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The Women's Health Project: A Case Study of Organisational Rupture
in a Time of Transition

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

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

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**A case study of the Women's Health Project:
organisational rupture in a time of transition**

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Abstract

Using a case study approach, the research explores social movement, resource mobilisation and feminist organisational theories to provide a framework for understanding the growth, development and demise of a Johannesburg-based social movement organisation that was operational between 1991 and 2004.

The research explores the notion that although the Women's Health Project was highly successful in policy terms, it had a number of institutional weaknesses that lead to its demise. The research hypothesis is that WHP owed its policy success to the political opportunity structure (POS) that was prevalent in the early to mid 1990s, but that this policy success was mediated by WHP's internal organisational weaknesses.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research seeks to understand why an organisation that was able to influence a range of policies pertaining to women's health in the early 1990s was unable to maintain itself in post-apartheid South Africa. At the heart of the question is a concern about what factors make social movement organisations (SMOs) sustainable¹. The subject of this study is the Women's Health Project (WHP).

In the last fifteen years the political landscape in South Africa has altered dramatically. In the early 1990s the country was in the midst of a transition: the apartheid era was almost over and hopes were high that a new democratic dispensation would soon be in place. WHP was born during this historical moment.

The nineties saw the normalisation of life in the country: the state and communities began the process of demobilisation (Scharf 2000: 3; Williams 2005: 5), and the new government led by the African National Congress (ANC) had the formidable task of reconciling the past with the present and the future (Gibson 2004a: 130).

The project of nation-building (as it soon came to be called) touched on all aspects of South African life, from leisure and recreation to politics and the media to the reconstruction of the state through the consolidation of the numerous government departments and former homeland structures (Moodley and Adam 2000: 55).

The civil society sector, which had once been active in opposing apartheid and providing services to marginalised communities, was forced to re-evaluate its role. Organisations that had previously fought against the state found themselves having to learn how to engage with the state in order to achieve shared goals. Within a few short years the state had gone from foe to friend (Ballard, Habib et al. 2003).

¹ This term will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three. However, for purposes of clarity an initial definition is provided here. The term social movement organisation (SMO) is used to describe a grouping that promotes the objectives of a broader social movement. SMOs explicitly align themselves to a particular social movement and exist to carry forward the objectives of that movement. In the case of the Women's Health Project, the larger social movement to which the group belonged was the women's movement.

Some organisations that had fought apartheid throughout the 1980s responded to the change in government by disbanding. For example, the United Democratic Front (UDF) argued that their role in bringing about change was over. As such, they closed their doors in 1991 (Good 2005: 13). The organisation encouraged their members to join the newly legal ANC and participate in a more normalised civic life. Other groups simply ran out of funding when donors shifted their support to the newly democratic state. Thus, without consciously deciding to close down, many simply went out of business (Habib and Kotzé 2002: 15; IDASA and CORE 2001: 7)

The new state created enabling legislation that made it easier for non-governmental organisation to operate, and soon began to fund the work of many NGOs either through sub-contracting agreements or through the numerous agencies that it established to distribute funds.² This increase in funding was particularly useful for those NGOs that provided social services of a welfarist nature (Habib and Kotzé 2002: 15 - 17).

However, by the end of the 1990s, three trends were emerging. Firstly a set of policy groups had evolved that played an important role in influencing the state but had been able to maintain relatively friendly relations with those in power. Secondly, a number of NGOs had developed that were dependent on the state for funding and essentially worked as contractors- providing services to communities on behalf of the state. Lastly there emerged a number of radical and oppositional social movements that were able to mobilise relatively large numbers of people (Ibid).

WHP had characteristics of all three types of organisations. The group had lobbied successfully for a number of important policies and laws in the mid-1990s and was closely aligned with a number of senior women within the ruling party. At the same time, as the decade had worn on, and foreign funding flows to NGOs had decreased, WHP had fought for and won tenders with various government departments.

² Habib and Kotze note that the Non-Profit Sector Partnerships (NPPs) engagement with government “created a new legal and fiscal space for CSOs to operate in. This included issues of registration of CSOs, tax exemptions, as well as the establishment of the National Development Agency (NDA) that would act as a conduit for development funding to CSOs” (2003: 18).

Therefore the group was the recipient of government funds and/or engaged with the state in a contractor-contractee relationship in a few projects.

WHP had also challenged the state to improve its track record in respect of women's rights, particularly in relation to the implementation of the legalisation of abortion. WHP had also developed a sexual rights campaign that was highly critical of the patriarchal structures and values that underpinned South African society.

But WHP did not mount the types of radical challenges that newer social movement organisations such as the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) the Homeless People's Federation (HPF), the Landless People's Movement (LPM) and the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) had waged against the state. WHP had not developed a sophisticated critique of the political economy of post-apartheid South Africa, and did not have the numbers – nor seemingly the inclination – to be as confrontational as the groups that emerged in the late 1990s and in the early years of the new millennium.³

Yet WHP was an important institution. Its life spanned a two decades that were important for South Africa. In the process of pushing for women's rights to access health services, WHP succeeded in bring about important policy changes that improved the quality of women's lives. When the organisation closed its doors in September 2004, many within the NGO community talked about the important lessons the group had to teach others about how to mobilise support and win difficult battles for women's rights (Harris 2004a; Scheider 2004). The aim of this research is to investigate some of these lessons.

McAdam (1999) has argued that the survival of social movement organisations (SMOs) – even in forms that may be different from their original purposes – is vital to the existence of social movements themselves (McAdam 1999: 358). Thus political scientists and sociologists have been interested understanding what makes social movements survive. This paper explores these debates using a case study approach.

³ For more detailed analyses of these and other social movements in the post-apartheid era, and on these groups in particular see the website of the Centre for Civil Society at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (<http://www.css.ac.za>).

The research has two inter-related arguments. The first is that WHP closed its doors in 2004 because it was incapable of adapting to the changing nature of relationships between the post-apartheid state and social movement organisations between 1994 and 2004.

In particular, the paper suggests that WHP was unable to adapt to the fact that after 1996, and particularly after 1998 when the Employment Equity Act was passed, the ANC ideology of non-racialism was replaced by a growing commitment to recognising what Moodley and Adam (2000) refer to as “ethno racial identities”.⁴ The new approach to race demanded that organisations and individuals demonstrate visible signs of their commitment to racial (and to a lesser extent gender) transformation. This put pressure on many organisations to seek black leadership and to undertake exercises aimed at internal restructuring – known in the South African political lexicon as ‘transformation.’

In order to fully explore this hypothesis, the paper will examine the political opportunity structure (POS) in order to understand the constraints and opportunities that were available to WHP both linked to race but also linked to its decreasing ability to connect with activists from the women’s movement who had joined the state after 1994.

According to political process theorists, the POS entails a) the degree of openness of the state towards social movements in general, b) SMO access to policy and political processes, c) SMO ability to exploit divisions amongst the elite, and d) public opinion towards the protesting group and/or the issues they advocate (Eisinger 1973: 17; Meyer 2002: 12; 1998).

⁴ For Moodley and the term ethno-racialism derives from the notion that, “Civic nationalism includes everyone regardless of origin while ethnic nationalism always excludes ‘others’. Civic nationalism is based on citizenship and equal rights for all residents. Patriotism results from pride in belonging to a common state in which citizens actively practice their civil rights in a democratic culture with equal opportunities” (2000: 54). The year 1996 is important because it is the year in which the TRC began to hold hearings across the country. These hearings were important for opening up national debate and dialogue about race and racism.

These political scientists and social movement theorists have tended to look closely at each of these elements in their analyses, almost always to the exclusion of issues related to how organisations themselves function. The analysis of institutions has largely been left to sociologists (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Selznick 1948; Zald and Ash 1966). As a result there has been a tendency within political science to emphasise grand contextual issues in understanding social movement organisation's successes and failures. Therefore the internal power dynamics within social movement organisations have rarely received rigorous analysis, particularly in African contexts.

The argument suggests that WHP's inability to adapt to the new environment emanated from internal weaknesses. The paper posits that these weaknesses were primarily due to the fact that its collectivist-democratic organisational type [elaborated in Rothschild-Whitt's (1979) model] encouraged the questioning of authority and lead to divisions and tensions. It is argued that this lead to "oligarchisation", "radicalisation" and ultimately demise (Zald and Ash 1966: 339).

In their seminal piece, "Social Movement Organisations: Growth, Decay and Change" Zald and Ash built on the work of Max Weber (1946), and Roberto Michels (1949), calling it the Weber-Michels model. According to the Weber-Michels model, "As a movement organisation attains a social base in the society, as the original charismatic leadership is replaced, a bureaucratic structure emerges and a general accommodation to the society occurs" (1966: 327). This is described as organisational maintenance. Zald and Ash argue that most SMOs become more conservative as they grow. Thus, "the primary activity of the organisation becomes the maintenance of membership, funds, and other requirements of organisational existence" (1966: 328). Based on the Weber-Michels model, Zald and Ash developed a series of more specific predictions about growth and change within SMOs, which they suggested could form the basis of further study. One proposition in their essay is critical to this case study. They suggest that, "the more the ideology of the movement organisation leads to the questioning of the bases of authority, the greater the likelihood of factions and splitting" (1966: 328).

This proposition is explored in detail in this case study. It is argued that as the organisation matured, and the political environment changed, the basis of the authority of the white leadership was increasingly under attack.

Ultimately then, it is posited that a combination of internal and external factors led to the demise of WHP. It is argued that the point at which the political opportunity structure for WHP's survival met the internal weaknesses of the group represented a 'rupture' from which the organisation could not recover. The paper will explore the ways in which this rupture occurred, and its consequences for the organisation.

1.1 Outline of Thesis

The thesis seeks to bridge the gap between studies of the political opportunity structure and organisational analyses. The research is divided into three sections that explore the links between the macro-level political opportunity structure for social movement success, and the micro-level capacity of social movement organisation to manage their internal affairs.

Part A introduces the study and contextualises the issues for the reader. It contains Chapter One, which is the introduction, as well as Chapter Two, which provides a literature review. Chapter One outlines the reasons why the case study was selected, and lays out the methods used to conduct the research. Chapter Two then looks at wider debates about social movement organisations that have emerged in the last thirty years globally and in the last ten years within South Africa. The chapter also describes the political opportunity structure for social movements operating in the South African context between 1990 and 2005.

Part B describes WHP in detail. Part B contains two chapters. Chapter Three describes WHP, outlining its vision and mission examining its activities in the years 1990 - 2004. This chapter includes a detailed analysis of the work of the WHP in four areas: women's health policy, abortion law advocacy, population policy and sexual and reproductive health and rights campaigning.

Chapter Four then presents an internal examination of the organisational processes and practices of WHP. In particular, the chapter explores organisational culture and

values, leadership, key organisational policies, and staff tensions related to identity – in particular race, class and gender.

Part C is an analysis the hypothesis of the study. Chapter Five uses Rothschild-Whitt's (1979) model of collectivist-democratic organisations to frame a discussion that explains the relationship between Whip's struggles with internal challenges and how these struggles impacted on the ability of the organisation to sustain itself in the long term.

Chapter Six draws conclusions based on the analysis in chapter five, and looks at how the case can offer guidance to organisations that are similar to WHP in terms of their mission and objectives as well as their links to broader social movements.

1.2 Rationale for this Research

At its peak, WHP was critical in setting the agenda for women's health policy at a national level. The organisation was also central to drafting and implementing a raft of policies and laws pertaining to women's health in the mid-nineties. Most notably, WHP was at the forefront of the successful campaign to legalise abortion in South Africa, which culminated in the passage of the choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act in 1996.

Members of WHP sat on numerous task forces and working groups at national level, and had significant access to senior members of government and the ruling party. WHP was also involved in coalitions of like-minded NGOs and part of the broader social movement that supported the shift from an apartheid state to a democratic dispensation.

Internationally the group garnered attention through its participation in think tanks and reference groups convened by prestigious institutions such as Harvard University and the World Health Organisation (WHO). WHP also played important roles at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994, and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 (Women's Health Project 1995a).

Given the Project's standing in national and international circles, there was dismay at the announcement that the organisation had closed its doors in September 2004 (Scheider 2004). Yet as this case study illustrates those who were close to the Project were not surprised by its closure. Indeed many wondered how the group had managed to survive for so long given some of the internal troubles it had faced and given how much the political landscape had changed since WHP was founded (Boucher, 2004).

1.3 Research Methodology

The research uses case study methodology to further its aims. Yin (1984: 23) describes the case study as a research strategy that focuses on understanding the dynamics present within a single setting – that is a 'case'. A case can be an individual, an institution or a group, covering settings as diverse as hospital wards and economic regions. A case study seeks to investigate a specific setting in order to answer a set of research questions (Gillham 2000). Case studies can employ either one or multiple levels of analysis within a single study. For example, the authors of *'Doing' organizational culture in the Saturn Corporation* employ a variety of methods including content analysis of Saturn advertisements, and discourse analysis of 'storytelling' by employees and clients of the corporation (Mills, Boylestein et al. 2001). Indeed the use of multiple sources of evidence is a characteristic of sound case study research (Stake 1995; Yin 1995).

Case studies may use either qualitative or quantitative methods. Regardless of whether they take a qualitative or quantitative approach, Tellis (1997) notes that case studies rely on combining data collection methods such as archival research, interviews, questionnaires, and observation. Within the field of political science, examples of case study research may examine individual decisions that leaders may have made (for example the Cuban missile crisis of 1962), or may look at states or

government policies or political parties, organisations and movements and how they function.⁵

Within feminist organisational theory, there are numerous examples of case studies. Feminists have effectively employed case studies to examine a range of organisations. Martin, Knopoff et al., (1998) have looked at alternatives to bureaucratic impersonality and emotional labour at The Body Shop, while Gottfried & Weiss have studied Purdue University's Council on the Status of Women (1994). Jo Freeman's seminal book on women's organising in 1975 included a number of feminist case studies including a detailed description of the bureaucratic style of the National Organisation of Women, one of America's largest women's rights lobbying groups (Freeman 1975).

Case studies can be used to accomplish a number of aims. Some studies are descriptive, for example, Searles' and Berger's study of the self-defence movements in the United States (1987). Other case studies seek to build theory by using cases to illustrate more general trends. For example Joffe et al (2004) examine the pro-choice movement in order to theorise about the possibilities of partnerships between medical practitioners and 'lay activists' in other health arenas (Joffe, Weitz et al. 2004).

According to Yin (1995: 23) case study research is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

Critics of case study methods have argued that studying a small number of cases does not offer sufficient grounds for reliability or generalisability of findings. Others have suggested that as the researcher is exposed to the subjects within the case in a relatively intense manner, they often become biased (Gillham 2000: 27).

⁵ For examples of case studies in political science see Harris, R. (2004b). *A case study in the banning of political parties: the pan-Arab movement El Ard and the Israeli supreme court*. Express O Preprint Series. Tel Aviv, Berkeley., as well as Piron, L.-H. and A. Norton (2004). *Politics and the PRSP approach: Uganda case study*. Working Paper 240. London, Overseas Development Institute.

Despite this, the many proponents of case study research suggest that the method allows for a close-up study of existing phenomena (Gillham 2000; Judd, Smith et al. 1991; Reinharz 1992; Yin 1995). Most importantly, for the purposes of this study, using a case study approach is useful for both describing social movement organisations and for and developing a theory that explains phenomena within them. The research involves the production of theory based on a case. This is often called, *grounded* or *emergent* theory. This is an unusual but fitting mode of research because of the subject involved. Few studies of African feminist organising exist, and fewer still speak to the experience of post-colonial African women's experiences within organisational contexts. African feminist literature is primarily concerned with theorising as related to identity and the role of women vis-à-vis the state. Feminist examinations of informal and organizational organising are almost non-existent.

Eisenhardt (1989: 532) proposes that a hallmark of grounded theory is that the researcher does not begin with “a priori theoretical notions (whether derived from the literature or not) – because until you ... understand the context, you won't know what theories (explanations) work best ” This is supported by Dick (2005) who argues that “grounded theory begins with a research situation” (2005: <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/grounded.html>). Dick further contends that the role of the researcher is not to test a hypothesis but rather to find out what is happening in that situation and find a theory that fits (Ibid).

The theory emerges from a rigorous process of testing categories or themes within the case itself – either between interviews, or across them. In Dick's analysis, constant comparison is at the heart of the process of grounded theory building. In this process, Dick suggests, “Theory emerges quickly. When it has begun to emerge you compare data to theory” (Ibid).

Like Dick, Eisenhardt (1989) cautions against conducting theory-building case research with a hypothesis. Rather, she asserts “theory building research is begun as close as possible to the ideal of no theory under consideration and no hypotheses to test. Admittedly it is impossible to achieve this ideal of a clean theoretical slate. Nonetheless attempting to approach this ideal is important because preordained theoretical perspectives or propositions may bias and limit the findings. Thus

investigators should formulate a research problem, and possibly specify some potentially important variables, with some reference to extant literature” (1989: 536).

The architects of grounded theory are Glaser and Strauss (1967) who argued that joint collection, coding and analysis of data is important. This differs greatly from conventional methods whether these are three distinct steps. They suggest that combining the steps enhances the ability of the researcher to theorise from their findings. Eisenhardt suggests that keeping a set of field notes in which the researcher “reacts rather than sifts out what may seem to be important” (1967: 539).

This requires the researcher to develop a methodology of taking notes that allows for simultaneous coding as themes emerge. Once the first interview has been conducted, it may begin to serve as a template against which to measure other responses – it is from here that your theory building begins. After some time, one category or theme will emerge with a high frequency and a high level of connectedness to other themes that are emerging. This is then called the core category.

During this phase, Eisenhardt (1989) suggests that asking questions such as, “What am I learning?” and ‘How does this case differ from the last?’ is essential. This forces the researcher to begin analysis whilst collecting the data, and will go some way towards refining his/her thinking. This is known as *coding*. As Dick notes, coding makes visible some of the components of your theory, while memoing adds the relationships that link the themes together. This has the advantage of allowing the researcher to make adjustments during the data collection process. “These adjustments can be the addition of cases to probe particular themes which emerge” (1989: 560).

Eisenhardt goes on to argue that it is legitimate to add cases or alter the course whilst collecting data. For research that specifically aims to build theory, the need for flexibility is primary. However, she cautions that flexibility is not a licence to be unsystematic. Rather this flexibility is controlled opportunism in which researchers take advantage of the uniqueness of a specific case and the emergence of new themes to improve resultant theory” (Eisenhardt 1989: 539).

Design

A snowball sampling technique was used for identifying both key informants and pertinent documents. Twelve present and former employees were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire covering four core sets of questions: (1) personal history, (2) current job description/ duties (3) views on issues of management, structure and hierarchy within the organisation, (4) views on race, gender and class politics both broadly as well as within the organisation.

Numerous documents were also analysed including publications by WHP staff, reports in the media, parliamentary submissions, strategic planning documents, organisational change workshop reports, etc. The data from both interviews and documents was aggregated, coded and analysed simultaneously using overlapping techniques as described above.

1.4 Summary

Initially this research was undertaken in order to develop a feminist case study of the Women's Health Project. The aim of the research was to undertake an organisational analysis of the vision, mission and practices of the WHP from a feminist perspective. The research objectives were drawn up in early 2003 with the intention of pursuing this line of inquiry. At the time there was no threat that WHP would close.

As the interviews proceeded, it became clear that the real story of WHP was not about whether or not it was feminist. The themes that were emerging from the interviews all pertained to strange contradiction that characterised the Project – while it was receiving international accolades and national recognition for its policy and research work, it seemed in an almost constant state of internal turmoil and crisis. In short, the study increasingly was concerned with the disparities between the internal and external faces of the organisation.

As the case study progressed it seemed that the key to understanding WHP lay in understanding the relationship between its successes in the external policy arena and its failures in the organisational realm. In conversations with colleagues in the NGO sector this split between the external and the internal seemed to find resonance. The

nature of the relationship between the state and civil society in South Africa had changed so fundamentally and so quickly that across sectors many NGOs were grappling with similar challenges.

Although the focus of this research is WHP, it is hoped that others can learn from the exploration of the argument that organisational sustainability is not guaranteed to social movement organisations that have strong policy-making skills and close ties to political elites. This thesis demonstrates that sustainability requires well-functioning and coherent organisational processes and practices as well as policy-making skills and political connections. Most importantly however, the thesis looks at why it is important for social movement organisations to respond to political change.

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Chapter 2: Theories of social movements

Numerous social scientists have sought to understand what makes change happen. Some have looked simply to political matters, examining issues of protest and the way that groups frame problems (Snow and Benford 1988). Others have been more concerned with sociological issues such as how individuals behave within a group (McAdam 1982). A growing number have also looked systematically at issues related to how social movements actually sustain themselves over time (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Zald and Ash 1966).

There are three distinct but interconnected blocs of theorising within social movement theory. In the first instance social movement theorists have sought to understand the political opportunity structure (POS) of a given environment. The POS comprises three primary units of analysis; inclusivity/exclusivity of elite towards opposition or challenge, opportunities and constraints on an SMO, and internal dynamics within an SMO that impact its ability to frame problems and interact with the environment. The POS will be discussed in detail in Chapter four. The second area that SMT examines is resource mobilisation. Resource mobilisation theorists have been interested in assessing the capacity of organisations to mobilise internal and external resources to support their cause, given the POS. The last factor that SMT scholars have studied is framing. SMT scholars interested in political framing processes have been interested in how groups demonstrate their own credibility by talking locating themselves in particular ways in the political and social discourse. Frame theorists suggest that framing represents SMOs efforts to describe social problems in ways that resonate with potential participants. They suggest that the ability to do this generates support and/or mobilisation, building solidarity, trust and loyalty, and differentiating the SMO from others.

In charting the historical development of social movement theory the chapter places WHP within the broader context of social movement theory internationally. The chapter that follows then describes the emergence of WHP in the South African social and political context.

2.1 Defining social movements and organisations

In their seminal essay “Social movement Organisations: Growth, Decay and Change” (1966) Zald and Ash define a social movement as “a purposive and collective attempt of a number of people to change individuals or societal institutions or structures” (329). Some (Blumer 1969: 99) have argued that social movements should be seen as long-term struggles, whilst others view them as “temporary public spaces, moments of collective creation that provide societies with ideas, identities and even ideals (Eyerman and Jamison 1991: 4)

Others (McAdam 1982; Zald 1996) have argued that social movements comprise formal organisations such as churches, trade unions and political parties. Others suggest that movements are often born out of informal interaction networks such as groups of friends, or people who share common interests which can later be mobilised into explicit identities (Melucci 1996: 66).

Some definitions suggest that social movements must have progressive goals, whereas others hold to the view that even fascists who come together for a common purpose, using tactics of social mobilisation can represent a social movement. Thus as Habermas (1987) suggests, social movements can be seen as shaping public opinion, and generating political values and norms that are then used to influence the state.⁶

Della Porta and Diani, (1999) have been critical contributors to the debate. They suggest that by their very nature, social movements comprise several organisations rather than a single grouping. They argue that movements are “by definition fluid phenomena” (cited in Mayo, 2005, p 56). So for example, the Treatment Action

⁶ Habermas argued that civil society represented a ‘public sphere’ where peers could discuss matters of mutual concern. Habermas suggested that norms, laws and policies *generated* as well as were *generated by* discussion. Habermas’ postulated that the act of communicating and publicly articulating positions had an effect on the public sphere and was a critical function of civil society. He suggested that public discourse is constitutive of civil society, further suggesting that this discourse spanned the distance within and across associations, movements, religious organisations, clubs, local organisations or concerned citizens and informal social networks.’ His concept was that civil society was a ‘counter-public’ that existed separately from and in addition to a wider set of institutionalised civil and political publics such as legislatures and constitutional courts. In Habermas’ estimation, public opinion was critical to the policing of those who held positions of power. He also suggested that civil society encompassed “all associational activity between citizen and the state”

Campaign (TAC), although often referred to as a movement, would actually represent one *social movement organisation* within a larger social movement for health as a human right.⁷

Increasingly scholars are seeing social movements as networks. Using the metaphor of computer mediated communication to discuss social movements. A number of authors (Diani, 1999; Wellman et al., 1996; Cerulo, 1997) have also examined the ways in which the growing use of the internet and email as organizing tools have impacted on social mobilization in the West. While this is certainly not the case in any meaningful way in the African context, the metaphor is a useful one because it demonstrates the interconnected nature of social movements and social movement actors. As Diani (1999) notes, “We can regard social movements as networks of relationships which connect informally - i.e., without procedural norms or formal organisational bindings - a multiplicity of individuals and organisations who share a distinctive collective identity, and interact around conflictual issues” (Diani 1999: 4).

