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GRAVE EXPECTATIONS

Participatory Greywater Management in Two Western Cape Shack Settlements

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts

Department of Social Anthropology

University of Cape Town

2009

Compulsory Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

~~Signature~~

Signed by candidate

Date.....

21/07/2009

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Abstract

South Africa faces enormous challenges in the face of burgeoning urbanisation and the growth of underserviced shack settlements. Waste water disposal is but one of many aspects of basic services that are lacking. This anthropological dissertation is focused upon a Water Research Commission funded project, conducted by University of Cape Town academics from the departments of Civil Engineering, Social Anthropology and Environmental and Geographic Sciences, and carried out in two shack settlements in the Western Cape, South Africa. The project's aim was to engender community-level *greywater* management through participatory methods in the two shack settlements. The dissertation involves close analyses of participatory methods, the legislation and policy which governs service delivery to shack settlements in South Africa, and ethnographic accounts of shack settlement residents' experiences of service delivery. This information is compared with the assumptions upon which the project was predicated, to argue that the project's participatory aims were challenged from the outset by the political and socio-economic context within which the project was carried out. Moreover, in line with enduring criticisms of participatory development – in spite of a professed adherence to the methodologies – was unable to achieve its participatory goals.

Acknowledgements

Thiyane Duda, Ncedo Mnqibisa and Ntobeko Dyani! My co-researchers, friends, guardians, teachers – this wouldn't have happened without you. I won't ever forget the many days we spent together arguing, thinking, talking and sharing ideas and feelings. You have each got so much to offer.

I am grateful to the WRC, via Neil Armitage, for funding my research. Thank you Kevin Winter, for your consistent optimism and support, and faith in my abilities. And Andrew Spiegel – thanks for putting up with me. I truly value your incisive criticism of my work and your assistance in the writing of this dissertation.

And I am indebted to family and friends who have, for the past couple of years, helped without hesitation in many different ways, even during my episodes of *research psychosis*.

I have not intended any of what I have portrayed in this dissertation to be directed at anyone personally. Rather, I am grateful for the opportunity to learn about people's experiences of living in shack settlements, that my eyes have been opened to the extent to which people living in shack settlements have been neglected by the state. It is an emotional issue for many of the people that we spoke with, and for myself as well. I may therefore be biased and tend towards cynicism about the greywater project and about state politics and functioning. I hope, though, that I have managed to communicate, through my fieldwork and this dissertation, the complexities of carrying out such a project in South African informal settlements, and that my employers and co-researchers and whoever reads this find some value in it.

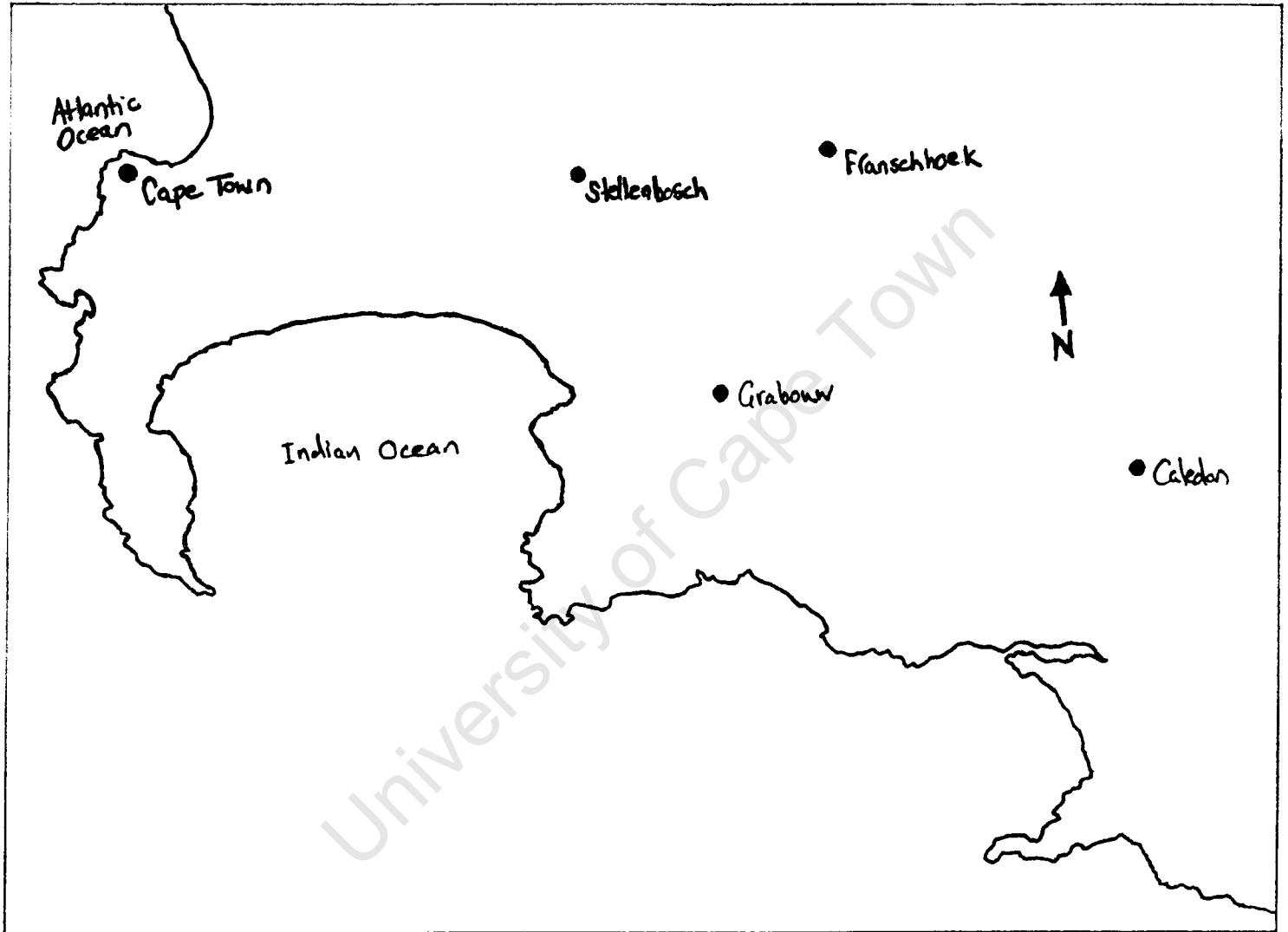
My eyes were also opened to the warmth and kindness shown to us by many of the individuals who spent time with us (I am not going to mention names here) in the two places we worked. I am thankful to have met you and spent hours chatting with you. And to the people who opened their homes to us, and shared their lives, experiences and time with us without hesitation: I am sorry I could not do more.

Things have got to change, the order must shift. I hope that we can all make some meaningful contribution to the change that is necessary, and that this dissertation can be a small part of that.

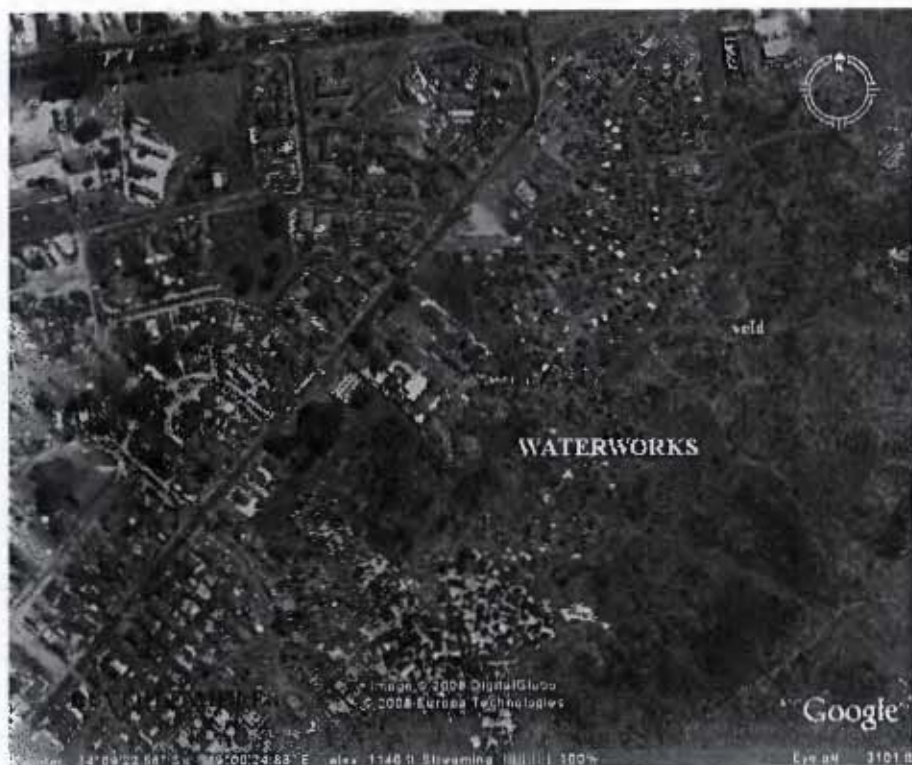
Glossary of acronyms

| | |
|------|--|
| ADMP | Adaptive decision-making process |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| CCLP | Coloured Labour Preference Policy (1954) |
| DA | Democratic Alliance |
| EGS | Environmental and Geographic Sciences |
| ESTA | Extension of Security of Tenure Act (No. 62 of 1997) |
| IDP | Integrated Development Plan |
| MEC | Member of the Executive Council responsible for local government in a province |
| MSyA | Municipal Systems Act (No. 32 of 2000) |
| MStA | Municipal Structures Act (No. 117 of 1998) |
| NGO | Non-government organisation |
| PAR | Participatory Action Research |
| RDP | Reconstruction and Development Programme |
| RSA | Republic of South Africa |
| SA | South Africa |
| UCT | University of Cape Town |
| WRC | Water Research Commission of South Africa |

Maps and Photographs



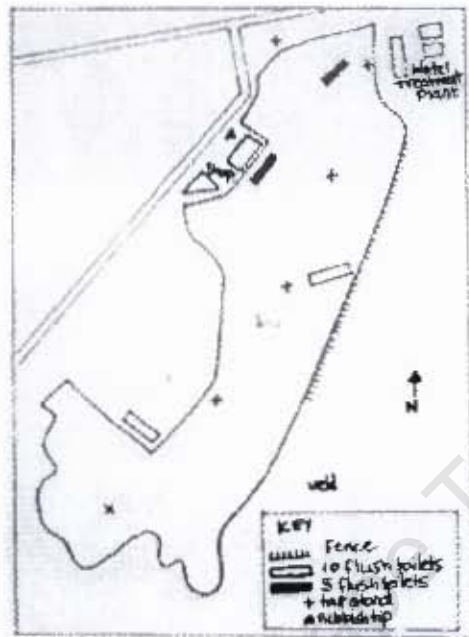
Map A: Western Cape Section Scale 1:750 000
(Adapted from Map Studio South Africa Road Atlas)



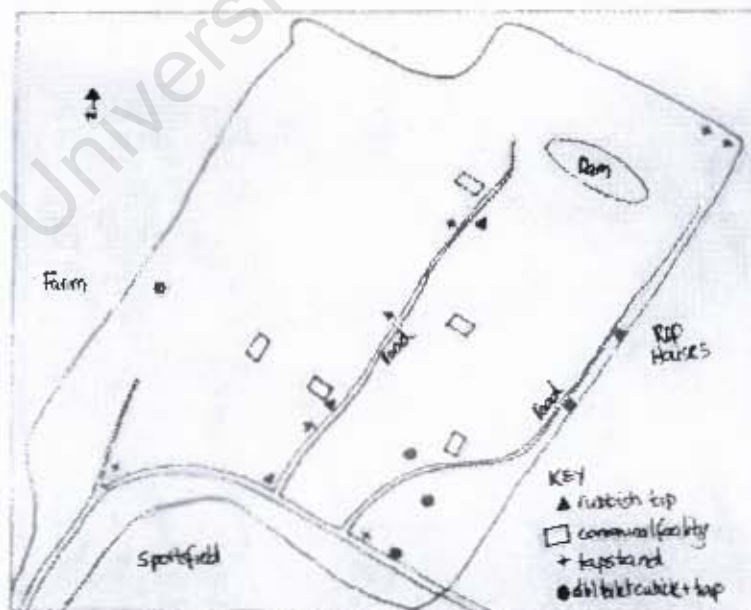
Map D: Waterworks Bird's Eye View (Courtesy Google Earth) Scale: 1cm = 80m



Map E: Langrug Bird's Eye View (Courtesy Google Earth) Scale: 1cm = 54m



Map F: Waterworks Services map (Adapted from Google Earth) Scale: 1cm=80m



Map G: Langrug Services Map (Adapted from Google Earth) Scale: 1cm=54m

The Research Sites: Photographs



A: Waterworks, a shack settlement in Grabouw, 65km from Cape Town



B: Langrug, a shack settlement in Franschhoek, 90km from Cape Town



C: Langrug tractor clearing roads after fire



D: Langrug residents after fire



E: Langrug, waste water furrows



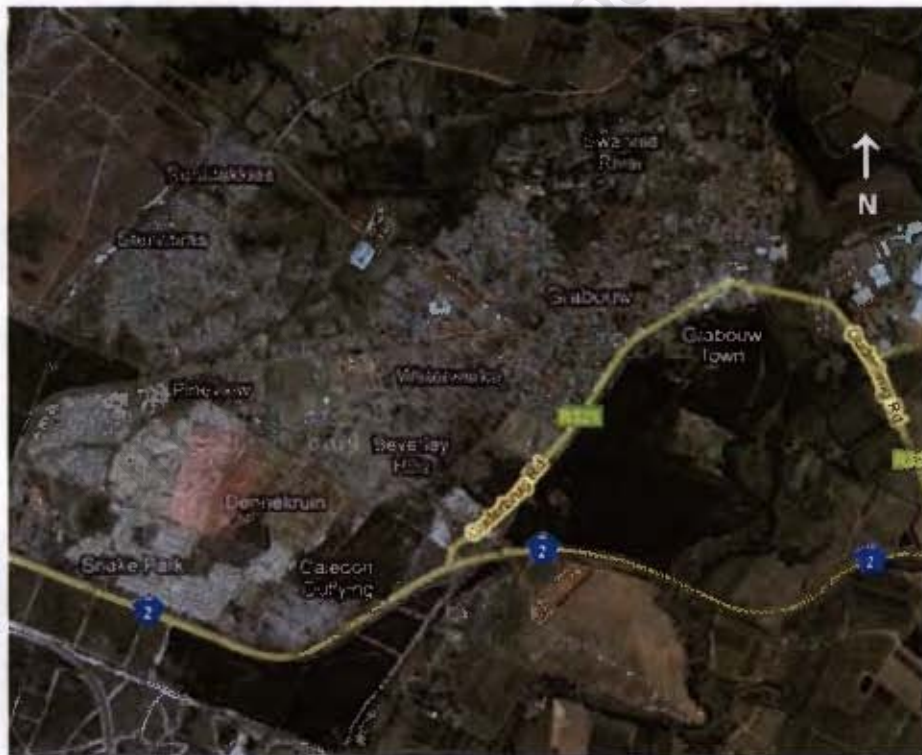
F: Langrug, waste water



G: Langrug, leaking communal facilities



H: Langrug, waste water and rubbish



Map B: Waterworks and Surrounds (Courtesy Google Earth) Scale: 1cm=439m





N: Langrug, one functioning toilet



O: Langrug, residents waste water intervention



P: Langrug fire victims meet with municipal officials



Q: Waterworks, communal tapstand



R: Waterworks, waste water



S: Waterworks, waste accumulation



T: Waterworks, waste accumulation nearby leaking sewerage manhole



U: Waterworks, the bush



V: Waterworks, communal tapstand



W: Waterworks, leaking sewerage manhole



X: Waterworks, streams of waste water from sewerage line



Y: Waterworks, immaculate yard

University of Cape Town

Introduction

In July 2007 I was employed as a research assistant on a research project, entitled “Sustainable options for community level management of greywater in settlements without on-site waterborne sanitation/Community Greywater Management” (WRC K5/1654, 2006). My role was to gain an understanding of people’s household waste water disposal practices (called *greywater* when there is no faeces, urine or vomit in it) and to work with residents in finding ways to manage its disposal on-site (in their own yards) in places where there were few or no facilities to deal with it. The research team comprised tenured academics from Civil Engineering, Environmental and Geographic Sciences (EGS) and Social Anthropology, and a team of fieldworkers, students with Psychology, Horticulture and Social Anthropology backgrounds. We conducted fieldwork in two shack settlements located in agricultural districts near Cape Town – Waterworks and Langrug. The project was to be based on participatory research methods, primarily through “Participatory Action Research” (PAR). It aimed to achieve greywater management in the shack settlements, expecting that a “bottom-up” approach would be more effective and appropriate for the local context than one externally-determined.

I did not foresee that I would eventually be writing this dissertation. Once logistics had been organised, and I was in the field, it soon dawned on me that greywater management in “informal settlements” was by no means as simple, nor as value-free a pursuit as it may initially have seemed.

“Can you count starving people?” Researching suffering

I began, along with my first co-researcher, Thiyane, to carry out surveys which had many questions about people’s income, the diseases and illnesses they experienced as a result of *amanzi amdaka* (dirty water in Xhosa) in their environment, what kinds of toilets they used, and how they disposed of their waste water and their waste. One of the ethical concerns raised by the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (1999) is that

“anthropologists should be aware of the intrusive potential of some of their enquiries and methods” and have “not special entitlement to study all phenomena.” The nature of our enquiries around waste water within the context of physical, economic and social marginalisation of shack settlements meant working in a context of poverty and deprivation. While the focus of the research was on greywater in this project, it had always to be related to that context. Enquiring about services and infrastructure, meant that we delved into some of the more sensitive areas of shack settlement life, the source of much suffering for many residents (i.e. having to defecate in overflowing toilets, or on top of other people’s faeces; or children’s backs, heads or faces being covered in festering rashes). Our research was by nature intrusive.

This fact was not lost on residents: a man in Waterworks stopped us, and asked, “What are you doing here?” I explained, as always to informants and enquirers, that we were students from UCT trying to understand how people dealt with their waste water, and to see if together we could find ways to manage it. After hearing my explanation, he asked, “Oh, so you are here to see how people are suffering?” In a second case, after some discussion about greywater management and our project, a man asked us, “So we are subjects to be studied because we live in poverty?” Their questions were astute: as noble or as benevolent as the intentions of this project might have been, ultimately we were studying the ways in which people managed living in severe poverty, with the additional burden of a dearth of services that precipitated the scenario which I describe below.

While our enquiries into toilet habits, waste disposal and deprivation were intrinsically intrusive and uncomfortable, and at times angered people, some were enthusiastic to show us the conditions that they had to deal with on a daily basis. On our first visit to Langrug, a man (who later became a key informant) gave us a service, infrastructure and facilities tour: he showed us leaking communal facilities, broken toilets and taps that caused streams of filthy water to cut furrows into the muddy roads. The furrows ran past people’s homes, where they threw out their own waste water, and then through a crèche, to deposit the accumulation of waste water into a slimy, bubbling brown mire in a trench that ran along the top of a school sportsfield. He then took us to the edge of the settlement to show us where people had to defecate on the

mountainside, because there were so few toilets in the settlement, and only some of them worked. On our first visit to Waterworks, my naive mind was stupefied by the barriers, heaps and piles of rubbish that had accumulated behind the shop, alongside homes, in the bush – in some places it lay 2-3 meters deep. And there was lots of poo in amongst the rubbish, and raw sewerage running down the hill between people's homes.

After two years of fieldwork, we did not accomplish anything meaningful in terms of greywater management. I accumulated many fieldnotes thanks to the generosity of informants with their time and patience listening to our questions and discussing our ideas, allowing us to experiment in their backyards.

I received a bursary to support my studies, and our fieldwork contributed to a number of academic papers being written. When I left the settlements, shoes covered in contaminated mud, nose filled with the putrid smells of waste water mixed with faeces and urine, I could go home for a warm shower and a hot meal. The residents had to stay where they were, struggle to get a bucket of water from the tap to their home, warm up this water on a paraffin stove and have a bucket bath in the middle of winter.

Hundreds of thousands of rands were spent in carrying out this research, and yet nothing had come of it other than the production of research documents. This did not bypass residents. On one occasion in Waterworks while fieldworkers were discussing housing issues in Waterworks, a man listening said to the other residents: "You shouldn't hope that they will bring you something, they are just doing their job. Don't think you'll get help. They will just leave and nothing will help. When people see a book or a white person, they think that food will be put on the table. People get tired of people with books, they get bored. People can come and say they are counting people – can you count starving people?"

In Langrug, we were told, "You are not the first researchers here, and there has been no change and no report back from those who have been here before. It is a waste of time to be involved in the research. You get the information you want, but nothing changes". We could not argue, and

we could make no promises. There were few returns for those who participated in the project, aside perhaps, as one person said, from the fact that it got people thinking about what was going on in their immediate environment.

However, it is my responsibility, according to the ethical guidelines of Anthropology Southern Africa's (2004), to "call attention to inequities, injustices, violence and intrusions of freedom". Although my involvement in this project has achieved little in the way of real returns to the participants, I have tried, using the tool of anthropology, to communicate the degree of inequity and injustice, the structural violence that the residents of informal settlements endured on a consistent basis as a result of being deprived of adequate services – and a clean and healthy environment within which they could begin to negotiate their daily lives, as honestly and objectively as I can.

While I have tried to represent my experiences in the field as accurately as possible, the arguments that I put forward in this dissertation are exactly those: arguments. I can therefore not claim to be representing reality in its entirety, but only as I interpreted it. I hope, though, that I have done so in a fair, just and balanced way.

I named one of my chapters "Call a spade a spade", which means to be brutally honest. I did not know that this dissertation would take so a critical a turn, to the point of being demoralising and negative. I have criticised the research project that funded my studies - but my discipline demands honesty. I have also been critical about municipal functioning and state policy and politics, and the way that these play out in people's lives.

WRC Project K5/1654

Some background is required to explain the project's approach. The team was commissioned by the Water Research Commission of South Africa (WRC) to develop so-called community-based solutions to the management of greywater (household waste water excluding toilet water) in "informal settlements" in the Western Cape without on-site waterborne sanitation.

The WRC is a parastatal aimed at broadening research and development in South Africa around water knowledge, particularly in relation to water shortages. Research generated through the WRC is used to inform state policy on water management, as well as to provide information and

increase the knowledge base about South Africa's water sector (WRC 2004). The project drew upon recommendations from a prior research project, K5/1524 - "Understanding the disposal and use of greywater in the non-sewered areas in South Africa." (Armitage *et al.* 2006) (also funded by the WRC). It

identified the need for a longer-term study in communities without on-site waterborne sanitation, with particular reference to the use and disposal of greywater so that more sustainable techniques may be identified. This project could also be used as an opportunity to educate residents of the communities and change their behaviour where relevant in order to ensure sustainability (Armitage *et al.* 2006 WRC Project K5/1654 proposal document: no page numbers).

Local-level technical interventions devised in collaboration with shack settlement residents, in concert with education and behavioural change, were considered the primary means through which to address the project's concerns around waste water disposal. The WRC Project K5/1524 report also recognised that poverty was related to service provision, including provision of water, sanitation, housing, electricity, employment and education. However, no explicit link was made between material or economic poverty and informal settlement residents' capacity to attain the goals of the project, which were that residents should be responsible for the co-conceptualisation, installation and maintenance of greywater disposal systems. Poor access to services was recognised as a cause of problems of uncontrolled greywater disposal, but there was scant attention paid to the consequences of inadequate service delivery in general for residents' potential to manage possible interventions.

Based on the findings of the earlier project, the project initiators proposed that a longer-term, more in-depth study, in collaboration with residents living in selected informal settlements, could provide models for effective local-level, small-scale greywater management strategies. This intention translated into a year of intermittent ethnographic-style fieldwork, focused on observing water disposal, learning about existing greywater management, and about social organisations that could potentially be engaged to mobilise community-based greywater management within Langrug and Waterworks.

The collaboration of various academics was meant to bring together technical, environmental and sociological expertise. The three individuals from the different departments were titled “project leaders”, and each were to take on different roles in the execution of the research. The representative from EGS formulated the methodological approach, and directed the fieldwork and interventions that were trialled in the two informal settlements. The civil engineer advised on technical matters, though was reluctant to influence the choice of intervention too strongly, claiming his bias towards large-scale engineering works. The team’s social anthropologist, who replaced the person on the original proposal writing team, was not involved in the formulation of the research proposals, and thus retained an advisory role on the means to gain understanding of waste water disposal and social organisation in the settlements, making recommendations for fieldworkers’ enquiries.

Our role as fieldworkers was to document waste water disposal observations in the settlements, and to negotiate the participation of residents in greywater management strategies, and note their responses to and opinions of the interventions. A later task became to gauge the potential for communal acceptance of the idea of greywater management through the implementation of the interventions devised by the EGS representative in consultation with the other team members and other academics in the Civil Engineering department who researched sanitation. It was also our responsibility to attempt to negotiate with municipal officials and ward councillors for their material and financial support for the proposed greywater management. Fieldwork also involved devising and trialling micro-scale technical interventions to manage greywater, with willing residents. We also engaged with municipal officials who dealt with the two informal settlements. We were therefore able to gain some insight into the ways in which the respective municipalities functioned, and into the relationships between municipal officials and the residents of the informal settlements.

Process and methods

I tried, during my term as researcher, to adhere to anthropological research methods, which provided data for this dissertation – participant observation, general “systematic observation”, and included a variety of interview techniques to elicit information from informants (Johnson and Sackett 1998:301). Anthropological method is based on ethnographic fieldwork that may

encompass these methods, which are not mutually exclusive. I also implemented discourse analysis, to analyse the project's methods, approach and assumptions in project reports and documents. Our observations did not allow for significant statistical data to be obtained, and therefore there is little in the way of numeric information. Predominantly, the methods that we used revealed qualitative rather than quantitative data.

'Participant observation' is distinguished from other methods as "the method in which an observer takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions and events of the people being studied" (Dewalt *et al.* 1998:260). The traits of orthodox participant observation involve spending a long period of time living amongst or with the people under study, learning the language proficiently, and involvement in social activities (Clifford 1988:24). This method is used in order for the researcher to gain first-hand experience of the subject's lives, as much as to build relationships of trust that are vital to anthropological research.

In our operationalisation of "participant observation", we drew on these principles but did not adhere strictly to the ideal. We conducted our fieldwork in the two shack settlements, and spent as much time as possible "hanging out" (Dewalt *et al.* 1998:261). In experimenting with interventions (see below in this chapter), we learnt about the difficulties of building and controlling water in the context of poverty and minimal service provision.

Initially, we spent a lot of time on the road between our base in Cape Town and the two settlements, which allowed relatively little time for field-based research in the sites themselves. Towards the end of the research period, and following the insistence of the social anthropologist on the project team, it was decided that we should spend some extended time on site, in order to gain in-depth information through our continuous presence. Until this point, we had spent more time and had gathered more data in Langrug, so we chose Waterworks as the principal fieldwork site. There we planned to learn about local social organisations and their potential for mobilisation to become involved in community-based greywater management. The on-site period proved very fruitful in terms of data gathering, swinging the balance, in terms of data, in

favour of Waterworks and resulting in certain gaps of equivalent kinds of information from Langrug.

We did not, however, actually live in either settlement, and I never became proficient in Xhosa, and had to rely on my first-language Xhosa-speaking work partners to translate. Beyond attending church services and some street committee meetings, we did not become involved in any significant way in residents' daily activities. The decision to spend extended time on site did, however, allow us to access residents' daily experiences, such as having to 'go to the toilet' in the bush or dealing with gale force winds and driving rain whilst using communal facilities.

By experimenting with the technologies introduced by the EGS project leader, we were able to gain insight into the challenges of living with and negotiating minimal service provision and, in turn, into the connections between various waste streams and the potential for residents to manage them. We were also able to gauge the receptivity and attitudes of municipal officials to residents and their waste disposal practices.

Our second primary method was interviewing, and we used a variety of techniques: structured and semi-structured interviews, informal inquiries and conversations, and interviews that we were subjected to by curious residents. We spoke with any people who showed interest in us and our activities, participants who allowed us to experiment with the technologies in their yards, municipal officials, residents who had been involved in protest and service negotiation, business owners, church leaders and congregants.

Levi and Hollan (1998:335) describe a variety of interview methods as "a series of examples, of guides for the mobilisation and education of a pre-adapted understanding", and as a starting point to be adapted as information comes to light. Indeed, we seldom stuck to our pre-arranged interview questions as our interviews regularly veered off the topics and questions asked to reveal interesting and revealing data. As that occurred, our inquiries became more tailored to our research topics.

Our enquiries revealed residents' perspectives on issues raised in our interviews (such as service provision, economics and social dynamics in the informal settlements), and their insights into the experience of dealing with waste water problems, inadequate service provision and municipal officials.

Participant observation and interviewing techniques provide information and meaning on the given subject from the perspective of the subjects themselves, ("emic" data), emphasising "meaning and subjective experience" (Johnson and Sackett 1998:301-302), though always recorded and reported through the ethnographer's lens. "Systematic observation" is used to balance the "emic" view – what people say they do – with the outsider's "etic" perspective. "Etic" data, gained through observation, is meant to show "patterns of behaviour and interaction, in relation to what people do" (Johnson and Sackett 1998:301).

Our observations centred on behaviour related to waste water disposal (i.e. quantities generated, means of disposal and management), as well as on the wider environment where this took place (i.e. homes, roads, pollution, sanitation activities, amenities and extant municipal services). We also observed the ways in which residents negotiated living with inadequate services, and the general social activities and interactions that took place in our presence in the two informal settlements. In addition we conducted household surveys with 25 households in Langrug and 55 households in Waterworks, at the request of the representative from the Environmental and Geographic Sciences department, who had compiled the questionnaire.¹ Our observations were less systematic than generalised because of our erratic presence in the sites, as suggested by the discrepancy between the numbers of surveys conducted in the two settlements.

¹ The questions were: what problems are experienced with waste water?; number of people living in dwelling; who the house belongs to; who is the head of the house; how long the informant has been living in the house and in the settlement; household income; where water is collected; time taken for water to be collected; is the tap working?; who is responsible for fixing taps?; how much water is collected by the informant each day?; what is done with the waste water?; where is waste water thrown?; reason for location of waste water disposal; where the informant goes to the toilet; what kind of toilet; who is responsible for providing toilets?; who fixes the toilets?; how could the toilets be improved?; problems with litter experienced; how rubbish is disposed of; and does the informant recycle?

As will be seen in the chapters that follow, I have used our observational data to understand the links between residents' different activities and the extant situation, in relation to service provision, their daily activities and behaviours (like sanitation behaviours and water usage), and the degree of municipal service provision (observed in the state of the informal settlements and the frequency of service provision).

Besides fieldwork methods, I have also relied on "discourse analyses". This method has a linguistic focus where "researchers pay close attention to how language is used in and across social situations in the context of social interaction, in contrast to utterances specifically elicited by a linguist or ethnographer" (Farnell and Graham 1998:411), and where they do that in order to "discover the social meanings inhering in language forms and their relationships to social formations, identity, relations of power, beliefs and ideologies" (Farnell and Graham 1998:413). I have focused on the language used in project documents in order to reveal the notions that underlie the aims of the project, and how these were used to conceptualise and justify the actions taken in the project. Particularly, I apply a discourse analysis to discourses about participatory research methods and development (Mansuri and Rao, 2003; Escobar, 1997; Cleaver, 2001; Mosse, 2001 etc.), and on South African urbanisation and policy analysts (e.g. Huchzermeyer 1999).

I was involved with the project for just over a year (July 2007-August 2008),² initially in three research sites. Two of these were shack settlements in agricultural towns in the vicinity of, but well outside Cape Town (Waterworks in Grabouw, and Langrug in Franschhoek), and one informal settlement within the City of Cape Town alongside one of the townships established by the apartheid government (Kanaana, neighbouring Gugulethu). The two agricultural towns were located, respectively, in the Theewaterskloof Municipality of the Overberg District Municipality,

² I joined the project after some fieldwork had already been conducted. The fieldwork and my employment spanned 2007-2008. At the beginning of 2008, my role shifted from working as an employee on the project, to working as a Master's student conducting research for the project until August 2008, when the fieldwork came to an end and I began to write this dissertation.

and the Stellenbosch Municipality in the Cape Winelands District Municipality.³ Kanaana fieldwork was abandoned during 2008 after an agreement reached between the project leaders and the City of Cape Town Municipality, to develop some engineering works there, had fallen through. This dissertation thus focuses only on Langrug and Waterworks.

The fieldwork process involved three general stages: a first phase of information gathering and observation where we tried to ascertain the current circumstances and superficially observed the goings-on in the two settlements. During this stage we also met individuals with whom we would, over time, establish relationships, and who would later become key informants. They connected us with other residents and, since most had lived in the settlements for some time, were socially active and aware of local issues, both within the settlement and between residents and the municipality.

