MAXIMUM WORKING CLASS UNITY?

CHALLENGES TO LOCAL SOCIAL MOVEMENT UNIONISM IN CAPE TOWN

DAVID CHRISTOFFER LIER

Thesis in partial fulfilment of the Cand. Polit. degree in Human Geography.

Department of Sociology and Human Geography,
University of Oslo, February 2005

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

• AEC	Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign
• AIDC	Alternative Information and Development Centre
• ANC	African National Congress
• APF	Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum
• CEC	Central Executive Committee
• CHED	Centre for Higher Education Development
• COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
• Gauteng APF	Anti-Privatisation Forum (in Johannesburg, Gauteng)
• GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
• ILRIG	International Labour Resource and Information Group
• NEC	National Executive Committee
• NEHAWU	National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union
• NGO	non-governmental organisation
• pers. comm.	personal communication
• RDP	Redistribution and Development Programme
• SACP	South African Communist Party
• SAMWU	South African Municipal Workers Union
• SMI	Social Movement Indaba
• UCT	University of Cape Town
• UCTWSC	University of Cape Town Workers' Support Committee
• UWC	University of Western Cape
• UDF	United Democratic Front
• WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

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“Social movement unionism is one that is deeply democratic... [...] It is political by acting, independently of the retreating parties of liberalism and social democracy, whatever the relations of the union with such parties. It multiplies its political and social power by reaching out to other sectors of the class, be they other unions, neighborhood-based organizations, or other social movements. It fights for all the oppressed and enhances its own power by doing so.”

(Kim Moody 1997:4-5)

“When [the social movements] are making the most organised and mass-based formations of the working class, unions do have an important role to play. But at the same time we have to confront this issue: How do you build maximum unity of the working class, given that you’re in an alliance with a multi-class formation?”

(pers. comm., Roger Ronnie, general secretary of South African Municipal Workers Union)

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the obstacles encountered by organised workers and poor communities trying to unite their forces in post-apartheid South Africa. South African trade unions fight for decent job conditions in a society undergoing constant change. While keeping a steady course away from its apartheid past, the country gets all the more enveloped in the global economy. Some observers of this globalisation call for organised labour to forge alliances with other progressive forces in civil society to stand their ground. Such an alliance requires a trade union reaching beyond the realm of production, including a wider set of issues onto their agenda. This is not an unfamiliar approach to the workers of South Africa. Trade unions can proudly look back on an anti-apartheid struggle where strong alliances across society formed the backbone of their political opposition.

By the onset of the new century, however, a different political landscape confronts South African trade unions. The common adversary in the guise of a white minority rule has been removed. But there are still reasons to stand together. The hardship forcing organised workers and communities to mobilise finds its roots in a political economy unlikely to change unless confronted by a united popular resistance. One of the most striking manifestations of the post-apartheid political economy has been the introduction of cost-recovery principles in service delivery. Access and affordability of basic services, as well as the work conditions and job security in public sector, are affected by these reforms. Workers and communities alike feel threatened by the repercussions of economic liberalisation. As numerous community formations resisting the adverse effects of these policies have emerged in recent years, trade unions in the public sector discern a potential ally in these organisations. My study centres on an attempt at establishing ties between a municipal worker union and community organisations in Cape Town. More specifically, I have employed the case study approach to investigate the relationship between the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) and social movements as participants in the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF).

Several areas of interest motivated my approach to this case, all of which have received previous academic attention. The first of these is to be found in the unique history of South African unionism. The close ties between the trade unions and the liberation movement during the anti-apartheid struggle have gone down in history as a remarkable effort of the South African working class, and hailed as a paragon of trade unionism worldwide. Black trade unions joined forces with civics, churches and political parties in a united front. This kind of collaborative union tactics was labelled *social movement unionism*. In the wake of the transition to democracy,

unionists and academics have questioned whether elements of these successful tactics can be translated into a post-apartheid context (von Holdt 2003, Buhlungu 2003, Waterman 1995, Baleni 1996). In this context, my study could be conceived as an attempt to investigate whether my case uncovers new occasions for social movement unionism in South Africa.

The second approach deals with the challenges facing labour in the global economy. As organised labour has been put on the defensive through informalisation, deregulation and increased competition in the labour market, some observers have suggested that traditional trade unions and new social movements must stand together for the workers' movement to reconquer lost territory. The establishment of new alliances and the incorporation of a broader set of political objectives onto the union agenda as a counterstrategy to the current globalisation has been labelled, in turns, as "international social-movement unionism", "new social unionism" and "global social movement unionism" (Moody 1997, Waterman 2001, Lambert and Webster 2001). Thus, examining the relationship between unions and communities at the local level can also be seen in the context of global trade union trends.

Thirdly, the political issue at stake, namely *privatisation* of basic services, has become a bone of contention in South Africa and elsewhere. With the advent of a neoliberal dogma, states are deprived of their developmental abilities as service delivery is put out to tender. Privatisation in this sense, does not only refer to wholesale privatisation of state assets, but to a wider political and economic process including outsourcing service delivery and introducing private sector principles of full-cost recovery and corporatisation (McDonald and Smith 2002). Both workers defending their jobs and poor people fighting for their right to water and adequate shelter, sometimes being the same individuals, are forced to mobilise politically to counteract the adverse effects of privatisation. The community formations mobilising against water and electricity cut-offs and evictions in South Africa are commonly known as *social movements*. In this way, an anti-privatisation forum uniting unionised workers and organised communities can be seen as a local defensive strategy against neoliberal attacks on the local state and people's livelihoods (Desai 2003, Xali Forthcoming, Lumsden and Loftus 2003).

Finally, my motivation also stems from a general interest in South African *civil society*, understood as all "organised expressions of various interests and values operating in the triangular space between the family, the state and the market" (Habib and Kotzé 2002:3). The popular anti-apartheid uprising demanded an end to apartheid and a new democratic South Africa. Their efforts did not only stun the world community and earn their leader a Nobel Peace Prize; a vital and tireless South African resistance movement accomplished its main objective, namely to topple the regime and allow for democratic changes to take place. The end of

apartheid was accompanied by new challenges for civil society. No longer aiming for a regime change these organisations were expected to take part in building democracy with the African National Congress (ANC) as the government party. Observers have paid increasing attention to the transformation of civil society since apartheid, and the growing gap between those aligned to the ANC on the one hand, and oppositional groups on the other (Oldfield and Stokke Forthcoming-b, Bond 2000, Habib 2003, Habib and Kotzé 2002). The abovementioned social movements have been put in this latter category. A majority of the labour movement, on the other hand, is political aligned with the ANC. Attempts to forge alliances between trade unions and social movements in South Africa can thus be studied as an attempt to bridge this growing gap. All these accounts tell of conflict lines. In the mosaic of conflict lines constituting present-day South Africa workers and poor communities often find themselves belonging to the losing side.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My research and analysis rely on the presumption that cooperation through the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum has been decisively challenged on many levels. However, it is not the purpose of this study to measure the success of union-community mobilisation. On the contrary, by giving these obstacles a close examination, I attempt to shed light on the dynamics of local politics, as well as the interconnectedness between this specific case and a broader context of national politics. Hence, I have formulated the main research question guiding this study as follows:

- *What are the main challenges to cooperation between the South African Municipal Workers Union and social movements in the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum?*

As cooperation is the focal point, I have focused less on internal procedures and the constitution of the organisations, and more on the interaction between them. The interacting of trade unions and social movements in Cape Town is not restricted to the activities of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum. In contrast, the forum consists of other organisations than unions and social movements. Following from this question, the specific relationship between the trade union and social movement organisations, as it is played out in the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum, forms the core of this analysis. I will also incorporate ways in which the organisations meet and cooperate outside the APF. To be able to give an adequate answer to the question above, I will examine the political agenda and the organisational dynamics of the forum, in addition to more

tangible manifestations of cooperation such as resource assistance and working methods. Although challenges to cooperation manifest themselves in a local context, it will be argued here that to fully understand the complexity conditioning the politics of this case, attention must also be paid to dynamics at the level of the nation-state. Therefore, I am also using a complementary question as the basis of my research:

- *How do national political dynamics assert themselves in this cooperation?*

It follows from this question that an analysis is required of the relation between the local actors and national political actors such as the government, the state apparatus and substantial civil society actors. An important limitation to this study in this respect is that I am not concerned with trade union involvement in structures such as the local ANC, ANC Women League, ANC Youth League, South African Communist Party (SACP) or South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO) branches, all of which belong to the ANC-aligned sphere of civil society. In contrast, by focusing on participants in the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum, this study will highlight the relations between the municipal workers union and organisations in outspoken opposition to the government or to government policies. Although this limitation might leave out a substantial part of SAMWU's civil society involvement, it allows for an in-depth examination of the fractures of South African civil society. To even roughly outlining these forces, it is necessary to understand how the political landscape has been shaped through recent South African history. This historical approach points towards a second complementary question, directing my theoretical approach to the matter:

- *How can these challenges add detail to the understanding of social movement unionism?*

I examine my case in light of the changes that have occurred in the post-apartheid political landscape. The concept in question holds an important place in South African resistance history. I will not compare unionism before and after apartheid, but I believe that the historical account contributes to a better understanding of current issues. Social movement unionism, in theory and practice, is not unique to South Africa, and has been part of several academic analyses over the past years. This thesis will not contrast the South African labour experience to unionism elsewhere. However, I will juxtapose my findings with general social movement theory as it has been conceptualised in relation to global trade union strategies. Serving as the point of departure will therefore be a review of the class and labour theory that has led up to the present social movement unionism discourse.

Assigned with this latter task, **Chapter 1** begins by introducing the concept of social movement unionism, in theory and history. The theoretical discussion suggests a link between the development of the class concept and contemporary debate on global unionism. Social movement unionism as a concept has been used to describe certain strategies employed by organised labour to overcome challenges posed by economic globalisation. What these strategies have in common is a commitment to transcend borders, either in the guise of national borders or as divisions of gender, employment status or formal/informal labour. The 'social movement union' is identified as one that forges alliances with other progressive forces in civil society; one that involves actively in this cooperation on a democratic basis; and one that engages in resource exchange with the abovementioned social movements, as they possess a minimum of organisational resource but in return represent a powerful potential of popular mobilisation. As a historical phenomenon, I follow the black social movement unionism of the anti-apartheid struggle, through the transition, and up to the situation facing organised labour in present-day South Africa. By pointing at the dilemmas of the post-apartheid reality mentioned introductively, I end this chapter by asking whether new occasions for social movement unionism exist today.