Diani (1999) notes, “Treating movements as networks also makes the relationship between movements and their spatial location most explicit. Contemporary social movements have developed historically in parallel to the emergence of a public sphere located in specific physical and cultural spaces, namely, in societies defined by national boundaries, specific infrastructures and common cultural traits” (Diani 1999: 2).

Diani’s reminder that social movements have been tied to particular locations and influenced by their physical and spatial realities raises some important issues in the South African context. In the 1980s social movements operated like networks that were often quite specific to the community in which they were located. Yet given the fact that apartheid was the over-arching structure of oppression, activists formed common traits and approaches across communities. Thus there are distinctly South

⁷ TAC is a South African NGO that was founded in 1999 to advocate for treatment access for people living with HIV and AIDS. The group has litigated against the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of South Africa and the Government of South Africa at different points, in high profile and controversial advocacy campaigns. In 2003, the organization was largely responsible for the South African government’s decision to provide free antiretroviral therapy at all government hospitals.

African modes of activism that have fuelled and energised all its social movements. Furthermore the network approach suggests that there are individuals and organisations that speak to one another across communities and issues because they have the same general set of analyses and strategies.

If movements are networks then social movement organisations represent the nodal points of activity, the engines that drive forward the general aims of the group. Zald and Ash (1966), suggested that SMOs were the manifestation of social movements. They noted that, “although the organisations through which social movements can manifest themselves may have bureaucratic features, analytically they differ from ‘full-blown’ bureaucratic organisations in two ways. First, they have goals aimed at changing the society and its members; they wish to restructure society or individuals, not provide it or them with a regular service (as is typical of bureaucracies).” (p. 329)

Hence social movement organisations are defined classically as organisations that are fundamentally different from traditional bureaucracies because their mission is different. They exist not to service clients, but to restructure society. The implication of this is that once SMOs accomplish their tasks, and achieve the goals for which they have been established, they can cease to exist.

Yet as the Weber-Michels model suggests, once SMOs attain a degree of success they rapidly become bureaucratic, particularly as people who do not share the original vision replace the original leadership. The model suggests that members of the group “have a stake in preserving the organisation, regardless of its ability to attain goals” (Zald and Ash 1966: 327). The section below looks at debates about resource mobilisation and framing in greater detail.

2.2 Major debates and schools of thought on social movements and organisations

The contemporary study of social movements originated in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s. At the time a number of political scientists and sociologists were concerned with understanding why people got involved in collective social activities. They emerged as collective behaviourists, academics who were deeply influenced by

Talcott Parsons, who was a prominent functionalist sociologist. Indeed Parsons has been described as ‘the midwife of modern sociology.’⁸

2.2.1 *Collective Behaviour Theory*

Collective behaviourists saw social movements as organised but sporadic groupings of people who challenged power – usually in the margins of society. A number of collective behaviourists saw social movements as problematic, even anti-democratic. Collective behaviourists were concerned about the emotional nature of protest action, suggesting that protesters were often irrational and dangerous. For example, Kornhauser’s (1959) “mass society” theory, depicted protesters as alienated products of abnormal nation-states. Like Parsons, Kornhauser saw fascism and communism as evidence of what happens when large numbers of people are pathologically disillusioned.

The question of social order concerned Parsons who asked, “How, if individuals were really separate entities pursuing their self-interest, there could be any order at all: How could there be anything but disorder?” (Johnson 1993: 116). Parsons suggested that the reason why society was not in chaos was because social values mediated individuals self interest. The theory went that, “People act on the basis of their values; their actions are oriented and constrained by the values and norms of people around them; and these norms and values are the basis of social order” (Knapp 1994: 191 - 192). Thus, for many US-based structuralists in the 1950s, social protest was seen as deviant because it detracted from the ‘normal’ functioning of society. Picketing and protesting were seen as anti-democratic because they deliberately upset the balance of society.

However, in the 1960s, the functionalist approach was discredited. The theory failed to explain the social and political upheavals that rocked the country, and the increasingly volatile and disorderly nature of protest. The people protesting were middle class, seemingly normal, and often young.

⁸ Talcott Parsons (1902-1979, United States) was a structural functionalist within sociological thought. He dominated sociology in the United States for many years, coming into disfavour in the 1960 and 1970s. In sociology today, his approach is generally treated as outmoded, although some of his ideas are now being viewed more favourably, and perhaps in a less conservative context than they were originally presented.

With structuralism, functionalism and collective behaviourism discredited, American sociologists began searching for other ways of understanding social action. Clearly they now understood that people were willing to act in groups to push for radical changes to their societies. Yet how these actions came to be undertaken and how they grew to influence others increasingly became the subject of debate and discussion in the 1960s.

It was clear that the generation of protesters who were taking to the streets to march for women's rights, and against the Vietnam War and segregation saw participation in social movements as an expression of political identity. They simply chose to do it from outside the traditionally defined boundaries of the political sphere.

At the same time that these societal shifts were occurring, the economist Olson produced a piece of work that fundamentally altered the discourse on social action. In *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and theory of Groups* (1965) Olson argued that individuals do not rationally participate in collective action unless the benefits of their participation outweigh the costs (Olson 1965: 2).

Whilst other theorists had always assumed that individuals acted together in groups based on their collective interests, Olson suggested the opposite. Olson's primary innovation was to suggest that collective *inaction* was natural and that action needed explaining. This was in direct contrast to the collective behaviourist approach, which emphasized the irrationality and emotion, involved in protest action. Olson argued that participation in large groups occurs only rarely because the benefits received by individual participants is only an average of the total benefits received by the group. Thus the average individual benefit is inversely related to the size of the group. Mancur argued that participation in a mass organization was therefore, rarely a rational choice and that in most instances people would choose not to participate in social movements unless they could see a direct and significant individual benefit (pp. 4 – 7).

2.2.2 Rational Actor Approach

This heralded the introduction of what is now called the 'rational actor approach'. This theory was significant to studies of social movements. Yet Olson had his share of critics. The approach "has been described as "methodological individualism".⁹ Critics have suggested that the approach is reductionist. In the first instance it denies the fact that individuals – even those who are defined as rational – make decisions both for themselves and with the interests of others in mind. Most importantly, the approach has been said to encourage, " A radical decontextualisation of choice and actions, excluding from view many of the factors that define a particular action as 'rational'" (Petrzelka and Bell 2000).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s theorists grappled with how to apply the rational actor approach to the reality of social movements. If Olson's theory was correct then why would people ever participate in social movements?

2.2.3 Resource Mobilisation Theory

Influenced by sociologists such as Max Weber, organisational studies theorists such as Michel and the burgeoning field of economics, a new area of analysis emerged in the 1970s: Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT). Resource mobilization theorists saw collective action as the reasonable response of actors who took advantage of new institutional and political realities to drive forward agendas from outside the conventionally defined boundaries of political life when and where the opportunities presented themselves. Resource Mobilization scholars such as McCarthy and Zald (1973;1977) suggested that in order to understand why people engage in social movements it was important to understand not only the individuals who participated in them but also the organisations that made up social movements.

They suggested that well organized social movements could overcome the challenges

⁹ This doctrine was introduced Max Weber, in the first chapter of *Economy and Society* (1968 [1922]). Weber argues that social phenomena must be explained by showing how they result from the actions of individuals, which in turn must be explained through reference to the motives of individual actors. Methodological individualism involves a commitment to ensuring that explanations of "macro" social phenomena must be supplied with "micro" foundations, ones that specify an action-theoretic mechanism (Alexander, 1987). See <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/methodological-individualism/> for more a fuller description.

put forward by Olson. In other words collective action made *more* sense if it was undertaken by multiple groups rather than simply by individuals. Groups could make a better case representing the interests of others than individuals could.

Yet what was useful about Olson's ideas for RMT was the emphasis on rational actions, which was a move away from the emotionalism of collective behaviourists. As Bate, Bevan et al (2003) have noted, "RM theory does not deny the importance of feelings or the need for them to be present in social movement action but merely asserts that they will not produce a movement unless they are organised and properly resourced" (2003: 16).

The primary critique of RMT approach is that it is far more concerned with *how* SMOs are managed and maintained, than *why* they emerge in the first place. Like rational actor theory, the approach is concerned with exploring technical unit-based challenges (looking at individuals or at individual organisations) rather than at the broader political and social trends related to social mobilisation. To respond to this critique a number of social movement theorists evolved into New Social Movement (NSM) theorists.

2.2.4 New Social Movement Theory

At the same time that resource mobilization theorists were exploring these questions in America, NSM theorists were emerging in Europe. These academics were interested in looking at the movements that had emerged in Europe linked to the environment, peace, and nuclear power. They suggested that these groups had arisen in response to the expansion of the state into areas of life that were at one time considered private (Cohen 1985). Because these organisations did not have access to power in the same way that trade unions, political parties and older movements did, they represented new forms of organizing and new channels for voicing the concerns of the public.

The primary difference between the two schools of thought was that resource mobilization theorists saw SMOs as groups established to accomplish particular goals, while NSM theorists saw social movements as a consequence or result of the

political, social and economic arrangements of particular societies.¹⁰ Mayo (2005) has suggested that while Americans have been interested in the mechanics of social movements, European theorists have sought to understand questions of political philosophy, looking at why movements begin in the first place.

More recently, scholars of social movements have begun to look at the interactions between and across movements. Whereas traditional scholarship has looked at social movements as discrete sets of actors, engaged in activism around a set of issues that are theme-specific, e.g. poverty, women's rights or the environment, contemporary analyses have suggested that social movements are often connected by resources and networks, particularly through the participation of particular individuals over the course of time.

McAdam's (1988) study of the civil rights movement is a solid case in point. McAdam studied a group of white American university students who had participated in the Freedom Summer campaign of 1964, which saw thousands of college students from the northern states of the USA work and live in communities in the southern States in order to challenge the Jim Crow segregation laws.¹¹ McAdam traced these students over the course of 20 years and found that this initial involvement in the civil rights movement spurred further involvement in a number of movements including the peace movement against the Vietnam War, the women's movement, and a range of other local and community movements (McAdam 1988).

McAdam's research points to interesting lessons for social movement scholars and actors. In particular his point that social movements rely on existing social networks (for example the civil rights organisations drew upon black churches for membership and organising and fundraising strategies) demonstrates that social movements do not simply pop up in a particular political moment. Rather they emerge from other forms

¹⁰ This is well explained in the work of **Social Movement Organisations and Collective Action in Mexico: a Comparative Analysis of Urban and Rural Cases**. Jeffrey Beasley, University of Kansas. <http://136.142.158.105/LASA97/beasley.pdf>

¹¹ The segregation laws valid in the southern states of America were so named after a popular 19th century minstrel song that stereotyped African Americans. Jim Crow came to personify the system of government that sanctioned racial oppression and segregation in the United States of America. Source: <http://pbs.org/wnet/jimcrowinoneword>: The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow

of organising – are helped by the structures and groupings that have mobilised in the past albeit on different grounds, for different issues. As Mayo notes, this illustrates that “even when social movements are at a relatively low ebb, these resources can survive, to be revived if and when the climate for social action becomes more favourable” (2005: 59). Mayo’s point is an important one for researchers who are interested in understanding how social movements come and go in specific contexts, and why the tactics of some groups echo those of others from previous eras.

2.2.5 The discourse on ‘Framing’

In their study of farm worker struggles over a thirty-year period, Jenkins and Perrow (1977) found that without the involvement of powerful elites, farm workers would not have been able to win many of the rights they sought to claim. Controversially, they suggested that powerless actors would not be successful unless they secured the support of elites. In their perspective, social change was impossible without the involvement of third parties who would enter the policy arena on behalf of the poor or socially excluded but were not poor and socially excluded themselves (1977: 253).

This signalled the beginning of a lively debate on the role of elites in determining the outcomes of social movement actors. This debate was quickly extended to look at how social movement actors would be able to get the attention of powerful allies. Beginning in the mid 1980s, scholars began to suggest that social movement actors were engaged not only in a struggle for specific demands – land or housing for example. They were also deeply engaged in creating meaning. Scholars began to suggest that social actors were “not viewed merely as carriers of extant ideas and meanings that grow automatically out of structural arrangements, unanticipated events or existing ideologies” (Hall 1982: 613). Instead it was increasingly clear that social movement organisations were intrinsic to what Stuart Hall (1982) dubbed “the politics of signification” (Hall 1982: 613).

The framing concept emerged from these new ideas. As Benford and Snow (2000) note, this stream of intellectual work “has come to be regarded, alongside resource mobilisation and political opportunity processes as a central dynamic in understanding the character and course of social movements” (Benford and Snow 2000: 613).

The language of collective action framing was made popular by Goffman (1974) a sociologists who suggested that frames enables people to understand the world in an organised manner. Collective action frames therefore serve an interpretive function by seeking to explain the world in a manner that can “mobilise adherents and constituents...garner bystander support and ...demobilise antagonists” (Snow and Benford 1988: 198).

Collective action frames help SMOs to define a problem in the public arena. Benford and Snow have suggested that this tends to happen in three ways: diagnostic, prognostic and action mobilisation framing. Diagnostic framing tends to invoke the notion of injustice. For example in the South African case the Soweto Electricity Crisis committee (SECC) argues that poor people should not pay for electricity services because they are victims of the injustice of globalisation. They cast the state as a violator of the rights of the poor, and as an antagonist in the global struggle for basic services, and they portray the poor as victims. Thus many SMOs frame their calls for action based on the framing of victims and perpetrators.

Prognostic frames tend to be those that propose a solution to a problem – often based on how the movement has framed the problem in the first place. For example the Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa argued that people in developing countries (cast as victims of a global trade system that is unjust) had a right to free antiretroviral drugs from the state. Based on this diagnosis, the organisation framed a solution. Through court cases and increasingly tense stand-offs with the state, TAC demonstrated that a) the costs of drugs were affordable to the state (based largely on the framing of its own actions as a protagonist in bringing down the prices) and b) that the costs of not providing ARVs would be worse than the costs of providing them.

Indeed, as the clash between TAC and the National Association of People Living with HIV and AIDS in 2003 demonstrated, within the same movement there may be different diagnostic and prognostic frames employed by different SMOs. While TAC took on the state, NAPWA questioned the value of providing expensive drugs to people in communities where there was food insecurity, and at times, the organisation questioned the efficacy of the drugs themselves.

Lastly, motivational framing tends to focus on a call to action. This frame asserts an urgency to the problem that requires a level of direct action that may not necessarily be envisaged by groups that frame issues in a diagnostic or prognostic manner. Again, using the example of TAC, when the state refused to scale up its prevention of mother to child transmission programme, despite a court interdict ordering it to do so, the organisation called upon its members and ordinary South Africans to engage in a civil disobedience campaign that included a call for citizens to go to their local police stations to file murder charges against the Minister of Health.

WHP emerged from the women's movement of the 1980s. The methods and strategies it used, the political connections it had, and its use of the media were all shaped by its roots in the social movements of the 1980s. It was able to access resources through its ties to a new category of political elites. It was also able to access critical information that demonstrated that there was a need for the services that it sought to provide to women. Yet WHP was also able to influence debate. As the next chapter illustrates, through its actions and activities, the organisation managed to frame debates that were vital to the success of the women's movement in the post-apartheid era.

Chapter 3: Political Opportunity Structure

This chapter describes the political environment that was prevalent between 1990 and 2005, bearing in mind that WHP operated from 1991 and 2004. Using elements of the POS as outlined by Tarrow (1994) and Eisenger (1973), and others as a guide, the chapter seeks to describe the political opportunity structure during this period. Beginning with a review of the literature of South African researchers and scholars, the chapter explores why after the mid 1990s many SMOs found it difficult to navigate the new politics of a democratic South Africa.

In order to make the analysis manageable, the chapter divides the thirteen-year period of WHP's existence into three segments based on the framework provided by Wierda Nauta (2004). In *The Implications of Freedom*, Nauta (2004) suggests that contemporary state - CSO relations can be characterized by three distinct periods. Firstly he describes the 1980s as the Struggle Era, in which many groups were united in their opposition to apartheid. He defines the years 1994- 1996 as the Freedom and Consultation Era, during which NGOs and government worked closely together to achieve similar aims and objectives. Lastly, Nauta defines the third era as that of the New Realism. In the New Realism Era, state - CSO relations have centred on the macro-economic choices that the government has pursued.

In his assessment of the organisational crisis at the National Land Committee (NLC)¹², Andile Mngxitama suggests that Nauta's three eras, "over-emphasise external forces as critical in shaping the character of NGOs. Such an approach runs the risk of denying the agency of NGOs" (Mngxitama 2005: 14).

To counter Nauta's short-coming, Mngxitama adds a fourth frame to the analysis, examining what he calls the 'rupture,' between the macro environment and the internal factors that brought about the crisis at the NLC. This analysis of the 'rupture' will be taken forward in detail in Chapter four, using a framework developed

¹² The National Land Committee (NLC) is an NGO that was established in 1995 to advocate for "the promotion of social justice in South Africa in relation to access to and control of land and related resources." For a detailed description of the NLC see Mngxitama, A. (2005). *National Land Committee, 1994 - 2004: a critical insider's perspective*. Durban Centre for Civil Society.

by Rothschild-Whitt (1979) to understand what precipitated the series of crises that lead to the closure of the WHP.

Following a review of social movement literature in South Africa, this chapter looks at each element of the POS in each of the three eras outlined by Nauta in order to understand (a) the degree of openness of the state to social movements; (b) the opportunities and constraints placed on a movement in relation to participation in formal policy processes; (c) the degree to which the political elite were divided in their efforts to address the issues raised by these social movements, and (d) the attitudes and opinions of the general public towards the issues raised by these social movements (Eisinger 1973; Tarrow 1994).

3.1 Social movement literature in South Africa

It is important to differentiate between the different types of civil society and social movement groups. Habib and Kotze (2002) suggests that there are three blocs of civil society groups operating in South Africa. They trace the roots of these distinct groupings to the transition process. The first set is what they call 'formal NGOs' which benefited from the demilitarisation of the state and the creation of a policy and legislative environment that allowed these groups to function and fundraise without state interference. They define the second set of groups as informal and survivalist in nature, suggesting that these organisations "enable poor people and marginalised communities to simply survive against the daily ravages of neo-liberalism" (2002: 16). They characterise the last bloc of organisations as, social movements, defining them as a diverse set of formal organisations that are often supported by a base of middle class activists. These groups are often explicitly political, seeking to challenge decisions made by the state, often "with the explicit aim of mobilising the poor and marginalised, and contesting and/or engaging the state and other social actors around the implementation of neo-liberal social policies (2002: 17).

This definition is problematic in a number of ways. Firstly, the categorisation denies the fluidity of these blocs. There are organisations that take up different issues and can fall into various categories. More importantly, there are connections between the three types of organisations that feed one another and create synergies. It is possible

to apply Diani's (1999) theory that social movements are like webs or densely packed networks, in order to suggest that even organisations that are operating in survivalist mode are likely to be working with formal NGOs either to access grants or services from the state. By the same token, formal NGOs often learn from and work closely with social movements.

Although it is an interesting analysis, the notion that one bloc of groups represents social movements and the others represent different forms of civil society organisations, is not in line with the definition of social movements that has been employed in this case study. This research defines social movements more broadly, and argues that groups that emanate from a particular movement are seen as carrying forward the objectives of the movement, regardless of how bureaucratised they may be. The research defines these groups as still forming part of what Mayo describes as the "fuzzy" landscape of social movements (2005: 57).

In general, South African scholars have been interested in understanding how this terrain of social movements and the actors and organisations that sustain them, have fared in post-apartheid or 'new' South Africa. Thus, an exciting field of literature has emerged. In some cases this literature has been developed by activists themselves, who have sought to theorise in order to understand their lived experiences.¹³

This has in large part been given impetus by the establishment of the Centre for the Study of Civil Society at the University of KwaZulu Natal. The organization's researchers have written extensively, analysing seventeen social movement organisations that have arisen in the post-apartheid era. Their analyses look at the political economy of the new South Africa and the types of social movements that have emerged in response. They also explore their leadership patterns and internal processes as well as their engagements with the broader political opportunity structure (Bond 2000; Desai and Pithouse 2003; Greenstein 2003).

Bond has argued that social movement organisations are "products of the structural transformation of South Africa's economic and political systems"

¹³ See for example Mngxitana, Desai and McKinley, all of whom have written and published on organisations with which they are politically involved: www.nu.ac.za/ccs/

(<http://www.nu.ac.za.caa>). These researchers have suggested that in the late 1990s, the state developed, “Universal and particular discourses of domination” which “intersect in a range of attempts to blame the poor for being poor and for suffering the effects of poverty” (Bond 2000: 17).

Desai and Pithouse (2003) charge that the re-emergence of radical social movements is the direct consequence of the restructuring of the South African economy that has accompanied the last ten years of democracy. The shedding of jobs, and the lack of basic services are all linked to the economic choices the government pursued shortly after taking over the state in 1994. (Desai & Pithouse, 2003; Bond, 2004) Despite this analysis, it is important to recognize that it has not simply been the restructuring of the economy that has led to rise in social movements. Other supplementary causes have included specific government policy blunders and failures, such as the delays in rolling out antiretroviral therapy. Other underlying factors include the new freedoms enjoyed by citizens, which allow for legitimate organized protest to flourish.

Other studies have investigated the relationship between identity and politics and what the intersections mean for social movement actors and their strategies. In particular these have examined the women’s movement (Albertyn, Hassim et al. 2002; Hassim 2002a) the gay rights movement (Kraak 1998) the black consciousness movement (Gibson 2004b) and health movements (Freidman and Mottiar 2004). The bulk of these studies have been organised around the relationship between social movements and the state. One gap concerns the lack of examination of the relationships between social movements themselves. For example, what are the linkages between the Treatment Action Campaign and the coalition spearheading the campaign for a Basic Income Grant? What relationships have been forged between the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) and the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF)?

There is also need for more analysis of the differences between social movement types. For example are there strategies of organising that are different in the land sector from those used by water rights activists? Within the women’s movement what

range of groupings exist and given the diversity of women's experiences, what strategies tie the women's movement together? ¹⁴

Despite these gaps, two key themes emerge from an analysis of the literature. Firstly, there is agreement that the post-apartheid state has not been as responsive to the demands of the citizenry as has been hoped at the end of apartheid. As Zuern (2004) notes in her analysis of the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO) and its relationship with the ANC, "a shift away from the politics of broad-mass-based movements to institutionalised party politics is often falsely understood to imply that the newly democratic system will be able to accommodate popular demands" (2004: 1). Zuern suggests that the state's inability to meet this expectation, "produced new and often competing opportunities for civil society actors" (Zuern, 2004: 1).

Secondly, there has been a tendency to suggest, as Meyer (2002) that those groups that were able to successfully navigate the transition and develop "safe spaces within mainstream institutions, including political institutions," are no longer part of social movements (p. 14). Citing Katzenstein (1998), Meyer goes on to give an example of the women's movement. He suggests that, "women following on the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1970s, established *habitats* in particularly unlikely places, including the Roman Catholic Church and the U.S. military" (Meyer 2002; own italics).

