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DEVELOPMENT AND DISAPPOINTMENT:

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF KOSOVO INFORMAL SETTLEMENT'S WATER AND SANITATION SYSTEM UPGRADE

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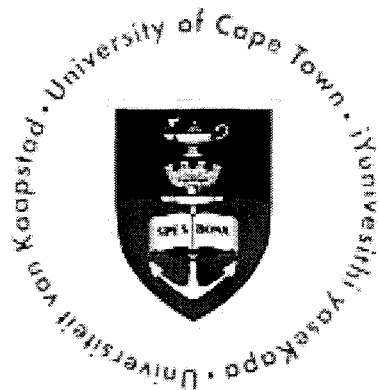
**A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Practical Anthropology**

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2010



PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for 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 acknowledged, and has been cited and referenced.

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ABSTRACT

In the context of rapid urbanisation and growing numbers of informal settlements in peri-urban areas of Cape Town, a development project was undertaken by the Cape Town, South Africa – municipality, to provide Kosovo Informal Settlement with a new communal water and sanitation system that utilises vacuum sewerage technology. The purpose of the ethnographic study described here was: to establish the level of social acceptability of the new infrastructure post-upgrade; to monitor how residents used the new and old water and sanitation systems; and to identify any other social or institutional barriers to providing water and sanitation services in similar contexts. After the completion of the study, the researcher found that the development project was a complete failure, because the residents could not use the infrastructure as intended; and, as a result, had reverted to using their old container toilet system. The primary aim of this dissertation is to describe the ways in which the municipality has engaged with residents and other stakeholders and to show how the inappropriateness of those engagements ultimately contributed to the project's failure.

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I would like to thank Dr Neil Armitage and the Water Research Commission (WRC) for providing funding to carry out this research project and allowing me the freedom to utilise research methods of my own choice.

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Roxanne Beauclair, 2010

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
C of CT	City of Cape Town
DA	Democratic Alliance

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The rain did not make the comforting and relaxing sound of a light tapping against the window. Instead, the raindrops sounded like fierce bullets whizzing past in a police raid, as they hit and echoed off the corrugated iron siding and roof of the shack.¹ While I listened to my research assistant, Xoliswa,² tell of her struggles in Kosovo informal settlement, I selfishly wished the rain would stop so I could hear her more clearly and take better notes. Retrospectively, I realise the harsh sound of the deluge of winter rain against her shack was the least of her concerns. For over a decade, whenever it rained, she had worried that her shack would flood and damage the few material items she had taken a lifetime to gather. She wondered if, outside her shack, the rain that mixed with faecal matter to form sewage pools might end up being where her neighbours' children would play. She wondered too about the large rodents that would invade her shack in search of food and a warm place to stay.

Because of these concerns, she frequently talked about her dream of 'development'. From the moment she had set up her first shack in Kosovo, Xoliswa said, she had had high hopes that she would one day have a proper brick house with access to water and flush toilets; that it would be built in an area with constructed roads with adequate storm water drainage; that she would have access to an electricity supply and not have to 'steal' from friends in formalised settlements; that there would be parks, hospitals, and schools that others in the city took for granted.

Unfortunately, Xoliswa had become disillusioned. For years now, the municipality had promised these 'development' items to the impoverished community of Kosovo, but had consistently failed to deliver on its spokespersons' pledges.

1.1 Introduction

Cries for 'development', such as Xoliswa's, were common in Kosovo informal settlement, where I conducted research from 7 June to 17 July 2009. Kosovo is just one example of the hundreds of illegal, informal settlements that have sprung up in and around Cape Town since its founding in the seventeenth century. These have appeared in ever-increasing numbers and size in the past two to three decades (Barry and Ruther 2005). Today these informal settlements are places where people live their everyday lives without proper housing, water or sanitation services, and often without any security of tenure.

People from all over South Africa – particularly from other areas of Cape Town, and in a few cases, even from other parts of the continent – had settled in Kosovo in search of a better life than that they had experienced in their previous places. But instead, they had ended up living in a

¹ Shack is the term commonly used by Kosovo residents to refer to the informal dwellings in which they live.

² All names in this thesis are pseudonyms, including those of municipal officials and ward councillors.

shanty town for years on end. The rapid growth of informal settlements, such as Kosovo, has compelled the City of Cape Town (C of CT) to try and provide inexpensive, rudimentary services to the thousands of people living in them.

For Kosovo such an intervention came towards the end of 2008, when the C of CT's municipal housing department implemented a shantytown upgrade that provided paved roads, stormwater channels, communal toilet facilities, utilising vacuum sewerage technology, and potable water taps, ostensibly to deliver various social and health benefits. Yet, as of June 2009, it remained to be seen whether this infrastructure, particularly the toilets and taps, would be used regularly by the residents. It was in this context that the leader of the South African Water Research Commission (WRC)-funded project K5/1827, 'Improving Sewerage for South Africa', appointed me to conduct an ethnographic study of the residents' experiences with the new water and sanitation infrastructure, and, by implication, of their encounters with municipal officials in activities relating to the new system, before, during and after the upgrade process itself. During my research it soon became apparent to me that attempting to understand how Kosovo's residents responded to and used the new vacuum sewerage technology would require that I also consider their experiences, good and/or bad, with the entire upgrade project, from inception to completion and utilisation.

Because of the apparent social, health, and engineering benefits of vacuum sewerage (see section 1.4), this development project was expected to be a huge success in improving the quality of life of Kosovo's residents. However, as will be shown, the opposite, in fact, has proven to be the case. Indeed, as this study demonstrates, the Kosovo water and sanitation system upgrade can be seen as yet another example of a well-intentioned, yet unsuccessful, development project that failed because the implementing agency did not engage appropriately with the residents and other stakeholders (e.g. Hess, 1997; Moore and Vaughan, 1994; Porter *et al.*, 1991; Richards, 1985).

1.2 Development Discourse

Readers will notice that many of the various stakeholders quoted in this work use the word 'development'. I point this out because the word has come to imply very specific meanings that

are not always the same for all those who use it. For that reason, it is necessary to offer a brief background in the form of a development discourse, and to understand why the term has been used as it has in the various contexts of the water and sanitation system upgrade; that is the central focus of this dissertation.

Although defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2009) as, “gradual advancement through progressive stages, growth within”, development has taken on new meanings in the world of economics and politics. For instance, the Kosovo residents who clamoured for development defined it as: “brick houses” containing various items such as “indoor, flushing toilets”; being “safe from crime”; and having decent schools in which children could learn. In development literature, as in the Kosovo residents’ vernacular, the word ‘development’ now conjures up specific images and language related to “improvements in wellbeing, living standards, and opportunities ... historical processes of commodification, industrialisation, modernisation, or globalisation” (Edelman and Haugerud, 2005: 1). Thus, a discourse has emerged that “identifies appropriate and legitimate ways of practising development, as well as speaking and thinking about it” (Grillo, 1997: 12).

Knowledge about development has been constructed historically and politically by countries and institutions in power that have wanted to present certain information as objective realities (Gardner and Lewis, 1996: 71). In the late 1940s countries with economic prowess, such as the United States, turned the poor people of other nations into objects of knowledge that could be studied and managed. Poverty itself was socially constructed and defined in economic terms (Rahnema, 1992; Yapa, 1996) in order to promote specific agendas, such as expanding domestic markets, preventing communism and overpopulation, as well as fostering republican democracies (Escobar, 1995). To meet these objectives development projects were implemented throughout the world, and they:

fostered a way of conceiving of social life as a technical problem, as a matter of rational decision making and management to be entrusted to that group of people – the development professionals – whose specialized knowledge allegedly qualified them for the task ... these professionals sought to devise mechanisms and procedures to make societies fit a pre-existing model that embodied the structures and functions of modernity (Escobar, 1995: 52).

Through the implementation of development projects by development professionals who attempted to promote economic growth in 'poor' countries, labels such as 'third-world' and 'underdeveloped' were given to nations that did not fit into norms created by modernity (Escobar, 1991). In other words, through the use of their power, international organisations, local development agencies, non-governmental organisations, and national planning agencies identified 'underdeveloped' and 'third-world' countries and defined them as 'abnormal', so that they could become objects of policies and plans. This entire process allowed those labels, along with the term 'development', to become naturalised and to filter down to ground level among those who were the beneficiaries of development interventions. An example is the way Kosovo's residents have internalised the discourse and have come to see their social situation as pathological, but remediable through 'development' interventions.

Some post-development anthropologists (e.g. Escobar, 1991; Escobar, 1995; Ferguson, 1990; Illich, 1997; Sachs, 1993) have suggested that those who work in development have participated in reproducing a harmful development discourse (see Chapter Three) that perpetually 'others' populations of the global South through their representations of those populations and through their control over them. Those same post-development anthropologists argue that, understanding this, anthropologists should refrain from engaging in development and should instead contest the entire 'development industry'.

While I agree that the predominant development discourse does indeed undermine the efficacy of many development experts' efforts to achieve their goals, I do not believe that either they or any other anthropologists should simply abandon all attempts to improve the quality of life for those they study or refrain from their work in the development industry. The fact is that, no matter what the original agenda and intentions of development programmes may have been, in many cases, such as in Kosovo, locals were themselves crying out for 'development'. As Simon (1997: 182) has said, "The emphasis of much post-modern literature on playful, leisured, heterodoxical self-indulgence ... has little to offer those who can still only aspire to safe drinking water, a roof which does not leak and the like". This was the case for Kosovo and the residents with whom I worked. Simply put, like many people around the world, they were living in precarious and dire circumstances and were desperately in need of help.

1.3 History and Context of Kosovo Informal Settlement³

The Kosovo informal settlement resulted from a partial land invasion in 1999 on private land owned by a private company, Laycrest (Pty) Ltd, located on the outskirts of Philippi, a suburb of Cape Town, South Africa (see Fig 1.1). Kosovo is just one of over 164 informal settlements that have emerged in Cape Town since the 1970s (Barry and Ruther 2005). Most residents in these settlements are people who have recently migrated from the rural Transkei and Ciskei regions in the Eastern Cape after the economic boom of the 1970s and the apartheid-era reforms in the 1980s that gave land rights to the urban black population (*ibid*). Approximately 48,000 people migrate to Cape Town every year in search of job opportunities, and most of these end up in such informal settlements (*ibid*).

In that respect, however, Kosovo is somewhat of an anomaly, in that most residents there came directly from other areas in Cape Town, rather than from the Eastern Cape. Most to whom I spoke said they had moved from other homes in Cape Town in order to start a life of their own away from their parents and siblings. In many instances, they said, their previous households had been growing and too many individuals were occupying one house or residential site. Other cases included previous ‘backyard dwellers’ - who no longer wanted to rent a shack in someone else’s yard, so they had left their previous homes and moved to new land with very few resources—monetary or otherwise—to begin their new lives.

Informants, who claimed to have been amongst the original settlers (‘land invaders’) in the area, explained that they had named it after the civil war-torn area of the former Yugoslavia.⁴ They added that, when people had first moved to the area, it was covered with trees that residents had removed in order to build their shacks - in several cases reportedly using the felled trees as poles for their new houses. Not long thereafter, the C of CT had demanded that the residents move,

³ The historical background provided in this section was gathered from the oral histories of several residents, the Ward 33 Councillor, and the project manager of the upgrade.

⁴ Naming newly-founded areas after historical events is apparently common among South Africans who do not have the skills to write down historical events. Kosovo was one among several other sites named for the same reason (e.g. Tsunami, Barcelona, Iraq, and Lusaka, just to name a few) (Gophe 2005).

because Laycrest had obtained an eviction order from the high court. Yet, residents held their ground and said they would not leave because they had not been offered anywhere else to settle.⁵

Building houses from nothing and contending with those who wanted them to vacate the land was just the beginning of residents' hardships. From 1999 until 2005, Kosovo residents endured a lack of basic services, such as electricity, water, sanitation, roads, schools, and storm water drainage. In addition, they had also to contend with living on low-lying land, used previously as a refuse dump and plagued by winter flooding, particularly in 2002, when many people lost their homes and were forced to move elsewhere (many reportedly returned to their extended families' homes in other parts of Cape Town). Others had to rely on leftover disaster relief food and



Figure 1.1: Kosovo site context (Goven, 2007)

⁵ A stipulation of the eviction order was that Laycrest had to provide alternative land or accommodation for those evicted. Since the company failed to do so, or to police the site adequately, the land was completely invaded shortly after the eviction order was issued.

blankets which agencies partnering with the C of CT had provided for people in neighbouring Samora Machel.⁶

Some residents said that they had had the impression that the ward councillor was using the Kosovo residents' plight to get private donations from companies – which donations, they alleged, went directly into the pockets of the ward councillor and his friends. They recalled, for example, that Telkom had donated R75, 000, ostensibly for Kosovo residents who never received any of the money. This, I was told, had left the residents feeling resentful, sad, and defeated. As my research assistant, Xoliswa, put it, “We heard people saying that in 1994 we voted for freedom. But at Kosovo we didn't know the meaning of freedom. The freedom was only for the councillor and his colleagues”.

Residents also recalled that, in 2003, after the 2002 floodwaters had receded, large trucks had come to Kosovo and dumped rubbish (a mixture of stones, wood, and miscellaneous refuse) onto the land where shacks had previously stood, and that by the time their first ward councillor, Vusi Chambers,⁷ had managed to stop the dumping, large mounds of stinking refuse were present. Recalling the situation, Xoliswa said: “For about three months we didn't open the door because of the smell. Very early in the morning and when the sun set there was a smell like a perm lotion.” Chambers had reportedly promised to organise trucks to bring soil to cover the trash heaps, but none had arrived. Consequently, residents collectively gathered money and paid truck drivers to come to Kosovo and level out the trash heaps so that they could rebuild their shacks.

In addition to living on low-lying land that had previously been a dump and that flooded regularly, residents' hardships included living without access to running water. Laycrest had refused to provide rudimentary services - on the grounds that this would violate the terms of the eviction order. Before the installation of a single tap by the C of CT in 2004, residents had had to walk to Philippi Station or Samora Machel to buy water and to carry two or three 25-litre containers of water in trolleys over several kilometres every day. In 2004, Xoliswa remembered,

⁶ Residents believed that neighbouring Samora Machel received disaster relief because it was a formally recognised settlement and Kosovo was not.

⁷ This name, as all other personal names in this text – other than those of public figures such as Cape Town's mayor – is a pseudonym (see Chapter Two).

“The queue was very long because it [the tap] was only one. But half a loaf is better than no bread. At that time we stopped renting [sic; paying] R30 a month for water in Samora”.

Not only did the single tap provide insufficient access to water for household purposes, it was also inadequate at times in dealing with the shack fires which were reportedly a common occurrence, as they also were in other shack areas in the country (see Bank, 2001; Godwin *et al.*, 1997; Murray, 2009). With insufficient taps providing water to extinguish fires and lacking proper roads, fire fighters’ efforts were severely constrained and many shacks were reportedly razed during those years. When, in mid-2004, the C of CT finally purchased the land from Laycrest, the settlement was provided with more standpipe taps and with container toilets.

