



OXFORD JOURNALS
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Source: *Community Development Journal*, October 2001, Vol. 36, No. 4 (October 2001), pp. 273-288

Published by: Oxford University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44258830>

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The changing role of the state in participatory development: from the reconstruction and development programme to growth, employment and redistribution

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Stephens

ABSTRACT The increasing strength of *representative democracy* in *South Africa* has profoundly changed the nature of the participatory process in urban development. Building on a wide range of sources, we analyze the changing policy framework in South Africa, and assess its impact on small- to medium-sized development projects in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban. We then analyze the relationship between the changing role of national government and the nature of *participation*, in particular, its impacts on *institutional change* at a local and national level. Findings are theorized in terms of the international debates on urban governance and *participatory development*.

Introduction: some international paradigms of participation

'In some transitional societies in the developing world newly ascendant state elites came under . . . pressure from powerful international institutions, potential foreign investors and local capital. In most cases they discarded previously held developmental approaches, still supported by their own grassroots constituencies, in favor of the globally-dominant neoliberal agenda, the so-called Washington Consensus. This economic choice of new state elites in both

Eastern Europe and the developing world invariably weakened, albeit in different ways, the prospects for the consolidation of democracy in these societies' (Habib and Padayachee, 2000, p. 1).

In its attempt to reconcile the requirements of macroeconomic policy with those of redistributive development, the South African government has faced challenging contradictions. In this paper, we attempt to explain some of the important outcomes of this national process of change and reconstruction, for the local, sub-municipal level.

Allied to policy change in South Africa, the increasing bureaucratization of development work may lead to fundamental changes to the nature of participation: The influence of participation may increase in some spheres, while it declines in others. These changes, in turn, are a direct consequence of the channelling of the development process directly through the state. In some cases, state-managed development may take place despite the fact that central government is no longer involved in *direct* provision, arising from decentralization of delivery and management to a local level. In such cases, central state involvement is merely less 'visible', largely consisting of defining standards and programmes. It is from this change in emphasis that a more bureaucratic approach to development has evolved which has profoundly affected the nature of participation, and its potential impacts, including the relationship between participation sustainability and empowerment (Lyons, Smuts and Stephens, 2000a; 2000b).

We now examine the role of the South African state, and follow the changes which have taken place there since the end of apartheid in 1994. Of central interest is the effect of South Africa's changing national development policy on participatory development. We use three project-level, community development case studies, to illustrate the impact of changes in development policy on the role and scope of community participation over a period of some fifteen years.

Methods

Within the sphere of community-led initiatives, we have focused on projects involving the provision of public amenities within the built environment, which aim to address socioeconomic imbalances. The projects all utilized community participation in the provision of public buildings in townships on the fringes of urban areas in three provinces in South Africa.

All projects selected have in common a partnership involving the community, local government (if only as a ground landlord), funders (from both public and private sources), consultants, who acted in a range of capacities, and to a lesser extent, the central state. In terms of South Africa's national policy framework (described below), these projects had roots which went back more than ten years prior to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), and they continued to develop and change after the

introduction of Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). It was thus necessary to examine South Africa's changing institutional framework, which affects development projects.

Data on each project had to provide a multi-dimensional view of that project, including:

- the *full history of the project management*, throughout the project cycle(s);
- the extent of *participation* at various times, in terms of '*breadth*' (i.e. numbers of people involved);
- and in terms of '*depth*' (i.e. the extent of influence and control over the project which was in the hands of members of the local community);
- peoples' *reasons for participation* and, particularly, for *non-participation*.

The data gathered were largely qualitative, and came from four main sources. **Evaluation workshops**, based on Action Planning Workshops (Handi and Goethart, 1996), were organized at each site, to elicit information about *conflict* within communities, and between communities and external agencies. Questionnaire-based, semi-structured **interviews with key informants** within each community and with operatives in several related sectors, provided detailed information on project histories and their relation to policy and institutional factors. Questionnaire-based, semi-structured **household interviews** (held in six selected projects) provided detailed information (relative to other socioeconomic data) on individuals' and households' levels of participation and *reasons for participation*. Ward level **data from the 1996 census**, covering a range of basic socioeconomic variables, were used to quantify structural problems in the communities.

