

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION

Background Paper for the Integrated Urban Development Framework

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Critical and liberating dialogue, which presupposes action, must be carried on with the oppressed at whatever the stage of their struggle for liberation. The content of that dialogue can and should vary in accordance with historical conditions and the level at which the oppressed perceive reality. But to substitute monologue, slogans and communiqués for dialogue is to attempt to liberate the oppressed with the instruments of domestication. Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated.

If the structure does not permit dialogue the structure must be changed.

- Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York, Continuum Press, 1993

INTRODUCTION

In reviewing the state of urban development in South Africa, the National Development Plan (NDP) maintains that the country is far from achieving the goals set out in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of “breaking down apartheid geography through land reform, more compact cities, decent public transport and the development of industries and services that use local resources and/or meet local needs”¹. An important reason for this is the model for service delivery that became entrenched after 1994, which produced a “dependent and inactive citizenry” that no longer actively seeks their own solutions or ways to partner with government to improve their neighbourhoods. As such, the NDP argues for “alternative policies of service provision” to satisfy popular expectations, “while building active citizenship and expanding citizen capabilities”. A participatory people-centred approach that has at its heart social empowerment and inclusion is necessary to develop and maintain human settlements in the urban space. It is this question that this research paper seeks to address.

¹ National Planning Commission (2013) “Transforming Human Settlements”, Chapter 8, *The National Development Plan, Our Future – Make It Work*, The Presidency, South African Government, Pretoria. The National Development Plan became the official development framework for of the ANC government in December 2012, calling for a new national compact between all sectors of society to drive change towards 2030. The plan aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by drawing on the energies of South Africans through active citizenship, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society. See <http://www.info.gov.za/issues/national-development-plan/index.html>

The purpose of the paper is thus to explore the potential of activating citizenship and social empowerment – as envisaged in both the RDP and NDP - through innovative forms of community development, linked to the routine investments and expenditures of the state into various social development areas and the public realm that underpins everyday life. South Africa is richly endowed with resources, talent and institutional opportunities to effect citizen empowerment through integrated community development. What is lacking is a coherent vision about what community development involves and how to create an effective institutional ecology to substantiate the vision². The absence of this clear political vision of how to animate and sustain deep citizenship in a context of extreme structural problems such as chronic unemployment and inequality, etched in distorted spatial patterns of residence, mobility and economic activity, is possibly the most pressing political issue facing the country today.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN SOUTH AFRICA'S POLITICAL ECONOMY

To understand what social empowerment and inclusion mean in active citizenship, it is useful to situate the paper in the broader political economy of South Africa. Key characteristics of the country's development context are poverty, inequality and the vulnerability of marginalised communities. A fundamental issue is the growing inequality between men and women, rich and poor, urban and rural, and within communities, converging in the description of South African society as one of duality, disparity and inequality, which acts as a constraint to ensuring that economic growth results in significant declines in household poverty levels³.

Thabo Mbeki's characterisation of South Africa as 'two parallel economies, the First and the Second' is often referred to in discussions about development in the country. According to an original statement by Mbeki, 'the First Economy is modern, produces the bulk of our country's wealth, and is integrated within the global economy. The Second Economy... is characterised by underdevelopment, contributes little to the GDP, contains a big percentage of our population, incorporates the poorest of our rural and urban poor, is *structurally disconnected* from both the First and the global economy, and is incapable of self-generated growth and development'⁴.

Despite widespread criticism of this conceptualisation, the analysis remains pervasive particularly in development policy where a commitment to government's role in addressing

² Pieterse, E. 2013. "Rethinking the purpose and modalities of community development in South African cities", Good Governance Learning Network (GGLN), Isandla Institute, Cape Town.

³ Borat, H., Van der Westhuizen, C and Jacobs, T. 2010. *Income and non-income inequality in post-apartheid South Africa: What are the drivers and possible policy implications*. DPRU Policy Brief Series, University of Cape Town.

⁴ Thabo Mbeki *Address to the National Council of Provinces* 11 November 2003, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki2003/tm1111.html>.

poverty has fuelled the notion of a “developmental state” and ensured that bridging the gap between the ‘parallel economies’ is the key rationale for the state⁵.

Reflecting on the analysis of the “two economies”, Kate Philip contends that “the world around us certainly appears to validate the idea that there is a ‘structural disconnection’ between them, that they operate in parallel, with the second economy left out, left behind, undeveloped and excluded from economic opportunities because it is disconnected”⁶. However, through reference to scholarship focused on pervasive chronic poverty in the country, Philip challenges the notion of ‘disconnect’. For example, Du Toit and Neves characterise the relationship as one of ‘adverse incorporation,’ to highlight the extent to which poverty and economic marginalisation are as much a function of incorporation and integration into the economy on adverse terms as a result of exclusion from it⁷. In a more recent paper, Du Toit reiterates the notion that the ‘economies’ are actually inherently intertwined, that the success of the First economy is predicated on the inequality between the two⁸.

This relationship – of adverse incorporation – helps explain the structural inequality in South Africa, which has its origins in the key legacies of apartheid. The structure of the economy continues to pivot on a centralised, monopoly structure of the core economy – that is capital-intensive and vertically integrated. As such, this economy is characterised by the highly skewed distribution of assets such as land and capital, and the impacts of migrant labour – all rooted in the colonial and apartheid ‘land grab’, forced removals and ‘jobless de-agrarianisation’⁹. This, in turn, reflects the spatial legacy of the former homelands and apartheid cities and the deep inequalities in the development of human resources. It is these forms of structural inequality that continue to hamper the best efforts of development policy, reinforcing old forms of social and economic marginalisation at the same time as facilitating new ones. Philip contends that the legacy of spatial ‘apartheid’ – of being apart – imposed structures of spatial distance on the

⁵ Friedman, S and Hudson, J. 2011. “Filling the Gaps? The Future of CARE in South Africa”, Report on CARE’s Role in South Africa in the Light of Current Development Needs and Stakeholder Responses Commissioned by CARE South Africa.

⁶ Philip, K. Inequality and economic marginalization – how the structure of the economy impacts on opportunities on the margins, Law, Democracy and Development, Volume 14, 2010, www.idd.org.za

⁷ Du Toit A, Neves D. 2007. “In Search of South Africa’s Second Economy”, *Africanus*, 37 (2). See also Hickey S, du Toit A. 2007. ‘Adverse-Incorporation, Social Exclusion and Chronic Poverty’. CPRC Working Paper 81, Manchester: IDPM.

⁸ Du Toit A. 2009. “Adverse Incorporation and Agrarian Policy in South Africa Or, How Not to Connect the Rural Poor to Growth”, paper presented at BASIS conference entitled Escaping Poverty Traps: Connecting the Chronically Poor to Economic Growth in Washington, D.C. on 26-27 February 2009. Available at <http://www.basis.wisc.edu/ept/dutoitpaper.pdf>

⁹ Du Toit, A. 2012. Understanding poverty and inequality in South Africa, presentation to CARE South Africa/ Lesotho, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 1 August 2012.

society and the economy that are still so visible - and so real – that they easily mask the complex sets of relationships that deliver both wealth and poverty within a single economy¹⁰.

To reiterate this argument, Julian May reasons that persistent inequality and poverty can be understood through recognising that apartheid stripped people of their assets – especially land – and distorted economic markets and social institutions through racial discrimination¹¹. This contributed to immense destabilisation and violence, which formed the backdrop of the negotiations, leading to the democratic elections in 1994. A lack of assets, distorted markets, dysfunctional social institutions, destabilisation, and violence; compounded by ill health, overcrowding, environmental degradation, a mismatch of resources and opportunities, race and gender discrimination and social isolation provides a toxic combination. These issues continue to bedevil contemporary South Africa.

Of particular importance, as it is often overlooked in implicit analysis, is the role of gender in shaping ‘social exclusion’ through ‘discrimination’ – and, equally validly, in terms of their ‘adverse incorporation’ in exploitative household reproduction and labour relations, particularly for many poor women in South Africa¹². Social and cultural identities play very important roles in processes of social exclusion and adverse incorporation, as do the ways in which culturally embedded gender norms and roles work to marginalise women. Reflecting critically on gender, Cecile Jackson is particularly concerned that, “it is necessary for social exclusion to employ a concept of gendered subjects rather than that of an implicitly un-gendered universal person”¹³. The idea that men and women are gendered subjects rather than bounded groups is important for policy formulation in that extending men’s rights to women, in for example, land or employment matters, may not deliver the kind of social inclusion anticipated.

In summary, millions of people find themselves excluded from the economy as workers, producers, farmers, and traders but included into the markets of corporations at heart of the core economy. Despite the potentially important shifts in government policy over the past two decades, the strategic implications of fully understanding economic marginalisation as a function of structural inequality have not percolated far inside or outside of government. These contradictions must be resolved if South Africa is to pull itself out of a cycle of increasing

¹⁰ Philip, K. *Inequality and economic marginalization*, 2010.

¹¹ May, J. *Poverty and Inequality in South Africa*, report for the Office of the Executive Deputy President and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Poverty and Inequality, 1998.

¹² Hickey, S and du Toit, A. “Adverse incorporation, social exclusion and chronic poverty”, Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Working Paper 81, 2007.

¹³ Jackson, C. Social exclusion and gender: does one size fit all? *The European Journal of Development Research*, 11(1): 125-146, 1999.

instability. Pieterse asserts that as a result of structural unemployment and economic exclusion, answers to the employment crisis are to be found beyond the formal economy, in the “social economy”¹⁴. The social economy is characterised by both trading and non-trading activities, community-based or social ownership and clear commitment to principles of self-help, mutual obligation and social relevance’. The social economy includes social enterprises in the community space and voluntary associations in the ‘self-help’ arena that address public interest concerns, with the distinctive element being the entrepreneurial energy and efficiency of these initiatives. The institution of the “social economy” raises the question of the role of participatory local government in enabling community space to generate alternative development trajectories in South Africa. It is to this question that the paper now turns.

PARTICIPATORY LOCAL GOVERNMENT: AN OVERVIEW

The concept of adverse incorporation in the broader political economy can also be seen as a driver of urban exclusion. In reflecting on ways to subvert structural unemployment, poverty and inequality, alternative approaches to integrated community development systems have to be considered that can generate rich social ecologies of work, citizenship and cultural expression. Using a social economy lens, Pieterse makes an argument for the role of social entrepreneurial activity to potentially break the declining character of social mobilization in poor areas. This is premised on the belief that citizen empowerment in poor neighbourhoods must prioritise job creation, even if it is outside the formal economy and squarely embedded in the social economy. However, in order to achieve this, the array of community–government partnership and interface bodies needs to be reinforced and strengthened. As such, it is important to review briefly the practice of participation as envisaged at local government level.