Although it has been the perspective of a number of South African activists and researchers, the creation of 'habitats' for social movements does not imply that these organisations are no longer part of the movement. The links that are still maintained between formal NGOs, and organisations in communities must be explored in a much more rigorous manner before conclusions can be made about this issue.

Indeed there has been a dearth of information on organisations like WHP. This set of groups served as a bridge between the 1980s and the late 1990s. They did the difficult

¹⁴ This is discussed in some detail in Hassim, S. (2002a). "A conspiracy of women: The women's movement in South Africa's transition to democracy." Social Research **Fall**(69).

work of policy-making and lobbying in the years immediately before and after the end of apartheid when the state of flux presented both opportunities and serious threats.

Despite this they have been largely ignored in the rush to investigate the newer and more radical forms of organizing. Yet they are important to study because as Mayo (2005) notes, “even when social movements are at a relatively low ebb, these resources can survive, to be revived if and when the climate for social action becomes more favourable” (Mayo 2005: 39).

Zuern (2004) has noted that in 1994 there were two general theories about what would happen to civil society in light of the transition to democracy. Firstly many believed that civil society groups would begin to play a more supportive role, standing in allegiance with the state. Secondly it was predicted that social movements would dissolve, giving way to more institutional actors. Zuern suggests that there was a widespread belief that there would be an overall decline in social mobilisation. Linked to this, social movement actors were expected to decrease their role in politics, allowing political parties, formal NGOs and more institutional actors to take a front seat. The theory was that many of the groups that had been established during the apartheid era, which were set up to oppose the state, would either disband or would need to undergo radical configurations in order to survive in the new political environment.

While Zuren’s synopsis is accurate, there has been a third phenomenon. As Zuren has pointed out, in the last twelve years, some social movements have dissolved, and others like WHP have sprung up to play a more supportive role, recognising the importance of implementing legitimate policies. Yet a new set of social movements has also arisen, which respond to a new set of challenges. These social movements are less formal, often rooted in communities to respond directly to matters of basic services. These are different from the groups like WHP because they tend to be combative, and less interested in an/or able to engage in technical policy processes.

The rest of this chapter looks at the extent to which WHP was able to take advantage of the political opportunity structure throughout the 1990s, using tactics and strategies

that represented important continuities between the past and the future of social organising.

3.2 The Struggle Era (1980s – 1994)

WHP became operational at the end of the Struggle Era. Nelson Mandela was released in 1990, and shortly thereafter the ANC and other anti-apartheid political movements were unbanned. At the same time, South Africans who had been living in exile for decades because of the political situation started streaming back into the country.

In 1991, the United Democratic Front (UDF) which had been established in 1983, and had in many ways operated as the internal arm of the ANC, dissolved itself based on the fact that its sister organisation was now unbanned. Indeed, Seekings (1997) has written that the UDF's leading cadre was “absorbed in various ways into the ANC and its allied structures.”¹⁵

The four years between the unbanning of the ANC and the party's victory at the polls in the first democratic elections in South Africa were marked by significant mass mobilisations (Cawthra 1997). Much of the political and social activity that took place during the Freedom and Consultation Era was planned and formulated in the dying days of the Struggle Era.

Before beginning a detailed discussion of the health and gender activism that defined the Struggle Era, it is worth discussing broadly the racial politics that defined the

¹⁵ Kenneth Good suggests that the rosy picture that has been painted to describe UDF- ANC relations is not necessarily accurate. Good argues that the UDF's model of accountability and openness was profoundly different from the approach of the ANC – a movement that had to rely on secrecy in exile because of the climate of fear. According to Good, “the process of secret talks between Mbeki and Mandela with the apartheid regime, which began in 1985, “both elevated the ANC leadership and relegated the UDF to the sidelines.” (p. 16). See Good, K. (2003). *Democracy and the control of elites. Limits to Liberation in Southern Africa: the unfinished business of democratic consolidation*. H. Melber. Cape Town, Human Sciences Research Council: 1- 20.

1980s. This is important because as the 1990s wore on, race emerged as an important issue both within WHP, but also more broadly in South African society. At WHP the racial politics were extremely subtle, although oftentimes overtly discussed. Even within the ostensible context of a commitment to non-racialism by both staff and the leadership, the organisation struggled to address its internal race dynamics. Yet these struggles were not played out in the crude manner in which they often took place on the streets and in the public arena in the South Africa of the mid-nineties. Instead the racial politics within the organisation played themselves out in the discourse of staff members as well as through the positions that people took on matters that were often not visibly about race.

During the apartheid regime the state used race to oppress people who were classified as non-white. Thus race became a significant political and social force during this era. As a response to institutionalised racism, the ANC adopted the ideology of non-racialism. The ideology was adopted by many activists within groups aligned to the ANC, such as the UDF and SANCO. Essentially non-racialism suggested that the colour of the skin was an irrelevant fact of life, one that should not even be noticed (Moodley and Adam 2000). This was a profoundly different approach from the view taken by black consciousness activists who argued that race defined every aspect of South African's lives, and represented a structural impediment to progress for blacks, and a structural opportunity for progress for whites.

Non-racialism was an important political concept because it provided the ANC with the moral high ground and allowed it to mobilise support from a broad cross section of people both within the country and outside it. Thus, in the 1980s people of different races worked alongside one another in social movement organisations both inside and outside the country. Non-racialists put heavy store in the law. Like all liberal ideologies, non-racialism was premised on the notion of legal equality. Once segregation had been abolished, non-racialists argued that South Africa would return to 'normal.' People would mingle freely, blacks would access the opportunities that were newly availed to them, and so on.

The country's first president, Nelson Mandela was an ardent non-racialist. His leadership in the negotiations stage was premised on the notion that he represented all

South Africans who believed in freedom – not simply black South Africans. As Moodley notes, “Non-racialism is colour blind. Indeed, Mandela once insisted that he recognised only South Africans – no longer blacks, whites, coloureds and Indians. Yet this romanticized ‘rainbowism’ of merging colours is contradicted by the reality of heightened ethnoracial consciousness” (Moodley and Adam 2000). As the country grew into its democratic future, ‘ethnoracial consciousness’ blossomed into policies and programmes, and dominated the airwaves and newspaper headlines. In particular, Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment strategies and policies have served as a touchstone on racial politics, causing many grievances and frustrations of the part of whites, and in response, often causing consternation amongst blacks who have felt these policies come under attack. These debates have also been addressed within the social movement sector, often in quite damaging ways.

3.2.1 Responding to Health Needs in the Struggle Era

A range of organisations was established in the late 1980s and early 1990s to respond to the health needs of South Africans. Among these were the National Progressive Primary Health Care Network (NPPHCN) which was established in 1987, to “advocate for a national primary health care policy and its implementation,” and the Health Systems Trust (HST), which was set up in 1992 to “promote scientific research into health systems in South Africa” in order to design and plan programmes and evaluations towards the “restructuring of the health system and the development of a comprehensive National Health System based on equity.”¹⁶ In addition, the Centre for Health Policy (CHP) at Wits focused on policy formulation.

There were also groups that, like WHP, evolved out of the activism of the women’s movement in the early 1990s and began to provide specialised policy inputs related to women’s empowerment in the democratic era. These included the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP), which was established in 1993 to promote women’s political participation, and the Gender Education Training Network (GETNET), which was set up in 1995 to train government officials and NGOs on how best to mainstream gender into the work of government. A range of organisations addressing violence against

¹⁶ For more detail on the Health Systems Trust see (www.hst.org.za)

women had already been in existence since the 1980s – groups like Rape Crisis and People Opposed to Women Abuse (POWA).

During this period the ANC was formulating its election manifesto. Civil society groups, including the WHP, played a critical role in influencing the document, which promised access to health services by all (Budlender 1995). In relation to women's health, the manifesto mentioned maternal health, HIV and AIDS and free primary health care (African National Congress 1994).

3.2.2 *Women's participation in the Struggle Era*

When the period of formal negotiations for the transition to democracy began in December 1991 with the launching of the CODESA talks, 400 delegates from the spectrum of political parties in South Africa were present. They had been selected to represent their members in the negotiation process. Only twenty-three were women (Gershater 2001: 11; Hassim 2004) (p. 8)

This glaring under-representation provided a useful opportunity for protest, and the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) was joined by women from other political parties in arguing for broader inclusion of women. As a result, a Gender Advisory Committee (GAC) was established to monitor the progress of negotiations. When CODESA fell apart within weeks, women were disappointed, but much more able to participate when the talks resumed, this time under the aegis of the multi-party negotiation process (Gershater 2001: 6).

The experience of CODESA was critical to the development of an organisation called the Women's National Coalition (WNC). By April 1992, when the WNC was launched as an independent initiative it comprised seventy organisations that represented thousands of women across the country. The tactics of the WNC were clear – it was a coming together of women *as women* who had different perspectives and ideologies but were united under the principle of inclusion. So while gender was the unifying identity, it is never allowed to become an excuse to homogenise women (Cock and Bernstein 2001; Hassim 2003).

Frene Ginwala, head of the ANC's research division, and a key figure behind the WNC, is credited by a number of scholars (Albertyn, Hassim et al. 2002; Cock and Bernstein 2001; Waylen 2004a) as having facilitated a process that brought together women from a broad range of social and political perspectives. Waylen (2004: 10) notes that they represented everything from the Inkatha Freedom Party, ANC, NP, Democratic Party (DP) and the Rural Women's Movement, to the Girl Guides, and the Soroptimists (Waylen 2004b).

The Coalition quickly set about attempting to influence the negotiations process by advocating for the inclusion of women in the negotiating teams; and ensuring that an equality clause would be inserted in the Constitution that would "over-ride the right to custom and tradition" (Hassim and Gouws 1998: 56). The WNC was remarkably visible and successful in its actions. Women were included in each of the negotiating teams, and a 'triple alliance' of women academics, politicians and activists was developed to ensure that technical and constitutional submissions were sound and well researched. The Women's Caucus, a multi-party forum to coordinate the efforts of women across parties, was established, and it fed information from the Triple Alliance to those on the teams (Waylen 2004b).

A significant clash occurred when the Rural Women's Movement (RWM) - which was a member of the WNC - pushed for customary law to be subject to the proposed equality clause protecting all South Africans from discrimination on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. An acrimonious and divisive fight erupted between women in the negotiations process, and traditional leaders (Hassim 2002b: 40). The traditional leaders lost the battle. This represented a major win for rural women and for the WNC. The clash had a lasting legacy. It was clear to all who witnessed the debates that institutions that protect and promote the interests of these critical constituencies would need to be created. Council of Traditional Leaders (CTL) and a Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) were put on the cards as institutions that would be created as a result of the Constitution. The Council of Traditional Leaders was ultimately weakened. It is an advisory body with limited powers, whereas the CGE was created with an oversight role and powers to investigate (Hassim 2002b: 41)

By the time the elections took place in April 1994, South African women had cause for jubilation, not only because for the vast majority of them, it marked the first time they had cast a ballot, but because April 27th brought with it sweeping Constitutional changes. The elections ushered in a new political system, one in which 300% more women were represented in parliament than the year before. As a result, women made up 27.7% of MP's after the first parliamentary elections (Waylen 2004a).

Despite the much-hailed victory of South African women in the constitutional process, there is an important postscript. The war between the interests of traditional leaders and women's rights activists is far from over. In some ways it could be argued that it was not just the strength of the women's movement that allowed the chiefs to be defeated in the constitutional negotiations. The women's movement was closely aligned to the ANC and the new forces of change, while traditional leaders were seen as having been in bed with the NP government in the past, often allowing their influence in communities to be manipulated by the apartheid regime. In some ways then, the victory of the women's movement appeared to be more profound than it actually was. Today senior members of the ruling party frequently invoke tradition as a defence against gender transgressions. Both Jacob Zuma and Mbulelo Goniwe, the Chief Whip of the House of Parliament, have invoked traditional African culture in their discussions of the charges of sexual misconduct that have been levelled against them.

3.3 Freedom and Consultation Era (1994 – 1996)

The Freedom and Consultation Era was filled with promise. The media was filled with stories about 'nation-building' as schools and government services became desegregated. It was during this period that Archbishop Desmond Tutu, then Chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) – in alluding to the diversity of the country and the optimism of the times - coined the phrase 'rainbow nation' (Simpson 2005: 1).

As this era commenced, the goal of nation building took centre stage. Essential to the task of building a sense of nationhood and commonality across racial lines, was the significant project of unearthing the misdeeds of the apartheid past. The TRC was set

up by the government in 1995 to guide this process. The TRC was led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and was based on the principle that freedom, truth and forgiveness were interlinked: without truth, there could be no forgiveness and without forgiveness the truth did not matter (Hamber 2003: 5 - 6). In its quest to find out what had happened to people who had disappeared during the apartheid era, the Commission opened old wounds. The nation debated the value of publicly treading old ground as images of crying families burying empty coffins flashed across television screens. For many South Africans there was profound value in knowing what had happened to the thousands of people who had disappeared during apartheid. Yet others were unsatisfied with the TRC, feeling that despite its mandate, it had skirted issues of race, dealing instead with a notion of justice that seemed oddly colour-blind (Simpson 2005: 8 - 10).¹⁷

For some black South Africans the TRC was symbolic of all the compromises that were made as part of the negotiated settlement. Harris et al have argued that “reconciliation is merely a euphemism for the compromises made during political negotiations – compromises that ensured continued white control of the economy” (Harris, Valji et al. 2004).¹⁸ In their estimation, reconciliation did not bring with it the structural changes that would be required to fundamentally address the legacy of apartheid.

As the discussions above illustrate, the politics of race remained centre stage after the first elections. The concern expressed above - that the new government was too soft

¹⁷ The core of Simpson’s argument is that, “A broad investment in forging a new historical orthodoxy – significantly determined by the TRC’s legislative mandate – had the effect of politically sanitising versions of the past that offered more complex and less predictable understandings of the magnitude and nature of violence and violation under apartheid and its relationship to racial and other identities. As a consequence, the role of the TRC in building reconciliation and preventing future human rights violations has been constrained by its representation of past conflict through party political cleavages, which are construed as analytically detached from broader patterns of criminal violence and community conflict in South African society.” For a fuller discussion see Simpson, G. (2005). “Race Against Time”: The Politics of Memory in South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Process Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Gilder Lehrman Center International Conference at

Yale University : *Repairing the Past: Confronting the Legacies of Slavery, Genocide, & Caste*, Yale, Yale University .

¹⁸ <http://www.wits.ac.za/csvr/papers/paprctp3.htm>

of those who had perpetrated crimes against black South Africans - hit a sensitive spot. In grappling with the question of how to both be fair to the victims of the past, and forge ahead in a new direction, the former liberation movement found itself in a difficult position. Perhaps this tension and discomfort is best illustrated by Jacob Zuma's response to a question he was asked in 1993, about whether the ANC had not 'sold out' the interests of black South Africans during the negotiations process. Zuma, then Deputy Secretary General, said plainly that the colonizers are " 'part of us and part of the solution ... Unlike [situations] where they 'pack their bags and go home' to the mother country, they live here ... South Africa is the mother country'"(Lyons 1997).

Lyons notes "the tension between a process that is procedurally neutral and impartial by statutory definition, but in substance is one that unleashes the torrents of anger at injustice, is both the Commission's strength and its most vulnerable point." In many ways this was a dilemma faced by the new government as a whole. The mere fact of its existence was a testament to the triumph over apartheid, and yet it was bound to respect the rule of law and uphold agreements made during the negotiated settlement. Its ability to do this represented both its biggest strength and its weakness in the eyes of ordinary citizens (Lyons 1997).¹⁹

In addition to the politics of race, the other critical issues that dominated headlines during the Freedom and Consultation Era was the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP). The RDP was the flagship programme of the new government. A month after the party assumed power, the RDP was adopted by the South African government as 'the centrepiece' of its economic policy (Weeks 1999: 798).

The RDP sought to provide large-scale government programmes that would raise the living standards of all South Africans. This meant building roads, upgrading education and health facilities, and most importantly creating jobs. Such was the commitment to the RDP in its initial few years that in order to help finance the programme, "Senior government officials including the president, accepted salary cuts of between 10 percent and 20 percent to contribute to social reconstruction. President

¹⁹ <http://www.monthlyreview.org/997lyons.htm>

Mandela also asked the business community to contribute financially to meeting the needs laid out in the RDP”.²⁰ As the next section outlines, despite the attention that was given to the RDP in the first few years of the post-apartheid state, the RDP soon took a backseat that the government was faced with the reality of managing the finances of the country.

Between 1994 and 1996 overall relations between the state and civil society could be described as being in the honeymoon phase. The Constitution itself provided the framework for civil society-state relations, The provisions having to do with local government state that the objectives of local government include the encouragement of community involvement in matters of local government. The Constitution also provides for freedom of association and freedom of the press; two fundamental building blocks for civil society (IDASA 2003; IDASA and CORE 2001; Meer 1999).

There were widespread consultations on the formulation of a Non-Profit Act (1997), which would provide a legal basis on which NGOs could raise funds and carry out their activities without state interference (South African National NGO Coalition, Association et al. 1999). Furthermore, for small voluntary associations, the Ministry of Welfare established easy registration systems that facilitated fundraising and allowed the state to enter into partnerships with community-based groups (IDASA and CORE 2001; 1997).

3.3.1 Responding to health needs in the Freedom and Consultation Era

In the health sector, the new government faced the task of ensuring equity in access to health services in one of the most unequal societies in the world. In addition to this, the new Department of Health had to reorganise eighteen health departments that had catered to different race and ethnic groups into a single national health Ministry and nine provincial departments (Williams 2000: 1168).

The government decided to allocate resources in a redistributive manner so that the new primary health care facilities that the government was building throughout the country would receive the lion's share of funding. In the past the health budget had

²⁰ <http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/61.htm>; accessed on December 10, 2005

been skewed in favour of tertiary health care facilities. In addition, the cabinet announced almost as soon as it came to power, that the government it would provide free primary care to pregnant women and children under the age of six (Hassim 2000).

The challenge for the new government was a complex one. Not only had it inherited a weak bureaucracy, it had also inherited an inefficient public service that existed to serve the minority. Simply restructuring the various departments and sorting out which workers were real employees and which were 'ghost' workers who were receiving an income unnecessarily consumed much of the time of senior bureaucrats, to the detriment of the provision of health services.

3.3.2 Women's participation in the Freedom and Consultation Era.

Hassim (2003) has suggested "One of the most notable changes in the landscape of the women's movement in the post-1994 period was the fragmentation and stratification of women's organisations in civil society." Hassim further suggests that women's organisations that were engaged in the policy and advocacy arena were able to ensure that their demands and rhetoric matched the discourse of the state, while grassroots organisations were increasingly excluded from the political scene.

The approach of women's policy groups was to work in a collegial manner in places where there were 'openings' within the state. Hassim suggests that this approach paid off in the Freedom and Consultation Era, particularly where the women's movement sought support from the state for controversial issues such as the termination of pregnancy legislation.

While women's groups were becoming increasingly stratified, the government was in the process of establishing the gender machinery that would be used to monitor and advocate for women's equality as envisaged in the Constitution. The South African gender machinery comprises three pillars:

- (i) Parliamentary structures of the Women's Caucus and the Parliamentary Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Women;
- (ii) The Office of the Status of Women based in the Office of the Presidency and working closely with the gender desks in line ministries;
- (iii) The Commission for Gender Equality, an independent advisory,

consultative and research body, which is directly accountable to parliament.²¹

Women's rights NGOS played a critical role in advocating for the establishment of these institutions. A number of gender activists who had been pivotal in the Struggle Era within the women's movement moved to the state to drive these new organisations or 'habitats'²² (Waylen, 2004a). In line with this, Hassim has noted that, "gender activists who moved into the state saw their new roles as an extension of their activism into a new arena, rather than an abandonment of the women's movement." (p) Yet within a few years there were doubts about whether this was indeed the case. As the era of New Realism dawned, activists seeking to influence the state through formal policy processes found it more difficult to access their former comrades who were now working within the state bureaucracy (Greenstein 2003; Habib 2003).

3.3 New Realism Era (1997 – 2005)

By 1997 CSOs were beginning to voice concerns about the state's macro-economic policies. While the RDP had presented a plan for economic and social development that had been broadly agreed to by numerous actors within civil society, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) that was adopted by government in 1996 was not as widely accepted. GEAR replaced the expansionist RDP with a fiscally restrictive strategy that "closely resembled an IMF structural adjustment programme which prioritised budget cuts, liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation and tight monetary policy" (Kahn 2000).

GEAR comprised three objectives: promoting private (especially foreign) investment; encouraging export-led growth; and improving productivity. These objectives are to be achieved by: reducing the deficit to improve business confidence and private investment; increasing government spending at a rate slower than overall economic growth; and tight monetary controls and the removal of import tariffs and exchange

²¹ <http://www.cge.org.za>

²² See earlier discussion of policy habitats by Meyer, D. S. (2002). *Social movements and public policy: eggs, chicken and theory*. Irvine University of California, Irvine.

controls to encourage private (notably foreign) investment. The emphasis on private investment and export promotion has constrained job creation and raising income levels for the poor (Wadee, Gilson et al. 2003: 10)

Critics suggested that GEAR represented “a typical market-friendly, supply-side policy... (which has failed to) stimulate the economy, and thereby create a virtuous cycle of growth and employment creation so critical to meeting South Africa's development challenges” (Padayachee, Smith et al. 2000: 1361).

GEAR fomented divisions within what is commonly known as the Triple Alliance: a political coalition comprising the ANC, COSATU and the SACP.²³ McKinley has noted, “it was not long before grassroots members of all three alliance partners began to question seriously the process by which GEAR had been adopted and its clear departure from the economic proposals as contained in the RDP” (McKinley 2000: 70)

Yet McKinley (2000) also makes the point that debates within the ANC and the Alliance took place in private. “Within the ANC, reports began to emerge that there was a concerted attempt by the leadership to crack down on any dissent, particularly within the ranks of parliament. Angry ANC MPs were quoted as saying that there was now a “climate of fear” in which “internal democracy gets crushed” and where “you don't think about sticking your neck out for fear of getting your head chopped off” (McKinley 2000: 67).

The public nature of the arguments soon spilled over into other arenas. Essentially the fight about GEAR was a contestation over the approach the new government would take to development: it permeated all sectors. By 1998 NGOs working on different issues were raising questions about how GEAR would affect poor people's access to basic services. Within the health arena the most explosive clashes between civil society and the state were related to HIV and AIDS. While the Treatment Action

²³ There has been some debate about whether or not SANCO comprises a fourth member of the Alliance. For a fuller discussion of this see Zuern, E. (2004). *Continuity in Contradiction? The Prospects for a National Civic Movement in a Democratic State: SANCO and the ANC in Post-Apartheid South Africa* R. Ballard. Durban Centre for Civil Society, CSS.

Campaign did not locate its efforts within the GEAR debates, Friedman and Mottiar suggest that others have. They cite activists within the LPM and the APF who contend that the movement for treatment access for poor people cannot be separated from the macroeconomic framework (Freidman and Mottiar 2004: 547). The point these activists make is that within GEAR, government spending on public services had to be curbed in favour of a more conservative fiscal policy. Payment of debts such as the apartheid debt had to be prioritised to allow the new state to promote macroeconomic growth, yet many argue that this type of growth came at the expense of service delivery on health, housing and basic services.

A number of scholars agree that the fight over GEAR although not resolved entirely, has resulted in a shift in the stance of the government. Padayachee and Valodia (2001) argue that, “The 2001 budget, announced by Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel on February 21, 2001, suggests the emergence of a significantly different economic policy stance by the South African government. The budget and a number of other recent events may herald the beginning of a shift in economic policy toward a more Keynesian type approach with the state playing a more active role in directing the economy onto a new growth trajectory, one that holds more promise for meeting the development challenges facing South Africa” (p. 71).