In the sections which follow, we present an analysis of changing policy at international and national levels; followed by our analysis of the wide-ranging implications of these changes for other institutions and agents in the development process, and the substantial restructuring which has followed in its wake.

A changing national policy framework

Until 1994, the majority of South Africa's population had been excluded from an official role in decision-making. The result was a society, accustomed to top-down planning, labour exploitation and white minority domination, which lacked a tradition of democracy and public participation, particularly at the grassroots level (Khan, 1998; Maharaj and Ramballi, 1998, p. 133). The election of a democratic and fully representative government in 1994 presented the first real opportunity for equitable participation in decision-making and planning.

At the point of its election to government, the African National Congress (ANC) had been attempting to formulate an economic development policy

for some time. The merits of a neo-liberal policy of privatization and reduction in public spending, broadly termed 'growth with redistribution', had been debated against the long-held policies of nationalization, redistribution and development.

The main objective of the RDP adopted in 1994 as the official policy of the new government, was to redress the socioeconomic imbalances and extreme poverty that beleaguered many communities, ultimately achieving social, political and economic justice through a process characterized by 'empowerment through participation' (Carolus, 1994; Blumenfeld, 1996; De Beer, 1996). Attracting widespread support, the RDP quickly became a powerful symbol for reconciliation and reconstruction.

However, within a year political and practical difficulties began to emerge (Blumenfeld, 1996). With the government under pressure of time to meet the expectations of many South Africans, the RDP policies were a focus of debate. In the development sphere, equity, predictability and accountability were seen as flawed. In 1996, the national RDP office was closed in favour of line-managed programmes within each ministry. A few months later, the government adopted a new national policy, largely macroeconomic in focus: known as GEAR (Padayachee, 1994; Blumenfeld, 1996).

The shift in economic policy resulted from the ANC's particular perception and interpretation of the balance of economic and political power, at both the global and local level, assuming that 'trickle down' from foreign investment-led development would lead in turn to redistribution through growth. Habib and Padayachee (2000, p. 264) argue that the ANC 'placed unusually great stress on the importance of foreign capital inflows and on the lower costs of raising capital in international markets that would derive from strict adherence to principles of the Washington Consensus'.

According to the ANC (1997), the fundamental goals that underpinned the RDP also underpin GEAR. However, where GEAR differs is that it clearly sets out the economic strategies for achieving these goals, namely: to promote growth through exports and investments, and to promote redistribution through the creation of jobs and the reallocation of resources through the budget (ANC, 1997).

Where the RDP aimed to achieve its goals through a 'people-driven process' (ANC, 1994), GEAR is not as explicit about the role or extent of public involvement in its policies which centre on economic restructuring, trade and labour reform. The promotion of partnerships and development of skills appear 'tacked on' to a policy that was introduced in a distinctly top-down manner. GEAR essentially advocates decentralization and partnerships between the state and private organizations. The promotion and institution of a culture of public participation and community development, while central to the RDP, are not identified as an explicit focus of GEAR.

The two core strategies of GEAR have parallels in the withdrawal of the (central) state from direct service provision. However, although there has been some privatization and semi-privatization, particularly of utilities, core

services, such as education, housing, arts and culture, are provided through provincial or local government. Concomitantly, where international donors previously funded projects on an ad hoc basis, they now fund government programmes. Funding reaches the project level through local government, which is also responsible for the management of the funds.

Institutional restructuring

The policy changes described above have strongly influenced the manner in which parastatal organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and provincial and local government institutions, approach development. In the case of parastatals, which have progressively withdrawn from direct involvement at the project level, there has been a radical change in their roles in the development process.

The Independent Development Trust (IDT) provides an interesting example. Founded by the National Party-led South African government in 1990, the IDT was endowed with a fund of R2-billion to upgrade social and physical infrastructure, using a participatory approach. It established major development programmes, in which a participatory development approach was used, *inter alia*, to provide public amenity buildings in low-income areas. In-house professional staff oversaw their strategic and financial management. Private sector agents, appointed by the IDT, carried out community development work, professional work and construction (interviews with G.S.; H.F.). Communities held the budget, disbursed payments and signed contracts, in addition to participating in brief formulation.