A second fieldwork phase was the intervention and trialling period, when, having established connections with a number of residents, we began to install small-scale technical interventions for greywater management that had been devised by the environmentalist on the project team. Two options were presented to residents: a “drum filter” and a “trench soakaway”.

The “drum filter” consisted of a black plastic rubbish bin. We drilled holes around the bottom third of the bin, and in the lid. We buried the bin in the ground, (so that only the lip was above the ground surface), and filled it with layers of coarse and fine rock and sand, and secured the upturned, perforated lid on top. The “trench soakaway” involved digging a trench approximately 2,5m x 0,5m x 0,5m in size, which we filled with coarse stones, gravel and sand (depending on the materials available to us at the time). Sometimes we lined the top or the bottom (or both) of the trench with thick, black plastic sheeting so the gravel would not simply filter into the sand surround. We then placed an up-turned crate at one end of the trench, where greywater could be poured in. The trench was then covered over with sand, and the crate lined with rocks so that it would not disappear into the ground. Both of these systems were supposed to act as conduits for

³ Another leg of the bigger project involved work in the Paarl area, which I was not involved in, and that research is not drawn upon here at all. .

the filtration of greywater, thereby reducing the health risks of exposed waste water, and the levels of pollution entering the ground.

A third fieldwork phase constituted an attempt to understand the potential for mobilisation of social organisations to be involved in infrastructure management. These organisations included a street committee, sports groups, church groups and burial societies. We also tried to work with a group of Waterworks residents on devising a small-scale greywater management programme in a section of the settlement. Although it had started out with the intention of being a local group project, it ended up in our assisting one individual in applying (unsuccessfully as it turned out) for a municipal tender.

It was the fieldworkers' responsibility to engage with residents. We approached the street committee and individuals in the settlements, explaining who we were and the purpose of our presence, and requested permission to install the interventions. Through a trial-and-error process, we installed the interventions at or near various homes, with the onus of digging and installing the interventions falling primarily upon us as fieldworkers, although some residents did provide assistance. We experienced little other participation on the part of the residents, beyond their expressing their opinions on the operation of the installations or on their placement.

Through our year of fieldwork, we encountered many obstacles that highlighted the constraints upon these shack settlement residents for community-based management of service provision. Also highlighted were the constraints on us as researchers attempting to develop systems for community-based management of greywater. As I discuss below, these constraints derive from state policy, municipal management and local residents' capacity for self-management (i.e. money, time, energy and experience) and cut across the political and economic arenas.

In this dissertation, I deal with the assumptions made by the project initiators in conceptualising and operationalising the project goals, through participatory methods, and I analyse them in terms of the findings brought to light from textual analyses of their proposals and from our ethnographic findings over the year of fieldwork. I deal with the challenges that arose in the process of this ostensibly participatory research project and with those which were faced by residents of informal settlements. I begin, in the following chapter, by considering the pitfalls

inherent in the particular approach to participatory research that the project actually took. The chapter entails a critical analysis of the concepts inherent to participatory approaches to research (such as *social capital* and *community*) as espoused in the research project documentation. Through using development studies literature (Mansuri and Rao 2003; Escobar 1997; Cleaver 2001; Mosse 2001 etc.), I show that the project faced many of the problems identified elsewhere regarding the unqualified use of social concepts in participatory approaches – particularly the tendency to overlook both the structural constraints to participation, and the difficulties posed by the project initiators' own assumptions about local social dynamics.

I deal in chapter 3 with the historical and contemporary economic and political contextualisation of urbanisation in South Africa by using the works of Western, 1981; Huchzermeyer, 1999; Murray, 1987; Todes, 2001; Spiegel, 1996; Spiegel *et al.* 1996a, 1996b, Graham, 2006. I analyse legislation governing service provision and the institutions established to implement those mandates, to show that participation in service delivery, and discussions about service delivery, is essentially compromised by the political and institutional contexts, despite a rhetoric that professes otherwise. In chapter 4 I argue that legislation governing service provision in South Africa is, despite claims to the contrary, fundamentally top-down, and that even the institutions meant to facilitate participation are limited by that political/legislative environment. In chapter 5 I show that the municipalities responsible for the two shack settlements faced major constraints in delivering basic services (e.g. bureaucratic and budgetary) and in facilitating public participation, largely as an outcome of their commitment to national housing policy mandates. Lastly, in Chapter 6, I turn from a rather distanced review of policy, state and municipal structure to focus in great detail to describe the consequences of inadequate basic service provision for residents' own management of their environment, particularly greywater disposal. Here - using case studies which describe shack settlement residents' daily experiences of living in an underserviced environment – I argue that the material conditions resulting from inadequate service provision severely undermined residents' capacity to manage that environment, including greywater.

In concert, I demonstrate that these findings show that shack dwellers' participation in service delivery, and discussions about it, was enormously constrained by the political and institutional

environment they were in, and their individual efforts to manage those effects at the local level, as proposed by the UCT/WRC Project K5/1654, were hamstrung by the consequences of local government's commitment to national policy. I show also that the project, because of its focus on local "communities" as the primary cause of and solution to greywater management, and its reliance on limited social constructs of *community* and *social capital*, swallowed down with participatory rhetoric, failed to recognise the structural and material limitations to those goals.

In consideration of the ethnographic evidence presented in the course of the dissertation, and in consultation with a spectrum of literature that deals with housing policy, state policy and participatory research methods, I conclude that the research goals of *community*-based management of greywater through participatory research methods were at once inhibited by the adoption and reliance upon a particular approach to housing and urbanisation in South Africa that is rooted in neo-liberal economics, and simultaneously inherently constrained by the theoretical paradigm of participatory research. I come to a further conclusion that the adoption of assumptions inherent to conventional participatory development discourse by the project initiators led to the research project encountering a variety of difficulties so that it ended up itself being a form top-down interventionism despite its expressed alternative intentions.

1. Fostering community-based development – hindrances to participatory research and development

The primary goal of the UCT/WRC project was to find sustainable options, both social and technological, for community-level management of greywater in informal settlements that lacked on-site waterborne sanitation. The project initiators aimed to achieve: agreement from various stakeholders that greywater problems were worth addressing; residents' participation and consensus in decision-making around management strategies; the development of low-cost, local-level greywater management strategies and interventions; empowerment and education of participants; and the development of a sense of ownership amongst residents, of the process and the management strategies decided upon (WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006:3-12).

The UCT/WRC greywater project, which was described as falling within the framework of participatory action research, relied on certain key concepts in conceptualising its goals. The project initiators took for granted a particular social, economic, political and institutional reality which would facilitate realisation of the goals. The project was planned to fit that premise rather than what actually existed, and was thus unable to achieve its stated objectives. I make this argument by analysing proposals for funding, methodological reports, the final draft report of the project, and the minutes of meetings of the project team and WRC group, which I later compare with ethnographic findings.

There is an extensive body of literature that analyses development as a practice, in particular participatory approaches. In this chapter I refer to various authors (Bologna, 2008; Escobar, 1997; Mosse, 2001; Mansuri and Rao, 2003; Pithouse, 2006; De Filippis, 2001 and Ferguson' 1990) who subject the practice and theory of development to critical analysis. Their findings focus on the way in which sociological concepts used in participatory approaches. I use these authors' works to explore notions of *participation*, *community* and *social capital*, and then to analyse the way in which they were used in the UCT/WRC project. I have drawn on a body of literature, both international and local, that deals with these concerns in development, to argue that the UCT/WRC community-level greywater management project was inconsistent in its application of a participatory methodology, and that it relied on untested assumptions about how the two shack settlements were socially constituted, and what their development needs were. In

my view which I substantiate below, the project conformed to precisely the kind of conventional approach to development that it was trying to avoid.

This chapter presents the overall proposition of this dissertation, that the UCT/WRC community-level greywater management project was constrained from the outset by misapplication of participatory methods, the adoption of assumptions central to those approaches in research, and the implications of current and past state responses to urbanisation in South Africa.

Participatory greywater management: aims, assumptions and arguments

The UCT/WRC project initiators chose participatory action research as the methodological framework for guiding the research (WRC Project K5/1654 Proposal 2006; WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006), alongside a similar approach called the adaptive decision-making process (ADMP). PAR is one of an array of research methods that claim to prioritise people's participation. These include *participatory rural appraisal* (Mosse 2001:16), *community-based development* and *community-driven development* (Mansuri and Rao 2003:2), *action research*, *co-operative enquiry*, and *appreciative enquiry* (Collins 1998:4). In spite of differences among participatory approaches (Spiegel *et al.*, 2009), the dominant thrust in all these approaches is people's participation.

The detailed report on the WRC/UCT methodologies states that PAR requires the active involvement of all stakeholders in the entire research-extension development process (K5/1654 D2 2006:6). PAR is intended not only to generate knowledge but also to produce an outcome; by definition PAR is supposed to be driven by the people that participate in the research/development activities. I therefore refer to development and research simultaneously or interchangeably here. However, when development is driven by a funder, a benefactor-beneficiary relationship almost inevitably ensues. Because there is an overlap in PAR between research and development, there is similarly only a blurred distinction between the notions of beneficiary and participant; so I use these terms interchangeably as well.

PAR itself has been defined as

research where the intended beneficiaries are involved in devising the research needs and the research plan, participate in the research, help determine the action to be taken

out and carry out the recommended action themselves ... The four stages of participatory action research are: planning, action, observation or monitoring and finally reflection and evaluation. (Then the cycle begins again.) The four dynamic and complementary activities overlap to form a series of learning cycles or loops (Stewart 1998:31-32).

The methodology used for the project was an adaptive decision-making process, which was described in the project methodology document as a framework that

explicitly takes into account social, political, economic, and institutional factors (Lal *et al.*, 2001). ADMP is a problem-focused, action-oriented process aimed at producing management strategies that stakeholders agree with and feel they can own. The research approach acknowledges the need for discursive decision-making and recognises that multiple stakeholders have different values and knowledge systems and decisions will need to be achieved through collaboration, co-operation and consensus. It is acknowledged at the outset that agreement among the stakeholders may be hard to obtain (WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006:6).

Although distinguished in name, both ADMP and PAR are defined as participatory approaches aimed at getting intended beneficiaries to determine the research needs and management plans to address those needs, and at getting them to carry out the planned actions themselves.

Participatory approaches in research and development have featured in mainstream development discourses since the early 1980s (Rew 1997:99). Participation of the beneficiaries/participants in research and development was seen as a solution to the failure of externally-imposed projects which had tended to dominate approaches in development (Collins 1986:6) until that point. Pithouse (2006a) suggests, however, that by definition *development* requires money from above, and it therefore involves an imbalance of power between the developer and the people targeted for development – and a tension arises between the participatory rhetoric and the way in which development is actually practised. Even the word “target” suggests an imbalance of power between those driving development projects (be they the State or researchers) and those targeted, who have little scope to exercise power in the development context, although they may resist it. Pithouse is amongst a chorus of voices that have criticised development practice in general and participatory rhetoric in particular.

“Development” is not simply an altruistic pursuit. Rew (1997:80) describes it as being simultaneously “a set of existing institutions and practices” and “sets of concepts containing powerful ideological visions with normative tools of reform on behalf of economic growth and poverty alleviation”. “Development” practice therefore comprises diverse approaches. What underlies many is the idea that material wellbeing “can be assured for all through technological progress and ever-rising production of goods and services” (Rist 1997:214) – reflecting a particular vision of economic development. Escobar (1997:91) summarised his objections to mainstream development:

Development was – and continues to be for the most part – a top-down, ethnocentric and technocratic approach, which treated people and cultures as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down in the charts of “progress”. Development was conceived not as a cultural process (culture was a residual variable, to disappear with the advance of modernisation) but instead as a system of more or less universally applicable technical interventions intended to deliver some “badly needed” goods to a “target” population.

Mainstream development, characterised by the top-down imposition of development goals and practices by development agencies and states, has been criticised for failing to meet those goals as a result of inappropriate interventions. For example, Ferguson (1990) showed how World Bank developers framed Lesotho as a traditional and isolated economy and society, in attempts to guide an agricultural development project there in the 1970s. This vision was formulated despite the existence of academic findings that Lesotho comprised a highly mobile society which had been engaged in modern economics and labour migration for decades before the development initiative. Ferguson argued that the formulation of the target society and its needs, and the imposition of development goals based on those formulations, led development agencies to implement technical solutions in a context that was poorly understood, and also to adopt contextually inappropriate technically-oriented development programmes. He argued that the developers’ reliance on inappropriate social models and development interventions resulted in failure to meet development goals. Moreover, he suggested that such “development” actually contributed to social degeneration and increased state control in the area of the development project. But, says Ferguson, because resistance to imposed development initiatives could be (and

was) interpreted as ignorance, local knowledge was disregarded and denigrated in terms of the developers' vision, and no actual development occurred, because the supposed beneficiaries had no active role in determining or carrying out the intervention programme, so it was unsustainable in the long-term.

Ferguson's study is a warning about how development (and research) initiatives can be easily misguided into failure, by development agents imposing a vision of how the subjects of research or development are constituted (socially, economically, and politically) based on inaccurate assumptions about society, and an inappropriate developmental response.

As large-scale projects carried out by governments and NGOs, often funded or influenced by institutions such as the World Bank, were repeatedly reported to have failed to deliver the promised vision of development, an alternative "participatory" paradigm was cultivated. The intention was to bring about greater participation in development projects and thereby to empower local people and to create conditions for sustainability of the outcomes.

Participation of the beneficiaries of development is thus supposed to remedy the "shortcomings of top-down development approaches" and the "ineffectiveness of externally imposed and expert-oriented forms of research and planning" (Cooke and Kothari 2001:5). Although participatory approaches were meant to remedy the shortcomings of top-down interventionism, and enable ordinary people to exercise power in projects that affected them, it was soon co-opted into mainstream development approaches in the 1980s, with organisations like the World Bank that were driven by a neo-liberal development agenda appropriating the rhetoric.

Like the notion of "development", neo-liberalism is itself not monolithic in theory or in practice (Larner, 2003). But the overarching ideology behind neo-liberalism is that the removal of state control of national industries and the increasing privatisation of public services will facilitate the operation of a free market and thereby lead to economic development and, with it, social development (Brenner and Theodore 2002:2-3). International organisations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund guide economic policy in many countries through

initiatives like Structural Adjustment Programmes and “Millennium Development Goals”,⁴ and they encourage “fiscal austerity, enhanced labour market flexibility, territorial competitiveness, and the free flow of investment and capital” (Brenner and Theodore 2002:2-3). Critics, however, point out that the promises of neo-liberal ideologies and approaches have not been fulfilled and instead have resulted in “pervasive market failures, new forms of social polarisation, and a dramatic intensification of uneven development at all spatial scales” (Brenner and Theodore 2002:5) and “failures of a quasisystemic nature in areas like transport, food systems, and pollution, and even in financial and labour markets” (Peck and Tickell 2002:43). Peck and Tickell (2002:43) further argue that in response to these failures, neo-liberal policies were broadened from management of markets and economics to

embrace a range of extramarket forms of governance and regulation. These included, inter alia, the selective appropriation of *community* and nonmarket metrics, the establishment of social-capital discourses and techniques, the incorporation (and underwriting) of local governance and partnership-based modes of policy development and programme delivery in areas like urban regeneration and social welfare, the mobilisation of the “little platoons” in the shape of (local) voluntary and faith-based associations in the service of neoliberal goals, and the evolution of invasive, neopaternalist modes of intervention ...

Participatory methods and principles of empowerment and inclusiveness have been subordinated to state development approaches and goals, in the service of the higher goal of devolving state responsibilities, towards the ends of fiscal discipline. Participation is also seen as a means to remedy state and market failure. As Cleaver (2001:36) explained:

Participation of community members is assumed to contribute to enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of investment and to promote processes of democratisation and empowerment. The conundrum of ensuring the sustainability of development interventions is assumed to be solvable by the proper involvement of beneficiaries in the supply and management of resources, services and facilities.

⁴ SA is a signatory to the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation, the treaty that commits to the Millennium Development Goals.

Similarly, the UCT/WRC project initiators relied upon the participatory approach via the frameworks of PAR and ADMP to achieve its goals of community-level greywater management, based on the idea that a community-level approach using a participatory approach

is likely to be a more effective method of managing greywater in these types of settlements than the traditional approach which entails the provision of rudimentary engineered services with minimal consultation with the inhabitants ... Local communities, stakeholders and interest groups, including local authority officials and councillors will have to be consulted to obtain their input and “buy-in”. An appropriate research design must therefore emphasise participation, collaboration and consensus decision-making among stakeholders so as to ensure the long-term sustainability of social and technological interventions and solutions (WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006:3).

The quote above, drawn from the UCT project’s “WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006: Detailed Report on Methodology” reflects the project initiators’ apparently uncritical acceptance of participatory development rhetoric, in that the participation of “beneficiaries” in determining their development needs and strategies was more beneficial than the “traditional” manner of imposing development interventions on target populations; and is more likely to be sustainable.

The authors of the methodology report openly stated their belief in the benefits of a participatory approach in their “research-extension-development” greywater project (WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006:12) when they said that

The intended research method and success of the study depends largely on the co-operation and willing collaboration of local residents. It has been argued, therefore, that the research methods must embrace a settlement/residents-level focus and should be characterized by participation and consensus decision making. This approach is premised on the assumption ... that sustainable solutions and strategies for greywater management are likely to be achieved if research and the resulting implementation strategies are driven by all stakeholders and by users in particular, and not simply by formal local authority structures alone.

However, neo-liberal policies have been shown to actually entrench poverty and increase the burden of already vulnerable sectors of society (Hristov, 2005; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002). When subsumed into a neo-liberal set of intentions, participatory goals of empowerment and inclusiveness stand at odds with the goal of co-opting civil society into taking on state duties. The UCT/WRC project was similarly conceived out of conflicting philosophies.

Alongside a participatory approach, the UCT/WRC greywater project also professed a “self-help” approach – although this was not elucidated in project documents, discussion among researchers revealed that the project initiators had included a “self-help” approach in their thinking about the project. For instance,

We are trying to find a way to spark a self-help revolution. We will fail in many respects, but we should still try. First prize would be to spark a group of people to pick up spades and collectively make a difference in the area, so it diffuses out. (Minutes from greywater project researchers’ meeting 18 October 2007); and

We need an explanation for why people can’t do more for themselves? Why do we struggle to get into communal self-help initiatives? (Minutes from greywater project researchers’ meeting 29 May 2008)

Verhagen (1987:22) defines self-help as

any voluntary action undertaken by an individual or group of persons which aims at the satisfaction of individual or collective needs or aspirations. The distinctive feature of a self-help initiative or activity is the substantial contribution made from the individual’s or group’s own resources in terms of labour, capital, land and/or entrepreneurial skills.

What the above shows is that the team was guided by the methodological thrust of participatory research principles and simultaneously by the principle that local people could and should administer services themselves, without clear regard for whether they might have had the means to do so. Internalisation of the idea that people should administer services themselves was reflected in discussions amongst the researchers that centred on the questions “why can’t people do things for themselves” and how the team might “get them” to do so. The “self-help” undertones to the approach suggest that the project initiators expected that “participants” would voluntarily take up tools to combat the effects of greywater mismanagement in their settlements.

That in turn translated into an intention to find means for residents of the two shack settlements to manage waste water themselves through the installation of technologies that, albeit probably rudimentary, could have been developed collaboratively between researchers and residents.

Building on the results of the previous greywater study (WRC Project K5/1524, 2006), the objectives of the UCT/WRC community-level greywater project referred to in both the original proposal and the project's later "Report on detailed methodology" (K5/ 1654 D2:3) could be broadly broken down to require two main processes. One involved identification and observation of "socially salient impacts", social challenges and the reasons for failure of interventions, ways to mitigate impacts, ways to overcome social and other obstacles and solutions to people's inability to "sustain or manage new systems" (the research aspect of the project). The second involved practical actions relating to greywater management – trialling social and technical interventions, preparing education material and developing so-called best practices and guidelines. At the same time as being a research pursuit, the project was also intended to generate practical outcomes.

The objectives display a particular focus on "social" aspects, where "social" suggests people and relationships amongst residents of the selected areas.⁵ The question seems to have been: what are the weaknesses (and strengths) of such people's relationships for managing and sustaining sanitation or greywater interventions and how might the project strengthen them? In light of the previous project's findings, the underlying perspective was that residents living in such places must necessarily take responsibility for the management of local infrastructure relating to sanitation, and particularly greywater, and they must be educated to ensure such services are in place, and to manage the infrastructure so that it is not misused, vandalised or caused to fail (WRC Project K5/1524 2006:2/8). This view of how research, and development, should occur through the project was channelled through the methodological approach of Participatory Action Research.

⁵ As the project leader commented every so often, the WRC project coordinator had wanted the social anthropologist on the team to be project leader. However, the original social anthropologist on the team was not available and, as indicated earlier, actually left the project and UCT.

The use of PAR was therefore meant to “establish a basis for participation by developing and/or strengthening relationships between stakeholders, negotiating roles and responsibilities based on common, shared goals for managing greywater” (WRC K5/1654 D2 2006:4). The project initiators claimed that their approach “could be considered more than just a ‘bottom-up’ approach since any implementation, with respect to this study, is going to be achieved by a combination of actors including researchers, the local authority, and local residents” (WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006:12).

Although the methodology report recognised that the project’s approach was “bottom-up” and “top-down”, from the perspective of the research project proposal (WRC Project K5/1654, 2006), the answer to mitigating the health and environmental effects of greywater disposal was seen to lie primarily with residents themselves, particularly given a context of municipalities which often did not provide adequate facilities or services and where residents of such places were understood to misuse, vandalize and ultimately cause the failure of provided facilities. This perspective was reiterated in meetings held amongst research team members. When we discussed what the project was meant to achieve, one of the project leaders articulated this idea clearly:

First prize would be to get people to organise themselves to solve their problems.

Around the world, some groups can manage their lives better than others - possibly because there was sufficient co-operation or leadership. It has to do with taking responsibility and taking action. Langrug has the fundamentals: water supply, flush toilets. The potential is there to divert waste streams. Some individuals do take responsibility, but there are too few people so the overall area is very poor. With a spade and hard work the place would be much better (Minutes from greywater Research Team Meeting 18 October 2007).

The project thus sought to convince residents that the consequences of greywater disposal were worth addressing, and that they should decide, with the aid of researchers, what should be done about it and do it themselves. A by-product was that municipalities would also have to be convinced that greywater management was worth investing in if local people were mobilized to do most of the management themselves, and in research team meetings, researchers (including project leaders) said, “The municipality may have to provide materials ... we need municipal involvement”; “They could use the maintenance budget.”; “The municipality could also provide

sand and stones” and “We need to get the municipality to provide some materials, people can collect the rocks.” These statements suggest that the project leaders expected that the respective municipalities would or should literally “buy-in” to the project, through the provision of funds and materials.

The project initiators planned to operationalise the participatory approach through four steps delineated in the ADMP method: “identification and assessment”; “reflection and establishment of shared goals”; “action” and “adaptive learning”. The researchers specified that the first phase, “identification and assessment” would involve introducing the project to various stakeholders – municipal officials, but particularly users - to gauge the level of support for greywater management and obtain their “input and buy-in” in the project. At the same time, the researchers planned to understand local circumstances by counting housing structures, establishing existing and future water and sanitation services, and by identifying “linkages, working structures and communication channels” (WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006:3-12).

The second phase, “reflection and establishment of shared goals” was to entail a process, through workshops, of identifying problems associated with poor greywater management, and then encouraging stakeholders to

prioritise the various greywater disposal and management issues in order to reach a shared understanding of what might be the best desired outcome for all concerned and to identify appropriate management strategies. Once agreement is reached with stakeholders with respect to the scope and extent of the problem, the researchers will facilitate discussions to establish a shared vision of greywater management (WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006:8).

The purpose of the second stage was therefore to encourage stakeholders to decide which greywater management strategies to adopt.

The third phase, “action” was meant to be the point at which the “stakeholders” implemented the management strategies devised in the second phase, whilst the fourth phase, “adaptive learning”, was supposed to involve the monitoring of the implemented management strategies, and to inform adaptations to those strategies based on feedback from the monitoring process (WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006:8).

While the project initiators noted that “agreement between stakeholders may be difficult to obtain” (WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006:3) what the aims outlined above show is that the project initiators took for granted municipal councillors and officials’ support for the venture and that the “stakeholders” would prioritise greywater management.

Within these aims and objectives, the project initiators identified a variety of related goals. One of these goals was to “explore the concept of ‘social capital’ – i.e. trust, connections, etc. between people” (WRC Project K5/1654 2006 proposal document: no page numbers) – and to understand how “the levels of connections, trust, exchange and reciprocity (‘social capital’) within the settlement” (*ibid.*) would impact on community-level greywater management. In terms of that exploration of social relationships, defined as *social capital*, the project initiators intended to strengthen “existing relationships between stakeholders, negotiating roles and relationships based on common, shared goals for managing greywater disposal” (WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006:4). In other words, they hoped to gauge how existing social relationships could be employed and strengthened for the purpose of generating participation in greywater management.

Another goal was to establish settlement-level organisations to engage in greywater management and implement changes decided upon by stakeholders, with the support of the local authorities or ward councillors (WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006:8). What the project initiators hoped to do was find existing organisations, such as street or block committees which were presumed to represent the settlements, to take on this role.

In combination, these goals reflected a variety of assumptions made by the project initiators about the subjects of the research. Firstly, it was assumed that the residents had a common sense of *community* defined by their residence in a particular informal settlement without on-site sanitation, hence the title of the project, “*community-level greywater management in settlements without on-site waterborne sanitation*”. Second, they took for granted that “stakeholders” – primarily municipal officials, ward councillors and the *community* – would prioritise greywater problems sufficiently over others they faced that local organisations that were taken to represent local residents would be able to rally residents around greywater management, and that they

would draw on their existing relationships to manage greywater, and also that municipal officials would support their greywater management efforts.

A glaring flaw in the project's adoption of PAR was the initial imposition of greywater as the development focus. From the outset, the project transgressed the fundamental principle in participatory research – that the participants define research needs, and its approach was elementally top-down.

A closer look at the conceptualisation of local social organisation reveals numerous other difficulties with the project initiators' theoretical approach to the research. For example, the conceptualisation of "stakeholder" groups in the appropriation of ADMP methods reflects closely the problems Frodin (2008) raised in his analysis about civic participation in governance and policy, as introduced in the 1990s internationally and in South Africa. He explains that participatory governance is based on a "conceptual triad" of state, market and civil society (Frodin 2008:42). The state, Frodin explains, "tends to be associated with hierarchical organisational structures and legal rational principles"; civil society "is assumed to be characterised by voluntariness"; while the market "is viewed as an arena in which self-interested, maximising agents are involved in a goal-oriented pursuit of economic profit and accumulation" (Frodin 2008:19-20). Frodin points out that in reality, the boundaries between these three categories are always blurred and that those in each do not always fulfil their envisaged roles. Instead of being distinct spheres, he suggests, they are part of the same institutional and legal order, and the categories therefore exist as politico-legal entities, though not necessarily as "institutionalised practices" (Frodin 2008:23). Civil society, according to this view, is not separate from the state, because public participation is seen as a response to state and market systemic failure.

Frodin (2008:35) adds that civil society or "networks", as a form of governance, are most often considered

a non-hierarchical form of co-ordination of relatively equal social agents and agencies based on trust, commitment and informed relationships ... network forms of governance rely on trust, shared understandings and companionship rather than on commands and price competition ... The liberal democratic model of governance is an idealised ...

theory which posits causal relationships between different societal spheres, characterised by different forms of coordination ... The liberal democratic model underlines the importance of civil society. There is no precise definition of the concept ... The term civil society usually denotes an intermediate organisational sphere between the state and the family consisting of organisations that have been formed voluntarily by members of society, with the aim of protecting their interests and values. The civil society tends to be seen as a source of shared meanings.

WRC Project K5/1654, in its operationalisation of PAR and ADMP, appeared to take for granted the hierarchical institutional order described by Frodin (2008) above, and almost verbatim the assumptions about civil society he highlights. Part of the problem is that the project initiators uncritically accepted that the bottom level of this perceived hierarchy – the target population in the respective settlements – was a single *community*.

Frodin (2009:293) warns that

... general concepts like state, market and civil society need to be handled with caution. What these notions in fact refer to is a set of institutionalised practices, according to which people invoke different logics of action in different situations according to a certain pattern. This pattern, or rather, a set of interrelated transaction domains, does not exist *a priori*. It has to be institutionalised. A formal legal order that serves to uphold government agencies, parties, civic associations and private enterprises as legal entities only exists insofar as it is reproduced through recurrent practices. If policy-makers and academics uncritically employ theories developed in different social science disciplines that focus on political (state), economic (market) and social (civil society) aspects separately, they will risk making flawed analyses.

The point Frodin makes that is relevant to the project is the problem of uncritical acceptance of conceptual social categories, and taking for granted politico-legal categories in analysis and research. Evident in the project's formulation of "stakeholders" and its focus on *community* was the acceptance of the functional existence of state politico-legal social categories particularly 'state' (municipal officials) and 'civil society' (*community/residents*).

It is not surprising that official state definitions of concepts employed in the UCT/WRC greywater project were very similar: the project initiators defined *community* according to co-residence in informal settlements without on-site sanitation, and the state definition was according to residence, rates payment and service use in a municipality, represented by civic organisations, non-government private sector or labour organisations involved in municipal affairs (Municipal Systems Act, No. 32, 2000).

Like the vague conceptualisation of *community* employed in the project, its use and definition of *social capital* (trust, connections, exchange, reciprocity etc.) resembled state definitions (RSA,1998b):

As an explanatory term, *social capital* refers to the assets accumulated through various social networks and relationships, based on trust, which enable people to work together to achieve common goals. Social capital is a resource created by participating in social networks; it is found in both horizontal or bonding relationships within social units, and vertical or bridging relationships between social units.

The close correlation between the project initiators' categorisations of stakeholders and its definition and usage of concepts like *community* and *social capital*, in pursuit of participatory development, shows that they accepted both the promises and assumptions behind participatory approaches, and at the same time state participatory and social rhetoric, a point I return to later in a discussion of state policy (see chapters 3 and 4).

Various critics of participatory approaches have drawn attention to the misconceptualisation and misapplication of these sociological concepts upon which participatory approaches, that both the UCT/WRC greywater management project and state development goals, were and are predicated. Among them are Henkel and Stirrat (2001:183) who showed that participatory approaches used in development that try to get "participants" to accept and perhaps carry out the objectives of the state or of researchers do not actually shift much from top-down approaches, because the research or development goals remain defined from above. In combination with a self-help philosophy that people should help themselves, a participatory approach that ascribes responsibility for development to participants can attribute the responsibility for the success or failure of the initiatives to them as well. They thus not only undermine their own priorities and

fail to empower local people. By blaming those people for a project's failure, they add to the extent to which they are disempowered through their being seen from above as inept.

In this way, while participation may be attempted in attempts to achieve development and research objectives, it can actually be made to serve "top-down" objectives, even though the purpose of a participatory approach is intended to avoid this. Projects that aim to be participatory can easily become standard interventionist projects due to research priorities and institutional constraints.

Other authors have shown how development projects have similarly been intended to conform to a participatory approach, on the grounds that it would remedy the weaknesses of 'top-down' interventionism, and bring about sustainability and empowerment through beneficiary participation. In reality, however, the balance of power tends to remain in the hands of the developers, and the developments remain externally imposed.

An example comes from Bologna's (2008) research on a government development initiative through the North West Parks and Tourism Board at South Africa's Madikwe Game Reserve in the North West Province. She showed how the developers employed the language of participation, but in practice failed to realise the participatory goals of *community* empowerment because they did not take seriously *local people's* perspectives. She also revealed an inconsistency between the participatory rhetoric used and the actual practice on the ground. As a result, she showed, the rhetoric developers used concealed the development intervention's reinforcement of existing power relationships between *developer* and *participants*, because *local people* were excluded from influencing or even participating fully. The Madikwe development thus failed to realise the promises of a participatory approach – participation, empowerment and sustainability.

I explained above that the UCT/WRC project initiators were hoping to work through local organisational structures to rally the *community* around greywater management and draw on their *social capital* (i.e. social relationships) to do so, assuming that municipalities would support community-level greywater management, but with the focus remaining on residents as both the cause of and the solution to greywater management problems.

In this case, the UCT/WRC greywater project initiators assumed (a) an extant *community* in the informal settlements, which defined itself by co-residence in a place without on-site water-borne sanitation; (b) the presence of social structures that were representative of that *community*; and (c) that members of the *community* would draw on their relationships (defined as *social capital*) to solve the common problem of greywater.

***Community* in participatory research and development: The antithesis of participation?**

Numerous criticisms have been made about a territorially-defined, bounded notion of *community*. For example, Bologna (2008) and Ferguson (1990) have both showed how preconceived ideas about a target population's social constitution can inform inappropriate development interventions, because the actual needs of that target population are ignored in favour of development agents' priorities.

