercise is a significant one in indicating the ability of people to mobilise in opposition to the ANC 'line'. Such opposition can take the form of lobbying support for an

independent candidate, or attempting to influence the ANC branch's choice of candidates.

On the other, there are indications that the ANC, as it becomes more centralised and bureaucratised, is increasingly trying to assert control 'from the centre' over local level processes such as the selection of candidates. This is partly in response to allegations of corruption and incompetence at council level, and can thus be seen to be at least partially out of a need to hold local councillors more closely to account. Yet doing this from the centre, rather than through the strengthening of participation and accountability at branch level, indicates an undemocratic trend. Thus it was reported in the *Evening Post* of 26 June 2000 that all ANC candidates for local government would have to be endorsed by the provincial leadership of the party before standing in the November elections. At the ANC's provincial general council meeting, held in the Eastern Cape in June 2000, it was announced that all candidates for the November elections would be 'screened' first at branch, then at regional and finally at provincial level. ANC branch representatives were given nomination and acceptance forms so that they could begin the process of identifying 'suitable candidates' for the elections. The ANC leadership gave assurances that its alliance partners COSATU and SANCO (as well as the SACP) would undertake this process 'jointly with the ANC', but it was widely understood that this process would 'ensure that party loyalists were elected'.<sup>20</sup>

The surveys as well as discussions with activists indicated that residents of Kwazakele were keen to see change at local government level – not necessarily in the party they vote for, but in the candidates put forward for election. They felt that particular councillors were not sufficiently accountable to their constituencies, and they were determined to hold them to account or to lobby for them not to be re-elected. Another indication of this was that the PE Council itself complained that they did not get reports or political input from the Ward Councillors in Kwazakele in order to implement development projects.<sup>21</sup>

In another example of failed communication and lack of accountability, an ANC activist explained about the Development Forum in Kwazakele:

The forum was tasked to look in Ward 23, at issues of development including the sports complex problem, and to hold councillors to account, and take them to task if there are problems. In addition we work with SANCO to resolve certain problems such as the sports complex, and our relationships with the councillors. SANCO thought that the councillors were accountable to the ANC – but we told SANCO that the councillors don't keep us informed either!

Councillors in Kwazakele are different in their individual levels of commitment and accountability. Some are unresponsive and make little effort to keep in touch with their constituencies; others are much more involved. This serves to emphasise the point that the ANC and the Councillors should not simply be conflated as 'political society'. The ANC and its local structures are not always in concordance with, and do not always have harmonious working relations with, the Ward Councillors. Councillors, as institutional representatives, are different from ANC branch activists. The former spend much of their time in council meetings, and little time working 'on the ground' in communities they represent. They are often not accessible to ordinary residents. In Kwazakele, too, some councillors are perceived to be 'too autonomous' by the ANC branch or by SANCO. In other cases, however, the councillors are themselves civic activists, and are not necessarily any more accountable. In fact, it seems that the councillors' relationship to SANCO, to the ANC and to their ward constituencies is highly variable and individual.

It is thus necessary to separate out the ANC as a political party with branches and participation by residents in the branches and their internal structures (which are extensive in Kwazakele) and the local government councillors who, although nominated by the ANC, are not always responsive to it. The following quote from ANC Kwazakele 1 branch secretary illustrates this tension well; when asked about the relationship of the ANC to local government structures in Kwazakele, he explained as follows:

This branch covers three wards of Kwazakele, as well as Ward 20 which is part of New Brighton (so the ANC in New Brighton relates to the Councillor for that ward). The three Kwazakele ward councillors – who are all ANC members - are ex-officio members of

the Kwazakele 1 ANC branch. They relate closely to the branch, and report back to it. The branch meets every Sunday. Around development issues, there is not such a close relationship; they only relate when there is a problem' and tend to use the organisation (the ANC) as a fire extinguisher. For example, there was one big project around the development of a sports complex in Mbilini street. The ANC did not know anything about it, as the councillors did not keep us informed – until there were problems. Clubs using the grounds were dissatisfied that they were not being kept informed about developments, and then they came to the branch.'

This would seem to indicate that the councillors do not always consult closely on development issues, and that sometimes the ANC membership get upset about this. In another example, that of Councillor Myoli detailed in Chapter 9, it was made clear by the ANC that people distanced themselves from the individuals' alignment with SANCO:

As regards Councillor Myoli, people protested against Myoli not fulfilling his role as a councillor – not his role as SANCO chairman. However, he is closer to SANCO. As regards Nceba Faku, we address him either in his capacity as Mayor, or in his capacity as an ANC member.

Both Sulelo and Myoli, as well as the controversial Msizi, were SANCO leaders selected by the alliance to be Councillors. Opposition to these councillors did not reflect a SANCO-ANC tension, but rather a tension within the alliance about holding people to account, or in the case of the hostel, a division of hostel-dwellers into different interest groups or lobbies.

Democratic local government, while not considered very significant or accountable by non-African residents, was something recognised in the townships as having been won after a lengthy and bitter struggle. It is easy for those who are accustomed to democracy to take it for granted. Those who predicted that there would be a substantial drop in voter turnout in the second national election were disappointed, as there was again an extremely high level of participation. In the second local government election, in December 2000, the voting poll dropped to 65% - still a respectable level of participation in local government in any democracy. The 1995 and 2000 elections both demonstrated high levels of voter participation as well as a high level of contestation of local party politics with regard to the selection of candidates for

the list. However, both elections showed a reluctance of Kwazakele voters to vote for candidates who did not come from the ANC. It can be concluded that dissatisfaction with the performance of certain councillors is thus not necessarily expressed in the form of voting for another party. Dissatisfaction is instead been played out within the branch structures of the ANC, and within its alliance partners, in the process of selecting candidates. These issues are explored briefly in the final chapter of this thesis, where the second local government election of December 2000 is discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> See Baines (1994) for details of ANC and SACP participation in Advisory Board elections in New Brighton.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed and sensitive analysis of township administration, see Robinson (1990) who has written extensively on the administration of New Brighton from the 1920s up until the height of the *apartheid* era.

<sup>3</sup> See Seekings's (2000) history of the UDF for a brief account of the opposition to these elections.

<sup>4</sup> *Kayamnandi*, meaning 'beautiful home', is one of those Xhosa words cynically applied to squalid townships by officials; *iBhayi* has for centuries been the Xhosa term for Algoa Bay or the whole of Port Elizabeth, used by officials from 1984 to mean only the African townships of New Brighton, Kwazakele and Zwide.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Glen Goosen, chairman of the Local Government Negotiating Forum and then chairman of the executive of the Transitional Local Council, 18/11/2000.

<sup>6</sup> I was one of a team of women commissioned by IDASA to devise and run workshops for the new women councillors on the functioning of local government.

<sup>7</sup> *EP Herald* 13/3/95 and 30/3/95.

<sup>8</sup> Information obtained from officials of the IEC office, Brister House, Port Elizabeth, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Interview 47, November 1995. Interviewee was a 25-year-old woman student.

<sup>10</sup> *Evening Post* 8/4/97

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<sup>11</sup> *Evening Post* 10/2/97

<sup>12</sup> All information in this section is from Kwazakele Survey 4, November 1995. See Appendix 5 for interview schedule and map. Interviewers were asked to ensure that various age groups and that both men and women were approached. Adult was defined as over 25; this ensured that the youngest of those interviewed were 'youth' in the mid-1980s, ie between 15 and 25.

<sup>13</sup> IEC statistics for the five main Kwazakele wards gives a poll of 79% for PR and 83% for ward representatives – which corroborates the survey statistic. Note: this includes spoilt ballots – ie is calculated as a percentage of votes cast, not of votes counted.

<sup>14</sup> Interview 32, November 1995. Interviewee was a 35-year-old male taxi driver.

<sup>15</sup> In the five main Kwazakele wards there were some 600 spoilt ballots or 1.5 % of the votes cast. Figures from PE IEC offices.

<sup>16</sup> Interview 32, November 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Interview 41, November 1995. Interviewee was a 40-year-old male trade unionist.

<sup>18</sup> See 'Introduction to Municipal Systems Bill, 1999', [www.local.gov.za](http://www.local.gov.za), 2000.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. See also 'IDP: Guidelines on the use of this manual', [www.local.gov.za](http://www.local.gov.za), 1998.

<sup>20</sup> *EP Herald* 26/6/2000

<sup>21</sup> *EP Herald* 10/3/98

## Chapter 9: Five Years On - Democracy at the End of the Transition

*Why then? The old man asks  
Himself  
Why is it that four years ago  
They came and made the same  
Promises?  
Why is that that they came and  
Told us that we will have  
Running water?  
Why is it that they told us that  
We would have electricity in  
Our homes?  
Why is it that we were told our  
Culture would be enriched and  
Respected?  
Has that got anything to do  
With the votes we cast four years  
Ago?  
Or maybe it has a lot to do  
With votes we will be casting  
Next week.*

Twadi Domane: *The Winds of Change*.<sup>1</sup>

On 2 June 1999, South Africans tested the strength of their new democracy by voting for a second time for national and provincial governments. The election was preceded by the compilation of a voters' roll and the creation of new electoral districts. Unlike in the first election, citizens had to first register and then vote in their particular district. While pessimists predicted that there would be a low poll, either because of the difficulty of implementing the voters' role, or because of disillusionment resulting from lack of delivery on the

promises of 1994, they were proved wrong. The vast majority of South African voters participated enthusiastically in the election process, and re-elected a government dominated by the African National Congress, which narrowly failed to gain a two-thirds majority in parliament.

It was an appropriate point at which to assess the consolidation of democracy in South Africa, and the nature of democracy in Kwazakele. The second general election had been held, the 'power sharing arrangements' of the government of national unity came to an end, and the first five years – which can be seen as still being part of the transition process – were over. The fifth, and final, survey of residents of Kwazakele was conducted in June 1999, in the month after the second democratic election.<sup>2</sup> The primary aim of the survey was to assess the consolidation of democracy through analysing the levels and nature of political participation of residents of Kwazakele at the time of the second election. This involved comparing participation in structures of representative democracy (elections) with participation in structures of direct/participatory democracy (civic structures). It also involved an assessment of whether or not structures of 'political civil society' were still active in Kwazakele, especially those structures which allow for direct participation by ordinary residents, namely the street committees. A secondary aim of this, the final survey, was to assess whether residents' expectations of democratic government had been met over the past five years. This also involved an assessment of how residents whose expectations had not been met, respond to the system of representative democracy: with apathy, with participation in political parties or electoral processes, or through involvement in extra-parliamentary mobilisation or 'civil society'.

### ***Electoral politics: Participation, opposition and pluralism***

I feel that I made a contribution in bringing democracy, and my party wins<sup>3</sup>

In Kwazakele, any fears that participation in the election would be significantly reduced – either because of voter apathy due to government failure to meet expectations, or because of the logistic problem of establishing a voters' roll – were proved to be unfounded.<sup>4</sup> The survey found that a very high percentage



did vote in the election. 10% of the survey respondents did not vote, while 90% did; of the 10%, half did not vote because of choice, being consciously apolitical; the other half because of problems with identity documents or registration on the voters' roll. This was corroborated by IEC election results, which showed that 92% of registered voters, and 85% of the eligible population, cast their votes.<sup>5</sup>

With regard to levels of political participation, the survey showed that people are still highly appreciative of their hard-won democratic right to vote, and exercise that right diligently - much more diligently, in fact, than those who live in long-established democracies. Residents generally expressed their feelings about voting for the second time in a positive way, with one old man expressing himself eloquently as follows:

I felt very important to vote for the second time in my lifetime. I think I am honoured.<sup>6</sup>

It also confounds the belief of those who imagine that those who are poor, illiterate, second-language English speakers who have not grown up in a democracy, are ignorant about political processes and representative forms of democracy.

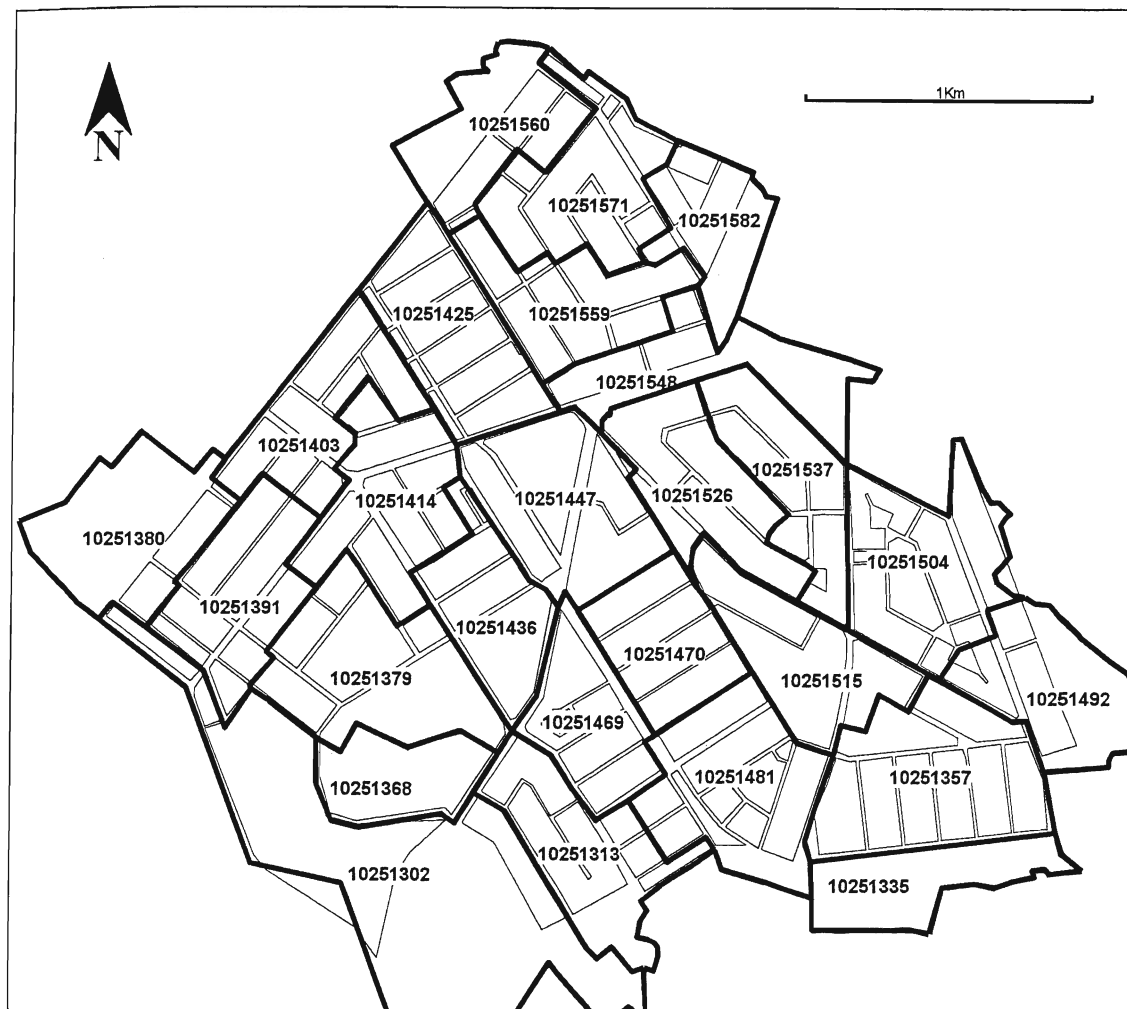
Only 8% of the survey respondents reported problems with the voting process, and the problems they experienced in voting were those of IEC logistical problems – polling stations opening late, long queues, and waiting for ink or ballot papers. There was no confusion about the method of voting, or the separate provincial and national ballot – although nearly all the Kwazakele voters confirmed that they voted for the same party at both provincial and national level, with the exception of one voter who split her vote, voting for ANC at national level and the UDM at provincial level, to 'give the UDM a chance' at provincial government. The UDM is now the official opposition in the Eastern Cape.

As regards political loyalty, the result was, as expected, overwhelmingly in favour of the ANC. The survey results reflected the IEC results for the various Kwazakele polling stations, and showed that there is small support for the PAC, UDM and AZAPO, which are the 'real contenders' for support among

African voters.<sup>7</sup> The traditionally 'white' parties that are trying to gain support in the black community – the DP and NNP – have made no headway at all in Kwazakele.<sup>8</sup> This is borne out by the answer that most of those surveyed gave to the question of what political parties are active in the area; all said some combination of ANC, PAC, AZAPO and UDM; other parties were not mentioned or known about. The ANC's hegemony is really uncontested; and what is more interesting is that this support has remained unchanged since 1994, as almost all those who voted for the ANC in 1994 continued to vote for the ANC in 1999, despite varying opinions about the performance of the government.<sup>9</sup> In fact, political loyalties in Kwazakele have remained largely unchanged since the 1980s, the exception being the formation of the UDM by Bantu Holomisa, a former ANC member, who has managed to take some votes from disaffected ANC members. In this respect, the survey merely confirmed what is widely known in Port Elizabeth and in the Eastern Cape more generally: that the ANC continues to have overwhelming support among African voters. It is more interesting to try and understand why the few voters who switched their loyalty away from the ANC, chose the UDM – a rather vague populist party – rather than the more left-wing alternatives, AZAPO or the PAC. The answer may lie, at least in part, in people's 'sense of history': they vote for the UDM on the basis of the support given to the ANC by Holomisa when he took control of the Transkei in the early 1990s; they 'know' him in the sense that he is a part of the political culture and history of the Eastern Cape.

Another part of the answer lies in complex local political dynamics, relating to the conflicts around development outlined in Chapter 7. The voting district of Kwazakele where opposition to the ANC was most evident was the Kwazakele Hostel, Voting District 10251368. Here, the UDM gained 200 votes, constituting nearly 6% of the total – the highest single opposition vote in any of the Kwazakele voting districts. In the adjacent voting district, 10251313, the UDM gained 123 votes, constituting 3.58% of the vote. In six other voting districts, the UDM gained between 3 and 4% of the vote; less than 3% in the remaining districts. The reason for this defection from the ANC lies in the conflict around the development of the hostel, and the division

within the ANC around who would be councillor for that ward at local government level (see Chapter 8 above). It also reflects attempts by SANCO to recruit members from other political parties – notably the UDM and PAC – in particular areas, to strengthen their claim to being ‘non-partisan’ and thus able to ‘represent all residents’.