Chapter 2 introduces a new question: What can a case tell us? By arguing for the use of the case study to shed light on my research questions, I present the methodological framework of my research. Based on the thoughts of Gillian Hart, I argue for the usefulness of a case study approach that seeks to explore the specific political constitution of a local case, while simultaneously acknowledging how the local level is articulated with political, economic and cultural dynamics on a larger scale. This chapter also includes an introduction to my case and an account of the methods of data collection.

Chapter 3 examines the dynamics of national politics and their articulation in my case. Antonio Gramsci's concept of *hegemony* provides the point of departure for this analysis. Hein Marais' analysis of the modern ANC, rising out of the collapse of the apartheid state, has showed how Gramsci's thoughts are applicable to the post-apartheid reality. Marais makes out a hegemonic project where South African civil society has become increasingly polarised between those who stay loyal to the ANC and those who find themselves outside this sphere of influence. As these lines of division are constantly negotiated the political positions of many organisations, progressive trade unions being some of them, are expressed in ambiguous terms. This also holds true of the political landscape of my case. Cooperation is constrained by the ability of the political system to divide civil society into friends and foes, through corresponding creation of consent and use of coercion.

Chapter 4 tails my analysis by giving a detailed analysis of the challenges to cooperation in the case of Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum. The structure of this analysis is founded on the issues that emerged through the discussion of social movement unionism in the first chapter. Summarily, the links between the trade union and the community organisations investigated in this study appear as a political potential rather than an organisational reality. This observation is made on the basis of an examination of the forum's aims and objectives. These aims are in turn contrasted with the involvement of the union, the dynamics of the cooperation and, finally, the extent of resource assistance amongst organisations. While the chapters of this thesis work their way backwards through the above-listed research questions, my **Conclusion** answers these questions in the initial order, by briefly summarising my analysis and making some concluding remarks.

1. SOCIAL MOVEMENT UNIONISM

The long-winded label of ‘social movement unionism’ veils numerous meanings. Showing up in globalisation literature it sometimes seems to refer to any progressive union strategy, although certain academics have tried to elaborate and develop it to a political programme for organised labour, incorporating new ideas emerging in social sciences and aspiring to apply to present political conditions. In South African labour history, on the other hand, it has come to designate the unique role of the labour movement in the struggle against apartheid. Social movement unionism is useful to me both from a theoretical and a historical perspective. Firstly, the references and literature on the subject can provide a set of concepts and values – and ‘ideal type’ – that my case findings can be confronted with. These case findings can in turn feed this model with nuance and detail. Secondly, by referring to the role played by black organised labour in the decisive stages of the liberation struggle, social movement unionism provides the historical comparison and background for any study of the post-apartheid labour experience.

IN THEORY

From a theoretical perspective, the concept of ‘social movement unionism’ originates from several academic debates. By examining how the concept applies to the understanding of *class*, I suggest a link to general theories in social sciences. It furthermore indicates the radical academic approach that inspires this project. The other point of departure is that of labour literature. Writings on the labour movement, globally and nationally, are grappling with these issues specifically. Hence, they provide a more direct link to my research field, albeit the actual impact of these theories on union policy-making might be arguable.

RESCUING THE CLASS CONCEPT?

The concept of ‘class’ has been contested since the days of Karl Marx. Its strong intuitive appeal has consolidated its position in popular politics and the social sciences. But the meaning of the concept, and the way it has been used, has changed continuously along with changes in the world economy and the corresponding developments in social science. New divisions of labour in the globalised capitalist system moreover highlight the relevance of class. Certain developments and

insights of the post-war era in particular has addressed the need for revision on behalf of the class concept. An emerging information and service society, the understanding of gender and ethnicity as variables of societal dynamics in their own right, the rise of new social movements and their quest for recognition on issues of identity, were all factors to prompt rethinking. Marx's dichotomous understanding of the working class and the bourgeoisie was challenged (Smith 2000). Some of this criticism sprang out of post-structuralist ideas of deconstruction and discourse. Instead of asserting class as the base of all social processes, this thinking championed anti-essentialist positions of mutual causality between economic, political and cultural phenomena. Anti-essentialism was paired with anti-determinism: a rejection of the assertion that capitalism inevitably would lead to a working class consciousness that in turn would spark a socialist revolution (Laclau and Mouffe 1990). Contributions to the revision of the class concept responded to the rise of the middle class and through the inclusion of the household as an arena hosting class processes (Wright 1978, Fraad, et al. 1994). The relationship between gender and class, and developments in feminist theory in general, have also occupied theorists and produced thought-provoking results (Foord and Gregson 1986, Gibson-Graham 1999).

An interesting current in the class debate of latter years has been questioning whether new forms of popular mobilisation are harmonious with the aim of social justice and the struggle of the working class (Young 1990, Harvey 1996, Fraser 1997, McDowell 2000). These debates serve as a preface to the theoretical conception of 'social movement unionism'. Strikes over wages and job security in North America and other industrialised regions have in recent decades been overshadowed by other expressions of protest. People have taken to the streets to defend their rights as women or as ethnic minorities. Their demands for acknowledgment of identities and cultures, alongside material claims, have lead observers to refer to this political activity as *identity politics*. Scholars have tried to accommodate the claims and perspectives of these *new social movements* into a framework of historical materialism and class struggle, in which workers' organisations represent the *old social movements* (Young 1990, McDowell 2000). However, this old/new dichotomisation holds certain pitfalls to avoid. One of them is overlooking the diversity of the 'old social movements'. Workers' organisations have throughout history been engaged in a range of issues concerned with identity and culture. Next, not to reduce workers as a group to the organisations representing some of them; the workers movement is reduced to the labour movement is reduced to the trade unions is reduced to the leadership of the trade unions (pers. comm., Jonathan Grossman, UCT). Nevertheless, while bridging old and new social movements in the theoretical field seems tough, uniting the labour movement with the multiplicity of new

social movements in practice is even tougher. However, several global and local initiatives prove there are honourable exceptions.

Using this point of departure as a rationale for examining South African politics is problematic, although we are all trapped in the global economy. The experience of living in the South African society, for the majority the country's citizens, is hardly comparable to the context in which the abovementioned theories were conceived. Neither is South Africa as a class society identical to Western societies. The South African unemployment rate has grown steadily since apartheid, leaving more 40% discouraged or unemployed by 2001. The number of formally employed workers has remained at approximately 7 million throughout the last decade, while the number of informally and domestically employed workers has grown (Altman 2004). In spite of these tendencies of unemployment and informalisation, South Africa is, in an African context, an industrialising nation with a substantial working class. By running one's eye over the official trade union rhetoric it moreover reveals a wide-ranging notion of the South African working class (COSATU 1997, 2003). The 'working class' incorporates the diversity of the South African poor whether they subscribe to the industrial worker stereotype or, in most cases, when they do not. Not restricted to formally employed labour, the working class encapsulates all those who have few other options to involve in the economic system than to sell their labour. The specific constitution of the South African society has also fostered a specific type of popular movements. Pondering the present-day societies of Europe and North America might bring to mind concepts such as 'consumerism', 'post-industrialism' and the 'information society'. Post-apartheid South Africa, on the other hand, is a highly unequal and racialised class society where resistance and popular mobilisation starts at a materially basal level. In light of this, the identity politics and new social movements in the industrialised North bears little resemblance to popular mobilisation in South Africa under and after apartheid. Certainly, there has been an exchange of understanding between them through participation in forums of the anti-globalisation movement, and many of their political aims are in line. Similarly, some elements of South African civil society, the Treatment Action Campaign being one of them, also have an explicit focus on identity rights. Most of the so-called social movements in South Africa, however, are mobilising around specific issues of land, health, housing and basic services. The fact that their activity primarily rests on material claims suggests they are essentially different from the previous depiction of new social and identity politics. Neither lack of organisational development nor immaturity prevents South African social movements from becoming explicitly identity-based as movements in the North. Rather, the mismatch stems from the different societies they operate in. Social movement unionism in South African should therefore not be equated with class transcending strategies in

Europe or North America. It is better understood in line with the introductory quote, as an attempt to build maximum working class unity.

TRANSCENDING BORDERS

Recent writings on unionism contribute to lift this topic out of an abstract analysis of class struggle and into the world of labour. Several contributions in the field of labour theory have attempted to exemplify and conceptualise ‘social movement unionism’. The ‘social movement unionism’ concept originates from attempts by certain radical academics to “understand the militant, mobilised, industrial unions emerging in newly industrialised countries” (von Holdt 2003:8). The term has moreover been used to draw a line between union strategy in the South, on the one hand, and American business unions, Japanese enterprise unions and the ‘social partner’ approach of Western European unions on the other hand (von Holdt 2003, Moody 1997). Gradually, the concept has moved on to become a mantra of global trade union strategies.

In his book *Workers in a Lean World*, Kim Moody (1997) analyses the world economy from the standpoint of organised labour. Working his way through the staples of capitalism, such as the rise of neoliberalism and the North-South divide created by uneven development, his analysis arrives at the conclusion that an “international social-movement unionism” is the proper response of labour to the offensive directed against workers by capital interests and corporate power. Supporting this view in his 2002 work *Globalisation and Labour*, Ronaldo Munck traces the history of the trade union movement from the 1st International into the era of globalisation. Steadily recovering from years of crisis, and motivated by the experience of certain labour movements in the global South, he now regards labour to have reinvented itself. Looking at the trade union movement in recent decades he observes a “new, more internationalist, as well as objectively ‘globalised’, labour movement is emerging with a strong social movement or community orientation” (Munck 2002:174).