As Verhagen (1987:13) cautioned over twenty years ago,

If we want to make our assistance more effective in strengthening the economy of the poor, we should start where some of the roots of the problem lie: that is within our own organisations and within our own minds where we tend to cherish ideas and assumptions which may provide legitimacy to our work, help secure the survival of our own organisations, but prohibit a consistent approach to self-help promotion among the rural poor. Self-help promotion has to start with a critical examination of the assumptions upon which earlier development efforts were based, and most of the ongoing effort still are ... [Those assumptions] are the products of a system of thought and reasoning, characteristic of an outsider's vision of change and attitude towards development issues. In an insidious way, they tend to steer our thinking in the direction of top-down interventions and disregard of the people's own ambitions and potential for self-help.

The project initiators relied on problematic understandings of *community* in the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the project and in their use of participatory methods, revealing a lack of recognition of many criticisms raised in participatory research literature.

The notion of *community*, by definition, assumes a common purpose, which very often is associated, problematically, with internal homogeneity, coherence and co-operation, within a

territorially defined area (Cooke and Kothari 2001:6). Seeing *community* as coterminous with territorial boundaries is problematic because such an idea may not be a true reflection of *community* as it actually exists (Mansuri and Rao 2003:6). Such a conceptualisation, as suggested by Bologna (2008), can also obscure local complexity and diversity, and therefore differing and competing views and goals within a defined population – even when developers claim to take heterogeneity into account. And, when developers and researchers seek particular formulations of *community* (e.g. defined by co-residence), they may find *community* where there is none on the ground – because there is no necessary drive locally for people to institutionalise their assumed contiguity or commonality into *community*, and rally around whatever the researcher/developer thinks is good for the cohort of people occupying a particular geographic area (Andrew Spiegel 2009: pers. comm.).

Frodin (2009) raises the point that institutions exist within the realm of human relations and social construction. *Community*, if regarded as a social institution, would therefore not be something that exists in a natural, given form: the existence of *community*, like institutions, depends on “collective acceptance” and “it is therefore only possible to create institutions deliberately if they achieve a sufficient degree of collective acceptance” (Frodin 2009:295).

Assumptions about the presence of *community* cohesion, homogeneity and boundedness can also render actual permutations of *community* unimportant. When people do have a reason to institutionalise their sense of common purpose, it could be seen as irrelevant to the project goals and therefore immaterial (Mansuri and Rao 2001:10).

The assumption that populations of contiguous residents form communities that are internally homogeneous, co-operative and coherent is a thorny one, because it can obscure local structures of power, “economic and social” (Mansuri and Rao 2003:10; Cooke and Kothari 2001:6) that influence participation. Such assumptions, as Cleaver (2001:47) points out, leave little space for varying livelihoods and motivations. And, as Bologna (2008:82-3) suggests, even when heterogeneity is recognised (as does the ADMP approach, which claims to take into consideration that multiple stakeholders have different values and knowledge systems), the use of a totalizing notion of *community* remains an obstacle. This is important to projects which seek development through participation of the beneficiaries, because local power structures can

actually influence the potential for participation and empowerment, a point which Mansuri and Rao (2003:10) argue could integrally influence the outcomes of a project that uses the notion of *community* uncritically.

On the basis of their assumption of an extant single *community*, the WRC/UCT project initiators imagined that they could co-opt local residents through organisations like street or block committees into carrying out the project's objectives. The project initiators assumed that through such bodies they could organize greywater management and get residents to draw on their existing relationships to do so.

Cleaver (2001:40) described how, in participatory development projects, there is a tendency to concentrate on "formal" institutions because "Formalised institutional arrangements are considered more likely to be robust and enduring than informal ones, and desirable characteristics include a clearly specified user group and boundaries, a system of clear rules and sanctions against offenders and public conflict resolution mechanisms".

Cleaver (2001:44) has argued also that by making assumptions about social solidarity, and by conflating *community* with resource, social and administrative boundaries, committees within such a *community* are understood to represent that *community*. Such a perspective, Cleaver maintains, is particularly convenient for developers and researchers attempting to ease delivery of development: "A concentration on boundaries highlights the need in development for clear administrative arrangements, more to do with the delivery of goods and facilities than a reflection of any social arrangement" (Cleaver 2001:44).

A focus on existing formal institutions that are assumed to be representative of an imagined *community* is also problematic because, firstly, as I have discussed above, there may not be an actual *community* defined by territory, and therefore a committee that is assumed to represent that *community* may not actually do so. Secondly, as Mansuri and Rao (2003:42) indicated, when existing committees are relied upon by researchers or developers to carry out a project's participatory objectives, that participation may in fact be constrained by the very involvement of the committee.

However, Cleaver suggested that there exist “more complex and fluid processes of institutional evolution, their ebb and flow according to circumstances (season, political interventions, need), and the *ad hoc* use of different institutional arrangements as appropriate, not necessarily conforming to project activities.” (Cleaver 2001:42). In situations marked by unclear institutional or social boundaries that do not fit developers’ visions, Cleaver added, beneficiaries of a development project are commonly interpreted as disorganised, weak and unable to develop or be developed – at least until more persistent institutional structures are created.

This point was reflected during the present project when we reported that we had been unable to identify an operational street committee in Langrug, and the project leaders then recognised that “many settlements lack clearly defined community structures that can readily facilitate community-focused solutions to greywater management” (Armitage *et al.* 2008:1) and then concluded that the local structures were weak (Armitage 2008:2) and that there were “no observable social structures” (Minutes from WRC greywater group reference meeting 12 November 2007).

The potential value of fluid social structures and social arrangements was therefore negated by the project leaders’ preoccupation with finding persistent social structures and working with a particular formulation of *community*. This was despite the fact that various authors have shown how flexibility in household and “family” composition is vital to livelihoods strategies of the poor in South Africa’s cities, precisely because they rely on inter-household and intra-national networks to sustain themselves in uncertain economic circumstances (Oliver-Evans 1991:189; Spiegel *et al.* 1996a and 1996b; Ansell and Young, 2006; Ross, 1995; 1996).

When a collection of people who inhabit a particular geographic space are equated with *community*, and when that *community*, and the individuals in it are considered the locus of change and are co-opted by researchers and developers to carry out their own visions of development rather than those of the participants, the “participants” themselves may be seen as the cause of failure of these projects. In actuality, however, the broader economic or political dynamics within which such a project operates, or the research priorities and approaches that defined the research goals, may also influence or indeed direct the chances of achieving the outcomes of the project.

Another problem identified by Mansuri and Rao (2003) regarding a reliance on uncritical notions of *community* within a participatory approach is that it can render local social dynamics unimportant and seemingly irrelevant to the goal of engendering the involvement of the beneficiaries of, or participants in such research and development. They have emphasised that local politicians may feel threatened by such developments, and this can lead to competition between civil and state organisations, as well as to conflicts of interest between politicians and their constituencies (Mansuri and Rao 2003:34).

A focus on *community* in participatory development has also been criticised for giving inadequate consideration to the broader social, economic and political context which frames the *local*. For example, Green (2000:68) argues in relation to rural development,

In premising the achievement of development on community participation in a locally implemented programme context, the new development orthodoxy contributes to the perpetuation of the very problems it seeks to resolve by failing to acknowledge the broader economic and institutional constraints which ensure the continued impoverishment of rural communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Social capital theory in participatory approaches

Social capital was another principle sociological notion employed in the project with little attention to its implications in the project's actualisation, and is a notion which appears frequently in participatory literature (e.g. De Filippis, 2001; Mansuri and Rao, 2003). The more common understanding of *social capital* (mirrored in project and state documents) was conceptualised by Robert Putnam in the 1980s, and soon became very influential in World Bank approaches to community-based development and participatory development (Mansuri and Rao 2003:10). According to Putnam (2000 in De Filippis: 2001:786-7), "Social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called 'civic virtue'". The theory relies on notions of "norms" and "trust" which, as in the case of the UCT/WRC project, remain undefined and are therefore very difficult to gauge. Yet

they are seen as “features of social life ... that enable participants to come together to pursue shared objectives” (Putnam 1996: 34).

Putnam’s theory relies upon a particular notion of *community* and how it can be mobilised for development (Mansuri and Rao 2003:11). The argument is that individuals within groups establish “bonds” between each other, and “bridges” between groups. The intensity and extent of interactions within and between groups are then used as a measure of a given *community*’s potential for self-improvement (Mansuri and Rao 2003:11). Like participation, social capital is assumed to be inherently a “good thing” which promotes “good, democratic government, and brings about sustainable economic growth” (De Filippis 2001:785).

De Filippis (2001) argued that relying on *social capital* for economic development is misguided, as it does not necessarily lead to democracy and sustained economic growth. This is because the structural challenges (such as access to economic or political power) to sustainable development and empowerment cannot be addressed by people at the “bottom” through their social relationships and innate abilities alone.

One of the principal criticisms of the use of Putnam’s theory of social capital in participatory development, resonating with other critiques levelled at participatory approaches, is that by seeing social relationships between individuals and groups as a resource in and of themselves, wider power and structural constraints become obscured. Mansuri and Rao (2003:11) argue that a more sophisticated model of “social capital” was conceived of by Bourdieu (1984, 1990, 1998), In contrast to the Putnamian understanding, Mansuri and Rao (2003) discuss Bourdieu’s analysis of “social capital” as existing within a wider power and social network, and that, because of this, social capital can actually serve to reproduce inequality rather than reduce it. This is because economically wealthier people may have greater access to networks and to individuals who carry social and economic weight than do poorer people, and that therefore the former are more readily able to use those networks to reinforce their relative wealth and positions of dominance.

De Filippis (2001:781) argues similarly that the conventional (Putnam's) understanding of social capital, as it is employed in much development discourse, "is fundamentally flawed because it fails to understand issues of power in the production of communities and because it is divorced from economic capital. Therefore, *community* development practice based on this understanding of social capital is, and will continue to be, similarly flawed."

De Filippis (2001:783) argued that Bourdieu's (1985) analysis brings individual and group capacity for economic or practical "success" together with the wider structural context, whereby that success is understood to depend not only on internal social dynamics (i.e. within a local population) but also on a particular economic context that itself is created through power relations in wider society, and which in turn will affect the scope of possibility for individuals in that network (De Filippis 2001:783): "Simply put, certain social networks are in greater positions of power than others, and they can therefore yield much more substantial returns to their members when those networks are engaged in social or political conflict" (De Filippis 2001:789).

One crucial assumption in the use of Putnam's notion of social capital is that, from the perspective of the researcher/developer, it would be drawn upon for the good of the *community*, or for direct economic or practical needs. As a result, when social relationships are drawn upon for other purposes (such as sustaining livelihoods beyond the cash economy), social capital may seem invisible to those who make this assumption. In fact, interpersonal and intergroup relationships may be prolific, but employed for reasons other than economic gain (De Filippis 2001:783). De Filippis explains his interpretation through an example in the United States, to clarify this point:

Inner-city neighbourhoods have social networks and trust between members of those networks, and they possess many nongovernment, community-based organizations. What they lack is power and the capital that partially constitutes power. They are not likely to realize either without confrontation or within a Putnam-inspired framework of community development (2001:801).

The overarching criticisms of the use of unqualified notions of both *community* and *social capital* in the way that I have described above, are, firstly, that they lead developers to make

assumptions about the form and function of local social circumstances upon which inappropriate development interventions can be predicated; and secondly, that they obscure the importance of local and broader structural constraints - socially, politically and economically.

Conclusion

The above discussion about concepts employed in participatory discourse brings to the fore some major theoretical and practical challenges faced by the UCT/WRC project. The conceptual fragmentation of state, market and civil society spheres in participatory approaches, and a focus on *community* and *social capital* independent of economic and political contextualisation, have been broadly criticised for failing to adequately consider the implications of state policy, economics and functioning for local level development initiatives (Frodin 2008; 2009). Participatory approaches that rely on misguided notions of *community* and *social capital*, and that take for granted a functional and neutral institutional environment, have further been criticised for tending to result in ill-conceived development of interventions inappropriate for the local context, and therefore prone to failure (Bologna, 2008; Ferguson, 1990).

Yet it would seem from the proposal of the UCT/WRC community-level greywater management project that its initiators did not take those critiques into account. In consequence, the project's planners effectively set themselves up to face enormous difficulties in achieving the project's goals of improving health and the environment in a sustainable and empowering manner through participatory methods. That is because it was trying to negotiate a reality that may not have existed in the way imagined and that, from the outset, cast residents in a disempowering light.

It has been argued (Collins, 1986 and Stewart, 1998) that participatory methods in research can engender "sustainable" and locally-appropriate development, and research that is conceived of by participant-recipients. However, the literature that I have drawn upon shows that most often such initiatives revert to the "top-down" imposition of development goals in the guise of being participant-driven. What they represent is an approach, encouraged by funding institutions and in mainstream development, which suggests that people can and should manage development themselves, but that is structurally such as to preclude their capacity to do so.

I have thus far shown how the project utilised various concepts central to participatory methods, and accepted the associated assumptions. In so doing, I have argued that, from its outset at proposal stage, the project fell into a trap that Ferguson's work cautioned about in 1990: that seeking to engender development through preconceived notions of the participants in the research/development process – particularly in terms of what *community* is, how it is meant to operate, and social structures that are meant to represent and constitute it – can lead to a failure to realise the research/development goals.

Participatory principles in research and development – participation, empowerment and sustainability – are in themselves not necessarily problematic. However, when they are used to legitimise project actions which do not actually serve the project's participatory objectives then such assertions only mask use of conventional approaches – the imposition of development agendas on a target population.

The critical analysis in this chapter of the assumptions and notions that informed the UCT/WRC greywater project's approach and actions is crucial to the research findings that I present in the following chapters, because they have tended to run contrary to the assumptions made by the project. As a result of the assumptions made in the project's conceptualisation and operationalisation, these findings were not adequately considered in terms of their repercussions for the participatory goals of the project.

The remainder of this dissertation deals with historical, ethnographic data and legislation to show how the efforts of the WRC/UCT community-based greywater management in two shack settlements were constrained by the adoption of assumptions inherent to participatory approaches in research that I have discussed in this chapter, and that it ultimately conformed to top-down interventionism despite claiming to be participatory. I analyse the extent to which the UCT/WRC project conformed to the kinds of approaches that have been critiqued in the literature. I compare historical, legislative and ethnographic evidence with assumptions inherent in the project's participatory approach that I have considered here. In doing so, I address critiques which contend that participatory methods tend to obscure political, economic, institutional dynamics which simultaneously constrain the goals of participation in development or research.

I attempt to make sense of how wider structural dynamics, local power issues in the shack settlements and municipalities, and the daily struggles of residents there, posed challenges to the participatory goals of the UCT/WRC community-based greywater management project. I explore through the course of this dissertation the challenges which arose in attempting to carry out the research goals of fostering community-based greywater management in the two shack settlements in terms of critiques of participatory research approaches presented here.

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2. Fundamental constraints for the UCT/WRC greywater project's participatory goals: A short review of urbanisation policy in South Africa.

An enduring criticism of participatory methods in research and development is the tendency for researchers and developers to view participation independently of the macro-economic and political structures within which they hope to operate. This criticism of development is not unique to participatory methods, and is a common critique of development and social research too (see Murray, 1987; Sharp, 1985). In this chapter I consider the policy and economic context of basic service delivery⁶ in South Africa that framed the UCT/WRC community-level greywater management project's participatory goals.

The UCT/WRC community-level greywater management project was driven, as I demonstrated in chapter 2, by the WRC's interests in finding solutions to greywater management in "informal" settlements and thereby being able to meet its mission of informing policy about water management. The methodologies document of the UCT/WRC project stated,

The apartheid system left a legacy of injustice, inequity and poverty which is particularly evident in the many informal, non-sewered settlements clustered around the major centres. Whilst the present government has made significant progress in addressing these legacies, inequities such as the widespread lack of access to clean water, sewage and sanitation remain ... One of the many problems facing people living under these circumstances is the poor management of greywater arising from the supply of water without the installation of appropriate systems for its disposal once it has been used. The impact of these circumstances, found in many informal settlements in South Africa, necessitates a research approach that is pro-poor, participatory and seeks to empower and educate stakeholders (WRC K5/1654 2006 D2:4).

This statement suggests that the UCT/WRC project initiators framed their community-level greywater management project as a response to the failure of the state to meet service needs in shack settlements.

⁶ By 'basic service delivery', I mean the provision of services such as water supply, sanitation, refuse removal, roads, electricity and drainage.

In some of the first meetings held amongst the project team's researchers after I joined the team, while we were discussing our research approach, the following statements were made:

Government is accepting failure on its part, and there is a move away from RDP [Reconstruction and Development Planning] housing, seeking new models to approach administration, especially with regard to improvements on existing housing. But this is coupled with the embarrassment of failure. Instead, rudimentary services are rolled out, with the tacit understanding that such services are all people are likely to get (Minutes for WRC Greywater Research Project, 19 July 2007).

And

"The greatest mistake of the government is the promise of RDP housing."

"People cannot be removed, houses will not be provided. RDP is a failure."

"Government needs to accept the crisis and deal with services. But what can we do now with a short and medium term intervention to make a difference for a small number of people's problems?" (Greywater project meeting minutes, 3 August 2007).

These statements suggest that the community-level greywater management project was seen as a response to government's failure to deliver on its promises of state-sponsored housing provision, which effectively led to the waste water (or greywater) problems which the project initiators hoped to address. The idea was to create an interim strategy to deal with waste water management problems in a context where houses were planned, but not yet built, and services such as drainage were found to be absent.

In this chapter I analyse the history of urbanisation in South Africa, which has remained relevant to current manifestations of and responses to urbanisation, particularly in situations strongly shaped by apartheid legislation. I show, through a review of contemporary urbanisation policy (Reconstruction and Development Programme policy framework: the Housing Act (No. 107 of 1997) (henceforth Housing Act); Local Government Act; the Housing Code (2000) (henceforth Housing Code); *Breaking New Ground* (RSA, 2004) (henceforth *Breaking New Ground*), statements issued by the Department of Housing and newspaper articles), and with the aid of urban analysts of service provision and state-subsidised housing in SA (Huchzermeyer, 1999; Huchzermeyer and Karam, 2006; Graham, 2006; Khosa, 2002; Pottie, 2003; Oliver-Evans, 1991;

Frodin, 2009; 2008; Vaughan, 2004; Green, 2000; Mathekga and Buccus, 2006), that service delivery in SA policy is defined and determined predominantly in terms of state-subsidised housing provision. I develop the argument further by then showing that contemporary national housing policy inherently constrains people's participation in either housing or service delivery, because of the uniformity of housing delivery, and the dominance of national government over policy and decision-making at the local level.

I argue, therefore, that the UCT/WRC project's aim to get shack settlement residents to participate in greywater management, and thereby to implement service delivery, must be viewed in terms of contemporary national housing policy as the primary instrument for service delivery in South Africa, and I show where this policy fundamentally constrains participation in both housing and service delivery. Based on these contentions, I show that the project's own participatory goals were, from the outset, constrained by the policy environment within which it was meant to operate.

Brief History of Urbanisation and Shack Settlements in South Africa

Apartheid policies has had enormous influence on contemporary urbanisation in SA. To a large extent, that was because they left the ANC government with massive housing backlogs, proliferating shack settlements and a legacy of poverty and inequality that corresponded with class and race-based social and spatial fragmentation.

Late twentieth and twenty-first century South African demographics have been characterised by the movement of rural migrants to urban centres, a process that is broadly referred to as urbanisation. The most common explanation for urbanisation is that people move to cities in search of economic opportunities (Du Toit 1975:5, Morris 1981:1). A feature of contemporary urbanisation, internationally, has been the development of "informal settlements" (Davis, 2006), as burgeoning urban populations have outstripped available housing and formal accommodation. Yet shack settlement has been a part of the South African landscape for the last century at least (Western, 1981).

There are many names synonymous with the term "informal settlement" – slum, squatter camp, shanty town, location, *lokasie*, *ikasi*, and *favela* and *Villas Miserias* (villages of misery) amongst

others (Srinivas, 2008). The name “informal settlement” is a rather sanitised, if politically correct term that refers to the UN-HABITAT’s (UN Human Settlements Programme) description of slums as “characterized by overcrowding, poor or informal housing, inadequate access to safe water and sanitation, and insecurity of tenure” (Davis 2006:22-23). Generally, “informal settlements” around the world have common features: lack of security of tenure; lack of access to services (being outside of formal service networks); and usually being inhabited by low-income earners. They are most often physically, socially and legally marginal (see Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006: 3) to the mainstream urban economy and geography.

It is easy, and sometimes preferable, for politicians, academics and people in general to use the term “informal settlement” because it removes the possible value judgements associated with other terms, and obscures the ideas of suffering, deprivation and marginalisation experienced by people living in *Villas Miserias*, squatter camps, slums and *iikasi*. A South African organisation representing shack-dwellers, Abahlali BaseMjondolo, has raised the same concern, saying on its website, “There is also a problem with calling imijondolo ‘informal settlements’ because once a place is called ‘informal’ it is easy for people to say that it shouldn’t get any of the ‘formal’ services that people need for a proper life like electricity, toilets, refuse collection and so on” (Abahlali BaseMjondolo 2007). Instead, the organization prefers to refer to shack settlements, or *imijondolo*.

I follow that lead and try, in this dissertation, to use the term “shack settlement” wherever possible. I do that also because the terms slum, squatter camp or shanty town often carry negative connotations about their inhabitants, especially when the terms are used to refer to inhabitants rather than the physical conditions.

Under National Party rule (1948-1994) (which instituted apartheid), urbanisation was controlled through racist policies and laws that were formulated to restrict the movement of people classified as *black*⁷ into South African cities and towns.

⁷ Apartheid was based on the socio-legal construction of race – under the Population Registration Act of 1950, “every single South African citizen was now compelled to register as a member of an officially designated race” (Posel 2001: 89), either *white*, *native* or *coloured* (Posel 2001: 98). People’s racial classification was based on arbitrary traits such as lifestyle, appearance, and “general acceptance” of their appearance (Horrell 1959: 7). The *coloured* category was divided into sub-groups, *Cape Coloured*, *Cape Malay*, *Griqua*, *Chinese*, *Indian* and *Other*

Apartheid was built on its predecessors' policies of urban racial segregation (May 2000:2). Under British rule, *black* people's land was confiscated, and they were relegated to living in *native reserves* on marginal, unproductive and undesirable. Reserve occupants were compelled to work on mines and industry in urban areas through the imposition of a variety of taxes, but their presence there was nevertheless controlled by the "pass" system: people not considered *white* were required to carry passes when they were in urban areas in South Africa long before apartheid (Marais, 1939), but the pass system remained a feature of South African law well into the late 20th Century. A fraction of *black* people were permitted to reside in scheduled areas on the edges of areas designated by the government for *white* people. What resulted was a system of "circulatory migration" (Wilson, 1972) as labourers travelled between their homes and places of work, together with the entrenchment of rural poverty (Setai 1998:54, 61).

The Union of South Africa's (1910-1948) Native Land Act (No. 27 of 1913) and the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 (amongst others) developed these colonial segregationist policies. The former act allowed for *black* people to be kicked out of urban areas virtually arbitrarily, and to be evicted by farmers if they refused to work for them (Horrell 1988:153). It specified that *black* people could buy or lease land in "scheduled" areas, which ultimately constituted *native reserves* in rural areas, and *native locations* on the edges of urban areas, and constituted only 8% of the entire country (Setai 1998:95). By 1915, the repercussions of this law had become evident – "wanderings, deaths, poverty, homelessness and helplessness of all who had been forced off the land...The Act converted the farmworkers, 90% of whom are landless tenants living on White farms, the other 10% being migrant labour from the reserves" (Mnguni 1988:153).

The Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 mandated the removal of unemployed *black* people from urban centres, and additionally restricted their rights to acquire land (Morris 1981:24; Davenport and Hunt 1974:62). Some decades prior to apartheid, official responses to *black* urbanisation

Asiatic (Horrel 1959: 7). *Bantu*, *black* and *African* are used by different authors and legislation, to connote the category earlier labelled *native*. It is necessary to use these categories here because much of the legislation during apartheid was based on them, and because they have shaped the social conditions experienced in South Africa today, where class and race categories generally still largely correspond. I use all race labels in this essay with inverted commas because I recognise the arbitrary nature of the categories, and, to dissociate myself from stereotyping associated with the use of such labels, I have also italicised them. I use the terms *black* and *African* interchangeably, depending on their use in literature and legislation that I have drawn upon.

were characterised by the exclusion of *black* people from urban areas, and their restriction to rural areas, even though they were compelled to work in urban areas. This socio-political arrangement led to patterns of circular migration, and poverty that corresponded with both race and space. But, while *black* urbanisation was increasingly repressed, the *black* urban population grew by more than 50% between 1936 and 1947, which Posel (1991:20) explains as a result of “expanding employment opportunities and desperate rural poverty”. And yet, with the 1948 change in government to National Party rule, *black* South Africans faced increasing difficulties in accessing urban areas. A number of key laws instituted apartheid “separate development” by regulating *black* urbanisation: the Group Areas Act (1950), the Bantu Authorities Act (1951) and the Native Laws Amendment Act (1952).

The 1950 Group Areas Act enacted the compulsory racial segregation in South African cities that were declared for *white* people only, while *non-white* people were forcibly removed to places designated for each race category – i.e. *coloured*, *Indian* or *black* people) (Horrell 1973:31). As a consequence of the Group Areas Act, settlement patterns in South African cities corresponded closely with race.

The Bantu Authorities Act (1951) declared the establishment of homelands, which were created out of the earlier established *native reserves*. These were areas where most *black* people had to reside when they were not working in urban areas, mines or industry. They were assigned to a homeland based on their supposed ethnic affiliation and language (Oliver-Evans 1991:60). Homelands were meant to be self-governing states, but were ultimately beholden in all respects to the South African state (Oliver-Evans 1991:60), with the State President being the “Supreme Chief of all Africans in the Republic” (Horrell 1973:36; De Loor 1992:62). Like the *native reserves*, homelands acted as labour reserves for the extreme capitalist economics of the apartheid system (Murray, 1987; Wolpe, 1972).⁸

⁸ Lurie explains, “During the early decades of the last century the movement of labour was controlled so as to ensure a continuing supply of cheap black workers for agriculture, industry and commerce while simultaneously protecting the relative privilege of white workers.” (2000:343). Wolpe’s (1972) political-economic analysis of the scenario led him to interpret the apartheid political-economic system as one of intensified domination and control over the *black* population in order to maintain cheap labour power and to maximize profit (Wolpe 1972:425-7).

The Native Laws Amendment Act (1952) was passed along with the establishment of homelands.⁹ This law made it compulsory for *black* people in urban areas to carry a reference book with the appropriate official stamps.¹⁰ The reference book was vital for *black* people to access employment and accommodation in urban areas. Without these, they were open to harassment and apprehension by policemen, or expulsion to their homeland (Oliver-Evans 1991:32).

In the Western Cape province, moreover, the apartheid government made access especially difficult for *black* people through the 1954 Coloured Labour Preference Policy (CLPP) whereby employers had to prioritise *coloured* people for jobs, and seek permission to employ *black* people once they were able to prove that they could not find someone *coloured*. According to this policy, *coloured* people were given preference over *black* people in employment, while *black* people were barred from building or buying houses in the province (Morris 1981:43, Granelli 1977:14).

The purpose of the CLPP was to control *black* people's immigration and residence in the Western Cape by limiting the number of both jobs and houses available to *black* people. It was reinforced by slum clearance policies (Oliver-Evans 1991:41, 49). As influx laws tightened, and the control of settlement by *black* people in urban areas became more severe, they were "considered as temporary citizens in all areas outside the homelands" (De Loor 1992:61, Granelli 1977:14). The freeze on housing for *black* people in the Western Cape, along with the intensification of marginalisation of *black* South Africans through the CLPP, and slum clearance policies, Oliver-Evans (1991:48) argued, "served to exacerbate the existing housing shortage in the Peninsula which was rooted in the early decades of the twentieth century ... Ultimately, Africans, faced with an acute and chronic shortage of housing for the better part of a century, have had little alternative other than squatting".

⁹The Native Laws Amendment Act (1952) amended the Blacks (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act (No. 25 of 1945) (Oliver-Evans 1991: 30).

¹⁰ The Native Laws Amendment Act (1952) made it illegal for *black* people over the age of sixteen to stay in towns or for longer than 72 hours without a reference (pass) book showing that they had lived there continuously since birth; or had worked continuously for the same employer for at least ten years; or if they were the wife or child (under the age of 18) of somebody who had a pass book and was 'qualified' to be in the urban area; or unless they had special permission to be there (Horrell 1973:23).

As the above information emphasises, National Party control over *black* people's mobility resulted in overpopulation and impoverishment of homelands, and increasing pressure for rural inhabitants to seek some means of survival in urban areas. The state was ultimately unable to control *black* urbanisation (Murray, 1987). By the 1970s, there were growing numbers of shack settlements in Cape Town, despite some of the strictest influx controls being in place (Granelli 1977:14). "Spontaneous settlements" (unplanned and illegal) by *black* people occurred on land zoned for use by persons of other races, or for industrial or military purposes. According to Western (1981:278), by 1977 up to a quarter of greater Cape Town's total population lived in shack settlements. The government's response to shack settlement was eradication, which was articulated through the Slums Act (No. 76 of 1979) and the Black Communities Development Act (No. 4 of 1984). The first of these made landowners responsible for the eviction of squatters and slum clearance on their land; the second gave the government power to "alter or disestablish any African township, relocate its inhabitants and demolish existing structures" (Oliver-Evans 1991:75). In the 1980s, under enormous local and international pressure, the apartheid state realised that it was unable to control *black* urbanisation. The government additionally recognised the economic impracticality of separatist policies (De Loos 1992:63) which had culminated in the impoverishment of *black* people through their confinement to homelands (Murray, 1987) and their exclusion from access to education, markets and infrastructure (May 2000:3). By 1982 the state abolished influx controls (De Loos 1992:63) and then embarked on a policy of *orderly urbanisation* (Huchzermeyer 1999:1): *black* urbanisation had been officially recognised, but remained controlled (Oliver-Evans, 1991).

The state steadily relaxed laws curtailing *black* urbanisation, allowing them permanent urban residential rights, albeit subject to the availability of accommodation and employment opportunities (Oliver-Evans 1991:66) – hence the term *orderly urbanisation*. Oliver-Evans (1991:67) argued that the state's enduring approach of controlling *black* urban residence by making it dependent on employment and accommodation contributed to the intensification of divisions between rural and urban living standards, thereby encouraging further rural to urban migration. *Orderly urbanisation* "was to allow for 'controlled squatting' on designated land, through the 'upgrading' of invaded land or the 'orderly development' of uninhabited land" (Huchzermeyer 1999:1), and entailed official recognition of the right of access for *black* South

Africans to urban centres by making provision for housing (still according to race), a marked break from its prior refusal to allow growth in the permanent *black* population in cities. It was still carried out under the Group Areas Act (1950), which meant that urban development continued to be race-oriented.

Huchzermeyer (1999) showed that the National Party's 1980s response to urbanisation was through a policy-shift from influx and population control to controlled state-sponsored housing provision. Part of the state's "new" approach to urbanisation involved the application of existing slum clearance laws, and, as Oliver-Evans (1991:74) noted at the time, "[e]ssentially ... the process of urbanisation has been overshadowed by restrictive measures which can be invoked wherever urbanisation occurs which does not conform to the government's policy of 'orderly' urbanisation." Oliver-Evans (1991:77) also noted features of the state's revised approach, where "the responsibility of financing and implementing the urbanisation process has devolved principally upon lower tiers of government, the individuals and communities concerned, as well as private enterprise".

Late apartheid's *orderly urbanisation* thus included the limited provision of housing, slum clearance and devolution of implementation of that policy to local authorities and *communities*. In the Western Cape in particular, it involved movement of people between existing townships, towns and rural areas, and amplification of existing circulatory migration patterns as *black* South Africans were granted greater freedom of movement (Oliver-Evans 1991:93, 250)¹¹. While housing was provided, the policy towards shack settlement remained eradication.

Two broad approaches characterise apartheid policy responses to urbanisation. For the most part, there was official refusal to accommodate *black* people in urban areas, and they were either relegated to living in distant homelands, or in Group Area Act designated *locations* on the urban fringes. Access to urban areas was strictly controlled by a pass system, ongoing harassment and slum clearance in areas occupied by *black* people. These responses served to create a cheap labour pool in the rural areas (Murray, 1987), segregated *white* and *black*

¹¹ Lurie (2000:344) notes that with the lifting of controls over population movement after apartheid, migration tends nowadays to become a longer-term pursuit, though with more frequent visits "home".

spaces, and deep rural impoverishment. In combination, these consequences placed enormous pressure on *black* rural inhabitants to find means of survival – and to urbanise.

Finally, the state began to accept *black* urbanisation, but only through limited state-sponsored, market-led housing provision. *Black* people were allowed in urban areas, but their presence was subtly controlled by the *orderly urbanisation* approach through slum clearance and by limiting the number of *black* people permitted in cities.