The South African local government system is designed to ensure participatory planning, responsive service delivery, active economic redistribution and a balance between short and long-term needs. At the core of the legal–policy structure is the concept of “developmental local government”, suggesting a commitment to addressing material poverty by meeting the basic needs of all citizens within a larger programmatic ambition to effect economic, social and environmental development¹⁵. Largely as a result of the structural issues described above, in particular adverse incorporation, local government has struggled to impact on poverty. By failing to adequately account for the structural disempowerment of poor constituencies, local

¹⁴ Pieterse, E. “Rethinking the purpose and modalities of community development in South African cities”, 2013.

¹⁵ Pieterse, E and M, van Donk (2013) “Local government and poverty reduction”, in Jansen, J; Pillay, U and F, Nyamnjoh (eds) *State of the Nation 2012-2013*, Human Sciences Research Council, HSRC Press, Pretoria.

government has been unsuccessful in capturing the importance of a capable state with the resources, institutions, people and appropriate culture to implement policies effectively – and to account for the constitutive role of the poor in being driving agents in both foregrounding and addressing the various dimensions of their poor living environments.

Thus despite the intentions of legislation, effective citizen engagement and empowerment is the exception to the rule, and most municipalities fail to facilitate participatory governance adequately¹⁶. One of the main reasons for this failure is that ward committees have generally been ineffective and often impede community empowerment: their territorial catchment of wards makes them unwieldy and too large for citizens to know their councillors whose allegiance, in turn, is to their parties rather than to their constituents. Exacerbating this, ward committees have very little power because of limited financial resources at their disposal. Although municipalities are expected to enrol the beneficiaries of services in almost every act of service delivery, they often fail to do so. This has led to the emergence of “routine” or “superficial” participation in service delivery planning whereby engagement is tokenistic. There are, however, important exceptions to this, as some services interface with community representatives who play an active role in the delivery of the services.

On the other side of community engagement, many Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have a poor understanding of how the state actually works and, as a result, cannot be effective in holding state bodies to account, influencing their priorities, or working with them to achieve development objectives. Many CSOs have to become better informed, deepen their issued-based expertise, work with theories of change regarding their role in policy engagement, as well as engage network politics to work together with other organisations and actors. All of this underscores the need for an alternative concept of citizenship empowerment¹⁷. Developing and maintaining sustainable development processes through collaborative government and community action will be impossible if communities are disorganised and fractured, and if they have little confidence in their municipal governments. A people-centred approach is required that helps communities and individuals to generate income, improve skills, increase safety, reduce food insecurity and enhance health through improvements in social and economic infrastructure. In this way, communities should contribute to practical problem solving and

¹⁶ Smith, T (2007) “Community participation and empowerment within the realm of local governance in South Africa: An assessment of current practice and possibilities for strengthening participatory local governance”, DPLG Review for the White Paper, Isandla Institute.

¹⁷ Pieterse, E (2008) *City Futures: Confronting the Crisis of Urban Development*. London: Zed Books.

upgrading schemes, and hold municipalities accountable. A new, revitalised concept of empowerment is required, and is the focus of the subsequent section.

A FRAMEWORK FOR EMPOWERMENT: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

An important position of this paper is that participatory processes have largely failed in South Africa because of a lack of a coherent vision about what community development involves and how to create effective institutional arrangements to support it. At the heart of such a vision lies the notion of “citizen agency”. In order to understand challenges to South African development and the roles of “empowerment” and “active citizenship”, it is useful to outline an historical and theoretical trajectory of development policy frameworks over the last three decades, which enables a nuanced understanding of these terms to inform an emerging conceptual framework on social empowerment and inclusion. Key to this is to recognise the shift away from a narrow, economic focused understanding and analysis of development, towards a broader and more inclusive framing.

To consider the various dimensions of social empowerment and inclusion, the following policy frameworks are examined: gender and development; empowerment; participatory development; capabilities theory; sustainable livelihoods; and social learning. Key tensions emerging in the theory are discussed, such as those between individual and collective empowerment; economic and social empowerment and the importance of environmental externalities. This leads on to an articulation of key conceptual issues in social empowerment and inclusion, particularly the critical role of acknowledging and addressing politics and power embedded in the related processes. The most recent wave of policy that has emerged is rooted in the concept of social learning, which provides a lens with which to establish connections in learning and social change between individuals, social networks and broader social units or communities of practice.

The frameworks have moved development policy towards a more comprehensive approach to the drivers and dimensions of poverty and the diversity of strategies necessary to effectively enable a state of social empowerment and inclusion. Key lessons drawn from these frameworks include the relational aspect of power inequalities between gendered groups; the connection between local and macro-levels of poverty analysis and action; the multi-dimensional aspects of power and empowerment, such as social, psychological and economic; the adoption of a rights-based understanding of empowerment and development; an understanding of capabilities in terms of the freedoms they enable; the individual and collective level transformative potential of

critically engaged ‘participation’; the idea that households call on a diverse collection of assets in order maintain secure livelihoods in the face of risks; and the ways in which learning takes place in the spaces where individuals embedded in social networks meet, thus transforming themselves and their social knowledge environments. These are summarised in table one.

Table 1: (Selected) Development Frameworks Relevant to Social Empowerment and Inclusion

Development Framework	Time Period	Key Contribution/ Dimension (Political Dimension)	Roles of individual & community (through participation)	Key Authors cited
Empowerment	1990s	Humanising development process, inclusion of the poor and marginalised in development - Connecting local to macro change or ‘opportunity structures’ with individual/collective agency - 3 dimensions of power and thus ‘empowerment’: political, social, psychological (Friedmann) -8 basics of empowerment - Household level of analysis	- Networked multidimensional power for ‘collective agency’	Friedmann, Norgayan and Kapoor
Gender and Development	Late 1980s, early 1990s	- Exploration of power as relational, moving beyond comparison of differential gendered experiences to articulating underlying social and structural determinants of inequality - Connection of gender-based roles to international capitalist system - Women’s ‘triple’ roles - Marxist analysis of social change - Feminist analysis of power	Broad structural change needed to address underlying inequalities and relational aspects of power	Moser, Molyneux, Young
Participatory Development	1990s-2000s	- Arnstein’s ladder: importance of the ‘degree’ of participation, from forms of ‘citizen power’-> ‘tokenism’-> ‘non-participation’ - Power cube analysis (Gaventa): Power is expressed in terms of Levels (Global, national, local); Spaces (closed, invited, claimed/created); Forms (visible, hidden, invisible)	-Participation, if undertaken critically can be individually collectively transformative -But constant attention and reflexivity must be given in order to mitigate potential exacerbation of existing power relations	Kothari, Chambers, Manor, Gaventa, Cornwall, Arnstein (1969)
Capabilities Theory	Late 1990s, 2000s	- Freedom is both the primary end and the principle means of development - 5 forms of interconnected freedom enhance the capability of the individual: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security - Freedom and capability are mutually reinforcing and connected	- Freedoms and capabilities enable ‘agency’ of the individual to ‘help themselves’ - ‘Rights-based’ approach, individuals have the right to development, freedoms and capabilities	Sen
Sustainable Livelihoods	2000s	- Asset-based - In maintaining ‘livelihoods’, households		Friedmann, Chambers, Carney,

		manage a diversity of assets to mitigate risk - Social capital is a component of acquiring and maintaining assets		Pieterse
Social Learning	2000s, into 2010s	- Learning through networks, communication, dialogue, experience - Importance of potential intermediary role of civil society between government and 'the poor'	Transformative individual learning situated in social networks = transformation in broader social learning Individual learning occurs through social interactions and processes in a social network and becomes situated within wider social units/communities of practice	Reed, Wenger, Mitlin

Empowerment: hopeful prospects for cities

The term empowerment encompasses a large landscape of meanings, interpretations, definitions and disciplines and as such is a term laden with multiple meanings and interpretations. For this analysis, the work of John Friedmann and his conceptualisations of 'empowerment' and 'alternative development' are important in that they converge on urban planning and geography. Friedmann's work has been influential in expanding poverty analysis from purely material deprivation, to include dimensions of powerlessness in social, political and psychological spheres¹⁸. The 'alternative development' envisioned by Friedmann, connects action in the micro and macro scale, responding to the constraining global economic forces and structural class and income inequalities to local development. It proposed shifting away from centralised development processes towards a practice of meaningful engagement with the 'poor' or 'beneficiaries' of development wherein people have an active role in determining their futures or 'development' in their lives.

According to Friedmann, "the empowerment approach places emphasis on autonomy in the decision-making of territorially organized communities, local self-reliance (but not autarchy), direct (participatory) democracy, and experiential social learning"¹⁹. This approach to empowerment is about social change that, "simultaneously seeks local or 'community' level mobilisation whilst 'transforming social into political power and to engage the struggle for emancipation on a larger- national and international- terrain'. In an, empowered approach, political change towards more inclusive democracy is considered a principal goal. As such, the

¹⁸ Friedmann, J. 1992. *Empowerment. The Politics of Alternative Development*, London: Blackwell; Friedmann, J. 1996. Rethinking Poverty: Empowerment and Citizen Rights, *International Social Science Journal*, No. 148: 161-172.

¹⁹ Friedmann, J. *Empowerment. The Politics of Alternative Development*, 1992.

model of empowerment utilises the household as the primary site for change within a strategic framework linking households to local and national change. Friedmann thus argued for “alternative development (empowerment) is not limited to local actions to ward off immediate threats to life and livelihood. It also pursues the transcendent goals of an inclusive democracy, appropriate economic growth, gender equality and sustainability. The territorial frame of these objectives is the nation-state. Alternative development, therefore, pursues structural changes at the national level as well as local ameliorative action”. His main thesis concerned the social empowerment of households to confront their own lives – to ‘have access to certain resources or *bases of social power*, the most important of which were a defensible life space (i.e., housing), access to surplus time above the needs of subsistence, social networks, and participation in social organizations’²⁰. Having high access to these bases would lead to social empowerment of households and to their ability to become politically active.

Friedmann emphasised the potential for catalytic change or ‘collective empowerment’ through networks converging around nexuses of power, which he names ‘empowering networks’. The idea of collective empowerment is relevant to the process of women’s empowerment through conceptualising gender-related social change catalysing shifts in power across and through the varied dimensions of networked power. This idea of networked power as potential sites for change is particularly relevant in an analysis of local-national change in South Africa and the potential intermediary role of CSOs between governmental structures and the public at large.