**Map 9. Voting Districts (1999 election)**

This was explained by Mbuyisela Madaka, Councillor for Ward 24, which includes Matthew Goniwe Village and the hostel area:

There is a UDM branch in this area, with about 200 people. The Broad Forum is not party aligned – the UDM can participate but doesn't, as an organisation. However, some individuals do attend, as SANCO reps; SANCO also has PAC and UDM representatives. This is opportunist rather than principled non-alignment. Here, there is a common interest in development, and petty differences are put aside – there is no real tension between parties. There are PAC and UDM people, but they don't participate as such

The PAC had tiny pockets of support spread fairly evenly across the voting districts; but in all cases smaller than support for the UDM, which clearly emerged as the choice of opposition party for Kwazakele residents dissatisfied with the ANC.<sup>10</sup>

The other factor affecting pockets of opposition to the ANC was the legacy of territorial political hegemony of the 1980s. There were two voting districts where AZAPO gained between 2 and 3 % of the vote – although this amounted to only 42 and 82 votes in each case. These districts were Voting Districts 10251391, the heart of Emagaleneni; and the adjacent District 10251403 (see MAP 9) This area, at the bottom of Njoli Road in the area around Daku Square, was the area where violence around the 1994 election campaigns had erupted, where AZAPO had pursued their election boycott campaign, and where allegations of intolerance had been made. With AZAPO's decision to participate in the 1999 election, it appears that support for AZAPO was concentrated in these areas in particular. In addition, there were a number of people from this area who did not vote at all – indicating their cynicism or continued lack of faith in electoral politics.

### ***Party politics: Centralisation vs. participation at branch level***

That there is still a high level of political awareness among residents of Kwazakele is reflected not only in the high voting polls, but also in the responses given by Kwazakele residents about their participation in their party's activities (if they were members of a political party). Most said they not only voted in the national and local government elections, but nearly 60% said that they attended political meetings of some sort in their area. 42% said they were members of their local party branch, and nearly one third paid membership dues. 20% said they had participated in campaigns over the previous year, with examples given being not only election campaigns, but also in a campaign against child and women abuse, and an anti-crime campaign. Others said they had attended rallies and workshops, community police forums, strikes and social events such as 'African Music Day'. 5% said they were members of an executive or other committee. Only 15% said they

were not involved in any way in any political party (except for in some cases voting in elections) – indicating that there is still, by any standards, a high level of political involvement by ordinary residents.

The ANC branches in Kwazakele are some of the biggest in the country in terms of membership, and involvement by ordinary members takes the form of attending weekly branch meetings (held on Sundays) and involvement in various campaigns. Despite the high level of support for the ANC, and the high level of political participation and awareness by residents, the ANC branch structures have not really succeeded in mobilising residents around ‘grassroots’ or developmental concerns. They have tended to mobilise (very effectively) around elections, and also around high-profile campaigns, in particular the campaigns against crime and the abuse of women and children. These campaigns saw a high level of citizen participation. Thus despite the commitment of both civic organisations and the ANC to ‘people-driven’ or participatory development, it would seem that for most people there is still the expectation of a democratically-elected state that it is primarily responsible for socio-economic ‘delivery’.

The ANC has become increasingly aware in recent months that it is losing the ‘grassroots’ involvement at branch level that was so important a part of the vision of participatory development it put forward in 1994. The tension between attempts to hold elected representatives more closely to account, through a more centralised party discipline, and the need to deepen the involvement of ordinary supporters through more decentralised party activities and debate, is explored further in the concluding chapter of this thesis. Yet despite the concern within some quarters of the ANC about loss of activity at branch level, it is clear from the survey that involvement in party branches is the primary form of political activity for most residents of Kwazakele. Does this mean that the high levels of participation in civil society have declined?

### ***Participation in ‘grassroots’ structures of civil society***

From the 1999 survey it would seem that political activity is largely channelled through political parties, rather than through the grassroots civic

structures of previous years. Civic organisation still has a significant presence in Kwazakele, however, with 75% of respondents saying that civics, primarily SANCO, existed in their area. Many residents said that street committees (65%) or area committees (45%) still existed in their areas; with 28% saying both street and area committees were present. Only 17% answered either that neither existed, or that they did not know of the existence of such structures. These structures are essentially structures that 'belong' to SANCO, although the distinction between the civic and the party is sometimes not made by activists, nor by residents themselves:

There is generally peaceful co-existence between ANC and SANCO structures at grassroots (ie unit and area) level. The ANC has a system of street representatives within units which is distinct from the street and area committees which are structures of SANCO. The ANC calls meetings using SANCO street committees to reach people. People are sometimes confused between street committees and street representatives. Street committees are elected directly by residents, and are accountable directly to those residents.<sup>11</sup>

While the perceived presence of structures does give some indication of the strength of civil society organisations, it is necessary to interrogate in a bit more depth the real activities and role of these structures in people's lives.

SANCO claimed that the street committee structures are still functioning well, and that during 1999 elections were held to the SANCO branches using a pyramidal structure from street to area to branch executive. This was explained by SANCO leader Mike Tofile as follows:

While being restructured at present, they are still functioning strongly in most areas. By the end of November this year, all branch executives will have been elected by area committees. Street committee councils elect the area committees, and in December there will be a general meeting of all committees. The committees consist of a mixture of people – women, youth and old people are represented in both street and area committees.<sup>12</sup>

This 'democratic centralist' model can only work effectively if the street committees are active and democratic in their functioning. To test this, the 1999 survey of Kwazakele asked not only whether there was a street

committee, but also how and when was it formed, what it does, and whom it represents.

On the issue of how and when it was formed, responses varied from street to street and area to area. In some areas, the street committees were still those that had been put in place in the mid-1980s; in such cases, residents understood their origins as having been in the UDF-AZAPO conflict, as described in Chapter 6:

It was formed as a form of resistance to the former government and during 1984-5 fighting between AZAPO and UDF to protect the leaders

In other areas, the street committees were formed in 1988-9, at the time of the re-emergence and reorganisation of PEBCO. In yet others, the committees from the mid-1980s had collapsed, and the current committees had been formed in the early 1990s,

After Mandela was released, we wanted people to work together and bring issues closer to the people

In some cases, this process was perceived as being in response to a need that emerged in the 'interregnum', in order to deal with escalating crime and a lack of legitimate state structures:

It was formed in 1990 because crime increased and people were not confident in the police

I am not sure about the exact date, I think after the release of president Mandela, it was formed because people lacked confidence in South African Police and Councillors.

In other cases, street committees were re-elected just before or shortly after the 1994 elections. The majority of committees were established in the periods when 'civics' achieved very high levels of organisation in South Africa as a whole – the 1985-6 period, and the 1992-3 period.

The extent of democratic practice in the formation of street committees also varied, with some residents stating clearly that the committee was elected at a meeting of residents of the street, while others simply said that the committee

was 'formed'. A few were openly sceptical of the representative nature of such structures:

I don't know how and when it was formed because they do not inform us of these things

while one resident explained the formation of the committees as part of a centralised, 'top-down' initiative:

An organiser called a meeting of street dwellers and advised them to form a cell structure in order to promote representivity.

In one case, the resident stated that the committees were re-elected annually; in other cases, residents said the committees had been there for 'a long time' and were thus clearly not subject to recall through regular election:

They elected themselves; they have been there for a long time

When asked who the street committees represent, however, most residents responded that they represented residents in the street or 'people of this street', the 'people of Kwazakele' or simply 'the community as a whole'. Again, there was the sceptical minority voice who felt that the committees

...represent themselves and their political parties mainly the ANC and this is wrong because if they say that they represent us they should do so

They claim to be representing the people but I don't see that; they only represent themselves and their next of kin

They are so selective and they represent those people who are very close to them

In general it should represent all dwellers, but practically I should say it represents and supports the policies of the majority party

The periodic existence of street committees is related to three variables. Firstly, the ANC organises 'street representatives' to assist with voter education and registration at the time of elections, but in between does not concentrate on representation at this level. Secondly, SANCO goes through periods of intensive organisation, which varies from township to township depending on the branch leadership and on the nature of the issues facing the



area. Thirdly, residents themselves take initiative to set up committees when they see a need to respond collectively to a particular problem.

The survey indicates that street committees vary greatly – in some areas of Kwazakele they are clearly much more active than in others. What function do they serve? One of the primary social problems seen as the responsibility of the street committees is crime, in particular petty crime such as theft:

They solve problems in the street, for example if someone steals something then gets caught by other people they take the (stolen) things to their owners

Grassroots structures still work in partnership with the police and municipal officials in certain respects. Thus structures such as the Community Police Forums still deploy local 'units' to guard municipal workers engaged in work in Kwazakele. However, the ineffectiveness of the police in dealing with serious crime has led to the rise of vigilante actions and 'mob justice' in the past year. It can be argued that if street and area committee structures were more active, they would be able to prevent undirected community anger against violent crime, and prevent vandalism of schools.<sup>13</sup>

Another major role of the street committees is as mediator of domestic disputes or disputes between families:

If for example, you have a problem with a particular person, then you report it and they will send a formal letter inviting that person to a meeting to discuss and solve your differences

The committees are also active in dealing with general anti-social behaviour such as drinking, making excessive noise, vandalism and littering. There is an interesting environmental emphasis by some street committees:

It looks at problems in the area, for example if you dump refuse or throw dirty water in the street you are fined, they see that there is not crime.

The committees are also active in taking up neighbourhood-level problems with municipal payments or services. Those mentioned by residents were payments for electricity, problems with meter-boxes, payment of dog taxes, blocked sewerage pipes, and broken drains and water pipes:

For instance dogs have to be paid for, land payment, the installation of metre-reading water valves, payments for electricity pylons, all those issues are discussed in meetings because people say they don't have money to pay for all these facilities.

Thus while street committees clearly do play extensive and important roles in both public and private life in Kwazakele, this needs to be qualified.<sup>14</sup> While they are playing an important role in private life, their role in public life is at a very local or neighbourhood level, and their influence on the councillors or the governance of the township as a whole is limited. Thus if a resident approaches the street committee about a problem with payment of municipal bills, the street committee will refer the resident to the correct channels for payment. This is usually the City Treasurer's office in the city centre. In other words, the committee does not actually take up the grievance as such, or provide any real assistance – but just gives advice or information on what to do. The committees have neither the resources nor the power to change or implement decisions made by the local authorities.

Sometimes the activities of the street committees are put in broader terms, the primary ones being 'solving problems', 'informing residents', 'maintaining the peace' 'keeping law and order' and 'mediating disputes'. Note that there is a significant minority in Kwazakele who feel that the street committees are interfering in domestic issues and have no right to assert discipline or make decisions about how individuals in a community should live:

They claim to be the enforcers of law and order but in my area I can say they are the perpetrators of crime because sometimes they interfere in other people's domestic affairs and judge people so that they harm those people through harmful means like *sjambokking*<sup>15</sup> people and other nasty things they do to people they see as being guilty.

How are residents personally involved with civic structures? 20% said they were members of a civic but otherwise were not involved; half of these said that in addition they did sometimes attend meetings. While a minority of residents (7-8%) paid membership dues or were involved in a committee, 50% said that they attended general meetings in the area where they lived. A further 12% said they had participated actively in campaigns such as the anti-crime campaign, the campaign against women and child abuse, and

mobilisation around electricity cuts or housing delivery. Three said they were involved in other ways, such as running workshops or recruitment. 42% said they were not members and were not involved at all, and a further 3% that they used to be involved but there was no structure in their area any more. While nearly half of those interviewed said they were not members of the civic organisation in their areas and were not involved at all, the percentage of those who claimed they were involved was still high relative to levels of involvement in civic affairs in other communities. When compared with levels of political involvement as defined by membership of political parties, a higher percentage of residents claimed membership of the party than of the civic. This is not a reflection of active involvement, however; as is shown below, many residents do not distinguish between party and civic in terms of their involvement in campaigns.

Of the 11% who said that they used to be involved but do not participate any more, a number of interesting reasons were expressed. A few were personal, reflecting the eternal dilemma faced by politically active women of child-rearing age:

I don't enjoy politics any more because I have children to look after

Most, however, related to problems with the civic leadership or internal organisation:

There were troubles with the committee members and accused of asking money from the residents and misusing it; because of infighting and jealousy I am not happy with the leadership style

There were also clearly expressed political reasons, such as

I feel there is no longer political intolerance so no need for such structures

Or general disillusionment:

Politicians used to be honest and truthful but nowadays you only come across greedy and selfish politicians

Other residents expressed the problematic relationship of SANCO to the ANC; some wanted SANCO to be more independent of the ANC, such as:

I don't like SANCO being close to ANC anymore

In some areas, SANCO structures had collapsed:

There is no longer SANCO but ANC, since it was unbanned, so I don't support ANC

Others gave preference to ANC activities, giving as a reason for their no longer participation in street or area committee structures that they were 'busy in ANC structures'.

While few of the residents interviewed were actively involved in these structures, the continued existence of such structures was recognised and felt by many to be the most direct or effective way of dealing with certain types of problems. Do such structures empower people at local level? While there is little sense of empowerment through direct involvement in decision making around 'local issues' in the bigger or 'political' sense of influencing council or party decisions, there remains another way in which people are empowered through such structures. These people do not constitute a passive citizenry; their experience has resulted in an ability to tackle problems collectively. These are very small problems, to be sure, and they can be tackled at neighbourhood level. Yet there is a marked difference between the way in which such a community deals with an errant teenager, or a blocked drain, and the way in which middle-class individuals in 'white' suburbs respond to such problems. What has happened is that such structures are no longer directly linked to a political function – perhaps they can no longer be termed structures of 'political civil society', but should more accurately be seen simply as 'civil society'. They do not influence decision making by councillors or by ANC leadership for the area. While they do relate to the SANCO branch structures directly, in theory at least, they have little influence here as SANCO's influence has declined.

For most residents, these structures have their own internal reason for existence and organisational dynamic. They are not 'driven' or directed by either political parties or civic organisations; in many cases, residents cannot clearly ascertain what their street committees fall under, or who they are accountable to. Yet this can be viewed in a positive light, indicating that

participation at neighbourhood level is indeed independent and empowering for ordinary people. They are not being manipulated by party bosses or local warlords, and are clear that these structures are not party-political in nature. In fact, the idea of tolerance of a plurality of parties has entered into people's consciousness to the extent that some residents vigorously defend the notion that their street committee should represent all residents of the street, whatever party they choose to vote for in the elections. This would seem to indicate a clear separation in people's minds between the 'political' and the 'civic' aspects of their lives – as discussed below.

### **The relationship between SANCO and the ANC: Political versus civil society?**

On the other hand, it can be argued that at local level distinction between 'civil' and 'political' society is blurred, and that this blurring is reflected in a tension between the role of civics and the role of local government representatives. Seekings has put it in terms of a tension between Rousseau's 'direct democracy' and Schumpeter's representative democracy. He thus noted (Cherry et al 2000b:9) that the 'Rousseauian impulse' to direct democracy was stronger in the working-class African townships than in other residential areas of Cape Town. This conclusion can be generalised to other working class African townships such as Kwazakele. What is interesting is how these different democracies are understood by ordinary residents and activists. On a day-to-day level residents do not perceive a tension between the two. Overall, residents of Kwazakele are remarkable in the thoroughness of their understanding of, and acceptance of, representative democracy (remarkable given the lack of experience they have of it). Simultaneously, they participate to a high degree in civic affairs – primarily at very local or street committee level – in what can be termed 'neighbourhood politics' to distinguish it from the somewhat grander visions of civic leaders. Is there thus a clear correlation between political parties and representative democracy, and civic structures with direct democracy? This can be explored in more depth by examining the relationship between the ANC and SANCO structures in Kwazakele.

Residents of Kwazakele owe loyalty both to the ANC as the 'mother body' politically, and to their neighbourhood structures, the street committees. While the street committees are technically SANCO structures, residents have little involvement in SANCO branch structures, or contact with SANCO leadership. Thus they do not perceive the tension between SANCO and the ANC, and the competition for their membership, time and money, in the same way that the leadership of SANCO and the ANC do. In Kwazakele there is a significant overlap of structures, with the ANC having or trying to have its own area and zone committees, and SANCO having area and street committees; this is even further complicated by the decision for councillors to establish ward committees. Yet despite this complexity of structures and multiplicity of demands on residents, they carry on participating in their immediate neighbourhood structures. The Kwazakele street committees take up primarily very local grievances and domestic or neighbourhood disputes, as outlined above. In addition, many residents participated in ANC activities such as the election campaign, and a campaign against women and child abuse (which was a joint campaign of the Alliance and which residents named as a 'civic activity') as well as the SANCO anti-crime campaign. In other words, there is no neat division between political and civic society – at least in the eyes of residents of townships such as Kwazakele.

The crisis of SANCO's effectiveness as the 'chief' organisational form of politicised civil society is not just an internal one, relating to organisational weakness and loss of leadership. It is integrally related to the ANC 'taking over' SANCO's 'territory' and setting up parallel structures at local level in some cases. In fact, much of the perception of crisis comes not just from civic leadership (as opposed to residents) but from ANC leaders, who are increasingly scornful of civic's claims to be representative or powerful. Thus the secretary of the ANC Kwazakele 1 branch noted:

Who will residents go to with a problem? They come to the ANC Constituency office after having been unable to contact their councillor, or after having been to the SANCO street and area committees. If there is a problem with crime, they go directly to the Anti Crime Committee. People can't differentiate between SANCO and the ANC; only when they don't get assistance from local representatives, do they then go to the ANC. There

are some tensions between the two organisations, which have been raised at ANC general meetings – where SANCO street and area committees were told they should have informed SANCO (rather than the ANC). In some other areas, there is a strong ANC presence and people say they don't need SANCO; in others there are sound working relationships between the two organisations.