Policies regulating urbanisation and population movement in the last century had fundamental consequences for contemporary urbanisation patterns. What remains, still, is a society characterised by racial and social stratification, grounded in spatially discrete settlement patterns. And, as a result of enduring rural poverty, both urbanisation and circular migration continue to intensify (Lurie, 2000) along with the greater mobility afforded to *black* South Africans, and their increasingly uncertain livelihoods. Lastly, the apartheid government's refusal to allow *black* urbanisation, and the consequent absence of housing for *black* people, coupled with continued rural-urban migration meant, unsurprisingly, that it left its successor with an enormous housing backlog, and burgeoning shack settlements.

Contemporary state responses to post-apartheid urbanisation

By the 1994 election of a democratically-elected government, there was an estimated national housing backlog of three million units. Shack settlements proliferated and grew as people from impoverished ex-homelands moved to South African towns and cities (RDP 1994:2.5.1). The new African National Congress (ANC) government had to address both economic poverty and severe inequality of access to services by the majority of South Africans. The Western Cape faced particularly intense housing shortages because of the earlier tighter restrictions on *black* urbanisation.

The new government had thus to deal with the consequences of inadequate service provision in shack settlements, and the health risks associated with lack of service provision and environmental degradation. Diseases related to poor sanitation are easily spread into homes and between people, when cooking or selling food for instance (Davis 2006:142-3).

Three seminal policy documents have guided state strategies to manage post-apartheid urbanisation – the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the Housing Act (1997), and *Breaking New Ground* (RSA, 2004).

The new government's efforts to counter the effects of decades of underdevelopment were initially implemented through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), itself a policy framework. A major component of the RDP was to address the inequalities produced under apartheid through the provision of housing, considered "one of the RDP's first priorities" (ANC 1994:2.5.4). Housing provision was envisioned as the primary channel to address service provision, job-creation, economic upliftment and shack settlement (ANC 1994:1.3.6; 2.5.3).

The primacy of housing delivery over basic service delivery is evident in the RDP Policy Framework document, where housing and services were addressed in the same section, under "Housing and Services", and scant attention was given to service provision itself. It was mentioned in only two points out of the twenty-one which constituted this section – firstly, in section 2.5.1, which states, "The lack of adequate housing and basic services in urban townships and rural settlements today has reached crisis proportions", and secondly, in section 2.5.6: "The approach to housing, infrastructure and services must involve and empower communities ... " (ANC 1994:2.5).

The rest of the "Housing and Services" section centred wholly on housing provision and related issues.¹² The scant attention to service provision in section 2.5 of the RDP Policy Framework document suggests that the state prioritised housing over other forms of service provision and that the service needs of the population were to be met through provision of housing.

The intentions set in the RDP were developed and detailed in the Housing Act (1997) and the Housing Code (2000). Analysis of these documents allows greater insight into how housing provision was to be implemented.

¹² i.e. housing problems and inequality in housing as a result of apartheid, right to housing, housing affordability, community participation, tenure, legislation, administration, housing subsidies, financing, hostels, rural housing, housing sector role-players, construction and housing delivery

Through the Housing Act, the Department of Housing planned to provide housing to people disadvantaged under apartheid through a subsidy to households earning R3500 per month or less (Housing Act). Beneficiaries could invest their subsidies into different housing types,¹³ *in situ* upgrading, or in the incremental upgrading of existing “informal” settlements through the provision of serviced sites.

The goal of state-sponsored housing was to allow all citizens and permanent residents access to “permanent residential structures with secure tenure”, potable water, adequate sanitation facilities and domestic energy supply (Housing Act, Section 1(vi)(a)(b)).

However, this policy was not achieving its stated intentions: in 2004, *Breaking New Ground* was released. It reported that housing and service delivery were being undermined by population growth and unexpected increases in household numbers, due to shrinking household sizes (RSA 2004:2). Growth in unemployment, attributed to increases in the size of the labour pool and slow job creation, was also seen as a reason for a growing housing backlog.

Moreover, while housing subsidy grants increased from R2, 692 billion (1996/1997) to about R4.5 billion (2004/2005), (RSA 2004:4), this did not reflect in the rate of housing delivery, which reportedly slowed down over the same period, because the grants increased only to accommodate annual inflation (*ibid.*). *Breaking New Ground* explained slowed delivery as a result of policy shifts, withdrawal of large construction groups and capacity constraints within government – particularly local government’s inability to “facilitate the establishment of sustainable housing environments” (RSA 2004.:5-6).

Breaking New Ground (RSA 2004:17) recommended the upgrading of existing informal settlements, which had to be “undertaken in flexible [sic] manner to cater for local circumstances. A new funding mechanism is accordingly to be introduced to support upgrading on an area-wide, as opposed to individual basis. This approach will maintain fragile community networks, minimize disruption, and enhance community participation in all aspects of the development solution.”

¹³ i.e. newly constructed, bondable single housing units; units in newly constructed multiple unit complexes, including flats; units in reconditioned or refurbished buildings; existing housing of any type

Central to the housing process, according to *Breaking New Ground*, was “community participation”. This was to be achieved through *community* surveys to determine their needs and the kind of development necessary. In the time between the surveys and actual housing provision, “basic services, social amenities and secure tenure” were to be provided to the “entire community”; whilst the housing itself was meant to be “developed in response to community demand ... constructed through mutual aid and community self-help or local contractors” (RSA. 2004:17).

Earlier approaches to housing delivery, through building on previously undeveloped “greenfield” sites, were now supposed to be augmented by “the eradication of informal settlements through in-situ upgrading in desired locations, coupled to the relocation of households where development is not possible or desirable” (*ibid.*). The upgrading approach was meant to be less prescriptive and to “support a range of tenure options and housing typologies” (RSA 2004:12) with the aim of “eradication of informal settlements” (RSA 2004:17). The criteria for qualification for housing subsidies were also relaxed to include a wider range of income-earners as housing subsidy beneficiaries – instead of having to earn a maximum of R3 500 per month, beneficiaries earning up to R7 000 per month also became eligible to qualify for the grant (RSA 2004:8).

In other words, the state had taken cognizance of the fact that its housing programme was not meeting the immediate service needs or addressing the conditions in shack settlements, and recognized the need to address service priorities in shack settlements. Through the shifts in policy, the state aimed also to take local perspectives into consideration through “community participation”.

Whilst recognising weaknesses in housing delivery, *Breaking New Ground* articulated the rationale behind a continued policy of state-sponsored housing provision through a one-off capital subsidy: “The new human settlements plan reinforces the vision ... to promote the achievement of a nonracial, integrated society through the development of sustainable human settlements and quality housing” (RSA 2004:7). In trying to achieve social equality and economic upliftment, the Department of Housing planned to accelerate the delivery of housing as “a key strategy for poverty alleviation”, “a major job creation strategy”, to ensure that “property

can be accessed by all as an asset for wealth creation and empowerment” for “leveraging growth in the economy” (*ibid.*). Cross (2006:254) explains,

[t]he general counter-strategy of the metropolitan municipalities seems to be to make use of government subsidy funding to bring the in-migrant population into full housing and services even if they cannot access jobs. The assumption appears to be that providing poor households with housing as a platform for accumulation will overcome exclusion, enabling them to stabilize their finances and invest in their own futures, so that their children at least will be able to stay in school and eventually enter the knowledge economy.

Despite the 2004 policy changes, recent statements from the Department of Housing suggest that delivery of houses through state subsidies remains the state’s dominant form of intervention. In a 28 May 2008 speech (South African Government Information, 2008), then Minister of Housing, Lindiwe Sisulu, said,

Conditions of poverty, especially within the informal settlements are unacceptable. We have drawn attention to this ad museum [sic]. It is precisely on this realisation that we, as the housing sector have prioritised informal settlement eradication and have given it a target date ... Two years ago we requested Cabinet to approve a policy that was aimed at immediately alleviating the very stressful conditions that invariably exist in high density informal settlements. The policy, which we termed Emergency Housing, was approved by cabinet.

And, on 29 January 2009, she commented on a ruling by the Durban High Court which dismissed an application by Abahlali baseMjondolo (a shackdweller’s association) against the KwaZulu-Natal Elimination and Prevention of Re-emergence of Slums Act (2007) (SA Government Information, 2009),

Since the launch of the Breaking New Ground policy all provinces have worked hard to develop policies to eradicate informal settlements, this judgment will allow them to speedily finalise legislation on how as Government we can manage the process of eradicating informal settlements ... We have always believed that the Breaking New Ground fundamental approach was constitutional and for the best interest of all poor

people, this judgment allows us to proceed to eradicate informal settlements by 2014 in partnership with all stakeholders.

These statements reflect the state's perception of shack settlements as only temporary, and its approach to dealing with the "conditions of poverty" in shack settlements as being primarily through the provision of housing. Although the state made policy shifts towards the progressive upgrading of shack settlements in a participatory manner, and provision for the delivery of services to places that were not yet upgraded (RSA, 2004) the emphasis remained on "once-off capital-intensive projects that aim to eradicate informal settlements through the provision of formal housing on individual plots" (Graham 2006:239). As a consequence, service provision to shack settlements must take place outside of housing policy as it remains only secondary to it. And, because housing development is seen by the state as the principal conduit for service provision, I would argue that the UCT/WRC greywater project's goal of people's participation in service delivery must be considered within the context of national housing policy in South Africa.

Participation in service delivery in the context of national housing policy

Huchzermeyer (1999) criticised the way in which urbanisation and housing delivery were carried out towards the end of the '90s: she explained that housing provision usually involves moving beneficiaries of government houses to newly developed "greenfield" areas. Even in cases of *in-situ* upgrading, people are usually removed from land they occupy to temporary transit areas (Huchzermeyer 1999:3) while houses are built in a predetermined form on standardized plots with freehold title and according to formal township layout (Huchzermeyer 1999:14). As a result, Huchzermeyer contended, there is very little actual scope for participation of beneficiaries in determining the form of housing, or how it is delivered. And, as the information presented above shows, urban policy is still being rolled out through state-subsidised housing in a predetermined form, which means, according to Huchzermeyer's (1999) argument, that participation in the housing process remains limited. Moreover, in a context where services are supposed to be delivered through housing provision, popular participation in service delivery, and discussions about it, must be fundamentally hamstrung.

While the Department of Housing (2004:20) claimed that the new housing policy approach would facilitate greater participation of beneficiaries (or *communities*) in the housing process, it envisioned

a substantially increased emphasis on the role of the State in determining the *location and nature of housing* ... This approach will enable municipalities to assume overall responsibility for housing programmes in their areas of jurisdiction, through a greater devolution of responsibility and resources to municipalities. It is assumed that municipalities will proactively take up their housing responsibilities given that clear guidelines and resourcing will be forthcoming from the national sphere.

Evident in the policy approach of, on the one hand, increasing the responsibility of local government and *local community* in service provision, and, on the other, emphasizing the role of the state “in determining the location and nature of housing” is the relationship identified by Frodin (2009) between so-called participation and increasing state power in determining local planning. As he explains, it reflects the British system of governance on which the South African model is based:

It is very similar to the British joined-up government model, in which the responsibility for planning is devolved to the local level, while the powers over overall policy design and financial control are concentrated at the national level. In this system, the national government establishes the broader policy framework, while local and regional governments are expected to co-ordinate and integrate the government functions and anchor them in the local civil society (Frodin 2009:293).

Although the state mandates participation in service and housing delivery, the way in which it operates - by determining policy at the national level, and devolving the implementation of policy to local government and *civil society/community* - means that actual participation in determining how service or housing provision actually proceed is very limited. Its continued implementation of housing provision together with “slum eradication” policies means that the very basic policy approaches to urbanisation in South Africa – as Huchzermeyer (1999) pointed out – fundamentally constrain participation in that process.

Other authors have shown that indeed to be the case. Vaughan (2004), for instance, conducted research on two national programmes that had a strong emphasis on *community* participation: the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme and the Local Economic Development Fund. She found that participation in service delivery was dominated, in part, by a focus on housing policy, service and infrastructure provision. Mathekga and Buccus (2006) similarly note that the top-down structure of South African governance through local government inhibits on-the-ground participation in the process of service delivery.

At the same time as being unable to meet its participatory mandates, the revised national housing policy has not been able to achieve its goal of eradicating informal settlements: in the Western Cape alone, there is a housing backlog of 400 000 (Rasool, 2008). With housing being treated as the primary mechanism for dealing with the effects of rapid urbanization, and as the primary channel for domestic service delivery, it is unsurprising that because housing is not being delivered, neither are services.

It has also been pointed out that the pressure on the state to roll out vast numbers of houses with a limited budget has meant that houses have tended to be built on cheaper land on the urban fringes and, as Pieterse (2004:4) notes, “the net effects ... reinforce and exacerbate the spatial form of the apartheid city, because the only *affordable* land ... amenable to large-scale, private sector-driven construction required for economies of scale was on the periphery of cities.”

Municipalities, (i.e. local government), are expected to implement both housing and service delivery, but their ability to meet their responsibilities in terms of housing and service provision has been shown to be severely handicapped (Khosa 2002:63; also see chapter 5). Yet the responsibility has fallen upon municipalities to implement national housing policy. That is over and above their existing mandates to provide minimum basic services to shack settlements by making 25 litres of water available per individual per day, within 200m of their home, and to provide each household with basic sanitation in the form of at least a Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrine (DWAF 1994:14, 15).

As Pottie (2003:458) has noted “Local government has continued to assume growing responsibilities for housing and infrastructure development, even as national housing budgets

have declined.” While Khosa’s (2002) and Pottie’s (2003) analyses of housing and service delivery were made prior to the 2004 housing policy revision, their arguments remains pertinent because the policy revisions simply increased local authorities’ responsibilities, at the same time as housing budgets having decreased.

It thus appears that current policy responses are not achieving the goal of addressing the material inequities brought about under apartheid, as envisioned in the RDP. In fact, there appear to a number of crucial continuities between the latter-day apartheid and contemporary state responses to urbanization and shack settlement: state-sponsored housing provision has remained the primary instrument for addressing urbanization, along with slum eradication and the devolution of state responsibilities to local authorities and *communities*. Because the current government continues with the same general strategies, many of the same problems persist and houses continue to be built according to the apartheid spatial layout, thereby perpetuating the social, racial and economic fragmentation developed under apartheid.

Moreover, adherence to the view that shack settlement is a temporary aberration means that the realities of inadequate service provision and the consequences thereof do not get addressed in practice, although they may be recognized in policy. Municipalities that already face enormous difficulties in providing services in spatially, socially and economically fragmented jurisdictions, have to take on additional responsibilities in housing and service delivery in carrying national policy mandates.

I have demonstrated above that national housing policy, to a large degree, defines and dominates domestic service delivery in South Africa. As a result, any intervention that is connected to service delivery, such as the UCT/WRC greywater project, must be viewed in context of that policy. The information presented above shows that current urbanization policy in South Africa displays some fundamental continuity with the late apartheid’s urban policy, particularly in terms of housing provision, devolution of state responsibilities to the local level of government and citizenry, and a paradoxical return to an “eradication” approach to shack settlements. At the same time, local authorities and actors are expected to take on greater responsibilities. The broader housing policy context, as Huchzermeyer’s (1999) argument suggests, is one which fundamentally constrains public participation in and influence over state policy regarding

urbanization and urban living conditions. The policy response, in seeking to provide housing, as did the late apartheid state, does not address the economic factors (such as unemployment or poverty) that drive contemporary forms of urbanization (Hunter, 2006). The UCT/WRC community-level greywater management project, which sought participation in the management of waste water, must therefore be viewed within this context which not only defines service delivery but, by its nature, fundamentally constrains participation in the process of service delivery.

It is in this context of flagging service provision, impotent housing policy and prescriptive governance that the UCT/WRC project initiators planned to co-opt residents of Langrug and Waterworks shack settlements into participating in their community-level greywater management project. When the project's participatory goals are considered in light of the implications of that policy, it appears that they were hamstrung from the very beginning.

3. Local government, ward committees and *community* participation: constraints to participation

State legislation governing service provision in South African frames participation in local government. In this chapter I shift focus from national urbanization policy to consider local government legislation in concert with analysis of evidence drawn from interviews with municipal officials, ward councillors, ward committee members and local residents regarding service provision in Langrug and Waterworks. My goal here is to understand the implications of local government functioning for the UCT/WRC project's participatory objectives.

A number of key documents govern service delivery in South Africa: the RSA Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996) (henceforth the Constitution), the Local Government Municipal Structures Act (No. 117 of 1998) (MStA), the Municipal Demarcations Act (No. 27 of 1998), the Housing Act of 1997 and the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (No.32 of 2000) (MSyA). I draw on work by Khosa (2000), Pottie (2003), Thurman (1999) and Frodin (1999) (dealing with institutional analyses of South African local government), as well as by Gervais-Lambony (2008), Vaughan (2004), Benit-Gbaffou (2008) and Piper and Deacon (2008) (who conducted localized research into the functioning of formal participatory structures in local government). I do that to develop an understanding of local government functioning both at the local municipal level.

I begin with a brief contextualization of the development of the two shack settlements to situate their respective political and social circumstances and the state of municipal service provision at the time we conducted our research. This is followed by a review of legislation specific to local government and service provision in South Africa, in order to give the policy framework for *local* level service provision in the two shack settlements. I then turn to the ethnographic evidence gathered around residents' participation and the role of ward committees, to understand to what extent official participatory structures in local government fulfil their mandates, and, in combination with policy, influenced the UCT/WRC project. Lastly, drawing on the findings of the authors mentioned above, I point out that, at policy level, *local* government structures limit the power of formal participatory structures (ward committees) to influence service delivery or indeed policy; and, drawing on our local level ethnographic findings, I contend that formal

participatory structures were, for a variety of reasons, unable to effectively fulfil their purpose of enhancing public participation. I conclude that, together, the two sets of circumstances posed inherent constraints on the UCT/WRC greywater management project meeting its goals.

Brief background to research sites

Waterworks

The first shack settlement in Grabouw started on Klipkop farm,¹⁴ close to Waterworks' location. Klipkop originally accommodated twelve families and about 140 people classified both *black* and *coloured*. The land was sold in 1988 (Rossouw 1990:7), and the occupants, who were compelled to move, feared that their families would be split (*ibid.*). *Coloured* people were to be moved to a *coloured* housing development, whilst the *black* people had nowhere to go because, under apartheid's Group Areas Act and Western Cape Coloured Labour Preference Policy (CLPP), no land was allocated for them in Grabouw (*Die Burger* 12 May 1989:4).

Some Klipkop occupants moved into backyard shacks in an existing formal *coloured* neighbourhood, Pineview (Rossouw 1990:7). *Black* people, not permitted to live in *coloured* areas, in 1989 occupied the land where Waterworks now stands. There they faced continual harassment from officials (*ibid.*), but they remained. Others, like one older man we interviewed, had moved to Waterworks from farms in the area. That man told us that he had been working on a farm in the area since 1975 and had, between 1978 and 1995, transported Transkeians to work on the farm during the harvest season. One of the first occupants of Waterworks, having moved there in 1990, he said: "I was part of those who started it, and the *white* people would remove us, but after some time we would come back and they got tired of evicting us." Newspaper reports of the time reported that the municipality had demolished Waterworks dwellings on the grounds that there were 'mixed groups' (i.e. racially mixed) illegally occupying the land (*Die Burger* 3 Feb 1990:3). Since there was no area in Grabouw designated for *black* people under the Group

¹⁴ Klipkop is now an up-market suburb in Grabouw, accommodating foreign immigrants and a number of bed and breakfasts. We stayed there for a month while we conducted intensive fieldwork in Waterworks.

Areas Act, the mayoral committee apparently said that they had to find a different place to stay (*ibid.*). Yet by 1990 there were 200 families living in Waterworks (Rossouw 1990:7).

Various factors influenced the development of shack settlements in Grabouw. Oliver-Evans (1990) reported that, under the labour migration system, farmers in the Grabouw area recruited workers through labour bureaus in the homelands, and accommodated them in housing compounds on the farms on annual contracts. In 1986, with the abolition of influx control laws, and the restitution, explains Oliver-Evans (1990:144) of a right to South African identity documents to some forced into homelands citizenship, farmers began to employ *black* labour locally on a permanent basis. Concurrently, with greater mobility allowed under these legislative changes, migration from the homelands to Western Cape urban and rural areas, like Grabouw and Franschhoek, increased.

As Nolan (2007:2) reported, there was another process at work too, at least after 1994. By then resident farm workers were being exposed to increasing evictions in the province as a result of the introduction of mechanised farming, which led to the casualisation and outsourcing of agricultural labour in the context of an increasingly competitive global fruit and wine market. Additionally, the protection of property rights, removal of subsidies for farm worker housing, and, ironically the introduction of minimum wage laws and laws aimed at protecting the tenure rights of farm workers (Extension of Security of Tenure Act (No. 62 of 1997) (hereafter ESTA)) have also influenced the increase of farm worker evictions since 1994. With nowhere to go, farm workers settled on land near towns and prospective employment.

Langrug

The origins of shack settlement in Franschhoek began with the removal of *coloured* people in the 1960s, under the Group Areas Act, three kilometres from the town centre to Groendal (Hofstatter, 2005), located just below the area that is now Langrug. The Coloured Labour Preference Policy resulted in the presence of few *black* people then, and, like Grabouw, no area designated for *black* occupation. As Groendal's population expanded, residents began to occupy adjacent private farmland. The farm owner sold the land to the municipality in the early 1990s as a result of the land invasion, and the Vietnam shack settlement was established (Hofstatter,

2005). Simultaneously, farmers in Franschhoek were reportedly evicting many of their farm workers from their farms in order to evade the ESTA laws, and turned their old labourers' cottages into bed and breakfast accommodation, as South Africa opened to tourism (Johnston, 2006). We met a number of people who attested to moving to the shack settlements when they were kicked off farms.

Langrug itself was occupied predominantly by Xhosa-speaking residents from the Eastern Cape (Adams *et al.* 2007:54) who were almost entirely excluded from residence in Franschhoek under the CLPP during apartheid. Langrug residents reported that the area had been settled from as early as 1986, and some claimed to have lived there for as long as seventeen years (i.e. since 1990/1).

The growing population of both shack settlements corresponded historically with the lifting of apartheid's influx control laws in the later 1980s. The two shack settlements where we worked had evidently been established for about two decades by the time we arrived, and both were already manifestations of housing shortages by the advent of democracy in 1994.

Local officials had reportedly recognised the housing needs in Langrug in the 1990s and reports were that the municipality was considering dividing Langrug into 400 erfs, in advance of housing development (Ferreira 1997:6). At the time, the municipality was also considering reselling the land where Vietnam was located,¹⁵ fearing further land invasions. However, land claimants and shack-dwellers living in Groendal and Vietnam secured a court interdict against its sale, and negotiated with the municipality and private developers in 1998 that the land be sold only for development of low-cost housing (Fife 2005:44), a project which would be funded by the development of a high-end residential estate and by state housing subsidies. In 2000, the development contract was signed, setting in motion the construction of 770 low-cost houses (Fife 2005:45) in what became the Mooiwater RDP housing area adjacent to Langrug. In 2003, when the last of Mooiwater's houses were built, developers were still suggesting that they might build between 300 and 500 houses in Langrug itself (*Die Burger* 10 June 2003:6), but nothing came of the suggestion.

¹⁵ Not featured on maps.

Grabouw faced similar severe housing shortages which manifested in conflict reported in *Die Burger* in 1996. The conflict was between *coloured* people living in the *coloured* areas (Pineview and Rooidakke) and *black* people living in Waterworks. It culminated in stone throwing and, finally, the police firing rubber bullets into the crowd. *Coloured* people, then aligned with the Pan Africanist Congress political party, had occupied land that was scheduled for the development of low-cost housing (in Melrose Place), 30% of which had been allocated to *black* people living in Waterworks who were aligned with the ANC. The conflict was over whom was entitled to occupy the houses: the *coloured* people protesting that they should have priority because they had been in the area the longer (Visser 1996:2).

Apartheid policies that had not provided housing for *black* people in the Western Cape left a persisting legacy in both Grabouw and Franschhoek. As newspaper reports (*Die Burger*, 1990; Hofstatter, 2005; Johnston, 2006; Rossouw, 1990; Visser, 1996) have suggested, the historical exclusion of *black* people from the province has meant that some *coloured* people believe they had greater claim to the benefits of housing developments. The current geographic distribution of people in both Franschhoek and Grabouw follows predominantly (though not exclusively) racial and class lines: the informal settlements are occupied mostly by Xhosa-speaking *black* people originally from impoverished Eastern Cape areas, *coloured* people occupy older residential areas built for them under the Group Areas Act, and *white* people occupy the original formal town. The focus on race is important here because I will show later how racial and geographical fragmentation had consequences for public participation in municipal service delivery in a number of interlinked ways.

To redress service provision inequities inherited from apartheid governance, the post-1994 government instituted a three-tiered state structure and reformed the municipal system to focus on service provision and public participation. I turn now to consider state legislation which guides local government and municipalities in service provision. I do so to clarify how service provision is meant to be delivered through local government and municipalities, in order to compare that legislation to the way in which public participation in service delivery decision-making was actually effected in Langrug and Waterworks.

I show that, because local government policy is determined at national and provincial level, and because decisions about local service provision are made by officials at centralised local municipalities, public participation in service delivery discussions is inherently impeded. Additionally, through analysing the ethnographic evidence we gathered, I demonstrate that the official participatory structures (ward committees) did not fulfil their role of enhancing public participation in service delivery discussions. I then show how that in turn meant that the WRC/UCT project's goals of community-level greywater management were constrained by the top-down structure of decision-making in state policy, and by local ward committee dysfunctionality.

The structure and functions of Local Government

Local government is the lowest of the three levels of the South African governance structure, and is subsidiary to national and provincial government. National government, the top sphere of the state hierarchy, is responsible for devising national legislation (in consultation with the other spheres), developing and implementing national policy, coordinating the functions of state departments and administrations, preparing and initiating legislation and “performing any other executive function provided for in the Constitution or in the national legislation” (Section 85, Constitution). Provincial government is responsible for passing provincial legislation (Section 104, Constitution), and implementing national policy and its statutes where required and empowered by the Constitution across different spheres. Local government is responsible for democratic and accountable government, including sustainable service provision, promoting socio-economic development and a safe and healthy environment to “local communities”, and encouraging the involvement of “communities and community organizations in the matters of local government” (Section 152, Constitution). These constitutional mandates are implemented through municipalities (Section 151(1), Constitution).

Prior to 1998, there were 843 independent municipalities. Under the Local Government Municipal Demarcations Act (No. 27 of 1998) their number was reduced to 284 (Khosa 2002:41). Along with the re-delimitation of municipal boundaries, municipalities were divided into a hierarchy according to three categories, established by the provincial MEC (Member of the

Executive Council) for local government: Metropolitan (Category A,¹⁶ of which there are six), Local (Category B,¹⁷ numbering 231), and District (Category C,¹⁸ municipalities numbering 47). Some municipalities were further divided into geographical/political units called wards – geographical areas but also constituted by roughly equal numbers of voters on the respective municipal voter's role (Schedule 1, Part 1, MStA). District and metropolitan municipalities are responsible for carrying out provincial and national mandates. Local municipalities fall under district municipalities, and both metropolitan and local municipalities can establish wards. Local municipalities and wards form the bottom levels of a centralized government bureaucracy.

Prior to municipal restructuring in 1998, Franschhoek and Grabouw had independent municipalities.¹⁹ Under the Municipal Demarcations Act, the Grabouw municipality became part of a new (Category B) Theewaterskloof Local Municipality with twelve wards. Waterworks fell into Ward 11 which covered 2,108km², included 3298 registered voters and included the neighbouring RDP settlement Pineview, Grabouw town itself and various outlying farms. Theewaterskloof Local Municipality was one of four local municipalities under the jurisdiction of the (Category C) Overberg District Municipality.

After municipal re-delimitation in 1998, Franschhoek incorporated into the (Category B) Stellenbosch Local Municipality, which included nineteen wards. Langrug (Map C) fell into Ward 2, covering 43.15 km² with 3148 registered voters. Ward 2 included historically *coloured* areas including neighbouring Groendal, La Motte and Wemmershoek, but no part of

¹⁶ Features of a Category A “metropolitan municipality”: areas of high population density, intensity of movement of people, goods and services, extensive development and multiple business districts and industrial areas, and has “exclusive executive and legislative authority in its area” (Section 1 ‘Definitions’: MStA)

¹⁷ A Category B (local) municipality (under Section 155(1) of the Constitution) is defined as ‘a municipality that shares municipal and executive legislative authority in its area with a district municipality within whose area it falls’ Section 2: MStA)

¹⁸ A Category C (district) municipality is defined as “a municipality that has municipal executive and legislative authority in an area that includes more than one municipality”. A district municipality can consist of a number of local municipalities, and ‘district management areas’. The latter have no local municipality, and are governed by the district municipality only (Section 1 ‘Definitions’, MStA)

¹⁹ Seether (2005: 143) noted that during apartheid, towns which were the preserve of *white* people – like Franschhoek and Grabouw – constituted independent municipal authorities. *Coloured* areas were administered by Coloured Local Advisory Boards.

Franschhoek town itself (which fell into Ward 1). Stellenbosch Local Municipality was one of five local municipalities under the jurisdiction of the (Category C) Cape Winelands District Municipality (Municipal Demarcation Board of South Africa, 2009).

Municipal redelimitation was implemented in order to “achieve the objectives of effective and sustainable service delivery, financial viability and macro-economic stability” (Section 25(1) of the Municipal Demarcations Act (No. 27 of 1998)). A further purpose of municipal redelimitation was to “broaden the tax base to be inclusive as possible of users of municipal services in the municipality” (Municipal Demarcations Act (No. 27 of 1998), Section 24).

Local Government (i.e. municipalities) functions on two levels – political and administrative. The respective provincial MEC for Local Government decides the political and management structure of each municipality. I deal here only with local municipalities because Langrug and Waterworks were under the jurisdiction of local municipalities which are categorized in the legislation in terms of whether they have a collective executive system, a mayoral executive system or a plenary executive system, with or without a ward participatory system.²⁰

On the political end, municipalities are required to have a municipal council (Section 18, MStA). Municipal council elections are for both political party representatives on a proportional basis and for ward councillors elected on a constituency basis. Under the ANC political structure, members can select a candidate for the position of ward councillor, but the regional ANC structures and leaders approve or decline such nominations. Benit-Gbaffou (2008:30) has pointed out that, in this context, ward councillors are more concerned with satisfying the ANC hierarchy than their constituents. What this means is that there is little scope or incentive for ward councillors or ward committees to truly accommodate public participation in service delivery discussions.

Both Stellenbosch and Theewaterskloof Local Municipalities had executive mayoral-with-ward participatory systems. That meant that the municipal councils elected an executive

²⁰ Section 9 of the MStA stipulates that local municipalities can be structured according to a municipality with a (a) collective executive system; (b) collective executive system and a ward participatory system; (c) mayoral executive system; (d) mayoral executive system and a ward participatory system; (e) plenary executive system or (f) plenary executive system with a ward participatory system

mayor from among their members (Section 55, MStA). The executive mayor was tasked with identifying and prioritizing the municipality's needs, and recommending municipal council strategies, programmes and services to address those needs through an Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Additionally, the executive mayor must also account for revenue and expenditure estimates, in consideration of national and provincial development plans (Section 56, MStA).

The municipal council can *choose* to establish ward committees within the municipality (Section 72, MStA) to make recommendations to the council.²¹ Both Stellenbosch and Theewaterskloof had established such ward committees – thus indicating an intention to enable grassroots participation in the affairs of council. Stellenbosch established ward committees only in 2003.²²

The administrative side of the municipality consists of officials. The municipal administration is supposed to provide public service and accountability and prevent corruption. It is meant to respond to the needs of the local *community*, facilitate co-operation between itself and the *community*, and provide accurate information about the level and standard of municipal services the local *community* is entitled to, as well as information about municipal management, costs and the persons in charge (Section 6, MStA).

The municipal administration's rights and duties are defined in terms of the rights and duties of the municipal councils and the local *community*, as set out in Sections 4 and 5 of the MStA (Section 7, MStA). In other words, municipal officials and administrative staff are responsible for implementing decisions made by municipal councillors and the mayor, in order to provide mandatory services to residents in each municipality. Municipal officials, therefore, do not make

²¹ Section 72 (1) of the MStA states that the following types of municipality may establish ward committees: Under Section 8 (c) “a municipality with a collective executive system combined with a ward participatory system”; (d) “a municipality with a collective executive system combined with both a subcouncil and a ward participatory system”; (g) “a municipality with a mayoral executive system combined with a ward participatory system”; (h) “a municipality with a mayoral executive system combined with both a subcouncil and a ward participatory system” and Section 9 (b) “a municipality with a collective executive system combined with a ward participatory system”; (d) “a municipality with a mayoral executive system combined with a ward participatory system”; and (f) “a municipality with a plenary executive system combined with a ward participatory system”

²² Ward committees were established when floor-crossing legislation was passed, giving the ANC the majority of seats on the council, and leadership of the Stellenbosch municipality (Yusuf 2004:9)

decisions about service delivery: their role is limited to executing council decisions by providing services, and providing public access to information about municipal functioning.