Over the last two years, the IDT has recognized that it will no longer be a conduit for direct delivery of services to communities. While withdrawing from service delivery (interview with H.F.), the IDT is undertaking a role of development programme facilitator at a ministerial level, linking 'needy communities to support agencies unable to reach the poor', as well as undertaking 'an advocacy role' on their behalf (IDT, 1999). Another major factor in the withdrawal of parastatals from direct involvement in project level development has been the perceived need to reduce exposure to risk (interview with C.V.R.).

Changes similar to those in the IDT can be seen in the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA). The DBSA has recently withdrawn from direct involvement at the project level, acting rather as a funder to local authorities, provincial authorities or other parastatals. Thus, the DBSA externalizes the risk of poorly managed development work to the authorities managing the relevant development programmes. This change of focus has been allied to a fundamental organizational restructuring characterized by downscaling, rationalization and increased efficiency.

Although a combination of factors has led to the withdrawal of these organizations from project-level involvement, in each case it has been associated with a fundamental review of the role and nature of community

participation in the development process and specifically, with the roles of these organizations in respect to grassroots participation. Meaningful participation at the grass roots level in national programmes, could only take place if there existed a mediating function between state and locality, a role which would be filled by new-style NGOs such as IDT (interview with L.G.). Implicit in this approach is a standardization of the content of facilitation practice, and of its structure.

The DBSA's concern with grassroots participation is reduced to the extent of ensuring that organizations funding development work manage projects in a participatory way (interview with P.d.G.). This is seen as a measure to advance local stability and long-term sustainability of development, through a process managed by formal criteria.

It is evident that the increasing state control over development funding has meant a restructuring of the major parastatals involved, in a manner that promotes an increasingly standardized conceptualization of participation, and an increasingly bureaucratized model of its management.

Participation and the local state

Institutional restructuring has not only accompanied the increasingly confined role of parastatals in the development process. The increasing pressure on provincial and local government in urban South Africa, to carry out the local management of national programmes, has coincided with substantial restructuring of their boundaries, institutional structures and management methods.

A series of changes within local government have taken place which have had the effect of partially allaying a long-held mistrust between elected or appointed officials and local populations (especially in townships). These include grouping wealthy and traditionally disadvantaged communities within municipal boundaries, and increasing the role played by local government in the delivery of services to townships. Particularly important in this process, has been the increasing engagement of the local authority with local residents.

This has been associated with a substantial cultural shift within local and provincial government towards a 'service mentality' (interview with A.K.), part of an ongoing process, which has been associated with the growth of an NGO sub-sector devoted to training organizations and facilitating change within local and provincial government departments.

With shifts in organizational culture and institutional structures has come an increasing clarity regarding *expectations* of local authorities in the management and disbursement of public funds, and the provision of services. Requirements for political and financial accountability have led to the establishment of clear-cut funding and development programmes by local government (interview with P.L.), and clear-cut lines of accountability among local government officials (interview with C.R.). Although no less

widely used than before, inevitably community participation has become defined and confined, assigned an increasingly pre-determined role in negotiations with local government in general, and within the development process in particular.

Project paradigms

When first developed on a wide scale, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, participatory methodologies were mainly concerned with efficiently gathering accurate and detailed information (Mitlin and Thompson, 1995). By the late 1980s, the attention had shifted from rapid to *participatory* research and development (Mitlin and Thompson, 1995, p. 231), within which the types of approach vary widely, implying a range of relationships between community and other stakeholders (e.g. donors, professionals, the state) (Rakodi, 1991; Abbot, 1996).

Fundamental to the classification of participatory development models, are the extent and quality of influence exerted over the process by participants. This is closely related to a debate about the aims of participation, which may focus on personal growth and community development (e.g. Wilson, 1996), or on the product (Lyons, Smuts and Stephens, 2001a). Positioning a development project along this continuum has implications for the process of participatory development. Covering a number of options between co-option and agency, is Arnstein's 'ladder of participation' (Arnstein, 1969).