What is the difference in role between the grassroots structures of each organisation? My personal view is that SANCO achieved the goals of one city, one municipality and a democratic council. Now there is tension over the role that SANCO wants to play. The ANC plays – or should play – a complementary role to the elected councillors. The ANC has departments, and does the same thing as SANCO. SANCO's role has long been phased out – there is no more role for SANCO as an independent civil society.

In fact, the whole notion of the need for 'independent civil society' formations to act as a watchdog of the developmental state is dismissed by this same ANC local leader. His views are not an anomaly, but reflect the views of those within the ANC and SACP who see the distinction between governing party and mobilised citizenry as false. Moreover, he cannot contemplate the ANC failing in its 'revolutionary mission':

What if the ANC doesn't do its job, and meet people's needs? The ANC cannot fail dismally. It has its departments, and local development structures and other forums play an important role. SANCO does not have clear direction, but wants to play a role in competition with the ANC. As an example, if there is a problem, a resident may go to a councillor; while waiting for a response she may go to SANCO structures. Then while the resident is waiting for the SANCO area committee to address the issue, the councillor may solve the problem – and then come into conflict with the SANCO structure. For example, if a resident sells her house without consulting other family members, and there is a conflict, SANCO will advise that the matter be resolved through its street committees.

What if the resident is a member of a party other than the ANC? S/he should go through the local development structure. Anyway, the 2% who don't support the ANC won't go to SANCO, as it is perceived as being aligned to the ANC. Individuals join SANCO opportunistically.

ANC councillor Mbuyiselo Madaka is equally sceptical about the role of SANCO:

The ANC is in government, but does not want to impose itself on people. Development must be people-driven. The ANC Unit is driving the process in the hostels, together

with other players. If there is a misunderstanding between SANCO and the ANC, then branches meet to iron it out. SANCO needs to define its role, it doesn't seem to understand its role at the moment, it wants to be everywhere. Parallel structures? There is the formation of local SANCO structures by disaffected ANC members, those who want employment or involvement in projects, or those who didn't get positions in the ANC. For example, in the Vuku road area, SANCO was not present until a development project began.

In contrast to this muted hostility and competitiveness, in the minds of residents, the distinction between civic and ANC structures at street and area level is not that important – the competition and the tension around the ANC setting up 'parallel structures' is really something that activists in the ANC and SANCO are concerned about.

In addition to these parallel party and civic structures, there are also in some cases the newly-formed Ward Committees designed to hold ward councillors more closely to account by their constituencies. There are also the various development forums and health and welfare forums described in Chapter 7, which involve representatives from both political party and civic structures on them. Given this complexity of relations between the various structures in the township – civic structures, political party structures, and elected public representatives – how can residents most effectively hold the government to account?

### ***Expectations and holding government to account***

It felt great! I had a feeling that this time around, the majority party would speed up transformation<sup>16</sup>

In the 1999 survey, 62% of residents said 'yes' to the question 'Has the ANC government met your expectations since the first election?' Some of the positive responses were

It has brought me freedom that we fought for for 300 years, to an extent of building houses for the people<sup>17</sup>

And



It has succeeded in reconciling the nation, managing to reach consensus, now building of the nation through the Reconstruction and Development Programme. We were always looking for an African based ideology so the ANC government has met that through the African Renaissance<sup>18</sup>

36% of respondents said that their expectations had not been met. Some of the more sceptical included this AZAPO supporter:

There are no real jobs for the average Azanian, even if s/he is educated. Therefore unemployment, crime and homelessness are still rife. Just look at the new squatter settlements since the ANC government took over. There is no delivery except on the 'gravy train'.<sup>19</sup>

In response to the question, 'Has your life changed since the first election?' 43% answered 'Yes, it is better' while 54% said 'No, it is the same'; those few who said 'Yes, it is worse' said so because they had lost jobs – illustrating the absolute loss of jobs in manufacturing and the overall rise of unemployment levels. Many of those who said 'No, it is the same' indicated that there had been no tackling of the primary economic problem of unemployment. This is also reflected in the answers given to the question about whether the ANC government had met expectations; many who said 'no' said so because of expectations of job creation that have not been met. This is exemplified by the bitterness expressed in this quote from a middle-aged unemployed man:

I think there are changes but I am disappointed that we don't get jobs. Yes we have rights but not jobs. They promised to create jobs for us and instead jobs were lost.<sup>20</sup>

However, this failure reflects less on local government and more on national and provincial government and the private sector. Residents are in general happy with the local government and its provision of services, with the exception of the homeless or those living in shacks, whose expectations of housing have not yet been met. This explains the seeming inconsistency of over 60% of residents saying that the ANC government had met their expectations, while 54% said that their lives had not changed. While their expectations of personal change in terms of a higher income or standard of living were not high, they were able to appreciate the broader changes that had improved the community as a whole, such as better service delivery. This

was consistent with the findings of the November 1995 survey, and indicated that people understood that development would not happen 'overnight'. They were also still appreciative of newly won political rights at a more abstract level: racial equality, reconciliation, social stability and gender equality were all expressed as expectations that had been met by the ANC government.

The significance of policies promoting gender equality are illustrated in the following residents' responses. The first, an unemployed woman teacher, felt that the government had met her expectations in that

They brought stability; and women's issues are on top of their agenda<sup>21</sup>

In stark contrast, but recognising the impact of the government's approach as regards gender issues, was this comment from a middle-aged man who felt that his expectations of the new government had not been met:

Unemployment is still there; there is more crime; there are too many rights for women – you can't even beat a wife<sup>22</sup>

Residents were then asked 'If the government does not meet your expectations, what can you do about it?' What was most telling the responses was the absence of a vision of using strategies of mass action or non-violent direct action – the dominant political strategies of the 1980s – to influence the ANC government. While there were some marches and protests during the five-year period from 1994 to 1999, as detailed in Chapter 7, few residents viewed such methods as now being viable methods of opposition in a democratic society. Most responded that they would either vote for another party, or not vote at all; and a number said simply that they could do nothing, or did not know what they could do to influence the government. A few expressed confidence in the current government, and a commitment to patiently waiting for change to take place. There was one single respondent who referred to the previously popular forms of 'mass action', and even then he had second thoughts, as if he would not be taken seriously if he suggested such a course of action:

Well I think we'll just have to *toyi-toyi*<sup>23</sup> again to get things done....On a serious note I'm not sure what I'll do

The 1999 survey showed that 'ordinary people', despite their electoral preference for the ANC, are not naïve about electoral processes, nor are they uncritical of the ANC's policies. Responses to the question 'What can you do about it?' indicated clearly an acceptance of multi-party parliamentary democracy as the primary means for changing a government that is unresponsive to the needs of the urban working class.

About one-sixth of the respondents said that if the government did not meet their expectations, they would vote for another party:

Though I don't think that the ANC government will not meet my expectations, but if ever it does [not meet my expectations] I think I will join another political party like for instance the UDM or DP who knows?

I cannot do anything that will make them perform but I won't give them my vote again, that is I will just vote for another political party like the UDM or NNP

I will just join another political party like the DP and ensure that my vote is given to them and not the government that is not meeting my expectations

I will definitely change my vote and withdraw my support for the organisation because what is the use of supporting them if they do not deliver to us the people who voted for them

Those who already supported the PAC or AZAPO retained their belief that they would be able to replace the ANC through electoral means:

I will ensure my party comes to power in the next election by voting for the PAC

I will intensify the movement (PAC) and ensure that by the year 2004 PAC wins the election

Interestingly, these parties – which had followed an even more radical revolutionary strategy than the ANC, have embraced parliamentary democracy in the same way as the ANC which happened to be the liberation movement to negotiate the transition. None of the PAC supporters mentioned the possibility of seizure of state power, or of using mass mobilisation or armed struggle to challenge the state. The sole (AZAPO supporting) revolutionary rather eclectically combined his belief in revolutionary change with a commitment to electoral change:

What can I do - nothing! But seriously I am confident that revolutionary change will take place eventually and the liberal ANC will be overthrown by AZAPO. So I will do what I have done recently that is I will vote for AZAPO again, and ensure that we win this time

The legitimacy of the state is thus universally accepted, and opposition takes on forms that are accepted as being primarily within the framework of parliamentary democracy.

A few residents looked to more creative individual solutions to failures of delivery: pressure through contacting the local radio station, or contacting government departments or public representatives. One respondent saw the possibility of taking collective action, although s/he was not sure what form this would take:

I would get together with other people who are also disappointed and maybe we would come up with something to do

About a third of respondents felt that there was nothing they could do to ensure that the government met their expectations, or simply did not know what to do. Another group felt a deep sense of cynicism of politicians and party politics, and said they would not vote again.

I do not care and I will continue not to vote because what is the use of giving corrupt and incompetent people your vote because they don't worry about us ordinary people in the streets so I will not give them my vote

I will become despondent and lose interest in politics therefore I won't vote again in the coming election in 2004 should the ANC not deliver

I will continue to live my own life and by not voting I will not put my trust in a politician because they are liars

In contrast to the above responses were those who expressed a deep loyalty to the current government, and were committed to waiting patiently for the government to fulfil its mandate. It must be remembered that very few residents of Kwazakele did vote for other parties in the 1994 and 1999 elections, and while some threatened to use their vote by voting for other parties, others found it very hard to imagine supporting, or voting for, anyone other than the ANC. This did not mean uncritical support; sometimes they

expressed themselves with remarkable political sophistication when explaining their understanding of the need for patience and the reasons for the lack of delivery:

I will give them another chance because if they do not deliver they will be obviously trying their best but due to certain factors they cannot reach their goals, so I will just be patient and wait. I am confident things will change

I will give them another five years, as I will be unreasonable to expect them to deliver in the short time they have governed

I will not worry because our democracy is still at an early stage and also we cannot expect anything in this short time

I will first try to find out what happens to cause the failure to meet my needs, and if I think they are reasonable enough I'll give them another chance by voting again

I will give it another chance by voting for it, I believe more changes in South Africa are going to take time to happen because of the white people that ruled this country

In addition, there were those who said they would not vote for a different party, but would work within ANC structures to try and make the governing party more responsive to their needs. This might involve replacing 'list' representatives through ANC party conferences, or lobbying ANC leadership, or raising problems at ANC branch meetings:

I would vote for a new government but under the ANC, and within ANC structures raise problems I encounter

I would criticise ANC structures, campaign for change in government structures, maybe join other political parties

People felt strongly their democratic right to participate and articulate their dissatisfaction to government, even suggesting means by which the government could be held accountable or get feedback from the electorate between elections:

I voted for the government, so I'm going to see that my demands and expectations are met - it's my democratic right

It (the government) can call meetings in all areas and people must discuss what they want to be done... It must on the other hand supply us with a questionnaire about what we want to be done with the problems we face. I can then voice out my views.

Another saw local government with its elected councillors as being more responsive to residents' needs:

Through local government elections, councillors will make sure that my complaints are communicated to the government. I will not change my vote to another party.

The understanding that local government is both responsible for service delivery, and is more accessible, is borne out in the residents' preparedness to voice scathing criticisms of councillors who don't 'perform', and to express these criticisms in ANC forums so that the councillors do not retain their seats. In some cases, ANC-supporting residents have even marched and protested against their own councillors – as detailed in Chapter 7.

The threat of 'voting for another party' in future elections, combined with the belief that they can influence the ANC through its own structures, is perceived as sufficient in terms of holding the government accountable to the electorate. Despite their awareness of the possibility of voting for another party, the overwhelming majority of voters in Kwazakele voted for the ANC in 1994 and again in 1999. It can be argued that this was not due to a lack of awareness of the shortcomings of the ANC, but rather an accurate assessment of the greater shortcomings of the existing opposition parties.

### **Reasons for changing levels of political participation**

When asked whether they were personally more or less involved with politics now than they were five years ago, 60% of the respondents said 'less'; 23% said 'more' and the rest either did not answer or replied that their involvement had not changed as they were apolitical to begin with. Their responses as to why their levels of involvement decreased provide some clues to understanding the 'normalisation' of political life. What is perhaps more interesting than a statistical indication of a decline in political participation, is the residents' own insights on why they had changed their level of

involvement. Let the residents of Kwazakele speak for themselves; as a highly politicised community, they do so eloquently.

Firstly, of the minority who said they were more involved in politics than five years ago, some said that the democratic nature of government in contrast to the authoritarian apartheid state was what had made the difference; this was expressed sometimes in terms of an absence of fear, as in the respondent who said

I can say that now I am more involved in politics than I used to be because I am free now to be involved as much as I want and there is no law that prohibits me like in the years of apartheid, because we don't have a police force that harasses and kills our people in the townships, people are more free to express themselves politically and can participate without the fear of being prosecuted by the government of the day.

Others saw their participation more in terms of the limited definition of politics as parliamentary and electoral processes, and in terms of the (formerly denied) right to participate in 'formal politics' by voting for government:

The ANC government lifted my interest in politics because through the ANC I participated in voting for my own government for the first time; I know now what the parliament looks like and what is really going on there.

Since the first election when I voted for the first time in my life, I became more interested in politics knowing that by taking part in elections I exercise my rights to have a say in government

Others differentiated between political power, and social and economic issues; they see political power as being 'outside of their realm' except in terms of voting; but that they could still be political actors within the social and economic sphere –

I am more involved now because I still think that we need to have a say as far as economic power.

Some combined a number of these elements: past fear, appreciation for representative democracy, and the commitment to advance oneself within the new social environment:

I am more involved now because I do not fear any form of harassment from the central authorities and also I have seen democracy to be a very good ideology as it come with opportunities in the economy, education and a better life for all, regardless of colour, creed or sex. So I am more involved because I want to ensure that my kids grow up in a suitable environment in which they will have equal opportunities with white children of SA when it comes to education

Many more, however, said that their level of political involvement had declined, and again a variety of reasons were given. Some expressed genuine disillusionment and cynicism of the new style of politics: representative democracy, as Rousseau argued, takes power away from 'the people'. One resident explained why he was less politically involved as follows:

I can see no reason to attend, because politicians are good at promising people and after we gave them the vote they will never come back to us and deliver what they promised us; what is interesting is that they will come to us and again demand our vote

An even more radical abstainer argued that

I will continue not to vote because what is the use of giving corrupt and incompetent people your vote because they don't worry about us ordinary people in the streets – so I will not give them my vote. I said these politicians are not giving a damn about ordinary people; all they are concerned with is their personal lives and those of their next of kin.

These respondents feel that the new democratic system has taken political power out of their hands, and put it in the hands of a new category of 'politicians' who are inaccessible to them. Others expressed disillusionment because of the failures of the new government to 'deliver' on material expectations, in particular jobs; or disillusionment based on the exposure of corruption and the affluent lifestyles of political representatives who had come out of their community and their liberation struggle – the infamous *waBenzi* class, as they are known in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa; in Port Elizabeth they tend to drive Audis or the top-of-the-range Volkswagen Jettas, the Volkswagen factory being one of the mainstays of the PE/Uitenhage economy.



Firstly I have lost confidence in the political process because of the lack of accountability and delivery, because what really happens is that we give these people the mandate to represent us but they don't seem to realise this and only take the opportunity to fill their pockets and those of their families. Secondly, the democracy we have today in SA has a bill of rights which clearly stipulates the rights of an individual, including the right to participate in party politics, unlike during the previous era when people were forced to take part in political campaigns. Therefore I believe our country is democratic and free now, so I have a right to be less involved in party politics and nobody can tell me what and when to do so. So I am free as an individual to carry on with my life

Others, however, saw the replacement of 'struggle' democracy by representative democracy as a natural and positive thing, as in

I have got political representatives to be involved for me, at least we have got the freedom to not need to be involved, we need to concentrate on our education and on developing our areas and the country

I am less involved because there are representatives we elected to carry our political aspirations in local, provincial and national governments

Leaders will be involved with politics for me; I voted for them

and other statements of a similar nature. These respondents saw the period of direct involvement in the 'struggle' as an unpleasant necessity, and appreciated its replacement by normal representative structures. Some were simply tired, bearing out the idea that it is difficult to sustain the energy and enthusiasm for political participation that is generated in 'revolutionary moments'; as one middle-aged woman said

I have been in the struggle for a long time now, I have to enjoy the fruits of my struggle, let the youth develop the country.

Another said that

I was more involved in politics in the time of struggle when we were fighting for the new South Africa; now that we have the new South Africa I just thought its time I give myself a break.

Sometimes this is linked to a consciously individualist philosophy - taking the opportunity to advance oneself through education, for example; at other times

it is expressed as a need to concentrate on personal lives, families and children:

I am less involved now because unlike ten years ago we people in the townships are not united and mobilised as they were during the apartheid era, and also the fact that we have a democracy now has caused us to pursue our own goals and empower ourselves as individuals, and not as it was then when we struggled for the emancipation of the nation

I am relying on the people I voted for to be more active; I am concerned with my family now

Even more interesting is the view expressed by a few respondents that there is relief from the 'hegemonic politics' of mass mobilisation and the related intolerance:

I am less involved now because of the democracy we are living in – because now we are not forced by the 'comrades' to go out to the streets and oppose the regime like we did in the pre-election era, and also the whole issue of corruption by public officials dampens my interest in politics as it made me see politicians as absolute liars

Such views indicate a qualitative change in the political culture of the township. The overriding collective imperative of 'the struggle' has been replaced with the notions of individual freedom and individual choice about levels of political involvement:

I am less involved now because I am not getting any younger anymore and also the democratic dispensation we have now allows one to be free and take part in whatever s/he wants. For instance, during the years of struggle every man was forced to fight the regime not considering if he wanted to take part or not, because if he didn't he would be called an *impimpi*<sup>24</sup> so now everyone has a democratic right to take part or not to take part in the political process – no one will force you to do what you don't want to do.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Barry Streek in review article 'Articulating Poverty', *Mail and Guardian* March 24 – 30 2000. Review of *Of Money, Mandarins and Peasants: A collection of South African poems about poverty*. Edited by Joanna Hemsley and Roy Blumenthal, resulting from the SANGOCO and *Homeless Talk* poetry competition. SANGOCO/Homeless Talk, 2000.