In the ward participatory system, municipal councils and mayors are supposed to base their decisions regarding service delivery on the recommendations put forward by ward committees. Ward committees are supposed to advise the council on the municipality's spending priorities; while ward councillor's are meant to communicate to residents the budget plans decided in council, and inform them about programmes and projects that affect them (ETU, n.d.). The purpose of a ward participatory system is thus ostensibly to facilitate *community* participation in decision-making in service delivery and local government.

Each ward must be represented by a ward committee consisting of no more than ten people and chaired by the elected ward councillor (Section 73, MStA). Ward committees are supposed to make recommendations to the ward councillor on issues affecting people living within that ward. The ward councillor is then supposed to communicate those concerns to the "local council, the executive committee, and executive mayor (Section 74, MStA). Ward committees, then, are supposed to effect *community* participation in service delivery discussions and local government functioning.

As mentioned above, each district and local municipal council is required to devise an Integrated Development Plan. The 2007 Stellenbosch Municipality IDP (2007: title page) defines itself as a process by which municipalities prepare a 5-year strategic plan that is reviewed annually in consultation with the communities and stakeholders. This strategic plan adopts an implementation approach and seeks to promote integration by balancing the economic, ecological and social pillars of sustainability without compromising the institutional capacity required in the implementation, and by coordinating action across sectors and spheres of government.

IDPs are meant to guide municipal officials towards meeting their objectives, and to facilitate the local government mandate for public participation in discussions about service delivery.

Formulated as a comprehensive document, the IDP should reflect the municipal council's stated future plans, its current developmental levels, needs and priorities, and should identify communities without access to basic municipal services (Section 26, MStA).

Each (Category C) district municipality is meant to plan for the greater municipal area, particularly with regard to bulk water supply, bulk electricity supply, bulk sewerage purification works, and solid waste disposal sites, taking into consideration the plans of its constituent local municipalities. Local municipalities develop their own IDPs for local management, which must, however, cohere with the respective district municipality's IDP.

Community participation is a legal requirement in terms of the Constitution of South Africa, the Municipal Systems Act (MSyA) and the MStA (Stellenbosch IDP 2007:26). Municipalities are thus tasked with ensuring that local *communities* are involved in preparation, implementation and review of IDPs and performance management systems, budget preparation and strategic decision making in relation to service provision (Section 16, MSyA). *Community* participation, as explained, is meant to be effected through the recommendations made by ward committees, via ward councillors, to the municipal council or mayor.

Stellenbosch Municipality's 2007 IDP makes clear that ward committees "are only advisory bodies to ward councillors and council [but] the wishes of a community are directly articulated by the ward councillor" (Stellenbosch Municipality IDP 2007:27) and that "the ward committee system allows both community and councillor to maintain a pulse on developments and potential developments in communities. This forum is also appropriate to air grievances and satisfaction in terms of services provided by the council" (*ibid.*).

The above shows that local government and municipalities are meant to be responsible for planning for and ensuring service delivery (including housing, see chapter 3) and participation therein. Under the mayoral executive and ward participatory system, the executive mayor and the municipal council system must identify, prioritise and strategise development planning, and develop IDPs informed by the recommendations ward committees. Ward committees, and the *communities* they are supposed to represent, retain only an advisory role where they are ultimately left in a position where they can only make suggestions, through ward councillors, to municipal councils regarding development planning and service delivery; and must act as conduits for information about developments affecting the *community*, implying that there is little scope for local *communities* to actually influence municipal decision-making. Nevertheless, municipal councils are, in theory,

supposed to take up the recommendations of the ward committees, and thereby take cognisance of local needs and address them.

Ward committee functioning?

I turn now to look at how ward committees functioned in terms of representing local *community* concerns to the municipality, in their capacity as the official structures intended to provide space for public participation in service delivery. I have drawn on interviews and conversations with municipal officials, ward councillors and a ward committee member, as well as residents. The evidence suggests that the ward committees did not function effectively to ensure public participation.

Theewaterskloof's Ward 11 committee and Waterworks

Ward 11's ward committee consisted of 10 people. A member of the committee informed us that representatives were voted in by a show of hands. According to the Grabouw town manager,²³ the ward committee consisted of geographical and sectoral representatives as well as people from churches and small businesses. Waterworks was, he said, very well, if not over-represented, with four representatives on the ward committee.

Ward 11's councillor was a member of the Democratic Alliance (DA) party in charge of the Theewaterskloof Municipality, the main opposition party to the African National Congress (ANC) which then controlled the Western Cape provincial government as it did the national government.²⁴ The 60-year old ward councillor had been a *white* policeman during the apartheid period. He suffered from a heart condition, and was seldom available. The ward committee member we spoke with understood that the ward councillor's role was to communicate to the municipal council what ward committee members told him. The chairman of the Waterworks

²³ The town manager told us that it was his responsibility to implement service delivery and to spend the budget so as to enhance service delivery as an "implementation agent" for the municipality. He reported to the Director of Corporate Services at the Theewaterskloof Municipality, whose responsibility was to ensure that council resolutions assigned to the administration are attended to within seven working days of the decision being taken by the council, and for making sure that information about the municipality is available to the public (Theewaterskloof Municipality, 2009).

²⁴ In 2009, the DA wrested control of the Western Cape from the ANC, after our fieldwork had concluded.

street committee²⁵ understood too that the ward councillor's role was to "listen" to residents' expressed needs and to approach municipal officials with those concerns. The street committee chairman said that, where the ward councillor was unable to deliver, he was meant to communicate that to residents. Similarly, the town manager told us that the ward councillor was a political leader who communicated with him, and reported to the municipal council. The manager added that, as a councillor, he had no role in policy implementation, nor could he interfere with the administration of service delivery. Moreover, the manager pointed out, municipal councils are not obliged to take up recommendations of ward committee, only to consider them when brought to council by ward councillors.

The scope for ward committees to influence municipal decision-making is therefore quite limited. Even so, ward committees are supposed to represent the *community's* expressed needs to the ward councillor. However, only one of the four Waterworks-based ward committee members seemed active: the ward's active committee member we spoke with said that one of the other members had died and not been replaced; another worked night shifts (when meetings usually took place); and a third was always absent from meetings. The active member said he felt he could not do much on his own, a situation hindered by his not himself being a member of the street committee. He said he did, however, attend street committee meetings when asked to, and used those opportunities to inform street committee members of municipal decisions.²⁶ The functioning of the ward committee, and this member, was therefore compromised by the three other members' absence since he alone was unable, he said, to communicate with all residents and represent their needs.

The ward councillor's ill-health posed another constraint on the effectiveness of the ward committee and the councillor's ability to meet his responsibility of communicating with either the ward committee members or the municipal council. When our fieldwork began, we were

²⁵ The street committee was an organisation of people who mediated local conflicts, and led protests against over service delivery and the ward councillor's disinterest in the affairs of Waterworks. A woman in Waterworks told us that prior to the 2009 national and provincial elections, the street committee was ANC-aligned. However, before the elections, with the establishment of a contending political party, COPE, some street committee members shifted political allegiance. This apparently led the street committee to split up, and we were told in 2009 that it was no longer functional.

²⁶ When we visited in 2009, this member, too, had fallen ill.

unable to meet him, as he was in hospital. While we did manage to secure one later meeting, residents told us that they too found it almost impossible to see him – for the same reason. Evidence suggested too that his history as an apartheid-era policeman may have predisposed him to disinterest in the affairs of Waterworks residents. Their reports to us suggest that he felt little obligation to represent their needs in council, as the following indicates.

Various marches had been organised since 2005 to protest the ward councillor's lack of involvement and interest in the affairs of Waterworks. The first of what was described to us as a series of events had involved the street committee, with ten residents in tow, walking to the ward councillor's house to speak to him. While discussing their issues around service delivery, the ward councillor had apparently told them that they did not vote for him, only the *coloured* people and the *whites* did, and therefore he did not represent them. They then reportedly asked him who their actual ward councillor was, because they had been told that it was he. And they asked him to come to Waterworks and tell the residents that he was their ward councillor – and said they thought that he was scared that he would be beaten if he did so.

After this incident, the street committee reportedly approached municipal officials for permission to march and express their needs to the ward councillor, whereupon the officials agreed to call him, but then apparently did not do so. The street committee then threatened to march to the municipal offices if he did not make an appearance because, they said, residents were very frustrated with the ward councillor's lack of commitment to improving their living conditions. The residents and street committee then marched on the municipal offices and expelled all the officials from the buildings, whilst strewing rubbish about the offices. While the street committee chairman claimed he had obtained permission for the march, municipal officials said he had not. In the ensuing chaos, police fired rubber bullets at the residents.

Another more recent march was reportedly organised after the 2006 local municipal elections. The street committee this time obtained permission to stage the protest – again over the ward councillor's lack of involvement and representation, and the lack of service delivery in Waterworks. The street committee told municipal officials that the march would move from the settlement to the police station. Assuring them that it would be peaceful, they said they simply

wished to question the ward councillor about the provision of houses because “the shacks were burning”.

This time, the ward councillor did appear, but only once residents had arrived at the police station – revealing for the first time, said residents, that he did not feel safe with them unless protected by the police. Moreover, we were informed that, during his appearance, he had again told residents that because they had not voted for him, he did not actually represent them – even though Waterworks was located within his ward.²⁷

What the Waterworks case reveals is a disinterested ward councillor, physically ill-disposed towards representing Waterworks residents’ needs, but who nonetheless allowed Waterworks residents to be included on his ward committee. Concurrently, the ward committee’s capacity to fulfil its function of representing Waterworks residents’ needs was undermined by the members ostensibly representing Waterworks not meeting their obligations, even though they made up 40% of the ward committee. In terms of their policy obligations, therefore, neither the ward committee nor the ward councillor appeared to be facilitating participation in municipal decision making, even within the constraints of policy. It seemed that that was the case because they were largely unable or unwilling to act as channels of communication between the municipality and local residents.

Stellenbosch’s Ward 2 committee and Langrug

The ANC ward councillor representing Stellenbosch Municipality’s Ward 2 (including Langrug) was a *coloured* man who lived in a neighbouring RDP suburb and had, by Langrug residents’ reports, and had been in the area at least since 1994. Ostensibly, he had been the councillor for ward 2 since the establishment of ward committees in the municipality in 2003:²⁸ We were told that he had been in Langrug “since the beginning of democracy”. He continued in that role even

²⁷ Statistics from the most recent provincial elections reveal the continued racial fragmentation corresponding with residence in Grabouw: Pineview and Waterworks residents had to vote at the Gerald Wright Hall, across the road from the two areas. Residents living in town, mostly white, voted at the Grabouw Rugby Sports Hall. The Gerald Wright hall results were a 50,51 % vote for the ANC and a 29,49% vote for the DA (traditionally associated with *whites*). The Grabouw Rugby Sports Hall results were a 4,3% vote for the ANC and an 86,31% vote for the DA.

²⁸ Ward committees replaced Representative Forums and Area Forums, the previous community participation structures (Yusuf 2004:9).

when the DA gained sufficient votes in the 2006 local municipal elections to lead a coalition that, for a while, governed the Stellenbosch Municipality. The ward councillor was then responsible for reporting to the DA-led municipal council. In 2008, however, a shift occurred and Stellenbosch's municipal councillors voted out the DA mayor and replaced the executive committee with mostly ANC members (Powell, 2008).²⁹ From then onwards, he was responsible to the ANC-led municipal council.³⁰

Langrug residents we consulted expressed ambivalence towards the ward councillor: on the one hand, some felt that he was approachable and that he was “good with people”. In part, his approachability may have been due to the location of his office on the edge of Langrug, and his proficiency in isiXhosa (the dominant language spoken in Langrug), making him available to residents when he was in the office. For instance, when we met him one morning, a woman living across the road in the Mooiwater RDP settlement came into his office to seek assistance because her house had been burgled when she was visiting the Eastern Cape, and her television, DVD player and two cellular telephones had been stolen. The ward councillor immediately called a police officer to assist her in the matter.

On the other hand, some thought that, in the time that he had been in office, the conditions in Langrug and of their lives had not changed, while others suspected that he feared their involvement in municipal affairs. While there was space for residents to air grievances and approach the man, it seemed that very little materialised out of these opportunities. One resident said that the ward councillor had been in office since 1994, yet there was nothing to show for it. Another man, who told us that he had called the ward councillor in person to tell him about low water pressure in the settlement, and about illegal private connections that some residents had made, explained, “They say they will come but they don't.”

Reports from Langrug residents suggest that the ward councillor was not fulfilling his duty of reporting their concerns to the municipal council. For instance, we were told that the DA municipality had disconnected illegal electricity connections which Langrug residents living on

²⁹ On the same day that the take-over was being orchestrated, we were unable to get in touch with the Langrug ward councillor. He later told us that he was involved in those very meetings.

³⁰ See chapter 5 for greater detail on political succession in the Stellenbosch Municipality.

the edge of the settlement had made to their homes and shops from RDP houses nearby. The municipality allegedly charged each house-owner a R1300 fine for illegal connections. A shop-owner, who was losing income as a result of the lack of electricity, decided to approach the ward councillor with a colleague about the issue. The councillor then called a meeting (he reportedly drove around the settlement announcing the meeting through a loudhailer). At the meeting the group and the ward councillor decided to march together to the municipal offices³¹ in Franschoek where they were dispersed by the police. The following day, the same two men decided to mobilise others to join them to walk to the ward councillor's office, where they began to sing protest songs. The group again moved towards the municipal offices where police threatened to arrest them if they did not quickly disperse. Some were tear-gassed while others were arrested - along with the ward councillor. After their release, negotiated by a lawyer affiliated to the ANC, municipal officials told them that their ward councillor should approach the council with their electricity concerns.

A Langrug shebeen-owner we spoke with had, with an associate, become involved in the electricity issue when they had gone to the jail to help negotiate the release of those arrested. The associate worked for a man at Franschoek's main Dutch Reformed Church, who advised him to form a committee to address the issue. He and the shebeen owner then called on concerned residents to meet on the sports field below the settlement and a committee was elected to make representations to the municipality. The committee negotiated with various senior officials for the provision of electricity, while the Dutch Reformed Church connection apparently organised a R5.5 million donation to the municipality for the cause. The shebeen-owner told us that the committee had been formed because the ward councillor was failing to report back to the residents. He said,

People were jailed for the electricity. [The ward councillor] did not report back on the issue.

The committee was formed for electricity only, but it worked as a good pilot to show that if the councillor is failing, people can help him ... In this area, things would have been right, but

³¹ The area manager was in charge at the Franschoek municipality offices. He was responsible for all housing development and services rendered in the Franschoek and Dwarsriver Valleys. He reported to the Stellenbosch municipal manager.

the councillor goes alone to municipality meetings. If he misses things, he has little information, and does not report back to the residents.

Moreover, in another resident's opinion, the electricity issue had arisen simply because the DA-led municipality did not know about the issue, and that was because the ward councillor had not told them. From the perspective of these residents, the ward councillor was not fulfilling his duty of communicating the needs of local residents in his ward to the municipal council.

In a heated meeting between residents and municipal officials in the aftermath of a widespread fire that burned down 30 shacks in Langrug during the period of our fieldwork, we heard one woman declare, "We don't want [the ward councillor]. He has been here since the beginning of democracy and nothing has happened. We must chase him away!" The ward councillor kept quiet and we saw him biting his lip. Two days later we spoke with some women whose homes had been burnt in the same fire. One said that they blamed the ward councillor for not doing anything, even though he had been there for a long time. Yet she also said that he did know how to work with people – possibly a comment that reflected his fluency in Xhosa.

A man living in a backyard shack in the neighbouring Mooiwater RDP-house settlement had opened an agency for *community* development that dealt with labour and divorce issues amongst others. At one point while we were in the settlement and when there had been very heavy rains, he surveyed Langrug residents about the damage caused. Explaining that he had regular contact with the ward councillor, he complained that the ward councillor saw *community* leaders as a threat: "he is scared people will throw him out [of office at the next elections]". He also offered the following as an example of inadequate consultation between Langrug residents and the municipality (which he intimated should have occurred through the ward councillor and ward committee): street signs had been erected on Langrug's principal roads, bearing generic names, it would seem, for shack settlements: Mandela Park and Zwelitsha.³² He said, "No one knows who made those street signs. We woke up in the morning and they were there. People asked where the signs came from ... The street names are not service delivery. If he [the ward councillor] had contacted people he would know what the priorities are." We also heard from some Langrug residents that the ward councillor disallowed them from organising their own meetings to discuss

³² These are the names of two other shack settlements in the Western Cape, one in Hermanus and one in Hout Bay.

service issues unless he was present. They had resorted therefore to holding meetings on the nearby soccer field.

While on the one hand, it became evident that the ward councillor was not very effective in his role of consulting with residents, on the other hand it appeared that he was actively excluding Langrug residents' participation in the ward committees, as the following case describes:

According to the independent *community* development agent living in Mooiwater, the Ward 2 committee had no Langrug residents as members. He said he had attended a meeting at La Motte *coloured* township (some five kilometres away) where candidates for the ward committee had been elected. This was at the time of the 2005 local municipal elections. Although the municipality had advertised the meeting with posters in the area, he reckoned that Langrug residents had been deliberately excluded from participating in the ward committee election because the meeting was held on a rainy winter's night, at a place difficult for them to access (few residents had their own cars, and public transport was limited at night). The result was that no Langrug residents were elected to Ward 2's committee, thus effectively excluding them from participating in official municipal structures that were meant to facilitate their input about service provision.

Further evidence suggests that the ward councillor had also indirectly excluded Langrug residents from participating in local municipal and political affairs. Two residents informed us that people had paid him ANC membership subscriptions, but had not received membership cards. One man said, "[The ward councillor] let us 'join' the ANC without giving us membership cards, making it difficult for us to stand. We also have no structures here, no street committees." The importance of people having party membership cards became clear when I discovered that

The choice of the ANC candidate to fight a local election ... is based on negotiations between the neighbourhoods within the ward. The ANC is structured at a local level into branches, one per ward (as long as there are more than 100 card holders); and then into sub-branches, one per neighbourhood. Each sub-branch elects a candidate or decides to support the candidate of another sub-branch and then there is a general vote at branch level. Lastly, the elected candidate has to be approved by the higher ANC structures (Gervais-Lambony 2008:90).

By withholding Langrug residents' ANC membership cards, the ward councillor precluded their forming a sub-branch and contesting his position with their own candidate. He also thereby precluded their inclusion in official participatory structures.³³

One resident felt very strongly about the ward councillor's tendency to exclude residents from participating in municipal affairs, and to avoid consultation with them, portraying him as a dictator – "He is like Mugabe, he controls everything! A dictator, like Saddam Hussein, like Louis XVI! He rules, with his family, and everything will depend on him and his family. His word is final."

We were also told that, if a person did not wish to raise an issue with the ward councillor, they had to go to a particular official in Franschhoek. In turn, they would be directed to the municipal offices in Stellenbosch. The committee which negotiated for electricity provision in Langrug did engage directly with municipal officials, but it was difficult for most residents to by-pass the ward councillor and gain access other municipal officials, because they had to go the municipal offices in Stellenbosch, 40km away and costing R56 for a taxi return-trip to get there – more than a day's wage for many residents we consulted. The cost in cash and time meant that most people were left at a dead-end and had little real representation in the municipality.

The Langrug case shows that while some residents found the ward councillor to be approachable and amenable to hearing their complaints, many were very dissatisfied that he was not contributing to improving service delivery nor was he consulting them over their service needs, because they had observed few changes in service provision and conditions during his extensive term as their ward councillor. Additionally, he was seen by some residents as domineering over their participation in municipal decision-making, and did not facilitate their representation on the ward committee which, as a result, did not serve its function to garner the participation of residents of the ward structures. And, the location of meetings in places that were difficult for Langrug residents to access further inhibited their participation in service-delivery discussions and decision-making.

³³ In 2009 we learnt that residents eventually did receive ANC membership cards.

Yusuf (2004) identified similar problems with public participation in municipal forums in a study on the Stellenbosch Municipality: the recent formation of ward committees meant that they were unable to give meaningful input in public participation platforms; internal social diversity within the municipality; lack of transport to meetings; safety concerns for people attending meetings held at night; power dynamics within the *community* and between ward councillors and members; and that consultation with ward committees tended to consist of “information dissemination rather than actual participation” and “obtaining information from the community” (Yusuf 2004: 10).

The evidence presented thus far can be summarised as follows: the municipal councils and mayors representing Langrug and Waterworks were responsible for decision-making over local-level service delivery, and for planning around national policy mandates over service delivery (i.e. actual delivery and public participation therein). Local service needs are supposed to be represented to the municipality by ward committees, via ward councillors, and it is up to municipal administrative officials to carry out the plans determined by council. We found, however, that the ward committees and their councillors had no real power over municipal decision-making: they played a strictly advisory role. This meant that neither municipal officials nor ward councillors could take decisions about local level service delivery, budget or resource allocation.

And, even if councillors could actually influence municipal council decisions, it was apparent that neither ward councillor was fulfilling his duty as conduit between the *community* and the municipal council – no residents from Langrug were on their particular ward committee, and in the Waterworks case, the ward councillor expressed a direct disinterest in residents’ affairs. Moreover, the ward committees themselves did not appear to be fulfilling their duties to communicate between residents and ward councillors, because – again – there were no Langrug representatives on the ward committee, while in Ward 11, few of the Waterworks ward committee members fulfilled their duties.

Discussion

These cases are certainly not peculiar to Langrug and Waterworks. Ward committee and ward councillor dysfunctionality, and the limits of participation in the ward system of South African municipalities are well documented. Gervais-Lambony (2008), who studied ward committee functioning and participation in two wards in Gauteng Province's Ekurhuleni Metro (Vosloorus) found that, although ward committees are supposed to be politically and sectorally representative, there is no guarantee of spatial representation, although wards had been demarcated in a "similar pattern to the demarcations of township space" (2008:87, 89). Gervais-Lambony (2008:91) argued that, because the ward system and municipal re-delimitation process were instituted to address inequity in service provision and development, and in response to the spatial fragmentation that developed out of apartheid urban policy, wards are inherently "internally fragmented spaces". This spatial and social fragmentation resulted, he added, in a need to question the extent to which residents living in different locations within each ward had access to public meetings. He noted that, "One of the primary spatial issues in the wards is the long distances between different extensions. There is little mobility from one neighbourhood to another, so, for the democratic process, the question is where to organise public meetings ... Therefore space matters simply because distance is an issue" (Gervais-Lambony 2008:91). The implications, described by Gervais-Lambony (2008) of spatial fragmentation for participation in municipal decision-making were most apparent in the case of Langrug, as described above. Whether, intentionally or not, residents' participation in ward structures had been circumscribed as a result of ward committee elections being organised by the ward councillor in a place that was difficult for them to access. And, in both the cases of the wards of which Langrug was part and that of which Waterworks was part, their respective spatial fragmentation corresponded very closely with racial composition – and representation – for the different places. It was precisely that fragmentation that underpinned the Grabouw (Ward 11) ward councillor being unconcerned with Waterworks.

Mansuri and Rao's (2003:34) point that local politicians could feel threatened by the participation of *community* members in development projects, and even obstruct such participation, is particularly pertinent in this case, where it appears, from my own and Gervais-

Lambony's (2008) findings, that ward councillors tend to be able to play a dominant role in the structuring of ward committees. The structure of the ward system, underscored by a legacy of spatial and social fragmentation, makes no guarantee for actual representation in official participatory structures.

Piper and Deacon's (2008) research on ward committee functioning in the Msunduzi Municipality in Pietermaritzburg (KwaZulu-Natal Province) argued that effective ward committee functioning was largely dependent on the ward councillor who is responsible for arranging committee meetings, discussions and information dissemination between the council and the committee. In other words, if ward councillors are not committed to representative and inclusive functioning of ward committees then they are unlikely to serve their purpose of facilitating public participation in decision-making around service delivery.

The findings I have presented above suggest that the ward councillors in both Langrug and Waterworks areas lacked the commitment to ensure representation of the different geographic and social components of their wards. Rather, they both seemed actively to exclude shack settlement residents from representation in official participatory structures – albeit for different reasons. Vaughan (2004) identified the same problem from research about two national programmes that had a strong emphasis on *community* participation, the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme and the Local Economic Development Fund. She too found that formal participatory structures like ward committees tended to be dominated by ward councillors, who blocked or co-opted *community* structures (Vaughan, 2004).

From Benit-Gbaffou's (2008:26) perspective, simply laying the blame for their various shortcomings at the door of ward councillors is, under the current South African system of governance, to turn them into "scapegoats of a dysfunctional participatory democratic system". This is a product of the top-down nature of political and local government decision-making processes, where ward councillors have little opportunity to communicate residents' needs to municipal councils, or to influence decisions made over local service provision.

Moreover, because ward councillors did not respond to the ward committees, which were in any event dysfunctional, they did not represent their constituencies: local *community* effectively had no representation at the political level where decisions about their own lives were made.

Segar's (1989) study of village residents' responses to the homelands administration in St. Paul's village in the Matatiele district of the Transkei in 1982 makes an interesting comparison with mine. She found that the homelands administration, under the Bantu Authorities Act (1951), comprised a hierarchical structure where the Transkei "state" was divided into 23 "districts", each consisting of "locations" made up of a number of villages. Villages were represented by village headmen, locations by Tribal Authorities, and districts by the Regional Authority, located at administrative centres. She found that when headmen were unable to resolve disputes within a village they would be brought before the Tribal Authority. Failing resolution there, cases could be taken to the Regional Authority court located at the administrative centre. Moreover, she found that village headmen and Tribal Authority councillors' power over decision-making was very often only ceremonial, and was superseded by that of the Regional Authority. And, while micro-politics at village level could be dominated by Tribal Authority councillors, they could be by-passed by approaching the Tribal Authority directly. For example, when a Tribal Authority councillor tried to prevent a women's self-help group from accessing land for vegetable gardens, one woman approached the Tribal Authority which overruled the councillor and granted the women land (Segar 1989:34). However, Segar (1989:33) found that "people were not only unaware of this facility, but were usually ... reluctant to travel all the way to Mount Fletcher [site of the Regional Authority offices] unless absolutely necessary, for the road is poor and buses are infrequent".

Segar's findings reverberate through the contemporary narrative of state bureaucracy, where shack settlement residents' representation at the municipal level was mediated through ward councillors who very often frustrated residents' attempts to influence municipal management. Yet, residents were able to circumvent local councillors by approaching municipal officials directly (in the case of Langrug electricity committees), although they were discouraged by the

distance and cost of having to travel to the administrative centre to do so. However, we found that even local municipal officials and ward councillors had limited power to influence service provision decisions and directives precisely because they were themselves answerable to directives from above.

Conclusion

Central to the success of this study is the establishment of settlement-resident level bodies/groups/committees of stakeholders whose members might be willing to engage in a process, and who may be prepared to implement changes in conjunction with the support of the local authority and, where appropriate, the elected ward councillors. This is likely to be quite problematical as there may be considerable disagreement – even outright antagonism – between the various stakeholders (WRC Project K5/1654 D2 2006:8).

The above quote is revealing: it explicates the project's positioning of local residents as central to the goal of greywater management, and, although it shows that the project's initiators expected conflict between "stakeholders", there is implicit understanding that local authorities and ward councillors would actually support community-level greywater management and the participation of local residents (and their associations) in that aspect of service provision.

The project initiators thought that the ward councillors and municipal officials would "buy-in" and contribute resources to this community-level initiative to manage greywater. The implications of that assumption were that councillors and officials had the authority to provide those resources, or at least the influence to access them, and additionally, that they would be willing to act on behalf of residents (supposed) needs.

I have demonstrated in this chapter that ward committees and ward councillors are supposed to represent the concerns of residents/constituents of a municipality to the municipal council responsible for each jurisdiction. Their role is to effect public participation in decision-making around service delivery. Their role is not, however, intended to facilitate actual participation in and management of service delivery, and is not geared towards the kind of participation sought after in the UCT/WRC greywater project.

Analysis of legislation, ethnographic evidence and academic discussions presented in this chapter reveal that the structure of South Africa's political system and its operation at the municipal level via local government poses inherent constraints on public participation in service provision decision-making processes, which remains at the government level. Simultaneously, the structures that are meant to facilitate it are unable to do so. The ethnographic research conducted in and around the two shack settlements revealed that the ward committees are not functioning to effect public participation; ward councillors have little power to actually influence decision making or policy, and were also found to exclude particularly shack settlement residents' (their constituencies) representation within municipal structures.

In combination, these structural and political constraints posed fundamental hindrances to the UCT/WRC project's goal of community-level greywater management through participatory methods because it was the intention of the project to engage in service delivery by getting residents themselves to participate in greywater management in the shack settlements, and the project initiators' expectation that municipal officials would support their participatory initiative.

Ward committees, ward councillors and municipal governance structures were given little attention either in the project conceptualization and design, or during the actual fieldwork process. This was a result of the project's narrow focus on local residents, and the drive to develop, install and test some low-tech drainage systems. It was also because we (the fieldworkers) had a poor understanding of the structures of local government and its relationship to provincial and national government. We therefore did not understand the roles of the different officials and ward councillors with whom we worked, and lacked the confidence to approach them. We also did not understand that there was little with which they could actually help us.

The information and arguments presented in this chapter suggest that both the governance structure behind municipal service delivery and the institutions within that structure, albeit created to facilitate public participation, created a stifling environment for actual participation. As a consequence it also reveals certain deep-seated limitations for the WRC/UCT community-level greywater management project's participatory goals.

Mansuri and Rao (2003:34) direct attention to the possibility of local politicians obstructing *civic* or *community* participation, out of a sense of threat to their own political positioning. Certainly evidence from both Waterworks and Langrug indicates that the respective ward councillors were actively excluding residents of those shack settlements, and doing so in an effort to maintain their own elected political positions.

As for the project: in its use of limited conceptualizations of *community* and *social capital*, and by focusing so strictly upon local residents and their “representative” organizations, it failed to understand what De Filippis (2001:781) referred to as “issues of power in the production of communities”, particularly when *community* seldom manifests itself merely in accordance with co-residence.

The analysis in this chapter of local government institutions and their operation at the local level, together with the similar findings of various other authors, raises the importance of contextualizing the “local” in the “bigger picture” of politics, policy and institutional functioning.

Having reflected on the structural and political constraints on the functioning of ward committees, I now narrow my focus to look, in the next chapter, at how the two municipalities functioned in terms of actual service delivery (that is, as distinct from the participatory mandates dealt with in this chapter). I do so to illuminate *why* the official participatory structures (i.e. ward committees and ward councillors) had such little influence on decision-making at local government and municipal level – bearing in mind that municipal councils *may* take up the recommendations of ward committees (as articulated by the ward councillor) but are not obliged to do so.

4. Dictates to Local Service Provision and Public Participation

Municipalities in South Africa are responsible for executing national housing policy, for basic service provision and for ensuring public participation in both those pursuits. “Basic municipal services”, according to the MSyA, “means a municipal service that is necessary to ensure an acceptable and reasonable quality of life and, if not provided, would endanger public health or safety or the environment”. Providing such basic services is to ensure the right of all citizens to “an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being” (Section 24(a) of the Constitution of South Africa Act (No. 108 of 1996)). Municipalities must meet their constitutional obligations (mentioned before) by making 25 litres of water available per individual per day, within 200m of their home, and to provide each household with basic sanitation in the form of at least a Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrine (DWA 1994:14, 15). They are also responsible for waste removal, storage and disposal, according to norms and standards set by national and provincial government (Section 9 of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act (No. 59 of 2008)).

In this chapter I argue that the municipal officials and municipalities responsible for Grabouw and Franschhoek lacked the financial and decision-making power to meet their legal mandates or adequately to provide basic services. They were consequently unable to address *civil society* needs as expressed, even through the constrained and limited ward system or public participation mechanisms, thus choking the potential for people to contribute to decision-making around service delivery. To a large extent, this inability was due to the prescriptive nature of the system of South African governance from the top, in spite of rhetoric of inclusiveness, and to local municipalities’ commitment to the politically driven mandate of housing development. A result of these municipalities’ inability to facilitate meaningful public participation in municipal planning, I argue, was that the UCT/WRC greywater project initiators’ hopes of extending that participation, in order actually to install and maintain greywater management systems, were similarly fettered.

I draw upon interviews with municipal officials, Integrated Development Plans and budget documents to substantiate my argument and to understand how decisions for service provision were made by municipal officials. The data reveal the challenges such officials faced in their

efforts to provide those services, as they do the limits on the kinds of services that were provided. I show that centralisation of municipalities under municipal re-delimitation had bound municipal officials within a new bureaucracy that held them to decisions made at higher levels of government, including commitment to full-on housing rather than basic service provision in informal settlements. I show then how the pressure to develop bulk infrastructure and providing housing meant that municipal budgets were predominantly dedicated to those “capital” intensive tasks and provided very little for basic services, particularly to informal settlements. Through analysing statements by municipal officials, and their plans for local housing development, I then show that their commitment to providing housing prevailed over basic service provision and in turn prejudiced the potential for public participation and input into decision-making around local services provision.