According to a report by the Human Sciences Research Council, “The present status of GEAR is somewhat ambiguous. To those not enamored of the policy, the indications that government increasingly wishes to embrace the idea of the “developmental state” amount to a tacit admission that GEAR has failed. Government meanwhile asserts that it is the success of GEAR, and not least the stability brought about by fiscal and monetary discipline, that will make the developmental state a possibility. Presently it is unclear what exactly the move towards a developmental state will entail, but it appears unlikely that it will involve a rejection of the mainstays of macroeconomic policy since GEAR.” (Human Sciences Research Council, DBSA et al. 2005: 4)

The debate on the developmental state and whether or not GEAR enabled or detracted from efforts to move towards a developmental state have tended to be unnecessarily polarizing. Mkandawire defines the developmental state as “one whose ideological

underpinning is 'developmentalist' in that it conceives its 'mission' as that of ensuring economic development, usually interpreted to mean high rates of accumulation and industrialization (Mkandawire 1998). Castells notes that the developmental state "establishes as its principle of legitimacy its ability to promote sustained development, understanding by development the steady high rates of economic growth and structural change in the productive system, both domestically and in its relationship to the international economy." (Castells 1992:55)

Using this definition, it is clear that South Africa is indeed a developmental state. In fact, the contested choice to pursue a fiscally conservative policy was argued by Mbeki and his finance Minister Trevor Manuel as part of an attempt to induce high growth and pursue a restructuring of the economy. GEAR is a classic Keynesian approach, with a strong emphasis on investment and the behaviour of the market.

Outside the debates about the economy, the New Realism Era saw the continuation of the discussions about race that has always characterized the South African political scene. During the celebrations of the first decade of democracy Barney Pityana, the former head of the Human Rights Commission, reflected on this, suggesting that, "Ten years into democracy, race in South Africa remains a central signifier in all public discourse... The democratic dispensation has not freed South Africans to speak freely about race rather than the defensive and antagonistic posture that any suggestion of race or racism elicits" (Pityana 2004: 1).

A number of scholars have noted that the era of nation-building ended with Mandela's departure. As Harris, Vahlji et al (2004) have suggested, this analysis is an oversimplification. There has been a tendency to equate Mandela with non-racialism, and Mbeki with a return to race. This creates the impression that the obvious differences between the two men in terms of leadership and style are at the root of the problem of race in the New Realism Era. In fact there are numerous continuities between Mbeki and Mandela's statements on race, in large part because the party has set the tone for the discourse – not the individuals.

Throughout the 1990s race remained an important and easily exploited difference between South Africans. This became more so after the 'honeymoon' was over. The

NGO sector was not immune to the racial tensions that characterised the rest of society. There were many white leaders of NGOs and SMOs. With their academic and policy skills and their relative privilege under apartheid, many whites had developed extensive experience in managing the non-profit sector. As the case of WHP illustrates, this became an increasing source of tension as the New Realism Era wore on.

3.3.1 Health in the New Realism Era

Heywood 2004 has argued that GEAR, “had the effect of worsening poverty. In the realm of health it caused a freeze in levels of public spending that severely damaged health services through not replacing staff exiting the health service, and through moratoriums on recruitment” (Heywood 2004: 115). This point is borne out by empirical data. An analysis of changes in the health sector between 1995 and 1999 indicated a few general trends. Firstly, there was an increased reliance on the private sector amongst all population groups since 1994, particularly amongst those who had better incomes and better education. Secondly, government funding for publicly provided health care stagnated, as did standards of care. Lastly there was an exodus of health personnel to the private sector (Wadee, Gilson et al. 2003: 11).

At the level of activism, the era of realism brought with it an intensified level of focus on issues of HIV and AIDS. While there were a number of other pressing health issues, including diseases of poverty such as malnutrition, there has been an unprecedented level of attention focused on AIDS. In large part this has been because of the efforts of TAC and the high-profile court cases it has used to garner media and state attention.

In part, TAC’s ability to mount a strong campaign against the state has emanated from its acceptance of many of the realities of post-apartheid South Africa. As Friedman and Mottiar note, “TAC is willing to engage with the post-apartheid system and to accept that real rights can be won for the poor and marginalised within it. A movement that uses the law implies that the law is not inherently biased against the poor and can offer them real gains. One that lobbies politicians implies that those who demand equity can find allies in the mainstream political system. And helping the government’s “roll out”, albeit in a way which may require confrontation as well

as co-operation, implies that the government can, with the right prodding, meet the needs of poor people living with HIV/AIDS” (Freidman and Mottiar 2004: 535)

Friedman and Mottiar suggest that other SMOs have not been willing to engage with the state to the same extent as TAC. This has meant that although their constituents may have numerous health concerns, with the primary one being lack of access to primary health care, there have been few attempts to engage with the state to address the problems of inequity that continue to frustrate efforts to transform the health system.

Policy groups that have highly technical knowledge about the functioning of health systems or particular medical issues have dominated debates in the health sector. Outside of TAC there has been little by the way of a vibrant health movement.

In the women’s health sector the same has been true. WHP's Sexual Rights Campaign (described in more detail in Chapter Four) was an attempt at raising awareness and debate across a broad spectrum of society about women’s rights to sexual and reproductive health. However, as the case study illustrates, the campaign was unable to sustain itself.

3.3.2 Women’s Participation in the New Realism Era

The political environment for women’s rights suffered a similar plight to that of health movement in the post-honeymoon phase. Women’s rights organisations soon found that although the government had committed itself to progressive policies, and continued to appoint women to senior positions at all levels of the state, the situation of women as a group was not improving. Some activists suggested that given that women represent the majority of the poor, the failure to change the realities of women was fundamentally linked to the failure of the state to provide for the poor (Hassim 2005: 627).²⁴

²⁴ In support of this point, Hassim suggests that “ the extent to which poor women have been able to access their citizenship rights has been limited by faltering political will to address poverty in a comprehensive manner, by an overarching macroeconomic

As compared to the early 1990s, when a relatively large number of women were mobilised around the goals of inclusion in the new political space, the post-apartheid era and particularly the New Realism Era has seen a tapering off of involvement in women's rights issues by women by large numbers of community-based and national organisations (Waylen 2004a: 13). On the other hand it is clear that women in more recent years women have been mobilised on the basis of specific identities such as class, HIV status, and spatial location. As Salo notes, "Organisations such as the anti-eviction campaign, which draws upon poor, working-class black women as a mass base, tend to deal mainly with the socio-economic issues that impact so harshly on their constituents' lives. However...the organisation's gender hierarchy emulates that of the larger society" (Salo 2005).

In additions to the anti-evictions campaign, one could argue that TAC's success has in large measure been based on its clever creation of an identity called 'HIV positive.' AIDS activists claimed this as an identity rather than just a description of a medical status. Where society at large had used this description to stigmatise and label people living with HIV, the TAC branded T-shirts that anyone could wear, boldly proclaiming the 'HIV positive' identity. Their claims from a social justice perspective were therefore embedded in their right to demand services and treatment based on who they were; based on their identities was people living with HIV and AIDS.

Thus there has been the emergence of a cadre of women who are involved as participants in new social movements, but are not necessarily doing so to advance gender interests.²⁵This provides both an opportunity and a threat to those within the women's movement.

framework that prioritizes fiscal restraint over redistribution, and by an administrative system and infrastructure that is unable to fulfil the basic tasks of service delivery." (2005: 627)

²⁵ For a fuller discussion on gender interests see Maxine Molyneaux's seminal article on practical and strategic gender interests. Based on an analysis of women's participation in the Nicaraguan Revolution, Molyneaux suggests that women's strategic interests are those that advance their power and autonomy as a group. These tend to be articulated through the law and public processes. On the other hand, women's practical gender needs are those that revolve around issues of basic needs

3.4 Summary

This chapter has described how as the decade of the 1990s wore on, the splits between the state and civil society widened. A critical factor in this regard was the GEAR strategy and what some within civil society saw as the jettisoning of the RDP. At the same time, the fault lines between black and white South Africans did not – as some had hoped – collapse after the end of formal apartheid.

The chapter also showed that the new infrastructure and resources that the state was able to pour into social issues after the elections were dedicated to a more equitable allocation of resources. In the health sector this meant a focus on primary health care, and resulted in pro-poor policies. In the arena of women's rights it meant the enactment of a flurry of laws that protected and promoted women's rights, and the setting up of institutions that would help women to access these rights and monitor the state and broader society again to make sure that these rights were realised.

Yet this chapter also noted that social movement responses to the changing environment were variable. The chapter suggests that at the tail end of the Struggle Era there was widespread agreement amongst social movements about what the new state would look like. The development of the ANC's Election Manifesto was evidence of this. The Manifesto later became the blueprint for the Reconstruction and Development Programme; an expansionist strategy that saw the state play a large interventionist role in restructuring the economy and providing social services.

The first two years of the new dispensation – the Freedom and Consolidation Era – represented a honeymoon phase where there was general consensus about the scope of the challenges faced by the new government and the strategies that were required to deal with these challenges. There was ample space for CSO input and relationships between the state and civil society were collegial.

and everyday survival. Critics of Molyneux and the gender planners who used her theoretical model to develop gender planning tools, have been suggested that this is an oversimplification of the complex needs and interests of women, and have argued that it creates a hierarchy in which women who are interested in meeting strategic needs can be seen as better activists than those who are concerned with daily survival and issues of poverty.

Very shortly thereafter however, the introduction of the GEAR policy, and more important the manner of its introduction, lead to a definitively more antagonistic relationship between social actors and the state. By the end of the 1990s there was considerable opposition to the macroeconomic strategy of the state. In addition there were clear divisions within the ANC and amongst the ANC and its tripartite alliance partners.

These factors comprise the political environment (otherwise referred to as the POS) within which the WHP was operating over the course of the thirteen years of its existence. The following chapter will look more specifically at the organisational issues that caused a crisis - what Mngxitama refers to as the 'rupture' - within WHP.

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Chapter Four: A Description of the Women's Health Project

This chapter describes the vision and mission of WHP, and examines its activities during the thirteen years it was in existence. It also considers the social context and includes a detailed analysis of the work of the WHP in four areas: women's health policy, abortion advocacy, population policy, and sexual and reproductive health and rights campaigning.

4.1 Social context

When the ANC came to power in 1994 there was little data available nationally with which to plan government services and design new policies. A full national census had never been undertaken. The new government quickly set out to conduct a census. The following year (1995) a Demographic Health Survey (DHS) was conducted. These two large pieces of research served as the baseline for documenting the country's socio-economic status in the 1990s. The results gave a comprehensive picture of the South African population and provided concrete evidence of what many NGOs had been claiming throughout the 1980s: while all black people had suffered under apartheid, African women had borne the brunt of the poverty and inequality induced by apartheid (Budlender, May et al. 1998).

The 1996 data revealed that the poverty rate among female-headed households was 60%, compared with 31% for male-headed households (Statistics South Africa 1999). Furthermore, only 17% of African females were in wage employment compared with 43% of African men (Chopra and Sanders 2002: 157).

It was also clear from both surveys that South Africa was in the midst of a fertility decline - an unusual feature for a developing country of its size. Furthermore, this decline was not only evident amongst white women, but also amongst African women. As a result, South Africa's total fertility rate was (and remains) one of the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa with less than 3.0 births per woman nationally and declining (South African DHS 1998). See *figure 1*.

Despite the decline in fertility, teenage pregnancy remained a significant challenge. In 1998, more than 30 percent of 19-year-old girls had given birth at least once (South African DHS 1999). Of concern was the fact that this fertility rate was equivalent to that of the generations preceding them (Preston-Whyte 1990). Kaufman, de Wet et al. have made the point that, "The persistent high fertility at young ages cannot be divorced from the broader trend in declining fertility. Many women who started childbearing as adolescents have few additional children in later life" (2000: 1).

High teenage pregnancy was one issue of concern to WHP. But there were other health concerns. Women's reproductive health in South Africa was particularly poor due to a number of factors. Many women died during childbirth, rates of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) were high, and increasingly women were becoming infected with HIV at a rate that was cause for alarm. The mortality curves for women and men starkly demonstrated this.

Mortality worsened between 1984 and 1999, as the AIDS epidemic hit the country hard. Women of childbearing age were particularly hard hit. However, amongst men, mortality figures remained constant. Men die in larger numbers progressively as they get older - as would be expected - rather than in a clustered fashion around certain ages as is the case with women. Thus, as the WHP argued, women's social position of inequality put them at greater health risk than men (Budlender 1995). The WHP was conceived as a response to this situation.

4.1.2 The Birth of the Women's Health Project

WHP was born in 1991, in the dawn of the transition to the new South Africa. As apartheid drew its last breaths, the organisation was established with a mission to

“develop and lobby for new policy proposals” in the arena of women’s health in the new dispensation.²⁶

WHP was the brainchild of Barbara Klugman, an academic and activist who had been a member of the Federation of Transvaal Women and was active in the Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee (JODAC) in the 1980s. Throughout the 1980s Klugman lectured in Social Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand and was later employed within the same university as a lecturer at the School of Community Health. (Klugman 2002).

Klugman talked with colleagues and friends at the University of the Witwatersrand about a year long participatory research process that would attempt to understand women’s health needs and concerns in order to influence the policies that a new government would need to design to address the significant health challenges faced by women in South Africa (Klugman 2002).

Having gained support from the Wits Faculty of Health, Klugman negotiated for some space and administrative support from the Wits-based Centre for Health Policy (CHP). Klugman was convinced that a project aimed at canvassing women to define a health policy agenda would be critical in the new dispensation. She saw the process taking approximately a year, and being primarily research and information-based (Klugman 2002).

The first year of WHP’s life was spent recruiting a few staff and conducting research to assess women’s levels of health information and knowledge. Klugman hired Emelda Boikanyo, who had been a nurse for many years, as a field worker. Boikanyo’s job was to talk to women in rural communities throughout the country about their experiences of health services, and what they would like to see from the government in terms of services provided (Women's Health Project 1992).

As Boikanyo travelled to different communities it became clear to her that just as the project had anticipated, there was a need for women to access information on policy

²⁶ (WHP website: www.wits.ac.za/whp)

and the processes linked to decision-making. Boikanyo also found that many women wanted basic health information. In response, Boikanyo began to use the workshops she conducted to provide information about health, with information about policy-making and agenda setting, helping women to understand issues related to their health, as well as to articulate their concerns about the future. This process involved building the capacity of women to engage with information and material about their personal health concerns as well as those experienced collectively by women (Klugman 2002).

Given the history of apartheid inequalities, it was unsurprising that the women WHP consulted had low levels of what Kuruvilla (2005) defines as ‘health literacy.’²⁷ Boikanyo and Klugman began to provide more health literacy workshops and materials. Yet they also understood that they could not reach all the women who needed their help in South Africa. A more pragmatic approach suggested that they would need to look at the barriers to information and care for women at a macro level.

A year after they began their health literacy campaign, Klugman and Boikanyo called for a national conference on women’s health. The idea behind the conference was to bring together women from all walks of life to develop a series of policy proposals that could be used as the basis upon which the government would draft new policies related to women’s health. It was through this strategic approach that WHP felt it could affect large numbers of women in a sustainable manner (Women's Health Project 1993: 1).

4.2 The Women’s Health Conference

The conference was planned for December 1994. WHP and its partners decided that women from all over the country would be consulted as part of the build up to the conference. The issues and suggestions raised at community level would then form the basis of the conference discussions. The conference would agree on and refine

²⁷ Kuruvilla argues that, “In the context of health decision making and development, health literacy is a useful concept for elucidating the knowledge and skills required for informed and effective participation.” Health literacy was a critical concept that defined the work that WHP was engaged in at a community level. http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/working_papers/wp251.pdf, p 15

policy proposals that would then be publicised after the conference and prepared for submission to the relevant sections of the new government.

In early 1994, it was announced that the first democratic elections would take place in April of that year. WHP was running workshops around the country in preparation for the Women's Health Conference. The organisation wanted to be prepared for the new dispensation with a handful of legitimately developed policy proposals concerning women's health. Although the Conference was scheduled for December, WHP was readying itself, consulting with over 5000 women around the country in hearings, workshops and 'expert group meetings' (Budlender 1995).

A national organising committee which included COSATU's Women's Forum, the South African Council of Churches, the National Progressive Primary Health Care Network (NPPHCN) and the Planned Parenthood Association, was established to plan the conference. They provided the overall framework for the preparations for the conference.

In May 1994, Katrina Arends was employed to coordinate regional meetings. Arends' job was "to involve the grassroots in the process leading up to the Conference" (Budlender 1995: 3). In each province up to five regional meetings took place in different geographic locations. These regional meetings allowed WHP to recruit those who wanted to contribute in some concrete manner to the conference, either by helping to draft policy or by addressing one of the 'Speak out' sessions on the programme. Regional meetings were also used to find out what expectations participants had of the conference in order to ensure that on a personal as well as professional level, the conference was a valuable one.

Parallel to the regional consultations, which had a much more grass roots feel, a policy process had been put in place to bring together professional experts already active in particular policy areas. A woman named Marion Stevens was hired to liaise with the regional meetings, activists and policy experts in order to ensure that the various consultations processes lead to concrete policy proposals that could be debated and discussed both before and during the conference.

Two months before the conference took place, WHP sent out the draft policy proposals that had been developed in the regional meetings and expert groups over the course of almost a year. By now WHP had a 4000-strong list of people that it counted as members of its network.²⁸ This happened in October 1994. Whilst WHP wanted to have the proposals sent to delegates earlier, because of the consultations process, Budlender (1994) notes that “many of the participants had time to see and think about the documents and possible changes before the conference” (Budlender 1995: 4).

In the first week of December 1994, four hundred people – most of them women – converged upon Johannesburg to discuss the future of women’s health policy in South Africa. In the lead up to the Conference, WHP had canvassed the opinions of over 4000 people, meeting directly with 3 500. The National Committee had allocated spaces to a combination of CBOs, NGOs, policy-makers, and academics. Sixty-three regional meetings were held. From each of these regional meetings, one woman was invited to the conference. Groups chose their own representatives. An additional twenty spaces were allocated to organisations that helped to organise regional meetings. Ten policy groups were formed, and seven members of each group were allowed to attend. A designated number of spaces were also provided to groups that were represented on the National Committee. National and provincial departments of Health, provincial departments of Welfare and Provincial Women’s Commissions were also invited.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provided the bulk of the funding for the conference. In part, funding was secured on the basis of a letter of support from the Minister of Health, Dr. Nkosasana Zuma, and Minister without Portfolio, Jay

²⁸ At various points in its history, WHP described itself as a ‘network.’ However, its network structure was never fully clarified, as ‘members’ ranged from people who simply received the newsletter, to those who actively worked in collaboration with WHP. In one evaluation, a colleague working within another NGO pointedly questioned the notion that WHP indeed was a ‘network,’ thereby questioning the group’s ability to speak on behalf of thousands of women. In NGO parlance, a network typically has a clear coordination and membership structure. In addition, there are roles that the secretariat of the network plays in relation to the membership, to enable a sense of accountability. The issue of ‘networks’ and their accountability is increasingly important as more NGOs use network structures to amplify their credibility with policy-makers and other stakeholders. Being part of or leading a network is often understood to indicate a wider membership and therefore more legitimacy to speak on behalf of communities

Naidoo. Further funds were secured from the Kaiser Family Foundation, Interfund, Commercial Union, Ithuba Trust, African Bank and the Johannesburg City Council (Budlender 1995).

Fourteen policy proposals were completed during the course of the three-day conference. These proposals covered a range of areas, including; abortion, ageing, cancers, contraception, lesbian health issues, maternal and neo-natal care, mental health, occupational health, sexually transmitted disease, aids and infertility, teenage pregnancy and sexuality education, violence against women, women, development and the environment, women's health and the nursing curricula and women's health in the medical school curricula (Budlender 1995).

The policy proposals varied in their level of detail but most were quite specific. The quality of proposals reflected the level of debate and engagement of activists on the ground in each sector. Where there had been social activism, or where there was an expert in the room, the proposals were rich and detailed. For example, the cervical cancer policy proposal was very detailed, and had specific recommendations that were the basis of research by Dr Sharon Fonn who later headed the Ministry of Health's task team which developed the National Cervical Cancer Policy when she was a Deputy-Director at WHP. Similarly, because of the work of the Abortion Rights Action Group and others during the 1970s and 1980s, the abortion policy proposal was clear, detailed and realistic (Budlender 1995; Klugman 2002).

The least detailed policy proposals were those on AIDS, STDs, women and the environment and infertility (Klugman, Stevens et al. 1995). Klugman et al. (1995) suggest that the AIDS group suffered from 'policy overload,' because a meeting on AIDS had ended just before the Conference. AIDS activists had been engaged in efforts to develop a national AIDS plan for the country which the Minister of Health endorsed towards the end of the year (National Department of Health 2000: 9)

The STDs and AIDS policy proposals, while comprehensive, were descriptive rather than results-oriented. In hindsight, Klugman suggests that although there was already significant concern about AIDS, the pandemic had not escalated yet to the point that it later would. Today the impact of AIDS on women is clear, yet at the time the

statistics were significantly less alarming. Therefore for the delegates present at the conference, it was perhaps understandable that addressing the challenge of AIDS – which was still largely seen as a male disease - was not as much of a priority as ensuring that women had the right to terminate their pregnancies if they wished to do so (Klugman 2002).²⁹

By the time the conference ended, WHP had a new mandate: to lobby for the proposals that had been developed at the conference. In addition to providing a new agenda for the organisation, the conference had succeeded in putting WHP on the social and policy map. Whereas many people in the health sector had known of Klugman before the conference, by the end of that week in December, many people knew of WHP. Budlender's evaluation of the conference indicated that many delegates were impressed with the fact that there had been a thoughtful and rigorous approach to the conference programme (Budlender 1995)

In her first newsletter missive of 1995, Klugman indicated that conference follow up would be an important part of WHP's work moving forward. She suggested that WHP would have the following focus areas: firstly, to use the policy proposals to lobby government for the necessary changes; and secondly, to make policy proposals available to women throughout South Africa so they can debate and lobby with them (Women's Health Project 1995a: 3).

The WHP sent the policy proposals to all the relevant national and provincial health, welfare and development departments as well as to the office of the RDP. The WHP Newsletters that were published in 1995 indicated that a number of delegates were following up on contacts made at the conference and were promoting the policy proposals that they had been involved in drafting (Women's Health Project 1995a; b).

²⁹ The most recent UNAIDS estimates (2005) indicate that 58% of people living with HIV and AIDS in South Africa are women. An estimated 18.8 percent of adults aged 15 – 49 are living with HIV. South African department of Health statistics (2004) indicate that 29% of pregnant women attending antenatal clinics is HIV positive. In 1994, the Department's own statistics indicate that this figure stood at just over 7%. For more on AIDS statistics in South Africa see the following fully referenced site: www.avert.org/safricastats.htm

In the months following the conference, countrywide, report-back meetings took place where women shared their Conference experiences. Some were better positioned to move policy proposals than others. For example, in April 1995, Francie Lund and Khosi Mahlangu presented the ageing policy proposal developed at the conference to the Department of Welfare. Mahlangu had been the co-facilitator of the ageing policy group at the Conference. Lund later served as an advisor to the Ministry of Welfare, and headed the Lund Committee, which made a number of recommendations about the administration of social security (Budlender 1995: 18).³⁰

4.3 Abortion Advocacy

The conference policy on abortion became an important instrument in the two years following the conference. Immediately after the conference, WHP sent the policy outline to the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on abortion. During 1995, WHP undertook an intense media campaign under the rubric of the Reproductive Rights Alliance (RRA), which was a coalition of women's rights organisations that came together to advocate for the enactment of the Bill on termination of pregnancy. The RRA managed to ensure that pro-choice religious groups publicly spoke out in the media in support of the proposed legislation.