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<sup>2</sup> Kwazakele Survey 5, June 1999. See Appendix 5 for interview schedule and map. The sample was of 100 individuals, selected by identifying location co-ordinates on a map of KwaZakhele using a random number table. Respondents were over 25 years of age, and approximately half were men and half women, to reflect the demography of the area.

<sup>3</sup> Kwazakele Survey 5, June 1999, Interview D 18.

<sup>4</sup> For example, it was reported in the EP Herald on 11 November 1998 that an IDASA opinion poll showed 'shock poll statistics' and predicted that a high percentage of the electorate would not register and that there was a high level of 'apathy and indifference'.

<sup>5</sup> Kwazakele is divided into 24 voting districts, with an average of 2 300 voters per district. The IEC gives the actual population (eligible to vote) for these 24 districts as 64 148, with the number of registered voters being 58 983, or 92%. The number of votes cast in these 24 voting districts was 54 759, which is nearly 93% of the registered voters, or 85% of the actual eligible voters. The figures of numbers of votes cast are from the IEC website official election results for these 24 voting districts; the figures on population and registered voters are from IEC documents entitled 'Voter Registration: Port Elizabeth' and 'Municipal Registration Progress: Eastern Cape' supplied to me by the IEC Office in Port Elizabeth in November 2000. See also MAP 9.

<sup>6</sup> Kwazakele Survey 5, June 1999, Interview D 16

<sup>7</sup> Out of the survey respondents who voted, 5 voted for the PAC, 2 for UDM and 1 for AZAPO; 4 did not wish to disclose their vote; the other 78 voted for the ANC. The IEC results for Kwazakele polling stations show that between 92 and 97% of voters supported the ANC; 2-4% the UDM; 1-2% the PAC, and 0-1% AZAPO, except for two voting stations where AZAPO support was concentrated and which showed 2-3% support.

<sup>8</sup> In mid-2000, the DP and NNP formed the Democratic Alliance in an attempt to challenge the ANC's hegemony.

<sup>9</sup> Two survey respondents changed their vote from support for the ANC in 1994; one to the UDM, and one to the PAC.

<sup>10</sup> Election results for specific voting districts taken from IEC Election Results, 28/6/99, [www.elections.org.za](http://www.elections.org.za)

<sup>11</sup> Interview with SANCO PE sub-region Chairman Mike Tofile, 28 October 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>13</sup> It was reported in the *EP Herald* of 27 November 2000 that a 35-year-old man was stoned to death by a mob in Salamntu Street, Kwazakele by a mob after he was caught by 'a member of the community allegedly trying to rape a girl'. This was reported as being the sixteenth person to be killed by 'vigilante groups' in the Port Elizabeth townships in 2000. On 20 January 1999, the *Evening Post* reported the destruction by arson of the Sophakama High School in Kwazakele. The school's 900 pupils had to be relocated and accommodated in another school building. Even popular ANC politician Mike Xego's car was stolen in Kwazakele in February 1999 – which would have been unthinkable ten years before. See *EP Herald* 23/2/99.

<sup>14</sup> See Cherry, Jones and Seekings (1990) for comparison of Kwazakele with other townships in this regard.

<sup>15</sup> *Sjambokking* is an Afrikaans term describing the practice of thrashing someone with a quilt.

<sup>16</sup> Survey 5 June 1999, Interview P 3.

<sup>17</sup> Interview D5, 1999

<sup>18</sup> Interview

<sup>19</sup> Interview M1, 1999.

<sup>20</sup> Interview D 8, 1999.

<sup>21</sup> Interview D 12, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> Interview F3, 1999

<sup>23</sup> The *toyitoyi* is a militant form of demonstration, involving a group or crowd of people 'dancing' rhythmically in response to a chant. It was based on the military training of guerrillas in Zimbabwe and then in the camps of Umkhonto we Sizwe, and was widely adopted by mass organisations inside South Africa from 1985 onwards.

<sup>24</sup> *Impimpi* is the Xhosa term for 'spy', used to refer to anyone thought to be an informer or traitor to the liberation cause.

## **Chapter 10: Strong Democracy in an African Society**

Since the final Kwazakele survey was conducted, in May 1999, there have been a few political developments that are included here for the sake of completeness. The most important of these was the local government elections of 5 December 2000, which brought an end to the period of transition in South African politics. Here, the results of that election provide a conclusion to the study. Some conclusions are reached about the consolidation of democracy, the nature of democracy and the nature of political participation in Kwazakele at the end of a decade of transition.

### ***The local government elections of December 2000***

By the time of local government elections in December 2000, the ANC claimed that it had learnt from its mistakes in allowing its members to stand as independents in 1995. ANC spokesmen said that they had been in error to accommodate independents in 1995, and 'emphasised it would not repeat what it did in 1995 when those who had registered as independents were forgiven.'<sup>1</sup> However, it had clearly not learnt much about what had led up to the independents standing, as the same thing was to occur in the lead-up to the following local government election.

The shake-up around local government began in June 2000, when the ANC conducted a 'performance audit' of all its local government councillors. The ANC decided after its Fort Hare provincial general council that provincial leadership would 'screen' and then endorse all candidates standing for election. The idea was that the tripartite alliance partners would participate in this process, through the establishment of 'list committees'. ANC provincial secretary Humphrey Maxhegwana gave a sharp critique of ANC local leaders, saying that unlike in the 1995 elections, the ANC would not take any chances after many of those elected as councillors had acted in a way that had cost the organisation sizeable support. He criticised the way local ANC leaders

‘worked among communities’ as it was ‘creating a wedge between the organisation and the people’. He said that

Our performance as a province in the last election could be directly linked to the problems associated with the inability of councillors to respond to challenges they encounter within the communities<sup>2</sup>

In July, when the audit of local councillors was almost complete, there were predictions that there would be a ‘purge’ of councillors who had not performed adequately, or who were considered to be ‘careerist and opportunistic’.<sup>3</sup> Shortly after the Fort Hare conference, Mike Ndzotoyi, deputy chairman of SANCO in the Eastern Cape, said that most SANCO branches wanted to field their own candidates in the local government elections. In response to threats of SANCO breaking away from the alliance, ANC leaders ‘exhorted local ANC branches to take up more and more issues that have traditionally been the domain of the civics.’<sup>4</sup> On 18 July, SANCO regional spokesman Mike Tofile announced that SANCO would compete with the ANC and put up its own candidates for the newly-formed Nelson Mandela metropole<sup>5</sup>. Tofile said that SANCO was ‘not satisfied with the performance of ANC-led local government’. Former MPL Mike Xego tried to arrange a meeting with SANCO to resolve their differences, but this was unsuccessful.<sup>6</sup>

Between August and October, the ANC engaged in a complex process of forming the new lists of candidates for the upcoming local government elections. Despite the commitment to the process of candidate selection being an ‘alliance led’ process, tensions with SANCO in particular continued. SANCO accused the ANC of ‘delaying tactics’ in formulating the final lists, and the release of the list was delayed a number of times as last-minute negotiations took place. In the end, some important civic leaders were included on the ANC’s proportional representation list, seemingly as an accommodation of ‘civil society’ and a means of averting conflict. Mike Ndzotoyi was one of a few civic leaders of note to be included on the list. Interestingly, Ndzotoyi is one of those who has been brought back from Bisho, where he was employed in the provincial Housing Department, and redeployed to local government in Port Elizabeth. Together with Kwazakele

activist and former MPL Mike Xego, Civil Society Forum head and ex-civic activist Monde Mtanga, and SANCO Uitenhage hothead Aubrey Mali, he was placed high enough up on the ANC's list of proportional representation candidates to ensure his position as a metropolitan councillor. In this way, some of the individuals who could have played a leadership role in an independent, civic-based opposition have been ensured important roles by the ANC. In turn, the ANC is ensured of their continued loyalty. This may be effective in Port Elizabeth, but tensions in the townships of Uitenhage are even stronger and dissatisfaction with the existing councillors even greater than in Kwazakele.

SANCO held an extraordinary executive meeting in October where they adopted a policy of independence from the ANC. Mike Tofile said that 'Efforts to clear misunderstandings with the ANC failed dismally'.<sup>7</sup> SANCO leaders from the PEU metropole signed a 'record of understanding' with independent candidates in early November, a month before the municipal elections. They agreed to co-ordinate their election campaigns jointly. Forty-two ANC members registered with the IEC to stand as independents in PEU and EL metropolitan areas, most with the support of SANCO. They were threatened with expulsion from the ANC, with ANC media officer Phakamisa Hobongwana saying that 'All those who continue to defy the organisation will feel the rule of the ANC'.<sup>8</sup> Mawande Jubasi reported<sup>9</sup> that ANC branches were 'revolting against the imposition of councillors by the party's deployment committee' and that 'many veteran activists' were either standing as independents or joining other parties.

In the final analysis, the SANCO rebellion did not have much effect in Kwazakele. The tripartite alliance contained the conflict in Port Elizabeth townships by putting certain civic leaders on the party list, although branch members remained dissatisfied in some cases with their selection of ward candidates being overridden by the ANC regional leadership. However, loyal ANC branch leadership managed to contain the conflict and, where there were independents, they did not succeed in winning over a substantial percentage of voters. In Kwazakele, SANCO-aligned independent candidates

stood in four wards. Luvuyo Maqakaza contested Ward 19, the seat to which the ANC's standing councillor, Mcebisi Msizi, was redeployed. Despite the controversy surrounding his role as councillor for the area, and the fact that he still lives in Motherwell, Msizi gained an overwhelming 85% of the vote, with the independent Maqakaza gaining 472 votes, constituting 8% of the total. Small though it was, this 8% was the highest of any opposition candidate in Kwazakele. Lungile Ngona contested Ward 21 where Monwabisi Gomomo, the ANC Kwazakele 1 branch secretary, was put up as candidate. While Gomomo gained 93% of the vote, Ngona managed to get just under 4% of the vote. Although small, it was the largest opposition vote, as with the independent candidate in Ward 19. SANCO activist Monde Grootboom stood as an independent in this Ward which was won by ANC candidate Thando Ngcolomba. While Ngcolomba is an ANC Regional Organiser and was the chosen candidate by the ANC leadership, there was some opposition to his nomination by other residents of the area who favoured one of their local leaders, Mnyamezeli Mkoto, who withdrew under pressure from the ANC. Despite the unhappiness among branch activists about the imposition of a candidate by the ANC leadership, Ngcolomba had no trouble in securing 89% of the vote, with Grootboom getting 7.5% of the vote. Two other seats which border on Kwazakele were also contested by independents. However, the ward which includes Kwazakele hostel, and was so hotly contested in the 1995 election, was not contested by an independent or SANCO candidate in 2000. The ANC ward representative Mbuyiselo Madaka was redeployed to stand again for Ward 20. It seems that he gained the nomination as ward candidate through winning over the Matthew Goniwe hostel leadership. Despite some unhappiness within the ANC branch about the candidate selection process, Madaka has successfully courted the 'civil society voice' in his constituency and has, through the development process, become closer to the hostel residents. Madaka thus managed to gain 92% of the vote, with the largest opposition vote being for the UDM candidate – only 4.2%. The PAC's June Johnson, who stood in 1995 as well, gained only 23 votes in this ward. There was speculation, on the basis of the 1999 elections, that SANCO and the UDM had formed a 'secret alliance' and agreed that SANCO would not contest the ward. Yet the UDM's 234 votes did not show much growth over



the 1999 elections (see Chapter 9), and did not indicate any trend towards a significant voice of opposition to the ANC.

In the period leading to the 2000 local government elections, there were predictions of voter apathy as a reflection of disenchantment with the ANC (see Friedman 2000(c):31). There were also been reports of low voter registration, especially among youth.<sup>10</sup> However, registration in Kwazakele was high; while there has not been a great increase in registration since the 1999 election, there was already in 1999 a high poll.<sup>11</sup> There was a 65% poll in the election in the Kwazakele wards – higher than in other parts of the PEU metropole – although it was apparent that what voter apathy there was, was among the youth.<sup>12</sup> This was confirmed by the ANC branch leadership, who explained that

The youth say the vote does not have any impact on their lives. There are no jobs – so why should they vote? They abstain rather than voting for the opposition.<sup>13</sup>

The second issue of interest is the influence of the womens' vote at local government level. 15% more women than men registered for the 2000 elections. Womens' greater concern with development issues and local conditions, as well as the high rate of crime against women, was seemingly reflected at the polls in the higher level of participation by women. In Kwazakele, however, it was not reflected as a preference for women candidates. The ANC has made a clear commitment to gender equality, which is expressed in its policy of putting up women candidates on its proportional representation lists for election. Thus of the fifty-four candidates on the ANC's list for the Nelson Mandela metropolitan council, over half were women. Of the thirty-eight ANC members who were elected to the metropolitan council on the proportional representation vote, seventeen are women. Yet, none of the ward councillors who stood for election for the ANC in Kwazakele were women; and in fact only one ANC ward representative out of the thirty-four elected, is a woman. It would seem that where ward seats are hotly contested by ANC members and within the tripartite alliance, women are not able to make their presence felt in local politics. It is only with the intervention of ANC leadership that women are represented, and thus occupy so many positions

on the party lists. If it is true that women are most active at the local or neighbourhood level of politics, one of the key problems is how these women make their voice heard within their local organisations, and whether this voice is transmitted, in turn, to their leaders in local government.

### ***The consolidation of representative democracy***

In the early 1990s, Steinberg (2000:196 -7) concluded that there were two contradictory conceptions of democracy which co-existed in South African townships. One was the 'quasi-Rousseauian vision' of direct democracy that involves 'real participation and power'; the other was the limited but pluralist representative democracy, which he argued was the 'new logic'. The Kwazakele case study would seem in general to bear out the validity of his conclusion. Participation in structures of direct democracy has declined, and most residents participate actively through the conventional institutions of pluralist representative democracy: political parties and elections. The case study indicates that democratic consolidation has, according to the conventional measurements of political scientists, been remarkably successful.

It has often been noted that freedom and democracy are elusive, abstract notions – things that are not noticed in the daily business of survival, until or unless they are gone. They are felt more in their absence than in their presence. Kwazakele is now undoubtedly a free community. People are free to participate or not, politically or otherwise; to join or be active in political parties, or in a wide variety of organs of civil society, or not, as they wish. They are free to express political opinions – as illustrated by the respondents who were aligned to AZAPO:

There are no real jobs for the average Azanian, even if he or she is educated. Unemployment, crime and homelessness are rife, just look at the new squatter settlements since the ANC government took over. There is no delivery except on the 'gravy train'<sup>14</sup>

or to initiate development projects, as Dorothy Vumazonke and many other women have done. Residents are very aware of this freedom, and unusually

appreciative of democracy. This was strongly expressed in the second election survey, in 1999. But they also feel free not to participate politically, as many residents expressed clearly:

I am less involved now because there is no need to fight, as our people used to; also the fact that we live in a democracy ensures that you can live your life as you wish and no-one is pushing anyone to participate in party politics.<sup>15</sup>

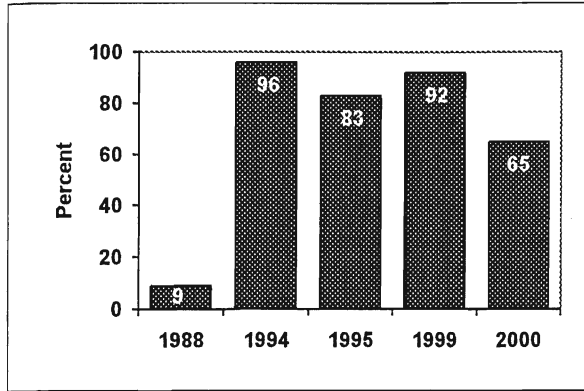
While general levels of political participation have declined, 'ordinary people' – in particular the African urban working-class who make up a significant proportion of the ANC's constituency – continue to participate enthusiastically in electoral politics, at both local and national level. Despite the overwhelming loyalty to the ANC, there are strong signs that democracy is 'healthy' in urban townships such as Kwazakele. Its health is manifest in a variety of forms of opposition to, or contestation of issues within, the ANC and the tripartite alliance. This opposition and contestation takes place within the ANC branches, within structures of civil society, and to a lesser extent, in the threat of support for opposition parties. Despite the weakness of the opposition parties, residents of townships such as Kwazakele 'reserve the right' to vote for an alternative political party. In addition, they are not afraid to challenge their elected representatives and hold them accountable, whether through their local branch meetings, or through mobilising direct action to make their feelings clear.

Parliamentary opposition leader Tony Leon has argued that the 'overriding political imperative in South Africa today is the need to consolidate and entrench substantive democracy'; the only way to do this and to prevent the ANC's continued one-party dominance is to form an opposition party which will reduce the ANC's vote to below 50%.<sup>16</sup> This is what the DP has attempted to do in its alliance with the NNP, forming the Democratic Alliance in mid-2000 in order to contest more effectively the local government elections. Yet it is clear that in the townships of the Eastern Cape, like Kwazakele, the DA has not made even a small dent in ANC support. Dissatisfaction with the ANC – which certainly exists – is channelled into votes for the UDM and the PAC; and, in the most recent elections, into votes for independent 'civil society'

candidates. Even so, the percentage of Kwazakele residents voting for candidates from parties other than the ANC, is tiny. More likely is that people will voice their dissatisfaction within the ANC and its alliance structures – sometimes in internal debate, sometimes in protest. This is the real opposition needed by the ANC – expressed not primarily as a political party opposition, but through ordinary people engaging in different ways with the governing party.