The process of expanding and applying models or experiences of social change into new or larger communities of practice was another key issue with which Friedmann grappled when considering collective empowerment. His concern was how to move from a disparate collection of disassociated small-scale grassroots movements and organisations towards more cohesive and formalised interventions, often in partnership with or integrated within state operations. Friedmann proposed that engaging with the state is necessary in order to be able to effect larger-scale change. This must be done, however, with a critical approach to balancing the benefits, such as more effective project management or resource availability, with the associated development of bureaucracy, movement of power upward into the structure, professionalization and co-optation of popular organisations by a powerful state.

The frameworks conceptualised by Friedmann embody empowerment as multi-dimensional, political in nature and connected through levels of change from the individual, through household, social network, community and towards the nation-state and globally. This

²⁰ Friedmann, J. 2002. *The Prospect of Cities*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

comprehensive view of empowerment informs the unfolding discussion in exploring effective and transformative strategies for urban development in South Africa. Linking local ameliorative change to broader social, political and economic, often in the national or international spheres, is integral to catalysing effective and inclusion social change.

Gender and development

Friedmann explicitly emphasised gender-related social change to catalyse shifts in power to enable development. This drew on a body of work that emerged through the 1980s. In the early part of the decade, the “women in development” concept focused on differences between men and women in the attainment of development outcomes. Although useful in articulating these differences, the approach was unable to assess the underlying reasons for the inequitable experiences between women and men. Towards the late 1980s, the focus moved onto gender and development with the intention to incorporate a deeper analysis of gender relations, power and the implications for development processes. It moved beyond the traditionally quantitative approach to understanding gendered differences in development indicators and provided a framework for a critical relational approach. This drew attention to power and process behind patterns of ownership and distribution particularly in relation to asset-based development.

A key author and practitioner in the area was Caroline Moser, who has written extensively on gender planning and development and mainstreaming gender for development²¹. The ‘Moser Framework’ outlined a set of tools and framework for gender planning and was key in articulating the idea of ‘women’s triple roles’, referring to productive (income-generating), reproductive (unpaid domestic) and community management roles, which, “challenges both the invisibility of women’s economic participation and the centrality of reproductive work at the household and community level, which was prevalent in most policy formulations of the time²².”

The gender and development approach faced criticism for failing to take a firmer political empowerment approach to gender analysis²³. Similarly, although it was instrumental in identifying structural drivers of inequality, it failed to move beyond the modernist discourse of constructing an image of the poor, vulnerable, woman of the “South”. Nevertheless, it played an

²¹ Moser, C (2008) “Assets and livelihoods: a framework for asset based social policy”, in Moser, C and Dani, A (eds) *Assets, Livelihoods and Social Policy*, Washington DC, World Bank, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/6542/453960PUB097801SE00ONLY1May014102008.txt?sequence=2>

²² Pearson, R. 2005. “The Rise of Gender and Development”, *A Radical History of Development Studies: Individuals, Institutions and Ideologies*.

²³ Pearson, R. 2005. “The Rise of Gender and Development” in *A Radical History of Development Studies: Individuals, Institutions and Ideologies*.

integral role in acknowledging and exploring the relational aspects of gendered inequalities, and is thus an important framework to include in a conceptualisation of empowerment²⁴. The key lesson from the approach was the importance of incorporating this relational analysis in all aspects of assessment, planning and implementation of social development and 'empowerment' initiatives.

Participatory development

Having moved rapidly from the margins into the mainstream of development since the mid-1980s, there was a backlash in the subsequent decade against the ways in which participation managed to "tyrannise" development debates without sufficient evidence that participatory approaches resulted in empowerment and transformative development for marginalised people²⁵. This reaction was encapsulated in Cooke and Kothari's book *Participation: The New Tyranny*²⁶. The critique essentially argued that participatory development often failed to engage with issues of power and politics and became a technical approach to development that depoliticised what was an explicitly political process. Despite this criticism, there remained a strong sense that the proper objective of participation was to ensure the "transformation" of existing development practice and the social relations, institutional practices and capacity gaps that cause social exclusion. Reflecting on more recent evidence, Hickey and Mohan argued that 'transformations need to reach beyond the local, involving multi-scaled strategies that are operationalized at all levels – individual, structural and institutional – and are linked to a radical development project'²⁷. Further, they argued, if participation was to (re)-establish itself as a coherent, viable and transformative approach to development, a more adequate theory of representation, and/or alternative ways of conceptualising the ways in which popular agency is legitimately conferred to higher levels, was required.

A static definition of participation is impossible as the term is complex and contested. This was illustrated by Sherry Arnstein's work in which she produced a 'ladder of citizen participation', which described the structure of participation in terms of the degree to which people were involved in projects (and therefore had choices about the things) that affected them²⁸. Rather than understanding participation as a yes/no question, she argued that it was a matter of *degree* - on a continuum - and although she had shown eight rungs in her typology, "in the real world of

²⁴ Kothari, U. 2002. "Feminist and Postcolonial Challenges to Development" in *Development Theory and Practice: Critical Perspectives*.

²⁵ Hickey, S and Mohan, G. 2004. "Towards participation as transformation: critical themes and challenges", in Hickey and Mohan (eds) *Participation: from tyranny to transformation?* Zed Books, London.

²⁶ Cooke, B and Kothari, U, (eds). 2001. *Participation: The New Tyranny?* Zed Books, London.

²⁷ Hickey, S and Mohan, G. "Towards participation as transformation", 2004.

²⁸ Arnstein, S.R. 1969. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," JAIP, Vol. 35, No. 4, July: pp. 216-224.

people and programs there might be 150 rungs with less sharp and 'pure' distinctions among them"²⁹. Arnstein's ladder has since been adapted in a number of ways, with Choguill presenting a particularly useful ladder of community participation in the 'underdeveloped' world³⁰. She argues that "community participation is not seen as being just a means to enable the people to influence decisions in the political arena about issues that affect them, but also as a means to obtain, through mutual-help initiatives and possibly with outside help, the basic needs which would not, otherwise, be available to them". The danger is that if not undertaken with conscious reflexivity and attention to power dynamics and motivations for 'participatory approaches', they can serve to enhance and exacerbate existing inequalities and further disempower participants.

It is thus essential for participation to move beyond the "us" and "them" configuration utilised to mobilise social and political change as this binary view of social relations may perpetuate power imbalance in social relations. After the social change 'goal' has been met, and spaces for more participatory governance have opened up, citizens are faced with the need to move into a mode of engagement based in dialogue and deliberation than it is about fighting an 'other'. A key question asked by Andrea Cornwall is how do societies transition into participatory and deliberative democratic governance³¹. This resonates with contemporary South Africa: municipal governance structures have mechanisms for participation and local engagement, however, a gap exists in skills and capabilities for engaging in deliberative participatory decision making, on the part of all stakeholders. Secondly, there is a further discrepancy between the institutional frameworks aimed at participation and the lived reality of 'the poor' in regards to continued social and economic exclusion (or their adverse incorporation into the mainstream economy). This reflects the gap in capacity or skills for deliberative democracy across society.

Another important consideration reflecting on the realities of participation is to consider what time and resources different stakeholders have in terms of the degree of their participation in various processes and projects. The key aspect here is to engage stakeholders, and in this case 'citizens', in a process of assessing and understanding their needs, challenges, based on Freire's *critical consciousness*, and structural constraints and how they see it best to go forward in addressing these. When thinking through these recommendations, it is important to recognise that individuals in a 'community' or group may be able, or interested, to participate in a variety of ways and with differing time and resource availability. It is not always practical, nor desired,

²⁹ The authors would like to acknowledge Tristan Görgens for drawing attention to this discussion on "ladders of participation" paper on participation and the issues they reveal.

³⁰ Choguill, M. 1996. A Ladder of Community Participation for Underdeveloped Countries. *Habitat International* 20 (3): 431-444.

³¹ Cornwall, A. 2011. *The Participation Reader*. Zed Books, London.

that everyone is involved in everything. However, what is critical is that the opportunity is made available to understand what actions would best address the issue at hand, the implications of the various forms of engagement in the process, and the ability to structure and choose the nature of one's 'participation' in the initiative or on-going process. This helps lead into considering the capabilities that different stakeholders may have to participate and be included.

Capabilities theory

Capabilities theory brings together a range of ideas that were inadequately addressed in traditional approaches to the economics of welfare. The core focus of the capability approach is on what individuals are capable of or what they are able to do. Sen posits that the basic concern of human development is 'our capability to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value', which is a move away from the focus of "traditional" development indicators such as rising GDP, technical progress, or industrialisation³². The theory emerged largely from the work of Amartya Sen in the 1980s, starting with his classic monograph *Poverty and Famines*, which emphasised the capabilities that people have to construct a life and livelihood, converging in the late 1990s in the influential book *Development as Freedom*³³. Sen conceptualises freedom as both the primary end and the principle means of development. Five distinctive forms of freedom are delineated including: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security; each of which is understood to advance the general capability of a person.

Sen argues that development consists of the removal of various types of "un-freedoms" that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency. This links freedom to the 'agency' of the individual, arguing that it enhances the ability of individuals to help themselves. This approach focuses on the agency and judgement of individuals, including their capability, responsibility, and opportunity. It proposes that raising human capability is positive as it improves the choices, wellbeing, and freedom of people; their role in influencing social change; and their role in influencing economic production.³⁴ Sen thus argues that freedom and capability are intricately connected. In *Development as Freedom*, Sen wrote that 'there has never been a famine in a functioning multi-party democracy'³⁵. The argument is that democracies confer a range of freedoms—not least the right to vote out an incompetent

³² Sen, A. 1999. *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, United Kingdom, Oxford.

³³ Sen, A. 1981. *Poverty and famines: An essay on entitlement and deprivation*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

³⁴ O'Hearn, D. 2009. 'Amartya Sen's Development as Freedom: Ten Years Later', *Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review*, Vol. 8, Spring 2009, pp. 9-15, available: <http://www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue8-focus1>.

³⁵ Sen, A. *Development as Freedom*, 1999.

government—that protect citizens against violations of basic rights. Although it broadens the conceptualisation of development - and thus empowerment - to include multiple dimensions of well-being, the focus on the individual and household agency have been criticised as largely focused on the dangers of focusing on individual and household agency without sufficient connection to structural elements.