Another year later, electricity was formally reticulated. Prior to that, many residents had formed groups of up to five shacks, pooling money for a cable (R200 for a 100 metre roll; several were needed), and connecting up informally to Samora Machel houses from whom they then ‘rented’ electricity – each group of five paying R200 per month. Often others would then hook into the cables and steal electricity. This frequently resulted in blackouts or electrical output dropping, along with overloading at peak times. Kosovo residents thus used electricity only for refrigerators and small appliances. Xoliswa explained: “The life was very difficult. To cook food we used a flame stove and lamp for light. Sometimes those electricity wires were stolen and then we must buy it again” (sic).

In addition to lacking electricity, prior to 2005 residents did not have any form of sanitation system. They dug and installed pit latrines in the sandy soil of their yards. The sand’s instability meant the pits frequently collapsed or filled up and had to be re-dug. Then, in 2005, the mayor of Cape Town, NomaIndiya Mfeketo, intervened to ensure that each shack was provided with its own container toilet that was cleaned twice weekly. Consequently, Kosovo residents, who lived there during that time, no longer had to use communal toilet facilities, although those who moved into Kosovo after 2005 had had to find people with whom they could share a toilet.

It was only in 2008/9, with the settlement upgrade project mentioned earlier, that Kosovo residents were provided with a new water and sanitation system, with flushing toilets serviced by

a vacuum sewerage system. The C of CT built 45 communal units with six to thirteen toilet cubicles in each. Each unit also included one or two taps attached to an outside wall and placed over small, concrete washbasins draining into grate-covered drains leading into the vacuum sewerage system. Additional communal standpipe taps were also dispersed throughout the area. The upgrade also included a few paved roads along the settlement's major thoroughfares, as well as storm water drains. As is discussed later, very few of the taps and toilets were operational during my research period. Yet this was only six months after the upgrade had supposedly been completed.

At the time of the water and sanitation system upgrade, there were an estimated 15,625 people living in 6,250 shacks in an area of 27 hectares (C of CT 2009). This works out at a population density of 579 people per hectare or about 40 square metres per residential site. Nearly all the residents that I interviewed (see Chapter Two for information about my methods and sampling techniques) said they anticipated moving to Kosovo, living there in a shack for a couple of years, and then being provided with a government-built brick-and-mortar house. As one resident, Mangaliso, put it, "We normally do this. We start from a shack and then move to bricks". Another middle-aged domestic worker, Nkosazana, said, "My dream was to be in a nice place. I thought Kosovo, by now, would be a good place ... because there are a lot of people who stay in posh houses ... RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) houses. I didn't think that by this year I would still be in the shacks". All the residents I consulted expressed similar hopes for better housing and for services that worked properly. Nearly a decade after the first settlers had moved to Kosovo, they were still waiting to get their 'posh', 'brick' houses from the government. While houses had not been forthcoming, the sewage system introduced as part of the upgrade had initially seemed promising. I now outline some of the technical details.

1.4 Vacuum Sewerage Systems

Part of Kosovo's 2008/9 water and sanitation system upgrade included the installation of a vacuum sewerage system, the first such installation of its kind in South Africa. According to the EPA (1991), vacuum sewerage systems have been used in Europe for over one hundred years and in the United States for the last few decades. They are considered a viable alternative to conventional gravity wastewater collection systems, since these can be extremely expensive to

install and are reliable only in specific contexts. Vacuum sewerage systems include three main components: collection chambers containing interface valves,⁸ sewer pipelines, and a central vacuum or pump station (Roediger, 2007) (See Fig. 1.2). Vacuum sewerage operates through the use of vacuum pumps that create differential air pressure in pipes, in order to move wastewater to tanks at the vacuum station (EPA, 1991). Conventional gravity sewerage systems require the use of 160mm diameter pipes and the construction of up to seven-metre-deep trenches.

Vacuum sewerage, in contrast, can be reticulated through much narrower pipes; and these are laid in far shallower trenches (1.2 to 1.5 metres deep). In Kosovo 110mm waste pipes were laid from communal toilets and washbasins to collection chambers, one per communal unit. These were then drained intermittently when the interface valve was activated by the volume of waste in the collection chamber. The waste was drawn by a vacuum pump to a holding tank at the pump station, whence it drained and/or was pumped, now through conventional sewers, to the city's wastewater treatment works.

Vacuum sewerage is reportedly particularly useful, reliable, and relatively inexpensive in the following environmental contexts: unstable soil, flat land, high water tables, restricted construction conditions, and urban development (EPA 1991). It is advantageous for such conditions because it uses smaller pipes and requires shallower installation depths than conventional sewerage, thus reducing excavation costs and environmental impacts. Not having to use large, heavy machinery for excavation allows local labour to be used during construction. Additionally, vacuum sewerage uses high velocities, so there is ostensibly a reduced risk of blockages; it allows installers to bypass unforeseen underground obstacles, since field-based changes can be made easily; it utilises only one source of power— electricity to drive a vacuum pump; and it allows for major leaks to be noticed quickly, thus preventing environmental contamination (EPA 1991). However, vacuum sewerage systems do have high capital costs; but they theoretically require very little maintenance because of high cleansing velocities, so that those capital costs can be recovered by savings in maintenance costs (Gibbs, 2008).

⁸ The interface valves seal the sewerage lines in order to maintain the vacuum suction. They open to discharge the contents of a collection chamber when a sufficient volume has accumulated.

The installation of vacuum sewerage offered an apparently feasible alternative in Kosovo, given that the settlement was built over flat land with loose, sandy soil (Cape Flats 2009) and a high water table. Furthermore, it was very densely populated with shacks, and the residents were extremely reluctant to relocate their homes for construction – thus leaving little room left for the retrofitting of a gravity sewerage system. The installation required very limited excavation spaces and the system included few access chambers or manholes. Moreover, zigzagging sewer pipe lines were used to avoid the shacks as obstacles. This offered several comparative advantages over other waterborne sewerage systems, and with its reportedly reliable track record for over a century, a vacuum sewerage system seemed to be a sensible choice for the consultants and engineers who were commissioned to design and oversee Kosovo’s upgrade.

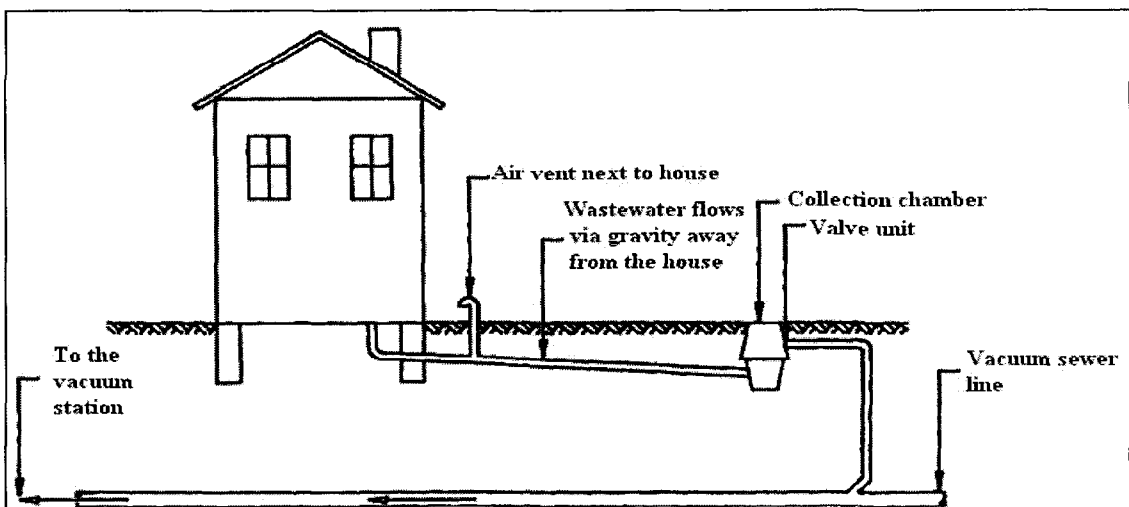


Figure 1.1: Components of Vacuum Sewerage⁹

1.5 Dissertation Structure

In the following chapters, I demonstrate how and why this particular aspect of the upgrade failed, at least in the short term, to achieve its objectives of providing safe and usable water and sanitation services to the Kosovo residents. In Chapter Two I elaborate on my research methods

⁹ This diagram illustrates how vacuum sewerage would look when installed for one house. In Kosovo, it looked much like this, except it was installed next to a communal block of toilets rather than a single house.

and the specific study I was commissioned to do, as well as consider the ethical dilemmas and setbacks experienced in my fieldwork. The chapter also explains how and why my original research objectives were slightly different from those that have guided the writing of this dissertation. Chapter Three's brief review of the anthropological literature on other unsuccessful development projects and the reasons for their failure is offered to provide examples that corroborate my own ethnographic research conclusions. Chapter Four recaps the intended benefits of Kosovo's water and sanitation system upgrade and then explains why it was considered a failed project. I look there – in Chapter Four - at the current deterioration of the new infrastructure and the resulting dire consequences. Chapter Five is the first of three chapters that suggest possible reasons for the project's failure, concluding that the C of CT failed to provide adequate information to the residents before, during, and after the implementation of the new system, or to establish a local management system. Chapter Six shows that the C of CT's lack of knowledge of local politics handicapped its agents in their efforts to get the development project off the ground and to develop a system for local management. Chapter Seven documents the extent to which the failure of co-operation between the ward councillor and officials from several municipal departments undermined their respective efforts to implement the project. In my conclusion I return once more to my main argument and demonstrate the importance of appropriate interactions between developers and beneficiaries in regard to successful development projects.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 The Study

The overarching aim of the WRC project K5/1827, 'Improving sewerage for South Africa', on which I worked as a short-term ethnographic research consultant, was to find cost-effective water and sanitation system technologies that could be used in low-income, informal settlement upgrades, as there is a growing need for sewerage in the rapidly expanding urban areas of the global South. To accomplish this, the project hoped: to establish comparative advantages (and disadvantages) of alternatives to conventional sewerage technologies; to make adjustments to existing technologies used in an informal settlement context; and to derive information from existing pilot cases where alternative sewerage had been used. My role within this large undertaking was to examine the particular case study of Kosovo. The project leader, a civil engineer, called me in as a social anthropology student and negotiated a brief - asking me to conduct a study that would assess the success or failure of the newly piloted sewerage system, as well as the social acceptability for residents and municipal officials (see Appendix I for the full official brief).

I created a practical set of objectives to guide my research. Firstly, I decided to establish the level of social acceptability of the new water and sanitation system by looking at how the new infrastructure had been received by the residents. Implicit to this objective was finding out what they knew about the technology and how that in turn would influence their acceptance or use of it. Secondly, I wanted to identify how residents in Kosovo used the water and sanitation infrastructure to wash, bathe, cook, and carry out other everyday life tasks. I anticipated that such information would be useful for urban planners and engineers when designing future informal settlement upgrades. Thirdly, I thought it necessary to determine whether any other institutional or social barriers evident in the Kosovo pilot project were hindering the provision of adequate water and sanitation services. My research findings were written up in a report for the project leader in August 2009. However, this dissertation is based primarily on findings that emerged in relation to my third research objective, as it became apparent that it was difficult for the residents to utilise the new infrastructure for their daily activities, let alone accept the technology, when

there were many institutional hurdles that prevented the system from working properly in the first place.

I conducted a six-week ethnographic investigation from 8 June to 17 July 2009 in Kosovo, with the help of two locally resident research assistants. During two of those weeks, I resided in a shack with one of my research assistants. Data were collected in many varied contexts, including periods when I spent nights in the area, periods spent talking informally to people in the streets – or, more accurately, the dirt paths of Kosovo – and in stations along the Cape Flats train routes, in Cape Town’s municipal offices, in local spaza shops¹⁰ selling ‘smiley’s’ (roasted sheep heads), and in residents’ living rooms. Data were also gathered from more mundane contexts, like the insides of bucket toilet cubicles. Furthermore, data were gathered by means of various activities, ranging from participation in housing protests to morning bathing routines and *sangoma* (traditional healer) ceremonies.

2.2 Entering the Field

Prior to receiving my brief from the WRC project leader, I had conducted reconnaissance research for a few days in Kosovo for a class project in April 2009. This short fieldwork exercise, meant to give students practice with working in the development industry, allowed me to gain several contacts within Kosovo and the C of CT, as well as to obtain superficial information about the initial results of the sewerage system upgrade. This basic information enabled me to develop a set of questions to ask residents when I began my research.

In preparation for my research, I presented a project proposal to the Social Anthropology department at the University of Cape Town and gained their ethical approval. Additionally, knowing that my security would be a concern in the context of a South African urban shantytown, I contacted Xoliswa, whom I had met during my reconnaissance fieldwork exercise, before commencing fieldwork. I asked her if she would be interested in working as my research assistant. I told her that it would require her to be available every day, any time of the day or night, throughout the duration of my work. I explained that I would want her to accompany me in all my activities in the settlement, to introduce me to possible contacts, to act as a Xhosa-to-

¹⁰ Spaza shops are informal convenience stores in South Africa.

English translator when necessary, and to help me to find a place to reside. She was more than willing to take on the task, and went so far as to find another friend, Thandiwe, who was also willing to help me. Both were eagerly waiting to begin on the day I arrived.

2.3 Methods

My primary research method was open-ended, informal interviewing. Initially, I went around to all the communal flush-toilet facilities and engaged in informal conversations with residents in their immediate vicinity. Throughout these very informal exchanges, I gathered the names of 34 individuals who appeared particularly vocal and seemed to have important stories to tell about their experiences with the water and sanitation system upgrade. I originally chose 34 individuals because I thought, given the time frame of the project, I would not be able to conduct several in-depth interviews with more than that many informants.

Finally, I ended up with just 23 resident informants. This was due to time constraints, residents being unavailable, and a couple residents deciding they did not want to share their experiences. Only seven of the 23 were men. Although I attempted to include equal numbers of each gender, the fact that interviews were conducted during working hours and by a woman assisted by another woman meant that women were more readily available than men. I also chose to conduct interviews with the Kosovo upgrade project manager in the C of CT municipality, the two municipal officials who took over the administration and maintenance of the system post-installation, the ward 33 councillor, the engineering consultant who designed the sewerage system, and the Samora Machel resident hired by the municipality to monitor the new infrastructure in Kosovo. I chose to interview these individuals, since they were all important stakeholders who could share their experiences in implementing and managing the Kosovo upgrade.

Throughout the study I followed up my initial conversations near the toilets in some of those people's homes at times that were convenient for them. Often, I came with a set of prepared questions. However, as people began to respond, new questions emerged and the conversations took unexpected directions, often leading to new, previously unanticipated questions. What this meant was that residents took the conversations in any direction they chose, but were then guided

back to those issues that seemed pertinent to the study. This method was used with the 23 Kosovo residents, as well as the other stakeholders who were not resident in Kosovo.

I also used participant observation, a method that allowed me to monitor vigilantly the behaviour and actions of individuals and groups in Kosovo. In most cases, I was actively involved as a participant in the same activities that I observed. This method allowed me to observe and ask spontaneous questions about behaviours, as they occurred. During the two weeks I resided in Kosovo, I tried to limit my interviews and to focus only on participant observation. Finally, I also conducted an unofficial count of all the new communal toilet facilities and the taps located on the communal blocks (See Tables 2.1 and 2.2). Doing that allowed me to see which toilets and taps were working, which were locked (See Table 2.3), which had been vandalized, and which had been modified by residents to minimise any damages from overflowing sewage. Throughout these exercises, I kept a fieldwork journal and took photographs to record visual and verbal data.