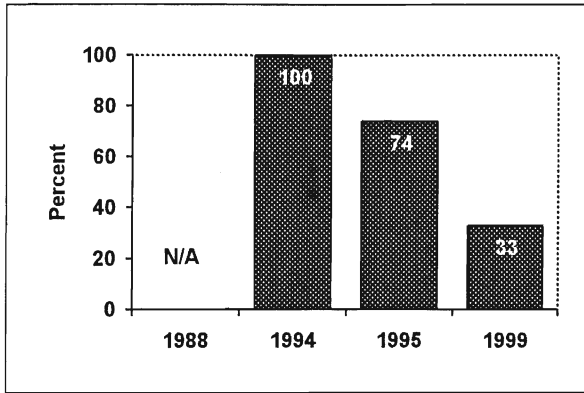
In their document 'Views of Democracy in South Africa and the Region', Bob Mattes and his colleagues from the project *Southern African Democracy Barometer* reach some rather pessimistic conclusions about the consolidation of democracy in South Africa. They find that South African citizens have not shown an increase in their support for democracy over the five years between the first and second elections, and that South Africans show lower levels of citizen interest and participation in politics than neighbouring countries. Their conclusion (Mattes et al 2000:ii) is that South Africa's culture of democracy 'failed to move to that higher plane that could help consolidate its new democratic regime'. The solution, they argue, is more civic education which 'teaches the value of democracy'; as well as the reform of representative institutions so as to encourage greater participation in the political process.

The findings of my research on Kwazakele showed, by contrast, that residents of this urban township have maintained a consistently high level of political participation. While some forms of participation – in particular in civic structures – have declined, others have remained remarkably high. In particular, levels of voting and knowledge about electoral preferences, in both local and national elections, has remained high from 1994-5 to 1999-2000. The local government elections saw a poll of 65% in Kwazakele – lower than the 1999 general election, but significantly higher than the overall percentage poll which was around 50%, and still indicative of high participation in a local election. In fact, the enthusiasm for local politics by the ordinary citizens of Kwazakele puts not only the white voters of South Africa, but the citizens of many Western democracies, to shame.

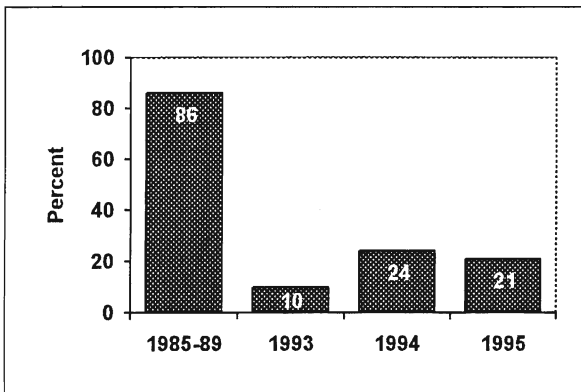


**Graph 1. Voting poll in Kwazakele elections**

Therefore, in relation to formal or representative democracy, it can be concluded firstly that the democratisation process has been successfully consolidated in urban African communities such as Kwazakele. The lack of an effective opposition party does not in itself indicate that democracy is weak, for residents of Kwazakele have demonstrated their ability to hold elected representatives to account by various means, as well as their commitment to change the party in power by electoral means if it fails to meet their expectations. Secondly, it can be concluded that not only have the citizens of this new democracy fully embraced the electoral process, but that they have an unusually high level of understanding of both the content and the process of politics at local and national levels. Moreover, although political participation has declined to some extent as politics has 'normalised', there is still a high level of participation in both electoral and non-electoral political processes. While some radical thinkers may argue that the forms of direct or participatory democracy of the popular movements of the 1980s have all but collapsed, it is evident that in Kwazakele there is a level of involvement in political campaigns and attendance of political meetings that would be the envy of many an established Western democracy. Residents also show a high level of understanding of the principles of tolerance, pluralism and freedom of organisation and expression that are necessary for the building of a democratic culture.



**Graph 2. Membership of political parties**

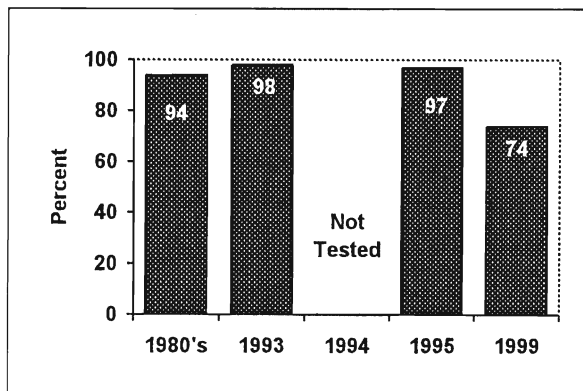


**Graph 3. Membership of political civil society**

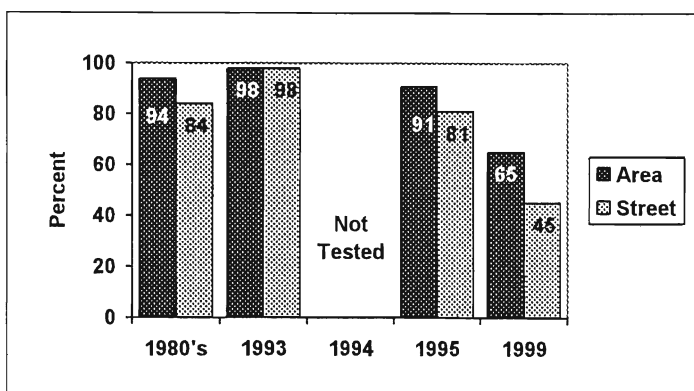
Yet to reach a conclusion that one vision (and the associated practice) of democracy has unproblematically replaced another is an oversimplification. As seen in the previous chapter, there is still a role for those grassroots structures that allow ordinary working-class citizens to participate around issues that affect them. The links between these structures and other 'formal' political processes are tenuous, to say the least. Whether the SANCO branch has any influence, whether the local councillor listens to what the street committee representative says, or whether the ANC branch ever calls meetings where area committee executives report back, is doubtful. Despite this, it is undeniable that ordinary people in Kwazakele have attained a level of participation and political awareness that is unusual in the most established pluralist democracies.

## ***The vision of participatory democracy***

Even if representative democracy has been successfully consolidated, as is argued above, we need to interrogate the extent to which a 'stronger' vision of democracy has been realised. Are residents of Kwazakele still realising the 'immense possibilities' – as Albie Sachs put it - of exercising power at local level, or have they been 'demobilised'? Has there been a decline in the vigorous and participatory civil society that emerged in the period of transition? Through analysing the transition to democracy in Kwazakele, it must be concluded that the answer is neither one of these two extremes. It can be argued that there is a healthy 'two level democracy'; while wholeheartedly embracing representative democracy, residents of Kwazakele have maintained organs of civil society that perform certain limited functions for them. The graphs below show that while membership of civic organisation has declined, the structures of direct democracy – the street and area committees – are still in existence for much of Kwazakele.



***Graph 4. Existence of civic organisation***



***Graph 5. Existence of street and area committees***

## **Government policy and public participation**

The vision of participatory democracy espoused during the 1980s was not altogether forgotten during the transition, and during the first five years of democratic government. It was apparent in the thinking behind the RDP, which encompassed the notion of 'people driven development'. It is apparent in the thinking behind the new local government legislation, outlined in Chapter 8, which aims to devolve power to local level and empower communities to 'take control' of development. Yet the practice of democracy by ordinary people has somehow been lost in the process of implementation of government policy.

This has something to do with the structures within which people participate. Thus civic organisations, which were never strong on internal democracy in the same way that trade unions were, have gone into even further organisational decline. Trade unions, while still strongly adhering to notions of democratic accountability and process, have also lost ground in terms of their weakening structural position. The RDP has lost its participatory aspect, and in many cases, such as has been seen in the case of Kwazakele, development is conceived of as infrastructure, which is implemented in the old 'top-down' manner. In terms of policy formulation, the idea of involving people at the 'grassroots' – which was debated in the 1989-90 period by the ANC and sympathetic academics inside South Africa in an initiative called the Centre for Development Studies – was given up and instead provincial governments such as the Eastern Cape became heavily reliant on highly paid expert consultants. Thus Friedman has recently argued the need for participation by ordinary people in policy formulation at local level. He notes (Friedman 2000b) that while 'white' civil society is 'vigorously exercising its democratic rights' 'black or non-racial' civil society, 'whose strength is meant to be one of our greatest democratic assets since it is said to offer people at the grassroots a means of holding government to account' is largely silent. He argues strongly that those who are most powerless – the shack dwellers, the single mothers in the townships – should be given a voice in public policy debates. This has been borne out strongly by some of the examples given in Chapter 7, which



illustrate the failure of government to solicit the participation of the poor in policy formulation.

As for implementation, many within the tripartite alliance still use 'RDP speak' in their conceptualisation of the relationship between government and the people in the implementation of development policy. The SACP's Blade Nzimande (2000:39) still talks the language of empowerment: 'Central to placing our economy on a development-oriented growth path is the empowerment of working people and the unemployed'. He sees one way of doing this as being through co-operative and 'other collective, community based ventures' which empower poor people involved in 'small scale, survivalist activities' to combine resources. This vision is reflected in, among many other initiatives in Kwazakele, the *rostlekoek* baking initiative of the Siyaphambili women's association, or the litter-collecting activities of the Solomzi and Vulindlela women's projects. Yet there is little indication of state support for such small-scale initiatives, or of their being integrated into a development programme of provincial or local government.

### **Inside or outside the governing party?**

In order to realise its vision of social transformation, there are within the governing ANC those who are now harking back to the days of extensive mass participation. Having too rapidly abandoned that particular conception of democracy, they are wondering whether it is not too late to reclaim at least some aspects of it. At the same time, there is a growing voice on the left of the ANC arguing for a radical oppositional social movement to ensure the implementation of democratic policies. Is the strong, participatory democracy to be built within the ANC, among members at branch level? Is it to be built within a re-invigorated alliance, with the ANC working in partnership with SANCO structures on the ground in townships and COSATU structures on the factory floor? Or is it to take the form of an oppositional left political party or radical social movement?

There are really two options for building a 'strong democracy' in South Africa, options which goes beyond the strengthening the existing multi-party

parliamentary system that is the option put forward by liberal critics of the ANC. One involves building democracy within the ANC and its alliance partners, assuming that the alliance will not fracture in the near future. This is the option favoured by the ANC itself, and involves the mobilisation of local community structures in partnership with the state and the governing party.

The ANC, which still commands the loyalty of the overwhelming majority of citizens in urban townships such as Kwazakele, has failed to realise the full potential of this high level of grassroots participation. Only recently has the ANC come to realise that it is becoming too conventional a political party, adopting the practices of the big parties of Western liberal democracies and losing the radical practices that inspired and empowered its supporters. As the transition process has come to an end, the ANC has attempted to put into place measures – both within the party and within government – to bring government closer to the people. It has realised the need to ensure that branch leadership are closer to their grassroots constituencies, and at the same time to ensure that local government is accountable and accessible within a development framework.

The other option involves building the strength and oppositional role of independent organs of civil society. This second option is favoured by civic activists and allied intellectuals, who have seen a more oppositional role for mass-based organisations. They argue – especially since the ANC's 'dumping' of its alliance partners and the RDP, and its adoption of the GEAR policy, that the potential exists for the formation of a new social movement in alliance with other social movements across the globe. In November 2000, during the local election campaign, president Thabo Mbeki delayed speaking at a public meeting in KwaNobuhle, Uitenhage, to avoid confronting the militant groups of dismissed workers, victims of human rights abuses demanding reparation, and women civic activists demanding services and jobs. Those protesting are all ANC members and supporters; while not loyal to any other political party, they are also involved with a variety of local-level campaigns or organisations.<sup>17</sup> Such incidents reflected the dilemma of the civic movement over its role in development in a democratic South Africa.

They demonstrate that the 'social movement' role of civics as a form of mass mobilisation, in opposition to or in protest against government policies, is not yet over.

Some advocates of this position, such as expelled SACP member Dale McKinley, argue that the ANC has deliberately suppressed popular working class initiatives, in order to ensure the stability of society for the neo-liberal agenda that has been imposed on it. Thus he argues (McKinley 2000) that

The strategy of seeking common ground with capital...for some kind of 'social contract' to drive the restructuring of an ailing South African capitalism has meant the containment of mass struggle and the delegitimisation of more radical policy alternatives emanating from the ANC's own constituency.

Similarly, Kwazakele activists argue that the 'masses have been bypassed' in the process of candidate selection, and that the inclusion of SANCO leaders is a cynical attempt by the ANC leadership to 'neutralise' radical working class leadership.<sup>18</sup> This position would seem to lead to the conclusion that the ANC cannot be the forum for the revival of mass participation. It is compromised by its role as governing party, controlling a state that is bound by the constraints imposed on it by global capital.

How does this debate relate to one of the central concerns of this thesis, which is the participation of residents of Kwazakele in grassroots structures of civil society? Firstly, with regard to participation in structures of popular power, the conclusion must be reached that levels of participation have declined; and that these structures have either collapsed or have substantially changed in nature. Whereas grassroots structures are still widely in existence in much of Kwazakele (see GRAPH>>>), which is a particularly well-organised and politicised community, these structures no longer play a role in terms of political power. They cannot thus be seen as an expression of a more radical form of democracy as envisaged by theorists of class power.<sup>19</sup> On the one hand, the rebuilding of these structures under the auspices of ANC branches to sustain the 'permanent mobilisation' of ordinary people is not likely to be successful, simply because most people do not want to participate in this way. On the other hand, the structural constraints posed by the global political

economy impose limits on the challenges that ordinary people can pose to the existing structures of power in the society. Ordinary people have scarce resources of time and energy, and will not waste them on endless political activity which has little impact. Yet, there is a sense in which such structures do still play a real role in empowering ordinary people to assert at least some control over their daily lives. They form a channel through which ordinary people can access those who have power, whether through political parties, civic organisations or local government representatives and employees. This empowerment is closer to the notion of active citizenship and 'strong democracy' as advocated by Barber and others.

### ***Development politics and global constraints***

The problems experienced now by residents of Kwazakele are not problems with politics in the conventional sense. They are 'development problems'; problems of power in the economic sense; problems that are 'overdetermined' by 'structural constraints' as we used to say. While there is certainly something to be said for local initiative, for 'civil society' and 'entrepreneurship' in contributing to development, it is not able to solve the primary problem facing this community: structural unemployment. In this respect, then, democracy is not and cannot be 'full' in the sense that we used to understand it in the 1980s – people cannot have complete control over all aspects of their lives when they have no access to resources, no control over the economy, no means of income. And yet – within the structural limitations that exist – there is as much democracy as people want. Or is there?

The perspective on development that argues in favour of local-level experience, knowledge and control of development processes, is still valid. The enormity of the development challenge facing South Africa – in particular the black townships – warrants that 'alternative' or 'grassroots' approaches to development are taken seriously – not only from an idealistic position, but also from a pragmatic one. Thus public participation is desirable on the one hand because it creates a more democratic society, which is a desirable end in itself in respect of protecting people's rights and encouraging more egalitarian

policies. On the other, it is desirable because local and provincial governments are having enough problems implementing 'top down' development policies as it is, without the active opposition of residents of local areas. To take the argument one step further, surely the active involvement of residents would enable the relevant local authorities to be more effective in their development planning and implementation?

There is a further argument in favour of encouraging participation, which is advanced by some of the more radical elements within the ANC and SACP. This position argues that popular participation is really about power, and that the concept of popular power advanced in the 1980s should be reviewed in the context of a democratic society. Popular power is seen as complementary to, rather than oppositional to, state power; and is seen as providing a support for, and a pressure on, the ANC to be responsive to its constituents in the face of strong countervailing pressures from global actors. This analysis is essentially a class analysis, which views power as class power: through popular participation, the working class can try to 'balance' the power of the ruling class, which is still capitalist. This view is reflected in the words of activists who argued in the 1980s that 'mere liberal democracy' was not enough; and in the words of Kwazakele residents today who observe astutely that while political power has been won, economic power has not.

Back in 1995, some left critics were arguing that the popular movement was 'in tatters, worn down by the transition process, emasculated by a totalising liberation movement, stripped of its best leaders by the new government and by capital...' (O'Connell 1995:19). Yet, at the same time, O'Connell noted that

the culture of mass organisation is deep-rooted and widely shared, even if many popular organisations and institutions that developed during the anti-apartheid struggle are in crisis, and even if the new government is uncomfortable with independent, popular initiatives.(O'Connell 1995:20)

The Kwazakele research would seem to bear this out. The networks of social organisation and mobilisation are still in existence, and could contribute towards the realisation – both in formulation and implementation - of more egalitarian and socially transformative policies.

## ***The nature of the ANC and the tripartite alliance***

Given the overwhelming loyalty of Kwazakele citizens to the ANC, the starting point is surely to look at the political culture and the nature of democracy inside the ANC itself. During the period of transition which is the subject of this thesis, the ANC has transformed itself from a revolutionary movement into a fairly conventional governing political party. How has it effected this transformation, and how has it coped with this transformation in terms of its internal political culture? Despite its own rhetoric, the ANC cannot be seen as a revolutionary party; nor as a movement of the poor. In the transition, the ANC has faced the danger of the retention of the more authoritarian aspects of revolutionary culture, while losing radical democratic aspects of that culture.

Within the ANC itself, the debate has been conducted not so much in terms of democratic culture, but in terms of power and transformation. Some leading intellectuals, such as the SACP's Blade Nzimande (1995:59) argued that the ANC should become the repository of 'popular power' and that civil society was the wrong concept to be using altogether. Others from a labour movement background argued that the ANC should be more like a trade union, with stricter membership rules, regular elections of leadership, and mechanisms for holding leadership to account.