Sustainable livelihoods

The capabilities approach had a strong influence on the development of the sustainable livelihoods approach, which emerged in the late 1990s in response to demands for practical advice on how to implement “a new approach of development”. This “new approach” reflected a growing commitment (by “development agencies, government departments in the North and South, and bureaucrats and politicians”) of focusing development efforts on reducing poverty by empowering the poor to build on their opportunities with particular emphasis on rights, power relations, access to assets and how governance and institutions affect poor people’s rights³⁶. At the core of the livelihoods and asset-based models of understanding poverty is the idea that all poor households have a portfolio of assets- physical, financial, human, social and natural capital, which they continuously manage to mitigate risks and improve their assets.

A number of principles are embedded within the sustainable livelihoods approach, which can be approached as either normative or analytical/ operational. Normative statements tell the users of the sustainable livelihoods approach what to do to ‘reduce poverty’ and ‘espouse a view about how to achieve this’. Analytical and operational guidelines flow from the normative principles. Users are guided on how to think about the issues and what to do about them. Key operational principles include empowering (amplifying voice, opportunities and well-being for the poor), responsive and participatory (poor people must identify and address livelihood priorities with outsiders listening and responding) and conducted in partnership (transparent partnerships with poor people and their organisations based upon shared goals). Clearly the framework links the relative capacity of poor households to manage their assets for risk mitigation within a larger set of structural and institutional factors. Thus, poverty needs to be understood in light of these dimensions if it is to engage with the structural and subjective aspects of the issues³⁷.

³⁶ Carney, D. 2004. *Sustainable livelihoods approaches: progress and possibilities for change*, Department for International Development, United Kingdom, London, http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0812/sla_progress.pdf

³⁷ Beall, J. (2004) Surviving the city: Livelihoods and Linkages of the Urban Poor, in: Devas, N. (ed) *Urban Governance, Voice and Poverty in the Developing World*. London: Earthscan, pp. 53-67.

Social learning

The final theoretical framework to be considered in this overview is that of social learning. There is currently no single agreed definition of the concept although the best approximation comes from Mark Reed and colleagues who describes it along three dimensions; (1) a process of learning that occurs through social interactions and processes between actors within a social network; (2) a change in understanding takes place in the individuals involved as they discuss their ideas and debate the issues; and (3) this change goes beyond the individual and becomes situated within wider social units or communities of practice³⁸. In sum, Reed and colleagues define social learning as ‘a change in understanding that goes beyond the individual to become situated within wider social units or communities of practice through social interactions between actors in social networks’. This has obvious connotations for the issue of social empowerment and inclusion.

In tracing the evolution of the framework, largely through an interest in social-ecological systems, Reed and his colleagues identify three main concerns with its usage. As a concept, social learning is frequently confused with the conditions or methods necessary to facilitate learning, such as stakeholder participation. Participation in itself does not mean that social learning will take place. Secondly, there is frequently confusion between the concept and its potential outcomes, as it is “frequently conflated with pro-environmental behaviour”. This is problematic because a range of other processes - such as monetary incentives - may lead to the same outcomes without any social learning actually taking place, or that it may occur without resulting behaviour change. Finally, despite conceptualising social learning as a process of social and/or political change, there is often little distinction made between individual and wider learning. As a result of these errors, many existing attempts to assess social learning fail to distinguish between effects of an intervention and other mechanisms through which wider learning may have occurred.

There has been a shift in thinking around learning being something that an individual does, to something that a social unit or ‘community of practice’ can do. Evidence that collective learning can perform better than the sum of individual learning emerges from the management literature^{39,40}. The potential to influence numbers of individuals to make decisions that benefit

³⁸ Reed, M. S., A. C. Evely, G. Cundill, I. Fazey, J. Glass, A. Laing, J. Newig, B. Parrish, C. Prell, C. Raymond, and L. C. Stringer. 2010. What is social learning? *Ecology and Society*, <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/volXX/issYY/artZZ/>

³⁹ Senge, P. 1990. *The Leader's New Work: Building Learning Organizations*. *Sloan Management Review*, 7-23.

⁴⁰ Argyris, C., and D. A. Schön. 1996. *Organizational learning II: theory, method and practice*, Addison Wesley, Reading, Massachusetts, USA.

wider society has important implications for the teaching of citizenship through positive experiences of involvement in society. For social learning to take place, it must diffuse from the small group into the wider communities in which people belong. Similarly, the mode of learning is important. This raises the prominence of context, power dynamics and differing values present in groups – and the need to avoid the assumption that high levels of interaction among stakeholders will necessarily lead to social learning.

This approach is deeply instructive for developing a framework through which the connection between individual, community and broader social learning can take place. By drawing on this approach, the intermediary role for CSOs in playing catalytic roles in strengthening citizen engagement and learning can be investigated. Drawing on the capabilities and sustainable livelihoods frameworks, this conceptualisation of learning and social change can be linked to structural (economic, infrastructure, and political) changes, emphasising the importance of congruent initiatives in social change with responsive contextual changes.

Implications for social empowerment and inclusion

Having reviewed some aspects of various policy frameworks, a number of key implications can be highlighted, as relevant to inclusive urban development in South Africa.

Poverty and empowerment are multi-dimensional

Empowered development requires addressing multiple drivers and determinants of poverty such as economic, social, political and gender-based exclusion and inequalities. It is also about transforming the structural determinants of poverty through a critically engaged process. In the gender and development approach, the emphasis fell on the relational aspect of gender-based inequalities raising questions about why and how these inequalities exist. The conceptualisation of empowerment in Friedmann's 'alternative development', moves beyond income-based development and proposes promoting change and development in social, political and psychological spheres. It emphasises the political nature of poverty and the link to empowered political participation of 'the poor' for their active engagement in development processes. The capabilities theory presents a multi-dimensional development, wherein multiple types of freedoms enhance the capacities of individuals to achieve a range of indicators of development, empowerment and wellbeing. The sustainable livelihoods approach also supports a comprehensive understanding of poverty and development, as it delineates a variety of 'assets' drawn upon by households to mitigate risks and maintain livelihoods. These assets take the

form of diverse resources, ranging from economic and material resources to human and social capital⁴¹.

Development and empowerment as a humanisation of development

Friedmann's empowerment framework articulates a humanisation of global economic systems and processes of 'development' through social and economic inclusion of the poor. He calls for a re-envisioning of development on the basis that "no matter how dynamic, an economic system that has little or no use for better than half of the world's population can and must be radically transformed. Broadly speaking, the objective of an alternative development is to humanize a system that has shut them out, and to accomplish this through forms of everyday resistance and political struggle that insist on the rights of the excluded population as human beings, as citizens, and as persons intent on realizing their loving and creative powers within".

Empowerment can thus be imagined as a humanising process, enabling access to the freedoms and capabilities of development.

Connecting micro-macro level change

The importance of connecting local changes to broader or 'macro-scale' (often at the national level) processes was emphasised in a number of the frameworks. Friedmann's work was critical in establishing the necessary link between congruent efforts at local and national settings in order to address both immediate and localised manifestations of poverty and disempowerment as well as a range of structural drivers and determinants, from policy frameworks to economic systems and political structures. The gender and development framework articulates 'practical' and 'strategic' aims, in a framing that balancing meeting present needs and advocating for structural and institutional reforms that may impact determinants of poverty, in particular relevance to gendered inequalities.

In considering scaling up initiatives for broader impact, Friedmann emphasises the importance of engaging with governmental structures to facilitate larger uptake of transformative initiatives and learning, as well as the potential to increase project management effectiveness and access to resources for programming. The proposed engagement with and uptake by government bodies comes with caution, however, as attention should be paid to the processes of bureaucratisation inherent in such partnerships so that the re-polarisation of power relations can be mitigated as

⁴¹ The question of environmental resources is highlighted in the sustainable livelihoods literature in the form of "natural capital", a key building block for livelihoods. This should be brought into discussions more centrally, as many frameworks are silent on the issue of sustainability, particularly in terms of the environment. An important reference in this regard is Swilling, M. and Annecke, E. 2012. *Just Transitions: Explorations of Sustainability in an Unfair World*. Cape Town and New York: UCT Press and United Nations University Press.

much as possible. This emphasises the notion of countervailing points of power to the state in democratic systems and the need for balance between state and social movements and civil society. In essence all institutions need strengthening as part of an interdependent process.

Critical 'Participation': the 'how' is as important as the 'what'

A central theme emerging from the frameworks is the importance of the nature of 'participation' in transformative social empowerment and development. Participation can be theorised as both an end and a means in itself. As such, it can take a variety of forms with associated political and power dimensions. As originally demonstrated by Arnstein, it can range from: manipulation of citizens to participate 'in' development; through forms of more tokenistic participation; and towards participant or citizen control, a form that could enable a more transformative participation for the individuals involved and the social structures they are participating 'in'.

A critical lens on participatory development is fundamental for strategising and implementing new forms of participatory local governance. Participatory development can facilitate the creation of more effective and appropriate development interventions, as demonstrated in the work of Görgens, Masiko-Kambala and van Donk on the roles of intermediary organisations in articulating and advocating for the incorporation of settlement functionality into government policy and practice of informal settlement upgrading⁴². In addition, the process of participation can transform social structures and systems. To locate participation this way is to position the approach as a political and transformative process in itself. When engaged with the aim of catalysing individual and collective change through the mechanisms of participation, constant critical reflection on process and experiential learning must be ensured so as to minimise the exacerbation or creation of inequitable distributions of power amongst those involved. The opportunity to participate in the processes of local governance and development can be an experience of personal development and transformation – or it can exacerbate existing conceptions of self- and collective-efficacy as limited by inequalities in power, resources and structural constraints. This calls for critical approaches to participation alongside an emphasis on the multi-dimensionality of social empowerment and efforts focused simultaneously at local and macro levels.

⁴² Görgens, T; Masiko-Kambala, P and van Donk, M (2013) "Establishing citizenship academies to cultivate 'cunning intelligence' and 'practical wisdom' in local governance in South Africa", Good Governance Learning Network (GGLN) (2013) Active Citizenship Matters: Perspectives from Civil Society on Local Governance in South Africa", GGLN, Isandla Institute, Cape Town.

Collective empowerment and social change through networks and social learning

The social learning framework emphasises co-learning and co-production of change processes. It also helps reflect critically on the question of how to scale up interventions and how to engage with the state for more effective programme management whilst mitigating the negative aspects of bureaucratisation, as articulated by Friedmann. According to Mitlin, social learning can provide an opportunity for networked learning, citizenship academies and co-production of change⁴³. This resonates with concepts of agency, whether individual or collective, that can be catalysed through effective cooperation amongst networks of civil society and government. This is needed to address a diversity of development needs, identified by communities themselves, as articulated by Sen, and the transformative learning that takes place through the theorised social learning whereby individual learning happens through networks of organisations or communities of practice.