The concept has also received attention in the field of human geography. *Spaces of Work* (Castree, et al. 2004) not only conceptualises globalisation and labour explicitly through geography but connects the important issue of scale to the issue of difference, providing ‘social movement unionism’ with a geographical rationale. This approach specifically emphasises the role of community involvement and local agency in trade union strategies. In addition to *Spaces of Work*, the July 2001 issue of the radical geography journal *Antipode* was specifically dedicated to trade unionism and geography, contributing to closer links between the geography discipline and the issue of labour. Another theorist that is worth mentioning in this respect is Peter Waterman,

who has gone farthest in giving a detailed categorisation of social movement unionism as a phenomenon (Waterman 1995, 2001, Waterman and Willis 2001). Furthermore he has been active in the South African labour debate, notably through articles published in the *South African Labour Bulletin*, thus showing the application of this debate to the context of my case. By drawing on arguments from the abovementioned texts I will, firstly, account for the general labour analyses that led to the employment of the concept of ‘social movement unionism’ and related terms. Secondly, I will try to examine the use of the term itself.

What led labour theorists to take an interest in social movement unionism was the general assessment of the global situation facing labour. Organised labour was sent into a state of crisis when the Fordist industrial regime gave way to casualising labour regimes, feminisation of the workforce and the increased economic competition of the post-Fordist era. In line with the reasoning of the previous chapter, this was not just an attack on the labour movement but on the nature of the working class itself (Moody 1997:270):

This very class was in the midst of change: its composition was becoming more diverse in most places, as women and immigrants composed a larger proportion of the workforce, and its organizations were in flux – somewhere still declining, somewhere growing, everywhere changing.

Many social scientists, including the abovementioned academics, have eagerly observed different responses and trade union strategies around the world. Their frequent use of the concept “new internationalism” could suggest that geographical ‘up-scaling’ represents the essence of these new approaches. The trench warfare between organised labour and capital in the industrialised world has historically been taking place on the arena of the nation-state. But the rules of the global economy have long since changed. The nation-state has been put under attack as economic processes increasingly ignore national borders. Cheap labour has simultaneously become one of the most central variables of competition, making the transnational actors of the global economy constantly search for lucrative labour markets to invest in. In a situation like this, any effective countering of market forces would itself have to be organised on a global scale. Thus both Munck and Moody see a process of ‘scaling up’ trade union action to a globally coordinated level as a prerequisite for organised labour to overcome its crisis.

But geographical ‘up-scaling’ is only one of many strategies employed by contemporary trade unions. Perhaps a more overarching principle of social movement unionism is one of *transcending borders*, in more than geographical terms. As trade unions seek alliances across national borders, they simultaneously need to avoid containing themselves within the limits of their traditional social base: the white, male industrial worker. The dramatic increase of women

workers on a global scale has challenged the worker stereotype and thus the foundation of the labour movement. Moreover, new forms of labour have accompanied the rise of a global female workforce: part-time workers, flexible employment contracts and casual labour have challenged trade unions on issues of recruitment as well as their political strategies (Moody 1997). Working people worldwide have become an increasingly heterogeneous group without an unquestioned allegiance to socialist ideology and global worker solidarity. To reach these constituencies the trade union movement must actively construct an inter-place solidarity that unites the multitude of worker identities (Castree, et al. 2004). Bridging the gaps between female sweatshop workers, employees of the multinational corporations and public sector workers in the North and the South are tough challenges. The ‘split-and-conquer’ tactics of the corporate and state sectors of many countries, and of international capital in general, has further complicated this challenge.

The call to transcend borders does not end at the brink of formal labour. One of the most characteristic effects of the globalised world economy has been a high degree of informalisation, and the brunt of this informalisation has found place among working women in the global South. A traditional trade union organisation based on a paid-up membership base of formal employees will effectively exclude a huge proportion of the world’s working population, furthermore bearing catastrophic effects on ethnic composition and gender dynamics of organised labour. In the opinion of Ronaldo Munck (2002:116), taking on the challenge of informal labour represents “the litmus test of the continued relevance of the trade unions to the world’s workers today”.

‘GOING SOCIAL’: THE REMEDY EXAMINED

As shown above, taking up issues of new identities, gender and informalisation of work are all necessary for organised labour to get back in touch with its own time, in addition to geographical ‘up-scaling’. The remedy then seems to be twofold: going *global* and going *social* (Lambert and Webster 2001:350):

GSMU [Global social movement unionism] may be said to exist when unions move beyond their traditional workplace boundaries to form alliances with other civil society movements within the nation state, whilst at the same time creating a new global union form.

Here, ‘going social’ is one element of a wider global strategy. The new social agenda is to escort a process of union internationalism. Catch phrases used in contemporary labour literature such as “global social movement unionism” (Lambert and Webster 2001) and “new social unionism” (Waterman 1995) support this observation. But this social agenda comprises different trade union

strategies on different geographical levels. Trying to unpack these through reading labour literature does not necessarily lead to one specific definition or a clear understanding of what they allude to in practical terms. Through drawing on some selected perspectives on the issue, I will conceptualise what I will refer to as ‘social movement unionism’ on a fourfold basis: its scope and political programme, the basis of trade union involvement in such a strategy, the principles of organisation and the terms of exchange between cooperating organisations. Finally, I will comment on how the local scale is understood within and indeed should serve as a cornerstone of any general union strategy.

Although many texts have been reluctant to describe in detail the institutional regulations of social movement unionism, they have been more than happy to outline the aims and objectives, at times in visionary terms. According to Kim Moody (1997:290), the scope is in itself one of the focal characteristics of social movement unionism:

What this current shares is not a single organization or a central leadership, but a view of what unionism can be in today’s globalizing world.

A tenet of this view would be for the trade union to engage in a broader fight in society. This means to involve in issues outside the factory gates, and beyond the realm of production, such as issues of consumption and transport (Munck 2002). In some cases this will materialise through single-issue campaigns, although it ultimately could bring the union towards an extensive social agenda. Furthermore it entails an active engagement with “other civil society movements”, as stated by Lambert and Webster above. This central point arises from the conviction that the interests of the organised working class harmonise with the interests of the broader working-class public, while at the same time acknowledging joint action between unions and communities as a way of further harmonising these interests in places and on issues where solidarity is not yet strong (Moody 1997, Waterman 2001). The latter point recognises the complexity of the working class as discussed above, and the multiple identities that social movement unionism must aspire to embrace its potential constituency (Munck 2002).

An interesting question in this regard is what role the trade unions are asserted in this broader fight. Kim Moody puts the union movement in the forefront of this alliance, justifying it through the ideological argument of working class allegiance and the strategic argument of the union movement’s relative strength (Moody 1997:276, *my italics*):

Unions take an active lead in the streets, as well as in politics. They ally with other social movements, but provide a *class vision and content* that make for a stronger glue than that which usually holds electoral or temporary coalitions together. [...] Social-movement unionism

implies an active *strategic orientation* that uses the strongest of society's oppressed and exploited, generally organized workers, to mobilize those who are less able to sustain self-mobilization: the poor, the unemployed, the casualized workers, the neighborhood organizations.

In Moody's analysis, the leading role of trade unions is coupled with a rationale of mutual exchange wherein unions provide economic leverage and organisational resources, whereas social movements and community organisations provide direct links to communities and mass mobilisation. Waterman, on the other hand, stresses the importance of a labour movement that is not "claiming to be nor sub-ordinating itself to a "vanguard" or "sovereign" organisation" (Waterman 2001:316). When Waterman warns against trade unions, or political parties for that matter, taking on a vanguard role in a broader movement, he touches upon an issue that is widely debated in leftwing circles in South Africa and elsewhere. I will later refer to this as the question of 'vanguardism'.

Social movement unionism, as the name suggests, pivots on the question of organisation, and of the relationship between these. Waterman sees social movement unions as "[i]ntimately related to other (potential) allies as an autonomous, equal and democratic partner". On this basis the trade union should reach out for community assistance and offer their support. The relations built through this are *strategic*, as opposed to *tactical* (Munck 2002). Carla Lipsig-Mumme (2003) takes this point a step further to argue that some initiatives have moved beyond *instrumental* links to creating *transformative* links and permanent identities. Moreover, the trade union members themselves should be active in this cooperation, avoiding elitist coalitions (Moody 1997). The alliances and coalitions that are established are seen to be intimate in nature, allowing formal and informal cross-organisational networks to be formed. The types of organisations suitable to join in are diverse: community-based organisations, women groups, youth groups, churches, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), environmental groups, lesbian and gay groups and other social movements. These are, or should be, treated on an equal basis and as autonomous organisations in any cooperating forum. Waterman emphasises a model of networking as opposed to traditional hierarchical structures, and mirrors thus the perspective of Manuel Castells and the 'network society' (1996). Waterman goes on to see the abovementioned principles of autonomy, equality and democracy not only as guardians of the inter-organisational relationship, but also to be correspondingly reflected in the make-up of each organisation participating, trade unions included. Hence, these unions are "favouring shop floor democracy and encouraging direct horizontal relations between workers and between the workers and other popular/democratic social forces" (Waterman 2001:317). He is aware that his perspectives are

phrased as a challenge to the trade union movement, and that they therefore might be contested. Even so, he takes a head-on approach towards this criticism (Waterman 2001:327):

For unions or socialists to condemn, or even criticise, NGOs as lacking in “democracy” or “representativity” is to misunderstand the new principles, forms and practices of radical-democratic social movements. [...] Insofar as we are talking of radical-democratic networks, networking or, indeed, NGOs, they represent a major source of, or resource for, renovation and movement within civil society, in relation to capital and state and within or between such organisations as trade unions. An international unionism concerned with being radical-democratic and internationalist will learn this, or it will stagnate.

The translation of this framework into practice is, as will be shown throughout this study, a challenge. The nobleness of these codes of conduct notwithstanding, all forms of cross-organisational cooperation contain dilemmas and contradictions. Proclaiming stubborn and conform trade unions as spokes in the wheel of the ‘radical-democratic’ project might be tempting, but it is not necessarily true.