In Kwazakele, as elsewhere in ANC-supporting townships around South Africa in the days of apartheid, the ANC was referred to as 'the Movement' while 'the Party' referred to only one party, the South African Communist Party. The ANC was a movement rather than a conventional political party, with multiple constituencies and organisational forms. It incorporated communities of exiles in various countries around the world, a tightly-organised guerrilla army, a small network of underground cells inside South Africa, and a mass support base, especially in African townships. After 1990, the ANC transformed itself from a broad-based liberation movement into a conventional political party for the purposes of elections. At the same time, it strove to maintain certain 'movement' characteristics – its broad, multi-class base; its ability to mobilise widely around certain issues; its hegemony in particular communities at 'grassroots' level. These characteristics are both

favourable towards democracy (in the sense that they encourage the involvement of 'ordinary people' and create space for internal debate and opposition) and unfavourable for democracy (in that they still hold to the old notion of hegemonic politics, with no space for opposition outside the movement).

The ANC itself does not perceive hegemony and democracy to be inherently contradictory. This is illustrated in its document, 'Cadre Policy and Deployment Strategy', in *Umrabulo* No 6, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 1999, where under the heading 'Winning Hegemony' it is stated:

In our participation in institutions – whether of the state or civil society – as cadres of the movement, we should have respect for the internal processes of the structures and institutions we are part of. Hence comrades who were part of the ANC underground in the unions during the 80s argued that they must respect and are bound by the democratic processes within the unions, even if the unions took a position different from the official line of the movement. Their responsibility was to pursue and win hegemony for ANC positions within the unions, not to impose those positions. (ANC: 1999:6)

A recent debate within the ANC posed the question of whether the ANC should be the organ of popular power at local level, and whether there was still a role for independent organs of 'political civil society', notably SANCO branches. One position (Makura 1999) argued that for 'people-driven development' to work, people had to be mobilised by the ANC into 'organs of popular power' which would be able to work with the state in implementing development policies, primarily through mobilising around the RDP in a 'popular movement for transformation.' This draws on Nzimande's conception of popular power, which sees 'organs of people's power' rather than 'organs of civil society' as the guarantor of democratic transformation. Hence Nzimande (1995:63) emphasizes that 'the conception of organs of peoples power expresses the unity of political and civic struggles in the era of the national democratic revolution.' Another related argument put forward was that the ANC should maintain its character as a movement, and should avoid falling into the trap of European or American style political parties that are hierarchical and mobilise membership only in support of leaders at election

time. The ANC has seen, since 1994, a drop in committed activist membership. Despite the ANC's claim that the Eastern Cape was the only province to show a 'consistent growth in membership' the membership figures do not reflect the active membership of a mass-based party. Although membership figures for the region doubled from 45 545 in 1997 to 104 611 in 1999<sup>20</sup>, it should be remembered that the ANC supporters in Kwazakele alone easily number 50 000. Most of those interviewed claimed to not only vote for the ANC, but to be members or to attend meetings and participate in campaigns. The energy and loyalty of these supporters is clearly not being tapped.

McKinley argues that 'The cumulative history of the ANC's leadership's political practice has gone a long way to emasculate the self-activity and self-emancipation of the mass of people who have given that very leadership its *raison d'être*.'<sup>21</sup> While he is perhaps overly pessimistic, there are other signs of popular discontent with the ANC's political culture. At a Freedom Charter memorial in Centenary Hall, New Brighton, in June 2000, ANC supporters criticised the leadership from the floor. They accused the ANC of 'paying lip-service to democracy, neglecting those who made sacrifices, creating divisions in branches and going to the people only when it was time for election.' Such criticism of the leadership is not often heard within the ANC. However, ANC national chairman 'Terror' Lekota acknowledged at the same meeting, 'ANC members had a duty to keep the leadership in check'.<sup>22</sup>

In other situations, internal opposition can take the form of more militant mobilisation, as with the marches and demonstrations outlined in Chapter 7. The ANC responds in contradictory ways to such mobilisation; from April 1994, ANC leaders have declared that 'The time for mass action is past' and condemned mass action as irresponsible and as promoting 'permanent revolution'.<sup>23</sup> As seen above, the ANC Kwazakele branch executive tried to dissuade people from participating in the SANCO march in 1995. However, some local ANC leaders acknowledge and accept the importance of mass mobilisation in order to hold leaders to account:



Is there a role for mobilisation of residents? ANC members and supporters should demonstrate; it is democracy in practice. People should make their voice heard, so that their grievances are attended to. These are the challenges which keep the ANC alive; we as the ANC need to respond to such issues.<sup>24</sup>

The SACP and COSATU retain their alliance with the ANC; yet as the ANC has been seen to abandon its commitment to socio-economic transformation in the form of the RDP, this alliance has inevitably come under strain. Once again, ordinary people are not excluded from this debate. The RDP was widely popularised at the time of the 1994 election, and most ANC supporters embraced its vision. While some development goals were met in Kwazakele in the 1994-9 period, residents do not see this transformation process as being complete. Some are optimistic that the RDP process will continue; others are somewhat sceptical, particularly in the light of the adoption of the macro-economic policy. The 'GEAR-RDP debate' was aired vigorously within branch structures, at the Sunday afternoon branch general meetings. A high percentage of the residents of Kwazakele surveyed said that they did attend general meetings on occasion. Even those who are not politically well informed or educated enough to understand economic policy seem to have some understanding of the issues. Yet, as shown in the residents' quotes above, dissatisfaction is unlikely to be channelled into militant mass action. Most ANC supporters show a remarkably sophisticated awareness of the constraints facing the government in terms of socio-economic delivery, and are not convinced – probably correctly – that any other party would be able to perform better than the ANC in this regard. There is little evidence among residents of Kwazakele that COSATU, whose members have even greater experience of participating in democratic organisational structures, has been an important influence on their political practices. Where it is likely to have had influence is in relation to the debate around socio-economic policy; in particular, in developing a critical consciousness among residents of the debate around the RDP and GEAR.

Thus even where COSATU or SANCO have organised mass actions to protest against some or other aspect of government policy, to demand job creation or protests against service charges, this is not perceived as being

antagonistic to the ANC, nor is there open condemnation of those who take part in such actions:

The COSATU march against service charges – I participated in that march, and in SANCO marches. We all participate; such actions are not perceived as being against the ANC itself.<sup>25</sup>

Yet the ANC itself retains some of the characteristics of a highly centralised and hierarchical revolutionary movement. As Barrell (2000) has noted, talk of 'disciplined comrades' does not fit easily with the modern, democratic political party that the ANC has become. There have also recently been contradictory indications of a movement towards tighter party organisation within the ANC. On the one hand, this is a response to the perceived corruption and ambition that has come along with liberal democracy and conventional party politics, and is an attempt by the ANC leadership to assert tighter control over public representatives, to ensure their accountability at least to the party that put them in positions of public responsibility. On the other hand, this can also be seen as an undemocratic tendency to turn the ANC from a movement-type of structure which can accommodate diversity and internal opposition, to a tight (communist) party type structure which demands discipline and crushes dissent. This tendency is reinforced both by the role of some SACP members within the ANC, and by the 'autocratic ethos' developed by the ANC in exile; Saul (Southall 2000:14) thus notes the importance of internal democratic processes within the Tripartite Alliance to 'bond it to its popular support base'.

Early in 2000, in preparation for the ANC National General Council meeting held in Port Elizabeth, ANC discussion documents acknowledged that although the party is based on the organisational principle of democratic centralism, this does not always work in practice. Proposals were made to 'modernise' the ANC and make it more centralised, partially in order to give leadership more effective control over party bureaucrats in provincial government, and unaccountable local councillors. (See Gumede 2000:33). While the desire to root out corruption and make officials and elected representatives more accountable is necessary for the consolidation of a healthy democratic culture, it could be rooted less in leadership decision-

making and more in local structures, such as ANC branches. One step towards this is the institutionalisation of Ward Committees, to hold local councillors to account. The role of branches in relation to ward committees still needs to be defined.

However, one ANC discussion document proposed the 'phasing out' of SANCO entirely in local government politics and proposing that the ANC should 'take over civic politics' entirely. This would involve ANC branches taking up grassroots concerns – to 'bolster the party's support base' as well as to 'stem populist tendencies and inculcate its tradition and culture at local government level.' The ANC went further to blame the failures of many local councils on the tension between ANC and SANCO at branch level, and on confusion between ANC and SANCO activities in the townships. This confusion resulted in a 'mechanical separation between the 'political' and 'civic' role of the ANC and SANCO branches respectively.' Despite the intention of the ANC to 'resolve its differences' and 'clarify its relationship' with SANCO before the end of year elections, it failed to do so.<sup>26</sup>

At the ANC's National General Council, held in July 2000 in Port Elizabeth, President Thabo Mbeki warned against the ANC degenerating into an 'election machine'; he noted that the ANC has an obligation to treat people as more than simply an electoral base. This meant changes in local government, in order to make local councillors more accountable to their constituencies. He went further than this, however, and argued that it was of 'central importance' to ensure that 'the masses of the people were continuously mobilised to achieve the aim of people-driven processes of change.'<sup>27</sup> Other speakers also emphasised the need for the ANC to go 'back to the masses'. ANC Secretary-general Motlanthe admitted that the tripartite alliance had been unsuccessful in mobilising 'the masses' behind development programmes, in order to improve the lives of ordinary people.<sup>28</sup> He acknowledged that relations with SANCO and COSATU have become increasingly tense as the ANC's policies are seen as not only having been unilaterally adopted by the government, but as leading to job losses and inner-city decay.

Yet 'continuous mobilisation' is surely not the answer, and nor is it possible, if we look at the reasons why citizens of Kwazakele are less politically involved now than in the past. It may be that a 'false dichotomy' has been posed between 'formal' politics of political parties and election campaigns, as in Western European liberal democracies, and the 'informal' politics of civil society. There are indications that while participation in civic structures has definitely declined, in many cases residents have transferred their involvement to ANC structures. These ANC structures are not only 'election machines' for the party leadership – although they do serve this purpose during election time – but they also serve as the vehicle for some forms of 'mass action' and popular political participation; such as in the anti-crime campaign and the anti-child and woman abuse campaign. Both had a high level of support and involvement from Kwazakele residents. This would seem to suggest support for Makura's idea of the collapsing of the division between the political and the civil. He gives (1999:16) as a similar example to Kwazakele a case study of a squatter area in Tembisa, where, it is argued

ANC activists have developed a unique and dynamic ANC branch characterised by its rootedness among the community. The organisational form of this branch has resolved the division between political and civic matters. These ordinary working class folks have resolved a major theoretical debate in practice. For them, there are neither 'two ANC's (one in government and the other outside) nor is there an ANC branch that is 'political' and not 'civic'.

The conclusion of such arguments is that there is no need for SANCO, as 'most local struggles are largely spontaneous initiatives of local people'; and that such struggles should be taken up most effectively by ANC branches, which are – or should be – more 'rooted' among local people.

The study of Kwazakele indicates support for these views in one respect. This is that ordinary residents do not make clear distinctions between civic and party issues and structures; where street committees are functioning, they are not clearly 'owned' by either ANC or SANCO. It does not make sense to attempt to duplicate such structures. Yet, it can also be argued on the basis of the Kwazakele research that the vision of some in the ANC, of revitalised civic-style branches, is not realistic. The continued or permanent mobilisation

of residents, as a 'disciplined cadres of a revolutionary movement' to use the ANC's language, is neither likely nor desirable. Many residents of Kwazakele expressed a desire to be personally free of such collective pressure.

Is there is 'middle position' between a population that is constantly mobilised, and one which is apathetic in the main, participating politically only at election time? Surely there is; it is this space, for active, involved, empowered citizens to play a role in directing their lives, which needs to be explored by both political and civil society organisations.

Barrell (2000:25) has interpreted the moves towards greater centralisation and 'cadre training' within the ANC as 'profoundly undemocratic', with the unstated but underlying message that 'no legitimate political expression can occur outside the ANC's ranks' Southall (2000:33) has argued that robust criticism and debate of the ANC should be encouraged both within the ANC and within civil society. This requires both that the ANC and its alliance (including SANCO) strengthen their internal democratic procedures, and that the 'the vibrancy and weight of civil society organisations' is revived to enable them to play a critical role in 'counter-balancing government.' The ANC's response has to been to build the idea of the 'new cadre' who is a true, selfless revolutionary.<sup>29</sup>

So what is happening on the ground, in townships like Kwazakele, which are the heartland of ANC support? There are indications that the ANC is grappling with these issues, and taking some steps to make leadership more accountable. The ANC has recognised the distance between elected representatives at national and provincial government level, and their constituencies. They have thus delegated representatives at both levels to 'serve' particular geographic constituencies, even though they were not directly elected by them. Thus long-standing Kwazakele activist and MP Ivy Gcina has been deployed to Kwazakele, together with Eastern Cape MPL Johnny Makgatho.<sup>30</sup> It is too early to assess how, and whether, residents can effectively access these representatives in a way in which policy outcomes for Kwazakele can be affected. ANC branches are also being restructured, and ward committees created to make councillors more accountable and

accessible to membership. These parliamentary representatives are meant to work together with local government representatives and their ward committees to ensure that the voice of residents is heard and their development needs co-ordinated.

The possibility of a new left party, or alternatively a reinvigorated 'social movement alliance', has been raised by a number of left critics of the ANC government. Left intellectuals and activists within the labour and civic movements, as well as independent left academics such as John Saul and Jessica Piombo, have articulated this view. Saul notes that 'the popular forces are at a low ebb' and quotes Shamin Meer that 'A striking feature of the post-election period has been the demobilisation of civil society.' Despite this demobilisation, Saul (2000) argues that the rebuilding of an 'effective popular movement' does not have to 'start from scratch.' This is because, in the townships, there are 'circles of township militants, focused on issues of schools, health facilities and services' and that in addition there is some 'fledgling reactivation of grassroots women's organisations'<sup>31</sup> Patrick Bond (1994) has taken this argument even further, seeing the potential for a left social movement in South Africa linking in with a broader, global social movement against neo-liberalism and the aspects of globalisation most destructive for developing societies. Yet this is not likely to take the form of mass mobilisation which is oppositional to, or threatening to the state; the democracy that is in place is still strong enough to provide meaningful participation by dissatisfied citizens. Thus Lodge (1996:204) writes that

Such challenges are not inevitable; for a while, at least, they can be averted by imaginative leadership and by public faith in the democratic process itself – if people feel that they can make meaningful choices in elections, then they are less likely to contemplate rebellion.

From the case study of Kwazakele, it can be concluded that it is true that there is a strong basis for grassroots organisation around material issues. The social and political networks are still in place in many areas, and people's level of understanding of their economic and political environment is high. Yet this movement taking the form of an organised opposition to the ANC is

unlikely. Loyalty to ANC is very strong; ANC has articulated a clear position with regard to accommodating dissent within its ranks, and ensuring that grassroots opposition does not undermine the state:

Mass involvement is therefore both a spear of rapid advance and a shield against resistance. Such involvement should be planned to serve the strategic purposes, proceeding from the premise that revolutionaries deployed in various areas of activity at least try to pull in the same direction. When 'pressure from below' is exerted, it should aim at complementing the work of those who are exerting 'pressure' against the old order 'from above.'<sup>32</sup>

Jeremy Cronin, back in the 'interregnum', emphasised that mass action should not be used by the ANC as a tap that could be turned on and off to its own advantage. Instead, he argued,

...we need to encourage, facilitate and build the kind of fighting grassroots organisations that can lead and sustain a thousand and one local struggles against the numerous injustices our people suffer...Democracy is self empowerment of the people. Unless the broad masses are actively and continually engaged in struggle, we will achieve only the empty shell of a limited democracy.<sup>33</sup>

While looking to local initiatives and 'issue-based' campaigns or organisation is a positive step, the limitations of such organisation should nevertheless be realised. The state, which is firmly controlled by a political party that commands the loyalty of most citizens, is still the key actor in development. The state itself is acting under severe constraints, and the grassroots initiatives to change things at local level do not have the potential to challenge power relations in society in any fundamental way.

Yet there are important indications that the ANC – both on its own and together with its civil society alliance partners – is beginning to be aware of its lost opportunity to build a strong, participatory democracy. Thus Saul notes that within the alliance, there are moves against the tendency to bureaucratisation, coming from the 'middle level' of the organisations. It has also been reflected in *Umrabulo* debates and in preparations for the ANC's National General Council held in April 2000 in Port Elizabeth. More recently, it has emerged in the debates within the Tripartite Alliance at the summit in

September of this year. Saul (2000b) has noted that despite the constraints on the type of radical social transformation hoped for in South Africa, there are signs that 'the left is beginning to reclaim space of to regain its self-confidence.' Bloch (2000) responded that there is indeed a space for the poor to organise and engage with government.

### ***Continuities and discontinuities***

What of democratic empowerment, and democracy itself? Something has been gained, and something lost. There is some continuity in the experience of democracy. People – even those previously unenfranchised or disenfranchised – do not have no experience of democracy when they enter a 'new democracy' after a transition from authoritarian rule. In South Africa, Africans in the Eastern Cape experienced democracy in various ways in the period before the banning of the liberation movements.<sup>34</sup> They also experienced democracy in other ways during the period of 'mass insurrection' of the mid-1980s. In Chapter 4, there was an exploration of how people in Kwazakele experienced this historical 'moment' of great turmoil with some elements of direct democracy. Greil Marcus (1996) has explored how ordinary people are 'written out' of the history of such moments, and find a voice only in popular culture, if they are lucky. He explores how people's experience of 'making history' themselves – of being actors, not passive bystanders – in history – gives meaning on a 'grand' level to people's lives.