Having presented and drawn out the key implications of selected development frameworks for social empowerment and inclusion, the next section looks critically at the existing context in South Africa, which most pointedly reflects the interface between sectors of society where empowerment and inclusion should take place; local government and the “delivery” of development and services.

TRENDS IN SOUTH AFRICA: FRUSTRATED VOICES

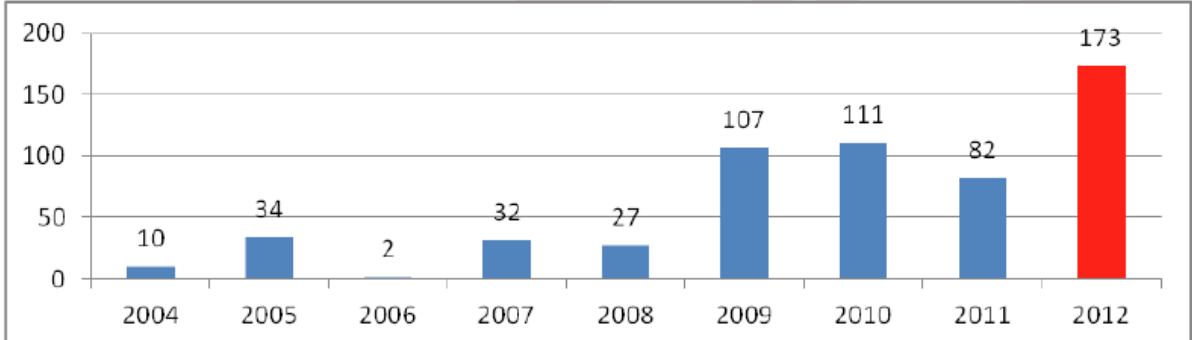
This section provides an overview of key trends in South Africa in relation to social empowerment and inclusion in municipal service delivery. The South African government’s articulation of itself as a developmental state - with an explicit interest in intervening in the economy and society to address poverty and inequality - is often undermined by the disjuncture between well-intended policies and ineffective implementation. Major service delivery protests against local government reached a record peak in 2012, with 78 per cent of such protests becoming violent⁴⁴. An underperforming ward delivery system and token participation in development processes partly explains service delivery protests, which emphasises community participation and empowerment within the realm of local governance in South Africa. Through this there remains a persistent air to a perception that many marginalised communities are frustrated with a lack of engagement.

⁴³ Mitlin, D. 2000. Addressing urban poverty: increasing incomes, reducing costs, and securing representation, *Development in Practice*, 10(2): 204-215; and Mitlin, D. 2008. “With and beyond the state: co-production as the route to political influence, power and transformation for grassroots organizations”, *Environment and Urbanisation*, 20: 339-60.

⁴⁴ Municipal IQ, Municipal Data and Intelligence, 28 November 2012, www.municipaliq.co.za

Analysis by Municipal IQ shows that service delivery protests in 2012 accounted for 30 per cent of protests against local authorities recorded since 2004, with the second and third quarter of 2012 recording more protests than any other quarter since 2004 (see Figure One)⁴⁵. These protests allegedly expressed a range of material grievances directed largely at municipalities through mass protests, demonstrations and violent confrontations. They are thus a direct result of the culmination of numerous frustrations often building up over a long period of time⁴⁶.

Figure 1: Major service delivery protests, by year (2004-2012)-



Source: Municipal IQ Municipal Hotspots Monitor, February 2013⁴⁷

As indicated above, violence has become a prominent part of service delivery protests, as it has become a feature in other sectors of South African society⁴⁸. In an interview in early 2013, Zwelinzima Vavi, the general secretary of the largest union confederation in South Africa, COSATU, agreed that violence during labour action is a symptom of a wider social malaise: “There is an increasing belief in society that employers and government have become immune to demonstrations. We got a shock when our COSATU membership survey found that 50 per cent of respondents believed violence was the way to go in strikes. Increasingly community service delivery protests are taking on the same phenomenon: if you want to be listened to, burn something”⁴⁹. Clearly the lack of agency – of being taken seriously, of being listened to and being able to do something about one’s situation – in a context where livelihoods are being eroded by inflationary and other forces, ratchets up a mounting frustration and creates a dangerous combination.

⁴⁵ Municipal IQ, Municipal Data and Intelligence, 28 November 2012, www.municipaliq.co.za

⁴⁶ See also Atkinson, D. “Taking to the Streets: Has Developmental Local Government failed in South Africa”, in Buhlungu, S; Johnson, D; Southall, R; and Lutchman J (eds), *State of the Nation South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Science Research Council Press, 2007.

⁴⁷ Available at www.municipaliq.co.za/publications/press [Accessed 22 June, 2013].

⁴⁸ Wehmhoerner, A, *The Marikana Massacre: watershed in the history of post-apartheid South Africa?* Foundation for European Progressive Studies, Cape Town, 18 September 2012, <http://www.feps-europe.eu/assets/fc256af1-7cd2-4f6e-b184-24caea82c9d3/the-marikana-massacre-watershed-in-the-history-of-post-apartheid-south-africa.pdf>

⁴⁹ Jones, G., “Labour turmoil: what’s wrong with SA’s industrial relations”, *Financial Mail*, February 22 to February 27, 2013, www.fm.co.za

The South African Institute of Race Relations offers another perspective on service delivery protests, agreeing with President Zuma when he describes service delivery as a success in the country: “There is no contradiction between the successes we identify and the protests that are commonplace around the country. These protests are not a function of the failure of delivery but rather in that this success has raised expectations that cannot be met because of shortcomings in the school system and the labour market”⁵⁰. Over the period from 1996 to 2010 the number of households living in formal houses increased by 86 per cent, the number of households with access to electricity increased by 127.9 per cent and the number of households with access to piped water increased by 76.6 per cent. The Institute states that this service delivery success together with increased access to social welfare, which now reaches 15 million people, “are responsible for the fact that the proportion of South Africans living on less than US\$2 per day has declined from 12 per cent in 1994, and a peak of 17 per cent in 2002, to just 5 per cent today”. This raises a key question. If things are getting better, why is there so much anger in the protests? Part of the answer must lie in the fact that rising prosperity is not shared – and that many see themselves being left behind and without recourse to be heard.

The gap between policy-makers and implementers on one hand and grassroots citizens on the other, has severely complicated attempts to address poverty, inequality and under-development more generally by ensuring that policy choices and implementation priorities often fail to reflect the experiences and needs of the poor. According to Friedman, in other contexts, the poor get their voices heard by aligning with specific political parties, however in the South African context, this is limited as one party dominates the political arena and ‘party loyalties are shaped by their identities – race in particular, but also language and region’⁵¹.

The service delivery protests are thus symptomatic of deeper structural issues including lack of voice in local governance. A recent study on collective violence in South Africa, including xenophobia and service delivery protests, identifies the underlying causes, arguing that violent protest is often the result of community frustration and is a last resort⁵². The research looked at eight cases of local communities that had experienced collective violence and, on the whole, argued that marginalisation, lack of community representation and the lack of economic and social citizenship were the main reasons why community members feel compelled to commit

⁵⁰ South African Institute of Race Relations, Press Release, 11 September 2012

⁵¹ Friedman, S., *Civil Society and the Extension of Rights*, unpublished SCAPE review, Centre for Policy Studies, Johannesburg, 2002.

⁵² Von Holdt, C; Langa, M; Molapo, S; Mogapi, N; Ngubeni, K; Dlamini, J and A, Kirstenarl. 2011. “The Smoke that Calls: Insurgent Citizenship, Collective Violence and the Struggle for Place”, *Society, Work and Development Initiative (SWOP)*, University of Witwatersrand, www.swopinstitute.org.za or www.csvr.org.za

violent acts to convey their grievances. Young men were identified as being the main instigators and participants in the violence due to their frustration at being unemployed with no real economic opportunity or prospects available to them. Further, the report argues that these young men use violence as an avenue to express their masculinity. These violent strategies employed by certain communities are counter-productive in the sense that they simply reinforce the root cause of their grievances by alienating municipal leadership through violence and intimidation.

The government has acknowledged these protests are prompted partly by a lack of citizen voice and has promised to strengthen the ward committees established by the Municipal Structures Act and a replacement of ANC local election candidates in an attempt to ensure more responsive councillors. While both responses indicate a growing recognition of the need to ensure far greater access by grassroots citizens, they do so in ways that fail to resolve the problem. Enhancing citizen access to government by channelling it through structured participation vehicles often does not offer an effective means to ensure response. These channels favour organised, visible, groups rather than organisations of the grassroots poor. Thus many remain relegated to those that remain “invisible”. Initiatives that encourage local communities to work together to promote social justice are vital in preventing collective violence carried out through service delivery protests.

On this basis, von Holdt and colleagues argues that encouraging the community to address issues, through workshops that facilitate open dialogue and through community work programmes, is key in preventing communities from venting their frustration through violent means. This reiterates an argument made earlier in the paper that community involvement in planning and service delivery is often poorly executed despite the existence of various policy instruments⁵³. These include, *inter alia*, democratic representative structures (ward committees), planning at a local level (community-based planning), implementation and monitoring plans using a range of working groups and community-based organisations, and supporting community-based services. The establishment of these structures has the consequence of fuelling rightful expectation of services; people believe because they are involved they will receive adequate services. Despite wanting community involvement (hence the various instruments), local government is badly placed to facilitate this in an appropriate manner. Thus a cycle of discontent is perpetuated.

⁵³ Department of Provincial and Local Government. 2007. National Policy Framework for Public Participation, Pretoria, South Africa.

This is symptomatic of a deeper problem around a lack of a social compact between citizens and local government whereby participation and partnership lead to the co-production and co-creation of development solutions. In this way, communities should contribute to practical problem solving and upgrading schemes, and hold municipalities accountable. As a result, patience is running out and the state is finding that it cannot deliver faster (in quantity let alone quality, and it cannot maintain what it has built), and is increasingly operating at the edge of the fiscal envelope. All of this underscores – once again - the need for an alternative concept of citizenship empowerment. Drawing on the various theoretical frameworks, a people-centred approach is required to generate communities and individuals that engender income, improve skills, increase safety, reduce food insecurity and enhance health through improvements in social and economic infrastructure.

This then raises the question; what does active citizenship mean in practice? This becomes the focus of the case studies investigated in the following section.

EVIDENCE FROM PRACTICE

This section provides a set of case studies that resonates with the framing provided above, drawing where possible, on positive examples of where social empowerment and inclusion has impacted on development processes. These case studies were compiled using mostly grey literature, as they had not been recorded in formal publications. In some cases information obtained from the literature was supplemented through personal interviews with key individuals involved with each case. For each interview the involvement of the interviewee with the case is explained. The second case study is an exception. This case draws exclusively from a study done by Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE), an applied research NGO, working in the socio-economic, political and developmental fields in South Africa.