While taking into account that the views presented above are far from consistent, and do not represent a single voice, they can nevertheless be summarised into four main points: First of these are certain *aims and objectives*: Trade unions take up new issues, beyond the realm of production. They do so through forging links with other actors in civil society, organising around common interests. These alliances, networks and coalitions comprise multiple identities, but are united by a class vision. Secondly, *union involvement* is based on internal, bottom-up democratic practices. They mobilise politically through an extensive and active participation by the rank-and-file of the union. Thirdly, the inter-organisational cooperation is based on certain *principles*: Organisations that take part in these alliances do so as autonomous and equal organisations cooperating on a democratic basis. Lastly, the strategy of social movement unionism opens up for *mutual exchange* between unions and communities: The unions provide economic leverage and organisational resources, whereas social movements and community organisations provide direct links to communities and mass mobilisation.

At this stage, however, it becomes important to move the discussion away from the principal and global level. Such a general account of unionism balances on the edge of two pitfalls. On the one hand, by failing to take local agency into account the analysis will end up as an abstract, even structuralist, depiction. On the contrary, it must also avoid advocating a ‘regressive localism’: romanticising the local and failing to understand the geographical dilemmas of trade union action. There are several general points to be made on the importance of the local sphere to the foundation of the social movement unionism approach. Social movement unionism on a local scale might differ in nature from the global manifestos of Munck and Moody for

several reasons. The relative strength and the resource base of the community organisations and the local trade union branches are not necessarily proportionate to their national or global counterparts (Castree, et al. 2004). Likewise the issues of mobilisation, the agenda of the organisations and the political field on which they play have distinct local characteristics. These characteristics will, in turn, apply specifically to its geographical level or to the particular case. Another crucial aspect is the importance of local agency and place-bound unionism. Case studies have pointed to the fact that local trade union initiatives might have profound effects on globalised systems, insofar as they strategically make use of and understand the interconnectedness of the global economy (Herod 2001). Hence the effects of social movement unionism could also be more substantial through coordinated inter-place actions. I will argue that there will be no *global social movement unionism* without an organic and dynamic *local social movement unionism*. Manifestations of global unity, be it in Seattle or Johannesburg, will achieve little without corresponding alliances being forged at the level of the community, the workplace and the local state. In other words, aspirations of bottom-up democracy, active member base and transformative links all fall short if they are not materialised in the daily lives and communities of workers. The discussion on scale will be taken further in the methodological framework.

In summary, the concept of social movement unionism proves theoretically useful in outlining a potential bridge between the new and the old social movements mobilising against various forms of oppression in today's world. In a more tangible way, the concept elaborates ways in which the labour movement can take on some of the formidable challenges confronting workers in the age of globalisation. By looking at attempts to theorise social movement unionism as a global trade union strategy, certain characteristics come to the fore: unions take up issues beyond the realm of production, forge alliances with other progressive forces around common interests. The union is actively involved, and the relationship between organisations is based on autonomy, equality and democracy. In this way, social movement unionism unites the organisational resources and repertoire of the trade unions with the mass mobilisation of the community organisation, making the alliance stronger than the sum of its parts. But whatever potential it has as a global trade union strategy, it seems obvious that a prerequisite for a *global social movement unionism* is a dynamic *local social movement unionism*. From this starting point, I will take this conception into different directions of analysis. Before doing so, however, I will provide some historical background.

IN HISTORY

There are two things to be learned from the newer unions of the Third World: the old lesson that where capital digs deep roots a workers' movement is almost certain to be born, and allies in today's world economy to be found; and the new lesson that successful unionism in today's integrated world must be social-movement unionism. This latter lesson has been best taught by the new unions of Brazil and South Africa.

(Moody 1997:205)

Several contemporary writings on labour make reference to Brazilian and South African social movement unionism to exemplify successes (Castree, et al. 2004, Moody 1997, Munck 2002). I will not assess whether the South African social movement unionism strategy is a success formula. Instead, I will use this chapter to give a brief historical account of recent black unionism in South Africa. In particular, I look at what came to be known as social movement unionism, showing how this pertains to a specific labour experience located in space and time. Furthermore, the rapid changes in politics since apartheid has forced this unionism to undergo severe changes to become what it is today. These changes can be seen not only in the politics of the major trade union actors in South African politics, but also by looking at the active debate that has been occupying academics and unionists in forums such as the *South African Labour Bulletin*. On the basis present political conditions I will then explore the potential for contemporary social movement unionism in South Africa.

ENDING APARTHEID

The rise of black unionism did not only have the apartheid era as its historical frame. Its very nature was shaped by the apartheid system, a system resting on a repressive labour regime as its economic foundation. The exploitation of black workers in the booming mining industry and elsewhere made South Africa's growth rate one of the post-war era's highest. White capitalists sought to keep black workers' wages as low as possible. White workers, on the other hand, were interested in protecting their jobs from the threat of cheap black labour. Black workers lost on both fronts. They were prohibited from taking skilled jobs, and as hordes of migrant labourers created a seemingly endless supply of cheap unskilled labour, wages were kept extremely low (Webster 1994). In addition, working conditions were poor and workplace culture riddled with racial insults and assaults (von Holdt 2003).

Black labour organised

Trade unionism under apartheid wore the face of Janus. White trade unionism was one of the driving forces behind the apartheid labour regime, while black trade unionism proved to be the one of the strongest forces to make it fall. The Communist vision of a united, multi-racial working class never materialised, and the trade union movement tends to be organised along racial lines even today. The formal industrial relations of the apartheid regime did only recognise white, coloured and Indian trade unions. Blacks were regarded as *gastarbeiters* from their 'homelands' and hence were not seen as proper workers. But black trade unions have existed in South Africa since 1919 (Baskin 2002). Operating on the outside of the formal system made effective black trade unionism an impossible task. Real wages of black workers never rose significantly during the apartheid era. The repressive 60s even saw a dramatic decline in black's real wages, while strikes were practically absent (Baskin 2002). Spurred by the economic depression of the 70s, the Botha administration attempted to modernise the influx control policies to meet the labour demands of the large corporations. Business was in need of cheap labour, but was denied access to sufficient surplus labour from the *bantustans* due to influx control.

The black unions, albeit severely undermined by years of repression, smouldered below the surface rather than disappear. Black labour in industrial relations could no longer be controlled by crude repression, and the recommendations of the 1979 Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions were an acknowledgment of the need of formal regulation of black labour relations. The 1981 Labour Relations Amendment Act, that followed the Wiehahn Commission, extended formal trade union rights to black workers and allowed for their unions to participate in the Industrial Council. This was a move to prevent the black unions to stabilise without going underground (Marais 2001). The anticipation of stability proved naïve. After an initial hesitation among the black trade unions on whether they should register or not, the overall trend was of a movement that seized the spaces of participation, building shop-floor democracies and recruiting new members (Marais 2001, Webster 1994).

Social movement unionism in South Africa

As Buhlungu (2003:187) observes, the political pursuits of black workers did not end with industrial rights:

Industrial citizenship in the workplace did nothing to diminish the black worker's aspiration for full political citizenship; indeed, it served as a catalyst to the struggle for political liberation.

Webster (1994:281) characterises social movement unionism as a response to workers being “excluded from the central political decision-making process”. The black population was indeed excluded from this process, and the concessions given to the industrial workers through recognising their unions did not put a lid on the conflict as intended. Instead it opened up for the liberation struggle to conquer the shop-floors, and as a consequence placing the labour movement as the spearhead of popular resistance. Social movement unionism sprung up in a time when other political activities were underground, exiled or decentralised. The political parties of the liberation movement were banned by the regime, and most organisational activity found place in the communities, especially through the civics in the townships. After successful joint actions between trade unions and other civil society organisations in the early Eighties, it became clear that the trade union movement was in a position to bridge geographical scales and organisational differences and lead a united resistance in struggle (Webster 1994:277):

It was the beginning of united mass action between organised labour and student and community organisations, with unions taking a leading role. For the trade union movement, it marked a decisive break with economism.

Trade union membership grew dramatically, and the black trade union movement became a serious political force and a threat to the apartheid economy (Webster 1994). A crucial factor was the union movement's ability to organise the mining workers on the Rand. It was here, in the townships of the mining community and in the migrant worker hostels, that the link between the community and the workplace became the strongest.

The level of mobilisation and the overlapping practices of union and community activity that characterised the South African mining and industry workers in the Eighties, have been subject to academic scrutiny (Webster 1994, Waterman 1995, von Holdt 2003). What gave this trade union strategy the label of ‘social movement unionism’ was a combination of characteristics that, in line with the theoretical conception of the previous chapter, ranges from its aims and objectives to organisational characteristics and working methods. Shopfloor and community resistance during this era was characterised by tight alliances between unions and other civil society organisations, such as civics and the political parties of the liberation movement. These tactics were not the result of strategic policy-making by detached, independent organisations happening to share similar aims. On the contrary, the close ties and the overlapping activity found their explanation in a “a series of networks that linked the popular movement and the

trade union, and the meshing of collective identities woven together in the struggle against apartheid.” (von Holdt 2003:113). Workers organised in the factory were simultaneously active in the township civics and in the ANC. Von Holdt stresses how the alliances between unions and community organisations, and the overlapping memberships, rested on more than worker solidarity and class identity (von Holdt 2003:108):

The collective identity forged by social movement unionism was not a straightforward class identity, but a complex amalgam of class and popular identities which emerged through interaction between different organisations on varied terrains.

Social movement unionism in the mines did not necessarily obey strictly to the principles of autonomy, equality and democracy. Rather than being a relation between autonomous organisations, it was a network of overlapping organisations and workers and communities shaped by various identities (von Holdt 2003). The unique role the trade union took on during the liberation struggle of the Eighties might also question the equality between the organisations. Upholding democratic principles in the face of militant unionism and apartheid repression was also a tremendous challenge. The union democracy that persisted influenced in turn the organisational practices of popular resistance. The influence was mutual, however, in the sense that the working methods used outside the factory gates now entered the shopfloor (von Holdt 2003:114):

Trade unionists did not provide a political alternative, but attempted to shape organisational practices and tactics within the popular movement. [...] Indeed, the tactics that came to prevail in the community under the hammer blows of repression – the tactics of ungovernability, violent confrontation and intimidation – were imported into the trade union together with the popular political identities forged in community struggles.