The lives of working people in peaceful, representative democracies are largely devoid of heroism, of the feeling of having the power to change society, to 'make a difference'. This is one reason why militarism and the 'cult of war' are so powerful in our society, with its anti-colonial and Cold War conflicts. For our parents' generation in Europe, their identity was defined by their role in 'the War'; it was the same for their parents' generation. Yet surely we should not only be focussing on the remembering of the glories of war – the violence of the struggle for liberation – as epitomised by the military parade in Umtata to mark Freedom Day on 27 April 1999? Where we remember the violence and the intolerance, it should be to acknowledge their



tragedy and pain; not to glorify them. But it should not be forgotten that there was a democratic and participatory tradition in the liberation struggle; perhaps it must be conceded, reluctantly, that such forms of participation cannot be sustained in an 'ordinary' democracy; that such extensive and enthusiastic participation is the produce of extraordinary times. Rousseau's model of direct democracy can only work on a small scale, and under conditions of hegemony, as described for Kwazakele. When looking at the question of whether participation has been 'taken forward' from the tradition of struggle into the new South African society, many people have asked whether that tradition was in fact democratic. The extensive participation characteristic of highly mobilised communities is not inherently democratic, it is argued; and thus is only appropriate to periods of political upheaval. Yet from the responses of both residents and activists of Kwazakele, as detailed in Chapter 4, it is apparent that there was a strong democratic agenda present, and a sense in which ordinary people were empowered in a way that can only be good for 'strong' versions of democracy.

## ***Conclusion***

What can be concluded about levels and forms of political participation in Kwazakele? It is clear that the days of 'direct democracy' in local structures such as street and area committees, and of 'mass action' to put pressure on government to meet demands, are by-and-large over. However, this does not mean that the residents of Kwazakele are politically apathetic or ignorant. On the contrary, they participate enthusiastically in the new democracy, primarily through the electoral process, but also through campaigns and meetings in their local areas, organised primarily by the ANC. It is perhaps time to look at a new, extended version of democracy – one that overcomes both the weaknesses of the democratic process in Western democracies and the intolerance of 'revolutionary' democracy, and replaces them with a vibrant political culture in which all citizens can feel at home.

What kind of democracy has emerged at the end of the transition in South Africa? It is posited here that the legacy of struggle and the experience of

ordinary people have meant that the form of democracy and the participation therein are somewhat more than the minimum of representative or 'thin' democracy. The type of democracy is not fundamentally at odds with representative democracy, however. It does not challenge the class base of society, and does not hold to Lenin's notion that true democracy is not possible until there is a classless society. It does draw on theories of democracy that emphasise a greater degree and quality of citizen participation. These theories include those which emphasize citizenship, such as Barber's 'strong democracy'; Young; and Moore Lappe. It draws on feminist theories such as Pateman and Phillips, which emphasise participation in political processes, and the conditions under which such participation can occur. It draws on the theory of developmental democracy in Held's model, as well as in the participatory theories of post-development theorists such as Korten, applied to South Africa by Roodt among others. It draws on those theorists who pose the need for a strong civil society to balance a strong state, as well as those who argue that social movements or non-institutionalised means of protest are an important supplement to representative or institutional forms of political participation – to hold elected representatives to account and to keep political parties 'on their feet.'

When we go back to look at the vision of strong or participatory democracy that was held so dear in the 1980s, it is clear that an opportunity has been missed. The case study of Kwazakele shows a community in which the optimal conditions for direct and participatory forms of democracy existed. There was a culture of political participation by ordinary people, and a brief moment of popular power when these ordinary people felt genuinely empowered. This moment was but a moment; it was brief and transitory, and the democratic culture it embraced was limited. Even so, this culture was gradually lost in the transition to democracy. The fragile and compromised nature of the transition meant that radical notions of power were perceived as threatening to the new government. Political leadership failed to take advantage of the culture of political participation in order to build a strong democracy, to use Barber's concept of citizenship.

In other respects, though, democracy is strong in Kwazakele. From the results of the numerous surveys conducted there over the past five years, there is little doubt that the pluralist, representative model of democracy has been thoroughly accepted and institutionalised. There is also a chance – a slim chance, but a chance nevertheless – that leaders in political and civil society will seize what remains of the opportunity that still exists, in order to build a deeper and stronger kind of democracy. A democracy in which ordinary people, including the poor, working class African women of Kwazakele, will be truly empowered to take control of their own lives.

Perhaps a community like Kwazakele – which still maintains very high levels of community solidarity at local or neighbourhood level, but which also holds the democratic rights of individuals in high appreciation – can be something of a model for this new democracy, whatever its flaws and whatever the structural constraints under which it operates.

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<sup>1</sup> *EP Herald* 25/10/2000.

<sup>2</sup> *Evening Post* 26/6/2000 and *EP Herald* 26/6/2000.

<sup>3</sup> ANC Head of Policy, Jeff Radebe, at ANC National General Council meeting in Port Elizabeth; reported in *EP Herald* 14/7/2000.

<sup>4</sup> Gumede 2000:33

<sup>5</sup> The metropole combines the municipal areas of Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Despatch, together with some of the peri-urban areas that used to fall under the Western District Council, into one local authority.

<sup>6</sup> *Evening Post* 18/7/2000 and *EP Herald* 19/7/2000.

<sup>7</sup> *EP Herald* 6/11/2000

<sup>8</sup> See Peter Dickson, 'ANC loses SANCO support in Eastern Cape' in *Mail and Guardian* October 27 to November 2 2000, and 'E Cape ANC outraged as 42 members stand as independent' in *Mail and Guardian* November 3 to 9, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> *Sunday Times* 12/11/2000

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<sup>10</sup> *EP Herald* 26/10/2000.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Also see IEC Port Elizabeth documents, showing actual population, census population, numbers of registered voters in 1999, and numbers of additional voters in 2000.

<sup>12</sup> I visited two polling stations on 5 December 2000, the Kwazakele High School station and the Ebhongweni Primary School station. At both, there were queues of elderly people waiting to vote, but relatively few young people. I have not been able to obtain a detailed breakdown of voting by age and sex.

<sup>13</sup> Mkhululi Kobe, Chairperson of the interim ANC 'Panki Dobo branch' structure, December 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Kwazakele survey 5, 1999, Interview M1.

<sup>15</sup> Kwazakele survey 5, 1999, Interview M14.

<sup>16</sup> *Sunday Times* 25/6/2000

<sup>17</sup> *EP Herald* 25/11/2000. See also 'After the hoopla, the people will speak' in *Mail and Guardian* December 1 – 7 2000.

<sup>18</sup> This view was expressed by Mkhululi Kobe of the ANC Panki Dobo branch in Kwazakele in December 2000.

<sup>19</sup> This notion of power has been expressed by Raymond Suttner and Blade Nzimande, both communist intellectuals within the ANC/SACP alliance.

<sup>20</sup> Figure given by ANC secretary general Kgalema Motlanthe in his report to the ANC's National General Council in Port Elizabeth in July 2000. Quoted in *EP Herald* 13/7/2000.

<sup>21</sup> *Mail and Guardian* February 25 – March 2 2000

<sup>22</sup> *Evening Post* 27/6/2000

<sup>23</sup> See Cherry 1994 for a detailed discussion of the demobilisation of labour and civic movements in the Eastern Cape after the 1994 elections.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with ANC branch secretary Kwazakele 1, Monwabisi Gomomo.

<sup>25</sup> Gomomo.

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<sup>26</sup> See Sechaba kaNkosi, 'ANC councillors jostle for posts' in *Mail and Guardian* June 15 to 22, 2000; David Makura in *Umrabulo* No 7, 1999; as well as the position papers in *Umrabulo* June 2000 including 'ANC – People's Movement and Agent for Change' and 'Organisational Democracy and Discipline in the Movement'.

<sup>27</sup> *EP Herald* 13/7/2000.

<sup>28</sup> *EP Herald* 13/7/2000 and *Evening Post* 13/7/2000; see also Jaspreet Kindra, 'ANC seeks to mend fences with its alliance partners', *Mail and Guardian* July 14 – 20, 2000.

<sup>29</sup> See 'Organisational Democracy and Discipline in the Movement' as well as Patrick Cull, 'ANC needs another 'revolution' – *EP Herald* 30/6/ 2000

<sup>30</sup> *EP Herald* 4/8/1999.

<sup>31</sup> See Saul in *Mail and Guardian* September 15-21 2000; also see Jessica Piombo in *Mail and Guardian* November 24 – 30, 2000, and articles by Glenda Daniels and Sean Jacobs and Lynne Abrahams, which she discusses, all part of the *Mail and Guardian* debate.

<sup>32</sup> 'The State, Property Relations and Social Transformation: A Discussion Paper towards the Alliance Summit' in *Umrabulo* No 5, 1998.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Saul 1993:175; from *Work in Progress* No 84, September 1992.

<sup>34</sup> See Cherry 1999, 'Traditions and transitions', for a detailed discussion of the experiences of Africans in Port Elizabeth in the apartheid era.

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## List of Interviews

(All interviews conducted by Janet Cherry)

**Mark Anstey**, Professor and head of Industrial Relations Unit, University of Port Elizabeth; Regional Director of Monitoring, Independent Electoral Commission, Eastern Cape, 1994. Interviewed at University of Port Elizabeth, 22 November 2000.

**Glenn Goosen**, Chairman of the Executive of the Port Elizabeth Transitional Local Council, 1994-5; ANC Eastern Cape Regional Treasurer, 1991 – 1994. Interviewed at my home, Port Elizabeth, 18 November 2000.

**Monwabisi Gomomo**, Branch Secretary, ANC Kwazakele 1 branch. Interviewed at the ANC Constituency Office, Enkuthazweni Community Centre, Kwazakele, 28 October 1999.

**Mkhuseli Jack**, businessman, former president of PEYCO and consumer boycott leader in the 1980s. Interviewed at his home in Mount Pleasant, 12 August 1993.

**Hintsa Brian Klaas** ('Oom Klaas'), Chairman, ANC Kwazakele 2 branch. Interviewed at home, 2720 Site and Service, Kwazakele, 31 July 2000; and follow-up discussion with Oom Klaas, Shooter Mkongi and **Mkululi 'Khusta' Kobe**, the chairperson of the interim ANC structure for the Panki Dobo branch, on 9 December 2000. This discussion took place at Khusta's shack in the Tambo Village informal settlement in Kwazakele.

**Sipho Kohlakala**, Development Officer with the Housing Department of the PE Municipality. Member of the ANC, serving on the ANC Land Committee. Formerly the chair of the ANC Housing Department in PE; PEBCO activist in the 1980s; SANCO education department head in early 1990s. Appointed as a TLC Councillor from 1994 until the elections in November 1995, when he did not stand for election. Interviewed 19 July 1993 and 22 October 1999 in Port Elizabeth.

**Mbuyiselo Madaka**, ANC member and councillor for Ward 24, 1995 - 2000. Re-elected as councillor for Ward 20 of the Nelson Mandela Metropole, December 2000. Went into exile in the late 1970s, returned in the early 1990s to Port Elizabeth. Interviewed at Ward Office, Matthew Goniwe Village, Kwazakele, 26 October 1999.

**Kholekile Mhlana**, former political prisoner and civic activist involved in rebuilding street and area committees in the late 1980s; after 1990 ANC Regional Executive Committee member; grew up in Kwazakele. Interviewed in Port Elizabeth, 14 July 1993.

**Thami 'Shooter' Mkongi**, member of ANC Kwazakele 2 branch, former trade unionist, PEYCO member and underground ANC activist. Interviewed at his father's home, corner of Gaika and Morongo streets, Emagaleni, Kwazakele, 18 July 2000.

**Monde Mtanga**, Chairman of the Civil Society Forum in Port Elizabeth. Interviewed at the offices of the Civil Society Forum, Brister House, Govan Mbeki Avenue, Port Elizabeth. Monde is a former PEYCO and PEBCO activist, and was influential in SANCO after its formation in 1992. He was elected to the council of the Nelson Mandela Metropole in December 2000.

**Mike Ndzotoyi**, Eastern Cape government housing department, ANC leader and SACP Political Commissar; SANCO housing, land and services department head in the early 1990s; together with Mike Xego negotiated the electrification of Kwazakele; currently deputy chairman of SANCO Eastern Cape region. Former political prisoner and PEBCO leader. Elected to the council of the Nelson Mandela Metropole in December 2000. Interviewed in Port Elizabeth, 14 July 1993.

**Alex Bonakele Rala**, former political prisoner from Kwazakele High group sentenced in 1977; released 1982, served on PEYCO executive; escaped from detention in 1986 and joined Umkhonto we Sizwe in exile; returned to Port Elizabeth in early 1990s. Interviewed in Port Elizabeth, 12 November 1993. Alex died unexpectedly in 1999.



**Mike Tofile**, SANCO Port Elizabeth sub-region chairman, former PEBCO activist, interviewed at the SANCO sub-regional head office, New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, 28 October 1999.

**Hilda Tshaka**, ANC Womens League activist in the 1950s. Interviewed at home in Kwazakele, March 1988. Mrs Tshaka died in Port Elizabeth on 20 May 2000, three weeks short of her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. She joined the ANC in 1950, was arrested with her husband and son in 1965, and banished to Keiskammahoek in the Ciskei on her release. She returned to Port Elizabeth where she lived in Kwazakele until her death. She was one of fifteen South African women honoured by the Indian High Commissioner to South Africa in 1988 for her 'tireless efforts in the struggle'. (*EP Herald* 26 May 2000)

**Dorothy Nombetesho 'Revelation' Vumazonke**, resident of 10194 Site and Service, Maqanda Road, Kwazakele. Interviewed at home, 10 November 1999.

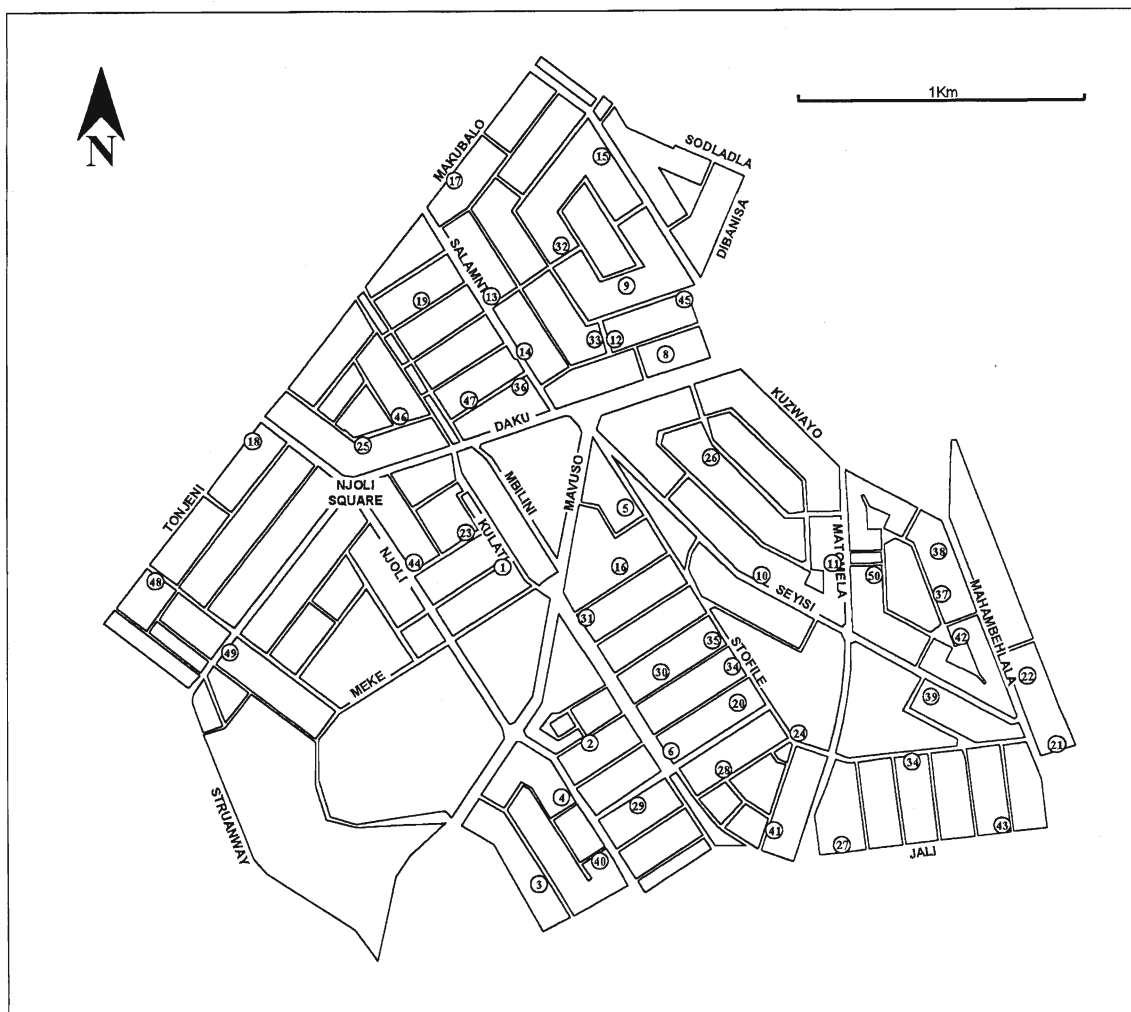
**Mike Xego**, former political prisoner from Kwazakele High group sentenced in 1977; PEYCO leader in 1980s; elected to ANC Regional Executive Committee in early 1990s; elected to Eastern Cape provincial legislature in 1994; elected as councillor on the Nelson Mandela Metropole, December 2000. Interviewed in Port Elizabeth, 15 November 1993.

# The Kwazakele Surveys

Interviewers: Pumla Jwambi, Amanda Mqoboli, Daliwonga 'Marx' Zweni, Dumile Damane, Masande 'Fiks' Dlali, Alex Rala, Kholekile Mhlana, Feya Njokweni.

## Survey 1

Conducted in 1993. Fifty residents of Kwazakele, randomly selected according to households situated in different areas of the township.



Map 10. Kwazakele survey 1 interview locations

## Survey questionnaire:

1. Street
2. Family size
3. Age and sex of interviewee
4. Occupation
5. What do you remember about the 1980s? (This is an 'open' question – don't try to get any particular information; it is just to make the interviewee feel relaxed and will give you an idea of what sort of view they have of politics etc)
6. Were you a member of any organisation? Which one? (NB: At that time: Questions 6 onwards refer to the past, the 1980s).
7. Did you support any organisation/s, even if you weren't a member? Which ones?
8. Which organisations were strong in this area? (name as many as you like)
9. Do you remember/know of PEBCO? Did PEBCO have a committee here? What did it do?
10. Was there an area committee for this area? If yes, then
  - What did it do? (Give examples of issues it dealt with, or campaigns it co-ordinated)
  - How was it formed? (Was it elected? Who served on it?)
  - Who did it represent? (Whose interests – ie only those who supported ANC, PEBCO, UDF? Or all residents?)
  - Did it effectively represent the residents in this area?