Communal Toilet Blocks (N=45)		Individual Toilet Cubicles in Toilet Blocks (N=403)	
Type of Sewerage System	(N=)	Type of Sewerage System	(N=)
Vacuum	41	Vacuum	369
Gravity	3	Gravity	29
Incomplete	1	Incomplete	5

Table 2.1: Unofficial count of the new communal and individual toilet facilities¹¹

Taps Attached to Communal Toilet Blocks (N=84)	
Functional Status	(N=)
Missing	70
Present/Not Working	9
Present/Working	5

Table 2.2: Unofficial count of the new taps attached to the communal block facilities

Completed Individual Toilet Cubicles in Toilet Blocks (N=398)	
Functional Status	(N=)
Locked with Padlock or Wire	307
Unlocked/Not Working	91
Unlocked/Not Working/Unclean (filled with faeces and anal cleansing materials)	88
Unlocked/Not Working/Clean	3

Table 2.3: Unofficial functional status of completed individual toilets

¹¹ I have excluded individual container toilets from my unofficial count, although they were still present. They were used and serviced whilst I conducted my research. The tables in this section include only the flushing toilets that were part of the 2008/9 upgrade.

2.4. Ethical Considerations

Several issues arose during my research that posed potential ethical dilemmas. The first was that investigating sanitation issues and residents' use of water might include the possibility of encountering individuals in private moments, such as defecating, urinating, and bathing. I never intentionally tried to observe such activities and have written only about what I observed in public spaces. Moreover, even then, I have avoided using personal names so as to avoid embarrassing individuals. Additionally, whenever speaking with residents, I informed them that any information they gave me would be utilised for my consultancy report, for my thesis, and for other possible published papers; and I asked them each time to decide whether or not to participate. I have also kept identification information confidential by using pseudonyms in all documents that others might see, including this dissertation. Finally, from the moment my research commenced, I made known my motives to everyone I encountered, including the ward councillor and other C of CT officials. I did not want residents to think that I was there to solve all their problems with the sanitation system. Rather, I told them, I was there to do research and convey their stories and opinions to other researchers who might be able to improve the experience of informal settlement upgrades elsewhere in the country.

2.5 Fieldwork Setbacks

While in Kosovo, I encountered very few setbacks. I had been particularly concerned about my personal safety since the Cape Flats settlements are reportedly crime-ridden. Fortunately, I was never a victim of the crimes to which so many others fall prey. Indeed, I experienced the opposite, with most people I met being very friendly and welcoming me into the area, and being eager to offer their opinions about the new sewerage system, and to allow me into their shacks for refuge from the winter rains. Though I was never terrorised by *people*, other unexpected 'terrorists' took over each night while I stayed in Xoliswa's shack: bedbugs, mice, and rats!

I had never realised how afraid I was of pests before I spent my first night there. It started out well until I awoke around 2:00 a.m. to the sound of scuttling in my nearby duffle bag. I turned on the light in time to see a mouse dash across the floor and out from one of the cracks in the shack's sidewall. I was utterly terrified and could not fall asleep for the rest of the night. The next few nights I slept with the lights and TV on to drown out the sound of rodents. However,

this tactic did not work very well when rats were trying to climb through the cracks in the wall, and I could still hear their persistent scratching throughout the night. Despite this, one might consider me lucky since I never woke up with bites being taken out of my ears or fingers, as reportedly often happens to babies in informal settlements. I did, however, suffer from bedbug bites that dotted my body. The upside to this situation was that I was always up and eager for another day of fieldwork, well before the crack of dawn!

2.6 Self-reflection

While conducting my research I was always conscious of how my social positioning might affect the data I gathered and how residents would perceive me when I was in Kosovo. I am a 24-year-old, Caucasian,¹² American graduate student. Would they view me as just another *uMlungu*¹³ who was there to espouse partisan politics? Would they take me more or less seriously than they might a South African who came to conduct the same research? Those are some of the questions I still contemplate months after the conclusion of my research.

As it turned out, there were a few young Kosovo women who refused to talk to me and participate in my research because they feared their husbands would be angry if they engaged in 'politics'. Even though I told those women I was a student at UCT, they were still convinced that I was 'working for the government' and would use any information they gave me for political purposes. For the most part, however, residents seemed keen to talk to me, since they viewed me as someone who could get resources for them (e.g. jobs, contact with the municipality). Furthermore, my 'Americanness' became an advantage because many residents were impressed with me for "staying in the shacks" and were eager to show an American how they lived – so that I could go back to the United States and tell others. The advantage of being American was also enhanced by Barack Obama's then recent election as the first black American president. Residents were often eager to talk to me, if for no other reason than to ask me what I thought of Obama's presidency. This proved to be a great segue into conversations about their own local situation and some of the politics surrounding the upgrade.

¹² In South Africa people often categorise me as belonging to the white racial category; however, in the United States, based on my phenotypical characteristics, I am rarely categorized that way.

¹³ *uMlungu* is the isiXhosa term for a white person.

I also worried about how municipal officials and other stakeholders would perceive me. It crossed my mind that they would not take my research seriously and would make little effort to talk to me, as I was only a Master's student. Luckily for me, all the municipal officials I sought to speak to made themselves available for interviews and seemed to take an interest in my research. However, after I had completed my research, they all seemed very reluctant to consider my recommendations, being more interested in the technical recommendations made by my civil engineering colleagues, who were also working on the bigger WRC project.

CHAPTER THREE: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON PREVIOUSLY FAILED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

3.1 Introduction

Ongoing debates among anthropologists in academia and those involved in development revolve around a moral dilemma that positions anthropologists as experts with the potential to provide ground-breaking, beneficial information for development programmes that could improve the quality of life for the poor, while at the same time being seen by some as complicit in the loss of cultural integrity and the underdevelopment of beneficiaries (Bennett 1988; Gow 2002). According to one anthropological view, development projects are lost causes that are actually detrimental to the societies they supposedly serve. The post-development literature that represents that view argues that development is a problematic discourse. It attempts to speak for others (Escobar 1995; Everett 1997); it views life as a technical problem that can only be fixed by professionals from the West (Escobar 1995); it re-inscribes the inequalities present during colonialism (Gupta 1998); it creates desires and aspirations among populations that will never be fully met (Illich 1997); it traps people between tradition and modernity (Sachs 1993); and finally, it masks the political nature of development (Ferguson 1990). Furthermore, Escobar (1991) suggests that when anthropologists work for development organisations or governments undertaking development projects, they are usually subjected to positivist research methods that preclude the possibility of an open critique of aspects of the project cycle. This, in turn, leads to their complicity in the destructive nature of development.

Another view has it that anthropologists should be involved in development projects (e.g. Conlin, 1985; Curtis, 1985; Goldschmidt, 1986) precisely because poor people remain concerned with modernising and improving their own standards of living by having their basic needs met (Simon, 1997). As Gow (2002) contends, anthropologists should become involved - precisely because they have the capacity and skills to utilise research methods that will allow them: to give people a say in programmes that affect them; to confront and contest presuppositions that are foundations for development policies and programmes; to analyse patterns of social organisation that could improve the management of projects; and to provide a view of development from below. Furthermore, Hoben (1982) says that anthropologists also: provide reliable quality data

that can be used to design surveys for larger-scope research; have the potential to illuminate the interests of local elites, which may facilitate the design and implementation of policies and programmes; and can offer lessons learned from failed development projects.

It is the last of these benefits that I explore in this chapter. While previous development programmes may have had disastrous effects, I believe such programmes have the potential to provide exemplary services and improve the quality of life for the beneficiaries - if only development officials were to learn from their mistakes and to learn to utilise anthropological expertise or research methods in the course of implementing their projects. With this in mind, in this chapter I provide a survey of a specific sub-section of development literature that provides an anthropological perspective on reasons certain development projects have failed. I argue that many development projects have failed in one way or another because developers were unaware of or ignored local knowledge¹⁴, or because they failed to correctly employ participatory methods¹⁵ in their projects. As I demonstrate later, my own research adds to this body of work.

3.2 Failed Development Projects: Lack of Local Knowledge

In anthropological development literature one common theme that crops up is that developers rarely utilise local knowledge – which intended beneficiaries hold about their environment and local practices – when designing and implementing a development project. According to authors such as Porter *et al.* (1991), indigenous knowledge systems (see Chapter Six), which include local histories of the people they aim to help, are rarely utilised by development professionals, and so their projects frequently fail. That is because such projects are often ahistorical in nature and are “designed as if time began with the project implementation schedule. Past lessons are seldom examined and still fewer professionals bother to enquire into the historical circumstances of the people their interventions seek to assist” (Porter et al., 1991: xv).

Porter et al. argue that, in the process of uncovering local histories, development professionals can also discover useful local knowledge about environmental conditions. They describe one

¹⁴ The term ‘local knowledge’ or ‘indigenous knowledge’ is defined and described in Chapter Six.

¹⁵ Participatory methods and their usefulness are described in Chapter Five.

such development endeavour, the Magarini Settlement Project in Kenya that took place from 1976 to 1989. Because it did not do this, it subsequently failed. It was an Australian-funded project that attempted to end slash-and-burn agriculture – an agricultural production process which was seen by the developers as inefficient, especially given increasing population – among Girama families, and to introduce farming schemes that required families to settle on plots of land and engage in modern, irrigated farming techniques. The development project did not succeed, say Porter et al., because the developers did not provide equipment suitable for local ecological conditions. As a result, the intended beneficiaries were eventually evicted from their land because they could not make payments for the farm land – bought from the project developers — due to poor harvests. Ultimately, Porter et al. (1991) show that, by neglecting to learn about local ecological conditions, the developers had planned an inappropriate agricultural intervention. This led to an increasing encroachment onto and into Girama lands and livelihoods.

Similarly, Richards' (1985) work in West Africa offers another prime example where developers ignored local knowledge available to them about ecological conditions and traditional agricultural practices. Richards explored a development programme instigated by the colonial powers in West Africa that attempted to convince local farmers to grow rice using modern, scientific agricultural methods. The new methods generated extremely acidic soils that actually led to a decline in harvested crops. Locals eventually deserted those methods and resumed their own which were better suited to their environment. Richards found that local farmers tended to adapt their methods to the ecological conditions, rather than simply attempting to overcome them. Richards' work brings to the fore a commonly held assumption by developers that all technological change is good and therefore adequate. In this case, that assumption proved to be false and so the project failed.

Moore and Vaughan (1994) also developed the theme of showing how the knowledge of local values and priorities can be instrumental in the success of an agricultural development project. They demonstrated how programmes to end *chitemene* (slash and burn) agriculture and to introduce resettlement schemes in Zambia - which gave Bemba people agricultural loans and small plots of land to participate in cash cropping - actually contributed to declining levels of nutrition among those people. This, Moore and Vaughan (1994) pointed out, was because

women had to spend increased amounts of time – compared to the time prior to cash-crop farming – on these farms which produced very little revenue. This ultimately took away from the amount of time they spent in their *citimene* gardens and in preparing meals for themselves and their children. The authors demonstrated how historical sources and ethnography may be used to shed light on local knowledge about farming practices and gendered labour relations. In this case, they did what developers had failed to do: they elucidated how Bemba women had historically prioritised time in *citimene* gardens; and how this ultimately provided them with optimal nutrition and time to spend with their children.

Fisher (2004) looks at yet another economic development project, this one introduced in the Swat Valley in Pakistan, and whose agents attempted, through it, to persuade local residents to grow seed potatoes for export to the Punjab. Unfortunately, the crop was not well-received because the development agents had erroneously assumed farmers were interested in producing large quantities of seed potatoes that were very large in size. Consequently, any attempts to grow seed potatoes were abandoned by the local farmers because they had little use for a product that did not produce a reliable yield. Shortly thereafter, a local man experimented with the seed potatoes to see which conditions would be best for quick growth, since local people tended to be more interested in crop reliability than in generating large volumes of produce. He was interested “in the application of that knowledge in a way that worked towards his goals. Because his goals were derived from his local, culture-based knowledge, he produced a result that was acceptable and accepted by others in his society as useful” (Fisher, 2004: 27). Fisher describes how his experiments were successful. He found a way to produce a strain of seed potato that was adapted to local conditions. The economic development programme was re-introduced in later years and was subsequently considered to be successful. Once again, this example demonstrates how easy it is for developers to make false assumptions about the priorities and values of those they aim to help. Local knowledge of agricultural values and priorities is imperative in any successful development programme.

Two further compelling examples demonstrate the importance of understanding local priorities and values. De Waal (2005) studied the types of aid beneficiaries received during the 1984/5 famine in Darfur, Sudan. He argues that the three million sacks of grain donated by relief

agencies were misconceived, since there was no evidence that they saved any more lives than were saved through local survival strategies already in place. Furthermore, he contends, the aid agencies should have investigated local responses to famine because, as it turned out, during the worst famines, families did not spend money on food. They would have rather gone hungry, he says, than give up their way of life – keeping livestock alive and preserving enough resources to cultivate during the rainy season. Since this was the case, De Waal recommended that development programmes should aim at buying animals and livestock fodder as a means of complementing local coping strategies.

Davies (1996) also conducted an analysis of famine-coping strategies, this one in Mali. Along similar lines to those argued by De Waal, Davies makes the argument that policy makers would do better to utilise monitoring systems that examine people's behaviour during social, ecological, and economic crises, rather than only considering indicators such as crop yields. Her approach emphasises the dynamism in people's coping strategies, and thereby shows the need to integrate disaster relief with other development projects. Both these examples show how locals have learned to adapt and cope during famines. Their methods of coping have much to do with their priorities - and therefore appropriate development programmes should also be designed with such priorities in mind in order to have the ultimate level of effectiveness.

In one final example, I would like to show how local knowledge of health and illness may also be vital to the success of a development project. Hess (1997) describes how the development program PROFOGAN, in highland Ecuador during the early 1990s, promoted a veterinary campaign aimed at providing anti-parasitic treatments to livestock, so that fewer animals would die, thus, it was hoped, increasing the incomes of farmers who sold livestock for cash. After the first injections, locals observed several of their livestock dying. They attributed the deaths to the injections of the treatment which, according to custom, were actually understood to cool down the body of an individual and to cause sickness in an animal that is already thermally balanced or healthy. Because the programme did not incorporate indigenous notions of illness into its plan, the developers failed to persuade the locals of the curative effects of the treatments, and so the locals resisted repeating the treatment plan on their own, believing that the vaccines only caused more of their livestock to get sick and die. According to Hess, even though the NGO personnel

did not subscribe to any of the local beliefs about aetiologies, diagnoses and treatments, if they had been informed of them they could have tailored their development programme in such a way that resonated with the residents' beliefs so they would be more likely to adopt the programme and repeat it.

Consideration of these failed development projects demonstrates the need to incorporate indigenous or local knowledge into the planning and design of development intervention programmes. Behaviour is the product of rational and practical decisions made by locals to meet their needs without introducing risks and costs (Hoben 1982). Because of this, development professionals should not discard the knowledge locals have to offer. When they discard such knowledge or fail to seek it, they run the risk of making erroneous assumptions that can compromise an entire development project.