In the first half of 1995, WHP supported women from communities all over the country to make presentations in parliament in support of abortion. The organisation also made its own submission to parliament and provided technical support to the PSC in drafting its report on the status of women and abortion in South Africa to date.

The work of WHP in this regard resulted in a number of NGOs using the suggested policy as a reference document as they put together their submissions to the Select Committee. By the end of 1996, termination of pregnancy was legal in South Africa; a key win for civil society groups that had been pushing for change for decades.

³⁰ Lund's recommendations laid the groundwork of the scrapping of the old social grant system in favour of lower payments spread across a much larger group of grant beneficiaries. Lund's recommendations included the broadening of parental maintenance, the child support benefit, the care dependency grant and the foster care grant. Lund's committee argued that the system of apartheid catered to a small group of whites and coloured at a cost that could not be sustained by the state.

Groups within the RRA mobilised to ensure that parliamentarians understood the negative effects of the old law on women's health, and were clear on how the new law would improve women's health outcomes. The then Health Minister Nkosasana Zuma was highly committed to the new law, as were a number of senior ANC officials. The abortion Bill was not just fought for by women. Lulu Xcingwana an ANC MP, recalls that the head of the health portfolio committee - Dr Abe Nkomo - was affirm supporter of abortion. According to Xcingwana, "Nkomo would say: 'ANC women, where are you? You must come. The women from the churches are coming today. They are calling us murderers.' We had to organise women from the churches from the other side" (Lowe Morna 2004).

Opposition to the abortion law did not simply come from other political parties. There were a number of ANC MP's who had objections to the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act (CTOP). As one case study notes, "Towards the time of the vote, various parties called for MPs to be able to vote according to their conscience. The conscience vote became a contested issue within the ANC, supported by many MPs who opposed abortion for religious reasons" (Colleen Lowe Morna 2004).

Yet women's rights groups were at pains to demonstrate that abortion was no more contentious an issue than other topics. In her 'Dear Friends' column, Klugman sardonically noted, "It is strange how so many other controversial issues, like free health care, or security of tenure for labour tenants, or an end to capital punishment, have been decided upon with courage and conviction. Yet there is a fear of asserting the ANC's view on abortion – even though this policy was the subject of consultation before the elections, and careful consideration by the Parliamentary Select Committee" (Klugman 1996: 3).

Two opposing movements were pitted against each other in the battle over the legislation. Pro-choice groups had coalesced under the banner of the Reproductive Rights Alliance (RRA), while pro-life organisations joined together as the National Alliance for Life.

Guttmacher et al (1997) note, "The debate among pro-choice and antiabortion advocates was ... complicated by the historically racist use of population control

policies under the Nationalist Party government....Many blacks oppose abortion for religious reasons or view abortion as yet another vestige of apartheid policy, designed to control the growth of the black and coloured population” (Guttmacher, Kapadia et al. 1998: 193).

Despite these views, the RRA was triumphant. Hassim (2004) notes that, “it was only the ANC’s strong support for the Termination of Pregnancy Act, and its refusal to allow its MPs a free vote, that made possible the passage of the legislation in 1996. In this case, a partnership between women’s advocacy organisations and a strong political party ally resulted in an key victory for women, entrenching women’s reproductive rights in ways that are still not politically possible in many older democracies” (Hassim 2004: 12). As such, CTOP was passed with a vote of 209 for the Act and 87 against. Five ANC Members of Parliament abstained from the vote, having sought prior permission to do so from the Chief Whip. Ninety-nine were absent from the house on the day of the vote. Predictably, the battle to pass the law had been a difficult one.

In the years since CTOP was passed, women’s rights groups voiced grave concerns about the slow pace of implementation. Following the passage of the Act WHP began to work with the Department of Health to ensure that health officials - particularly clinic staff - were competent to refer women requiring terminations. The challenges included changing the mindset of health workers, and putting in place systems to ensure that women in all parts of the country could access services.

Studies done by WHP staff indicated that the law needed to be enforced by tough actions against health workers who deliberately obstructed women’s access to abortion services. For example Varkey, who was a senior researcher at WHP, argued that, “Attitudes on abortion in the general community and among health workers do not support women's right to choose: Studies indicate a preference for abortions to be permitted only under certain circumstances, such as rape, physical or mental harm to the woman or foetus, or medical reasons such as being HIV positive. Furthermore,

there is a general reluctance to allow minors to have an abortion without parental consent” (2000: 88).³¹

Despite these challenges, the numbers of women accessing abortions is growing. The health system is strengthening its ability to reach women across the country. However, it remains of concern that the majority of women accessing abortion services are in the provinces of Gauteng and the Western Cape, where the two largest cities in the country – Johannesburg and Cape Town – are located (Seepe 2001).

Women within in the ANC have acknowledged that without the participation of women outside the party, the abortion Bill would not have become law. For example, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, who in 1996 was a senior ranking member of parliament and was the chairperson of the Parliamentary Working Group has noted, "The intersections were interesting. We were able to find common ground with some women; with others it was very much determined by party policy. What we did do (as ANC women) was to use our majority and get the support of the men in the party so we could pass this law. But there was support from many individuals in other parties; it was not just the ruling party alone” (Lowe Morna 2004).

The point Madlala-Routledge makes is an important one. Women across parties – particularly the PAC, ANC and DP – worked together to pass the law. Their success would not have been possible without the involvement of women in academia and in the NGO sector, who made submissions, created advocacy packs, and pushed for the ANC to vote as a party.

4.4 Population Policy

During it’s fifty-year rule, the National Party’s interest in population issues focused primarily on buttressing apartheid. The NP “feared the increasingly militant poverty-stricken and disenfranchised Africans...” (Klausen: 3). The logic put forward by population experts at the time, and by Nat leaders was that the more Africans there were, the less stable and sustainable white minority rule was. Thus, population and

³¹ The law allows minors over the age of 14 to seek abortion services without parental consent.

fertility were the most contentious and racially charged issues of the apartheid era. The latent fear of the black population was exacerbated in the 1960s by emerging international discourses about 'overpopulation.' As Kaufman (1997) notes, books such as Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968) and Georg Borgstrom's *Hungry Planet* (1965) were sounding alarm bells about the planet's capacity to cope with population growth, particularly in developing countries (Kaufman 1997: 13).³²

It was in this context that the National Family Planning Programme was introduced in 1974. From the outset, the National Family Planning Programme was viewed with extreme suspicion. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, black political leaders made statements that equated family planning with genocide, and suggested that contraception was a means of controlling blacks (Kaufman 1997: 25). Many activists in the 1970s and '80s were skeptical of the government's concern about black women's fertility, questioning why the state was distributing free contraceptives "while simultaneously neglecting their basic health needs" (Klausen: 3).

The scientific controversy that later ensued over Depo-Provera added to the suspicion of black leaders. Depo-Provera was an injectable contraceptive that was favoured by government clinics at the time and remains so today³³. During the 1980s over half of African women and almost 40% of coloured women on contraceptives were administered Depo-Provera, whereas white and Indian users primarily used the contraceptive pill.

³² Kaufman notes that there was an implicit rather than explicit acknowledgement of the white fear of black numbers in the Family Planning Policy. She writes, "The government promoted family planning services as a measure to improve the health of women and their children; it also acknowledged the program was a way to place a check on the high growth rate burdening limited resources. The government did not implement the program on a racial basis, services were provided free to any woman who sought them; however, the links between the family planning program and white fears of growing black numbers were widely acknowledge.

³³ Despite widespread belief to the contrary, Depo-Provera is a safe and effective form of contraception and is used by many governments and private agencies worldwide. The FDA has approved the use of medroxyprogesterone acetate (MPA) injectable suspension (Depo-Provera Contraceptive Injection, made by Pfizer, Inc.), indicating that despite some concerns related to its use in terms of bone density, and amongst adolescents, MPA is indicated for the prevention of pregnancy in women of child-bearing potential. For more details, see www.medscape.com/viewarticle/498675

During the 1980s the racial differential in contraceptive use was largely a function of the health delivery system: the government health service provided black women with the injectable because it was an easier method to administer and monitor than the contraceptive pill or IUD. In post-apartheid South Africa the patterns of contraceptive use have remained largely similar to those of the 1980s. Indeed, as Smit, Beksinski et al. note, “Many women use the injectable because of its efficacy with low failure rates (0.4 per 100 women years). There is a strong belief among providers and clients that women will not be able to remember to take a pill every day” (1999: 70). Many women also take the injectable because it is easier to hide its use from their partners.

Given this history of population policy, the new government had an interest in shifting the discourse of population. The old policy had worked hand in glove with the racist apartheid laws, and in many instances had the direct effect of violating the sexual and reproductive rights of African women through coercive tactics (Klugman 1988a; Salo 1993). Yet it would be some time before the ANC was truly able to put its stamp of the affairs of the Ministry of Welfare and Population Development.

As part of the agreements reached during CODESA, the ANC agreed that the first five years of democracy would be overseen by a power-sharing agreement, made operational by a Government of National Unity (GNU). Under this agreement, the NP and the IFP held positions in the first cabinet. The NP retained leadership of the Ministry of Welfare, and as such the Minister was Dr Abe Williams. His Deputy Minister was Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, a long-standing ANC activist who had been exiled for some time in Zimbabwe.

WHP’s first official contact with the ministry took place in 1994, when Klugman was invited to participate in the government delegation that attended the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. The ICPD conference was the first United Nations conference that the newly legitimate South African state was invited to attend. (Women's Health Project 1994a: 9; 1994b: 1).

In part the invitation was extended to Klugman because the department was interested in securing her services to assist them in redrafting the National Population Policy.

Klugman saw the assignment as an opportunity to influence the state from the inside. She noted that “It seemed an opportunity not to miss - to be able to actually shape a process” (Women's Health Project website --: <http://www.wits.ac.za/whp/>). At the time, Klugman’s husband was involved in the development of telecommunications policy. He mentioned the concept of a Green paper, to her, explaining that it was a discussion document put out by government to allow civil society organisations and interested stakeholders to participate in a dialogue before a policy was officially put in place by the government. Klugman suggested it to the Minister and he approved of it. Klugman wasted no time. The Population Policy Green Paper was the first Green paper issued in the country (Women's Health Project website --: <http://www.wits.ac.za/whp/>).

In 1996 when the NP pulled out of the Government of National Unity (GNU), Fraser-Moleketi took over as Minister. She quickly constituted a working group to oversee the development of a new Population Policy for South Africa, based on the consultations that Klugman had begun during the Green paper process. The policy was aimed at balancing the concerns and development priorities of a growing and predominantly poor population.

The Minister selected Klugman to chair the process of developing the policy. Her selection was based on a number of factors. In addition to the fact that she had already been involved in the process, Klugman was a well-qualified academic. Klugman had extensively researched issues related to women’s sexual and reproductive health in the 1980s. Her MA thesis, completed in 1988 looked at *Decision making on Contraception amongst a sample of Urban African working women* (Klugman 1988b), while as early as 1980, her undergraduate thesis had examined *The Political Economy of Population Control in South Africa* (Klugman 1980).

The Minister also appointed Klugman to Chair the working group on the basis of her political credentials. Her background in progressive women’s politics was unassailable, and her links to the trade union movement made her a trustworthy

candidate. In his analysis of the process of developing the population policy, Magasela refers to Klugman as “an ANC person,” brought on board to add legitimacy to the process of developing the population policy. Magasela further adds, that Klugman, “was active in the ANC Women’s Health Commission and was known to be highly critical of the NPG’s PDP having authored a paper pointing out the racist nature of the PDP” (Magasela 1997: 8).

In addition to being an ANC person, Klugman, through WHP, had been involved in the drafting of the women’s health section in National Health Plan, which was launched by the government in July 1994 (Women's Health Project 1994a: 10). As Klugman noted, “Prior to the change of government, the ANC had little interest in population policy, and WHP was concerned that they may not realise what was happening with the old policy and may not give priority to changing or getting rid of it. So we lobbied within the ANC and finally ensured that its Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) included a clear position on population” (Weiss and Gottfreid 1994; Women's Health Project website --: <http://www.wits.ac.za/whp/>).

The new Minister was keen to shift the discourse about population from one that was race-based and concerned primarily with controlling population growth and fertility amongst Africans, to one that recognised the rights and needs of women as individuals, and focussed on sustainable approaches to development in the context of population growth (Women's Health Project website --: <http://www.wits.ac.za/whp/>).

The ANC government had inherited the apartheid bureaucracy, and many of the officials under the previous regime had elected to stay in their jobs. The sunset clause, negotiated under CODESA, made it impossible for the ANC to fire the old guard. The mistrust between the new political elite, and the old bureaucrats was palpable. To avoid the conflict that would almost undoubtedly have arisen if she had delegated senior officials with her ministry to draft the policy, the Minister appointed a working group that was independent of the state, to push forward the policy. In addition to Klugman, the members of the group included Dr Padi Lehohla, who was based at the Central Statistics Services, Benny Mokaba who was within Social Development Policy and Information Division of the Development Bank of Southern

Africa and Mandla Tshabalala who was employed by the School of Social Work, University of Cape Town (Government of South Africa 1996).

As Klugman herself noted, the appointment of these members of civil society organisations to the working group was mutually beneficial. “The process of bringing in new civil servants with a commitment to equity and the skills to guide policy development was very slow. As a result, there was a gap in resources acknowledged by both politicians and government officials, which many NGOs and policy consultancies exploited. Moreover, since many of those in power came from the same political perspective as those in NGOs, they felt comfortable with the political perspective of NGOs” (Klugman 2000b).

As Chairperson of the working group, Klugman had an opportunity to insert the values of WHP into the policy process. In reflecting on whether she was able to be neutral in the process of coordinating the policy, Klugman was unequivocal in her response, stating, “we don’t believe in neutrality. No notion of neutrality whatsoever. We were a group of people who, yes we had expertise, but I mean the notion that expertise is neutral...there is very much this notion used in the civil service that people are technical experts... everybody has values that they bring to bear. We were quite explicitly people who were supportive of the New South Africa and whose politics were part of that New South Africa, quite explicitly” (Magasela 1997: 11- 12).

This sense of involvement and investment in the making of the new state was a hallmark of the values and principles that drove WHP’s work between 1994 and 1999. In many ways, it was this sense of the organisation’s belonging to the new era and participating in the overturning of the legacy of apartheid that made WHP so successful in terms of policy-making and influence during this initial post-apartheid phase.

4.5 Sexual Rights Campaign

In 1999 WHP embarked on a campaign to entrench sexual rights in the minds of ordinary South Africans. Through the Sexual Rights Campaign, WHP hoped to create awareness at community level about the importance of respect and dignity for

women's rights to decide on their sexuality. The Campaign was the last major initiative WHP undertook before it closed in 2004.

The idea was closely linked to the emerging discourse on sexual and reproductive health and rights that was becoming popular amongst women's health activists internationally. The term "reproductive rights" was coined during the International Meeting on Women and Health in Amsterdam in 1984. This was the beginning of the development of a discourse that linked women's sexuality issues to the discourse of human rights, while the term sexual rights emerged in 1995 during the fourth World Conference on women in Beijing. In between these two landmark dates, a number of developments made it clear that both terms would be critical in defining an agenda for women's health activists around the globe (Choike --; Ravindran 2003: 2- 4).

Sexual rights include the right to exercise and express sexuality freely and safely; be protected from sexual violence and discrimination; be in charge of decisions about one's own body; have access to information and services necessary for sexual health; and experience sexual pleasure. In the international discourse thus far, activists from developing countries have made the point that sexual rights are fundamentally linked to economic, social and political rights. Like all human rights, sexual rights are indivisible from other rights (Centre for Reproductive Rights 2005: 11).

Women's right to control where, when and under what conditions they engage in sexual intercourse, and their protection from sexual violence and discrimination have been clearly outlined in The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (Ravindran 2003).

By 2000, WHP had interpreted its mandate to include the development of a Sexual Rights Charter (SRC). The campaign aimed to address HIV/AIDS, violence against women, and teenage sexual health issues using a methodology that promoted open dialogue about sex and sexuality. The idea for the campaign emerged from discussions within the WHP office in which staff recognised that "simple messages addressing only surface issues relating to sexuality would not meet the country's needs" (Seicus 2002).

In taking on the issue of sexual rights, WHP was seeking to embark on an arena that moved beyond policy. Delving into the arena of sexual rights required WHP to address community attitudes and behaviours rather than the difficult, but more straightforward issues of service delivery and expansion of access that it had been working on for most of its life. For example, in its literature describing the SRC, WHP noted that, “For most women, culture dictates that they may not assert their sexual needs, let alone their sexual safety. Suggesting to a partner that a condom be used is often met with violence, withdrawal of financial assistance or loss of the relationship” (Women's Health Project 2000).

Zanele Hlatshwayo, Manager of the Sexual Rights Campaign noted, “We felt that a real grass-roots campaign was necessary to get people in communities across the country to talk about sex.” During the first phase of the campaign, the Rural Women’s Movement was a key partner. They facilitated the grass-roots element of the campaign, working to mobilise people in communities around the country through “train-the-trainer workshops” (Hlatshwayo 2004, personal interview). “The idea behind it was to take ordinary people and train them on sexual rights. Hundreds, maybe thousands of people were trained using the cascade model” (Hlatshwayo 2004, personal interview).

In the second phase of the campaign, government structures were targeted. In particular, WHP wanted to create awareness amongst provincial legislatures about the different elements of sexual rights. Zengeziwe Msimang who was Advocacy Officer in 2001, makes the point that WHP wanted “to force these public institutions to talk about sex and sexuality. The idea was to provide them with brochures and pamphlets that clearly talked about these very difficult issues. We wanted to walk into government departments and see sexual rights posters on the wall, in the same way that you see condoms in toilets everywhere at government offices these days” (Msimang 2004: personal interview).

The processes used in the campaign were ambitious. The campaign sought to challenge the liberal notion that legal equality automatically translates into substantive equality in women’s lives (Albertyn and Hassim 2003). The ANC’s triumph over

apartheid in the early 1990s had in taken place through legal reform. This meant that equality was guaranteed in the law, but was not supported by the social and economic changes that were necessary to transform the lives of the majority of poor black South Africans. For women, the Constitution recognised equality with men, but again, it was unable to guarantee that equality in a substantive sense.

As the AIDS statistics worsened, affecting women disproportionately to men, and as violence against women continued to remain a threat to many women's lives, it was clear that the campaign spoke to the challenges presented to women's rights activists under the new dispensation.

The SRC was important because it recognised that gender equality was in place in the eyes of the law but this did not necessarily have a meaningful impact on women's lives. Feminists have long argued that rights that can only be realised in the context of what is considered to be the 'private' realm tend to be the most difficult to realise. In this case, the rights that the WHP sought to secure were situated not only in the home but also in the bedroom. As one woman in a WHP workshop conducted in 2000 indicated, "In my culture if *lobola* was paid, more so the eleventh cow, a woman does not own her body anymore. The husband uses it the way he wants" (Women's Health Project 2000).

WHP staff found that not only was gender inequality an issue within the workshops, simply finding the right language to talk about sex was not easy. In many African languages the words used to describe body parts and sexual acts were simply too crude to be translated into English. In addition to this, there were often difficulties convincing groups of older and younger people to open up and talk about sexuality issues when they were in the same room together. These cultural barriers presented themselves frequently.

The campaign culminated in the launching of a Sexual Rights Charter in 2003 (see Appendix A for full text of the Charter). The Charter was developed along the lines of the Women's Charter of 1959 and the subsequent charter developed by the WNC in 1993. In this sense it was quite consciously a part of the trajectory of the women's movement in South Africa. In a modern twist however, it also drew on international

instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Programme of Action of the ICPD.

The charter was based on a consultative forum in Cape Town in late 2002, that brought together approximately 100 delegates from around the country, both from within government departments and from the civil society organisations and community groups that had participated in the campaign. The meeting was dominated by organisations that were based in urban areas, and by groups that represented young people. The rural associations of women, and organisations working with marginalised women such as sex workers or women living on the streets, were not present. More importantly, the delegates failed to develop a document that accurately and simply conveyed the principles linked to sexual and reproductive rights. Having talked to hundreds of people in workshops and conferences over five years, WHP was unable to produce a Charter that coherently articulated the ideas of sexual and reproductive rights and why they should be respected.

Instead, WHP had to ask a consultant to draft a document. As the Campaign was closing down Hlatshwayo, conceded, “The document that had been developed at the conference was too dense, too complicated, filled with words and phrases women in rural areas would never connect with” (Hlatshwayo 2004, personal interview).

Perhaps the task that WHP set for itself was too large. It sought to address a long-term cultural, economic and socially rooted problem in a five year time period. It sought to create a language for discussing sexuality – not only in simplified English – but also in the many African languages that South Africans speak. That it failed to develop the Charter through consensus is perhaps unsurprising.

More importantly however, WHP failed to develop a consensus that the charter was indeed necessary. The organisation placed too much of an emphasis on the act of drafting a Charter. Despite its best attempts to work at a grassroots level, WHP was thinking like the policy NGO that it had become. Rather than working with women to identify their needs and priorities, as it had in the run-up to the Women’s Health

Conference in 1994, WHP had worked with women in order to *teach* them a new language. The process was top down, rather than bottom up. While in WHP's experience, developing concrete proposals worked well with policy-makers who needed to push pieces of legislation through parliament, this did not work at the community level. For women and men at community level to truly develop a commitment to gender equality and a respect for women's bodily integrity, they would have had to be engaged in more sustained conversations with one another and with WHP. The sexual rights workshops were an attempt to do this, but they fell short because they were time-bound rather than continuous. This was of course, a function of funding. The discussions were paid for by WHP, facilitated by a local organisation that often did not have a firm grasp of gender issues. In most instances even the RWM was unable to articulate the sophisticated gender analysis that WHP project staff had developed. Moreover, because of capacity constraints, WHP staff were seldom able to attend the community workshops. Therefore it was difficult for them to understand why people were attending the sessions. Msimang notes that there were incentives for attending the workshops, "We gave out lots of t-shirts and caps. And of course lunch. In poor communities where there is nothing happening all day... You can't tell me this was not a reason why people attended. Maybe once they got there they listened, but I know many wouldn't have come otherwise" (Msimang 2004: personal interview).

Although WHP was able to train close to 700 trainers who in turn trained others, the organisation failed to politicise their campaign. The goals were radical, but the group did not have the grassroots networks and connections to develop a thorough and indigenous approach to sexual rights.

4.6 Analysis

In each of the areas outlined above, WHP used its extensive networks and connections to move its agenda forward. It also developed a thorough methodology and a way of organising its work that efficiently and effectively reached out to influential people.

Based largely on the experience of pushing through the CTOP, Klugman has acknowledged that the role WHP played was assisted by the political moment of transition. She suggests that, "the majority party, the ANC, began without any institutionalised systems for research support for parliamentarians. In addition, the

process of bringing in new civil servants with a commitment to equity and the skills to guide policy development was very slow. As a result, there was a gap in resources acknowledged by politicians and even government officials, which many NGOs and policy consultancies exploited” (Klugman 2000b).

As Hassim has noted, feminists in the NGO sector generally shared the political perspectives of the women who found themselves in parliament in 1994. This was reflective of the broader relationships between the state and CSOs: in the early years of the transition, the political space was willingly shared across state and non-state lines. Within the executive, senior bureaucrats were drawn primarily from the ranks of activists in the anti-apartheid struggle. They worked closely with NGOs to operationalise the RDP. There was a general consensus that the new state had numerous capacity constraints and required support.