11. Was there a street committee in this street? If yes, then

- What did it do? Give examples of issues it dealt with, or campaigns it co-ordinated
- How was it formed?
- Who did it represent?
- Did it effectively represent the residents in this street?

12. What was the relation between the street/area committees and the 'resistance' going on at the time?

13. Were people in the street/area committee detained by the police? Did anything else happen to them?

14. Did these structures help people in your street/area by:

- Mobilising against the government?
- Dealing with your problems?
- Teaching people about politics?
- Building democratic structures/an understanding of democracy?

(Tick as many as people agree with. You might have to explain them, but not in such a way as to influence people's response)

15. How long did the street/area committee last? (roughly what period?)  
Does it still exist?

16. If it still exists, how has it changed?

- What does it do now?
- Who is involved with it?
- Do you think the street/area committees were/are a good thing?

17. Does SANCO operate in your area? If so,

- What structures does it have now?
- Who is involved with it?
- What issues does it take up?
- Do you think civic organisations (SANCO etc) are a good thing?
- Are you a member of SANCO?

18. Do you think these structures will still be needed when we have a democratic government? Why?

19. Do any other organisations exist in this area?

- Political organisations/liberation movements, eg ANC, PAC, AZAPO, IFP, DP (note which ones)
- Any other organisations (Youth, church, women's groups etc)

20. What is the difference between the political organisations (eg ANC) and the civic organisations (eg SANCO/PEPCO)?

## Survey 2

Conducted in May 1994. Fifty residents of Kwazakele, randomly selected according to households situated in different areas of the township.



Map 11. Kwazakele survey 2 interview locations

## Survey questionnaire:

### ***A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS***

1. Address
2. Age
3. Gender
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
4. Education
5. Occupation
6. First language
  - a. Xhosa
  - b. Other (specify)
7. Other languages
  - a. English
  - b. Afrikaans
  - c. Xhosa
  - d. Other (specify)
8. Are you a member of a political party/organisations?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

If yes, which one?

9. Are you a member of any other organisation?

- a. Trade Union (if yes, which one?)
- b. Civic (if yes, which one?)
- c. Church
- d. Sports club
- e. Other (if yes, please specify)

**B. ELECTION**

10. Did you vote in the election?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If not, why not?

11. How did you feel about voting? Why? (open question)

12. Did you have any problems voting?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, what problems? (please elaborate)

- i. Identity documents
- ii. Illiteracy (couldn't read the ballot)
- iii. Confusion (didn't understand the process)
- iv. Fear/intimidation
- v. Transport, time off work or other practical problems]



vi. Lack of information (didn't know who to vote for)

13. What did you vote for? (tick only one)

- a. The National government
- b. The Provincial government
- c. Both the National and Provincial governments
- d. The Local government
- e. The President
- f. All of the above

14. If you voted for both the national and provincial governments, did you vote for the same party each time?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If no, please say why you voted for a different party.

NOTE: Respondents do not have to answer the following questions if they don't want to.

15. Which party did you vote for for the National Government?

16. Which party did you vote for for the Provincial Government?

### **C: EXPECTATIONS**

17. How do you think South Africa will be different after the elections?  
(open question)

18. Do you think that your life will be different under the new government?

- a. No, it will be the same
- b. Yes, it will be worse

c. Yes, it will be better

If (b), in what way? (open question)

If (c), in what way? (open question)

19. If the new government does not do what you want, what can you do about it? (open question)

20. Do you think people will still need trade unions or civic organisations after the election?

a. Yes

b. No

Why? (open question)

### Survey 3

Conducted in May 1995. Fifty residents of Kwazakele, randomly selected according to households situated in different areas of the township.



Map 12. Kwazakele survey 3 interview locations

**Survey questionnaire:**

**A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS:**

1. Name of street
2. Age of respondent
3. Gender
4. Education level
5. Occupation
6. First Language
7. Other languages
8. Are you a member of any of the following: (Please tick all that apply)
  - a. Trade union (if yes, which one)
  - b. Civic organisation (if yes, which one)
  - c. Church
  - d. Sports Club
  - e. Other (specify)
9. Are you a member of a political party or organisation?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
10. If yes, which one?

**B: ORGANIZATIONS IN YOUR AREA:**

11. What political parties are active/have branches in your area? (Please tick off all the parties that apply)

ANC/AZAPO/DP/IFP/NP/PAC/Other (specify)

12. If you are a member of a political party (ie answered yes to Question 9), how do you participate in this organisation? (This applies for the period of the past year, not before) Please tick all that apply:

- a. Paid membership dues/subscription fees
- b. Voted for it in the general election
- c. Attended meetings
- d. Sat on a committee or executive
- e. Participated in activities (marches, campaigns etc)
- f. Other (Please specify)
- g. None of the above

13. Is the executive committee of the branch of this party in your area

- a. Elected by everyone who lives in the area (If so, how?)
- b. Elected at a mass meeting by a show of hands
- c. Elected by the members by a secret ballot
- d. Chosen by a small group
- e. Self-appointed
- f. I don't know

14. Is the branch of the party in your area

- a. Good at solving people's problems
- b. Sometimes helps people but cannot always solve their problems

- c. Talks about problems but cannot solve them
- d. A political party is not meant to solve people's problems

15. What other organisations exist in your area (tick all that apply)?

- a. Civic organisation (If yes, specify)
- b. Trade union (if yes, specify)
- c. Sports organisation
- d. Church
- e. Other (specify)

16. If a civic organisation exists, does it have

- a. Street committees      Yes/No
- b. Area committees      Yes/No

17. How are you involved in this civic organisation? (tick all that apply)

- a. I am not involved at all
- b. I am a member but otherwise I am not involved
- c. I pay membership dues
- d. I am involved in a structure
- e. I attend general meetings
- f. I participate in activities (marches, campaigns etc)
- g. Other (specify)

18. Is the executive committee of the branch of the civic in your area

- a. Elected by everyone who lives in the area (If so, how?)

- b. Elected at a mass meeting by show of hands
- c. Elected by the members in a secret ballot
- d. Chosen by a small group
- e. Self-appointed
- f. I don't know

19. Do you think the branch of the civic in your area

- a. Is good at solving people's problems
- b. Sometimes helps people but cannot always solve their problems
- c. Talks about problems but cannot solve them
- d. A civic is not meant to solve people's problems

### **C: PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRACY ONE YEAR ON:**

20. Did you vote in the election last year?      Yes/No

21. How do you think South Africa has changed since the election? (Open question)

22. Has your life changed since the election?

- a. No, it is the same
- b. Yes, it is better
- c. Yes, it is worse

23. If you answered b or c to question 22, how has your life changed? (Open question)

24. What do you still expect from the new government? (Open question)

25. Which level of government is responsible for meeting these expectations?

- a. National
- b. Provincial
- c. Local

26. Do you think the government will meet your expectations

- a. Within the next year
- b. Before the next election (in four years time)
- c. In ten years
- d. This government will never meet my expectations

27. If the government does not meet your expectations, what can you do about it? (Open question)

28. Do you think the present government is democratic?      Yes/No

Why or why not? (Open question)

29. Are you, personally, more or less involved with politics now than you were before the election last year?      More/Less

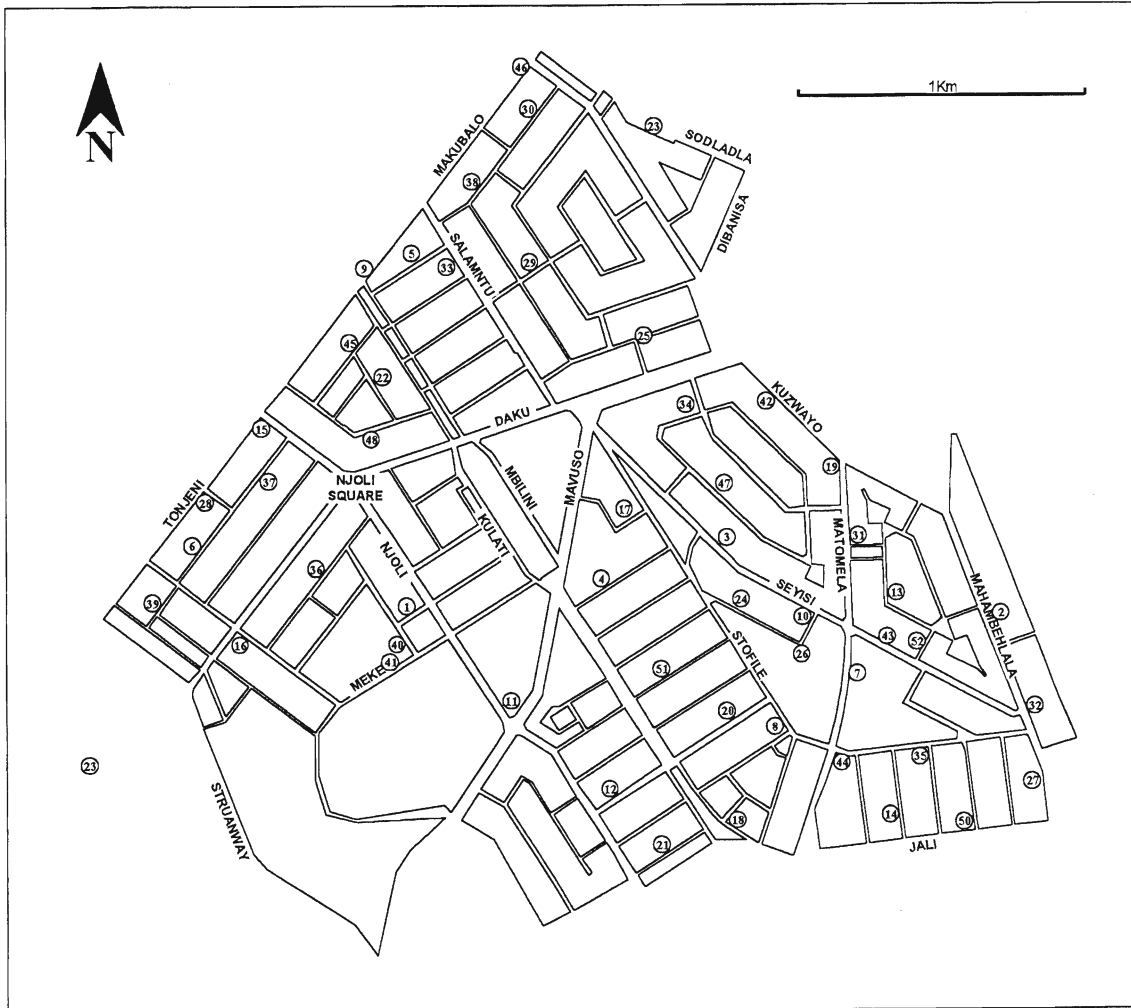
30. Do you think political leaders

- a. Are taking advantage of their positions to gain materially
- b. Are doing their jobs adequately and are rewarded fairly
- c. Are doing a very good job and deserve to be rewarded more than they are now



## Survey 4

Conducted in November 1995. Fifty residents of Kwazakele, randomly selected according to households situated in different areas of the township.



**Map 13. Kwazakele survey 4 interview locations**

**Survey questionnaire:**

**A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS:**

1. Name of street
2. Age of respondent
3. Gender
4. Education level
5. Occupation
6. First Language
7. Other languages
8. Are you a member of any of the following: (Please tick all that apply)
  - a. Trade union (if yes, which one)
  - b. Civic organisation (if yes, which one)
  - c. Church
  - d. Sports Club
  - e. Other (specify
9. Are you a member of a political party or organisation?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
10. If yes, which one?

**B: ORGANIZATIONS IN YOUR AREA:**

11. What political parties are active/have branches in your area? (Please tick off all the parties that apply)

ANC/ACDP/AZAPO/DP/IFP/NP/PAC/Other (specify)

12. If you are a member of a political party (ie answered yes to Question 9), how do you participate in this organisation? (This applies for the period of the past year, not before) Please tick all that apply:

- a. Paid membership dues/subscription fees
- b. Voted for it in the general election
- c. Voted for it in the local government election
- d. Attended meetings
- e. Participated in activities (marches, campaigns etc)
- f. Other (Please specify)
- g. None of the above

13. What other organisations exist in your area (tick all that apply)?

- a. Civic organisation (If yes, specify)
- b. Trade union (if yes, specify)
- c. Sports organisation
- d. Church
- e. Other (specify)

14. If a civic organisation exists, does it have

- a. Street committees      Yes/No
- b. Area committees      Yes/No

15. How are you involved in this civic organisation? (tick all that apply)

- a. I am not involved at all
- b. I am a member but otherwise I am not involved
- c. I pay membership dues
- d. I am involved in a structure/committee
- e. I attend general meetings
- f. I participate in activities (marches, campaigns etc)
- g. Other (specify

### **C: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS:**

16. Did you vote in the local government elections on 1 November? Yes/No

17. Why did you vote/not vote? (Open question)

18. Did you have any problems voting? Yes/No

If yes, what problems?

- a. Identity documents
- b. Illiteracy (couldn't read the ballot)
- c. Confusion (couldn't understand the process)
- d. Fear/intimidation/interference
- e. Lack of information (didn't know who to vote for)
- f. Problems of polling station organisation (no voters role, materials etc)

19. What did you vote for? (Tick only one)

- a. A representative for your ward on the PE Local Council
- b. Representatives from a party list for the PE Local Council

- c. Both of the above
- d. The mayor of PE
- e. Provincial representatives

20. Who stood for election as ward representatives (Give names)

21. Who did you vote for?

22. Which parties/organisations put up lists of candidates in this election in PE? (Tick all that apply)

- a. ANC
- b. ACDP
- c. CP
- d. DP
- e. NP
- f. PAC
- g. SACP
- h. SANCO
- i. Other (Please name)

23. Which party did you vote for?

## **D: EXPECTATIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

24. Has your life changed over the past two years?

- a. No, it is the same
- b. Yes, it is better
- c. Yes, it is worse

25. If you answered b or c to question 24, how has your life changed? (Open question)

26. Have conditions in your area changed over the past two years?

- a. Yes, things are better
- b. Yes, things are worse
- c. No, things are the same

27. If you answered a or b to question 26, what has changed in your area? (Open question)

28. Do you think the newly elected Port Elizabeth Local Council will represent your interests?      Yes/No

29. What do you expect from the new PE Local Council? (Open question)

30. Do you think the local government will meet your expectations

- a. Within the next year
- b. In the next four years
- c. It will take longer than four years
- d. This council will never meet my expectations

31. If the council does not meet your expectations, what can you do about it? (Open question)

32. Do you think the new local council is democratic?      Yes/No

Why or why not? (Open question)

33. Do you think that civic organisations are still necessary?      Yes/No

Why or why not? (Open question)

34. Do you think that local government is

- a. More important than national government
- b. Less important than national government
- c. As important as national government

## Survey 5

Conducted in May 1999. One hundred residents of Kwazakele, randomly selected according to households situated in different areas of the township.

Each researcher took one area and conducted twenty interviews.



Map 14. Kwazakele survey 5 interview locations



## Survey questionnaire:

### A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

1. Name of street
2. Age
3. Sex
4. Education level
5. Occupation
6. First language

### B: PARTICIPATION IN PARTY POLITICS/REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY:

7. Which political parties are active/have branches in your area? (Please name all you know of)
8. Did you vote in the election on 2 June?
9. If yes, what was your experience of voting?  
  
If no, why didn't you vote?
10. Did you vote for the same party for national and provincial government?
11. Did you vote for the same party that you voted for in 1994?
12. Which party did you vote for?
13. How do you participate in the party you support (please tick all that apply over the past year):
  - a. I am a member of my local branch
  - b. I paid membership dues/subscription
  - c. I voted for it in the national election

- d. I voted for it in the local government elections in 1995
- e. I attended meetings
- f. I am a member of an executive or other committee
- g. I participated in activities (marches, campaigns etc)
- h. Any other form of activity
- i. I am not involved in any way in any political party

**C: PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL CIVIL SOCIETY/DIRECT DEMOCRACY:**

14. What other organisations exist in your area (tick all that apply):

- a. Civic organisation (if yes, please specify)
- b. Trade union (if yes, please specify)
- c. Sports organisation
- d. Church
- e. Other (please specify)

15. If a branch of a civic organisation exists, does it have:

- a. A street committee in your street
- b. An area committee for your area

16. If you answered 'yes' to question 15a, what does this street committee do?

17. If you answered 'no' to question 15a, when did the street committee stop existing? (If there was never a street committee in your street, say 'never')

18. If you answered 'yes' to question 15b, what does this area committee do?

19. If you answered 'no' to question 15b, when did the street committee stop existing? (If there was never a street committee in your street, say 'never')

20. How are you involved in this civic organisation?

- a. I am not a member and am not involved at all
- b. I am a member but otherwise I am not involved
- c. I pay membership dues
- d. I am involved in a structure (a committee)
- e. I attend general meetings
- f. I participate in activities (marches, campaigns etc)
- g. I am involved in other ways (please specify)

**D. EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRACY FIVE YEARS ON:**

21. How do you think South Africa has changed since the first election in 1994? (Open question)

22. Has your life changed since the first election?

- a. No, it is the same
- b. Yes, it is better
- c. Yes, it is worse

23. If you answered b or c to question 18, how has your life changed? (Open question)

24. Has the ANC government met your expectations since the first election?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please give examples of which expectations have been met and which not met

25. If the government does not meet your expectations, what can you do about it? (Open question)

26. Are you, personally, more or less involved with politics now than you were five years ago?

a. more

b. less

Give reasons for your answer (Open question)