Services in Langrug and Waterworks

On the basis of what we saw in Langrug and Waterworks, one can only say that the municipalities were providing services that were inadequate for the needs of residents or for ensuring a safe and healthy environment. Waterworks (Photograph A) was one of four informal settlements in Grabouw, an agricultural town about 70km east of Cape Town. It was situated on the sides of a rocky hilltop, and adjacent to a water purification works. The main entrance to the settlement was at the bottom of the hill, along a tarred road. The settlement extended up the hillside to meet the neighbouring RDP housing settlement called Beverley Hills (Map B). A concrete fence ran along one side of the settlement (Map F), which was intended to separate the settlement from adjacent open land and a new shopping mall. At the time of writing, the fence was incomplete.

According to municipal counts, there were about 800 shacks in Waterworks, and they provided homes for about 3 000 people. Some shacks were carefully constructed and quite solid in appearance, often made of planks from fruit packing crates shingled over one another. Others were very rudimentary, consisting of wattle poles nailed together and covered only with thin plastic sheeting. Thoroughfares wide enough for cars extended only some distance into the settlement, whereafter footpaths took over.

Langrug (Photograph B) was located on the outskirts of Franschhoek, an upmarket tourist destination about 100km from Cape Town. The informal settlement was located on a steep, clayey slope alongside a recently developed RDP area and surrounded by vineyards, though it was a far cry from the wealth and exclusivity to be found in the tourist oriented restaurants and wine-tasting rooms of the nearby town. Two principal roads ran through the settlement up the hillside, one on the east edge and one through the middle. Some also ran between the principal roads, to access different parts of the settlement and some of communal facilities. Footpaths criss-crossed between homes and the various roads. About 5 000 people lived in Langrug, in about 1 000 homes that were often constructed from materials people collected and bought – wooden planks, plastic sheets and sections of corrugated iron.

Amenities – sewerage, water supply and treatment – in the two shack settlements were scant. Waterworks had seven water collection points (tap stands) for the 3 000 residents, and in Langrug we counted 37 water points for the population of 5 000, allowing a tap stand to resident ratio of 1:429 and 1:135 respectively.³⁴ In many cases, residents in both settlements lived beyond 200m of a water point (Map F), and it is difficult to imagine that seven taps would be sufficient for the needs of 3 000 people, or even 135 taps for 5 000 people.

In Langrug, water collection points were located at communal facilities and alongside sets of twin toilet cubicles. At some such facilities, the water drained into underground drain piping, but in many cases they drained directly onto the ground. Communal facilities very often leaked severely, from broken taps, broken toilets and broken piping. In Waterworks, of the seven taps, only one drained into a formal drainage system, whilst the others drained straight onto the ground. Lacking waste-water disposal facilities, most residents threw their household waste water onto a road or the ground near their homes. Consequently, pools, puddles and streams of waste water collected in both settlements to a greater or lesser degree (I give more detail in chapter 6).³⁵

³⁴ If each resident collected water once a day, over a 24 hour period, in Waterworks water would be collected every three minutes and in Langrug every ten minutes.

³⁵ I was unable to find any legislation governing the provision of drainage facilities in informal settlements in South Africa.

The Theewaterskloof municipality provided Waterworks with ten flush toilets and twelve ventilated pit-latrines (VIPs). Some residents had put padlocks on the toilet cubicles, making them accessible only to key-holders, while the pit-latrines did not function at all, and had, according to reports, not functioned in a long time because the municipality did not attend to their chemical treatment, and because the pits beneath them were shallow. Most of the 3 000 residents used the bush adjacent to Waterworks.

In Langrug the Stellenbosch municipality had provided 74 flush toilets for the 5 000 residents, although, when we counted them, only 31 were usable (the others were leaking, broken or filled with faeces and debris). This meant that (on that day) there was 1 toilet for every 161 people.³⁶ As in Waterworks, some people in Langrug used nearby bush to defecate.

In Waterworks, when we began our research, solid waste was apparently being collected once a week by a municipally-contracted private contractor, from a tip at the front of the settlement. However, according to residents' reports, the waste was sometimes collected after only two or three weeks, and then only from that one tip which was located far from many residents' homes. Large volumes of waste had thus collected in the veld surrounding the settlement, and very often within the settlement as well – in some places it was thigh deep. Over the two year period that we have been visiting Waterworks (almost to the date of writing), we have noted very few visible changes in the pollution around the settlement. The rubbish tip disappeared after a couple of months, but had then reappeared when we returned a year later. According to the town engineer³⁷ (in 2007) the tip was cleared “when it got full”.

Langrug had three rubbish tips located along the one principal road through the middle of the settlement. These were meant to be cleared once a week by a private contractor. A resident living across the road from one such tip had taken on the responsibility of signing a form each week to confirm that the service had been provided, but he did not report to anybody. Very often, only

³⁶ This means that, on average over a 24 hour period, a toilet would be used every eight minutes in Langrug.

³⁷ The town engineer's role, he told me, was as assistant manager of civil services, and he dealt with service delivery queries, and made sure that services were implemented and “run smoothly”. According to the housing project manager, the town engineer was not involved in municipality planning processes

the waste in the tips was cleared, and the overflow which accumulated all too often was left behind (Photograph K(2)).

A brief perusal of these statistics, and the conditions in the settlements – the volumes of waste and waste water observed in Waterworks and Langrug, and the large numbers of people using the few facilities there – indicate that the services available for Langrug and Waterworks residents were insufficient for their needs; I provide greater detail in the next chapter where I discuss the consequences for the residents' daily lives and their capacity for managing the ensuing environment. The sanitation statistics, specifically, signify that the municipalities were failing to provide sufficient services to these shack settlements under their jurisdiction.

Challenges to basic municipal service delivery in Grabouw and Franschhoek

In a meeting at the municipal offices in Grabouw, the town manager explained to us that prior to 1998, Grabouw had had an independent municipality, with its own transport and engineering departments. Under municipal re-delimitation, the Grabouw municipality was incorporated into the Theewaterskloof Municipality, and its local departments were centralised in Caledon, 55km away, where officials responsible for the Overberg District Municipality's decision-making were stationed.³⁸ Before taking any decisions about service delivery, municipal officials in Grabouw had to first consult officials located at the Caledon offices. As a consequence, local municipal employees were unable to take immediate decisions about service delivery. The town manager explained that this bureaucratic process slowed down service provision and maintenance in Grabouw. Furthermore, he claimed that service delivery was now additionally hampered because technical expertise in the municipality was no longer located on site and, as a result, action could not be taken as problems arose.

Franschhoek, like Grabouw, was incorporated into a greater municipal structure, in this instance the Stellenbosch Municipality and the Cape Winelands District Municipality with offices located 22km away in Stellenbosch. Consequently municipal officials in Franschhoek faced similar

³⁸ We were instructed to seek permission to carry out our research in Waterworks from an official in Caledon who was in charge of housing in Grabouw.

problems, in terms of the bureaucratic processes they had to follow in order to address service delivery, as did those in Grabouw.

Incorporation into Stellenbosch Municipality had also brought other problems, since there were various major political and managerial upheavals there during the time of our research. In 1994 the Stellenbosch Municipal Council came under ANC leadership; that was until the first democratic local government elections in 2000 when the DA won control (Seether 2005: 143). In 2003, after floor-crossing legislation was passed, the ANC gained the majority of council seats, and took the helm of the Stellenbosch Municipality (Yusuf, 2004, Seether 2005: 143). The DA was re-elected in 2006 following which the *Cape Argus* newspaper reported that the ANC-aligned municipal manager, deputy municipal manager and the head of policy development and executive support were “relieved of their duties” (Mabaso, 2007), and that the DA “restructured [the] executive management organogram” by effectively doing with away with the portfolios of municipal manager and head of policy development and executive support (*ibid.*).

During our period of research, in April 2008, the municipality once again underwent a major political shift: a majority of councillors passed a vote of no confidence in the DA-led municipality. The power shift depended on the vote of the one councillor who represented the Khayamandi Community Alliance,³⁹ and he was soon installed as the new mayor. The DA speaker was replaced by an ANC councillor, and the UDM⁴⁰ deputy-mayor was replaced by the ANC chief whip (Powell, 2008). Soon thereafter, the municipal manager portfolio was reinstated and a new municipal manager appointed. What is important for this dissertation is that the shifting political administration over this time significantly affected municipal management.

Indeed we saw the political rivalry between the two parties vying for control over the municipality play out on stage in a meeting we attended in a *community* hall in Groendal, alongside Langrug, in January 2008. The meeting was held to address the process of electricity provision in Langrug (I detailed the origins of the electricity issues discussed at this meeting in chapter 4). The meeting was attended by Langrug residents, municipal officials and councillors:

³⁹ Khayamandi is an informal settlement in Stellenbosch.

⁴⁰ United Democratic Movement, a small political party

specifically, the ward councillor for ward 2, the Stellenbosch deputy mayor and a representative of the mayor's office. Also present were the council's ANC chief whip and another ANC councillor, as well as an official representing the municipal engineering department. The officials and councillors sat on an elevated stage before the residents. The mayor's representative informed residents that they would have to pay R1550, possibly more, to get electricity boxes in their homes. They could, he said, pay the municipality a R550 registration fee, followed by five instalments of R200. Five residents at a time were permitted to go onto the stage and express their opinions, through a translator, about the mayor's representative's announcement. The following statements exemplify points that were made:

- You cannot expect us to pay R1600 for electricity. Every meeting we see different faces, and in the RDP homes, people got free electricity boxes;
- Every day in the meetings it's a different story, a different person. We are tired of talking about the same thing every time. You must tell us whether or not you are giving electricity. Otherwise take your poles and get out!;
- We cannot expect to get electricity for free, but R1600 is too much. We need a solution here. The meeting is only about one thing: we cannot afford this.

The mayor's representative responded, "I am not here to argue this, I am just here to tell you what the mayor said. We cannot give you this money, we also have to look after Khayamandi, and they are paying the same. We said from the beginning people would have to pay for their boxes and we would lay the lines. People must be tolerant; it's the same situation in Langrug."

These statements indicate that the main issues around electricity provision for residents were affordability, and the inconsistency in municipal representativeness; while the municipal councillor would not enter into a debate or discussion about the concerns that residents raised, and shielded himself by saying that it was not he who made the decision, saying that he was just communicating the mayor's decision, and that "these decisions are made with a committee."

The chief whip made his contribution, by saying, that

Electricity is not a favour, it is a right. They shouldn't tell you about the committee.

Where are the minutes? If paying is a problem, the municipality must do a survey of what people earn so that they can negotiate a price. The money is more of a punishment

for the municipality. People should negotiate how much to pay, but they don't even have money.

And later he said, "In Khayamandi, electricity never cost R1600, so why [should it cost so much] in Franschhoek? You should never have to pay so much ... If the DA cannot solve the problems, they should call in other parties that are part of the municipality to help." His statement suggests that he supported the residents' concerns about affordability, but also made a veiled criticism of the DA's management capacity.

The mayor's representative then responded to the chief whip's remarks saying,

We want you to take advantage of what we can give you. We don't want to make this about the politics of the day ... We are here to help people. We are going forward in small steps. Please don't stand in the way of your neighbours, let's see how many people we can help with this offer from the mayor and the municipality.

Evidently, the mayor's representative took the chief whip's comments and presence as a political manoeuvre. According to a resident present at the meeting, the municipality maintained that the meeting was being politically sabotaged.⁴¹ We later learnt that the matter had been referred for discussion between ANC and DA councillors in the Stellenbosch municipality, and that residents had formed a committee to negotiate the provision of electricity.

A man who was on this committee told us that they had had a number of meetings with municipal authorities who came to Langrug to negotiate the provision of electricity. They negotiated that residents would pay R450 for installation and get six months of free electricity. When the electricity was installed, however, different people appeared than the ones with whom the committee had negotiated, and they told the committee that they would actually have to pay more. In the end, residents had indeed to fork out R1500 to access electricity. The man told us, "I was surprised that the price had increased, because we had already decided on the amounts, and

⁴¹ Four months after this meeting, we learnt that the ward councillor was directly involved in the process of voting out the DA-led council, and that it was the same chief whip who had attended the meeting who had been voted in as deputy mayor of Stellenbosch. It appeared that his presence at the meeting was indeed more to do with making a political presence than acting in the interests of the residents, as he claimed to do.

this led to quarrels with the municipality.” Evidently, the ANC councillor’s involvement at the meetings, the negotiations between the different parties and the public participation process itself were of little consequence.

The story above can be summarised as follows: During the time that the Stellenbosch municipality was under DA rule, the DA-led municipality had allowed residents to air their grievances, but did not engage their concerns, and their approach remained prescriptive. ANC councillors intervened in the discussions, and claimed to support the concerns expressed by residents, subtly criticising the DA municipal management. The issue was taken to higher levels for discussion between the two parties and a committee representing Langrug’s electricity concerns. After negotiations had taken place between the different role-players, and a lower installation price allegedly agreed, the municipality eventually returned offering to install electricity at the same originally higher cost after all.

My interpretation of this series of events is that the political rivalry between different political parties in the Stellenbosch Municipality led to discontinuity in the municipal management structures, which were already providing inadequate services to Langrug. But the change in political management did not effect any observable changes in service provision (when we returned to Langrug in 2009, we were told that many people still did not have electricity). Instead, and what is crucial for the present dissertation, is that the ostensible platform for public participation was converted into a party political jousting arena. As informants commented: “They are fighting for positions and they forget what they were elected for ... Before the ANC won Stellenbosch, all the people were coming here. Since they won, they don’t come anymore;” and, “We are like goats and sheep to them. If there is a drought, they decide for the goats where to go ... It is as if they are using us, the poorest of the poor, to fight their political battles.” These residents’ comments reveal that they were well aware of the way in which their participation was being used as a tool for political influence, and that they themselves had little influence over decisions made about service provision in Langrug.

Service delivery in Langrug and Waterworks

Given the political, managerial and bureaucratic difficulties faced by these municipalities, I turn now to look at how services were in fact delivered to the two shack settlements. As mentioned above, solid waste removal in Waterworks was severely lacking, and was not carried out in a systematic fashion. This could be explained as a result of the way basic services are budgeted for by the municipalities.

South African municipalities' budgets are assigned according to operational and capital priorities. Capital expenditure includes large, long-term financial outlays and projects, such as water piping, land acquisition, sewerage works, roads and motor vehicles. Operating budgets cover costs such as staff salaries, short-term day-to-day basic services, repairs and maintenance. Municipalities fund two-thirds of their own activities from income generated from property rates, service charges, fines and equitable shares (Yusuf 2004:3).⁴²

Service provision in Grabouw was funded by the Theewaterskloof Municipality.⁴³ According to the 2008/2009 Theewaterskloof Municipality Draft Budget and IDP, Grabouw was allocated an operating budget of R19 560 971. The town manager explained that an additional budget (over and above the operating budget) of R1 250 000, called "Quick-wins", was available for "small projects with immediate effects". R880 000 of this money, he said, was allocated to the beautification of roads, the provision of bus stops, road tarring, an early childhood development centre and the upgrading of the "Pineview Sport Park". The remaining R120 000 was allocated for the provision of twenty toilets in Waterworks, and R250 000 for the cleaning up of four shack settlements in Grabouw, including Waterworks.

⁴² Equitable shares are derived from national revenue and provided to municipalities to ensure service provision and development (ETU, n.d.)

⁴³ The Theewaterskloof Municipality 2008/2009 budget was financed by external loans (47%, R33 177 960), a Capital Development Fund (10%, R7 100 000), capital from income (2%, R1 244 000) and Grants-in-aid (Provincial and National) (41%, R29 493 000). The funding was allocated to the seven different towns in the Theewaterskloof Municipality jurisdiction: Caledon (16%, R11 039 000), Botriver (10%, R7 253 350), Grabouw (28%, R19 830 000), Greyton/Genadendal (11%, R7 900 000), Riviersonderend (13%, R9 322 630), Villiersdorp (6%, R4 025 000) and Theewaterskloof (15%, R11 644 000) (Theewaterskloof Draft Budget and IDP 2008/2009).

To address waste removal, the municipality advertised a tender for waste removal on its website, and notices were put up in the Grabouw offices. Knowing that one Waterworks resident was particularly concerned about the accumulation of waste in the settlement, and keen to address it, we project fieldworkers decided to try to assist her in applying for the tender. Our efforts were, however, soon undercut when the town manager informed us, a month after the advertisement had been placed, that the tender had been cancelled at the behest of the then MEC for Local Government and Housing in the Western Cape, who had instructed Western Cape municipalities to focus on food security.

As indicated earlier, solid waste removal is a mandated municipal responsibility, suggesting that it should be systematically built into the municipal operating budget. The case above shows that in fact, solid waste removal management was not *de rigueur* in Waterworks, but was rather subject to the whims of provincial government.

The fact that twenty additional toilets for Waterworks were budgeted for in Grabouw's extraneous budget rather than in its regular budget suggests that basic sanitation was also not considered part of the regular municipal functioning by the Theewaterskloof Municipality, even though it is legislated for. Moreover, the way these toilets were provided also proved problematic. The town manager assured us that they would be built by July 2008. By the time we left that same month, there was no sign of construction in Waterworks. Upon our return in 2009, we discovered that ten toilets had been built, and that they were high up in the settlement (Map F) near a leaking sewerage manhole.⁴⁴ Residents living near the toilets told us that the municipality had built them in November 2008, and instructed them to put locks on the cubicles. Apparently two of the toilets were broken. We also found that another ten toilets had been built in the middle of the settlement (Map F). We learnt that these, however, were all locked and had never been used, because – residents told us – the municipality had not yet connected them to the water supply and sewerage system. Furthermore, we were told that residents were not consulted as to their location: apparently municipal officials arrived one day and decided unilaterally where to put them. The way in which toilets were provided through the “Quick-wins” budget was

⁴⁴ On the same day, we found municipal workers fixing the piping that was connected to the manhole and causing the overflow problems.

problematic because half of those provided did not actually work, while those that did benefited only the few households which held keys to the locks on them. Moreover, residents had not been consulted about their location. This all suggests that sanitation in Waterworks was apparently not methodically accounted for by the municipality because it was allocated through a malleable budget.

Yusuf (2004) pointed out that municipalities are expected to finance two-thirds of their own activities – including basic service provision – which they are meant to pay for out of income generated predominantly from rates and payments for services. However, of the entire budget available to the Theewaterskloof Municipality, only two percent (R1 244 000 of R71 014 960) was generated from these sources (Theewaterskloof Municipality, 2008), suggesting that there was very little money available for basic service provision to all seven towns in the municipality.

The 2007 Stellenbosch IDP budget allocation also suggests that basic service provision was not systematically budgeted for by that municipality, at least as regards sanitation. The document lays out the budget allocation projections for 2007-2010 in a graph format according to various categories. Three of them are: “Basic Civil Services” (including allocations and projections for the eradication of bucket toilet use amongst “informal (backyard dwellers)”; water provision in informal settlements; sanitation in rural areas, *informal* settlements and backyard dwellers; solid waste, where the “Target constitutes additional collection points to be services, such as Langrug and farms”; and roads and stormwater); “Bulk Civil Infrastructure” (bulk water supply; sewerage plants and network; waste disposal sites; and roads and stormwater); and “Housing” (Stellenbosch Municipality, 2007). What is revealing in this document is that, while it identified a backlog of 480 (2007), 260 (2008) and 200 (2009) “persons”, there was no budget allocated for sanitation. A note in the graph explains, “The backlog is due to informal settlements, rural areas and backyard dwellers. The target should be reached by ways of integrated human settlement. Budget included in ‘Housing’ projection.[sic]”. That there was not money allocated directly towards sanitation provision, and its inclusion in the housing budget projection, suggests that the municipality expected to provide sanitation with housing development. The IDP’s “Housing” projection showed that the municipality planned to build 400 houses in its jurisdiction in 2007,

and 600 houses every year after that.⁴⁵ In other words, the IDP vision was that residents living with inadequate sanitation facilities – such as those in Langrug – would be supplied with those facilities when being provided with houses.

Importantly, as Yusuf (2004: 8) discovered, most of Stellenbosch municipality's income is generated from electricity sales and property rates, and 87% of this income was allocated to "non-discretionary spending" on items such as salaries and bulk water purchases, leaving little for day-to-day concerns such as waste removal and maintenance. Like the Theewaterskloof Municipality, basic service delivery had to be funded predominantly by the municipality's income, with only limited resources.

Both the Stellenbosch and Theewaterskloof Local Municipalities appeared to deal with basic service provision (at least waste removal and sanitation) in an inconsistent way – both in terms of the actual services provided (as I explained at the beginning of this chapter) and in the way in which they were budgeted for, either falling outside of the formal operational or capital budgets, or only being accounted for through the provision of housing. In both cases, the municipalities had to fund basic services almost entirely from their own income.

A review of statements made by different municipal officials we consulted gives some insight into why basic services were not being adequately provided in Waterworks.

- Bulk service [provision] is one of the other big issues because of the huge influx of people. Water and sewerage need extension and the rising mains need upgrading ... The government budgets for housing and services, but not for bulk services, which have to be supplied by the municipalities (town engineer, 29 August 2007).
- There are plans to build houses in Waterworks, so the municipality cannot spend money in the place until then ... It is difficult to spend money now, since in the short-term services will be provided. For now it is just the minimum: taps and toilets for the short term (town engineer, 6 May 2008).
- One of the big problems is that the bulk services and infrastructure that exist do not have the capacity to deal with the number of houses that are supposed to be built...

⁴⁵ The housing backlog identified in 2007 was 19 403 units, and was inflated by 2% per year to accommodate immigration. The budget for 2007-1020 for each respective year was R29.97, R38.2, R46.3 and R51.05 million.

Because of the infrastructure backlog, there is no money left for other problems... The services cannot be rudimentary because it would be a waste of money (town manager, 12 May 2008).

- Regarding rubbish, water and sewerage, the municipality cannot roll out better services, hence the in-situ upgrading and housing plans (town manager, 19 September 2007).
- Grabouw is one of seven towns integrated under one budget. The budget is limited, and problems increase with settlement density. It is difficult to prioritise who gets what (housing project manager, 6 May 2008).

In other words, the town engineer was saying that bulk infrastructure provision (e.g. sewerage plants, bulk water treatment, bulk water provision) was a major concern for municipalities because it is vital to support housing development that is mandated and funded by national and provincial government. With impending housing development on the cards, the municipality did not want to spend additional money on basic services, and would only provide the bare minimum until houses were actually built,

The town manager's comments suggest too that the municipality's resources were primarily directed towards the development of bulk infrastructure, in order to facilitate housing development, and that they did not have the resources necessary to provide adequate services to Waterworks, bar the most "rudimentary". The housing project planner's statement directly infers that the municipality simply did not have the budget to attend to all its residents needs.

In another statement he explicitly said,

Public meetings are continuously held to consult with residents. Needs are prioritised for funding, and sewerage receives top council priority. Information is gathered by the municipality to inform the funding prioritisation, and the [municipal officials] return to residents with the budget priorities that they have come up with. When the money becomes available, then those plans which have been prioritised are implemented... It is difficult to prioritise who gets what... The IDP and consultation process is carried out every year at great expense and effort, but with limited potential (Meeting with housing project manager, 6 May 2008).

The housing project manager's statement thus reiterated the views of other officials that there was little scope for the municipality to attend to all the expressed needs of residents in the IDP through public participation, suggesting that public participation had little effect on the municipality's planning because the municipalities' identified priorities took priority over those expressed needs.

According to the town manager, moreover, any recommendations made by the public via the ward councillor and committee had "to go through due process, and whatever the proposal is, it has to be approved by council. Often only a few of the total number of issues that people raise get discussed in budget meetings, and are actually acted upon."

These two municipal officials' statements imply that decision-making around municipal service delivery, and its prioritisation, lies in the hands of the municipal councillors to whom the officials are responsible, and that there is little actual input on the part of *civil society*. Yusuf (2004:10) too has pointed out that "community participation ... in the budget process relates largely to the capital budget" and that only a very small percentage of the operating budget can be influenced through public participation. This meant that *communities* had little scope to influence basic service provision, because these are met through the operational budget. It also meant that the WRC/UCT project initiators' assumption that officials and councillors would be able to provide resources for individual greywater individuals was very unlikely to be realised.

The above findings indicate that basic service provision to Waterworks was not a priority for the Theewaterskloof municipality and its officials located in Grabouw. Rather, they were more preoccupied with making sure that they provided the bulk infrastructure necessary for subsequent housing development, which they expected would eventually address the basic service needs of Waterworks residents. Their prioritisation of bulk infrastructure meant that there was little budget available for addressing *community* concerns that were expressed through public participation, thereby reducing the scope for public participation in influencing service delivery.

In the few meetings we had with the ward councillor responsible for Langrug and with the Franschhoek area manager, when we discussed the WRC/UCT research project and service provision in Langrug they would quickly respond by telling us about the housing plans for Langrug. Moreover, when early on we introduced the project goal to work with residents to find low-cost interventions to deal with greywater – both men were quick to emphasise that the municipality would not be able to find resources to fund such interventions. Rather, they suggested, we should raise funds through private donors, such as local landowners.

The mayor's representative made a telling remark in response to a resident who complained angrily, "You shouldn't compare the homes you live in with shacks: you cannot expect us to pay R1600 for electricity. Every meeting we see different faces, and in the RDP homes people got free electricity boxes." The mayor's representative replied, "The ruling has been made that Langrug will get electricity and drainage, but there is no legislation for shacks. The money for the electricity in Langrug is not coming from the government but from the municipality." His response implies that the municipality would provide very basic services to Langrug, which the municipality would have to fund; but at the same time existing legislation did not cater for service provision in shack settlements.

The information presented above details the constraints on how the Stellenbosch and Theewaterskloof Municipalities provided services, and shows that they were not only inadequate but also failed systematically to be addressed in municipal planning. Instead, basic service provision was relegated to being addressed indirectly through housing development (in the case of Langrug sanitation), or as "extras" in "Quick-wins" budgets that were open to manipulation (in the case of Waterworks waste removal). Remarks made by municipal officials and councillors indicate a heavy bias in favour of bulk infrastructure and housing provision, over the provision of basic services such as water supply, sanitation and waste removal. Their comments also show that these municipal officials and councillors were more inclined towards supporting the national housing policy's vision of housing development as the main channel for service provision, and that they were more than willing to allow it to take precedence over basic service provision in shack settlements. As a consequence, there was little scope for the municipality to address residents' concerns raised through public participation processes.

With housing envisioned as the primary tool through which to supply services, from a policy and official perspective, I turn to consider housing planning and provision in the two shack settlements – bearing in mind that the Western Cape province currently faces a 400 000 unit housing shortage (Rasool, 2008). I do that by reviewing the plans for housing that we learnt about from officials and councillors in the two municipalities.

Housing delivery before service delivery?

We established that the Theewaterskloof municipality planned to build 2500 houses in different parts of Grabouw, including 800 in Waterworks. Initially, the town manager explained, the municipality had planned to relocate Waterworks residents to the nearby Rooidakke housing development because of the technical difficulties that the rocky terrain in Waterworks posed for construction. Subsequently however, the municipality had opted for *in-situ* upgrading, he said, fearing that the land would be re-occupied when the land was vacated. Echoing the state’s “eradication” approach, he said, “We don’t want a squatter camp here” (Meeting with town manager, 12 May 2008).

Accordingly, the town manager was confident that construction in Waterworks would begin in 2008, once environmental impact assessments had been conducted through a “fast-track” approach. He pointed out that surveyors had begun work in Waterworks, but that the layout and designs for plots had yet to be finalised.⁴⁶ He assured us that, by 2009, there would be houses in Waterworks.

Yet that confidence was not expressed by Grabouw’s housing project manager,⁴⁷ who explained to us how the housing development was to proceed: The municipality, he said, planned to develop housing in Grabouw through a phased approach, beginning with Rooidakke, a low-cost housing area first developed in the mid-1990s. While one area was being developed, applications for the others would be submitted successively to the

⁴⁶ In July 2008 we noticed land surveying activities in Waterworks, although residents were not informed why and we did not manage to find out directly from the surveying team.

⁴⁷ The housing project manager was responsible for all housing projects in Grabouw, and reported to the town manager.

provincial housing department for approval. He pointed out that Waterworks would be attended to last, saying that,

There has been no real planning for Waterworks. A land surveyor has been appointed to locate contours and rocky outcrops to determine designs for sewerage and water. There will also be an environmental [impact] assessment. After this, a site development plan will take place. We will have to see how many units will fit into the area (Meeting with housing project manager, 6 May 2008).

From the housing project manager's perspective, there was little certainty as to when houses would actually be constructed in Waterworks. Moreover, an interview with the housing project manager at the Theewaterskloof Municipal offices in Caledon in September 2007 revealed plans for just 200 houses to be built in Grabouw each year, beginning in 2008. From his perspective, such development would necessarily involve the relocation of residents to temporary locations with temporary services. According to his statistics, it would take at least twelve years to finish building the 2500 planned houses, and it would be eight years before housing development in Waterworks would take place – if, indeed, it was the last area to be attended to as the project planner had indicated.⁴⁸

The statements of municipal officials directly involved in municipal planning and housing development in Grabouw indicated that, although they thought houses *would* be developed in Waterworks at some point, they could not be certain *when* that would happen. Yet, as I explained above, municipal officials did not wish to provide more than “rudimentary” services to Waterworks because of the pending housing developments. A statement made by the town engineer (6 May 2008) is revealing:

There is great pressure for services in this area, and there is also a lot of pressure on the housing department to build houses. The less that the municipality does now, means that there will be more pressure on the [provincial] housing department to act. We don't want to make it too easy for the housing department, to keep pressure on them to

⁴⁸ We returned to Waterworks in May 2009. No houses had been built. A woman who was connected with the street committee informed us that they had met with the Rooidakke street committee, who had told them that there were no plans for housing in Waterworks yet.

provide housing. Waterworks was the first informal settlement in Grabouw, established in 1986, and something needs to be done to help the people.

From the town engineer's perspective, pending housing development was an excuse *not* to provide services to the residents of Waterworks, in order to keep pressure on the provincial housing department to support housing development in the area. The overall approach of the municipality, ranging from officials at the town level to councillors at the greater municipal level, seemed to be that provision of houses and the infrastructure to support their development were favoured over provision of basic services such as adequate waste removal, drainage, water supply or sanitation.

Housing development for Langrug seemed even less certain than in Waterworks, at least from the perspective of the ward councillor and the area manager with whom we spoke. The Franschhoek area manager informed me in August 2007, that the plan for Langrug was to move some residents into low-cost housing being planned in an area adjacent to Langrug.⁴⁹ He said that by relocating some of the residents, space could be made for the upgrading of Langrug itself, which would include roads, services and reticulation, and would begin with electrification.⁵⁰ The housing development in the adjacent area was, he explained, to be settled by a selection of residents on a waiting list which comprised applicants from Langrug and Groendal, and farm labourers. The area manager expected that houses would be constructed in the next five to ten years, and agreed that there was a need for interim measures in service provision – particularly because neighbouring landowners were threatening to take legal action against the municipality as a result of the landslides, litter and pollution coming from Langrug.

⁴⁹ We noted from the beginning of our research that there were already some RDP houses built adjacent to Waterworks. Alongside these houses streets had been laid and tarred. A school was being built above the empty streets. We saw that the open area was being used as a dumping ground and, upon closer inspection, noted that some of the rubbish came from a nearby restaurant. Langrug residents came here to salvage materials with which they could build or improve their homes.

⁵⁰ By the time we had completed our fieldwork in Langrug in July 2008, an electricity grid had been laid in Langrug. Some households had bought pre-paid electricity meters from the municipality, but we were told that not all residents could afford the installation fee.

Eight months later, in April 2008, the ward councillor told us that plans had changed: 301 Langrug applicants were scheduled to receive housing to be developed *in-situ*. Those who did not qualify for housing would be moved to an area above the present settlement where there was an empty dam (MAP G) which would be flattened. He said that the plans would begin to take form the same year, because “things must start happening... since the ANC councillors took over the Stellenbosch Municipality last week, and the elections are coming up next year – we need votes” (Meeting with ward councillor 14 April 2008). He added that our community-level greywater management project could perhaps fit in with the relocation of the remaining 700 households to the empty dam area. When we returned to Langrug in May 2009, however, no houses had been built in or near Langrug.⁵¹

While I showed earlier that, in almost all cases, municipal officials and councillors were reluctant to address basic service provision in two shack settlements, instead prioritising investment in bulk infrastructure to support housing development, the evidence presented above indicates that there was much ambiguity about when houses would actually be built in either Langrug or Waterworks. However, the fact that there were such plans meant that both municipalities focused predominantly on the provision of bulk infrastructure in advance of housing provision, and did so at the expense of immediate provision and maintenance of basic services to informal settlement residents. The municipalities seemed caught between a need to first provide infrastructure which could deal with additional inputs of sewerage, waste water and solid waste, a need to provide housing and infrastructure to support that housing, and the immediate service needs of the resident population.