City of Joburg 2040 Growth and Development Strategy⁵⁴

In 2011, the City of Joburg reviewed the existing Growth and Development Strategy (GDS) and subsequently launched a draft GDS focusing on 2040 to build the city's resilience against emerging challenges such as climate change, resource scarcity, food insecurity and increasing inequality. The draft GDS 2040 formed the basis for a nine-week civic outreach programme to inform a fully-fledged strategy⁵⁵. The final strategy was launched on 20 October 2011⁵⁶. Chapter

⁵⁴ For the actual GDS see http://www.joburg.org.za/gds2040/pdfs/joburg2040_gds.pdf. To view the IDP 2012/16, the first phase of the GDS until 2016, see http://www.joburg-archive.co.za/2012/idp/idp1216_part1-6.pdf.

⁵⁵ Tau, P. 2011. Speech by the Executive Mayor of the City of Johannesburg on the occasion of the launch of the Joburg 2040 Growth and Development Strategy (GDS), FNB Stadium, Johannesburg. Available:

Five of the strategy summarises the civic outreach programme, which encompassed a number of platforms used over nine weeks to collect input from citizens. These included thematic weeks with the schedule for weekly events appearing on the City's website; ward-level participation to include local communities; a GDS Conference in which leading global, regional and local experts participated; and the launch of the GDS attended by the city's key stakeholders. According to the City, over 2,000 people participated in the process including, *inter alia*, community organisations, informal traders, people with disabilities, and ordinary citizens.

The objectives of the engagement were to open up a public discourse on the key challenges confronting the City; obtain input and suggestions from stakeholders and local communities; and capture the imagination of residents and stakeholders around the city's visioning process. The intention was partly to set the precedent for more participation and support for ward committee and petitions processes in the Growth and Development Strategy, also emphasising the ideal of "social *inclusion*" in the Integrated Development Plan of 2012–2016⁵⁷, certainly on paper at least. According to a recent study, however, the practice is something different: the Petitions and Public Participation Committee expressed frustration that the petitions system was often undermined not just by officials but by uncooperative ward councillors and closure on some petitions had taken multiple years, with many more petitions still requiring resolution⁵⁸.

In an interview with Zayd Ebrahim around the participation dimension of the strategy, he emphasised the political nature of poverty and the link to empowered political participation of 'the poor' for their active engagement in development processes⁵⁹. According to Ebrahim, approximately 50,000 people were reached through the outreach, far above the number claimed in press reports, largely because this accounted for web-based interaction. This was the first ever process of its kind facilitated by the City in which a great deal was learned. Ebrahim stressed the importance of taking into consideration the context and purpose of the outreach, which was driven by a new term of office requiring a relevant, long-term and shared

http://www.joburg.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7336:speech-by-the-executive-mayor-of-the-city-of-johannesburg-clr-mpho-parks-tau-on-the-occasion-of-the-launch-of-the-joburg-2040-growth-and-development-strategy-gds&catid=96:speeches&Itemid=114. (8 July 2013).

⁵⁶ City of Johannesburg. 2011. Joburg is ready. Available:

http://www.joburg.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7317:joburg-2040-is-ready&catid=88:news-update&Itemid=266. (9 July 2013).

⁵⁷ City of Johannesburg. 2012. *Integrated Development Plan 2012/16: Committing to a Promising Future*. Group Strategy, Policy Coordination and Relations.

⁵⁸ Pernegger, L. 2013. The Agonist State? The Case of Johannesburg: City of Strife. Conference Paper Version 15 June. Resourceful Cities 21, Berlin, 29-31 August 2013. Available: <http://www.rc21.org/conferences/berlin2013/RC21-Berlin-Papers/27-1-Pernegger.pdf>. (9 July 2013).

⁵⁹ Interview with Zayd Ebrahim, Deputy Director of Strategy and Research at the City of Johannesburg by Anri Landman, 12 July 2013.

development vision for the City. One of the successful elements was the use of online and social media to collect inputs from residents, which created an “honest platform on which residents felt free to be critical”. Some residents found it difficult to participate in a visioning process with so many existing more pressing issues in their neighbourhoods. They challenged the City about its long-term approach. Ebrahim said facilitators handled this by explaining that a shared vision was necessary to guide sustainable approaches to more pressing problems. Although 50,000 people were reached, the City still received feedback from people who felt left out. Ebrahim said that the whole process was communicated in English and that it would be necessary to communicate to various stakeholders in their own languages if more people were to be included in the future.

*State-led community participation processes in Johannesburg and eThekweni (Durban)*⁶⁰

As shown in the Johannesburg 2040 case, the management structures of South African cities consider community participation important on paper, but often dilute its possible positive impacts by superficial interpretations of the processes required for effective engagement. In order to investigate the commitments by cities to make community engagements an integral part of planning, budgeting and service delivery processes, CASE conducted a study into state-led participation processes in three sites each in Johannesburg and eThekweni. Sites were chosen if authorities considered the housing strategy adopted by residents of these sites as illegal or temporary. CASE consulted city officials, civil society representatives and residents to assess existing mechanisms for community participation, as well as their effectiveness.

The study found that state-led participation efforts had been ineffective at giving the poor voice and choice in matters surrounding housing upgrades. The report argues that discrepancies between community and state perspectives emerge from conflicted understandings of the process of participation, the composition of community (who should take part) and the validity of participation strategies (such as forums versus protests). It was also perceived that communications increased during election periods, when politicians were campaigning. This finding supports reviewed literature in the study that suggests that ward committees are often politicised, elected by a single ward councillor (violating municipal guidelines), and representing one political party. When residents feel unrepresented, they form area committees that may

⁶⁰ This case draws exclusively from a study conducted by Felicity Kitchin, a consultant researcher from CASE. Kitchin, F. 2012. Enhancing the voices of the poor in urban housing: Durban and Johannesburg. Community Agency for Social Enquiry – CASE. Available: <http://www.case.org.za/images/docs/enhancing-the-voices-of-the-poor-july-2012.pdf>. (11 July 2013).

challenge ward structures, exist parallel to it or dominate it. Neither ward structures, nor area committees represent non-South African residents.

The study concludes that existing participatory processes do not make residents feel included in decisions about their futures. An effort to better understand the objectives of participation, community composition, and strategies that effectively engage the community is necessary. It is important to recognise that communities are heterogeneous and require different modes of communication. Participation processes need to be designed more transparently, so that residents can observe that their concerns have influenced municipal planning and delivery.

This gives a strong emphasis to the role of leadership to embark on “new ways of doing things” that sometimes subverts the roles that government and society are used to. The incoming Mayor of Johannesburg, Parks Tau, was adamant that the new GDS would be developed through a different process, one that emphasised participation as voice, as was possible with a limited time frame and existing budget. Despite the limitations of what can be achieved in nine weeks, seeking inputs from a small portion of the city’s population, it provided a new frame of reference for hard-pressed officials working between societal expectations and pressures “from above” to deliver. Although it is too early to judge, the process recognised the need to establish the necessary link between congruent efforts at local and national settings in order to address both immediate and localised manifestations of poverty and disempowerment as well as a range of structural drivers and determinants, from policy frameworks to economic systems and political structures.

iShack – Enkanini, Stellenbosch

The Improved Shack, or iShack as it has become known, was developed by a Masters student, Andreas Keller, as part of his degree at the Sustainability Institute of the University of Stellenbosch. His model was informed by sustainable development principles and extensive community engagement processes with the informal community, Enkanini, in which the first technical demonstration model was built. Enkanini is an un-electrified community with 2,400 households that share 70 toilets and twelve taps; has infrequent waste collection of the seven open waste skips; is located on a steep topography with no formal drainage; and has no effective leadership structure in order to engage with the municipality to address these infrastructure

challenges⁶¹. An initially unplanned community engagement process emerged in 2011 to address these challenges.

The iShack concept embraces the notion of incrementalism – improving an informal house or “shack” is an incremental process that depends on a variety of factors⁶². The iShack project recognises existing infrastructure and entrepreneurship present in typical informal settlements that can be leveraged, and that people living in informal housing are able and willing to pay for services such as energy when they are able to⁶³. It thus takes the form of an enterprise model that supplies a service to its clients – shack dwellers. At the time of the interview with Andreas Keller, positive discussions with the national Green Fund⁶⁴ to scale up the project to 1,800 units to saturate the Enkanini market were underway.

According to Keller the local Stellenbosch municipality was informed of the research intentions. The research team was advised to work through existing ward structures and councillors according to the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) framework. They experienced the ward framework operating in a top-down manner, confined to timeframes and outcome indicators that hindered thorough engagements with the community. The varied levels of competence, experience, and commitment of ward councillors further challenged any upgrading efforts in Enkanini. As such, the research team sought to find an alternative approach to community engagements. There was no leadership structure in the local community and so the researchers went to the area and spent time having conversations with local residents. This grew into more official engagements on a weekly basis in a local venue. Issues in the local community were discussed and solutions considered at these engagements. Participants would then test the ideas of solutions in the community before the next discussion. These discussions started in 2011 and are on-going. The five local residents who continuously attended these meetings were later appointed as co-researchers and have been a key success factor of the engagement process. This was an unintended and emerging successful outcome. The co-researchers have become representatives of the community, but have remained a-political and are not interested in

⁶¹ Swilling, M., Tavener-Smith, L., Keller, A., Van der Heyde, V. and Wessels, B. 2013. Rethinking Incremental Urbanism: co-production of incremental informal settlement upgrading strategies. Paper submitted to the ISDRC19, 1-3 July 2013 at Spier, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

⁶² Green, E. 2013. The iShack: A business model for incrementally upgrading informal settlements. Fact Sheet, The BOP Learning Lab. Reciprocity. Available: http://www.bop.org.za/BOP_Lab/Publications_files/Reciprocity_iShack.pdf. (3 July 2013).

⁶³ Keller, A. 2013. Personal interview conducted by Anri Landman on 26 June 2013.

⁶⁴ The Green Fund is a national fund supporting green initiatives that contribute to transitioning South Africa to a low carbon, resource efficient and climate resilient development path delivering high impact economic, environmental and social benefits (Green Fund n.d.).

assuming formal leadership roles. The co-researchers have been empowered by the process, and were able to secure sustainable employment through their participation in the process.