3.3 Failed Development Projects: Lack of Participatory Methods

Other anthropologists describe examples of development projects that have failed as a result of a lack of participation by those who were meant the intended beneficiaries. Mason (1986) tells of his experience working for a development agency that provided monetary aid for an informal settlement upgrade at Ben M'Sik in Casablanca, Morocco. The project's attempt to build new homes and provide water, electricity, roads, and educational centres to thousands of residents failed, he points out, because of a lack of residents' participation. He argued that developers involved in the project did not fully understand what participation meant; and they thought that a socio-economic survey of inhabitants was sufficient as a means to engage them in the work of the project. Furthermore, as Mason points out, the developers were afraid of interacting with Ben M'Sik's poor urban residents, and feared that allowing them too much input into the project's work might incite them to riot. Ultimately, the project was terminated because they feared explosive riots and, as a result, nothing was accomplished.

Another development project that attempted to use participatory methods, but failed to do so in a way that was promoted by the beneficiaries themselves, has been reported on by West (2006). In her ethnography of a 'conservation-as-development' programme in Maimafu, Papua, New Guinea, West describes a development programme that made an effort at providing

‘development’ – defined as cash by the conservationists — in exchange for the local Gimi people’s participation in conservation programmes. The Gimi were required to give up hunting – a traditional source of subsistence – and cutting down trees in their forest, and to participate instead in coffee planting and bilum bag production for sale in exchange for cash. In return, the Gimi expected to receive homes with tin roofs, hospitals, and schools. Yet, all West reports they received was small amounts of money for their hard work. Both parties in this relationship thus became dissatisfied with the other because they were not getting what they wanted out of the programme. The Gimi occasionally continued to hunt and encroach upon the forest, which annoyed the conservationist-developers, while at the same time the Gimi’s work load stretched their labour force too thin, which made them weary. Perhaps these effects could have been mitigated if the conservationists had approached the Gimi and asked for their opinions about appropriate forms of participation and what they expected in return for their conservation efforts.

3.4 Conclusion

Since World War II, numerous development projects have been attempted and implemented throughout the world. Unfortunately, as the anthropological literature shows, that world is littered with examples of failed development projects. Most analyses have focused on agricultural and economic development projects that were unsuccessful in utilising local knowledge. As a result, those studies now show, projects were planned without any knowledge of local conditions, priorities, values and behaviours, and thus employed false assumptions, drew on poor information, and proposed inappropriate solutions. The literature also indicates that such project failure may result from any lack of appropriate participation by intended beneficiaries. If people are not adequately consulted or integral to their own development, then they may lose confidence in the project and abort it altogether.

As I aim to show in the chapters that follow, many of these same kinds of problems manifested in the Kosovo informal settlement water and sanitation system upgrade that was the focus of my own research and to which I now turn. I do so with the intention of being able, through identifying some of the pitfalls that anthropological approaches can reveal, to provide developers with information on how they might be able to improve their attempts to develop local situations of extreme poverty where people themselves seek what they call ‘development’.

CHAPTER FOUR: CURRENT USE –OR NOT–OF THE NEW WATER AND SANITATION SYSTEM

“He [John Graves, project manager] guaranteed the toilets by saying they come from Germany. They are a new system. They are number one. They are not blocking even when people use cement papers. Even the drains can’t block - just like the ones in Samora Machel.” (Xoliswa, research assistant)

4.1 Introduction

Kosovo residents told me that in 2008/9 they were initially eager and thrilled to be the lucky recipients of ‘development’, which included new flush toilets, wash basins, grey water drains and taps. As the quote above indicates, the residents were promised a superb product. That meant they could finally do away with container toilets in favour of flush toilets – a common symbol of respectability in the Cape Flats informal settlements (Ross 2005). The C of CT and its consultants had decided that, for financial reasons, the new facilities would be communal rather than each residential site having its own toilet and tap. My informal count of the facilities indicated that 369 such toilets had been provided and linked to the vacuum sewerage system, in 45 toilet blocks (see Table 2.1). They were installed in addition to 29 toilets using gravity sewerage (and five toilets that were started, but never completed). At the 44 completed communal facilities, there were 84 taps in total. Despite the presence of the new facilities, however, residents quickly returned to – and in some cases never stopped – using container toilets. In this chapter I will show why this occurred and why the development project failed, since the residents would not use the toilets and taps as intended (i.e. for ablutions as well as collecting water for drinking, bathing, cooking, washing, and extinguishing fires, etc.).

The residents had a promising new infrastructure that effectively – and paradoxically – exacerbated an already dire public health situation. I will show that the failure of the project forced residents to revert to using container toilets. This ultimately caused friction between the C of CT and the residents – particularly on the issue of who was to blame for the development disaster.

4.2 Condition and (Un)usability of the New Water and Sanitation System

Walking Kosovo's dusty back roads in June 2009, I found it hard not to notice the litter - ranging from empty chip bags to used condoms and brick fragments surrounding the shacks, themselves constructed from pieces of mismatched corrugated iron, with fences of colourful, plastic crate sections. From a distance, it appeared that the settlement, made of randomly discarded items and iron, was interrupted in places by sterile looking, new concrete structures. These were the communal, flushing toilet blocks, built only six months prior to the beginning of my research. Closer inspection showed that they were far from clean or sanitary - contrary to what their designers had intended. It also showed that some individual toilet cubicles within each block, especially those in unlocked stalls, were in complete disrepair. Yet from the residents' comments, many of the locked toilet stalls also contained inoperable toilets - because they were connected to the same vacuum sewerage line that was blocking. I observed many toilet bowls filled to the brim with unflushed faeces, urine, and various types of paper. In many other cases, the toilets themselves were damaged: several toilet seats/lids had fallen off and lay to the side of the bowl; in others bowl rims were cracked, flush levers loose, inlet and/or outlet pipes broken and leaking - many of them apparently being of inferior materials - and creating pools of water and waste around the bowl's base. In one case, a resident pointed out a toilet bowl near her shack that had become completely detached from the cubicle floor.

All the residents I spoke with throughout the entire duration of my fieldwork had, they said, stopped using the new toilets and reverted to the container toilets within the immediate vicinity of their shacks. Indeed, residents complained that the new toilets had never worked properly in the first place. Some claimed that when the toilets had been completed at the beginning of 2009, they had worked for only a couple of weeks before becoming blocked, and then overflowing - something residents attributed to the way the toilets had been built by the contractors. For instance, a woman said, "I think it is that collection chamber which is wrong [the problem], because when we open that main tap, the toilet [sewage] comes out of that collection chamber." Other residents thought the problems stemmed from the cisterns in each cubicle, because there was insufficient water pressure when they flushed the toilets, so that water just trickled into the bowl. Some residents had then reportedly resorted to dumping a bucket of water into the bowl to

aid the flushing, though in some instances that simply exacerbated sewage overflows at the nearest collection chamber. Still other informants complained that the outlet pipes were too small, especially for the kinds of items they commonly flushed, such as cement and flour sack papers and newspaper, all of which were used as anal cleansing materials.

One of the residents' most common criticisms was that the toilets had been constructed with substandard, cheap plastic materials. Yet, when the C of CT-based project manager, John Graves, was asked why such materials, deemed shoddy by residents, had been used, he replied:

We are working very strictly towards national norms, standards and guidelines. We will not tolerate any inferior material ... The people; they see plastic taps as inferior material. We all agree a plastic tap is inferior to a brass tap or a metal tap, we know that, but a brass tap will last, at most, 24 hours, after that it's gone. Unfortunately, we are dealing with vandalism and the theft of material... So, in some cases, yes, there are much better materials we could use, but we know that it won't last...I promise you, it won't last for 24 hours.

From what he said, it appeared that Graves believed that any building materials of value would be stolen from the facilities by people hoping to make money on the scrap metal market. Therefore, he did not want to spend money on superior materials that would frequently need to be replaced when stolen. Contrary to this reasoning, Bob Storm at Urban Engineers¹⁶ – the company used to advise the C of CT on the upgrade and design of the new infrastructure – said that budgetary constraints had been the problem: “Through the interaction between the project committee and the City [of Cape Town], it was decided to create systems and we can only put in a certain quality for the money available.” In other words, Urban Engineers chose ‘inferior’ materials because the C of CT did not provide them with an adequate budget for better materials.

The toilets' state of disrepair and the alleged cheap materials used by the C of CT were not the only concerns that residents complained about. They also complained about heaps of faeces and large volumes of sewage coming up from the gullies in the grey water drains below the wash basins (See Picture 4.1). In some cases, water slowly trickled from the base of the collection chambers and the control valves of the water mains. These are located within a metre radius from

¹⁶ Urban Engineers is a pseudonym for the real engineering consulting firm.

the communal toilet blocks and, in most cases, from residents' homes. As the water leaked out of the ground, it flowed through the outlying sand and dirt into residents' shacks.

The problem with water leaking out of the gullies, manholes, and control valves was a common difficulty throughout Kosovo, and residents were forced to deal with the problem themselves. As one frustrated woman remarked, "Where am I going to put the water? I just dig a hole. And here when you dig, the water comes out easily. I have to stay with the water in my shack with my children." She was one of several residents I witnessed digging trenches in the soil outside their shacks so that the sewage would have an alternative route to flow, instead of into their shacks. They also often took matters into their own hands and filled the system's gullies with soil and large stones or covered them with boards, hoping thus to prevent sewage flowing out of the drains.

The new taps attached to the communal blocks of toilets were also in a state of complete disrepair. The cement wash basins located below the taps were full of cracks and, in many cases, contained backed-up, dirty water and rubbish. For the five taps that were working, the residents who lived in the vicinity had very few complaints. However, of the remaining 79 new taps that had been installed, the residents complained that they were also made out of inexpensive materials and were installed in a substandard manner. As one man said, "I think by the time they built the taps, they didn't put enough glue in order for [them] to stick for a long time ... when you open the tap, it [the tap itself] comes out." Most residents agreed and complained that the taps could be pulled out with little or no effort. One enterprising woman pulled the tap out of the pipe connected to it, and then stored it in a drawer in her shack. She claimed she did this so no one could steal it to sell on the black market. When she needed water from the tap, she reconnected it to the pipe, and then removed it again when she left. Although this prevented the plastic faucet from getting stolen, other residents were then unable to use it.

Whilst various faucets had been broken by the sheer weight of buckets being hung on them - whilst being filled - others were leaking as a result of the careless way they had been installed. Almost every resident spoken to complained of leaky taps that caused water to run down the sides of the toilet facilities, through the soil, and into their shacks. Residents began to remove the

taps themselves and turn off all the water to the communal block — toilets included — using the control valve to the water mains. Significantly, no resident I spoke to said they knew of any taps that had been stolen for monetary gain. This implies that the missing taps were deliberately taken by residents in order to prevent further destruction from leaky faucets. Water trickling down from leaking taps was compounded by the problems of annual flooding and constant sewage overflows.

4.3 Alternative Uses of the New Infrastructure

The new communal blocks of toilets and sinks acquired alternative uses to the intended ones because they were in a state of disrepair that did not allow for proper usage. For instance, the new facilities had taken on the function of playgrounds or jungle gyms for small children. Because there were no parks, open fields, or spaces inside shacks for children to play, I often observed children playing with their friends in the gullies and on the manholes covering the collection chambers. Sticks and little stones that they played with then entered into the drains and



Picture 4.1: Sewage overflowing from the gulleys below the washbasin

may well have been items that blocked the whole vacuum sewage system.

Children played in the toilet facilities - not because their parents were negligent - but because the only other place for them to play was in the streets where, as parents often complained, there were no speed bumps to reduce the reckless driving that made the streets very dangerous for children and adults alike. Despite parents' efforts to keep children away from the toilets and streets, it was nearly impossible to monitor their children's every move. One frustrated parent, Sipliwo, said, "It is difficult because these toilets are near us, so sometimes you go outside and you leave the baby in the house, but when you come back the baby is out playing there [in the toilets and gullies]."

Playing near toilets and grey water drains that were overflowing with sewage caused many children to get sick. Parents showed me new rashes and sores that their children had got from playing in toxic, bacteria- and virus-infested water. This was a daily occurrence during my fieldwork. Parents were not ignorant of the dangers of sewage, but, because of their circumstances — living in small shacks with no room for children to play inside and at the same time in close proximity to the toilets — they were unable to prevent their children from playing in the new communal facilities.

Also, the new facilities took on the function of a large trash receptacle. In many of the communal blocks, trash littered the floor of the individual stalls and filled the wash basins. Though no residents admitted to this, it was obvious, when looking into the stalls and the water basins, that some individuals were using the new facilities as places to discard their trash. Some residents attributed the trash to the wind and to dogs. However, in the absence of trash receptacles located nearby and infrequent refuse removal provided by the municipality for their large dumpsters, I frequently observed residents casually leaving their rubbish behind at the facilities when walking by them. One resident suggested that people had become complacent in the informal settlement because they were used to 'ugliness' and 'dirtiness', and that it was sensible to discard rubbish in an area that no longer served any other practical purpose. Residents' use of the infrastructure as a rubbish dump definitely contributed to its condition of disrepair. However, it was uncertain whether they had started using the facilities in this manner because of sheer disregard for

something they did not own or whether they had started to use it in this way because it did not work in the manner expected of it – along with various other municipally provided services such as garbage collection.

4.4 Use of Container Toilets

Since the new flushing toilets were not functional, the residents had reverted to using container toilets. In Chapter One I mentioned that households had been provided with individual container toilets in 2005 – to replace their self-dug and unstable pit latrines. Each container toilet consisted of a hard plastic, green portable container holding up to 50 litres of human waste. It had two handles, one on each side, to carry it away for cleaning. Kosovo’s container toilet cubicles were typically brown and conical-shaped, although a few shacks had cubicles within a single, concrete slab stall with a corrugated iron door.

Container toilets had a negative reputation among both residents and C of CT officials, commonly being associated with impoverished conditions, inadequate sanitation and infectious and water-borne diseases. Needless to say, they were regarded as undesirable by the residents. Yet, those who lived in Kosovo in 2005 recognised that they had been ‘lucky’ to have been provided with one container toilet per household rather than to have to share with others. However, as indicated, those who had settled there after the container toilets had been provided did have to share. During the period of my research, and despite the presence of flush toilets, residents on some residential sites still shared a container toilet with up to five other households.