It was in this context of collegial relations between women in the state and women in the women’s movement that the campaign to legalise abortion was carried out. WHP was able to work within a progressive coalition of organisations to push forward a policy proposal that had been generated as the result of years of activism. WHP used what Hassim has called ‘inclusionary tactics’ in this campaign, calling on long-standing relationships with parliamentarians, and using the media to frame abortion as a right to health rather than to bodily integrity to win support (Hassim 2004). Hassim describes ‘inclusionary tactics’ as “a set of tactics that does not rely on mass mobilisation or confrontation. Rather, tactics, demands and rhetoric might be moderated to fit the discourses of the state in order to make incremental gains and to retain hard-won openings into the state. A number of crucial legislative and policy gains have been made as a result of this strategy” (Hassim 2004: 12). Although the new government opened up parliament to a variety of interests groups, held public hearings and invited submissions, many women’s associations knew nothing of how these processes worked. Indeed, had they known, it is likely that many would have been intimidated by the procedures of parliament. Many would have faced other barriers to participation, including the costs of travelling to Cape Town to make a submission, and arranging accommodation whilst there.

It is clear then, that a group of elite women – no longer predominantly white – were allowed to participate in a new political space, especially in the period from 1994 to 1997. Yet as the New Realism Era began, women's rights activists began to recognise that the inclusionary approach that had been so successful in securing policy and legislative success for issues such as abortion rights and the population policy, would not guarantee that women were protected from sexual violence and from HIV infection. As Klugman (2000) has noted, "Civil and political recognition alone is not enough to achieve sexual rights. Also necessary would be the redistribution of access to such necessities as credit and inheritance, as well as of responsibility for reproductive activities such as domestic work and childcare, so that they are shared equally between women and men" (2000a: 3).

Based on this analysis, WHP began the Sexual Rights Campaign. The work that WHP sought to undertake with the Sexual Rights Campaign represented a radical departure from what they had previously done. They sought to tackle the insufficiencies of the law that women's rights organisations had recognised in the years since apartheid ended.

Their expertise in the policy arena and their ability to navigate complex language proved to be both an asset and a liability in the SRC. On the one hand, like many women's rights organisations that emerged out of the period of the WNC, WHP approached the work from a liberal perspective, focussing on the importance of developing a Charter that could be used as a tool to help women to articulate and claim their rights. The approach was problematic on two levels. The Charter failed to explicitly link women's sexual and reproductive identities and concerns with their broader concerns about poverty and social inequality, and yet much of the effort to mobilise around this issue took place in poor communities.

This failure to reflect the multiple challenges of women's lives, which had an impact on their sexual and reproductive well-being was symptomatic of WHP's legalistic approach in working with women. WHP was accustomed to dealing with policy-makers. As such their approach was a legalistic one: the belief that a Charter could somehow make a difference to women was premised on the notion that the written word has meaning. In some contexts the written word is absolutely necessary, while

in rural settings charters and documents have less currency within the community. As Gouws (2003) notes, "Because the outcomes of the discursive struggles in the state are usually laws or policies, power is vested in *law as expert knowledge*... It claims to have a method and to establish the truth of events. It therefore also has the power to disqualify other knowledges and experiences.... Yet what women most often bring to the sites of power in the state are their everyday experiences of subordination, abuse, poverty and a lack of resources. If these experiences are not organised and legitimised by legal experts, women remain outside the discursive struggles."³⁴

By the time WHP was carrying out the SRC, the organisation had acknowledged that the inclusionary approach might not be effective in the fight for sexual rights. This conclusion was drawn based on the fundamental implications that these rights had for women's place in society (Klugman 2000a: 3). Furthermore, by 2000, a number of organisations had indicated a disillusionment with the GEAR strategy. Although WHP was no doubt aware of these debates, it failed to engage directly on the matter. This could be seen as an indication that the organisation was not prepared to be openly combative towards the state, given its reliance on what some might call the patronage of the state, at the policy level.

Although the Rural Women's Movement was a credible partner because of its role in the WNC, it did not represent a social movement organisation that had a sustained and committed constituency. Had WHP itself been more rooted in the communities where is sought change, it may have been able to assess the extent to which there were cleavages in the views of local leaders, and exploit these. Unfortunately WHP was unable to succeed in this regard.

The POS within which WHP was operating at local level was radically different from the national arenas in which it was accustomed to operating. For men and women in the communities in which the SRC was attempting to bring about a change in attitudes, a charter was inconsequential. In these communities, wisdom and meaning were passed on in radically different ways than WHP was prepared to work with. The

³⁴ Gouws, A. (2003). "The politics of state structures: citizenship and the national machinery for women in South Africa." *Feminist Africa*(3).

organisation failed to frame the debate about sexual and reproductive rights in a way that made sense for people outside the women's movement.

Although the Campaign was groundbreaking in its analysis, was championed by progressive organisations around the country, and was well funded by progressive donors, it failed to get both national and local traction. This failure was largely due to the fact that WHP did not understand the political opportunity structure at community level, did not acknowledge the growth and rise of new social movements that worked with women on the basis of broader social identities, groups like TAC, the LPM and the SECC. WHP was far less comfortable seeking structural change at a community level, than it was in the policy habitats that it had come to know well in the course of its other efforts. As the next chapter will show, by the time the SRC was undertaken, WHP was on the verge of an internal crisis. This crisis, or 'rupture' represented a moment in which WHP was unable to navigate the POS because it was haemorrhaging internally. The mismatch between the 'inside' and the 'outside' of the organisation will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter. An analysis of the events that took place in the years preceding the closure of WHP provides a useful context for determining when and how the organisational rupture took place.

4.7 The beginning of the end

In 1999, WHP conducted an evaluation of its programmes. Many of its programmes had been running since 1994, and therefore were due for review. The evaluation suggested that WHP needed to restructure in order to address a number of internal challenges, including the challenge of racial transformation.

The new WHP was radically different from the old one. This revamped version of the organisation would feature an executive committee of five people, and a streamlined staff of professionals with very tightly defined job descriptions. Most importantly however, the new would not have any of the leaders who created it.

Khosi Xaba had resigned in 1999. Although she stayed on until 2000, and was part of the restructuring discussions, her resignation was a major blow to the organisation. As one staff member noted, "there was an assumption that she [Khosi] would take over from Barbara (Christofedes 2004: personal interview). Xaba left because she,

“Wanted to go somewhere where I could make a name for myself. Where people would look at what I had done and say this was Khosi. I got tired of taking collective credit when there were others who were willing to say in a meeting – yes I wrote that document myself” (Xaba 2004).

The woman appointed to lead the organisation in Klugman’s place was Nana Kgotsidintsi. Kgotsidintsi was a medical doctor who was originally from Botswana. She had studied in the United States and settled in South Africa in the early 1990s. Kgotsidintsi’s education and professional background made her a sound choice. She had worked with WHP for almost two years prior to taking the post, and had good working relationships with most staff.

Marking her official appointment as Director of WHP, Kgotsidintsi wrote, “As I take over the leadership of WHP from Barbara I am daunted by its past achievements. It will certainly be a challenge to sustain the organisation while consolidating the gains of the past ten years and taking on new challenges” (Women's Health Project 2001: 3)

The transition was carefully stage-managed. In the 2001 Annual Report, the organisation noted that, “the move was both the result of the current leadership wanting a change and, linked to this, to realise one of the basic *raison d’être* of WHP. This is to train women in leadership, particularly black women” (Ibid). Furthermore, Kgotsidintsi, a medical doctor by training, had extensive programme experience in women’s health and HIV and AIDS, and was well suited to the position – certainly in terms of her areas of expertise.

However, within a year Kgotsidintsi was again writing in the newsletter: “Sadly, I now wish you all farewell as I leave the Women’s Health Project.” There was a notable absence of an explanation for her departure (Women's Health Project 2002: 3).

Amongst staff however it was general knowledge that Kgotsidintsi felt undermined by Klugman and Fonn and was never able to take the reins. Two years after her departure, one staff member noted “Barbara left but she still ran WHP for a long time. Even when she was working from home” (Hlatshwayo 2004: personal interview)

In her interview, Kgotsidintsi indicated that she resigned because she felt as though she was living in the shadow of the old director. She also noted that she was challenged by “managing divisions – between black and white staff, between admin and technical staff, between new and old” (Kgotsidintsi 2004: personal interview).

Following Kgotsidintsi’s departure, WHP had a series of Directors and Acting directors. After more than six months of short-term solutions, in 2003, Marion Borchers, a mental health specialist with no expertise in women’s health, but with strong skills in the area of Human Resources was pulled in to help save the organisation from closure. New funding had almost completely dried up, and the turnover of staff had lead to disappointing programme performance.

In September 2004 the Project officially closed its doors. Its last project funding had finished and Wits decided that it could no longer continue to support the existence of the group.

Chapter 5: Organisational Culture and Values lead to Rupture

This chapter examines WHP using Cynthia Rothschild-Whitt's (1979) model on ideal-type bureaucratic organisations and collectivist-democratic organisations (see Appendix B for a summary of the model). According to the model, there are eight factors that can be used to determine whether an organisation is bureaucratic or collectivist-democratic. It suggests that WHP was largely collectivist-democratic although it had some elements of a conventional bureaucracy. Having characterised the group as collectivist-democratic, the chapter then argues that WHP's organisational weaknesses were linked to: a) an internal culture in which the basis of authority of the leadership was gradually questioned; and b) a higher level of organisational commitment amongst the leaders than its members, which led to a radicalisation of the organisation over time.

Implicit in the first proposition is the suggestion that a trait that the group encouraged – that is the questioning of authority – ultimately weakened rather than strengthened it. Underpinning the second proposition is the fact that in classic SMO theory, the more radical a group, the less likely it is to survive the political environment. Thus the chapter argues that these two organisational weaknesses resulted in a significant 'rupture' from which the group could not recover.³⁵

The primary gap in the Rothschild-Whitt model is that it does not elaborate significantly on issues of leadership. In the last twenty years a great deal of analysis within organisational theory has looked at leadership. Thus the model is only useful insofar as understanding how internal dynamics were shaped by the structure and type of the organisation. However, it is important that the analysis allows room to examine the agency of individuals, especially those who played a leadership role.

³⁵ The term rupture is used to describe a relatively clear, time-limited occurrence that can be easily identified and described. After a 'rupture' a situation is significantly and qualitatively different from the way it was before in ways that have significant consequences. The consequences of the rupture can be intentional or unintentional, positive or negative or a combination of each. This concept is revisited at the end of the chapter.

Using the concept of 'rupture' as a frame, this section looks at leadership issues at WHP, with a particular focus on the changes that took place from 1999 onwards. The section examines the sequence of events that lead to the eventual closure of WHP in September 2004.

In his analysis of the NLC, Mngxitama examines what he calls the 'rupture,' between the macro environment and the internal factors that brought about the crisis at the NLC. Mngxitama looks at a moment in NLC's existence when a 'rupture' occurred with the past. He argues that rupture is, "the dynamic between the external and the internal environments which shape the extent and nature of the crises suffered". In essence, a rupture represents the point at which there is enough pressure – both from the inside and the outside – to shatter an organisation. As the organisation moves into the future after the rupture, it can never be the same again.

In organization theory, a rupture represents a relatively clear, time-limited occurrence, one that is easily identified. In essence after a 'rupture' a situation is significantly and qualitatively different from the way it was before in ways that have significant consequences on the future of the organisation. The consequences of the rupture can be intentional or unintentional, positive or negative or a combination of each.³⁶

The idea has its origins in the work of Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). Foucault suggests that although historians are constantly thriving for grand explanations and theories, "Beneath the great continuities of thought, beneath the solid, homogeneous manifestations of a single mind or of a collective mentality, beneath the stubborn development of a science striving to exist and to reach completion at the very outset, beneath the persistence of a particular genre, form, discipline, or theoretical activity, one is now trying to detect the incidence of interruptions." (Foucault³⁷, 1969) For Foucault, these interruptions are critical

³⁶ Space. Imagination // Rupture: The Cognitive Architecture of Utopian Political Thought in the Global Justice Movement, Stephen Shukaitis PhD candidate in Philosophy and Political Economy, University of Leicester (Leicester, Great Britain) 2005

³⁷ This reference has no page number. For the full text see the on-line version of the first three chapters in the book:
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/foucaul2.htm>

moments for reflection. Because “they suspend the continuous accumulation of knowledge, interrupt its slow development, and force it to enter a new time, cut it off from its empirical origin and its original motivations, cleanse it of its imaginary complicities; they direct historical analysis away from the search for silent beginnings, and the never-ending tracing-back to the original precursors, towards the search for a new type of rationality and its various effects.” (Ibid)

Understanding the story of WHP through this lens is critical. WHP’s history was not simply a linear story; it was also series of ‘interruptions’ that lead to a rupture from which the group could not recover. As the preceding chapter has demonstrated, there were many moments in the organisation’s history that challenged its trajectory. There were moments when staff members re-wrote the script, when they eschewed traditional power and as Foucault would describe it, allowed the force of the ‘discursive’ to take over³⁸.

As this chapter demonstrates, a rupture took place within WHP when Khosi Xaba left WHP in 1999. It is tempting to suggest that the departure of Fonn and Klugman represented the rupture. Yet as this detailed analysis demonstrates, Xaba’s departure delegitimised Klugman’s leadership and demotivated many staff members. Suddenly the organisation seemed out of step with post-apartheid South Africa. Whereas there was widespread recognition of the need for racial transformation in all arena of society, WHP seemed to be moving backwards. A range of dynamics within the

³⁸ One of Foucault's central concerns, and a theme that runs through his diverse writings, was the nature of power. Foucault conceived of power not as a possession - it is "never in anyone's hands" - but as something that circulates through people. Foucault wrote that "individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application". Foucault used the metaphors of nets and capillaries to describe the dispersed yet all-encompassing distribution of power through the social fabric. In Foucault's view, power is exercised in relationships between individuals, each of whom has some possibility of action. In Foucault’s estimation, the exercise of power by one does not erase the other's freedom "the other must always be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts". Though in any particular instance one person may have greater potential for "guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome", he notes that "resistance is always possible". Source: Everything about Michel Foucault website: http://www.everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=80951 accessed: November 29, 2006.

organisation created this feeling, and these dynamics were brought into sharp relief by Xaba's decision to leave.

Using this broad definition of 'rupture,' – a relatively clear, time-limited occurrence - this section examines the critical moment when WHP experienced a change that was significant enough to lead to the eventual demise of the group. This examination is premised on the fact that – as Foucault points out - a number of other smaller processes and tensions had been building up, which defined the nature and depth of the ultimate crisis.

5.1 Authority

In a collectivist-democratic organisation authority resides in the collective as whole rather than in particular individuals who are vested with power. Rothschild-Whitt's model suggests that in collectivist groups "authority is only delegated temporarily and is subject to recall by the group." She further asserts that "compliance is to the group as a whole rather than to a particular individual" (1979: 509).

This is dramatically different from bureaucratic institutions where, as *Figure 6* (see above) indicates, "compliance is to universal fixed rules" which are monitored and enforced by people whose primary function it is to carry out these functions. In this regard, the advantage of bureaucratic organisations is that they have clear processes, and it is relatively easy to hold individuals accountable for performance or non-performance. Yet collectivist organisations are premised on the notion that social order is possible "without recourse to authority" (Rothschild-Whitt 1979: 510). Collectives assume that people can behave in a cooperative and disciplined manner for the greater good. They seek not to transfer power from one person to another, but to work in a manner that circumvents power relations all together.

Yet collectivist groups recognise the importance of having some level of decision-making. If all members are involved in decision-making processes and can fully participate, then decisions are deemed to have been made democratically and therefore are binding. Democracy in these organisations is best understood as consensus rather than a simply majority or some other proportion of the group. In a

purely collective organisation even decisions such as recruitment, firing, salary levels, etc., are made by group consensus.

WHP was certainly not an ideal-type collectivist-democratic organisation in this regard. The organisation had elements of collectivist and democratic processes but its structural location at the University of Witwatersrand made it difficult for the group to be radically alternative: the university simply would not allow it to be.

Prior to establishing WHP, Klugman, Fonn and Xaba each worked within organisations that had strong collectivist leanings (Fonn 2004, June; Klugman 2002, November; Xaba 2004). Fonn and Klugman, came from trade union and UDF backgrounds. In these structures, not only was authority based on consensus, leadership was shared and group structure tended to be flat rather than hierarchical (Klugman 2002, November). Xaba had been part of the ANC in exile. Xaba noted that although the ANC was hierarchical, it believed firmly in cultivating a shared and collective vision through debate and dialogue amongst cadres (Xaba 2004).

In recent years organization theorists have become more critical of collectivist organisations. Barker (1993) has coined the phrase 'concertive control', which "represents a key shift in the locus of control from management to the workers themselves, who collaborate to develop the means of their own control. Workers achieve concertive control by reaching a negotiated consensus on how to shape their behaviour according to a set of core values, such as the values found in a corporate vision statement" (Barker 1993: 411).

Pollert's 1996 study of the introduction of a team-based approach within a large food company demonstrated that attempting to develop a collectivist sensibility to work caused inter-team competition. The result was mistrust instead of the improvement of the quality of work that was expected. Pollert quotes a worker who states, "Everyone's watching everyone else -- we didn't used to do that" (1996: 200).

As this chapter illustrates, collectivist organisations are not immune to the negative dynamics of power. Indeed intra-group dynamics do not preclude the potential of collectives to victimize particular individuals. As a hybrid, WHP espoused some of

the values of a collectivist-democratic group, but maintained a quasi-bureaucratic sensibility in relation to authority. Authority at WHP can be understood in two ways: by looking at the structure of the group and then by examining formal and informal decision-making processes regarding the direction of the organisation.

A noteworthy illustration of the hybrid nature of power dynamics is found in the use of job titles in the organisation. WHP had a contradictory relationship with job titles. In the early years of WHP's life, the newsletter provided detailed information about who was joining the organisation and in what role. As the group expanded this continued and a column was added to the front of the newsletter listing simply the names of each staff member without a title next to their name. The list of names in the newsletter was not alphabetical, nor was it shaped by any perceptible logic. Yet in its annual reports the organisation listed job titles. What was consistent however was that Klugman's was always listed first.

The 1996 organisation did not have a proper organogram and the different positions clearly indicated this. There were no clear operational units, although there was a general split between Research, Training and Policy. The three areas were generally divided up amongst Klugman, Fonn and Xaba. In addition to being Coordinator, Klugman was listed as Section Manager responsible for Networking and Policy Promotion. Fonn was the section manager for Research and Xaba was the Section Manager for Training and Materials Production.

Fonn had three research officers under her supervision. Xaba had a trainer and an intern from World Health Organisation (WHO), to assist her unit. Klugman had a policy analyst and a senior project officer who focused on financial and project management across the organisation. Regardless of titles, from the establishment of WHP it was clear that Klugman was in charge of the operation. A 1992 *WHP News* listed her as General Coordinator, although by 1996, the first year in which the project produced a formal Annual Report, Klugman was listed as Coordinator and Section Manager for Policy.

Despite the different titles, each of the three women at the helm of the organisation received the same salary package, in recognition of the fact that they contributed

similar amounts of time, energy and expertise to the organization. In terms of day-to-day authority, Klugman and Xaba were hands-on managers who had relationships across the organization with all staff. Fonn was less extroverted and involved with significant teaching responsibilities. Thus leadership of the group rested primarily with Xaba and Klugman (Fonn 2004, June; Xaba 2004).

The partnerships worked well. Klugman had significant contacts with donors and some senior politicians, whilst Xaba had political credibility and wide-ranging contacts with member of the ruling party – both inside and outside government. As the project grew, both were able to leverage their relationships to the benefit of the organisation.

By 1999, Klugman's official title was Director. Fonn was Deputy-Director responsible for Research and Xaba was Deputy-Director responsible for Training. When the organisational restructuring took place in 2000, these units – which had been fairly fixed since the inception of the Project - fell away. The new structure included an Executive Director, three Executive Officers, three Senior Specialists, a Senior Researcher, one Researcher, one Junior Researcher and one Research Intern, three Trainers, a Communications Officer, a Finance and Administration Manager and a Finance Officer.

In many alternative organisations, rules are developed in an ad-hoc fashion. While norms and standards exist, collectives seldom develop manuals or handbooks for staff. The advantage of having and using written rules is that members have clear recourse if the rules are not followed. However, collectivist groups are committed to accounting for decisions based on substantive ethics, rather than based on a set of rules passed down from the hierarchy. In collectivist organisations, the group is responsible for explaining its actions in the terms of social values and principles. Thus decision-making may not always be transparent but in theory it is seldom arbitrary (Rothschild-Whitt 1979: 512).

Decisions were not typically made by consensus at WHP although many decisions were open for debate and discussion. Staff meetings were used as a time for all members of the organisation to voice concerns and influence organisational policy

and direction. However, the strategic direction of WHP was shaped not by a board of directors or advisors, but by the three women who were section managers / directors. Interestingly, because WHP derived its mandate from the Women's Health Conference of 1994, many of the issues it chose to work on were framed as predetermined. In the way that WHP publications articulated the work of the project, the power of the 400 people who had attended the Women's Health Conference was always looming large, justifying the existence of the group and guiding its actions. Indeed, WHP depicted itself as a network in the years immediately before and after the Conference. For example, in an early *WHP News and Views*, Klugman wrote, "we are being asked to give a lot of information and financial support to women's health networks and this probably means that we need to develop a new understanding of what it means to be a national network" (Klugman 1995 : 3; Women's Health Project 1995a).

Implicit in this approach was a sense within the organisation that WHP derived its authority from the fact that it had a constituency. Furthermore, the leaders of the organisation made much of the notion that their mandate was derived from the Women's Health Conference. This meant that decisions about what WHP would undertake were not seen as having been made by Klugman, Xaba and Fonn, instead their authority was seen as coming from the wider women's movement (Shapiro and Nell 1996; Women's Health Project 1995a).³⁹

In reality, the direct link between WHP and a constituency was tenuous at best. The Project's attempt to serve as a network was largely unsuccessful. WHP did not actively work on becoming a network. Instead, the group sent out a newsletter that facilitated networking but could not be considered to be a network itself. Leibler and Ferri (2004) suggest that, "Though knowledge and information sharing are important activities of most networks, the core of the network is the relationships among its members" (2004: 15) If WHP had been a sectoral network it would likely have fit the following description: "Sectoral networks are generally highly collaborative, and

³⁹ This impression is created in a number of the early newsletters of WHP, which referred to a network. In the evaluation carried out by Shapiro and Nell (1996) a member of an NGO noted that WHP staff continually referred to the network as the source of their strength.

often involve advocacy, technical capacity building, joint research, and the development of standards” (Leibler and Feri 2004: 17). WHP worked in collaboration with a range of groups, but in an ad hoc rather than a systematic fashion.

As it was, the organisation evolved into a fairly typically NGO after the 1996 abortion rights campaign was won. It had staff, a board, and projects, rather than a broad membership base. As the Freedom and Consultation Era ended, WHP had evolved into an effective policy organisation that understood the women’s health sector and could articulate a set of priorities for women’s health. They knew how to frame the debates. With Klugman and Xaba as the public face of the organisation, the group had a political credibility that was difficult to match. Internally, staff members respected the leaders of the group. Klugman and Xaba were particularly popular amongst staff members. Yet as the number of staff members increased the credibility of the leadership (particularly Klugman) became increasingly contested.

5.2 Rules

Rothschild-Whitt’s model suggests that collective-democratic groups have minimal rules, preferring ‘ad-hoc individuated decisions’. Collectivist groups tend to like fewer rules rather than more, preferring to rely on trust. Yet as Rothschild-Whitt notes, “just as the most bureaucratic of organisations cannot anticipate, and therefore cannot circumscribe every potential behaviour...so the alternative organisation cannot reach the theoretical limit of zero rules” (Rothschild-Whitt 1979: 524)

The issue of rules at WHP was fraught with contradictions. WHP struggled with the establishment of organisational systems throughout its existence. In part this struggle was practical – again because it was situated within a university context but focused on issues of national or community importance, which seldom involved the type of activities that the university was involved with. But at another level, WHP had to develop systems for itself under duress because it grew so quickly. From a small project with minimal funding and a staff complement of three in 1991, it grew to a medium sized organisation with ten staff members and an annual budget of almost R3 million in 1996 (Women's Health Project 1996).