According to Keller, the other key ingredient to successful engagements has been the identification of a “champion”. He described a “champion” as someone who is known in the community, respected, trusted, bright, a networker and slightly fearless. This person must be able to make some unpopular decisions. The research team identified a local pastor who has fulfilled this role. He facilitated engagements with the community, advised the research team on various matters, translated when necessary and helped the team identify beneficiaries. When he participated in key processes, he was remunerated for key deliverables. Identifying a champion was not easy. The team learned the risk of politicisation when their efforts were co-opted by an individual campaigning for a local party before the municipal elections. The team’s efforts were portrayed as if the political party’s and the team had to cut ties with their initially identified “champion”.

According to Keller engagement processes informing urban development are most often constrained by the need for quick solutions, yet sustainable solutions take time. Communities in need of urban development initiatives are often fragmented without leadership structures. It is therefore important to identify champions and co-facilitators who are a-political, yet respected and trusted in the community. A sustainable urban upgrading project requires the community’s input from design to implementation, as well as the necessary training of local residents to maintain infrastructure once it has been installed. The project needs to address the specific needs of the community and expect from them only what they can contribute, when it is available to them.

It is also important that engagement processes are designed for specific contexts and projects. Building a road might require engaging with community leaders, whereas in the case of the iShack project it was essential to identify a-political community representatives. The project also needs to be measured with context-specific process indicators rather than outcome indicators. Urban development in informal settlements is messy and organic and will not fit into rigid frameworks with rules and regulations. However, it is essential to build accountability into the process and so a flexible framework measuring process indicators, is important.

Community engagement is a constant requirement for sustainable urban development, which makes scalability a challenge. Keller concluded the interview by saying that perhaps the

sustainable solution to urban development would be to move away from an emphasis on scalability to doing many smaller context-specific projects.

Community Works Programme

The Community Works Programme (CWP) is a government programme aimed at tackling poverty and unemployment. It forms part of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), which was launched in April 2004 to help alleviate unemployment by creating at least 1 million work opportunities (40% women, 30% youth and 20% people with disabilities)⁶⁵. The EPWP emerged out of a strategy process initiated by the South African Presidency to support the “second economy” by addressing inequality and economic marginalisation. This strategy argued that employment should be placed at the heart of all economic policy. The CWP was started as a pilot project late in 2007 under the auspices of a partnership between The Presidency and the Department of Social Development, which constituted a National Steering Committee to provide strategic oversight to the programme. In March 2010, CWP became a fully-fledged government programme based in the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (DCoGTA) since April 2010.

Kate Philip, the Inequality and Economic Inclusion Programme Manager at Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS), which facilitated the programme in the first phases, remains contracted through TIPS as an adviser to the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency, on short-term strategies for job creation. She focuses on public employment and the Community Work Programme in particular. According to Kate Philip: [the CWP] “was designed in response to the structural nature of unemployment in South Africa, and to the problem that many EPWP participants exit back into poverty after short-term employment because the economy cannot absorb them”⁶⁶. The idea was to provide indefinite, regular work of two days a week (or eight days a month). CWP provides an employment safety net by giving participants a minimum number of regular days of work, thus providing a predictable income stream. The CWP is thus designed as an employment safety net, not an employment solution for participants. The purpose is to supplement people’s existing livelihood strategies by offering a basic level of income security through work. It is based on the recognition that policies to address unemployment and create decent work will take time to reach people living in marginalised areas with few opportunities.

⁶⁵ Department of Public Works. No date. Welcome to the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP): Phase 2. Available: <http://www.epwp.gov.za/>. 2 July 2013.

⁶⁶ Jones, G. 2013. Government to expand Public Works Programme. Financial Mail, 28 March. Available: <http://www.fm.co.za/economy/2013/03/28/government-to-expand-public-works-programme>. (2 July 2013).

What makes the CWP different from other job creation initiatives is that it is also a community programme. The created work must be “useful work”, which is decided in Ward Committees or local development forums. Although not descriptive about community development approaches, the CWP has applied the Organisation Workshop methodology as a form of inception-phase training at some sites, and the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to analyse local problems and formulate solutions with local stakeholders⁶⁷. “Useful work” is defined as work that improves the local area and the quality of life of its inhabitants such as fixing community assets like schools, road and parks, and setting up food gardens. Work could also include looking after orphans and vulnerable children, helping sick people, assisting teachers at schools, looking after children while their parents are at work, and working with the local police to improve safety and reduce crime. Clearly frameworks such as that of the capabilities and sustainable livelihoods resonate with the CWP in that addressing a comprehensive understanding of poverty and development requires delineating a variety of ‘assets’ drawn upon by households to mitigate risks and maintain livelihoods.

A crucial dimension of the CWP is that community residents help decide what work is most urgent. The research into community violence undertaken by van Holdt and colleagues identifies the case of the community of Bokfontein, in the North West province, that implemented a series of CWPs that were successful in creating local job opportunities through public works programmes and, in the process, promoted social justice in a community that was culturally diverse with high levels of inequality. Thus, apart from the tangible skills imparted to individuals and community-led work, the participatory processes enabled other deep-rooted issues to be resolved. It emphasises that participatory development can facilitate the creation of more effective and appropriate development interventions and highlights the importance of the nature of ‘participation’ in transformative social empowerment and development.

A FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION

In exploring the potential of activating citizenship and social empowerment, this final section brings together the broad situational review, the range of theoretical frameworks and a cluster of case studies that demonstrate (relative) positive practice of applying emerging principles. In

⁶⁷ DoCGTA – Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. 2011. Community Work Programme Implementation Manual. Available: https://www.google.co.za/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDQQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cogta.gov.za%2Fcwp%2Findex.php%2Fpublications%2Fdoc_download%2F8-cwp-manual-2011.html&ei=3_bcUefmMib17Aa-IDQCA&usg=AFQjCNFuL1O3KrB8LDid3Y0JYwMp0BRYyQ&sig2=00arbcqCiC_bo3qSG1rbQ&bvm=bv.48705608.d.ZGU&cad=rja. (3 July 2013).

this way innovative forms of community development are explored. The paper thus returns to the initial question: how to engender a participatory people-centred approach that has at its heart social empowerment and inclusion, in order to develop and maintain sustainable and socially just human settlements in the urban space?

A key question, therefore, is how to enable “activist citizens” to emerge? An activist citizen is someone committed to community life and the urban environment and that can lead change independently rather than wait for the government to “fix things”. The relationships encapsulated in the iShack are an example of this. An important aspect is how such individuals see themselves as being part of a larger society and wanting to influence this – and to know how to do this. Such an attitude allows non-experts to engage complex processes of change. A non-expert is an individual who engages in an activity despite having no formal training or background in it. This type of participation is essential for urban development because these spaces are made up of individuals who are not necessarily experts. The powerful lived experiences of people can be harnessed as valuable resources for identifying issues and solutions. Community members are experts on their particular urban situation and contain within them the knowledge and solutions for any number of issues.

This requires placing the citizen at the root of urban change – through encouraging social, cooperative models of city organisation. Citizens alone cannot address the larger scale challenges of water, sanitation, transportation and other essential needs that rely on extensive infrastructure. There is thus the need to bring together public and private stakeholders, ranging from grassroots thinkers to city officials, to discover how they can work together and how top-down and bottom-up planning solutions can complement each other⁶⁸. This would essentially encourage collaboration and participation between a variety of people from different backgrounds and levels of expertise.

The NDP recommends that the planning system should encourage properly funded, citizen-led neighbourhood vision and planning processes, drawing on methods, successful in other countries (2012). This reiterates a point that the state cannot be effectively “developmental” unless it has strong links to society, needed to ensure that those with access to skills and capital are persuaded to co-operate with development and that grassroots citizens respond to

⁶⁸ The term “bottom up” first appeared in relation to its opposite, “top down”, in the 1942 edition of Harvard University’s *Quarterly Journal of Economics*: “In the long run it is part of the larger question of whether “bottom up” control can be as efficient as “top down” control”.

initiatives in ways which are likely to unleash energies and initiate development⁶⁹. The government cannot, therefore, realise its stated goal of initiating pro-poor development unless it allows grassroots citizens far more say in policy formulation and implementation. The evidence of the past nineteen years indicates that government will be able to do little unless it wins the co-operation of a range of social actors, including people at grassroots, and that a developmental state will not achieve its goals without a significant narrowing of the income gap. The technical response of government as a vehicle for specialists to use their greater knowledge to dispense benefits to a grateful populace has proven limited in effect.

An alternative process can cultivate constructive, mutually supportive initiatives similar to what Parks Tau articulated for Joburg 2030. This comes down to the core value of trust – as demonstrated by both the iShack and CWP case studies, citizens who feel good about where they live are more likely to take care of it, spend money and socialise with strangers. Friedmann makes clear that effective urban relationships are largely based on notions of trust rather than systems that rely on control. While strategies of trust imply uncertainty about the outcomes – which can be challenging for some stakeholders such as city officials measured on results – they are also known to benefit process-driven thinking and experimentation, as established by the iShack case study. Trust is needed for more convivial urban spaces in ever-more diverse contexts.

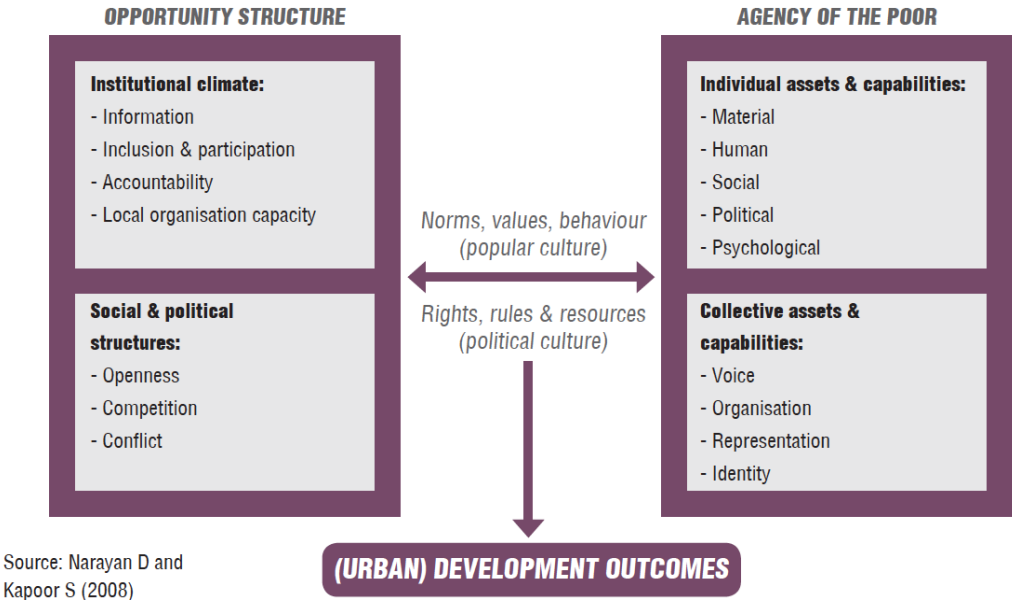
Pieterse outlines a view of social empowerment that expands beyond social and political domains to include multi-level economic empowerment⁷⁰. In other words, empowerment linked to the routine investments and expenditures of the state into various social development areas and the public realm that underpins everyday life. This entails addressing local economic development needs, strengths and capabilities while consistently addressing contextual constraints through longer-term strategic macro-economic restructuring. Pieterse proposes an integrated community development approach, building on Narayan and Kapoor's empowerment framework. This integrated conceptual model, presented in figure two, draws together individual and collective assets (and capabilities) of the poor with opportunity structures and institutional mechanisms for participation and engagement to enable simultaneous action at individual, local and macro spheres.