As a consequence, the repertoire of action employed by the resistance movement during the last decade of apartheid was diverse: bus boycotts, rent strikes, stay-aways, consumer boycotts, anti-Constitution campaigns accompanied by a strike level peaking at its all-time high. The culture of social movement unionism had profound effects on the struggle it was part of. Although social movement unionism was the most important trend in the labour movement of the Eighties, it was far from unanimously agreed upon. Certain trade unions were staunchly opposed to the tactics of community struggle, as they feared this would reduce their organisational capacity and negotiating power in the face of economic recession (Webster 1994). Moreover, the political firepower of the mining worker unions was not replicated in the rest of the country.

An influential event in taking the strategy of social movement unionism from the mines in Gauteng to formal politics at the national level was the launch of Congress of South African

Trade Unions (COSATU) in 1985. COSATU was an attempt to overcome political, geographical and sectoral differences in the trade union movement. Being a marriage between the shop-floor-based unions and the social movement unionism tradition, COSATU managed to take a proactive stance towards other progressive organisations without jeopardising its worker base (Webster 1994). It forged direct alliances with civics and thus bridged township resistance with politics on a national level. The culmination of social movement unionism was perhaps in 1992 when ANC's call for mass action led to the biggest political strike in South African history. Two years later a democratically elected government was in office. COSATU was in a political alliance with ANC and had mobilised millions of members in the election campaign. South African social movement unionism was characterised by a variety of resistance activities. The particular role of trade unions in this front explains why the South African labour experience of this decade came off with flying colours, as evidenced by the Kim Moody quote that introduced this chapter. Social movement unionism as strategy against exclusion from the political decision-making process had finally placed the unions in the heart of that exact process.

POST-APARTHEID CHALLENGES

Many activists and observers now look back nostalgically to the era of social movement unionism of the 1980s and early 1990s, and imagine that this form of unionism can be revived. [...] [W]hat is certain is that the era of militant unionism in which millions of South African workers played a leading role in bringing democracy to South Africa is for now dead and buried. The times have changed and the unions are changing with it.

(Buhlungu 2003:197, 201)

With the advent of democracy, trade union strategy was forced to adapt to a new reality for several reasons: one of the main goals of apartheid-era unionism, the undoing of racial suppression, was at least formally achieved. Firstly, the largest trade union federation, COSATU, had entered a political alliance with the new ruling party. Secondly, the introduction of “labour-friendly labour relations” helped to institutionalise the labour movement and demanded a change in union working methods from confrontation to cooperation (Buhlungu 2003:188). By looking specifically at the issue of union-community links, I will draw up the main changes in trade union strategy since 1994 and discuss the political contestation within and beyond the labour movement that accompanied them.

Trade unions in transition

Labour, notably COSATU, had been quite successful in influencing the events of the transition. A lot of debate preceded the 1994 elections within the trade union movement, and the importance of strategy became even more relevant as the trade unions were to participate in the building of the new South African nation. The labour leadership was grappling with the ambivalence on how to accommodate the strong grassroots foundation of social movement unionism, while functioning as a government ally and a constructive negotiation partner (von Holdt 1992). The former role was played by the rank-and-file in a workplace or community setting, whereas the latter was a matter of skilful leadership and good judgment. This schizophrenia put a certain strain on the relations between the union leadership and its ranks. During the time of transition there was a concern among trade unionists that the elite-led and bureaucratic negotiations would alienate the leadership from their ranks and jeopardise the links to the civics and the communities. Accompanying this challenge was a brain drain of union leaders tempted by influential positions and higher salaries in civil service and the corporate sector. In this challenged situation, the trade unions were forced to watch their step carefully not to marginalize themselves (Buhlungu 2003).

For a while, ideological debates and ‘coherent visions’ had to step aside for lobbyism on legislation and tugs of war in corporatist forums, such as the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). The pragmatic approach that was exerted by trade union leaders was criticised from an ideological as well as a populist point of view. It was a time when the socialist rhetoric of the SACP could be heard from the same labour leaders that propagated business-friendly schemes and entered personal business alliances. The one thing the trade unionist seemed to agree upon was that alliances were needed, but the question of *whom* to collaborate with remained a matter of debate. The COSATU leadership, while rhetorical attacking the government’s right turn, continued to stress the importance of the Tripartite Alliance. Opposing that view were certain progressive unions and intellectuals. They regarded the emerging social movements and progressive NGOs as a better match for the working class in transforming the South African society in accordance with the ideals of the union movement. The relationship between the unions, the state and civil society remained a hotly contested issue throughout the Nineties (Nzimande and Sikhosana 1992a, Mayekiso 1992, Baleni 1996, McKinley 2000).

Union strategy and strategic unionism

No ideology could fully prepare the unions for the post-apartheid reality. They had never been closer to the execution of state power, and new democratic channels lay open. It was time for a change in repertoire. Coming to terms with their role in the transition meant the methods of social movement unionism no longer seemed appropriate. Waterman (1995), one of the chief architects behind the concept, argued for abandoning the term in contemporary debate. First of all, social movement unionism was a strategy deployed under specific historical circumstances. Secondly, it was never embraced as a concept by the trade union movement itself. And in leaving the old paradigm, attempts at conceiving a new one and coining a new term surfaced. The politics and tactics of the labour movement in the Nineties came to be known as “strategic unionism” (von Holdt 1992, Waterman 1995). Strategic unionism was never agreed upon as an official idea or programme, but can rather be seen as the unions encounter with *realpolitik* that characterised the time of the transition. Just as the country was in a transition, Karl von Holdt described the concept of ‘strategic unionism’ of 1992 as a work-in-progress (von Holdt 1992:32):

[N]either the federation nor its affiliates have developed a common or coherent vision or strategy. The practice and perspective of strategic unionism is beginning to emerge, but it is uneven and contested.

Lively debates throughout the Nineties sought to explore the content of strategic unionism and find its shortcomings. The trade union movement had become increasingly professionalised and bureaucratised, and certain observers tried to highlight the exclusive effects strategic unionism had on the rank-and-file of the trade unions, that had constituted the driving force behind union mobilisation during the Eighties. This was a serious threat to the political strength of the trade union movement, particularly as the relative strength of labour in the corporatist industrial regime seemed to loose ground. The labour movement would be faltering without strong popular support and an active constituency, hence links with civil society organisations were once again emphasised.

Strategic unionism had to forge stronger links to communities and local actors, while maintaining good relations to the state (von Holdt 1992:33):

[T]he labour movement needs to build a broad coalition of popular organisation and interest around a programme of economic, social and political reform, democracy and development.

Others stressed that this inclusive profile had to encompass informal labour and the unemployment together with workers with formal jobs. Frans Baleni from the National Union of Mineworkers incorporates this vision in his definition of ‘strategic unionism’ (Baleni 1996:79):

We have to take into account the interests of the homeless, the unemployed, unorganised workers. If we as trade unionist concentrate on sectional interests we will alienate other deprived groups in the society who are not organised and who do not have the collective strength of workers.

There is a strong tradition of unity in the liberation struggle. This stems in part from experience of racial oppression, but also from the ideological notion of a South African working class encapsulating all oppressed people, not just formal labour. This view is clearly expressed by the general-secretary of the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU), Roger Ronnie (1996:24):

We need to develop alliances with other working class formations in advancing the demands of the broader working class.

The term ‘strategic unionism’ rang hollow in the ears of certain observers, and was not seen to describe a unionism that was grassroots-based and inclusive (Waterman 1995, Baleni 1996). Moreover the political performance of the trade union leadership on the national arena did not lead to a significant improvement in the livelihoods of poor workers, nor did it appease the political leftwing of the labour movement. A need to find strategies that surpassed the realpolitik of strategic unionism, while being more applicable to the contemporary challenges than social movement unionism, became apparent. Waterman (1995) tried to revive elements of the social movement unionism of the Eighties in a contemporary scenario in his concept “new social unionism”. Based in socialism, social unionism should nevertheless build alliances in a “democratic, pluralistic and co-operative direction” to “non- or multi-class democratic movements” (Waterman 1995:73). In line with the Baleni quote, non-unionised, domestic workers and all poor people were to be a part of the movement. The union should not be subordinated to a vanguard league, but remain “intimately related to political forces with similar orientations” (Waterman 1995:73).

The 1997 September Commission on the Future of the Unions, appointed by COSATU and chaired by the vice president of the congress, introduced ‘social unionism’ as the most viable road map for South African unions. Social unionism was to be a strategy for the future, and a way to overcome the hindrances that lay in the way of an effective workers’ struggle and societal transformation:

Its [social unionism] goal is democracy and socialism. Its influence on society is based on its organised power, its capacity to mobilise, its socio-economic programme and policies and its *participation in political and social alliances*. It is committed to workers control and democracy, and to maintaining its character as a movement.

(September Commission 1997, Section 2.2.3, my italics)

Once again alliances are presented as the way out. The question of alliances has followed every turn in the history of South African trade unionism. It has influenced ideology and debate and represented a source of organisational strength, as well as a trigger of divisions, when put into practice.

NEW OCCASIONS FOR SOCIAL MOVEMENT UNIONISM

Entering the new millennium as a formal democracy South African politics were based on new rules, new roles and new relations, albeit most political actors were not new to the field. Allegiances from the apartheid era were put under strain, whereas new bonds had been built. The liberation movement had become the governing party, the former regime was now a party in opposition, and the biggest trade union congress had been put in alliance with the government. However, political casting at the national institutional level was not a sufficient indicator of democratisation for the South African people. The real challenges were found in tackling questions of basic needs, life opportunities and work in the communities of the poor majority of citizens. Allowing their concerns on these issues to be heard, have proven to be a test case to whether the political process of post-apartheid South Africa is bringing about substantial democratisation (Stokke and Oldfield 2004). Some of the most important political disputes engaging poor communities and workers throughout the country during the last decade have been over service delivery. The popular mobilisation based on grievances in the local context might provide one of the most interesting occasions for trade unions to develop close links to community organisations and hence revitalise a strategy of social movement unionism at the local level. To arrive at this understanding, it is necessary to understand the macroeconomic shifts of the new regime, the effects of these on service delivery and the local state. These political issues present opportunities for trade unions to employ strategies in accordance with the principles of social movement unionism, modified by the post-apartheid reality.