Almost all the residents spoken to claimed that, prior to moving to Kosovo in the late 1990s and early 2000s, they had had access to outdoor flush toilets in their previous urban residences. These were usually shared by the family in the main house along with backyard shack dwellers. It was thus quite a change and a rude awakening for some, when they moved to Kosovo, to find that it had no sanitation system at all. Moreover, the container toilets provided in 2005 did not compare with the flush toilets they had been used to, and residents complained that they represented a step down from what they had had before moving to Kosovo. As one resident, Palesa, said: “We used to use them [container toilets] in the olden days in the rural areas, not in the townships, especially not in the squatter camps because there are a lot of people.” Another

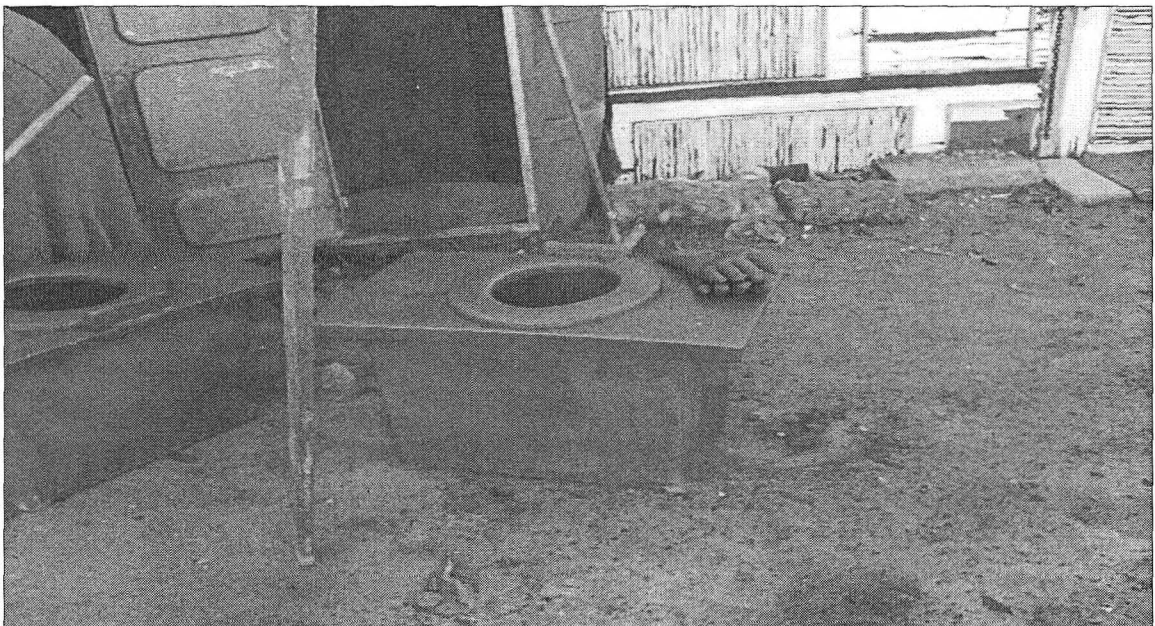
woman, named Nkosazana, remarked, “I’m stayin’ in cold here...and I’m suffering about the toilets. I now have to go out[side] and at that time [when I lived in Pinelands, Cape Town] the toilet was inside.”

Palesa’s comment indicates that residents viewed container toilets as a technology that is satisfactory for rural areas where only a few people use a single toilet, but not for their current conditions in a densely populated urban area. Nkosazana’s comment about going outside points to the embarrassment associated with having to walk in full view of neighbours every time one needs to perform one’s most private bodily functions. Physically speaking, for Nkosazana and many of the residents, there was also the discomfort associated with walking outside in the rainy, cold and windy winter months in order to relieve oneself, a discomfort I too experienced during my research which was conducted during the winter. These comments indicate that, far from being satisfied with container toilets that were assumed to be a step above a pit latrine, residents had been disappointed that they did not offer the comfort level of the toilets to which they were accustomed.

Container toilets were also disgusting to see, and especially to smell. According to Sarah, an unemployed, single woman living with her mother, “You are not supposed to look in when you use a toilet” because several days worth of urine and faeces would be visible. Others complained about the flies that accumulated around the toilets and flew into people’s shacks. These flies, according to many of the residents, carried diseases such as tuberculosis. Mangaliso, an unemployed man living on his own, elaborated on this idea, “Yeah, we got it [TB] from the toilets because faeces are a part of the thing that we cannot sit normally with it (sic)”. It was common to hear residents associate container toilets with disease. For them, the build-up of effluent and the flies contributed to an overall ‘dirtiness of the atmosphere’, which, they said, ultimately caused diseases. This is not unlike the aetiologies that people of Swaziland attributed to their diseases when they described unseen agents “in the air” that were said to cause illness when they were breathed in (Green, 1986: 115). With up to five shacks using each container toilet, it is no wonder that they filled up quickly and produced strong smells, which fostered local beliefs about disease aetiologies.

The rapidity with which the container toilets filled up demanded that they be cleaned and the excrement pumped out regularly. According to Alphonso Barry, one of the municipal officials in charge of maintenance, his department had hired a contractor, Toilet Warehouse¹⁷, to clean the container toilets in Kosovo three times a week. Typically, residents said, when Toilet Warehouse came to clean the toilets (See picture 4.2), the faeces and urine were simply emptied out of the container into a larger container in a truck and then transported to a sewage plant. Later, some ladies, also employed by Toilet Warehouse, would clean each container with chemicals and sweep out the cubicle.

When the container toilets were cleaned in this manner and on time, residents were usually satisfied and had few complaints about the cleanliness. However, aside from a few residents that confirmed Barry's statement about thrice-weekly cleaning, most residents indicated that each Kosovo container was cleaned professionally only twice weekly, pushing the limits of the containers' capacity. One resident said that her container toilet was cleaned only once per week and, towards the end of my research period, she complained that her container toilet had not been



Picture 4.2: Container toilets with the container out for cleaning

¹⁷ Pseudonym used to protect the name of the company.

emptied or cleaned in over two weeks. She claimed she had thus had to turn people away from using her toilet because it was overflowing with faeces and urine.¹⁸

When Kosovo residents had heard they were going to be provided with flush toilets as part of the settlement upgrade, most were reportedly very eager and elated. As Ben Mozi, a community leader said, “At the time they were building the toilets the people were happy, but after they were finishing ... people are not happy”. For them, this was an opportunity to bid good riddance to container toilets that they and indeed the state regarded as wholly inappropriate in any context, especially high density populations. They had expected the new toilets to halt – or at least slow down – the occurrence of diseases and embarrassment they associated with container toilets. However, the new vacuum sewage system did not work, so residents lost their enthusiasm for their new toilets and went back to using container toilets, despite the flies, unpleasant sights, and strong smells.

4.5 City of Cape Town vs. Kosovo Residents

From discussions I had with residents, the disastrous conditions of the new communal blocks had led some to despise the entire development project along with those who participated in its conception and implementation. Likewise, the C of CT officials in charge of its implementation and maintenance were frustrated with the consequences of the project, which led to their almost indifferent attitude towards the project. There seemed to be a mutual tension between the two as regards the new water and sanitation system upgrade. On the one hand, the C of CT portrayed Kosovo residents as unclean, abusive, vandalising and ignorant, because they attempted to flush improper anal cleansing material (e.g. newspaper) and threw their trash in and around the new facilities, which may have caused some of the blockages. On the other hand, Kosovo residents portrayed C of CT officials as political opportunists, incompetent and uncaring. These views stemmed from the fact that neither party took the opportunity to really understand the other’s point of view. They each had separate objectives and neither seemed really to want to understand the other’s point of view. In this situation, the developers and the Kosovo residents began to talk “past each other ... certain unspoken political and cultural imperatives were responsible for

¹⁸ When toilets did not get cleaned properly, residents often came to me, hoping that I could bring someone to get the job done.

many a crossed signal, and ... very slow movement was attributable to different agendas and priorities (often hidden) held by the various parties” (Mason, 1986: 141).

For example, John Graves, the project manager, blamed the improper functioning of the new system on the residents’ negligence and sheer lack of respect for the new system. He said:

Unfortunately it [the sewage system] cannot take abuse and that is unfortunately what we’re having in Kosovo. People are abusing the sewer system... We took out disposable nappies. We took out rags. We took out stones, cans, you name it ... pieces of food, everything [was] coming out of the sewer system ... that is a problem and to get the message across to the community not to ... to use the system and not to abuse it ... that is the problem.

In Graves’s mind, the disrepair and blockages could not possibly have been from any faults within the system or its construction. Only the residents could possibly be culpable. The ward councillor during the time of my research, Anele Gwetywa, completely disagreed with Graves, saying, “John, in his explanation about the blockages ... I took his explanation as an insult ... [He said] the reason there are blockages is that there are things thrown into the toilets like stones, and sheep skins ... This is a pure fabrication of the situation on the ground”.

In Graves’s explanation to me about the “abuse”, he depicted the residents as ignorant and uneducated about how to use a flushing toilet:

But you must remember many of these people, they come from the Eastern Cape ... they haven’t seen a toilet ... a flush toilet in their life before ... [It’s] something new. I read, the other day, of a child of four years old [he] was playing with his puppy and his puppy was dirty and decided to wash his puppy ... this little boy he took his puppy and put it in the toilet and said I’m going to wash you. Now this was a small child that’s growing up in that environment; now what do you expect of a four-year-old child that has never seen a flush toilet before; he’s used to a pit latrine.

It is quite common for developers to paint a portrait of those who are being developed as ignorant and underdeveloped - in order to justify interventions (Hobart 1993), or in this case, to rationalise a project’s failure. Furthermore, the kind of deprecating illustration offered by Graves is one that effectively “equates their moral and social status with their ability to manage sewage” (Ross, 2005: 637).

However, as we have seen, Graves’s example does not apply in the context of Kosovo. Most of the residents there were not directly from rural areas of the Eastern Cape. In most cases they had

moved from other locations in the Cape Town metropolitan area. All the residents I spoke to had lived with their own flush toilet prior to their move to Kosovo, so they were well aware of the proper ways to use such toilets.

For their part, residents attributed the blockages not to their own behaviour and ignorance, but rather, to the C of CT's shoddy and inadequate work and materials. Some residents commented that the municipality had insidious intentions and the upgrade was only a political manoeuvre to show voters that they were doing something for the people. Residents were no strangers to various political parties showing up in Kosovo during the months leading up to municipal, provincial, and national elections, all claiming they were going to help residents in their plight. After the elections, however, the same politicians would disappear and, in people's experience, as several residents expressed it, little was ever done to remedy their situation. Therefore, it is no surprise that they told me that the municipality had no intentions of providing them with something that worked or could be maintained. Below are a few comments that substantiate this:

There were all these new toilets that were made but ... some of them did not even start working; but the government officials were here to see and make sure everything was built right ... the company that was doing all this work was paid for incomplete work ... The budget for all this was something like 20 million bucks. Are you going to tell me the entire amount was not enough to provide excellent services to this underdeveloped Kosovo Community?

They trick us in our minds because we didn't know ... It's like a little kid who doesn't have enough to eat. If you give a kid a slice of bread, now he can take it without seeing there is a poison in it.

There was no planning with the toilets ... I think they didn't sit and plan it properly. It's like they just did it so they could say 'we did something for them.'

These verbal descriptions of each other on the part of both the C of CT and the residents often painted each other in a negative light. Though there are elements of truth in each construction, they both tried to portray themselves in a positive manner so that they did not have to be accountable for their own actions. Graves, the project manager, did not want to bear the onus for expensive maintenance problems; therefore it was easier for him to put the blame on the residents for all of the blockages. Likewise, residents did not want to claim any responsibility for trash that ended up in the sewerage system, so they condemned the municipality for creating a substandard product that did not work properly.

4.6 Conclusion

The C of CT's attempt to provide Kosovo with a water and sanitation system upgrade using vacuum sewage systems was a complete catastrophe. From the moment of completion to the end of my fieldwork, the system never worked as intended. In fact, for the duration of my research, I only ever saw one toilet that flushed properly. The result of this development project was a set of disastrous effects: sewage openly flowed into neighbouring shacks; it produced foul odours and sights; and it forced residents to resume the usage of container toilets which they despised and saw as a symbol of embarrassment and unrefined living.

The situation in Kosovo is another example where the question: 'Which came first: the chicken or the egg?' becomes pertinent. Was the disrepair caused by residents' use of improper anal cleansing materials that could not be flushed, the use of the facilities as trash receptacles, their allowing their children to play in the units and put stones into the system, and/or their attempts to minimise overflowing sewage by covering the drains with boards? Or were these actions a result of the toilets not working from the beginning due to second-rate construction and poor understanding of local people's needs? While it is impossible, in retrospect, to deduce which caused which, it is undeniable that the project failed.

CHAPTER FIVE: FAILURE TO CONSULT, INFORM AND SET UP LOCAL MANAGEMENT

“We in the community are also important stakeholders that are not actually recognised by other stakeholders such as the government ... We are not central in our development; we are not in control of our development. It is only the government that is imposing on the people. There is no input from the community - who at the end of the day - is going to live with this development for their entire lives and it is going to affect them on the ground ... we are not given choices.” (Anele Gwetywa, ward councillor)

5.1 Introduction

The Kosovo water and sanitation system upgrade was an ongoing and complicated process that started in 2005 and was ostensibly completed at the beginning of 2009, although few if any facilities worked properly upon completion. Upon my arrival in Kosovo in June 2009, only a few taps and toilets were operational. The remainder were not working and were in a state of disrepair. For residents and the various stakeholders involved in the project, the question remained: Where did this well-intentioned project go wrong? There are several answers to this question; in this chapter I focus on one in particular. I examine the C of CT's failure to adequately consult, involve and inform residents about the development project throughout the entire project cycle. The development project did *not* involve different types of continuing dialogues and consultations with residents in order to complete the new toilets and taps. Occasionally, during the upgrade, C of CT officials attempted to inform residents about the new system and its technology. However residents were not adequately informed about the overall development process and their options for technology and design. Furthermore, after the completion of the upgrade, the C of CT failed to set up a local management system to deal with toilet allocations and maintenance protocol. In this chapter, I elaborate on these claims and demonstrate precisely where the C of CT fell short.

5.2 Informing and Consulting Residents

In contemporary development work it is commonly accepted — and recommended by anthropologists—to use a participatory approach. Participation in development research refers to one of three possible opportunities for locals. As Gardner and Lewis (1996: 110-111) argued, locals can and should be:

1. given access to development project plans and have the opportunity to reflect upon, comment, and critique them;
2. allowed to offer their own services that can be useful in implementation and maintenance of the project; or
3. allowed to use their own initiatives and actions to bring about 'development'.

It is claimed by several anthropologists that participatory methods offer several advantages. They allow locals to become empowered (Grillo, 1997) by giving them a voice and opening up new spaces for political action (Williams, 2004), as well as allowing them to analyse their own problems in order to bring out socially relevant solutions. They also allow developers to pre-empt some of the problems encountered with development programmes (Hess, 1997), such as making false assumptions about the beneficiaries (Pottier, 1993). In other words, participatory methods act in “facilitating meaningful communication between development personnel and local people to establish what each has to offer, informing science and what it might offer, so that they can better understand the alternatives available in addressing problems” (Bicker and Sillitoe, 2004: 3).

However, as indicated, participatory methods were not used in Kosovo. According to the residents, no C of CT officials approached them to ask them what sanitation technology would be appropriate for their circumstances, how they would like the toilets and taps to be built, what materials would be practical, and how the hiring of workers should be conducted (see Chapter Six). Rather, John Graves, the project manager, had consulted only Urban Engineers— an engineering consulting firm located in Cape Town – about these matters. One of the Community Liaison Officers (CLOs),¹⁹ Mangaliso Vande, said, “We were taken by the C of CT as wheelbarrows to tell the people, to force them to go out [relocate for construction of the communal infrastructure], but when we want to share our ideas with the C of CT, they will tell us, ‘No man, this is not a community meeting, this is a technical meeting’.” This quote demonstrates that some residents, particularly the community leaders and CLOs, felt used by the C of CT, who apparently only valued them to get their dirty work done.

¹⁹ Community Liaison Officers were residents hired by City of CT to inform other residents about the upgrade and ask residents to relocate their shacks during construction.