De Beer (1996) distinguishes between two approaches to participation. One approach, characterized by community 'involvement' and prevalent in the old South Africa, is perceived more as the *co-option* of communities in the implementation of projects resulting from top-down decision-making. The emphasis is on institutional initiatives with outsiders identifying needs and planning responses, and ultimately results in the 'failure of participatory involvement as a development approach' as very little learning takes place and the ownership of development is never taken (De Beer, 1996, p. 68). The second approach, characterized by *empowerment* and linked to the new South Africa, the RDP, and the grassroots structures on which it has been built, involves decentralizing control and decision-making to civil society, credited with creating self-awareness and the transformation of society through empowerment (De Beer, 1996, p. 71). We ask, has the introduction of GEAR eroded this process?

Our concern in this paper is with development paradigms which intentionally and actively involve local people. Within this range, two archtypical, ideal-type models of participatory development could be envisaged. At one end of a scale, we might place the 'community agency' model, characterizing De Beer's (1996) 'empowerment' paradigm. This, as distinct from community participation, suggests a project which is owned in all senses by the community in which it takes place. Members of the community initiate

the project, bid for funding, hold the funds, hire consultants, appoint contractors, manage the development process, own the completed facility and manage the service which it houses. Institutional structures are put in place on a pragmatic basis, to regulate those relationships which are deemed by the community to be necessary to the project.

At the other end of the same scale, and representing the 'involvement' paradigm (De Beer, 1996), we might place a model of development which is initiated and managed by the state. Part of a programme, funding criteria are pre-determined and impact on the definitions of project types, institutional structure within the community, and criteria for the appointment of consultants and contractors. These two 'ideal-type' models are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

Clearly, in some senses, a project of the first type is bounded by state regulation. However, as this takes place only at a 'generic' level (e.g. in the regulation of land-use, construction standards or environmental standards), it may be termed 'anarchic' – not because it leads to anarchy, but because it is independent of the state and, to a large extent, defined ad hoc. The multiplicity of pre-defined aspects of the second arch-type, make it essentially more restricted in terms of the extent and type of influence which can be exerted on the structure, type and process of development, at the local level. We might term this arch-type 'limited' participation. This is the bureaucratic model, referred to below.

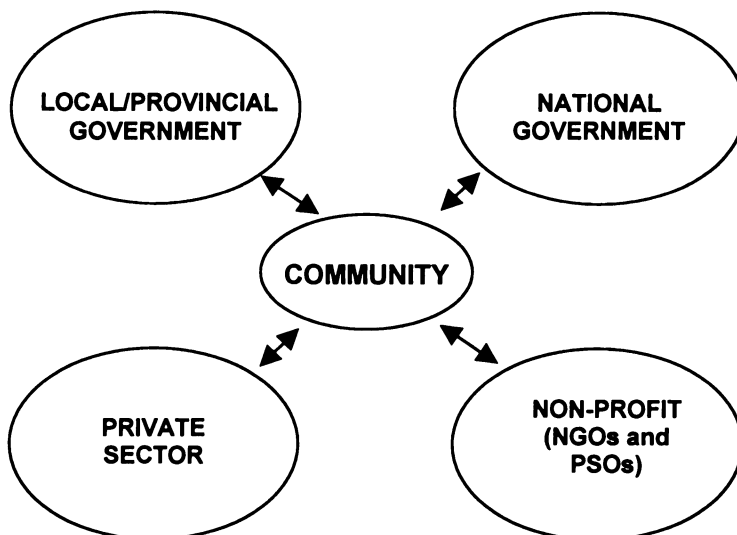


Fig. 1. Ad.hoc/anarchic project structure.