GEAR SPELLS NEOLIBERALISM

The evolution from leading the liberation struggle to becoming an electoral party, eventually in government, presented the ANC with a formidable mission in shaping policies that would redress the wrongs of the past and create opportunities for the lives of millions of South Africans. Visions of a society after apartheid had to face political realities, powerful institutions and interests in order to materialise in political change. The ANC government commenced substantial shifts in their macroeconomic policies of the from the election campaign predating the first democratic government until the late Nineties. This is most illustratively seen in the transformation of the initial political platform, the *Redistribution and Development Programme* (RDP), and its subsequent renunciation in favour of the 1996 *Growth, Employment and Redistribution* (GEAR) plan.

One of the most important contributions of organised labour during the political transition was making the RDP base document, which would later serve as ANC's political platform for the 1994 elections. The RDP base document had a clear objective of redistribution, basic service delivery and democratic socialism. Albeit a product of COSATU ideologues, its visions of a nationalised industry and state-provided services can also be read as a reworking of the ANC's 1955 Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter demanded that "the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the Banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole". By the time the ANC adopted it the document had, according to Dale McKinley (1997:132), "in the process ditched its radical potential in favour of a more 'realistic' free-market political economy that has little to offer South Africa's workers and the poor". ANC published this modified version, the 1994 RDP White Paper, after the elections. Although COSATU's base document had been made in consultation with civil society alliances and others, the White Paper was a consensual document integrating the views from business, government offices and other institutions of power. Perceived as a compromise by the ANC and a sell-out by the trade unions, it nevertheless was a product of consultative process and seemed to confirm the hope that South Africa was indeed becoming a democracy (Marais 2001).

The predictions that the ANC government was moving the country towards a "free-market political economy" were corroborated two years later when they unveiled the economic strategy presented in the 1996 GEAR document. A few general points can be made from looking at the change from RDP to GEAR. Firstly, if RDP bore the visions of the labour movement, then the Reserve Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) masterminded the GEAR philosophy. This implicated that trade unions' position in the political landscape was being

pushed towards the periphery. Secondly, whereas both the RDP base document and the RDP White Paper was made through dialogue and contestation, the GEAR document was designed by what Hein Marais (2001:163) refers to as a “coterie of mainstream economists”. In other words, COSATU’s participation in political negotiations could not guarantee practical political impact. The South African economy was fighting itself out of a recession, and there was little patience to wait for democratic processes to deliver. GEAR was conceived by technocrats and implemented as a ‘non-negotiable’ policy. Lastly, GEAR substituted RDP’s core idea with its inversion: “Redistribution for Growth” had become “Growth for Redistribution”. This third point is the most important, and refers to how GEAR signalled an explicit embrace of economic neoliberalism, characterised by strict fiscal control, wage restraints, a liberalised trade regime and an extensive privatisation programme (Marais 2001). The GEAR plan did identify service delivery as a key task, but its emphasis on fiscal control led to reduced overall social spending through the public sector, making it hard to redress inequalities and facilitate opportunities for the country’s poor. The liberation struggle had paved the way for profound political reforms, but in the face of economic realities it fell short. The implementation of GEAR highlights what Gillian Hart (2002:17) calls the “profound irony of the post-apartheid moment: that political liberation and emancipatory promises coincided with the ascendance of market triumphalism on a global scale, defining the terrain on which the newly elected came to embrace neoliberalism.”

THE LOCAL STATE AND THE CRISIS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

The GEAR strategy did lead to an increase in economic growth, but not to the anticipated redistribution of wealth through creation of new employment. Many of the adverse effects of this macroeconomic reorientation were felt at the level of the local state, particularly concerning service delivery. In addition, the design of the South African municipal sector had a long way to go to shed its apartheid legacy. The different race groups were, through geographical segregation, placed in a system of highly differentiated standards of service delivery. The 25 municipalities constituting Cape Town were grim examples of apartheid planning. Evictions and forced removals were employed as means to accomplish the visions of the Group Areas Act, which was passed in 1950. Although the idea was for the municipalities to be self-sufficient, the citizens of the white municipalities enjoyed heavily subsidised services. Needless to say, this system was at the expense of the impoverished areas of other races, whose hard-laboured but miniscule taxes gave little in return in terms of service delivery (McDonald and Smith 2002, McDonald and Pape 2002, Venter 2001). Hence, the South African municipal sector needed restructuring. The

municipalities were given the bulk of responsibility for development at a local level through the political vision of a ‘developmental local government’, whose main aims are social development and economic growth. However, as Doreen Atkinson (2003:137) argues, these expectations are “contributing to the strain experienced by municipalities”. All development takes place in the context of fiscal restraints, while local administrations are simultaneously expected to undergo organisational restructuring and open up for community participation. All this while faced with high and increasing popular expectations of service delivery. South Africa has been in a state of municipal transition since apartheid, and the process of deracialisation and development at a local level has been accompanied by, and is sometimes hard to separate from, the unfavourable effects a neoliberal model of growth on communities and workers (Hart 2002). The public sector unions have participated in the local state restructuring, but have also been the starkest critic of these processes when they have been followed by job losses, reduced job security or aggravated working conditions.

It would, however, be naïve to consider the situation of the local public sector as solely caused by the governmental policies at the state level. Public and municipal sectors worldwide follow a trend of commercialisation, structural adjustments and public sector reforms, policies eagerly advocated by the World Bank as well as private contractors (Waghorne 2000). Likewise in South Africa, market logic and the imperative of cost-recovery have entered the realm of service delivery. The move from a ‘statist’ delivery model to a neoliberal one reduced the role of the local state in basic services from being a *provider* to merely being an *ensurer* (McDonald and Smith 2002, Desai 2003). Testifying to the contradictory nature of the latter is how water and electricity grids have been extended to millions of new households under the ANC government, but at the same time more than ten million South Africans have experienced water and electricity cut-offs due to non-payment (McDonald and Smith 2002). The balance sheets might have improved but fees have risen, in some cases dramatically. The negative effects are felt strongly on the ground, creating what Ashwin Desai (2003:19) have labelled the “neoliberal squeeze at the local”.

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

In the wake of GEAR popular resistance outside the Tripartite Alliance was articulated more clearly. As a response to the cut-offs and to related grievances such as evictions or lack of land distribution, people in townships and rural areas around the country organised in community groups with defensive strategies to resist what they perceived as an attack on their livelihoods. These groups, in South Africa often referred to as *social movements*, are not using elections or

strikes as their means of influence, but rather mass mobilisation and direct action (Desai 2003). Their repertoire includes illegal reconnections of water and electricity, occupying their former homes, and street blockades against police and companies to political action such as protest marches and negotiations with local government (Xali Forthcoming). Their direct targeting of the local state has reinforced a confrontational and adverse relationship between some of these movements and the police. Their informal methods of organisation and action have made trade unions and political parties uneasy by the prospect of collaboration. The movements' grassroots support should not be underestimated, however, and their existence continues to create repercussions in the leadership of COSATU and the ANC. They remain loosely connected without a dynamic national coordination. However, their constituency, their politics, their methods of action and the potential threat they represent have justified characterising them as "the most relevant post-1994 social force from the point of view of challenging the prevailing political economy" (Desai 2003)

The newly emerged social movements are vigorously opposed to the macroeconomic policies of the government. Moreover, these policies have also been the target of the labour movement in the same period. The fact that many of these battles have been over service delivery and the local state, further suggests that public sector unions, and in particular unions organising municipal workers, share the political interests of the newly emerging movements. On the one hand, union members are concerned with these issues as *producers*; their job security, work conditions and wage level are suffering from the neoliberal shift. But as most public sector workers reside in areas dealing with these issues on a day-to-day basis, they are also concerned with service delivery as *users* of these services (Xali Forthcoming). Manifesting these shared aims through building linkages between unions and community organisations is thus based on direct and pragmatic concerns. It is in this political landscape my theoretical and historical reasoning leads to addressing whether the post-apartheid experience has laid open new occasions for social movement unionism.

SUMMARY

To grasp the diversity of struggles fought out in today's world, the class concept as devised by Marx has been subject to continuous revision. Similarly, the stereotype of the white, male factory worker is about to retreat before a more diverse working class, perhaps more typically represented by a female casual worker in the Global South. As a consequence, new issues and more complex geographies challenge the traditional trade union. This challenge calls for a

strategy of transcending borders. The union should not only strive for internationalism, but also find new constituencies among women, informal labour and the unemployed. But are new and old social movements essentially different in nature, or does this difference merely originate in an academic exercise? To show how social movements of all kinds can overcome their differences and unite in struggle, many observers have lifted up the close ties that have been forged between trade unions and civil society in South Africa. In times of apartheid oppression, South African trade unions rose up to their challenge through taking up issues beyond the realm of production and forging alliances with other civil society actors of the resistance movement. This type of union strategy, commonly known as ‘social movement unionism’, took the black South African working class, once bereft of all political rights, into the centre of the political stage with the fall of apartheid.

But the moment of triumph also announced the arrival of a host of new challenges and dilemmas to organised labour. Inclusion into the decision-making processes entailed abandoning the militant tactics of social movement unionism. But as the labour movement aspired to be treated as responsible political players during the course of the Nineties, the link between the union bureaucracy on the one hand, and the workers and communities that once made up their constituency on the other hand, was put to the test. On top of that, the macroeconomic policies of the government were increasingly characterised by fiscal control, commercialisation and reduced public spending, in spite of organised labour being represented in the national political arena. The adverse effects of this growth strategy were strongly felt on the ground, and as a result, social movements sprang up across the country defending their livelihoods and attacking government policies. As the issue of municipal services has become a particularly contested terrain in this regard, this chapter ends in a question: Do municipal workers in struggle and communities fighting for delivery of basic services represent a new occasion for social movement unionism in South Africa?