When I met with Graves, I asked why the residents had not been consulted or presented with possible options for the upgrade. He indicated that the residents lacked knowledge about the technical aspects of upgrading infrastructure, implying that it would be a waste of time to use a participatory approach for their development. “It was not participative planning; otherwise we would’ve still been busy planning ... Sometimes ... especially when people are not technical, it’s difficult to reach consensus on what you can do and what you can’t do.” What his words suggest is that Graves made the false assumption that the residents could not contribute anything useful to the design or the implementation, because they were ignorant of engineering and city planning expertise.

Bob Storm, the director of Urban Engineers Consulting - who was in charge of providing Kosovo with rudimentary services - offered a different explanation for why he did not consult residents. “We didn’t feel it necessary to engage with the community because it doesn’t really affect them – as far as flushing it away – whether it’s a conventional gravity sewer system or a vacuum sewer system. Their concern is what they come into contact with, which is a flush toilet.” While Storm may or may not have been correct in this assumption, he did not consider the other aspects of conducting an upgrade. My research shows that residents were not particular about the technology behind the services they received; but they did care about *how* and *where* the facilities were to be constructed. Residents, especially former CLOs, had strong opinions about this:

What we need... is the municipality to come to the community and ask the community, ‘What would be alright for you?’ It’s us who use these. We know what is right for the squatter camps (Xoliswa Phiri, former CLO).

Before you do anything for the people, you must just ask them what they need. Just because you have money to do it [doesn’t mean you should]...it’s just like taking money, if you say this is the first thing or second thing in Africa to be done (Mangaliso Vande, former CLO).

Firstly, the C of CT has to sit with people and ask their permission. Of course, they are staying here in the shacks, but still [residents] have rights...they have to sit and talk to people and explain before they do anything...and whatever you do, you have to think about the people who are staying there...because these people [in the municipality] they didn’t plan and they were not professionals (Vuyiswa Mzima, young resident who attends a post-secondary training programme for nursing).

These quotes indicate that residents would have appreciated the right to choose, even if they ended up agreeing with the consultants in the long run. They wanted to feel as if they were integral to their own development.

Not only did the C of CT neglect to elicit residents' insights and opinions during the planning phases of the project, they also failed to keep them informed during the actual implementation of the vacuum sewerage system and the communal facilities. All they did to inform residents was to host a series of meetings to which residents were called prior to the commencement of and during the upgrade. However, according to residents these measures fell short because they either did not know about the meetings or were unable to attend them due to time conflicts. According to Graves, the meetings informed residents of everything they needed to know about the upgrade. "Everything about the track, the toilets, the sewer system, water ... it'll be shared facilities; everything that we could think of, we shared with them." However, others shed a different light on what they were told at community meetings:

We were told that the sewage system is actually a German pilot project. It was first used in Africa, in Botswana and so on and so forth. But they were unable to tell us exactly ... what are the challenges, advantages, and disadvantages of that system (Anele Gwetywa, ward councillor during and after implementation of upgrade).

They didn't explain how it is going to work or who is going to use what, but they said they are going to implement the flushing system (Thandiwe, community leader during the upgrade).

These comments indicate several issues. Firstly, the residents who attended the community meetings were given only very basic information, like what type of technology was being used and where it came from. They were not given practical information, such as how the toilets would be allocated and about the strengths and weaknesses of the particular technology. If Graves's sessions had, in fact, provided them with this information, as he said they had, the residents did not remember it. Graves also indicated that they had held several different meetings over the course of the few years they had been busy upgrading the settlement. The meetings, he said, had taken place in venues like community halls or the yard in front of the local Spar shop.²⁰ Despite this, at most only about three hundred residents had shown up – though he did not indicate whether they were the same or a different set of attendees each time. This poor

²⁰ Supermarket chain in South Africa

attendance explains, however, why most of the residents I spoke to claimed they did not know about the meetings and that no general information had been disseminated to them. Some residents told me that they were aware of some meetings, but they were working or in school, so they could not attend.

Despite Graves's claims that there had been various consultative meetings with the residents, Storm of Urban Engineers said that he had participated in meetings with community leaders and CLOs only, and not with any of the residents in general. It was the CLOs' duty, he said, to inform residents about the upgrade and to convince certain people to relocate if their shack was on a site that was scheduled to be occupied by a future pump station, road, or a communal toilet facility. He also said that, after these meetings, the CLOs and community leaders had the task of going to different residential sites to convince people that their shack had been chosen for relocation or to be located next to the new toilets. Many residents objected, because they did not want to reside near smelly toilets.

The CLOs said it was a tough time for them because they faced a lot of resistance from those residents. Xoliswa, my research assistant and a former CLO said, "The people, they come to my shack ... a group of people! And they tell me 'Why do I do that to them?' It was very tough ... they come to me and they say, 'Why you sell us to these white people?' And I tell them, 'No, we want development, please, and it will be all right!' but now it's not all right." Xoliswa's words here indicate how powerful development discourse had become in the process of convincing people to relocate. Many of them were very hesitant and well aware of problems that might stem from communal facilities (i.e. foul toilet odours and strangers using nearby toilets and leaving behind messes); yet several residents indicated to me – such as Nkosazana, an older domestic worker – that they had moved and agreed to live near to the toilet blocks for the sake of 'development' that carried connotations of normal and proper living standards.

Aside from telling residents that they must relocate their shack for construction or that a new toilet block was to be located near their shacks, CLOs did not provide residents with any other information. Both Mangaliso and Xoliswa, two of the CLOs, said this partially stemmed from the fact that they were themselves given very little information about the technology and its

operations at the meetings they attended with Graves and Storm. Also, there appears to be a disjuncture between what the municipality and consulting engineers said the CLOs should do and what they actually did. Despite Graves's and Storm's expectation that CLOs would communicate the information they were given at the meetings and ensure it reached all residents, Xoliswa told me they only went to houses located in the immediate areas of construction. She said that she thought it was their job to make sure those residents were ready to relocate for construction, not to convey any other information about the upgrade to all the residents. This thus left a large number of residents without any information about the upgrade.

In addition to not having been informed about the upgrade during implementation, most residents claimed they had never officially been informed about the completion of the new water and sanitation system. A few informants said the contractors had told them they were ready for use, but failed to provide them with any information about their correct or proper use. Moreover, most residents to whom I spoke asserted that they had found out from neighbours who had simply started claiming toilets for themselves by putting locks on them. Their comments included statements like:

The company just left on the last day without giving any last progress and financial report to this poor Kosovo community. I think the company knew something was not right with their job and that is why they did not call the community to give the last report.

The person that built the toilet here, he just built the toilet, and he didn't come maybe after a week when they finish and say 'you must use it now'. They must come and check if the toilet is right.

Such comments were made, despite Graves having claimed that he had hired a man from Samora Machel to notify residents when the toilets had been completed at the beginning of 2009. Graves also asserted that, in the community meetings held prior to the upgrade, he had informed the residents about the proper use of the new facilities. To remind the residents of their proper use, he said, the C of CT had also created posters, written in English and Xhosa that were meant to be put on each communal facility, with information about materials that should not be flushed and what type of sewerage system had been built. However, at the start of my research in June 2009, nearly six months after the completion of the toilets, my colleagues from the University of Cape Town and I found the posters stacked up in the system's pump station, and the residents were

adamant that they had never seen them on the toilet units. Indeed by the end of July, when I had completed my fieldwork, no posters had appeared on the communal facilities. It seems as though what little information most residents received had reached them by word-of-mouth from the few residents who had obtained and managed to retain the small amount of information conveyed at the earlier community meetings.

5.3 Setting up Local Management

Comments quoted in the previous section from Thandiwe implied that the C of CT's officials had failed to inform residents about how toilets would be allocated upon completion; how they should be maintained and cleaned; and how blockages and malfunctioning facilities should be fixed or by whom. In other words, what she had said was that when construction and commissioning of the toilets had supposedly been completed, the municipality had failed to set up a local system to manage them. This is one particular instance where a participatory approach would have been useful. For example, the C of CT could have facilitated a forum for community leaders and residents to discuss how they would like to allocate particular toilets and delegate the responsibility for them. Because the municipality did not do this, the toilet-claiming process became quite chaotic and, as will be shown later in this section, led to some conflict.

While conducting my research, I heard three different stories regarding how the residents were informed of the toilet completion and how they had then claimed the new toilets. Some people said that, upon completion, the contractors²¹ had put locks on some of the individual toilet stalls, and a number of residents reported that, before leaving Kosovo, the contractors had recommended that they form small groups of five or six shacks to claim a toilet. In compliance with this recommendation, those individuals who had actually spoken to contractors went to their neighbours and asked them if they would like to form a group in order to claim and share a toilet. According to a resident who was a part of one of these shack cohorts, he and the others in his particular cohort combined their money and bought new padlocks for the toilet they used because the contractors left before providing keys for the padlocks they had placed on the toilet cubicles – padlocks that had now to be broken before being replaced.

²¹ They were hired to build the new infrastructure after it had been designed by Urban Engineering consultants.

Most other residents described a different way they were informed about the completion of the toilets. They claimed that they heard from neighbouring residents, rather than from the contractors, that the toilets were completed and then went to break the lock on a stall and put on their own padlock for their own individual house. Contrary to this, some residents said that they found toilets without locks and were able to easily put on their own padlock without having to break ones that were already on them.

Graves tells a completely different story however. Graves had said that the municipality had employed someone explicitly to inform residents when the toilets in their section had been completed and were ready for use. This person was *not* hired by the contractors nor was it supposed to be the contractors themselves, as they were not paid to tell the residents how to claim the toilets. However, when asked, no resident I interviewed indicated having received this information from a C of CT worker. Furthermore, Graves said that residents were already using the toilets before all of them had been completed and before the C of CT had a chance to develop a plan for toilet allocation. The lack of communication and participation resulted in residents not being informed about the toilets' completion in a uniform manner, as well as some residents receiving a toilet to use, albeit unofficially, while others did not. According to various residents, this part of the upgrade was disorganised and inconsistent. How people claimed toilets varied from shack to shack, and followed no discernible pattern based on location within the informal settlement.

Those who had been lucky enough to claim their own toilet used padlocks to keep random individuals out of 'their' toilets, so that the residents who used them could maintain cleanliness of these toilets. If an individual who did not belong to the cohort for a particular toilet needed to use it, they had to ask someone to lend them a key. However, having to ask individuals for keys every time the toilet was needed led to conflict and annoyance among neighbours. Since the residents were never told or provided a means to decide which individuals should be responsible for particular toilets, they gave out keys to any individual who needed to use the toilet throughout the day, whether they wanted to let them use it or not. These particular residents did not want to clean up the mess of strangers; yet, because they did not own the toilet, they felt

obligated to let others use their keys. This changed, and by the time I conducted my research, most residents who owned keys to the toilets refused anyone the right to use 'their' toilet.

Since none of the toilets were working properly, they did not want to give others the opportunity to cause further property damage or instigate more sewage blockages and overflows. This was especially true for the residents who lived nearest to the communal blocks. They claimed that others, who did not live near the toilets, had no incentive to stop using the toilets when they were in disrepair because they did not have to live next to them when they were overflowing with sewage. In one particular example, a young woman described how she and her neighbours had locked a toilet that was not working and then denied another neighbour access to the toilet:

[During] the time they tell us the toilet is not working, the other lady just come and use this bucket to flush the toilet while the toilet is not working. When you flush the toilet, the water is coming out and also right at the back [the gulley] the water is coming out. So we tried to tell the lady, 'You have to stop using the toilet'...now we go to that lady...and tell her she cannot use the toilet until it is all right. And she said, 'If I want to use the toilet, I will use it', then she started shouting, 'I will hit you. I will go to court. I will call the police'. So I went to the police station because the day I was talking to her, she bring the bucket with the urine and throw inside here on my head....Since then, we never talked again.

This case reveals just one set of problems that has presented itself in Kosovo since the completion of the toilets. Many of the residents I spoke to seemed exasperated by the situation. Several people claimed they had initially bought proper toilet paper to use, but then gave up because they thought it was pointless to continue purchasing it when others were disrespecting the toilets by creating messes and blockages.

Added to the fact that residents were never presented with an opportunity to discuss the allocation of the toilets by the C of CT, they were not given a protocol for maintenance when the toilets were in disrepair. Some residents living alongside the communal facilities said that they had never seen any person come to fix the toilets near their shacks, though most claimed that they had seen the contractors come at least once to look at the toilets. The residents who witnessed this thought that the contractors lacked the technical know-how to fix vacuum sewerage systems, since the toilets continued to block after their departure. Some said:

They don't send people to fix. They only send people to suck [sewage and garbage from toilet basins]. You know? This is a bucket system [a type of container toilet] now. This is not a flushing system.

They must come and check if the toilet is right. These toilets, these ones in front of me, they are not right. They are not working, as from when they finished it. No one has come to inspect the toilet and its condition.

Some other day there was a blockage and there were some guys from the C of CT that came to unblock the pump station. And then I asked them why they leave, because they left without solving the problem. They said, 'No. The system that was put there was vacuum pumps' so they don't know anything about it. They were going to bring people who know about the vacuum pumps.

Alphonso Barry, one of the municipal officials in charge of maintenance, also said that the C of CT did not have any in-house expertise to deal with vacuum sewerage maintenance problems, which raises the additional question: Why did they implement a new system they could not adequately maintain?

Another source of frustration for the residents was that they had no-one to whom they could report maintenance issues. Prior to the upgrade, Graves said, he had told some of the community leaders that, if there were a problem with the new toilets, the C of CT would find out from the equipment in the pump station and come to fix the maintenance issue. As Thandiwe, one of my research assistants who was also a community leader, elaborated on what they were told by Graves: "What happens is there is some sort of signal [in the pump station] that actually works as an alarm and, in fact, shows up on the municipality computer screens; and once they see that on their screens ... they come and attend to the problem." Anticipating the likelihood of maintenance issues in the future, she added, the community leaders had asked about how else they should report problems with the new toilets; to which Graves reportedly responded that the technological equipment in the pump station would do all the necessary reporting for them. Unfortunately, however, the process did not work that way in practice.

5.4 Conclusion

Kosovo residents were not consulted about the technologies and facilities in their upgrade package prior to implementation. Moreover, this trend continued during the implementation process and even after completion. Most of the residents I spoke to were given little information

about the entire development process: when the toilets would be ready for use; the advantages and disadvantages of vacuum sewerage; and ultimately, who would be responsible for the cleaning and maintenance issues associated with particular toilets. Allowing residents the opportunity to comment, critique, and question the design and construction of the infrastructure has the potential to avoid some of the pitfalls described in Chapter Four, because only the residents can be fully aware of the various complexities of sharing facilities in a densely populated settlement. Additionally, the C of CT could have been more instrumental in organising the community to create a local management system that allocated and maintained the facilities.

Because none of this happened, the toilets fell into a state of disrepair and eventually could not be used as intended. Residents described, *ad nauseum*, a vicious cycle of disorder that ensued, whereby residents would allow complete strangers — both residents and visitors — to use toilets they had claimed for themselves. Many of those individuals would leave behind messes and use inappropriate anal cleansing materials that blocked the toilets. Because no protocol had been established by the C of CT to report maintenance problems, nor had individuals within Kosovo been trained to deal with blockages, the toilets stayed plugged for weeks on end. Eventually, those who had claimed particular toilets for themselves also gave up on cleaning them and buying toilet paper — precisely because the system did not work and their own toilets also ended up being dysfunctional — a situation which perpetuated the problem. This cycle, in combination with a lack of information and participation, left residents with little pride in their new facilities and scorn for the municipality that had built them.