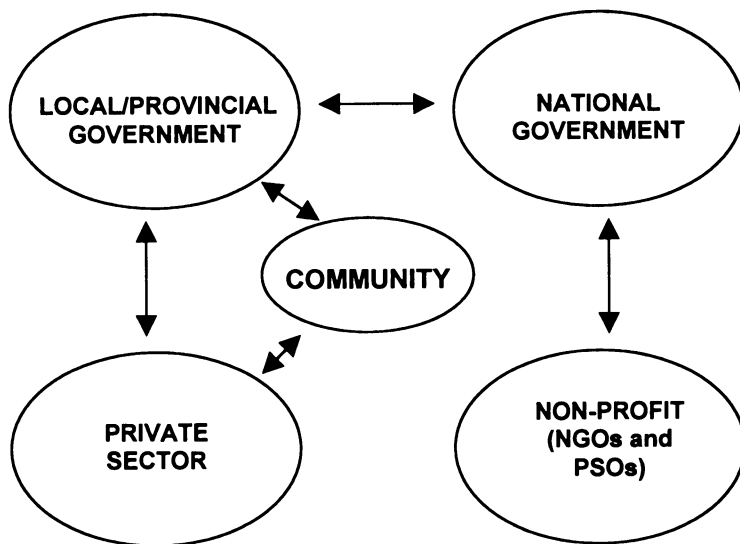


Fig. 2. Bureaucratic project structure.

More participation, less empowerment?

Since 1996, South Africa has progressively moved from the anarchic, 'empowerment' model towards the bureaucratic model of 'limited' participation (i.e. from a situation depicted in Figure 1 to a one depicted in Figure 2). Where before, developments were defined and initiated at grass roots level, funded ad hoc from a range of sources, led by independent consultants and managed at a local level, a far more state-centred process has now developed. We illustrate this road to a dramatically changed development paradigm with three phases in South Africa's recent political history, which emerge in this process of change.

1. *Towards a grass roots structure.* Phase 1 characterizes the later stages of apartheid government (the years preceding 1994), during which the local state had very little constructive involvement in township affairs, largely because of the mutinous conditions in the townships. It involved the initial stages of project definition and the formation of ad hoc community structures.
2. *Community agency:* Phase 2 characterizes the later stages of apartheid and the early days of post-apartheid government, prior to, and shortly after, local government elections (1994–1996). Its spirit is enshrined in the principles of the RDP. It involved the development of buildings and services, with initiative largely taken by local residents and a small number of consultants working 'on spec', and NGO officials, who

Table 1. Details of case studies undertaken in Cape Town, Durban and Gauteng

	Objective	Funding	PHASE 1: Towards a grassroots structure	PHASE 2: Community agency	PHASE 3: Engaging with state bureaucracy
Gugulethu Central Meat Market	To shelter a meat market successfully operating on open ground	R1.7 million; grants from Escom, ¹ British High Commission, Provincial RDP; DBSA loans	1984 onwards: police harassment of traders; traders unaffiliated and in competition; forced to consider mutual needs 1985: elected a committee; unified; identified mutual needs and wanted to address relations police	1991: project taken up by Umzamo ² (led initial efforts to formalize trading) 1993: backed by Umzamo, traders approached development consultants; began planning and fund raising 1995: successful fund-raising renewed interest by Umzamo; power struggle with traders; changes in executive led to delays 1996: construction began, managed by the steering committee; training of committee members; overspending	1997: local municipality agreed to supply abutment block; set conditions on the committee representivity; local authority involvement grew; 1998: building commissioned under Umzamo; traders moved in; meat traders not meeting rents, although other fruit traders were; if loan repayments to DBSA (underwritten by local authority) not met, local authority may take over management of market
Bester's Camp, Inanda	To provide amenities (library, school, workshops etc.) in a recently resettled informal township of Inanda	R10-million Grants: Tongaat Hullet, IDT; Subsidies: Prov. Education Dept, Durban Libraries and Escom	1990: UF's ³ Informal Settlement Unit appointed by provincial government 1992: UF formed a development trust to bid for funds for a centre at Bester's Camp, local residents minority voice 1993: minimal consultation with local residents, resent grew towards top-down planning and links with NP ⁴ gov't grew; township under control of SANCO's grassroots bodies, project halted	1994: UF withdrew due to boycotts and threats; locals formed trust; implemented procedures for accountability; trust became site landlord and appointed management executive 1995: transferred Inanda from provincial to local administration; new councillors elected; trust now influenced by grassroots structure; independent funding; amenities designed in consultation with public and services	1996: through participation and led by ICDDT the school, library, community hall, training centre and utility payment centre completed 1997: sub-committees formed to deal with each facility 1998 ⁵ : community hall taken over by municipality, residents little control over use and high costs restrict use; school and library managed by community; negotiation by trust for new development funds
Boipathong School, Vaalwaterbijl Park	To provide a purpose-built school and thus end long-standing 'platooning'	R5.5 million: National Public Works Programme	1988: residents decided to work towards building their own school 1990: project committee formed of parents and local councillor; strained relations with councillor resulted in slow progress and declining interest	1994: stagnant phase in the township due to political rivalries and suspicions, apathy and hopelessness	1996: hope of debt write-off and new funding with new provincial gov't; project committee reformed 1997: funding agreed after protests; role-players trained 1998: limited control; building occupied vandalized; low staff morale
PARTICIPATORY APPROACH					
			AD HOC APPROACH → 1994 RDP	→ 1996/7 GEAR/stronger local gov't	→ BUREAUCRATIC APPROACH
			Projects developed from adversity which forced agreement over issues; differences between projects and the initial stances taken by the community, but all projects developed an internal structure to define solutions.	Coincides with RDP; upsurge of hope and grass roots activity led to progress in Gugulethu and Bester's Camp, but not in Boipathong due to poor power-sharing and entrenched power relations.	Coincides with GEAR, growing importance of local government in each project and improved predictability in each case.