Conclusion

A number of key findings have emerged out of the data presented in this chapter. To begin with, the services provided to Langrug and Waterworks were inadequate for the resident populations' requirements. Khosa (2002:40, 63) similarly noted that, in spite of an impressive service provision record, the services provided by South African municipalities remained inadequate and of poor quality. Khosa (2002:59) attributed the disjuncture between reported and actual service

⁵¹ A resident informed us that the municipality had held a meeting with residents the previous week, where they were told that the municipality was planning to provide each household with its own toilet.

provision to budget constraints that arise from fiscal discipline required in the state's macro-economic policy, and lack of skills capability within local government. Thurman (1999:26) had earlier noted a further tendency towards the lowering of service standards by local government, in favour of investment in house construction.

When I tried to come to grips with the reasons for inadequate service provision in Langrug and Waterworks, I discovered that municipal officials' capacity to respond to problems in the municipalities was hampered by the centralisation of technical expertise and authority to local municipality offices, and that basic services were not addressed systematically in municipal planning or budgeting.

In the Langrug case, where the Stellenbosch municipal council underwent a number of revisions, political power struggles appeared to have little direct effect on service delivery, the status quo in Langrug service provision remaining even as political leadership in the municipality changed. Yet, these struggles also seemed to create platforms for public participation in service delivery discussions – precisely because the ensuing discussions could then become grist for the political power struggle mills.

Pieterse (2004:2) made similar observations in relation to local government restructuring, with particular reference to the integration of the Black Local Authorities and Management Committees (which were in charge of service delivery to *black* areas under apartheid) into the former City of Cape Town municipality: "In this context of inevitable organisational turmoil and conflict it was highly unrealistic to expect these municipalities would be able to formulate, operationalise, monitor and refine multi-dimensional policy objectives, especially if the policy objectives were politically contentious" (Pieterse 2004:2)." The Stellenbosch case reveals similarly continued organisational restructuring which appeared to eclipse policy and decision-making at council level, and indeed the potential of public participatory mechanisms to influence that decision-making (as distinct from being drawn into political conflicts and contestations).

From the perspective of various officials and councillors, bulk infrastructure and housing were municipal priorities that took precedence over basic service delivery. As a consequence, funding was allocated to bulk infrastructure at the expense of basic service delivery, with the result that

municipalities were unable, or unwilling, to address residents' needs as articulated in even the limited available public participation processes. Municipal planning around service provision remained determined at council level, where the primary means to channel service delivery was envisioned, in line with national policy, through housing development. Tapscott (2000) explains the centralisation of authority as a reason for failing service delivery which, he said, "stems from a lack of real power to implement policies which have been handed down from the centre. A lack of executive power in particular ... inhibits effective decentralisation of administrative responsibility." Pieterse (2004:15) similarly noted that public managers lack decision-making power, and "have little say or control over staffing, budget priorities, spending or poor performance. This results in the tendency to work hierarchically (and safely) up or down the line. The effect is to decentralise responsibility, but not authority".

While municipal officials were expected to carry out decisions made at council level, acting on national housing policy, upon inspection, the housing development plans for the two shack settlements revealed that the likelihood of houses being built in the near future was only tentative, as there was little actual clarity amongst officials and councillors as to *when* houses would be constructed. It appeared that until such time as houses were actually built, the municipalities would continue to provide inadequate services in which the recipients would have little say.

The patterns identified in this chapter, with regard to the impotence of local municipalities' ability to provide basic services, and indeed to facilitate public inputs, are clearly not unique to the two municipalities and locations within which we conducted research. Indeed, the problems which have emerged regarding service provision and public participation in that process in these two municipalities appear to be rooted in systemic flaws of the system of governance in South Africa rather than local peculiarities. The views of the authors cited, and the findings revealed from our own research, suggest that local particularities need to be grounded in a thorough understanding of local institutions and their location within the broader political and economic environment.

There are two main outcomes of the constraints faced by municipalities. Firstly, at a practical level, the municipalities were hamstrung from really being participatory – i.e.

acting upon the recommendations of *civil society* – as they tried to meet the objectives of national housing policy. Secondly, service provision to informal settlements was set to remain inadequate for the foreseeable future as a result of the municipalities' commitment to the national government's vision for housing development which I have detailed in this chapter.

The UCT/WRC project initiators had expected that they would get financial or material support from municipal officials and ward councillors for the community-level greywater management project, and eventually to the extent that their recommendations might be taken up at policy level and rolled out nationally. Our experience, however, was that one municipal official in Stellenbosch organised for the delivery of just one pick-up truck-load of gravel to Langrug; and, in Grabouw, a municipal official from Caledon organised a truck-load of soil to Waterworks, soil which we were unable to use. Moreover, as I have explained, when we asked about available resources, we were repeatedly told that the budget had already been allocated, or that the resources were being channelled towards housing development. These experiences, and the evidence presented in this chapter, show that the municipalities were not, and for structural reasons could not be oriented towards local-level initiatives; nor were they able to take up local recommendations and really facilitate the kind of participation in service delivery that the UCT/WRC project initiators sought.

The intention of participatory policies in housing and local government, even if not realised in practice, is to create means for public participation in discussions about service delivery and other concerns that municipalities should be able to address, and in making recommendations. The project initiators hoped to extend that level of participation (i.e. in discussions and recommendations made in public participatory processes) into public participation in the installation and maintenance, as well ideally as the design, of a system that would provide a service in terms of greywater management and disposal. The project initiators' aspirations went far beyond the participatory goals envisioned in policy, policy goals that were themselves not being achieved. The project initiators' expectations that municipal officials and ward councillors would provide materials or funds were therefore quite misplaced. The causes for inadequate

service delivery which I have explored in this chapter had further consequences for both the residents and the project, and I explore these in greater detail in chapter 6.

University of Cape Town

5. “Call a spade a spade”

The UCT/WRC greywater management project aimed to get Langrug and Waterworks residents to manage greywater communally, themselves, and to achieve that goal through participatory methods. As I pointed out in chapter 2, the project initiators made some key assumptions about local circumstances when they embarked on the research. To briefly recap, these critical assumptions were that: (1) Residents of the shack settlements should and could take responsibility for greywater management themselves and, by implication, that residents were not doing enough for themselves. (2) Residents would readily volunteer their services in aid of the project’s community-level greywater management goals. (3) Residents would prioritise greywater management. (4) The level of service provision in the shack settlements was sufficient to facilitate the goal of community-level greywater management. These assumptions, as I showed in chapter 2, were largely rooted in limited preconceived notions about *community* and *social capital*.

In this chapter I probe these assumptions by presenting case material from our work in the settlements, material which reveals the implications of service provision for residents’ capacity and propensity for voluntary community-level greywater management. In particular, the case material shows the problems which arose from inadequate service delivery, and their repercussions for the shack settlements residents’ capacity to manage services themselves. It also reveals residents’ definitions of their own needs, and their perceptions of where responsibility lay for the management and provision of basic services.

Bringing these findings together with the arguments of a variety of commentators on urban development, (Pithouse, 2006a; 2006b; 2008; Murray, 2009; Mustafa, 2005; Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2008) enables me to test the project’s assumptions about participation in service delivery and residents’ needs and aspirations. From there I go on to consider what those assumptions meant for the project’s goal of participatory greywater management, particularly in contexts where, as I demonstrate, service provision was so poor that residents’ efforts to manage the effects thereof had little impact on the overall environmental conditions. I show that residents were aware that the conditions with which they contended were caused by the inadequacy or absence of a variety of services which, in combination, exposed them to a myriad of hazards and

risks. Consequently, I point out, their prioritization of services did not centre on communal waste-water management, but rather addressed for them more pressing issues like electricity, housing and individualized sanitation provision. Moreover, I show that they saw the provision of these services as the municipality's duty and therefore considered it as beyond the limits of their own responsibility. These perceptions, together with a situation of widespread unemployment and poverty, meant that few residents were willing voluntarily to participate in the project's goal of community-level greywater management.

Based on these findings, I argue that because the project initiators' assumptions lay behind the inappropriateness of the project design for the context in which it was implemented, that in turn led to the project being unable to respond to the needs and aspirations articulated by settlement residents, or to the most pressing issues that fieldwork revealed in the two settlements. That all allows me then to demonstrate that the project was unable to meet its participatory goals because the project initiators were too committed to their own self-conceived research/development goals, and their preconceived ideas about local circumstances.

My approach is informed by an understanding that anthropology attempts to step into the shoes of the subjects of research, to gain an insider's perspective of life in a particular time and space, and to be able to communicate this to readers, including those who have commissioned, or at least funded, a particular piece of research – in this instance the WRC.

Although it was not possible for me to fully understand the insiders' experiences, and indeed it is recognised as not entirely possible at all (Clifford 1988:23), I attempt here to communicate what I learnt over the year of fieldwork in the two shack settlements about local conditions relating largely to service provision. I also try to provide as close as possible an understanding of what it means to live without adequate sanitation, drainage and waste removal in a context of extreme deprivation in a post-apartheid South African "informal settlement".

Contextualising the settlements' residents

Unemployment was widespread amongst residents of both settlements,⁵² and many households relied on one or more social grants.⁵³ Those residents who were employed were mostly involved in local agricultural industries and development projects – which meant that their jobs were insecure.⁵⁴ Some residents operated small home-based businesses – *spaza* shops (selling household items like candles, porridge, soaps, paraffin, sweets etc.), shebeens (small-scale retailers of beer and spirits), offal traders and traditional healers. In order to make ends meet, some residents resorted to sifting through the nearby waste dump to find food to eat, whilst occasionally children collected scrap metal to exchange for money at the local scrapyard during school hours.

Apart from the difficulties of providing food each day, Langrug and Waterworks residents dealt with countless problems associated with service provision. Fire was a major concern for many. Residents in both settlements had protested for services because of fire hazards related to poor housing conditions and service provision. In Langrug, when illegal electricity connections to neighbouring RDP houses were cut and residents were fined by the municipality, some protested for electricity provision. In part, the protests were a response from business owners who were losing income as a result of the disconnection; but they were also a result of pressing concerns amongst residents about fire hazards in the settlement. In Waterworks, we were told, the street committee had organised a march to protest the ward councillor's lack of involvement in their affairs, and to question him about the provision of houses because "shacks were burning" (see chapter 4).

⁵² In the Stellenbosch Municipality, unemployment amongst the 'African' population group was 30.1% (Stellenbosch Municipality IDP 2007:15)

⁵³ In surveys conducted, we found that 10/25 households in Langrug and 19/63 in Waterworks drew monthly government grants. Respondents reported that pension and disability were R900/month and child grants were R200/month per child at the time of writing.

⁵⁴ In Langrug, the building of a local dam, and in Waterworks the construction of a shopping mall, employed some men, reportedly at R50 a day on average. According to the Stellenbosch Municipality IDP of 2007, the average household income in the 'African' population group in the entire municipality was R612p/m (+/-US \$60 at the time of writing) in 2001 (Stellenbosch Municipality IDP 2007:15).

Encountering the fall-out of a number of fires in both settlements during our fieldwork helped us to understand the myriad issues related to fire, and why it was of major concern for many residents.

Earth, wind and fire: negotiating an underserviced environment

Ncedo (a co-fieldworker) and I arrived in Langrug one autumn morning to meet the ward councillor. Thirty shacks had burnt down that night, and the councillor had been up in the early morning hours to deal with the consequences. Our meeting was cancelled, and we instead followed the ward councillor to the site of the fire. En route he told us that the fire was an opportunity to keep some of burnt area clear so that he could mark off space for a road to be constructed although he would have to figure out where to move the displaced residents.

A crowd of residents had gathered around the charred house remains. Burnt corrugated iron sheets were stacked neatly in piles, while a bulldozer cleared the area (Photograph C). Some municipal officials were standing around the site and the crowd was engaged in an altercation with a woman who was (according to the ward councillor) on the Stellenbosch municipal council. The residents were demanding houses, identity documents and food. The woman shouted back: "Because we [ANC] are in power now, you want everything at once!" People responded saying that they simply wanted a place to stay. The woman replied, saying that they (the municipal councillors and officials) still needed to work out the details of costing and logistics; to which some residents replied: "We don't care about the details; we want to know where we will sleep today!"

Whilst the altercation continued a young woman approached me asking whether I wanted to know what was going on. She then told me that the residents were very angry because they wanted houses while the municipality said that they wanted to make streets: "But where are the people going to go? The municipality must promise something. We will move but they must give us a place." She then added that she had a baby, but no formula, and no clothes, and showed me that she was wearing pyjamas under her dress, still from the night before. A woman standing next to us then said she too had no food: "We are desperate for houses, we want to build a shack, but they say we must move our shacks and there's nowhere to go." Meanwhile another lady told

Ncedo that “Making streets now only makes sense to those who have homes, but those whose houses are gone don’t have time to be rational anymore.”

By this stage we had lost track of the ward councillor, but learnt that there would be a meeting at his office. Residents affected by the fire then gathered outside the office while the ward councillor, the woman who addressed the crowd at the site of the fire, an official from the engineering department, amongst others, met inside. They then emerged and the councillor addressed the crowd about emergency food provisions. An altercation soon began again whereupon the councillor said they needed to create a working relationship with one another to which a resident replied: “The municipality sees houses being burnt down as an opportunity to make streets. Is this the way the municipality wants to have a working relationship with the residents?”

The councillor then told them that within three days people who had arrived most recently in the area would be moved to elsewhere in the settlement, and those who had come earlier would stay in their current location. Someone then asked, “What must we do in those three days?” The councillor’s response was that the municipal officials had to be given time, as there was nothing they could do immediately. When the officials and councillors left, one man said, “They’re going to their safe houses. What are we going to do with our left over possessions?”

When we returned to the site of the fire two days later, we saw that some men were busy rebuilding their shacks with materials salvaged from the debris (Photograph D). Some women were standing near a water pipe that been burnt during the fire and which had now become a water supply point –the pipe being doubled over to stop the flow of water when no water was being drawn. Nonetheless, a stream ran down the hill from the broken pipe (Photograph X).

A woman standing nearby asked, “Why doesn’t the government do anything? Why do they take so long? Government is supposed to help victims. The municipality said they would provide five zinc sheets and four poles. Social workers told us that we should not use the burnt sheets, because it was dangerous for our health, children could touch and eat it. We could paint the sheets, but we have no money, and no ID books to access our bank accounts [to buy paint].”

We asked one of the women what had caused the fire. She told us that a man had been cooking in his shack. He left his home to watch a soccer game on television, leaving his food on the stove. While he was out, his shack caught fire, leading to the destruction of the 30 other homes. He had apparently run away fearing retribution because people were angry with him. His cousin, with whom he lived, had also fled.

In Waterworks, we encountered a similar scenario: a shack had burnt down, and remains of the mattress, kitchen utensils and buckets lay on the ground. Plastic sheets on the neighbour's house, melted and peeled, showed signs of having burnt too. According to the neighbours, the owner had been sitting by a fire when he decided to get some beer. He locked his sleeping wife in the shack and went out, thinking that he had extinguished the fire. Some time later, the house caught alight, and the neighbours had to break down the door to extricate his wife. They fortunately lived alongside a tap stand and people had disconnected the pipes and directed them towards the fire to extinguish the fire before it spread. The wife was taken to hospital for burn injuries, and the neighbours later reportedly beat the husband.

A Langrug informant explained why fire was a common hazard: because many people did not have electricity, they relied on paraffin stoves and candles for domestic energy. Often people would leave their stoves or candles burning if they fell asleep or went out. She explained that going out to fetch water might take just five minutes to walk to the tap stand, but one could have to queue for half an hour.⁵⁵ In that time, one's house could catch fire if a lit candle or paraffin stove fell over.

Murray (2009:184) has noted the hazards associated with the use of paraffin for cooking:

It is estimated that fires linked to defective paraffin stoves cause 75% of all burn deaths in South Africa every year ... Paraffin is also a poisonous substance and, if ingested, can cause chemical pneumonia, an often fatal condition that at least 55, 000 poor children in South Africa contract each year ... When lit, paraffin stoves release harmful carbon

⁵⁵ Pithouse (2006b:19) notes in the case of shack settlements, "Everyone spends a lot of time queuing for and carrying water for drinking, cooking and bathing but women often spend huge amounts of time queuing to wash clothes. This is usually made into an important social and political space but does not detract from the brutality of an official state and mainstream NGO and media feminism that obsesses about the number of women in power while remaining entirely uninterested in the kind of casual misogyny that can describe the disconnection of water to an entire settlement as 'best practice'."

monoxide gas and fine particulate emissions. High levels of exposure to carbon monoxide can cause hypoxia, leading to unconsciousness and in some cases death, while particulate emissions, some of which are recognised carcinogens, can cause acute respiratory infections.

Apart from the immediate causes of shack fires, and the dangers associated with the use of paraffin stoves, fire risks were exacerbated by the low number of water supply points (seven in Waterworks, for 3 000 people, and 37 for Langrug's 5 000 residents), and the distance of those water supply points from many homes. Moreover, because of the limited water supply, it was very difficult to put fires out – either the water pressure was too low (if a hose was available), or residents would have to run back and forth with buckets of water.⁵⁶ The situation was aggravated by the narrow or non-existent roads in many parts of the settlement, which made them inaccessible to fire engines.⁵⁷ The use of plastic sheeting over light timber frames made shack structures highly inflammable and, once started, fires spread rapidly.

Immediate threats caused by fire – the loss of homes and possessions, loss of lives and injury – made provision of electricity a priority for many residents. When people's homes burnt, they had no place to stay, no clothing and could not cook. When their identity documents burnt, they were unable to access bank accounts or government grants.

Bank (2001) noted further that the impact of fires in shack settlements goes beyond material loss. His research in East London's Duncan Village shack settlement revealed that the trauma of fires "hit at the very fabric of this urban society ... Because fires were frequent, uncontrollable and random, people actually became conditioned to think of themselves as victims, caught up in powerful and destructive forces over which they had no control" (Bank 2001:154). Moreover, Bank (2001:162) found, fires disrupted domestic social arrangements, pressuring "domestic

⁵⁶ Murray (2009:172-3) noted in the case of Alexandra township: "Hastily mobilized bucket-brigades of resident volunteers often play a significant role in dousing small fires, but they have proven to be no match for the huge blazes that consume everything in their paths."

⁵⁷ Murray (2009:166) noted a similar fire scenario in Alexandra township in Gauteng, 2003: "What severely hampered the efforts of fire-fighters was the spatial agglomeration of the squatter encampments: tiny shacks arranged cheek-by-jowl, sometimes built precariously one on top of the other, laid out along narrow, meandering footpaths."

groups to split and disperse ... this undermined family solidarity and encouraged intergenerational conflict in fire-prone areas ... [and led to] constant competition and infighting for space [which] further eroded urban social fabric and encouraged social disintegration and inertia”.

The consequences of fire for shack dwellers are thus wide-reaching and dire. Shack settlements are highly susceptible to the risk of fire: statistics from Cape Town hospitals, reported in 1997, revealed that shack fires were the “second most common reason for admission of patients into the burns unit in Cape Town” (Godwin *et al.* 1997:151). Murray (2009:184) noted, alarmingly, that the use of unsafe paraffin stoves was associated by the Paraffin Safety Association of South Africa with 40 000-80 000 household fires countrywide, the destruction of 100 000 shacks and the loss of 2 500-3 000 lives every year.

The prioritisation of fire prevention through electricity provision that we found in Waterworks and Langrug is evidently a common issue in South Africa. In 2008, the KwaZulu-Natal-based shack dweller’s association, Abahlali baseMjondolo, called a summit to discuss shack fires in order to “define ourselves and our situation and then begin an open and public discussion amongst all shack dwellers’ organisations on how to defend ourselves and our communities from the fires” (Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2008). The summit was attended by shack dwellers and representative organizations from across South Africa. The statement on the summit, issued by Abahlali baseMjondolo (2008), declared,

People loose [sic] everything in shack fires. They loose money, clothes, documents, medicine - everything. Children that loose [sic] uniforms cannot go to school. People that lose ID books cannot get grants and pensions. People that lose HIV treatment are sometimes considered to have defaulted. People sometimes lose jobs and have to drop out of studies ... Therefore these fires are a crisis for the whole country. They are a state of emergency. They must be stopped by all means possible. If the government and the rich are not willing to recognise our humanity and continue to fail to recognise that shack fires are a crisis for the whole country then we will have to force the government and the rich to recognise the humanity of the poor ... The causes of the fires are clear. The fires happen because shack dwellers live close together in small shacks made of

plastic and cardboard and because we are forced to rely on candles for light, paraffin stoves for cooking and braziers for warmth.

The discussion above highlight how shack settlements are highly susceptible to conflagration, as a result of the use of highly inflammable construction materials and open flame heat sources (Godwin *et al.* 1997:153). I have explained too that long waiting periods in queues for water, distant and slow-running water supplies, and poor or non-existent roads prevented effective access of fire engines to extinguish fires. Fires not only destroyed people's homes, lives and critically important documents; it also disrupted already fragile social networks and livelihoods (Bank, 2001). Different aspects of service provision (i.e. roads, electricity, water provision and housing), which were inadequate for people's needs, compounded the negative impacts of that inadequacy on residents' lives.

The situation described here highlights municipalities' failure to address the problems arising out of inadequate service provision in an integrated manner. Pithouse (2008: Online) also highlighted the urgency around fires in shack settlements in South Africa, and the consequences of the connections between different services for fire prevention:

One of the most acute consequences of the failure to provide services to shack settlements is the relentless fires. They can happen any time but across the country winter is particularly feared as the burning season ... The ultimate solution is clearly the provision of decent housing. But the housing crisis in South Africa is not reducible to the provision of houses. There are all kinds of smaller interventions that could immediately reduce the threat of fire. For instance, if there were taps spread throughout the larger settlements people would be able to fight the fires more effectively. And community fire fighting efforts would clearly be much more effective if fire extinguishers were provided. Fires would be less likely to start and to spread if people were given fire resistant building materials. Fire engines would be better able to access the large settlements if roads were provided into the settlements. But the biggest issue is that of electricity. In settlements or parts of settlements that have been electrified, whether by the state or by residents, the incidence of fires is greatly reduced.

The existence of under-serviced shack settlements and their material conditions exposed residents to daily threats of fires, and endangered lives and precarious livelihoods, thereby exacerbating residents' susceptibility to catastrophe and poverty. Fire and electricity were amongst residents' chief concerns, due to the very immediate effects these had on their lives. Residents both recognised and dealt with waste water problems (as I shall later demonstrate), but could not by themselves remedy the systemic nature of fire hazards and their consequences in shack settlements, nor could they alone address the risk factors by using less inflammable housing materials or providing better water supply, roads and electricity services.. For them, therefore, greywater management, despite the WRC/UCT project's assumptions, was not prioritised – a point particularly reflected in the causes for mobilisation of protest in Langrug and Waterworks.

The following ethnographic descriptions also show how inadequate service provision of different kinds interwove to compound the consequences of poor service provision in shack settlements.

We met an old man in Waterworks who complained of a sore throat and bronchio-nasal congestion. I promised to bring him some ginger and lemon, which I thought might alleviate his symptoms. I explained that the ginger would ease his sore throat, and that it was also useful for countering nausea. He told me that his stomach filled up with fluids, and he felt nauseous often. Our enquiries led him to explain that, when he had to go to the toilet, he went to “the bush” – a patch of veld and bushes adjacent to Waterworks (Photograph U). It was here that many residents, with only ten flush toilets and twelve non-functional pit latrines between 3 000 of them, and with limited rubbish removal services and drainage facilities, disposed of their rubbish, waste water and relieved themselves. It was here too that a leaking manhole's sewerage was deposited. The old man told us that, when he went to relieve himself in the bush, he also vomited up the contents of his stomach because of the sickening smell from the faeces and rubbish lying around – reminding us (if we needed such reminder) that not only was there a severe lack of sanitation in Waterworks, but that the lack of other services also exacerbated residents' experience of that inadequacy.

Sanitation was similarly problematic for Langrug residents. A woman living near some communal facilities at the top of the settlement told us to look at them. She said

Even when they've been cleaned, you'll see that it is only the concrete area around the toilets, or maybe one toilet. The situation is getting worse, and it seems that no one cares about the living conditions here. You cannot even sit on the toilets – they're so dirty that if you need the toilet you get shaken and scared because you have to face those horrific toilets. Today, I had to stand over the toilet like a cow, with my baby strapped to my back.

We had carried out observations of all the facilities in Langrug, and had examined that particular set of communal facilities about which that woman spoke. Of ten toilets, only one functioned. The other nine were either filled to the brim with faeces, food and newspaper, and/or had been completely detached from the plumbing system. The one functioning toilet had wet newspaper spilling out onto the floor outside (Photograph N). The adjacent washing area was flooded, and women washing their clothing there had to straddle the puddles.

Most of the five communal washing and toilet facilities, and eight double cubicle facilities interspersed around the settlement had major leaks issuing from their piping. In one case, we saw faeces coming out of a pipe leading from one communal facility's toilets and spilling onto the floor of the washing area (Photograph I) where people collected water, washed clothes and sometimes rinsed offal (Photograph J). In many cases, waste water generated at the communal facilities, either from leaking pipes, or produced by users, drained directly onto the ground rather than into the sewerage system. Consequently streams of contaminated water ran down the hill through the settlement, to create furrows up to 0.5m deep (Photograph E). The furrows would then clog up with rubbish, and many residents threw their household waste water into them, along with night soils, food and baby poo.

Langrug's sanitation situation shows that communal facilities were insufficient for the population of 5 000, and posed a public health hazard directly (because there were not enough for the population, and they consequently broke and quickly became filthy) and indirectly (because they were the source of much contaminated waste water that ran through the settlement). The case also shows how sanitation was tied up with other services such as drainage

facilities, maintenance and waste removal, and, as in the case of fire, it highlights the importance of an integrated approach to service provision because, as I have demonstrated, the effects of a lack of one aspect of service provision can be exacerbated by the absence others.

When we asked residents in surveys how (non-existent or broken) toilets could be improved, most said that the solution would be the provision of flush toilets, preferably with each individual household having its own flush toilet. As one interviewee said

Each house should have a toilet and a tap so that individuals can be responsible for their maintenance. Individual services would be better and easier to control and manage. It is easier to pinpoint individuals than a community for mismanagement. Mismanagement of collective services is harder to control ... People break services because they are careless, and you cannot always know who did it or why. If individually-owned services are broken then individual households can be held responsible. People are always told to use toilet paper but still use newspaper, which blocks up the toilets.

In a later conversation, he told us,

What are important are human beings. Water, sanitation, roofs and lighting are basic needs. If people don't have those things, do they remain humans or do they turn into animals? You don't need toilets for animals. But people need toilets and taps in homes. From 1992 to 2008, sixteen years, the government hasn't thought that we need toilets ... Those public toilets are not safe for people. It is useless to take government money each year: many things must be done with that money. Every year government gives us money to repair public toilets – that money should be used for big jobs. Last year we complained about broken toilets flowing onto the streets, and this year we must complain about that again.

Results from the surveys we conducted, along with this man's comments, were revealing: when we asked how toilets could be improved, 40 of 51 respondents in Waterworks said through the provision of flush toilets, six through individual flush toilets and one through the provision of housing with individual flush toilets. In Langrug, out of 25 respondents, four said flush toilets, eight said individual flush toilets, and two said houses with individual flush toilets. When asked who was responsible for fixing taps, 18 Langrug and 55 Waterworks residents said it was the municipality. 17 Langrug and 53 Waterworks residents said that it was the municipality's

responsibility to provide toilets, while 15 Langrug and 35 Waterworks residents said the municipality was responsible for fixing toilets (although a number of Waterworks pointed out that the bush was their toilet, and they actually did not toilets).

The statements above, along with the observational data presented earlier, suggest that various residents thought that service inadequacies should not be addressed through communal facilities but rather through individualised services (toilets, water, electricity and/or housing provision, and most thought that these should be provided by the municipality.

The information presented here shows that the material conditions that arose from the impacts of different aspects of service provision compounded residents' negative experiences of those consequences. Especially, the systemic linkages between inadequate service provision made fire, housing and service provision far more pressing concerns for residents of the shack settlements than greywater management on its own. Moreover, the systemic linkages identified, which arose from poor service provision, made the isolated management of greywater that was sought after in WRC Project K5/1654 exceedingly challenging, if not unlikely.

Statements from meetings held between researchers revealed awareness amongst project initiators of the need for an integrated approach to service delivery to manage greywater effectively. One of the project leaders said, in a researchers' meeting, that greywater could not be separated from other waste streams because the rubbish and the sanitation problems were much bigger than those caused by the streams of greywater. However, another member of the team said, "We need to address greywater alone. We cannot put in working toilet blocks; we must accept that they will always be inoperational." (Minutes from greywater research team meeting, August 2007). In a later meeting, the research team discussed the possibility of communally managed greywater facilities. The two fieldworkers (of whom I was one) explained what we had learnt in the field: "People don't want communal resources because it is difficult to regulate these" and "People say they want flush toilets and taps." To this, one of the project leaders responded, "But we will not be providing these, so people must take what they can get" (Minutes from greywater research team meeting, 8 October 2007).

The difficulties of local level environmental management in shack settlements with inadequate basic service provision

Inadequate provision of different services converged to create a myriad daily challenges for residents. Although our surveys, interviews and participant observation revealed that residents prioritised access to services such as electricity, housing and individualised toilets and taps, we discovered that residents in both settlements made many attempts to deal with the conditions that manifested as a result of the inadequate and fractured service delivery which I have described above.

Generally, residents kept the yards around their homes very neat and clean (Photograph Y). The emphasis on management strategies outside their yards differed, however, between the two settlements. In Langrug there was greater evidence of waste water management than in Waterworks. A number of Langrug residents had installed pipes to conduct and conceal waste water (Photograph O), including that which issued from communal facilities and from residents' disposal of their household waste water which then ran down the hill in one filthy stream. Some had installed urinals with the aid of an upturned two litre coke bottle attached to piping that led to the main road on the east side of the settlement (Map G). Others had erected short lengths of corrugated iron sheets along the waste water furrows and used those as urinals.

That there was noticeable attention to waste water may have been the result of two factors – the steepness of the slopes in Langrug and the number of facilities (often leaking and without proper drainage). The steep slopes allowed liquids to run down the hill, making it possible for residents to harness gravity to direct wastes away from their homes. The fact that there were seven times as many toilets, five times as many taps, and 2 000 more people in Langrug than in Waterworks suggests that there was a much higher water consumption (and discharge) in Langrug than in Waterworks. In combination with steep gradients, domestic and communal waste water flows resulted in severe erosion and very often, water running past or even into residents' homes, something we observed regularly only in Langrug.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ We returned to Langrug after a year, where I noticed one furrow which had grown by about 4m in length, and had eroded almost 0.5m deep in our absence.

The following case shows one individual's efforts to manage waste water in his environment: A shebeen-owner in Langrug had installed a pipe across the road from his home, underneath an intersection in the dirt road. The pipe channelled water that issued from communal facilities uphill from his home and business premises, and waste water disposed of by householders along the road. The water was often black-grey in colour, and stank ferociously. At one point, maggot-like organisms abounded in the putrid liquid.

The water had, he said, previously run towards his house and into the yard of a defunct crèche where children still played on the jungle-gym. He had then installed a pipe and thereby concealed the waste water for approximately ten metres, directing it along the road until an open furrow resumed at the end of the pipe.

The man's efforts succeeded in concealing the dirty waste water for a distance, and also improved the road, because the furrow no longer ran across it. They also reduced children's exposure to the dirty water when they played in the crèche. Up and downstream of the piping, however, the waste water remained exposed and accessible to residents. Thus, although the pipe improved the environment immediately around it, the resident's efforts were not always appreciated. He explained how a squabble had ensued between him and a neighbour when he had scolded the neighbour's children for throwing food into the furrow. Their father came out and told him that he did not like children, and that it was right for them to throw food into the furrow, because that was its purpose. Our informant said he had then told the father that the food would block the furrow, adding that he was sure the father did not want to live in a dirty place, but pointing out to us alone that he believed the man did not want to do things for himself.

When we later accompanied our informant while he cleaned rubbish out of the furrows in his area, passers-by asked, "How long are you going to do this for?" and, "Are you going to work alone like this?" as if it was strange that he was cleaning the area himself.

Towards the end of our fieldwork in Langrug, the municipality had graded the settlement's major roads. In doing so, however, the furrows that had previously conducted waste water down the hill were closed up with soil. Consequently, water was now collecting in puddles and spilling out onto the road. Moreover, the pipe installed by the shebeen owner had become silted up and, once

again, filthy water was flowing towards the shebeen and running directly into the yards of other residents, collecting beside their homes. Apparently, our shebeen-owning informant had received no notification from the municipality for the grading. He told us much later,

If we had money we could do things. But we don't have money, we are dependent.