⁶⁹ Edigheji, O. (ed). 2005. *Trajectories for South Africa Reflections on the ANC's 2nd National General Council's discussion documents* Special edition of Policy: issues & actors Vol 18 no 2 Johannesburg Centre for Policy Studies June.

⁷⁰ Pieterse, E. "Rethinking the purpose and modalities of community development in South African cities", 2013.

Resonating with Friedmann’s conceptualisation of collective empowerment, Narayan and Kapoor present an integrated conceptual model that connects the assets of the poor households with more collective endowments of the communities in which they live⁷¹. The framework emphasises the multi-dimensional nature of both empowerment and strategic action to catalyse, in this example, urban development outcomes. The two overarching components are “opportunity structures” such as institutional climate, social and political structures, and “the agency of the poor”, which is represented in individual and collective assets and capabilities. The latter links to the development frameworks of capabilities and sustainable livelihoods in particular, which emphasises an understanding of household coping, adapting and management mechanisms in light of economic insecurity. These two components – opportunity structures and agency of the poor - are mediated by popular and political culture. The opportunity structure’s ability to enable pro-poor interventions is affected by institutional factors such as the availability of information, possibility and opportunity for effective participation, effective accountability systems, and the capacity of local organisations to use these systems and the nature and features of political and social organisations that shape these opportunity structures themselves.

Figure 2: Economic empowerment of the poor



In this way, a balance can be found between providing immediate service needs in poor settlements, which focus more broadly on the public realm to enhance the spaces that can make

⁷¹ Narayan, D. and S. Kapoor. 2008. Beyond Sectoral Traps: Creating Wealth for the Poor, in Moser, C and Dani, A (eds) *Assets, Livelihoods and Social Policy*. Washington DC: World Bank, pp. 299-321.

everyday life easier and cheaper, especially collective action such as trading, production or exchange. This reiterates the need to balance immediate physical needs such as housing and sanitation with the broader, underlying determinants of why those needs are not being met, which is a complex set of interrelated factors including structural unemployment, adverse incorporation into economic activity, educational and training gaps, amongst others. Pieterse therefore emphasises the need to invest in local economic development from the public sector in order to address these needs through such initiatives as the community works programmes in sectors characterised as the care economy, green infrastructure, cultural and arts services, and the construction and maintenance of public infrastructure⁷². This resonates with one of the key recommendations of the NDP to ensure that public works programmes are tailored to community building and local needs in at least four broad areas: a) the economy of social care, b) green infrastructure, c) cultural services, and d) public facilities such as schools, clinics, roads, parks, community centres and libraries.

In considering the individual and collective assets and capabilities “of the poor”, it is useful to look at these as a “practical register” of skills required to effectively engage the opportunity structure. Information is key. This reiterates the capability approach, the effective opportunities that people have to “live the lives that they have reason to value”. One of the crucial insights of the capability approach is that the conversion of goods and services into “a valuable life” is influenced by personal, social, and environmental conversion factors; and that it should not be taken for granted that resource provision leads to increased capabilities. Indeed, this has been the case in contemporary South Africa where, despite the resources of the state, much remains unchanged in people’s lives.

So what then are the skills required to engage these resources? For some capabilities, the main input will be financial resources and economic production; but for others, it can also be political practices and institutions, including political participation, social or cultural practices, social structures, social institutions, public goods, social norms, traditions and habits⁷³. Essentially access to information sources and through this to have an understanding of the political and government structures and political opportunities. Part of this is having access to basic accounting knowledge to be able to engage budgets. Legal knowledge is also imperative particularly around planning. All of these issues imply that there is time to gather information and respond to it, something sorely lacking in a political economy where people are surviving.

⁷² Pieterse, E. “Rethinking the purpose and modalities of community development in South African cities”, 2013.

⁷³ Oosterlaken, I (2009) “Design for Development: A Capability Approach”, *Design Issues*, Volume 25, Number 4, Autumn.

Another crucial issue is a place to meet without having to pay, as renting a community hall is expensive. Costs also accrue through transport to bring in people with necessary skills and food for people who travel. As it is unlikely that all the necessary skills will be available in a neighbourhood, these skills will have to be sourced and strengthened. In managing meetings other basic skills will be required including writing, minute taking, typing and access to computers, printing, language (translation) and bridging between groups. All these issues reiterate why a citizenship academy is important.

As a result of the closed political space within government, there is a critical role for civil society in South Africa to be a voice for the poor. The challenge for civil society is how to do this, to find ways of accessing informal power relations and networks, so as to 'deepen their own roots', making them more representative of the grassroots poor – and more strategic. Strengthening grassroots participation in society to define their future is a key contextual factor facing CSOs. Narrowing the gap between state and society requires not only that elites be assisted to develop deeper social roots but also that those at its grassroots - who currently are unheard in policy debates - be empowered to engage with the state and others in the society whose access to power and resources give them the capacity to impact on the lives of the poor. On a cautionary note, efforts by external agents to boost grassroots capacity are unlikely to succeed if they seek to create new organisations or to impose resources and new approaches on existing associations. Support is most likely to be effective and to build capacity to participate in democratic institutions if it supports existing organisations rather than trying to stimulate new ones and if it concentrates not on dispensing money but on supporting opportunities to engage with power-holders.

This then brings in the issue of promoting citizenship education and training to strengthen community organisation, planning and project management skills and competencies, which has been strongly motivated for by Görgens, Masiko-Kambala and van Donk. To quote, "citizenship academies are conceptualized as deliberative and learning spaces initiated by a municipality in partnership with a local civil society or learning institution. The intention is to create structured spaces where community groups, civil society organisations, state officials, politicians and progressive professionals can be equipped with the relevant skills and information and have the opportunity to debate possible solutions to social and technical problems, thereby deepening their understanding of the motivations and positions of other stakeholders". Through equipping each community activist and community works manager with a range of hard skills in community organisation, management and planning, effective engagement can be facilitated with larger municipal planning systems to ensure that neighbourhood community visions are

integrated. This will help local government becomes sufficiently responsive to community needs and opportunities. Pieterse advocates for citizen empowerment in poor neighbourhoods that prioritise job creation, even if it is outside the formal economy and squarely embedded in the social economy, an approach that is more likely to foster a pragmatic and ambitious democratic vision of neighbourhood-scale incremental improvements and medium- to long-term systemic change⁷⁴.

Finally, to promote mutual understanding, community cohesion and integration of people from different national and cultural backgrounds, forums for dialogue and liaison should be established at neighbourhood and municipal levels. These would essentially help local communities, benefit from the skills, enterprise and international networks of new arrivals, and reduce xenophobia and migrant exclusion. In addition, it could establish a framework to create “bridging social capital” between townships and suburbs that can generate a cross-class collaboration to provide the political and technical ability to transform space – and give legitimacy to integration. The “bridging” would enable the creation of dignified access to basic services through a high quality public environment that guarantees safety with economic infrastructure to support the informal economy co-produced with residents of township and suburb to make it affordable within an institutional framework.

Establishing forums for dialogue and liaison would enable a learning, reflective process, bringing together relevant stakeholders to assist them to share, understand and learn from their diverse perceptions. In other words it can be used to initiate forms of social learning. The process would build trust between stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and allow for creative and mutually supporting learning that could ultimately strengthen the capacity of the stakeholders to find and implement innovative solutions to different challenges. However, multi-stakeholder processes are complex and require particular skills to facilitate. To be authentic and to shift perspectives, such processes need to have space to follow whatever direction it takes, something that those in authority find difficult to support.

IN SUMMARY

Starting with the premise that “alternative policies of service provision” are required in South Africa to satisfy popular expectations, while simultaneously “building active citizenship and expanding citizen capabilities”, this paper set out to explore social empowerment and inclusion. The guiding frame was to explore the potential for a participatory people-centred approach that

⁷⁴ Pieterse, E. “Rethinking the purpose and modalities of community development in South African cities”, 2013.

had at its heart social empowerment and inclusion, which was necessary to develop and maintain human settlements in the urban space. The purpose of the paper was therefore to explore the potential of activating citizenship and social empowerment through innovative forms of community development, linked to the routine investments and expenditures of the state into various social development areas and the public realm that underpins everyday life

To understand what social empowerment and inclusion mean in active citizenship, the paper was situated in the broader political economy of South Africa. Key characteristics of the country's development context were briefly described with the concept of adverse incorporation suggested as a key driver of urban exclusion. This led to questions about the role of participatory local government, as a key facilitator of enabling community space to generate alternative development trajectories in South Africa.

In order to understand challenges to South African development and the roles of empowerment and active citizenship, an outline of historical and theoretical trajectory of development policy frameworks over the last three decades was presented. This allowed for a more detailed understanding of these terms to emerge, which were used to inform an emerging conceptual framework on social empowerment and inclusion. Having reviewed the key trends in South Africa in relation to social empowerment and inclusion in municipal service delivery, the question was asked; what does active citizenship mean in practice? This became the focus of case studies, drawing where possible on positive examples of social empowerment and inclusion that had impacted on development processes.

With these elements in place, the paper turned back to the key question and subsequently outlined a view of social empowerment that expanded beyond social and political domains to include multi-level economic empowerment. In other words, empowerment linked to the routine investments and expenditures of the state into various social development areas and the public realm that underpins everyday life. This was premised on the belief that citizen empowerment in poor neighbourhoods must prioritise job creation, even if it is outside the formal economy and squarely embedded in the social economy. In order to achieve this, the array of community-government partnership and interface bodies needed to be reinforced and strengthened.