2. IF SOCIAL MOVEMENT UNIONISM WAS THE CASE

If the previous chapter ended in a general inquiry, this chapter sets off by asking a follow-up question: what can a case tell us about such a general theme? After giving some suggestive answers to this question by looking at the thought of Gillian Hart, as well as presenting some case studies of transferred relevance, I will give an introduction to my specific case. This chapter ends with a discussion of the method and approach of my fieldwork and data treatment.

WHAT CAN A CASE TELL US?

Whether and how alliances can be forged depends crucially on how particular articulations have taken shape historically in particular socio-spatial contexts, and on how they are understood.

(Hart 2002:299)

By drawing inspiration from the argument of Gillian Hart (2002), the methodological framework for this study will be presented. Hart takes up questions of geography and scale in relation to case studies, and places them in a South African context. This makes her reasoning all the more relevant to my study. In her 2002 book *Disabling Globalization*, she looks at places of power on the local scale in post-apartheid South Africa, while simultaneously relating the political dynamics of this micro-level to processes of globalisation. However, she consciously surpasses a determinist account of a global capitalism dictating every move in the power games of South African municipalities. Drawing on Lefebvre's (1991) thoughts on the *production of space*, she sees the political arenas of her case study as an actively constructed social space where "room to manoeuvre is always present but never unconstrained" (Hart 2002:36). Her understanding of the interconnectedness of spatial scales reflects that of Doreen Massey, and she analyses the interplay between local political dynamics and an omnipresent economic phenomenon as capitalism, or cultural and political phenomena like hegemony. Thereby, the dynamics of a specific case are viewed as "a local articulation within a wider whole" (Massey quoted in Hart 2002:35). Hart has, through her first-hand experience of South Africa, acknowledged the spatial complexity of social and political relations and how the "limits and constraints operate on different levels" (Hart 2002:45). This entails an analytical challenge for researchers. Instead of projecting abstract

categories of class or capital onto a political study, the researcher should pay “close attention to the differential constitution of political subjects through situated practices and their associated discourses and power relations in multiple, intersecting arenas of everyday life” (Hart 2002:45). For Gillian Hart, this gave her a reason to conduct a comparative case study of two cities in KwaZulu-Natal. By doing so, one can begin to understand how and why different cases submitted to forces of the same global economy in the same national political reality display *multiple trajectories of socio-spatial change*, to use her own terminology (Hart 2002).

As far as this study is concerned, Hart’s argument has methodological bearings. First of all, it serves as a justification for embarking on a case study, albeit not a comparative case study such as Hart’s. My research questions could be relevantly employed in scenarios elsewhere, but I have chose to limit my study to concern a specific organisational landscape with a relatively small number of organisations mainly operating on a local level. This allowed me to delve thoroughly into the specific discourses and organisational histories constituting the context of my study. In addition, I was acquainted with the ‘cast of characters’ and got to see for myself some of the physical surroundings that provided the setting for the organisational activity. Extensive information provided about one specific and local case might appear inutile in the context of social research in general. I would argue to the contrary that the constantly changing organisational landscape of my case represents one trajectory of socio-spatial change. An analysis of these changes could pave the way for *analytic generalisation*, “in which a previously developed theory is used to compare the empirical results of the case study” (Yin 2003:32-33). Although ‘social movement unionism’ far from represents a developed and coherent theory, it does offer a loose set of principles that can help to explain the empirical findings of my case study.

Hart not only advocates for local approaches, she furthermore encourages looking at how limits and constraints on different levels are articulated in these local cases. This can not only be seen in my focus on *challenges* in my research question, but also in how I have tried to analyse the challenges and constraints of my case through the concept of hegemony. This opens up for an analysis that incorporates dynamics on a national level into my local case, and emphasises the interconnectedness between spatial scales, politically and discursively. In using the ‘social movement unionism’ perspective on the one hand, and the concept of hegemony on the other, I have let previous research and theory structure my study. Put in the context of previous research on South African trade unionism and civil society, as well as labour theory, a case study like this could contribute to a “broader critical work” (Hart 2002:291).

RELEVANT CASE STUDIES

South African unionism and civil society both represent familiar territory to researchers. Although the subject has attracted worldwide attention, South Africans conduct most of this research. Moreover, the South African union movement and many national NGOs have a strong tradition for conducting their own research, resulting in ample first-hand material ranging from theoretical exercises to research made by community activists for advocacy purposes. The three following case studies are different in character, but they all bear relevance to this study. In drawing on the general assumptions from these particular cases, the soundness of my analysis and the basis on which I draw my conclusions are strengthened.

Karl von Holdt, a long time profile in the South African union movement, undertook a historical case study of black workplace unionism in his work *Transition From Below* (von Holdt 2003). Concentrating on the heyday of South African ‘social movement unionism’ in the Eighties, his case was based in the core of industrial South Africa, namely Highveld Steel outside Witbank, Gauteng. Some of the central arguments of his have already been accounted for in the chapter on ‘social movement unionism’. Drawing on an extensive interview material from the mid-Nineties, von Holdt provides a first-hand account of the relation between union and community in the last days of apartheid. As mentioned previously, one of his most interesting findings is the overlapping organisational belonging that provided the basis for social movement unionism. Von Holdt’s study does also call the orthodox ‘social movement unionism’ analyses to account by adding to their class-based explanation the complex dynamics of popular identities, such as racial, migrant and ethnic identities.

Fiona Lumsden and Alex Loftus’ 2003 report *Inanda’s struggle for water through pipes and tunnels: Exploring state-civil society relations in a post apartheid informal settlement* is also based on a case study relevant to mine. Their research does not focus on trade unions, but share a number of characteristics with my approach. Firstly, it scrutinises a forum where formal political institutions, as well as private sector enterprises, engage civil society actors. As with my case, this interaction provides a good case for studying the dynamics of political and civil society in South Africa. Furthermore, the politics of service delivery in poor areas, in this case water provision, provide the context of these dynamics. As a consequence, they also deal with the political controversy revolving around the newly emerging social movements. Interestingly, Lumsden and Loftus also employ Gramscian concepts to their account of state-civil society relations, looking at how hegemonic struggles continuously shape the politics and discourse in question.

During the course of my fieldwork I was made aware that an initiative, partly based within the APF circle, was being concerned with a research objective similar to mine. Mthetho Xali, a researcher at International Labour Resource and Information Group (ILRIG) and a working committee member of the forum, was writing a research report requested by Centre for Civil Society at the University of KwaZulu-Natal during the time I conducted my research. This paper, titled *Seeking Trade Union and Community Organisation linkages in the Cape Town Metropolitan area: Possibilities for new trade unionism and new social movements* (Xali Forthcoming), does not only focus on the relationship between trade unions and community organisations in Cape Town, but has also chosen the relationship between SAMWU and the AEC as his case study. Xali draws comparisons to experience of union-community alliances in different places and at different times, thereby placing his work in the ‘social movement unionism’ perspective.

In many ways, my thesis can be seen as a hybrid of these case studies. In a similar fashion to von Holdt’s, I base my study on interview material from workers and community activists. Through looking at a different time and place, especially in the context of social movement unionism, the unionism at Highveld Steel provides the historical backdrop of my research question. His study serves as a contrast to mine, depicting a society subjected to harsh repression, but in lack of hegemonic consent. This provided the basis for uniting worker and community organisations. Moving on to Lumsden and Loftus’ case in Inanda, the South African scenario is radically altered, but so has the ground for unity in South African civil society. As the findings of this case are of current interest, they substantiate two central premises of my study. First of all, their case shows how looking at arenas where formal political actors and civil society organisations come together on issues of service delivery highlights important paradoxes of post-apartheid politics. They furthermore seem to agree with Marais and others in employing a Gramscian approach to understand these dynamics. While I can find support with von Holdt (2003) and Lumsden and Loftus (2003) for my analytical approach on a general level, the research of Xali has also been helpful in backing up my empirical findings. Moreover, due to Xali’s generosity and helpfulness, I have been able to draw on his insights and even been granted access to some of his informants. Behind this seemingly identical gate of entry, however, there are some important differences. The ILRIG report has been concerned with shopstewards and depot workers of SAMWU, whereas my approach has been mainly based on office bearers. Furthermore, Xali has not focused on the role of the APF but rather focused on the potential for joint action in the communities between workers and community organisations. However, as evident in Xali’s conclusions, the dynamics facilitating and constraining cooperation at the level of the rank-and-file outline a similar picture as will be found in this study. I believe the

opportunity to benefit from his research, as well as the other case studies mentioned above, has strengthened the reliability of my approach and my findings significantly.

THE CASE IN POINT

I will here give a background for my case. The focal point of this case study is a particular attempt to build an alliance between the local branch of a municipal trade union and certain community organisations: the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum. Of the organisations that have been involved in this forum, I have chosen to pay specific attention to the relationship between the Cape Metropolitan Branch of the South African Municipal Workers Union and newly emerging social movements in Cape Town.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPAL WORKERS UNION (SAMWU)

SAMWU was established in 1987 as a merger between 5 public sector unions, and organises at present 122 000 workers in local government. It is affiliated to COSATU, and a member of the global union federation Public Services International (PSI). SAMWU has a complex relationship to the ANC. As a COSATU union it is allied to the ANC through the Tripartite Alliance. Through organising public sector workers unions such as SAMWU and National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) also find themselves in an employee/employer relationship to ANC as the elected government employing the public service. This put all parts of the SAMWU organisation, regardless of political alignment, in a complex relationship to the ANC, and further explains the ambiguity on part of the union.