¹ Escom (Electricity Supply Commission). ² Umzamo (Utility Company formed by local NGO). ³ UF (Urban Foundation). ⁴ NP (National Party). ⁵ national movement of civic organizations.

became involved through numerous routes. In effect, an 'ad hoc' project structure was developed. A more formal grass roots structure generally emerged from this phase.

3. *Engaging with state bureaucracy*: Phase 3 (1997 onwards) is characteristic of the policy and institutional restructuring which has coincided with the replacement of the RDP by GEAR as the official national development policy. The new state-financed development paradigm is one where elected councillors, in consultation with local fora and professional officers, formulate programmes. Programme funds are then bid for by local communities, and drawn down against certificated completion targets. Communities participate in decision making at the various stages, but frameworks established by the state for each stage of the process define their sphere of influence.

This process of change is illustrated with reference to three case studies in South Africa: Gugulethu Central Meat Market in Cape Town, Besters Camp in Durban, and Boipatong School, in Vanderbijl Park, Gauteng. Details of each case study, and the changes under each of the above phases, are presented in Table 1.

Summary and Discussion

In contrast to recent experience in the north, where the level of state involvement in the development process has declined, the level of state involvement and control in service provision to low-income communities in South Africa has increased with the growing legitimacy of the state. This has happened through a number of linked processes.

Our findings suggested that the consolidation of the new South African state, following the end of apartheid, set in motion a process of development policy changes, which were intended to improve accountability and predictability, and increase state control.

The institutional rationalization in all tiers of government and in the semi-autonomous parastatal organizations, which accompanied the process of consolidation, has increased the state's control over local affairs. We also found that the neo-liberal economic agenda associated with GEAR reinforced this process of consolidation, by mitigating in favour of greater organizational and financial clarity and simplicity. Although the focus of GEAR was on macroeconomic issues, this policy shift never involved an explicit renunciation by the government of personal empowerment and the community development agenda, which were an intrinsic aspect of the RDP. However, the policy change has had substantial implications at the sub-municipal level. These processes were linked to the adoption by the national government of programme-led development, funded and administered through the state.

We have argued that this change in national policy was in some measure

responsible for limiting the range and scope of community participation in the development process. Further, we defined this change over time, within which three main phases were identified, as a movement from an 'ad hoc', to a 'bureaucratic' participatory framework.

Findings were that each of the case study projects changed in both its management structure and the scope of participation, as external changes impacted on it. Certain parallels were evident in these changes. As the RDP was supplemented by GEAR, and as the power of local or provincial government was increased, funding came increasingly from local government, or other state providers, rather than from private or semi-private funders. The management structure of all projects became increasingly formalized. Local authority figures, whether elected councillors or appointed officials, played a greater role in this new structure than they had in the past. Finally, all projects experienced a limiting of their autonomy, with respect to financial management, and a channelling of their initiative into pre-defined courses of action.