As the organisation grew it developed rules. In some cases the university rules that governed it by default were unsatisfactory, and so the Project drew up new ones. In

other cases, the university bureaucracy made it difficult for WHP to circumvent its systems (Klugman, 2004: personal interview). By 1996 WHP had grown so much that there was a clear need for it to develop its own internal administrative systems. The annual report of 1996 noted that WHP was engaged in the process of developing a policies and procedures manual. In order to do this, the group hired a consultant to help train staff in Wits University's administrative systems in order to "develop clear mechanisms for administrative decision-making and implementation" ((1996: 45). This included "checklists for organising events [and] a problem form for taking up miscommunication or other conflicts" (1996: 45).

The following year, WHP formally separated itself from the Centre for Health Policy (CHP) where it had been housed since its inception. The Project continued to be based at the Department of Community Health, and continued to collaborate with CHP on publications and events. However, donors and the University were requesting that WHP set up its own financial and administrative systems.

The policies and procedures manual was completed in 1999 and the next year a Senior Office Manager was hired to enforce the new rules and ensure that administrative issues were adequately dealt with. In announcing the creation of the post in 1999, Klugman noted that the old system of shared responsibility had "put unacceptable pressure on WHP's senior management" (Women's Health Project 1999: 43).

Once rules and systems had been established, WHP had to begin to apply them. This proved to be a difficult task. Most staff members who were interviewed in 2003 indicated that there seemed to be two sets of rules: one for the managers and one for the rest of staff. One staff members suggested that while managers enjoyed flexibility in terms of whether they would work from home or at the office, and what hours they would work, lower-ranking staff member's movements were more closely monitored (Monareng 2003: personal interview).

When probed further, the staff member above acknowledged that she was referring to the fact that after vacating her post as director, Klugman continued to work for WHP from her home. Similarly throughout the life of the organisation, researchers and programme staff who had to finish writing up large documents often worked from

home. Yet the policies manual clearly stated that normal working hours were between eight o'clock and four in the afternoon.

While this may seem a petty point, it illustrates the extent to which there was a perception within the group that different rules applied to different people. Yet in interviews with staff and the leadership, it was clear that rules were developed out of necessity and not because the leadership was interested in hierarchy or asserting authority. This led to a reluctance amongst senior staff to observe and/or enforce the rules too strictly. Their collectivist tendency was to take a hands-off approach as long as the work was getting done (Klugman 2002: personal interview).

In spite of this, as noted above, some staff experienced WHP as an organisation that policed and monitored them. Klugman argued that those who were watched closely were often not delivering the quality of work that was expected of them. Thus, while WHP eventually had to develop some bureaucratic rules to guide its functioning, its value base was driven by a different ethos, a more collectivist-democratic orientation in which the rules mattered less than the contribution of the individual. However, where the individual failed to live up to the standards of excellence set by the organisation, she was often subject to a great deal of bureaucratic supervision.

5.3 Social Control

Rothschild-Whitt (1979) suggests that in a collectivist-democratic group, "social controls are primarily based on personalistic/moralistic appeals" (Rothschild-Whitt 1979: 523) and the fact that the membership of the group is fairly homogeneous. Homogeneity is important because as Zald and Ash (1966) propose, heterogeneity leads to divisions and tensions with SMOs. This is particularly the case where the heterogeneity is ideological in nature (1966: 337).

Social control within bureaucratic organisations is typically exerted either through direct supervision, standardised rules and sanctions, or by the selection of homogeneous personnel. Collectivist groups tend to favour the last option for exerting social control. Rather than developing systems, alternative organisations vest their faith in people, arguing that those with the same vision will fall in line with the organisational culture.

Rothschild notes that people in alternative organisations tend to come from financially privileged backgrounds and well educated families (1979: 521). Her conclusion has been reached by assessing American organisations, and to some extent it describes the backgrounds of the white women within WHP. Yet the black women at WHP typically did not come from similarly affluent backgrounds. The following examples illustrate the point that unlike typical collectivist groups in American contexts, WHP staff was not homogeneous.

Desiree Monareng

I had two sets of parents – one in Rustenburg who were the biological ones and one set in Mamelodi, where I was raised. In the Mamelodi house I was the last born, but with biological parents is the second child. Did my schooling in Mamelodi, went to northwest in 1994 because of uprisings and unrest. My town parents were worried that I would get hurt. I'm young but I have a son – ten years old. For him it's good to be in the house in Mamelodi with his grandparents and everyone to take care of him. So I commute from Pretoria to Johannesburg everyday (Monareng 2003: personal interview).

Marie van Rooyen

I am a mother, freelance indexer, working on a part-time basis. I have three grown up sons and I'm the grandmother of one. My son lives in England so we only see them when they come home to visit. I lived all my life in Pretoria. I got a pharmacy degree and worked at CSIR where I learned to do indexing. From there I went to the State library and then worked at different private organisations.

I would say that I am white and privileged. I grew up in an above average economic environment and am now still in the above average economic background. Except now my husband is out of work. He was a member of

air force and then he was retrenched. That makes you sometimes feel negative about certain actions taken about colour.

My family was conservative Christian, quite different from the other people here. Although my background is quite different, we connect because I've learnt from the past. I come from an Afrikaans background and the wrong that was done, when I go outside its part of my life what I learn here, outside... It makes me a better human to be able to work in this environment (Marie van Rooyen 2003: personal communication).

These two narratives indicate how different the backgrounds of some of the staff were. Yet, as Rothschild notes, alternative organisations tend to be very emotionally intense environments because of close interpersonal relationships that are encouraged. Rothschild suggests that these are often more satisfying than those formed in bureaucratic organisations, but the social cost of this form of organisation can be high. Rothschild suggests that interpersonal tension is likely to be a feature of such relationships.

This description is apt when looking at WHP. Given that WHP was established in an attempt to contribute to a non-racial South Africa, the organization strove to be racially diverse and provide a space for women with different race class and gender experiences to pursue a similar vision. Yet this heterogeneity within WHP made it difficult for the group itself to exercise social control. Even at the level of vision, the group was extremely diverse: some staff members were committed feminists while others questioned the value of feminism. Some were working because they had to, while others worked because they were passionate about the job.

When asked if they were feminists, WHP staffers answered in many different ways:

- A feminist is someone who is too sensitive about gender issues. No I'm not a feminist (Mosiane 2003 personal communication).

- I haven't read a lot of feminist literature – so I can't speak from a point of knowledge. In principle a feminist believes in self-determination for women and the rights of women to assert themselves and make use of opportunities available to all. A feminist helps women to achieve equal opportunities. If that's the case then yes I believe in it (Kawonga 2003).
- Yes. In terms of the perspective of not conforming, I have women's interest at heart, to look at equality between the sexes, whether in a mental health organisation or at a local authority level. So yes, I suppose I see myself as a feminist (Borcherds 2003: personal interview).
- Sometimes I have a problem with the word – some are more on the extreme and not considering what women can and cannot do. Other than physical stuff, women can do everything. We need to balance the two, we also need to listen to men and understand where they come from and help them if there are things they can change. Men fear people who call themselves feminists because they seem to be man bashing. That's when we lose them (Monareng 2003: personal interview).

These varying ideas about feminism indicate a diversity that is healthy in a typical bureaucratic organisation. Yet for an organisation that was collectivist in nature, and sought to bring about changes that were fundamentally tied to these ideas, the diversity of perspectives was troubling. Although there was a sense of solidarity amongst the women in the group during particular moments - particularly in the early years - for most of the time that WHP was in existence, there were smaller social and 'ideological' groups within the larger organisation. These smaller groupings were largely defined by race.

Organisational studies theorists argue that individuals tend to interact with people who they define as being part of their own group rather than with members of other groups (Stephan 1985: 613 - 616). This has come to be known as "in-group favouritism, or the tendency to favour the in-group over the out-group" (Richard and Grimes 1996: 157).

Given the body of evidence about in-group favouritism, a strong critique of collectivist organisations is that they do not allow healthy space for certain types of diversity. Because they value similarity of purpose, they tend to ignore the ways in which social markers of identity can shape group members' responses to particular issues, as well as how these differences can affect group solidarity.

Zald and Ash (1966: 337) suggest that intra-group schisms are often linked to “a concern with doctrinal purity” They argue that these tensions are linked not simply to ideology itself but more importantly to the notion of where leaders within the SMO derive their legitimacy or their basis of authority. “Unless the ...movement organisation possesses the prestige of success and material incentive” say Zald and Ash (1966: 337) “the bases of authority are difficult to establish” (Ibid).

Over the course of its existence WHP was able to claim a number of successes but the group was unable and unwilling to offer significant material incentives to its members. Indeed, staff fragmented into cliques, often along race and class lines. Furthermore, despite its policy success, WHP did not achieve mass popularity or recognition in the manner of TAC or the APF. WHP mattered in the policy and movement circles that it inhabited but it did not garner much attention beyond this.

Thus, as the organisation matured, staff members grew increasingly sceptical of the basis of Klugman's authority. This scepticism was not premised on a denial of Klugman's intelligence or leadership skills, but was linked to questions about WHP's sustainability in the face of the growing rhetoric in the public arena about the importance of black leadership at an institutional level. Before Xaba left, Klugman's leadership was not easy to question. Xaba was an intellectually engaging woman, who had a powerful in her ability to make a point. Xaba was known for speaking her mind. She was a role model to a number of women at WHP – both black and white. She was especially popular amongst the black staff because she challenged and confronted racism. Xaba would often, “just speak in Zulu in the office- the whole day! If people wanted to understand me they had to learn how to speak it, just as black people had to learn how to speak English” (Xaba 2004: personal interview).

After she left the organisation when black staff within WHP asked, ‘where is

Klugman's authority coming from?' the easy answer they gave themselves was that her authority was vested in her social position as a white woman. Klugman had benefited from apartheid in the past, despite her best efforts as part of the struggle against the apartheid regime. It seemed inappropriate to some staff that they should still be led by a white woman in a South Africa that was liberated. In the political environment that emerged in the new democracy, this was not simply a radical view held by people with black consciousness leanings (Moodley and Adam 2000).

The questions staff members asked about the leadership within the organisation fed into larger discourses about NGO legitimacy, racial transformation, and the creation of a 'new' South Africa. Slim (2002) notes, "The questions NGOs have asked themselves concentrate on how their voice relates to the people they are primarily concerned about — the poor, people whose rights are violated, and the victims of war. These debates about NGO voice might be summed up as follows: do NGOs speak as the poor, with the poor, for the poor or about the poor?" (Slim 2002)?

Although they worked for the same organisation, black and white staff within WHP saw themselves as fundamentally different from their colleagues. Many of the black women saw themselves as being like the women in the field, those who Slim describes as, the poor, the violated and the victims of war (2002). A number of black women interviewed expressed doubt over the credibility of Klugman and questioned her legitimacy as a leader because they did not think she could speak as a poor black woman, in solidarity with poor black women or on behalf of poor black women. As the section below explains, they did not think that Klugman could relate to poverty or blackness, and the fact that she shared the identity of being a woman — like them — was simply not enough to mitigate their concerns.

Slim (2002) suggests that a number of 'intangible' aspects of NGO's legitimacy create a feeling of goodwill towards a group. He suggests that, "Qualities such as credibility, reputation, trust and integrity are critical to an organisation's legitimacy. Although they are closely dependent on the tangible sources of legitimacy — support, knowledge and performance — they are unusual because they can take on a life of their own. They thrive on perception to function more like belief than fact. They can rely on image rather than reality and may not require any empirical experience to

influence people one way or the other” (2002). Although Slim’s example is meant to illustrate a dynamic that exists between outsiders and the NGOs they observe, it also aptly describes the importance of intangible measures of goodwill *within* an NGO.

In interviews, a number of black staff members mentioned that they resented the fact that the leadership was primarily white (Hlatshwayo 2004: personal interview; Kgotsidintsi 2004: personal interview; Monareng 2003: personal interview; Xaba 2004: personal communication). These women also mentioned feeling resentful towards their white colleagues for not seeming, in the words of Moodley and Adam, to be “aware of their invisible knapsacks of privilege” (2000: 58).

As one staff member suggested, “The whites had the skills to deliver if you looked at it straight. Sometimes in reality it becomes difficult and there is always the dominant and someone not so dominant” (Hlatshwayo 2004: personal interview).

Looking at it ‘straight’ as the staff member noted was no easy task. The opinions of all members of the group were coloured by their life experiences as members of a particular race group in South Africa. As Moodley and Adam (2000: 58) explain, “As the number of blacks among the 20 percent of the South African population [considered to be wealthy] now exceeds whites, many former beneficiaries of racial legislation actually feel comparatively underprivileged. The previously colonized still reel under stereotypes about the behaviour of blacks or Indians, as if they were a monolithic group. ... many blacks still suffer the burdens of long internalized imposed labels and struggle with them.”

The manifestations of the internalized labeling that Moodley and Adam describe are anger and suspicion. In her recollection of a clash between herself and Klugman, Nana Kgotsidintsi (the Executive Director who replaced Klugman) demonstrates that few discussions within WHP could be taken at face value: the racial undercurrents were strong. In Kgotsidintsi’s story, Klugman was unaware of her ‘invisible knapsack.’

In her interview Kgotsidintsi told the story of overhearing some of the training staff complaining about the long drives they had to endure to get to project sites. They noted that they did the journey without any heat or air conditioning and without a radio. Having experienced a drive of this nature, Kgotsidintsi agreed that perhaps WHP should consider installing air-conditioning and a radio into the office vehicle. She raised the matter at the next staff meeting and was met with resistance from Klugman. She recalls that Klugman “lectured her”, arguing that her own personal vehicle had neither an air-conditioner nor a radio. Kgotsidintsi also remembered Klugman stating that with money intended to help the poor, it would not be appropriate to purchase “frills” such as a radio or aircon” (Kgotsidintsi 2004: personal interview).

Kgotsidintsi felt reprimanded and misunderstood, arguing that Klugman saw a radio and aircon as frills or perks, because she didn’t have to undertake the trips herself. Thus, Kgotsidintsi noted “she was able to maintain a moral purist argument about how development funds get used, without acknowledging her own privilege and power in the situation, as the boss, as a white woman who had enough money to choose whether or not she was going to have aircon and as the one that did all the writing and never sat on the road in the summer getting hot and freezing in the winter. It just wasn’t an issue to her” (Ibid).

Staff members at WHP often saw themselves as part of small cliques. As the organisation matured, the tensions grew and coalesced around issues of race. This came as no surprise given the history of racism in the country. However, it made for an organisational climate that was often tense and difficult, despite the advances that WHP was making in the policy arena.

5.4 Social Relations

In collectivist organisations relations can be labelled as personal, intrinsic, situational and are recognised as having value in and of themselves. Whereas in bureaucratic organisations, social relations are based on roles, and people generally deal with each other based on the need to address a matter related to work processes, within collectivist groups, people speak to one another because they want to. The notion of a

community is often used to describe the social relations within alternative organisations.

Yet, as illustrated above, WHP was a diverse organisation where there were deep divisions based on different histories. Creating a sense of community in this environment was not simple. However, many early members of the group recall a strong sense of camaraderie. Certainly until 1996, the women who worked for WHP were a happy group who worked well together (Shapiro and Nell 1996: 14).

The sense of community in WHP was fostered formally and informally. This included the capacity-building programme, the feminist reading group and the friendships that were cultivated through shared interests and informal mentorships. These three expressions of community within WHP are examined below to assess their influence on the outcome of the organisation.

From its earliest days, WHP ran a capacity-building programme that was designed to support African women wanting to join academia or research and policy in the area of women's health. The programme had a number of strands including an internship programme that supported young women's professional development. A few of the young women who enrolled in the programme joined WHP as researchers once their internships were over. Interns were encouraged to travel, to present research at conferences, and to develop their academic writing and research skills.

Each year all WHP staff members were entitled to a month's leave for capacity building. This could be interpreted widely, and some staff members used the opportunity to work on finishing their MA thesis, others went on a course, and so on. Staff members were provided with opportunities to attend courses on a regular basis and technical experts and activists were often invited to attend discussions and workshops at WHP. Staff members were also actively encouraged to enrol at institutions of higher education – although this was not always matched by the necessary time and space for staff members who decided to do so.

The internship programme provided valuable skills to a number of women who went on to work in the NGO sector. For example, Daphne Conco was quoted in the 1999

annual report saying, “The actual work that one is doing is developing me as a person, talking to people gives me new insights on the issues surrounding us. I am purposely not saying that I learnt more about women’s health, because the truth is women’s health topics are not the only topics I have gained knowledge on” (Women's Health Project 1999: 43).

Conco’s comments indicate the importance that collectivist groups place on the value of experiences for their own sake, not simply for instrumental purposes. However, some people within the organisation were critical of the internship programme. They suggested that the women who were considered interns in WHP would have held full-time, well-paid jobs in other NGOs (Msimang 2004: personal interview). This criticism suggested that WHP had unrealistic expectations of its staff members. Within WHP the notion of ‘excellence’ was a theme. Klugman was known to have exacting standards, and freely admitted that this was the case (Klugman 2002). Yet there was a perception within the organisation that these standards were too high, and that somehow they were linked to race. What lay underneath the criticism of Klugman was an accusation that if she were black she would not be so demanding of her staff.

Yet the experience of another reproductive health and rights organisation that recruited a former WHP staff member, and product of the internship programme, indicates that Klugman’s demands may have been reasonable. The director of a women’s health advocacy organisation that worked in the southern Africa region, recruited a programme officer who had been an intern at WHP for three years. Within six months the new recruit had been dismissed from MSC I for failure to perform. The director noted that, “she simply did not have what it took to do the level of policy analysis that we required of a programme officer” (Harris 2004a). The fact that despite having worked as an intern for three years, she was unable to perform in a competitive environment illustrates the challenges that faced WHP in seeking to build the capacity of women who had had inferior access to education for most of their lives. While the script within WHP dictated that Klugman was viewed suspiciously for her high standards, the example above illustrates that at least in one instance, Klugman exercised more patience than other NGO leaders were prepared to demonstrate.

In many ways WHP was a feminist organisation. As this analysis has demonstrated, the collectivist –democratic tendencies of the organisation were in line with the basic tenets of feminist organisations (Martin 1990). In addition, Fonn, Xaba and Klugman were all feminists although they proclaimed this fact in different ways.

Fonn and Klugman noted that the use of the term had grown increasingly detrimental in certain settings, but agreed that the content and processes of their work was feminist. Xaba was more direct in her feminism. Writing in 2001, she stated, “I may be proudly black and proudly Zulu, but I am also a feminist and politically aware. We all need to see hurtful, sexist customs for what they are and change them forever, for everyone’s benefit” (Women's Health Project 2002).

At one point in the mid-1990s, staff members were interested in learning more about feminism. This was largely because of the influence of Xaba, Klugman and Fonn, as well as Marion Stevens and other feminist women who either worked for the project or came to the offices on a regular basis. WHP set up a reading group in 1997. The group met during lunch hour and discussed journal articles and books about women’s rights and activism. In their evaluation the following year Nell and Shapiro noted, “For those who have not necessarily been exposed to 20 years of feminist theory and reading, this is proving very valuable” (Shapiro and Nell 1996: 51).

Despite the difficulties and tensions that hung over WHP, it was at times described as a wonderful place to be. One staff member suggested, “It’s one place where I can find a white woman undoing a black woman’s hair at lunch time” (Ziyambi 2003: personal interview). Another staff member said, “I’ve been here for the past four years and – no world is perfect. It’s a good working environment, the openness in being able to talk to each other, the ability to sit as a team and go through issues without really pointing fingers without fighting. We fight here and there but it doesn’t govern us” (Robertson 2003: personal interview).

Despite the positive feelings about some of the relationships between women at the Project, all staff members interviewed noted that there had been a change. In the beginning WHP was a dynamic organisation with important work to do. The group

had sought to do this work in an innovative and thoughtful manner. The organisation sought to involve and empower all staff members in the process. However, by the time the organisation closed, it was riven by in-fighting.

As one staff member who had been with WHP for over six years noted, “At the beginning WHP was feminist, but then as they grew bigger, when you listen to them the energy and the vibe, people carved their positions and claimed fame and international expertise the feminist agenda took a back seat. People continued to improve the lot of women but not in the same way. It became about the work out there – not in here” (Hlatshwayo 2004: personal interview).

Another staff member, employed between 2000 and 2003, suggests, “I liked at first the freedom in terms of the types of work, and this was challenging. But we tried to change leadership and it became difficult to see how everyone participates. If you were able to make a plan it worked for you. The work culture – you were given responsibility - no one chased after you. People trusted you. The organisation grew and it became hard to operate that way in the free grown-up way, and there were now efforts to streamline. People found it hard to adjust. Filling in forms, questions, about where are you going? Why? When will you be back” (Ziyambi 2003: personal interview)?

The moment at which the organisation began to ‘feel’ demonstrably different is linked in the minds of many staff to the period just before and after the organisational structuring took place. The restructuring exercise paved the way for the departure of Klugman and Fonn. More precisely, a number of people suggest that the crisis began when Khosi Xaba announced her departure in 1999 (Hlatshwayo 2004: personal interview; Msimang 2004: personal interview).

An administrative assistant who had worked for WHP since 1997 commented that she felt that the organisation had changed significantly after Fonn, Klugman and Xaba left. She suggested that, “There is a big difference. You wake up in the morning and want to come to work because there was challenge – interacting with them you wouldn’t feel the level that you’re with. You had discussions with them and had a

chance to hear. Those days there was more sharing and more interesting work, there was more time for staff' (Mosiane 2003).

In 2003, when the bulk of the interviews were carried out, morale was low. There had been a series of directors in the three years since Klugman departed, and the organisation had not demonstrated the capacity to fundraise. Despite this, a number of staff members felt that the organisation still had an important role to play (Marie van Rooyen 2003: personal interview; Monareng 2003: personal interview). Although most staff members were looking for jobs at the time of the interviews, there was a cautious optimism. One staff member commented that, "It isn't as bad as it seems. It's such an important institution and set up and way of doing things. I imagine working in a corporate world: my life would be terrible. On the whole it's a great place to be" (Ziyambi 2003: personal interview).

5.5 Recruitment and Advancement

Collectivist organisations often recruit members based on shared social and political values. Unlike bureaucratic organisations where formal qualifications are seen as important, collectivist democratic organisations value the attitudes and informal skills of group members. According to Rothschild-Whitt's model, "the concept of career advancement and hierarchy have no meaning," within a collectivist organisation.

Not only was the university culture hierarchical, it also valued particular ways of knowing and doing as more important and better than others. Therefore, the recruitment and advancement patterns within the university were skewed in favour of people who had race, class and gender privilege. For example, people within the university setting who had more years of formal education were paid more, received more accolades and were more highly regarded than those who had less years of formal education but may have had more practical experience in community settings. Thus white people tended to have better professional advancement opportunities at the university than black people.

Because teaching, learning and research are the core business of a university, Wits valued those who were able to lecture and produce published research. Again in this

area whites tended to have better publishing track records than blacks, and tended to have better qualifications.

As WHP grew, the recruitment and advancement policies of the organisation became increasingly important. Formal criteria were formulated to guide recruitment and promotion decisions. As outlined above, these included shared values with the larger organisation. In addition WHP sought staff that had the ability to produce high quality research, conduct policy advocacy and networking.

As this happened patterns began to emerge. Staff members who needed to strictly observe office hours because of their personal circumstances felt that they were limited in their ability to advance in the organisation because they were perceived as not being committed. On the other hand, there was a resentment of colleagues who could come and go as they pleased – staying late or arriving late due to the flexibility of either having a car or not having children or having support at home in the form of a domestic worker, spouse or other family member. One staff member noted that “some people even get to work from home, and you wonder if they are really working so hard that they cannot stop working for enough time to get into the car and come to work. But if others tried to say we are working from home there would be a lot of questions” (Monareng 2003: personal interview).