CHAPTER SIX: THE FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND LOCAL TENSIONS, RULES, AND POLITICS

One day after arriving in Kosovo, I noticed an abnormal amount of commotion in the street that separated Kosovo from Samora Machel. A couple of hundred people were marching in the streets, singing old freedom songs. Every few metres or so, there were conspicuous columns of smoke emanating from piles of blankets burning in the street. I also saw a Samora Machel resident tipping over Sanitech toilets filled with excrement and urine. In response to these activities, the police charged the scene and scared people off by shooting rubber bullets. I quickly walked to Xoliswa's shack to ask her what was going on. She replied that the Kosovo residents were protesting because they wanted the government to build them houses and bring proper development. She explained:

I don't know whether the municipality or government know about us ... because nothing was happening here at Kosovo unless we do that noise... to make that noise of protesting. It helps us here in South Africa because after you make that noise the government come to you and know about you. I don't know if the government was knowing about Kosovo [before we protested].

She also said that the residents were tired of getting blankets from the disaster relief agency every time they were flooded. She and others were convinced that blankets would not solve their problems, but houses would and the government would not come to their aid unless they resorted to extreme measures, such as protesting, violence and destruction.

6.1 Introduction

Protests like that described above, as well as fighting with fists and words among local residents, were very common in the settlement. To the municipality and press, such violence may seem futile, destructive and contra-indicated, but to the residents violence became a mechanism to get the attention of those whose help they sought. Underlying all the violence and protesting was a desire to be seen and heard, to be understood and taken seriously. This chapter examines the reasons residents of Kosovo have historically engaged in protest, violence and conflict, and what this ultimately has meant for the development process.

Both municipal officials and residents spoke of delays and setbacks throughout the upgrade process. Most had resulted from conflicts related to the desire for residents' own form of local representation, as well as the need for the municipality to hire local workers, using local, unwritten rules as guidelines for the employment process. In this chapter I argue that the municipality's failure to understand residents' needs has fostered local tensions and resulted in

delays for the upgrade, ultimately contributing to a dysfunctional water and sanitation system upgrading.

Underlying the municipality's failure to understand what residents wanted is that officials did not engage with any 'indigenous or local knowledge' prior to commencing the development project. According to Bicker and Sillitoe (2004: 2), indigenous knowledge is generally, "any understanding rooted in local culture. It includes all knowledge held more or less collectively by a population that informs interpretation of things". The term 'local knowledge' refers similarly to "knowledge and skills related to a specific place". These issues need to be "culturally and ecologically situated" (Antweiler 2004: 3). In the case of Kosovo, an 'ethnography of local history', was necessary (Ellis and West 2004), so that oral narratives could be used to examine the local knowledge of the legal system, local conflict management, and local, but unwritten rules at play in such a development context (c.f. Antweiler 2004). Often, development projects fail because they are planned without any consideration for how they fit in within the larger structures of local practices (Curry 2003). Simply put, "lack of understanding, miscommunication and negligent behaviour are ... quite regular occurrences in development projects around the globe ... [M]any development practitioners tend to see those they deal with as basically identical to themselves in their way of experiencing the world as objectively given" (Hess 1997:5). The following two examples demonstrate why the C of CT needed to engage with an 'ethnography of the local history' of Kosovo.

6.2 A Ward Councillor of their own

Cape Town is divided into several wards, each represented by an elected official, called a ward councillor.²² Kosovo is within Ward 33 which encompasses Philippi, West Philippi, Samora Machel, and Weltevreden Valley. Prior to the council elections of 2006, some Kosovo residents had decided that they wanted their ward councillor to be from Kosovo, as opposed to another

²² Wards are geographical areas composed of approximately equal numbers of voters and are established by both local and metropolitan municipalities (Schedule 1, Part 1, MStA). It is the municipal government that is responsible for providing sustainable services and a healthy and safe environment to the residents of wards (Section 151-152, Constitution).

suburb in the ward because, as I was told, they said that only someone from Kosovo could truly understand their hardships and do something to remedy them. During periods of flooding prior to that election, different companies regularly made charitable gifts to Kosovo, but the residents complained that they saw the gifts going directly to the ward councillor and to residents in Samora Machel who already had formal housing. They had become tired of Samora Machel residents and the ward councillor, Vusi Chambers, benefiting from their plight, while they lacked even the most rudimentary services. Before they decided to promote their own candidate, however, they protested for the removal of the then current ward councillor. My research assistant, Xoliswa, related the story of their initial protest:

We went up and down, trying to remove Chambers. We ended up going to the parliament, protesting. At that moment he started to come with bucket toilets. He tried to confuse us [bribing them with bucket toilets] because he took us to be idiots. We were the people at Kosovo whom he used. We break and fall down [destroyed] those bucket toilets ... By the time we break and fall the toilets, Mozi [another prominent Kosovo resident] tried to fight and save those toilets. The community beat him and he ended up in the hospital ... It was a civil war.

The former mayor of Cape Town, NomaIndiya Mfeketo, took an interest in their protest and met with the residents to address their concerns. After this meeting she decided to convince the ward councillor in another ward, Mary Mashaba, to take some interest in Kosovo and help them out since Chambers was very unpopular. Several residents told me they were happier once Mashaba started helping them out, but they still wanted their own representative from Kosovo. This prompted, Zukile Mava, a prominent Kosovo man, to run for the African National Congress (ANC) party nomination in the ward councillor elections. Unfortunately, he had not been a formal member of the ANC for at least a year, as party rules stipulated, and was disqualified from the ANC election. Instead, Anele Gwetywa won the ANC nomination, but had yet to win the council election.

Zukile, having decided to run as the Independent candidate against Gwetywa, was heavily supported by Kosovo residents. They made t-shirts with his name on them and produced posters to put up in Kosovo. However, with lack of support from Samora Machel and the rest of Ward 33, he lost the election.

His supporters did not want his rival, Gwetywa, to make decisions for them; consequently, they held their own unofficial community meetings in Kosovo. Two factions within Kosovo quickly formed: those supporting Zukile and those supporting Gwetywa. Xoliswa once again related:

As Kosovo community we made a decision that we don't need him [Gwetywa] in Kosovo. We hold our meetings excluding him. There are a few people in Kosovo who favoured him. We fought with these people and vandalized their shacks. We were taken to Nyanga police station and arrested ... [then] the councillor started employing his favourites and we chased them and beat them in Kosovo. When we did that he called the police and arrested us. We became 2 groups in Kosovo: Zukile camp and Gwetywa camp. Because we vandalized their shacks they burned Kosovo. They moved to and stayed in Samora Machel.

The residents' resort to violence and to court arrest testifies to the desperation they felt in not having their own representation. For them, however, it seemed to be the only effective means of getting noticed. After the election, both Xoliswa and Zukile switched allegiance to the Democratic Alliance (DA) political party since, as Xoliswa said, they had gotten nowhere with the ANC and with the Independent parties.

This was around the same time when the municipality decided to provide rudimentary services in Kosovo. Yet bringing these services to Kosovo required residents, including Zukile and Xoliswa, to work closely with the newly elected ward councillor, Gwetywa, as well as with municipal officials since they were community leaders. However, some Zukile supporters, all prominent Kosovo residents, refused to co-operate with Gwetywa. In their minds, he knew nothing about their circumstances and would thus not act in their best interests. This halted the development project. As Graves, the project manager, said:

But they said to us: no If that guy is part of the project we don't want the project. And one day I said to them: You know what, I pity you people. One day your children will come to you and that child of yours will ask you: "Mom, when I was small and I had to play in the mud ... when I wanted water, I had to drink stagnant water; dirty water, and I needed a toilet, your sister told me to go behind the bush. What did you do for me to improve my living conditions?" Then I pity you if you have to stand up, and you will say to your child: "Sorry, my child I did nothing but fight. I couldn't agree with other people so that is why we didn't provide you with better conditions.

Shortly after Graves had reportedly said this to the Zukile faction, they decided they would rather work with Gwetywa to get toilets and roads than continue to fight. By this time, the factional

conflict had set the development project back nearly two years. An important point to note here is that Graves told me that the two different factions had formed because different residents belonged to different political parties and that it was this that had caused tension. However, as this ‘ethnography of local history’ indicates, this was ultimately *not* a struggle about party politics or particular party allegiances, but rather, a conflict rooted in a desire to have a representative who was a resident of Kosovo and could “feel their pain”. They did not want development if it was just going to promote the ward councillor’s interests, as it had apparently done in the past. This was precisely what Graves did not understand, and why it took nearly two years to resolve the conflict.

Ultimately, a compromise was reached in 2006, when the C of CT hired two Kosovo residents to act as Community Liaison Officers (CLOs). Their job, according to Graves and Storm, was to represent the Kosovo residents’ views in planning and steering committee meetings, although, as we have seen from their own reports, the CLOs’ opinions were not listened to in those meetings. Nonetheless, they were tasked with informing residents about the upgrade. However, as the next section shows, their hiring caused additional delays and exacerbated local tensions even further.

6.3 Sharing Work

Peace in Kosovo was short-lived. According to Xoliswa, one day, at one of the initial project committee meetings, she was appointed as a CLO by the municipality. Having told Zukile she was not sure what the job required, he called a DA councillor to explain a CLO’s role. Discovering it was a paid position to inform residents about the upgrade, he told her that her appointment required community approval. She thus stepped down, pending the community’s approval. The next day, however, Zukile himself applied for the position and was appointed instead of Xoliswa to represent Kosovo on behalf of the faction that supported him when he ran in the council election. Yandiswa Mkansi, a young, female resident of Samora Machel, was also appointed, to represent the supporters of the ward councillor. Xoliswa said that she felt slighted by this betrayal.

Zukile and Yandiswa were CLOs until 2007. During that time, Xoliswa said:

The rule at Kosovo said people must share work. People were supposed to work for three months and give the others work after that. He [Zukile] was the one who came with that rule. Now, because he is working, he doesn't want to share because money is very nice. Zukile forgot about the people who fought for him.

Xoliswa was speaking of an unwritten rule in Kosovo: if an individual received a job within Kosovo, they could only take it for a few months, and then they were expected to give it up, so that others would have an opportunity to work and make money, as jobs were scarce. Zukile, however, was unwilling to do this, even though he was reportedly one of the original people to espouse this imperative.²³

In 2007, Xoliswa said, she had decided that it was time for a change in Kosovo. She was not happy that the same two people had been employed as CLOs for over a year. According to her, in January 2008 at an informal community meeting, the residents decided together that it was time to appoint new CLOs. A few days later, they appointed Xoliswa and Mangaliso Vande as the two new CLOs. Within a couple of days of having been appointed, they said, they had gone to work from shack to shack, informing residents who would have to relocate in order to make way for the construction of the new water and sanitation infrastructure.

A few days into their new job, however, Zukile had shown up for work and insisted that he was still the CLO. Xoliswa related the story:

[Zukile] said it is him who comes with development at Kosovo. He was like a person who is mental. Every day they go to work and stay in the office. He said he could stop that development. When we held meetings he came because he claimed he was a CLO. When he was tired, he went to CCMA [Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration]²⁴ He said it was an unfair dismissal. He demanded R32,000 from January to July to re-imburse him for his work.

From what Xoliswa and Mangaliso told me, Zukile continuously threatened to stop construction if he was not allowed to keep his job. The C of CT and the contractors were faced with a dilemma. Zukile and Yandiswa technically were entitled to be paid because they had signed a

²³ Unfortunately, I did not get to speak with Zukile to corroborate this story, because he had been shot during the time of my research and spent several weeks recuperating at a friend's home outside of Kosovo. My other research assistant, Thandiwe, as well as a few other residents also supported this story.

²⁴ The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration is an independent body formed to resolve labour disputes.

contract. However, Kosovo residents were clamouring for Mangaliso and Xoliswa to become the new CLO's. Once again, according to Xoliswa, Graves sided with the community and allowed them to take over Zukile and Yandiswa's positions. This prompted Zukile to go to the CCMA arguing that he was the victim of unfair dismissal – a case he won and for which he was then paid out by the contractors who were building the new facilities. Because Zukile and Yandiswa were locked into a contract, they technically had the right to get paid.

After their contract had been formally ended by the contractors and the C of CT, Zukile continued to make Xoliswa's and Mangaliso's jobs difficult and even prevented the contractors from completing their job too. As Xoliswa angrily exclaimed whilst relating the story:

All the time we worked Zukile monitored us. He was always going to the contractors and telling them that the CLOs and project committees were busy with community meetings. He also called Graves, telling him this story. Another time, he called a meeting ... with the D.A. councillors. They said they wanted to drop us because we were illegal [not on contract to conduct the work of a CLO]. The community always supported us. When he saw that the community was proud of us by the time of the building the toilets he went to the people who were in points [where the new toilets and roads would be built] and told them to refuse to move. Then he changed and started to fight development. There are points where we are supposed to have toilets, but he went to the people who were supposed to move and told them not to move.²⁵

This situation reveals discord resulting from a number of fundamental problems. The first is the C of CT's and Zukile's failure to recognise the "three-month employment" rule that was fundamental to Kosovo residents' notions of being good neighbours and citizens, particularly when jobs were scarce. That the C of CT did not know or understand that principle, provides an example of a lack of local knowledge that might have been uncovered had participatory methods been employed. For example, the C of CT needed to know how residents wanted their employment contracts to be made up, so as to keep the project on track for completion, and prevent local conflict. Furthermore, had they had such information they could have relayed it to the contractors who were in charge of hiring local workers for the infrastructural construction.

²⁵ The consultants provided me with a detailed map and layout of the new toilet locations. However, in my unofficial count of the facilities, I observed that several of the facilities located on the map of Kosovo were never completed, thereby corroborating Xoliswa's story.

The second fundamental problem underlying the local discord was that residents did not realise that their decision to appoint someone they wanted for the position of CLO did not mean that those individuals would necessarily be officially recognised by the municipality or the contractors. An assessment of how residents preferred to allocate local jobs and structure employment contracts could have prevented this problem.

6.4 Conclusion

On the surface, the two examples of local conflict presented here make it seem as though residents were directly to blame for the delays in development and the failure to complete all of the communal toilet blocks in Kosovo. Not only did the tensions cause delays and failures, but they promoted violence and destruction. Residents were far from innocent bystanders; but what I have hoped to have demonstrated is that some of the conflict, and the ultimate failure to complete all of the intended facilities, can be attributed partially to the municipality and its inadequate understanding of what residents wanted in regard to representation and employment. For them to have acquired this information would have required their conducting an 'ethnography of local history'. Had the C of CT officials taken the time to ascertain local knowledge about desires and unwritten rules, they could have pre-empted the problem of local representation, by dealing with locally accepted terms of employment – before the problem had blown out of proportion.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FAILURE OF DEPARTMENTS TO WORK CO-OPERATIVELY

While I was in Kosovo one day in June 2008 with some colleagues from UCT, Daniel Smith, from the C of CT Water and Sanitation Department, gave us a tour of the new facilities. My research assistants, Xoliswa and Thandiwe, accompanied us while Smith showed us examples of the new facilities that had been built – along with some of the already accumulated disrepair. Included in the tour was a visit to the pump station. Upon entering the pump station, some of us noticed a stack of approximately one hundred laminated posters containing information about the proper use of the new facilities. Smith said we could take one if we liked, but failed to mention what he would be doing with them, if anything. I only found out later, from Graves, the project manager who works in a different C of CT department, that the posters were supposed to be put up on each new facility as they were completed. He seemed disconcerted by the fact that his colleagues in the Water and Sanitation department had failed to do this. Perhaps more agitated than Graves was Xoliswa, who said, “The time we were at the pump station ... we saw the pamphlets [posters]. You know? But they didn’t give the pamphlets to us. Why they didn’t give the pamphlets to us? It is because they know that this is not right ... They rob us. They only rob us. They play with us. If the toilets were finished, they were supposed to give the pamphlets to us. But they didn’t do that.”