At the same time, there have been both quantitative and qualitative changes in terms of participation and community empowerment. The limiting of local autonomy, which has coincided with a reduction in funding opportunities, also coincides with a reduction in opportunities for training and for first hand local involvement. However, the analysis revealed some interesting differences; showing that a range of factors can have a significant impact on the way in which increasing bureaucratization has affected the participatory development process at the local level.

Thus, the growth of a programmatic approach to development had different effects on the opportunities open to Gugulethu Central Meat Market and to Bester's Camp. In the former, internal rivalries resulted in a lack of proper financial controls. The two combined to ensure that, not only was the Market subject to the financial and programmatic limitations of the new state culture, but it had also largely lost some of its independence from the state. There were local government officials in the management, and no strategic decisions could be taken entirely independently of local government.

On the other hand, Bester's Camp, with its strong grass roots structure, was able to remain largely independent of the state in its internal affairs, retain ownership of its assets, and maintain a relatively united front to all outside agencies, not least local authority services.

As discussed above, a prime objective of the incorporation of development work into state programmes has been the establishment of the new government's legitimacy at the local, as well as the central level. In other words, the state institutions needed to be *seen* to be instrumental in the delivery of development. Our projects suggest that institutions of the state are now widely perceived as central to the instigation and maintenance of successful development. However, local and provincial government are also seen as forums at which localities must compete for resources. While success in the bidding process enhances the government's image, failure must

damage it. In the long run, the credibility of the government, and of its top-down approach to development, will be tested by results. If the government can not deliver, initiative (and funding) may return to the grass roots.

The change of focus from RDP to GEAR was carried out in a climate of demands for improving equity, predictability and accountability. The sustainability of *programmes* over a wide area or over a longer range of time depends on predictability of costs and timing. Control on local level spending in the case study projects appears to have improved, with a reduction in corruption, the regulation of rent payments, and improved maintenance of facilities. However, this transformation is not complete. The local authority's relationship with a *project* can never be based strictly on business lines. For example, in the Gugulethu Meat Market, it is difficult to enforce rent payments due from reluctant tenants. From our findings it appears that the bureaucratic model has nowhere been fully adopted, which may mean that the system cannot reach full predictability.

One very interesting outcome of this tension between the anarchic and bureaucratic models is to throw into question notions of 'sustainability'. Clearly, evidence at the local level suggests that the adoption of community agency can be more empowering to local people, reinforcing local democracy and its competency to engage with the state and other external agencies. Some of the obstacles to accountability and predictability arise from the application of this model (Lyons and Smuts, 1999). Further evidence has suggested that projects developed through this system have a longer life, are less likely to be targets for vandalism and more likely to enjoy local respect and participation. Thus, the first (anarchic) model may well better serve sustainability at the local, project level, and a tension arises between the long-term sustainability of a project and the long-term sustainability of the programme that funded it.

Implications for policy

Implications for policy, as well as for theory, emerge from this analysis. In the introductory sections of this paper, we suggested that government policy may heavily influence the opportunities for empowerment through development. De Beer (1996, p. 76) argues that '[if] real people-centred development is to guide development efforts, a valid question is to ask why central or provincial government should be involved with local-level co-ordination. Or are we reverting to a dispensation of participation as involvement?'

Indirectly, our findings suggest that the particular strength of government does not lie in its ability to foster open-ended and anarchic development. Instead, its strength lies in its ability to foster and protect a wide base of participation within a community, using its influence to ensure that intimidation is reduced and a wide range of voices are heard. Its ability to nurture projects after completion, although for a limited period, is also a strength. These issues are taken up elsewhere (Lyons, Smuts and Stephens, 2001).

Some authors have argued that a convergence is taking place between north and south, in the role and management of participatory development (Mitlin and Thompson, 1995). Our findings suggest the existence of fundamental differences between north and south, where in South Africa, unlike in the north, the role of the state has grown, while the role of the private and semi-private sector has declined.