Those who put in extra hours writing documents were often rewarded by getting more research assignments and better treatment by management. Yet there were gripes in this arena too. A junior researcher noted, “I wake up at five and take the train from Pretoria to get to this office. And then I hear about how writing is so hard. When am I going to find time to write” (Monareng 2003: personal interview)?

Another staff member - this one a manager - noted, “people around here act like it’s the greatest thing to work all the time. I like my job but I have a life. There are other things I’m interested in besides women’s health okay?” (Hlatshwayo 2004, personal interview). Thus, advancement at WHP was linked how hard one was perceived as working. Those who did well as WHP demonstrated these traits.

5.6 Incentive Structure/Social Stratification

In collectivist organisations, “normative and solidary incentives are primary; material

incentives are secondary” (Rothschild-Whitt 1979: 517). People work because they are passionate about a cause. In addition, collectivist democratic organisations try to minimise the differences in pay. Because of the hierarchy of the university, pay scales were dramatically different amongst different levels of staff. This discrepancy in pay was in direct opposition to the ideal of a flat organisation to which the leadership were committed when they established the organisation in 1991. Indeed when WHP was established, salary equity was an important principle, and as a result Fonn, Klugman and Xaba earned the same salary (Xaba 2004: personal interview).

However the idea that the amount of pay individuals were earning should be secondary to the content of their work was not shared by everyone in the organisation. Again race played a part. There was a feeling amongst some white women that there was too much concern, particularly amongst the younger black staff, about how much they earned (Christofedes 2004: personal interview; Klugman 2002: personal interview). The debate about whether working at WHP was a vocation or a necessity came up repeatedly in interviews, and here too the racial and class lines were relatively stark (Christofedes 2004: personal interview; Hlatshwayo 2004: personal interview; Kawonga 2003: personal interview; Kgotsidintsi 2004: personal interview; Klugman 2002: personal interview).

Coming from trade union backgrounds, both Klugman and Fonn believed that the level of compensation for the work they performed at WHP was unimportant. In separate interviews, both noted that they had never been concerned about how much money they earned. Klugman noted that in progressive settings in the 1980s, asking for more pay was “inconceivable.” She expressed dismay that in during her tenure as head of WHP many staff – “particularly the younger generation” - wanted higher pay and had no qualms about voicing their concerns (Klugman 2002: personal interview).

There was a clear division between those who wanted more money, and therefore were concerned with understanding the organisational procedures related to, “what you could claim for,”⁴⁰ and those and those who seemed comfortable with whatever

⁴⁰ This phrase is related to the ability to ‘claim’ money for expenses incurred during official travel. It is standard NGO practice to compensate staff for travel both in terms of reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses and through the provision of a travel

they earned. As one staff member noted, “People saw their work as a job, not just a cause, and that is valid because it is a job, but some people couldn’t understand that, they felt that it betrayed what we were there for” (Christofedes 2004: personal interview). Klugman’s views certainly conformed to the latter. She suggested that as the era of Nelson Mandela passed young black South Africans were entering a period where non-racialism seemed to matter less, and they were interested instead in materialism – in “how much this cost, and how much they could earn, rather than the work itself” (Klugman 2002).

On the other hand, it stood to reason that women who were supporting extended families, or were single mothers or had no savings base, would be concerned about what they earned. One staff member described herself as “Middle class – but ... in my thinking I’m not working class but in my status I still struggle with money. I can tell you it is not a very nice place to be” (Ziyambi 2003: personal interview). Although the voices of women who believed in work as a vocation were fairly loud, there were equally strong voices that suggested that the relative importance of salary was a function of need, rather than greed. Xaba suggests that this debate had its roots in the early years of the Project, when, ‘I made a big deal out of the costs I incurred while travelling with my daughter. She was nine-months old and on one trip – quite early on - I had to bring her with me and pay for childcare while we travelled. The bill for two days on the road was the equivalent of a month of childcare in Johannesburg. So, I paid it, then I made out a receipt and forced the organisation to foot the bill. I was single mother, there is no way that they felt the pinch the way I did (Xaba 2004).

There are two points of importance in what Xaba is articulating above. In the first instance she points to the fact that travelling was an organisational role. As such, on principle the organisation had a responsibility to pay for childcare costs. Had it not done so either Xaba would have paid herself – an unfair and tangible financial cost –

allowance or *per diem*. There has been some concern expressed amongst donors and NGOs that per diems are abused by development workers, some of whom travel specifically in order to claim this allowance. It is against this wider context that these comments were made by Christofedes.

or a friend or relative would have taken care of her baby, thus subsidising the costs and implicitly making them invisible.⁴¹

The other women in the organisation who had children also had partners who were earning an income, and therefore personally absorbing the costs incurred while travelling was relatively simple. But for Xaba, who was a single mother it was important that there be a well defined and supportive policy related to travel and child care, rather than a series of ad hoc arrangements. The organisation settled on a policy that allowed mothers of infants to travel with their children, and paid for the costs of childcare (Klugman 2002; Xaba 2004)

As illustrated previously in this chapter, the tensions between those who felt they needed more money, and those who saw the Project as a 'cause' and therefore felt that the work was more important than the pay, took on ideological and racial tones. As explained below, these tensions were exacerbated by the division of labour that existed within the group.

5.7 Differentiation

Collectivist-democratic organisations are characterised by minimal division of labour. Rothschild-Whitt suggests that in collectivist groups, "administration is combined with performance tasks and the division between intellectual and manual tasks is reduced." In collectivist organisations jobs are generalised rather than specialised. This means that ostensibly everyone in the organisation can take over from a peer or colleague if necessary. Indeed a fundamental tenet of collectivist groups is the notion that expertise must be demystified (Rothschild-Whitt 1979: 523).

Rothschild-Whitt suggests that in bureaucratic organisations the opposite is the case. In conventional organisations, "Differences of skill and knowledge are honoured. Specialised jobs accompany expertise. People are expected to protect their expertise.

⁴¹ For a fuller discussion on this and other aspects of the gender division of labour, see pages 49 – 56 of Himmelweit's 2002 discussion the care economy: Himmelweit, S. (2002). "Making visible the hidden economy: the case for gender-impact analysis of economic policy." *Feminist Economics* 8(1): 49 - 70.

Indeed this is a sign of professionalism, and it is well known that the monopolisation of knowledge is an effective instrument of power in organisations” (Ibid).

Feminist organisational theorists have been particularly interested in how work is divided in organisations. Acker suggests that, “The concept of a ‘job’ is thus implicitly a gendered concept, even though organisational logic presents it as a gender neutral. A job already contains the gender-based division of labour and the separation between the public and the private sphere. The concept of a job assumes a particular gendered organisation in domestic life and social production” (Acker 1990: 149).

As leaders of an organisation run by feminists, Fonn, Klugman and Xaba worked hard not to reinforce existing gender inequities. They sought to circumscribe the gender logic of organisations but developing processes and mechanisms that empowered and nurtured women. The capacity-building programme described above was just such and attempt⁴²

At the same time, the leaders of WHP were aware that despite their harsh criticism of the academic hierarchy, the organisation needed to deliver products and services such as training manuals, workshop materials and advocacy information in order to survive on the campus. As activists the directors were also committed to the production of useful documents, guides and tools for activism - regardless of whether or not they the university required these documents.

In order for the group to produce meaningful products, its staff needed to be able to write and produce high quality research. The ability to deliver or in the parlance of WHP staff, to ‘produce’ was a valued trait. This is evidenced by the fact that the phrase dominated numerous interviews. Staff members noted that being able to write papers, to do policy analysis, get media attention, and participate effectively in international meetings was highly valued by the leadership. Those who could not

⁴² Fonn, Klugman and Xaba each agreed that they were feminists. Klugman in particular was at pains to emphasise the seriousness with which as leaders, they all took sound feminist practice both in order to nurture the women who worked within WHP and in order to demonstrate that models existed. The exit strategy that Fonn and Klugman were party to in 2000 was evidence of this commitment.

perform these functions to the high standards set by the group found it difficult to cope (Christofedes 2004: personal interview; Monareng 2003: personal interview).

The organisational commitment to excellence was an indication of the fact that the women who led the organisation were driven and rigorous in their analysis. But it was clearly also the result of Klugman's personality. Because she had founded the organisation, Klugman was often credited with and faulted for having too much of an impact on WHP. This included its organisational culture. Klugman had many attributes that lent themselves to the creation of a supportive environment, and this was evidenced by the capacity-building programme and fact that a number of women both inside and outside the organisation saw her as a mentor (Hlatshwayo 2004: personal interview).

Yet she also was exacting in her standards. Klugman's standards were so high that many within WHP felt that they were unrealistic. Indeed, even people who had qualifications that would have been well recognised in other NGOs, felt insecure around Klugman. For example, when asked whether she felt valued by the organisation, one mid-level staff member with a Masters degree, responded thus, "Professionally no. Personally in terms of relationships it's okay, we work together well. It's okay" (Ziyambi 2003).

This statement is indicative of the fact that despite its efforts to empower staff, WHP had the opposite effect, bringing down confidence and losing some people because things moved at such a fast pace. Klugman in particular was accused of not being able to relate to people who were not as well equipped as she was to write and debate issues, even though she professed to be committed to empowering women (Doe 2005: telephonic interview).

During an evaluation in 1996, one member of staff suggested that the organisational culture at WHP was such that, "they make some space for you, but if you don't take it, you lose it" (Shapiro and Nell 1996). Taking the space given to you required hard work. However there were tensions about what kind of hard work was required of different people within WHP. There were three main categories of work: training, research, and administrative and logistical support. Staff members who conducted

training activities in communities were rarely the same staff members who specialised in policy analysis and research. Both groups were classified as programme staff. Administrative staff facilitated transport, travel and accommodation and other support for the programme staff.

Many of the training activities that WHP undertook took place in communities outside Johannesburg. The staff members who worked on these projects were all African, in part because they often had to conduct workshops in indigenous languages. The staff members who participated in the policy analysis and research were of all races. They tended to be university educated, and many had post-graduate qualifications. Thus there was a clear class bias in terms of the work differentiation. However, junior researchers tended to be African. Operations and administrative staff were also racially diverse. However the management tended to be white and the lowest level administrators were African and coloured.

Typically within civil society organisations that have attained some level of professionalisation and bureaucratisation, the primary internal tensions are between programme and administrative staff. This was certainly the case at WHP. The tension between professional staff and administrative staff was long-standing. One staff member even suggested that, “admin people need a little more explanation and a little more respect” (Christofedes 2004). Class, race and gender combined to demonstrate stark distinctions between those who had power within WHP and those who did not. The women who did the administrative work tended to be black and carried out “female functions.’ As Acker (1990) has noted, they communicated and managed interpersonal relationships with clients. The women who raised and managed funds and did what was considered to be technical work such as research and writing. They performed the ‘masculine’ functions within WHP and tended to be white and/or better educated than those carrying out the ‘female functions’(Acker 1990: 152).

While these tensions were significant, they paled in comparison with the animosity that sometimes surfaced between the trainers and the policy analysis and research staff. The tensions were linked to two issues: on the one hand research and policy analysis was more valued than training at the university and consequently this was

also the case within WHP. Secondly the work differentiation linked to training and research was differentiated along race lines in that all the trainers were African. The policy and research group was more racially diverse. However the concerns that were voiced by training staff was linked to the fact that there were no white women located as low on the programme totem pole as they were (Monareng 2003: personal interview; Robertson 2003: personal interview).

On the other hand Klugman (2004) noted that trainers who found it difficult to write often underestimated the amount of time and effort it took for those with sound academic qualifications to write. She suggested “there was a sense in which those of us who published were perceived to just be able to sit down at a computer and magically produce a piece of work. It’s simply not that easy, and the process of writing is an intense and difficult one. The trouble is, once you see the product you have no idea of that. I work very hard to produce a piece of writing. It takes a long time” (Klugman 2002: personal interview).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This paper has documented the strength, decline and re-emergence of social movements in South Africa between 1990 and 2005. It has shown that as the Struggle Era ended, social movements were strongly rooted in local activism, but that this shifted following the first democratic elections. The research then examines the ways in which the new government was open to being influenced by SMOs. During what has been dubbed the Freedom and Consultation Era, the paper has noted that people who had been allies during the struggle against apartheid settled into new roles. Some were employed by the state, while others remained within civil society. During the Freedom and Consultation Era they worked together to promote a set of common political and social agendas. There was a shared vision of what the transformation of South African society would look like, which was based on the RDP. During this era, even groups that were not seen as friendly to the state were encouraged to participate in the processes of social mobilisation. Thus the early 1990s represented a political moment that was defined by nation-building.

The case study has also defined the political opportunity structure as; a) the degree of openness of the state towards social movements in general, b) SMO access to policy and political processes, c) SMO ability to exploit divisions amongst the elite, and d) public opinion towards the protesting group and/or the issues they advocate (Eisinger 1973).

The research has demonstrated that WHP flourished in this environment and was deft at navigating the POS. Because it had easy access to policy and political processes both through the involvement of its leaders within the ANC, WHP was able to take advantage of the fact that the state had a high degree of openness towards social movements. The case study also points out that WHP was able to exploit divisions amongst the elite. Its work on the population policy was based on the tensions that existed between old-guard policy-makers in the Department of Welfare and the new political establishment. As the research points out, the old guard needed WHP to legitimise the process of drafting a new policy. Through its access to both circles, WHP scored a win for its issues. Lastly, in terms of the ability to frame debates, as

Hassim (2004) points out and the research reinforces, WHP was able to galvanise support within the ANC based on the argument that abortion was a health and maternal mortality issue rather than a fight about women's rights to bodily integrity.

Between 1994 and 1996 WHP was able to achieve a clear set of objectives: the Women's Health Conference, the abortion advocacy, the Population Policy, and the Sexual Rights Campaign represented major successes for WHP. The Conference and the abortion advocacy were resounding successes. They demonstrated that WHP could bring together technical experts, community members and policy-makers in the interests of poor and marginalised women.

Unfortunately the Freedom and Consultation Era ended abruptly with the introduction of the GEAR strategy. The research has tracked the debates between civil society organisations and the state during the New Realism Era. The research has shown that the rifts largely centred on the adoption of the GEAR policy and the closing of the office of the RDP. As McKinley points out, many SMOs felt that the new government had made important decisions behind closed doors. Yet as illustrated in Chapter Three, before the disgruntlement about these developments surfaced, a number of SMOs had disbanded in the belief that the interests of the poor and the marginalised would have a space in the new dispensation. Indeed a number of representatives of these movement organisations were now working for the state. As a result the research has shown that the capacity for civil society groups to mount an effective campaign against GEAR was limited. However, by the late 1990s a new crop of SMOs was emerging, driven largely by the frustrations of people in poor communities who had no access to basic services. They served as clear evidence that social movements were finding their voices in the post-apartheid political landscape, and number of them were doing it boldly. The fear of contesting the 'liberators' was fading away as groups like TAC, LPM, APF and HPF staged loud and aggressive protests.

These tensions marked a new era of social mobilisation and the birth of what have been characterised globally as 'new' social movements. The research makes an important distinction between these groups and organisations like WHP. WHP and its generation of SMOs had been established to support the new state and to push for a

vision of a society that was shared with people who soon became the government. The new groups emerging in the late 1990s were profoundly different. There were some fundamental points of divergence between the state's vision for development and theirs, particularly on issues of globalisation and macro-economic strategy. Organisations like WHP, that had helped to usher in changes in the mid-nineties, lost their place in the political environment as new social movements radically altered the POS. By the end of the 1990s, the state had grown confident in its abilities to navigate the policy arena, and was no longer desperate for the skills that organisations like WHP had brought to the table.

The research also examined the WHP's shortcomings, suggesting that these emerged quite clearly during the Sexual Rights Campaign. The case study has shown that organisation's inability to gain momentum for the grass roots campaign was linked both to its structure as a policy outfit, and to its lack of leadership. The SRC was developed at a time when WHP's strategies and approaches seemed suddenly outdated rather than trend-setting and agenda-defining, as they had been in the past. Whereas WHP had always been able to navigate the POS, by 1999 there were signs that it was having difficulty adapting to the challenges of the new South Africa. The newer movements seemed closer to the pulse of what women in communities wanted than WHP was, and many of them were not even women's rights organisations. Indeed groups that developed a political language for talking about poverty in post-apartheid South Africa were reaching more women than WHP was able to given its policy orientation. More importantly the issues these groups were addressing – particularly those of land and basic services – seemed to resonate more clearly with women in communities than the issues that WHP was championing through the SRC.

Sadly, both Xaba and Klugman were gone by the time the campaign was in full swing – although they had roles to play in its conceptualisation. The discussions WHP sought to stimulate at community level needed to be made legitimate at national level by a well-respected African woman if they were to have any advocacy impact. Xaba was not there to drive the process, thus what could have been a cutting edge process turned into a blunt instrument.

Chapter Five illustrates how WHP lost its footing in the POS because of its internal problems. The chapter describes how the organisation configured itself differently from the standard bureaucratic organisation in the early 1990s. Instead of adopting a hierarchical structure with a strong reliance on rules, social control, differentiation of labour, routinised recruitment practices and starkly divided incentive schemes, WHP saw itself as a collectivist-democratic organisation. WHP was not exactly the ideal-type model described by Rothschild-Whitt (1979), but it was successful at maintaining a strong sense of an alternative identity in a setting that was itself quite hierarchical and bureaucratic. While the university valued academics and researchers, and 'expertise,' WHP tried hard to value training, community wisdom and policy analysis; all of which it saw as critical to advancing the women's health and rights agenda. Although WHP did not always succeed in demonstrating these values to members of staff, it actively and consciously explored and problematised the values that underpinned the university's notions of expertise.

The case study also points to the commitment from both staff and the leadership of WHP, to debating and talking about how to pursue social change. As part of this commitment, WHP staff frequently reflected on the best arrangements through which to share power and organise work. When for example, staff members raised matters for which there was a solution that was acceptable to all, the organisation adapted. As the research illustrated, Xaba's concern about childcare was heard and taken on board through the development of a policy that addressed her concerns. It was this capacity to probe and introspect that was both WHP's strength and its weakness.

The case study demonstrated that the difficulty arose when it was clear that the staff of WHP had widely differing views on some core issues linked to the identity of the group. In a typical bureaucratic organisation difference and dissent on social and political matters are the norm. It is not problematic that people differ in their views because as Acker (1990) points out, bureaucracies purport to be neutral and therefore as long as the work is done the political and social views of staff members are inconsequential. In these settings, difference ostensibly has no meaning.

However in collectivist organisations, homogeneity – certainly at the level of values – is critical to success. SMOs that seek to effect lasting change require a certain level

of ideological cohesiveness. By the time WHP closed its doors there was almost nothing upon which staff could agree. For example, staff members expressed significantly different views from each other on the topic of feminism during interviews in 2003 and 2004. Yet in 1996 they had begun a feminist reading group based on their interest and commitment to the subject. One could argue that the organisation never needed a shared value base because it was dominated so strongly by Klugman for most of its life. The fact that the organisation was not able to recover from her eventual departure seems to support this theory.

Yet this is an overly simplistic analysis because it fails to recognise that the challenges that WHP faced went beyond the typical problems facing organisations that fall apart once a great leader leaves. Such an analysis would ignore important dynamics between staff members within the organisation and between the organisation and the external environment. It would also minimise the role of Khosi Xaba as the real site of power within WHP.

Indeed as Chapter Five demonstrated, far from leaving the organisation in a hurry, Klugman worked hard to nurture leadership and build the capacity of staff members. Throughout the life of the project, time and energy were poured into evaluations and reflections on organisational practice. In a sense, WHP's leaders – and Klugman in particular – did everything they could have done to lay a strong foundation for a sustainable organisation.

At base, the internal problems of WHP were about its inability to handle race issues in the new POS that emerged in the New Realism Era. On the face of it, the organisation seemed to adapt, but it never really did. In some ways, the staff members of WHP did what they could in that particular historical moment and – given the people involved - were almost doomed to failure because they were caught in such complicated times. There is no space in this discussion to look at some of the other strategies that could have been employed, but further analysis of this would be important for those seeking a deeper discussion on race within new institutions in South Africa. For example, it might have been helpful for WHP to hire junior level white staff as well as senior black staff- so that the organisation could practically displace the notion that whites are always in charge and blacks always occupy the

bottom rungs. This may have seemed counter-intuitive at the time, but bears thought in terms of its discursive power to shift ideas about what roles black and white people play within institutions.

Within the wider political and public discourse the language of the African renaissance and black empowerment defined the New Realism Era. As illustrated in numerous interviews throughout the case study, the discourse certainly made sense to black staff members at WHP who used it as a lens for understanding the actions of their white colleagues,. The discourse also made sense to the leadership of WHP. This is evidenced by the many programmes that were in place to facilitate the empowerment of black women within the organisation.

However as the case study illustrated, when Xaba left WHP in 1999, the organisation was thrown into flux: there was no longer a legitimate successor to Klugman. Paradoxically, her departure undermined Klugman's credibility both inside and outside the organisation. This was the moment of rupture that precipitated the crisis and ultimate breakdown of the organisation. Internally, the effect of Xaba's leaving was profound. It brought the many race-related tensions that had existed in WHP since its inception to the fore. Even during the Freedom and Consultation Era when non-racialism was the order of the day, there had been tensions within WHP. Xaba spoke of these openly in her interview, acknowledging that there were cliques and factions within the organisation for years. The case study has shown that as the organisation matured, it simply became acceptable to be angry about race in the New Realism Era. This was fed by the notion within the larger political environment that an organisation demonstrated its commitment to the post-apartheid nation by having a black person at the helm. Thus Xaba's departure opened a Pandora's box. Suddenly all aspects of work life and culture at WHP were open to contestation on the basis of race. The proof that WHP was committed to racial transformation (Xaba) was suddenly gone. The organisation's investments in capacity-building and mentoring paled in comparison to the reassurance provided by having a real life black woman waiting in the wings for her chance to lead. The lack of a black head became an organisational liability. As in the rest of society it was a source of attack and resentment for black staff and a source of vulnerability and defensiveness for white staff.

Once the tensions were in the foreground, it was hard to escape them. Crudely put, black staff resented white staff for their relative affluence and ability to work from home or drive to work, while white staff resented black staff for raising issues related to salaries and benefits and getting to work late or leaving early. Black staff felt that their jobs were undervalued and white staff felt that their black peers would be taken more seriously if they made more of an effort to write up their research findings. Within the organisational script, whites were portrayed as doing the work for the love of it, while blacks were typecast as simply working for their salary. Thus, the paper has demonstrated that faced with competing ideological perspectives and social differences – related primarily to race, class and their intersections - it was almost impossible for WHP build a sense of community amongst staff members in the late 1990s.

This case study has charted new terrain. There is a lack of scholarly analysis examining the organisations that bridged the gap between the Struggle Era and the era of New Realism in which South Africa now finds itself. This research has demonstrated the various political opportunities that were available to WHP in the early to mid 1990s. At the same time the research has shown that these opportunities were finite, uniquely moulded to that political moment. Racial politics inside and outside the organisation, as well as the shift in the collegial nature of state- civil society relations meant that WHP was unable to translate the successes it won during this moment into a sustained organisational presence in the new South Africa.

The death of WHP represents a loss to South African women. However given that social movements tend to have long memories, and are connected to one another by individuals whose experiences survive long after organisations fade, it is likely that newer forms of activism will emerge to fill the space left by WHP's closure. It is hoped that the groups and individuals that take over from WHP will succeed in representing the experiences of women in a way that reflects the realities that lie in intersections between poverty, sexuality and health. It is hoped that these activists and movements can do so in a manner that takes into account the complicated politics of race in post-apartheid South Africa.

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