7.1 Introduction

The situation described above is indicative of the lack of co-operation that became apparent to me among the various stakeholders in the different municipal departments involved in the water and sanitation system upgrade. In this case two different departments had failed to support each other and to collaborate with the various tasks, with the result that the residents were not officially notified of the completion of the new sewerage system. As indicated by Xoliswa’s comments above, this seemed to provide residents with their own ‘proof’ that the C of CT had never completed the upgrade and had instead provided them with a substandard product. Regardless of C of CT’s intentions, it is evident that, from the very beginning, the different stakeholders had offered each other very little assistance and collaboration. Each seemed to suffer from tunnel vision, limiting thereby what they saw to only a small fraction of what it takes to launch, complete and maintain a successful development project.

According to Bicker and Sillitoe (2004: 3), “We cannot understand cultures by looking at individual parts in isolation; as complex systems they manifest emergent properties that we can only see when all the parts are working together. It is not possible to predict which cultural

domains might relate intimately with others; often unexpected practices impinge on one another". Likewise, we cannot completely understand what went wrong in failed development programmes by looking at individual development agents. Thus, I argue in this chapter that, had they worked together co-operatively, the Housing and the Water and Sanitation departments, along with the ward councillor, could have provided each other with the information and support that was needed to ensure the success of the project. Before participatory methods can be employed to gather local knowledge, there needs to be a solid foundation of co-operation among the various stakeholders.

7.2 Level of Co-operation among Stakeholders

It became evident to me that the various stakeholders were not working together co-operatively when the issue of maintenance for the new system arose among the residents. As stated in Chapter Five, residents did not know who was in charge of maintaining the system and fixing any broken facilities. Not only did the C of CT fail to set up a *local* management system, but its officials failed to provide adequately for a C of CT-run maintenance service. According to Graves in the Housing Department, after the implementation of the upgrade, officials of the Informal Settlements Water and Sanitation Department (Smith and Barry) were supposed to have taken responsibility for all the maintenance and cleaning-related toilet issues. Graves claimed the completion of the toilets occurred in January and February 2009; however, Barry contended that he only found out, in an e-mail from Graves at the end of May, that his department would be responsible for maintenance of the new system. This meant that there was a period of four to five months where there was no specific policy or procedure for the maintenance of the new toilets.

Graves also claimed that the intended plan was for the Water and Sanitation department to send someone to Kosovo about once a week to see if things were working properly or in a state of disrepair. Moreover, if they had found problems with individual toilets or collection chambers, they were supposed to ensure that these were fixed. However, he said, this did not happen because his colleagues did not know how to fix vacuum sewerage-system related problems and, consequently, they were negative towards the new system and did not want anything to do with it. Noting their reluctance to get involved with maintenance, Graves said:

So you need constant maintenance, constant co-operation with the people on site and they are not prepared to do it. They don't want to touch it because it is a new system – although they were part of a group decision that was taken to use the system. Now they say: 'no, no, no, no, no, we are not involved, we were never involved and we don't want to know about the system' And now I'm stuck with it.

Barry, on the other hand, did not seem to have a negative attitude about maintaining the system or fixing problems in Kosovo *per se*, but rather, seemed to be unhappy about *how* the handover had taken place. "To my knowledge there hasn't been any official handover [saying] here are the manuals, and this is the procedure you must follow, these are the maintenance items that you'll need in stock or here are the items, you know, for the next year. That hasn't been done."

He also said that, within a week of the email in May, he had received so many complaints about the toilets from residents that his department had immediately sent the same contractors that had built the new sewerage system and infrastructure to Kosovo so that they could repair the blockages to the toilets and collection chambers. While doing this, Barry had added, the contractors had encountered operational problems that could only be fixed once they brought a vacuum sewerage expert to the site. Pending obtaining expert advice, however, Barry used a Samora Machel resident, named Siyabonga Nkosi, to monitor the cleanliness and the extent of disrepair of Kosovo's new toilets. By then, as indicated earlier, residents had reverted to their container toilets, which continued to be serviced, as previously.

Nkosi had worked for the C of CT from 2006 until the time I conducted research. Prior to monitoring Kosovo's new infrastructure, he had been employed by Barry in other capacities. Specifically, he had been previously hired to monitor the toilets, taps, and roads in Samora Michel and also to provide Kosovo with chemical (container) toilets. He said that, even before he had officially begun monitoring the toilets and taps in Kosovo, none had been working properly. Complaining bitterly about how the system's maintenance had been conducted in the past, he said that, in March 2009, he had already told Barry and Smith about the problems he had witnessed in the new sanitation system. Allegedly, Smith had then sent the same contractors to Kosovo to fix the blockages in all of the toilets but, just one week later, residents were once again complaining about new blockages. When Nkosi told Smith about this, Smith told Nkosi to

take the complaints to Graves since; at that point, he did not understand it to be their duty to maintain the new system.

In April 2009, Graves visited Kosovo to show some of my UCT colleagues the vacuum sewerage system, an opportunity Nkosi used to tell Graves what he thought was wrong – in front of a sanitation specialist professor of civil engineering. Nkosi told me, in our interview, that Graves had allegedly replied that he was the only one who knew how vacuum sewerage works and that Nkosi should therefore keep his opinions to himself – which led Nkosi to decide to limit his contact with Graves, since he did not respect his work and views. Interestingly, Nkosi confessed that, after this incident, he had gone to work every day, had had a quick look at all the facilities, and then spent the rest of his day talking to local taxi drivers about cars, because he was “tired of politics”.

Once again revealing the lack of teamwork, Barry of Water and Sanitation and Graves of Housing each provided separate solutions to the issue of maintenance. When I spoke to Graves in June 2009, he said that, from the following month, there would be a permanent office within Kosovo where the residents could report on any maintenance problems. He said that the Housing Department would provide an office worker for a few hours every day to take complaints from the residents about water and sanitation issues. A list of emergency contact phone numbers would be made available to residents so that they would know whom to contact in the event of a problem. However, by the end of my research in July 2009, this plan had yet to be implemented.

Barry, in contrast, admitted to not having a solid maintenance plan for Kosovo, primarily, he said, because he still needed a couple months to develop the specifications and to advertise a tender for a contractor to take over the system’s maintenance. Having done all of this, he said, they might even then only perfect the system in a couple of years. Regarding these plans, he said:

We got the idea to outsource the maintenance, the community involvement, the telemetry, the monitoring of all the working parts of the system over the next two years. And hopefully that will tell us what the cheapest option is: should we do it in-house? Should we outsource? And what sort of community intervention has the best impact on the maintenance cost of this system? ... We need to keep track of all our interventions in the system.

While Barry and Graves were deciding how they should best implement their separate maintenance plans for the Kosovo water and sanitation infrastructure, however, residents of Kosovo continued to suffer from toilet blockages and overflows.

While I was in Kosovo there were some obvious operational problems with the new vacuum sewerage system. It was unclear whether the C of CT had the expertise to deal with the maintenance issues, or whether certain departments simply did not want the task, and so they passed the blame and work on to other departments. In all probability, it was a combination of both. One thing is clear: the residents could not use the new toilets because they were constantly in disrepair and the C of CT was avoiding addressing the problem. This could have been an opportunity where the three different parties — Graves from Housing, Barry and Smith from Water and Sanitation, and Nkosi — could have worked co-operatively on maintenance-related issues. Instead of doing so, however, the two C of CT departments passed the buck between them whilst denigrating the efforts of the one man hired to report and keep track of all the maintenance problems.

It is precisely because of such issues that Koenig (1988: 353) advocates that the development process should be negotiated throughout the duration of a project cycle. He contends, “Goals, meanings, and strategies are not simply negotiated once and accepted by all, but rather they are continually re-negotiated through the life of the project, as long as there are decisions to be made”. In other words, it is not enough to have a good project design; in addition, there must be co-operation among all the stakeholders where negotiation is encouraged for any joint decisions that need to be reached. Yet, as indicated here, it is impossible for negotiations to occur when departments work independently of one another and when the only source of regular on-the-ground information is completely ignored.

While it is clear that the C of CT departments failed to work co-operatively, what is less obvious is their failure to utilise a key resource during the entire development process: the ward councillor. Admittedly, Graves had said he did not want to use a participatory approach (see Chapter Five), but at the very least he could have worked closely with Kosovo’s elected representatives, first Chambers and then Gwetywa, who were ostensibly there to speak for

residents and to act in their interests. Like Nkosi, when I discussed it with him, Gwetywa expressed a feeling of exclusion from the development process. “You see, that project was actually decided in the board rooms. We, as the community, our input received deaf attention from the people who designed that project.” Gwetywa thought that, at the very least, the C of CT should have held meetings with him to discuss the needs and desires of residents, especially after his conflict with the Zukile faction had been extinguished. Instead, the meetings to which he was invited simply informed him about decisions that had already been made. As could be expected, this frustrated him: “We are not central in our development ... There is no input from the community who, at the end of the day, are going to live with this development for their entire lives and it is going to affect them on the ground ... We are not given choices”.

Inherent in effective co-operation is mutual aid and teamwork. The C of CT did not rely on the assistance the ward councillor said he was willing to provide. The ward councillor might have provided the necessary social information if they had used more inclusive, participatory approaches to the development project.

7.3 Conclusion: The Key to Success is Co-operation

As in any system, a development project is made up of different components and departments, each of which performs separate and unique tasks. While the specific tasks might vary from one department or person to another, they do not exist in isolation. Each must be cognizant of the others' role in carrying out and completing the project, not only to facilitate effective transitions from one phase to another, but to avoid tensions and the possibility of collapse. Furthermore, each component of the system must recognise the others' ability to perform a unique and useful task in providing all the information needed for the system to function. In short, for a system — in this case, development — to function appropriately and successfully, there must be co-operation. This is precisely what was missing among the various stakeholders of the Kosovo water and sanitation system upgrade. Because of the overall lack of co-operation, the system quite literally broke down.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

Like many failed development projects before it (see Chapter Three), Kosovo's water and sanitation system upgrade was, for residents and municipal officials, hugely disappointing and deemed to be unsuccessful. The developers intended to introduce a system that would provide improved access to water, as well as to provide a means for effluent disposal away from the settlement, so as to eliminate water-borne illness and foster healthy living. Despite the municipality's noble intentions, the upgrade failed to meet these objectives. Rather, it aggravated an already bad public health situation by producing sewage overflows, some trickling into residents' shacks, from the toilets and grey-water drains. This situation forced the residents to revert to using container toilets, despite their reputation for being unpleasant and symbolic of undignified living. I have argued that the main reasons for the system's failure lie in the municipality's inability to interact appropriately with all the stakeholders: officials did not employ participatory methods with the beneficiaries, nor did they adequately inform them about the upgrade; they did not make any attempt to gain an understanding of 'local knowledge' or history; and they did not function co-operatively with the other stakeholders.

While I have presented these three reasons for failure in individual chapters, in practice they were not isolated from one another. By failing to achieve any one of these objectives, the others were additionally less likely to be met. For this project to have succeeded, it would have required the municipality and all local stakeholders to work together as one unit, cognizant of each others' roles and of information that each could offer. Working co-operatively might have allowed the municipal officials to gain insight from the ward councillors and local officials such as CLOs about local history and knowledge. Their awareness of local rules and desires could have facilitated effective participation from residents, as well as helped to set up a *local* management system. Participation by residents, the acquisition of local knowledge, and the co-operation of stakeholders should have been fundamental from the very beginning, in order to make this project successful.

Knowing the reasons why this particular development project failed has implications for the field of development anthropology. Analysis of the processes whereby this project was undertaken

shows that there was no inherent reason why it could not have succeeded. All of the reasons why the Kosovo water and sanitation system project failed were preventable if only the developers had simply taken time to understand the local rules, desires, and history, as well as adequately to involve local people throughout the project cycle. Because developers do not always have the training to access local knowledge and employ participatory methods, social anthropologists can be useful human resources for development projects. In development contexts, such as Kosovo, anthropologists have the potential to see cultural constructs and inform any development plans (Goldschmidt, 1986).

One of the primary reasons development projects have unforeseen consequences, such as the broken system in Kosovo, is because they are naively conceived (Curtis, 1985). However, anthropologists have the potential to identify potentially unforeseen consequences and to reduce, even prevent, the harm development projects might do (Gow, 2002). This can be done by using participant observation and asking deep, probing questions, while interacting with the intended beneficiaries. By using such methods, anthropologists are able to gain access to local knowledge and history, as well as to understand local people's desires for how they might want to participate in such a development project.

My own research project fell short of the ideal in that I did not have the opportunity to make recommendations to the municipality, see them implemented, and subsequently study and critique the effects. However, it does provide a starting point for developers who intend to implement a similar upgrade in a large, densely populated informal settlement. This dissertation demonstrates and reiterates some of the common pitfalls development programmes face. It suggests what might be done to avoid them. Most importantly, it proposes that development programmes should not simply be deemed as lost causes and abandoned – as so much of the post-development literature seems to imply. Rather, it suggests that developers should learn to work together as one unit, in order to decode local knowledge and employ participatory methods, and to use the skills of anthropological research to be able to do that.

APPENDIX I

Brief from Project Leader of Water Research Commission (WRC) Project

In recent decades the rapid growth of urban centres in South Africa has led to an increased demand for water and sanitation systems. This has resulted in difficulties for municipalities and provincial governments that are trying to keep up with the pace of urban growth and provide viable and inexpensive sewerage services, particularly in informal settlements that are densely populated.

The cost of implementing the standard gravity sewerage systems for all infrastructure upgrades has become too great. Consequently, the Water Research Commission Project has been trying to improve waterborne sanitation in South Africa by looking at alternatives to conventional sewerage systems. One such alternative is the vacuum sewerage system that has already been piloted in Kosovo Informal Settlement in Cape Town.

Professor Neil Armitage has asked a student of social anthropology to conduct a six week ethnographically based study during June/July 2009 in Kosovo informal settlement and to produce a report for the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Cape Town – at most two weeks after the fieldwork has been completed. The overall goal is to assess the success – or otherwise – of a recent upgrade to the settlement in order to be able to guide the Water Research Commission Project as to whether similar upgrade processes should and could be implemented in other informal settlements.

To do the above will require that you find the necessary means to establish the social and cultural acceptability to residents and local level municipal officials of the upgrade, particularly, but not exclusively, as regards the provision of toilets, taps, washbasins/troughs and grey water disposal facilities.

The brief for the study requires you to research residents' and local officials' views of the utility – or not – of the toilets, taps, washbasins/troughs and grey water disposal facilities that have been

provided, as well as the ways those are managed and the extent to which they believe the facilities' management might be revised to accommodate residents' needs and use patterns/expectations.

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