However, it has been suggested that the growth of community participation in a number of urban renewal sectors in the north, which has been associated with increasingly neo-liberal state and regional policies, has been more apparent than real, in that its terms are circumscribed and its influence curtailed by the presence of stronger private sector partners (Miller, 1999). In this regard, our findings suggest a parallel in the fortunes of communities in participatory development in north and south.

Clearly further research is needed, which focuses on barriers and constraints to community influence on the development process in particular, and on local democratic processes in general. In particular, the survival of some community democracies in South Africa, in contrast to others, suggests that the South African experience in particular and the experience of the south in general, may well hold lessons for the north.

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- P. De Gasparis, Development Bank of South Africa, Social Expert.
- L. Gwagwa, Independent Development Trust, National Director.
- A. Kaplan, Community Development and Research Association, Director, Cape Town.
- P. Lever, Cape Town City Council, Director of Corporate Finance.
- C. Ralarala, Cape Town City Council, Director of Arts and Culture.
- G. Scott, Western Cape Clinic Building Programme, Architect.
- C. Van Royen, Development Bank of South Africa, Local Government Specialist.

Acknowledgements

The following people are acknowledged and kindly thanked for their time and valuable input during the interviews:

Cape Town: Sean Cuff (Sean Cuff Architects); Edwin Hendriks (Provincial Government, Western Cape); Ernest James (Co-ordinator, Community Projects Office, Pentech); Isaac Johnson (Director of Rural Electrification

Programme, Independent Development Trust); Alan Kaplan (Director, Community Development and Research Association); Peter Lever (Director of Corporate Finance, Cape Town City Council); Comfort Ralarala (Director, Arts and Culture, Cape Town City Council); Gideon Scott (Architect, Western Cape Clinic Building Programme); Desmond Jackson (Project Leader, Community Projects Office, Pentech); Henk Lourens (Acting Chief Architect, Cape Town City Council); Thando Nguli (Provincial Reconstruction and Development Programme Office); Mr Ntotovivane (Gugulethu Central Meat Market trader and Gugulethu councillor); Sivuyile Nzokosie (Umzamo); Adrian M. Peter (Gugulethu Central Meat Market, Secretary of Executive Committee); Amanda Younge (Cape Town City Council).

Durban: Dave Crompton (Crompton Associates Project Managers, Urban Foundation Project Manager in Bester's Camp); Estelle Gericke (Library Services, Durban Metro Council); Colin Marx and Dennis Swartz (Directors, Built Environment Support Group, Durban); Juanina Masojada (MMM Design Workshop, Durban, Architect for master plan, school and library, Bester's Camp); Mr Ncwane (Councillor, Inanda); Nottie Nkoba (Executive Director, Bester's Camp); Derek, van Heerden (Architect, Urban Foundation, Bester's Camp); The Reverend Arthur Sibisi (Amatikwe).

Johannesburg: Professor Lindsay Bremner (University of Witwaterstrand); Mr Bronkhorst (Gauteng Department of Public Works, Project Manager for Boipathong School); Louise Emdon (Communications Expert, DBSA); Hirsch Fish (Regional Director and Director of disaster relief projects, Independent Development Trust); Priscilla de Gasparis (Social Expert, DBSA); Lulu Gwagwa (National Director, Independent Development Trust); Mohammad Hassan (Director, Planact); Philip Mashabane (Mashabane and Partners, Architects, Boipathong School); David Mmakola (Policy Expert, DBSA); Kate S. Ngwenya (Deputy Chairperson, Boipathong Development Committee); Tshidi Phooe (Community Liaison Officer, Vanderbijl Park, Gauteng Department of Public Works); Shaun Phillips (National Reconstruction and Development Programme); Lionel Ramble (Programme Co-ordinator, Planact); Jacqueline Samson (Acting Director, Gauteng Department of Public Works); Luisa Thellani (Interfaith Community Development Association); Cor van Royen (Local Government Specialist, DBSA); Prof. Leon van Schyk, Melbourne Institute of Technology (interviewed in Johannesburg).