People are trying. I built this shack on my own. If we could buy the land or if it were ours we could do things. I cannot go to the bank to borrow money because I have no security. If we could have land we could do our own things. We expect government to give us a plot so that we can build houses, but we don't have money for that.

The above has shown how one man attempted to intervene to improve his immediate environment, and to overcome the effects of inadequate waste-water disposal service provision. It shows too that while people did do things for themselves to improve their environment, individual interventions had little effect on the overall environment because the general conditions (i.e. the overall lack of drainage in the area, coupled with badly-maintained communal facilities that lacked drainage) overwhelmed them in their attempts. Further, it shows how one individual's efforts could be undermined by the apathy and antagonism of others, and by municipal activities that did little to improve the environment but rather exacerbated conditions, as well as being undertaken without any consultation with residents. Lastly, it shows how a lack of services and a lack of access to resources, along with a sense of insecurity around land tenure, restrained residents from effectively managing their environment and developing themselves. People's insecurity appeared to result, in part at least, in their hesitancy to invest in their homes and local infrastructure (financially or physically).

In Waterworks we observed few examples where residents had intervened to deal with waste water.⁵⁹ There, as described, rubbish lay thigh-deep in places, and residents appeared more concerned with managing solid waste than greywater. Since the solid waste collection service had failed, the street committee had requested residents to dispose of their waste in the veld rather than between their homes. Consequently few residents took their rubbish to the one

⁵⁹ We found one residence where the owner had attached a zinc basin to lengths of PVC piping which deposited waste water in the veld alongside the settlement. In a second case, we encountered a group of residents packing stones around a channel of water caused by a leaking tap that had no drainage facilities. In a third case, the residents of one house dug a channel to direct a stream of sewerage water away from their home. There were far fewer cases of residents having made such interventions in Waterworks than in Langrug.

official dumping site in the settlement – a tip from which the municipality collected waste only on a haphazard basis. Sometimes, we noted, garbage lay there uncollected for over a week, and would be torn apart and scattered by dogs.⁶⁰ And, for some residents, it was almost one kilometre to take their waste to the disposal area (see Map F).

One day, whilst we were observing water use and disposal at a tap stand in Waterworks, we met a woman who, we discovered, was on the street committee. On learning that we were researching greywater management in Waterworks, she told us that she wanted to initiate a waste management project in her area of the settlement. Although she thought waste water was important, she was more interested in managing solid waste. We ended up trying to help her submit a proposal to the municipality for a waste management tender in the area. However, as indicated in chapter 5, the municipality soon retracted the opportunity for residents to tender in that way when provincial government cut funding in favour of food security programmes.

Another person who had tried to manage the rubbish in the vicinity of her home was a *sangoma* (diviner), and a leader of a Zion church. She lived near the edge of Waterworks, next to the fence that divided the settlement from the open land adjacent to it. She said that other residents would sometimes dump their rubbish, even dead animals, in amongst the boulders and bushes near her yard. The church was right next to her house, and, she said, the stench from the waste became unbearable which, she added, was not good for the church. She had thus felt compelled, she said, to clear the bushes nearby that people used as a toilet, and had removed the rubbish and muck that had collected there. She and her *sangoma* trainee had also cleared waste lying in the bushes and boulders, raked the area and dumped the waste in the veld on the other side of the fence (Map F). She told us that they did this to show others that, if everyone contributed, the environment could be better. But, she said, people were not all the same and would not all do this. They did what they could do there, but the other side of the rocks remained in the same state because people did not clean in that area.

⁶⁰ At the beginning of our research project, there was a rubbish tip at the front of the settlement. We saw that it was collected sometimes only after two weeks. In time, the rubbish tip was removed entirely, and residents had to leave their rubbish in the open, making its contents susceptible to interference by dogs, and allowing the exposure of its contents to children. We did not notice any reduction in the volumes of waste that accumulated in the veld surrounding the settlement.

Pointing out that there had been an outcry about the waste among her neighbours, and complaining that “The municipality does nothing”, this same woman said she had asked the municipality for plastic bags, and had then given bags to her neighbours to fill. But they had not then taken the filled bags to the official collection area because, having bagged a lot of rubbish, they complained it was not their job to then take them to the skip site. Instead, they had burnt it, leaving a residue of ash and semi-burnt garbage and also contributing to the risk of fire.

This case shows how one resident’s efforts to improve the immediate environment of her neighbourhood were thwarted by both the apathy of neighbours – not all were willing to clean up rubbish around the houses, some continuing to dump it in right there – and by the municipality’s inadequate waste removal service. The case points to the limits of civic responsibility as locally understood: residents perceived that responsibility to extend only to collecting rubbish in and cleaning the area inside their yards, and perhaps nearby, but not to disposing of it at the tip which was some distance away. We were told, “This area – especially Waterworks - gets ignored by the municipality. The rubbish was not taken to the shops because the residents collected a lot of rubbish here, and it was not our job to take it to the shop, so we burnt it instead.” From the sangoma’s perspective, the municipality should have come into the settlement to collect the rubbish which residents had collected and put in rubbish bags outside their homes.

A similar attitude was revealed to us one day when we engaged with a group of Waterworks residents and asked why, with so many residents being unemployed, they did not attend to drainage problems there. One young man’s response illustrates the more general perspective illustrated above: “The place is dirty, but how can we clean? We must shit in the bush, how can we clean there? You cannot clean outside: it does not belong to you. You can clean inside your yard and home.”

Although we found many instances of residents trying to manage their own immediate domestic environments, few were willing to volunteer their services to the UCT/WRC project’s goal of greywater management. This may have been in part because of most residents’ perceptions around the limits of their responsibility. If indeed most residents saw that responsibility to be limited to the maintenance of the area inside and around their own yards, then community-level

greywater management (like community-level solid waste management) would have been regarded as outside of that scope.

However, we found other evidence that helped us to understand further why most residents were not willing to work voluntarily for the “communal good” in greywater management. When we asked why, if people in Waterworks were unemployed, they did not do something about the drainage problems in the area, an old man told us, “They are not getting paid. They will get hungry if they do this work, and go home hungry and go to sleep.” In Langrug, when we told a primary informant that we had hoped to work with groups of people, he said that it was difficult to work with residents in groups because

Most people don't work, and poverty prevails. So if people work, they need money for food. I worked with you because I don't like pollution, and there was water all around my house when you got here and I had channelled it. You were the only people who were helping me with what I did.

A similar attitude was revealed when we first met the woman with whom we worked on the Waterworks waste removal tender. We asked her to bring together some of her neighbours to discuss their voluntary involvement in waste and greywater management initiatives. She managed to assemble eight people to attend a meeting with us at her house and discussed possibilities for waste management in their area. But when the neighbours realised that there were no employment opportunities, and that their involvement would be voluntary, only the one woman on the street committee, and a man who was on the ward committee, remained interested. As one said: “People don't want to do things for free: they need an incentive. Maybe they will get involved in one day campaigns, but they would not do it all the time for free.”

Evidently, residents in both settlements were not prepared to work voluntarily, for free because food and an income were priorities – and they were not prepared to work without remuneration, on an empty stomach. Findings from a short study by UCT Social Anthropology masters students similarly indicated that residents of Langrug were generally not prepared to voluntarily manage local services, particularly waste water in public areas (Adams *et al.* 2007:47).

Residents' statements about voluntary work thus suggest that their ability and willingness to become involved in managing service provision was not solely dependent on their perceptions

about where responsibility lay for service provision, but was also tied up with constraints such as extreme poverty and unemployment.

Again, Pithouse's (2006b:21) observations in KwaZulu-Natal's Kennedy Road shack settlement are reflective of the scenarios described above where residents were actively engaged in managing their circumstances, but were under enormous duress as a result of the conditions under which they lived:

As well as enabling access to the wider city the settlement contains many possibilities within itself. There is a vibrant collective life with a crèche, churches and sacred spaces, a vegetable garden, shops, pubs and all kinds of cultural, sporting, religious and mutual support projects... The settlement is also a space of tremendous suffering. Many people have no viable livelihood and scrape out the most precarious and uncertain living. The tiny number of toilets causes serious health risks, puts the safety of women and children at particular risk when seeking privacy at night and imposes easily avoidable cruelties on the everyday lives of people with AIDS who often suffer with chronic diarrhoea. The lack of electricity means fires and last year there were 9 conflagrations. Children have been found eating worms that grow in the shit in the portable toilets.

The kinds of observations I have dealt with in this chapter suggest that residents' of Langrug and Waterworks faced numerous challenges in managing their environments themselves, and that greywater management could not be considered as distinct from the socio-economic context within which greywater "problems" emerged, nor from the local environment generally. Rather, the social and environmental consequences of poor service provision undermined residents' capacity for any public service self-management, including greywater management. A further inhibiting factor was their socio-economic and physical marginalisation within South African economics, politics, society and geography.

Discussion

Murray's (2009) research on fire incidents in Alexandra township in 2003 shows that a narrow focus on specific fire events, and the framing of these as isolated catastrophic, "natural" tragedies, deflects attention away from the regularity with which they occur in shack settlements. Furthermore, he contends that vulnerability to "natural hazards" like fire or water catastrophes

are not at all natural: rather, vulnerability to disaster depends on one's positioning within the wider context of social vulnerability and the "risk expressed in the linkage between location, infrastructure, socio-political organisation, production and redistribution systems, and prevailing discursive understandings of the situation" (Murray 2009:186). He goes on to argue that a focus on the particular reasons for individual fire events tends to frame shack dwellers as responsible for their own misfortune, thereby ignoring the wider environmental setting and socio-economic circumstances within which the fires occur.

Seeing these fires as part of the everyday conditions of existence in the squatter settlements lays bare what amounts to the wholesale abandonment of the urban poor, cut loose from the conventional ties that bind city-dwellers to the urban fabric... Shack-dwellers suffer not solely because of the sudden and unpredictable force of nature. Extreme weather events cannot solely be thought of independently of the social processes that reproduce a permanent state of emergency for the urban poor. The social catastrophes in the longstanding abandonment of the urban poor as part of the normal functioning of neoliberal urban governance, with its stress on individual initiative, entrepreneurship, pay-as-you go and cost recovery ... The real lesson which these shack-fires reveal is that the disaffiliation of the urban poor from the world of work, from decent housing, and from basic social services is a part of the normal functioning of urban governance under the hegemony of neoliberal ideologies and practices ... while piecemeal interventions can alleviate the suffering of victims of fires, floods and extreme cold, they largely ignore the root causes of disaster-vulnerability. Where urban residents live and under what conditions largely determines their exposure to risk. The structural underpinnings of susceptibility to natural disasters are linked to uneven patterns of social inclusion in the mainstream of urban life. Without regular work, decent housing and access to social services, the urban poor remain subject to the deadly consequences of natural disasters.

Murray's (2009) point is relevant here: a narrow focus on particular "problems" in shack settlements, divorced from both the broader physical environment resulting from inadequate service delivery (i.e. uneven access to infrastructure), or the socio-economic positioning that shack dwellers find themselves in, ignores the root causes of the "problems" being addressed,

and is unlikely to yield significant or meaningful insights or results. Bank (2001:147) notes the increasing recognition amongst analysts of the structural nature of fire disasters, and their relationship with social economic forces, concluding, “It is essential that local stakeholders and government officials begin to recognise the social power of fire and acknowledge the long-term social and economic damage that can be done if it is allowed to take hold in densely settled, metropolitan shack areas” (Bank 2001:162).

I would suggest that the UCT/WRC greywater management project needs to be viewed in similar light. By focusing attention on greywater problems, as if isolated from other environmental concerns (solid and human waste) brought about by inadequate service provision, the project initiators failed to recognise the importance of local residents’ marginalisation in terms of service provision, or their socio-economic positioning, and the effects that might have on achieving the project’s participatory goals. The project focussed on identifying local level social weaknesses – individual and group social behaviour and attitudes around waste water disposal – rather than on broader socio-political and political-economic structural weaknesses. It focused on “educating” residents about greywater management rather than attempting to understand and work with what those people already know. And it focused on residents as agents who might provide panaceas for their own failings and on their inability to manage greywater (as perceived by the project initiators), rather than recognising that the extent to which their agency was structurally constrained. As Murray (2009) suggests, doing that not only attributes blame to the shack dwellers themselves but deflects attention away from the severe economic and infrastructural inequality that residents of the two shack settlements experienced, as I have demonstrated in this chapter. I would add that such focus also obscures the importance of interconnections between different aspects of service provision such as those that Pithouse (2008) highlighted with regard to fire hazards.

Dealing with the combination of environmental, social and structural (economic and political) effects on the vulnerability of the urban poor to natural disaster, in the context of floods in the Lai Nullah floodplain in Pakistan, Mustafa (2005) developed the idea of “hazardscape”. “Hazardscape” refers not only to physical landscape within which people experience the “lived reality of hazardous places”, but the “social structural basis of vulnerability as well as the

power/knowledge dynamic governing policy and popular discourses on the flood hazard in the Lai” (Mustafa 2005:566). Mustafa (2005) thus acknowledges that risk in the context of environmental hazards is dependent on the socio-economic positioning as well as physical location of the subjects in question, where

vulnerability is understood as the susceptibility of hazard victims to suffer damage from extreme events and their relative inability to recover from those events on account of their social positionality ... As in other cities of the world, various physical, social, and technological factors intersect to make flood hazard in the Lai a “hybrid hazard” ... This study establishes how a single hazard in a place is the outcome of interactions of geographical variables operating across spatial scales (Mustafa 2005:566).

Mustafa (2005) points out that hazards policy in the United States and elsewhere tends to have an engineering bias which is “characterised by a concern for practicality of research and the role of perception in influencing individual and collective behaviour to hazards” (Mustafa 2005:568), a stance which he criticises for “isolating hazards research from the larger continuum of human environment interactions ... [and] apparent scientism, technocratic managerialism, and lack of attention to the political-economic factors that made certain groups differentially vulnerable to hazards” (Mustafa 2005:568). Important here is Mustafa’s point that the interconnections between the physical environment, socio-economics and politics have bearing upon the vulnerability of the urban poor to the hazards which they experience on a daily basis.

In the context of greywater management and the WRC/UCT project on which this dissertation is focused, I would suggest that, although waste water problems were not acute catastrophes, they were part of the daily experience of living in a chronically hazardous and indeed potentially catastrophic environment where people lived in constant fear of fire, and in perpetual battle with burgeoning solid, liquid and human pollution. Hence, both Murray’s (2009) and Abahlali baseMjondolo’s (2008) description of the situation that the South African urban poor find themselves in as “a state of emergency” seems entirely appropriate. Indeed, they resonate strongly with Mustafa’s tone when he moves away from focusing on catastrophes such as flooding, to say,

Hazardscape substitutes for the term natural hazard, which connotes some external nature as the key causative element in the hazardousness [sic] and vulnerability of life

... hazardscape awards a centrality to hazardousness as part of everyday life, where vulnerability, exposure to hazards, and human-environment interactions become exemplars of wider struggles of social justice (Mustafa 2005:569-570).

Mustafa suggested that the solution to reducing the vulnerability of the urban poor to the hazards of life on the margins is prioritisation of service delivery over cost recovery; understanding the limits incurred upon the urban poor's choices for dealing with their social structural and public discursive vulnerability; and increased local level public debate and input in decision-making regarding that situation. In contrast to the UCT/WRC project initiators who saw the "education" of "participants" as part of the "solution" to greywater management problems, Mustafa recommended that

Training and the sensitisation of public servants to power/knowledge issues and encouragement of reflexivity about their own subject and epistemic position will ... be an important prerequisite for useful public private partnerships. This training must go beyond the traditional participatory methods of training popular in development circles. The point is for trainees to look critically at their own ontological assumptions that underlie their own policy prescriptions (Mustafa 2005:583).

Conclusion

I began this chapter by stating my intentions to analyse some of the basic assumptions made by the UCT/WRC greywater project initiators in terms of the ethnographic data we collected about waste water management in Langrug and Waterworks. My contention was that those assumptions about local circumstances and residents' inclination towards community-level greywater management were misplaced.

Consideration of the data presented above challenges the preconceived ideas that the project initiators had about local circumstances and residents in Langrug and Waterworks, as I now show explicitly. To summarise briefly: the key findings of this chapter are that levels of service provision in Langrug and Waterworks had numerous negative consequences for residents, and that these were compounded by the systemic linkages between the different types of inadequate basic services (i.e. sanitation, waste removal, housing and electricity). Residents' vulnerability to

disaster and risk could therefore not be attributable to single causes (e.g. poor waste water management) but to multiple hazards.

Residents' prioritisation of services reflected a keen awareness of those linkages. This was particularly evident in the fact that electricity and housing were of major concern, because, as I have shown, fire was a common hazard acutely exacerbated by: inadequacy of water supply and roads; the use of open flame heat and light sources because of a lack of electricity; and the use of highly inflammable building materials.

Additionally, most residents' sense of responsibility was predominantly focused on the vicinity of their homes, and they expected the municipality, as the elected body responsible for communal facilities, to take care of the management of public spaces and public and communal infrastructure. Many were therefore not interested in communal facilities and their management, explicitly indicating a preference for individualised access to services (taps, toilets and electricity) along with formal communal amenities (e.g. roads, sewers, water and electrical supply lines) being provided and maintained by the municipality. Moreover, because residents were poor and because many of them were unemployed, they were unwilling to voluntarily participate in providing or managing services. Many saw that as the municipality's responsibility – even if only by employing and overseeing residents to undertake those tasks.

In spite of the UCT/WRC project's assumption that residents should and could manage "community-level" greywater themselves (and were therefore seen as not doing enough for themselves), we found that residents of both shack settlements were actively engaged in managing their environment in many respects – house construction, individualised waste water and rubbish disposal. Moreover, although the project initiators conceded, during the course of the research, that local authorities have limited capacity to manage service provision but "operate in crisis mode in an effort to address short-term demands" (Winter *et al.* 2008), the reason they gave for the project's failure to achieve its goals was to suggest that residents failed to report service issues (such as broken sewage lines) because of their mistrust of, and loss of confidence in local authorities. That in turn was understood to have led to residents' "reluctance to cooperate" and their "inertia. In spite of their thus recognising the infrastructural dysfunction in the settlements, the project initiators ascribed much of the project's failure to residents' social

character traits – as evident in the use of such statements as “their mistrust”, “weak social structures”, “loss of confidence”, “inertia” and “low-self esteem”.

The tendency to disregard or underplay the powerfully real structural and everyday difficulties that residents faced, as I have demonstrated in this chapter and throughout this dissertation, is encapsulated in the statement made in Winter *et al*'s (2008) “Why Things Fail”: “residents continue to believe that the municipality should provide everything and solve their problems. These unrealistic expectations are fuelled by political and ideological rhetoric.” Ironically, it would seem that it was the project’s own unrealistic expectations, driven by its initiators’ adherence to (ideologically driven) assumptions about how local communities should behave, which proved to be the Achilles heel of the approach it had hoped to adopt to achieve its goals.

I have shown in this chapter how, by imposing greywater management as a priority, and relying on flawed notions about local social constitution and circumstances, the project initiators did not take seriously participants’ own definitions of their needs and priorities; nor did they adequately consider the substantive consequences of poor municipal functioning and inadequate service provision in that context. The project was thus unable to achieve its participatory or community-level greywater management goals. Moreover, by casting that failure as the weakness of local residents’ social relationships, the project reflected Bologna’s (2008) criticisms that so-called participatory projects can actually reinforce inherently unequal developer-participant power relationships. The data I have presented shows that, to a large degree, lack of service provision and insufficient facilities reinforced residents’ difficulty in “managing things” themselves. Therefore, I contend, it was not so much a “social” weakness particular to those “communities” that caused the failure of interventions such as the UCT/WRC community-level greywater management project, but their marginalisation in terms of service provision which was underscored by their social and economic marginalisation in contemporary South African society.

The reinforcement of power imbalances between developer and “participants” arises with the imposition of project priorities which downgrade the importance of local knowledge because local opinions are not and could not be taken seriously. Moreover, the casting of residents as weak reinforces, if not materially then socially and psychologically, those imbalances in ways

that both Pithouse (2006a) and Bologna (2008) describe. When such notions are then disseminated in the public and the academic domain via journal articles, conference presentations and WRC reports, they produce what Bologna says is a more general consequence of the use of participatory rhetoric in development:

the potential to create another more insidious form of power and control that is intensely political, yet obscured because it utilises liberal democratic language that appears “people-centred” – despite the evidence that development interventions rarely result in those at whom initiatives are aimed gaining greater autonomy of becoming more empowered or less marginalised to any truly significant or lasting degree (2008:81).

The arguments that I have presented in this chapter emphasise the overall argument of this dissertation that efforts of the UCT/WRC research project to develop community-level management of greywater in two shack settlements in the Western Cape were hamstrung from the outset by its misapplication of participatory approaches in research and development through its notion of what constitutes Participatory Action Research.

7. Conclusion

I began this dissertation intending to explain how the assumptions upon which the UCT/WRC project initiators predicated their participatory greywater management project failed to recognise a series of constraints that would render the project unworkable as a participatory exercise. My initial hypothesis was that, in their particular application of participatory research methods, the project initiators' reliance on limited notions of *community* and *social capital* led them to overlook important structural and material constraints on their meeting the project's goals. I argued, moreover, that in doing so they operationalised a development-oriented research project of a kind that has been widely critiqued for making rhetorical claims about using participatory approaches whilst actually reproducing conventional top-down approaches (Bologna, 2008; Pithouse, 2006a; Henkel and Stirrat, 2001;). In order to probe those assumptions, and test my hypothesis, I have analysed both the policy and the legal mandates governing local level service delivery and examined them in the light of ethnographic material from two field sites.

It is common cause in South Africa today that apartheid urban policy, which entailed the systematic repression of *black* urbanisation and was characterised by disavowal of the driving forces behind urbanisation, has left a legacy of racial and spatial segregation that corresponds with continuing unequal access to economic opportunity and basic services. One of my arguments is that post-apartheid state responses intended to address the inequalities entrenched under apartheid have failed, like their predecessors, to acknowledge the economic and social compulsion behind shack settlement. I offer various reasons for reaching that conclusion.

One is that national housing policy, the state's primary response to contemporary urbanisation, not only defines and dominates service delivery in South Africa; it also poses fundamental constraints on public participation in either the housing delivery process or determining service delivery, due to the predefined form that housing delivery takes. Constraints on public participation in service delivery discussions exist, in part, because service delivery in shack settlement, in the context of national housing policy, is contingent on housing delivery which has been prioritised at the expense of service delivery in areas where there are no formal houses.

Although participation is legislated in both housing and service delivery discussions, the political structure behind local government decision-making precludes the meaningful input of officially sanctioned institutions – ward committees – which have been constituted to be the primary institutions to facilitate public participation in determining service delivery. The ward committees in our research areas were clearly not functioning even in their role of communicating local *community* concerns. That was largely because the respective ward councillors did not fulfil their role of representing local residents’ concerns to municipal councils, and in some cases appeared to actively exclude local residents’ from participating in ward committee activities. Policy mandating public participation was not being realised in practice, even at the level of discussion and input into decision-making about service delivery.

Part of the reason municipal officials and councillors in our research areas were unable to take up *civil society* recommendations is that officials had little power or authority to make decisions locally. They could therefore not respond to immediate problems in their locality, let alone take up local residents’ recommendations. More importantly, officials and councillors were committed to national policy that prioritises provision of bulk infrastructure to support housing delivery at the expense of basic service provision for shack settlements that were thought to be short-term and temporary, but tended to be present for very long times. A consequence was that they lacked the finances to address local recommendations for local service provision in such shack settlements. Residents of the shack settlements were thus left in a situation where basic services were not being adequately provided, as a result of municipal councillors and officials’ commitment to and faith in promises of and policy for housing delivery. Moreover, residents were unable to influence service delivery decisions through official channels because the official public participation processes had been rendered close to useless.

The WRC/UCT greywater project initiators’ expectations, however, went beyond the policy goals of *community* participation in service delivery discussions and decision-making. They hoped to get *community* members to provide and maintain such a service themselves, via community-level greywater management structures. Apart from the institutional environment (which itself has been shown to severely hamper even discussions and decision-making around service delivery), the physical environment of the shack settlements as a result of the neglect of

basic services relentlessly curtailed local residents' energies and interest in attempting to manage that environment. In a context of dire poverty and neglected service provision, such as we found in both Langrug and Waterworks, residents were unwilling to volunteer their services – unpaid – to meet the project's goals of community-level greywater management. Partly, residents' reluctance to participate in the project was because they did not see service management outside of their individual yards as their responsibility, especially since their private resources of time, labour and money were employed in tending to their homes and households.

Moreover, the presence of specifically greywater runoffs, and their management, was not a high priority for the residents we consulted in the shack settlements where they were exposed on a daily basis to the hazards of that underserviced environment (a constant threat of fire, flooding, and a barrage of waste to be negotiated simply to be able carry out the most basic of human functions). My earlier ethnographic descriptions show how the lack of each basic service – waste removal, sanitation, drainage, roads, electricity and water supply – interwove with a similar lack in all the others to compound the negative consequences for residents. They also show the difficulties one must face when trying to manage those effects independently of one another.

Various authors (Murray, 2009; Bank, 2001; Mustafa, 2005) have drawn attention to the fact that the innumerable environmental challenges that the urban poor face in underserviced environments cannot be viewed in isolation of each other; or without consideration of the broader social, economic and political context, because – to a large extent – shack settlements are a consequence of that context. As Mustafa (2005:566) has pointed out, vulnerability to environmental hazards is inextricably linked to the socio-economic positioning and state policy in which that environment is embedded.

The project initiators' goal of getting shack settlement residents to draw on their social relationships of mutual trust and co-operation to manage greywater in their localities was challenged both by the difficult physical environments that existed in those settlements, and because greywater management was not, from the perspective of residents we spoke with, in their realm of responsibility. The project's participatory greywater management intentions therefore had some fundamental limitations, which ranged from broad historical and political

constraints, through local government functioning, down to the physical and economic challenges which residents experienced in the local level in shack settlements.

The project initiators' rigid focus on local residents as the primary agents for service delivery (in the form of greywater management) meant that they were unable to foresee the many challenges to their participatory greywater management goals. In many ways the project exemplified the criticisms raised by numerous authors who have analysed the successes or not of development projects, participatory development project in particular. The first major criticism exemplified by the project was that, because the project initiators, acting on the WRC's directives, pre-determined the research goals, it could not be participatory. The project initiators had already decided that greywater was the research priority, and had devised amongst themselves micro-level technical interventions which they offered to participants. Yet for the most part, it was the fieldworkers (Ncedo, Ntobeko and I) who actually installed these technologies. Residents were involved in the project to the extent that they could choose which of the two technologies they would allow us to experiment with in or alongside their yards, and then make suggestions or give criticisms of them. Residents' most keenly expressed requirements involved demands for "proper" infrastructure – such as flush toilets, piped sewerage reticulation and drainage – which were beyond the technical capacity of the fieldworkers, the budget of the project and indeed outside the project's intentions which were to test and develop small-scale, low-cost interventions.

By espousing a participatory approach, and yet imposing its own development goals, the UCT/WRC greywater project exemplified some fundamental points of criticism raised by an assortment of theorists about projects that claim to use a participatory approach (Mansuri and Rao, 2003; Mosse 2001 and Henkel and Stirrat, 2001; Bologna, 2008). Those authors identified the following problems. Firstly, developers' and researchers' priorities tend to be influenced by the funder's directives, with distinct development agendas, often with the intention of influencing policy (Mansuri and Rao 2003:23-4). Secondly, a project's funding priorities can prevail over participatory objectives when a project's capital, operational and maintenance costs are taken into consideration (Mosse 2001:17). Thirdly, participation can be used as a tool of policy-implementation rather than empowerment, when the policy goals actually override local

goals and needs. In other words, participation can be used as a means to get people to carry out state policy and responsibility, often in the interests of cost-recovery (Henkel and Stirrat 2001:17).

The UCT/WRC project reflected the concerns raised above closely, since it was driven by the WRC's priorities of creating a knowledge base to inform policy about water management – in this case, managing the environmental and health consequences of uncontrolled greywater disposal. Effectively, the project was precluded from the outset from achieving its participatory objectives.

However, as I have demonstrated above and throughout the dissertation, the project's heavy focus on local *community* and *social capital* led the project initiators to fail to adequately consider the implications of national policy, politics and the economic and social environment within which they had hoped to carry out the project. The project initiators' apparently unquestioned faith in what are actually very limited conceptualisations of *community* and *social capital* led them to assume that they could work primarily with the Langrug and Waterworks *communities* by getting them to manage greywater in the two shack settlements.

The focus on *community* (when assumed to be defined by co-residence and co-operation) and *social capital* (when understood as social relationships, reciprocity networks and mutual trust internal to that *community*), has a number of uneasy implications.

Whilst taking a particular form of *community* for granted – one assumed to be able draw on its *social capital* to manage greywater – the project initiators also took for granted the institutional environment in which that *community* operated. That is, the project initiators assumed that local municipal officials and ward councillors would be willing and able to provide materials for the project's participatory greywater management project. Yet, as I have shown, that "institutional context" went far deeper than the municipal officials and ward councillors whom we met, and had far-reaching implications for the project's goal of getting local residents to participate in the management of services in the shack settlements themselves. That is because decision-making about local service delivery in the SA state are largely determined from above. The scope for public participation in decision making about housing delivery – a process which has been

shown to take precedence over service delivery in shack settlements – is minimised by the predetermined form that state-sponsored housing takes. Moreover, because basic service delivery is only subsidiary to housing development, services are not adequately provided to shack settlements. As a consequence of the environment that ensued from inadequate service delivery in Langrug and Waterworks, residents' attempts – and potential - to manage that environment were drastically curtailed.

The UCT/WRC community-level greywater management project was constrained in its attempts to be participatory, in part by the continuities between historical and contemporary urban housing policy in South Africa. Simultaneously, by relying on a narrow formulation of *community* and *social capital*, the project failed to adequately consider the importance of that political context and the constraints it imposed, thereby failing to recognize how those would constrain its own participatory goals. The UCT/WRC project, like many research/development projects before it (see e.g. Bologna's (2008) example of the Madikwe initiative), can be criticized for failing to properly consider the broader political context within which it hoped to work, and for espousing a rhetoric of participation while actually being unable or unwilling to be participatory.

Green (2000:74-75), writing of the context of participatory development in rural Tanzania, articulated the problem neatly:

Political ignorance ... makes possible the construction of an imagined community of participants who can, and will, act collectively. These kinds of assumptions, deriving from a misunderstanding of basic sociological theories and out-of-date anthropology, are unfounded ... Like the colonial policies of indirect rule, the prioritization of the local and micro over meso and macro effectively obscures and deems irrelevant the context in which people ... find themselves, a context largely determined by the articulation of macro policies and meso institutional levels in which ... people are both actors and acted upon. The micro context of development studies, development practice and certain kinds of anthropology is in actuality an analytical category. It is not a description of social reality.

The research aimed at community-based management of greywater, and the analysis of that process, revealed that the greywater project faced many of the challenges to participatory research raised by development critics.

Although residents of Langrug and Waterworks faced severe constraints in determining their service needs and accessing them, they did have the capacity to organize themselves to discuss their priorities and to go about accessing them through negotiation with the municipality. Where residents were unable to negotiate the delivery of services according to their self-defined needs, they resorted to protesting against the lack of delivery.

The information presented in this dissertation has revealed that the major constraints residents faced in managing the shack settlement environment were rooted in municipal incapacity to deliver basic services. That municipal incapacity resulted in conditions that were beyond the economic and material capacity of residents to deal with on their own, and indeed beyond the capacity of those municipal structures themselves to alter. What, then, are the prospects for participatory research and development in a context where the current policy of state sponsored housing provision is unlikely to meet the need for houses, and where shack settlement is likely to remain a feature of the urban landscape for the foreseeable future?

It would seem that true participation in service management, and determination of services, would require that local residents have access to resources, and that existing relations of power would need to be shifted so that the interests of residents become the prime driving factor. That would in turn also require that researchers and developers put their so-called participants' needs ahead of their own research goals.

One informant suggested to fieldworkers how residents could participate in service management in the shack settlements. He said that the project should make a sum of money available for residents to organize themselves around infrastructure and service delivery, and to manage it themselves. In the face of the challenges identified in this dissertation, can researchers, project designers and their funders even envision supporting participatory research in such a manner? Would they have the courage to put the decision-making power in research in the hands of intended beneficiaries, and would they be able to accept that such beneficiaries could determine

their own needs and address them with such support? And, would local municipal councillors and officials facilitate true self-determination amongst shack-dwellers? Without all of that being agreed upon and followed through in practice, the idea of participatory research will remain what it has turned out all too often to be: a rhetorical device that permits old-style top down interventionism and research to continue, albeit in a disguise that has become increasingly transparent yet which continues to be worn by too many well-meaning but ill-informed developers.

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