SAMWU has provincial structures covering the country's 9 provinces, with local structures subordinate to these. The Cape Metropolitan branch is one of the most powerful branches of SAMWU, boasting a membership of 18 000. The internal organisation of the Metro branch has undergone a restructuring process, moving from a geographically organised model of 7 municipal councils to a sector-based organisation. This can be seen as a move towards a more efficient organisation, but it is also a measure to overcome the gross inequalities and racial segregation inherent in apartheid geography. The Metro branch is currently divided into 5 sectors, as shown in **Figure 1**:

FIGURE 1: ORGANISATIONAL MAP OF SAMWU

Each sector has a full-time office bearer appointed to the task. In addition to these, the Metro branch has appointed 4 branch office bearers. Outside the office, there are 155 shopstewards representing the membership (pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative). SAMWU's National Office is located in Cape Town, and share office facilities with the Cape Metropolitan branch in the Athlone area.

SAMWU passed a Central Executive Committee resolution in 1998 stating that the union should participate in establishing anti-privatisation forums that could facilitate collaboration between trade unions and communities (pers. comm., National Office representative). As the trade union being most vocally opposed to privatisation in the municipal sector, SAMWU initiated anti-privatisation forums in Cape Town and Johannesburg in 1999-2000. This was a reaction to the city authorities' restructuring plans, the Unicity Commission and the iGoli 2002 respectively, and their perceived neoliberal agenda. These initiatives were seen as controversial within the Alliance, and SAMWU was perceived as on the fringes of the trade union movement (pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative). In spite of being a very specific response to a specific process, it springs out of a broader anti-privatisation campaign that the union launched in the late Eighties. The union's campaign was directed towards privatisation and

commercialisation of local government, and had its most active years in the immediate aftermath of GEAR. In 1997-98 SAMWU was the most active opponent to the implications of GEAR on local government and even had a national campaign coordinator devoted to research and mobilisation. A part of the union's approach to restructuring of local government was to explore alternative delivery models and develop pilot projects to show how the transition from the apartheid state could be realised without selling away service delivery. But as the restructuring process proceeded in a market-oriented fashion, the most important and vigorous leg of the anti-privatisation campaign has been the defensive one. Their defensive strategy has been based on political protest with and without COSATU and through mustering support from the general public and organisations in opposing government policies and the city restructuring plans of South Africa's main cities. Regardless of whether the 'social movement unionism' term adequately characterises the measures of SAMWU's anti-privatisation campaign, it nevertheless has a clear rationale of mustering popular support beyond the ranks of formalised labour:

There's a realisation that linking in with community organisations will practically help the struggle around privatisation of service delivery.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

THE CAPE TOWN ANTI-PRIVATISATION FORUM (APF)

The Cape Metro Branch of SAMWU initiated the Local Government Transformation Forum, later renamed the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum, in 2000. This was a response to the Unicity Commission and its restructuring plans for the city. SAMWU's invitation was addressed to all organisations opposed to privatisation: trade unions, NGOs, social movements organisations, left groupings and individuals. Nearly 40 organisations have, in some way or another, been involved in the APF, but the participant base has not been very stable (pers. comm., Metro branch representative). As shown in **Box 1**, nine worker and community groups and six supportive organisations regularly attend the APF meetings at present.

BOX 1: COMPOSITION OF THE APF

As at the 22nd of January 2005, the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum was made up of the following organisations.

Worker and community groups:

SAMWU

NEHAWU

Intatho Nxaxheba kaWonke – Wonke

Mandela Park Anti-Eviction Campaign

UCT Worker's Support Committee

Jubilee South

Concerned Residents' Movement

United Socialist Activist Committee

Youth and Jobless People's Campaign

Supportive groups:

Workers International Vanguard League

African People's Democratic Union South Africa

Socialist Group

Conscious Marimba

Alternative Information and Development Centre

International Labour Resource and Information Group

Source: (APF 2005)

The supreme decision-making body of the APF organisation is the *plenary meeting*. It is open to all activists of the affiliated organisations. A *working committee* is appointed to maintain the regular operation and coordination of the forum. The working committee consists of five people from various organisations. In the plenary meeting, the various organisations give a report-back on their respective activities and they discuss joint action (APF 2005). The APF plenaries have been held in the SAMWU offices in Athlone, but is currently taking place at the Community House in Salt River. Both are located in the suburbs and not in the townships. Certain workshops and meetings, however, have taken place in the townships, such as Khayelitsha and Gugulethu.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN CAPE TOWN

The turn of the century saw a revival of local political activity and protest in Cape Town, as it did elsewhere in South Africa. The groupings organised as direct responses to threats to their livelihoods, most of them as a result of the cost and quality of basic services such as water and electricity, or evictions and forced removals from their houses. Although these organisations

fought over specifically local issues, many of them started to collaborate and enter alliances. They were all facing similar challenges: sharing experiences of poverty, corrupt bureaucracies and state repression. All of this tied them closer together (Desai 2003). The most highly profiled of these social movements in the Cape region is the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC). The AEC was formally established in November 2000, and the campaign consists of a number of community-based organisations struggling against evictions. It started out as fifteen organisations from the townships and poorer suburbs, and has been joined by new organisations as the campaign moved along. Although they have a formal structure and hold monthly meetings, the various organisations continue to fight their own struggles in various ways with various means: obstruction of attempted eviction; re-instatement of households into houses from which they have been evicted; marches to local councillors and provincial authorities; reconnecting the fittings of those that have been cut off from their water; barricading an area that is going to be “invaded by the sheriffs”; direct confrontations with the police and the army when they accompany the sheriffs (Xali Forthcoming). Many of these methods of action blend uneasily with the responsible, post-apartheid image of government-aligned organisations like COSATU and SANCO. Notwithstanding, COSATU-affiliated SAMWU invited them to cooperation in Cape Town.

The Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum has stimulated social movement activity in Cape Town. The Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign was born out of their early meetings, and some of the central figures of the AEC were active in APF’s early phase. The social movements and their involvement have varied throughout the course of the initiative. Many of the social movements involved in the APF have become affiliated to the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign. There are also other community formations present in the APF. Lately, AEC presence and engagement in the APF have become increasingly tense and sparse to the point where they are not any longer formally participating in the APF. This is partly due to a crisis in the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign organisation, and partly due to an opposition within certain anti-eviction committees to cooperation with the APF (pers. comm., APF and AEC representatives). The absence of the biggest social movement in Cape Town bereft the APF of much of its mass base, which seems to be a central concern with the SAMWU representatives. The relationship between the two organisations remains undefined, but both sides anticipate clarifying this issue. Still however, activists from other anti-eviction committees attend APF plenaries.

REGIONAL TRAJECTORIES

South African politics display significant geographical variations. Therefore, the specific trajectory of the anti-privatisation struggle in Cape Town could not be applicable to a generalisation of South African politics. An illustration of this geographical variation can be seen in the experience of the SAMWU initiative in the Gauteng province, in contrast to the case in question. SAMWU established a forum concerned with the restructuring process in Johannesburg city, known as iGoli 2002. A merger between this campaign and a similar initiative at the University of Witwatersrand, led to the establishment of an umbrella organisation uniting formations such as the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, progressive trade unions, students and left organisations. This organisation was later named the (Gauteng) Anti-Privatisation Forum. The Johannesburg forum saw the local SAMWU branch officially withdraw after a year, although certain union activists remained central in the campaign activities. Gauteng APF became a well-organised, politically powerful and controversial organisation, and apparently too controversial for the SAMWU to lend its approval to. The pressure from the ANC and the tension within COSATU had made the climate for collaboration between unions and social movements in Gauteng unfavourable. However, while the Gauteng APF has sustained political firepower without formal trade union participation, the opposite happened in Cape Town. Being a much weaker organisation than their Gauteng namesake, numerically and in terms of resources, the Cape Town APF was considered a lesser threat. A strong commitment amongst trade unionists and certain community activists have made it possible for the Cape Town APF to keep going with formal SAMWU support. Even though the two APFs are not formally affiliated, it is noteworthy that the same trade union left the Anti-Privatisation Forum in Gauteng while it remained relatively active in the Cape Town APF.

Some of the explanation to the different outcomes of these two regions can also be found in geographical variations in the internal union culture of SAMWU, and how the provincial and local branches have managed to effectively engage with community organisations:

You have to accept that if a union operates nationally there are different dynamics in different areas and different provinces. So what makes it possible to work with an organisation in one area might not make it possible to work with an organisation in another area. So, to that extent, the seeming contradictions can and will be held within the same union.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

The comparison most frequently mentioned was the difference between the political culture at the National Office in Cape Town and Johannesburg:

The Cape Town leadership [of SAMWU] does create the space for this involvement, and for things to be discussed.

(pers. comm., APF representative)

In Johannesburg the union is not active in the APF and is quite antagonistic towards the APF there, because they perceive it as anti-ANC.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

Whereas the general-secretary of SAMWU located in Cape Town has openly supported engaging in the APF, the union culture in the Gauteng region is perceived as much more “right-wing and ANC-loyal” (pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative).

To better understand the geographical complexity of SAMWU, one has to take the union’s history into account. The establishment of SAMWU in 1987 was a merger of five COSATU affiliates in local government (see Appendix 5). Moreover, these unions comprised three distinct union traditions in South Africa: the Trotskyite union tradition in the Western Cape that was aligned with the Unity Movement; the ‘workerist’ tradition made up of unions from COSATU’s predecessor Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU); and the movement-based tradition aligned to the United Democratic Front (pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative). As mentioned earlier, SAMWU operates in a point of intersection between the history of the union and the harmony of interest between communities and municipal workers. This intersection point harbours the explanation to the union’s social movement tradition (Barchiesi 2001:398, my italics):

Together with the particular location of SAMWU members in the South African economy, *this peculiar mix of radical community unionism and radicalised established unionism* probably explains the union’s sensitivity to worker-community alliances, which has been prominent in its antiprivatisation and anticommodification discourse and strategy.

The tradition of social movement unionism has strong roots in those parts of SAMWU originating from the ANC-aligned United Democratic Front (UDF) tradition under the anti-apartheid struggle. Paradoxically, the close ties between ANC and SANCO have led to scepticism towards the emergence of new social movements within this group:

The UDF was quintessentially a social movement-based thing. Towards the end of the Eighties, on the other hand, the UDF became more and more vanguardist - an elite who led and made the political choices at a general level. So, it’s rather ironic: that centralist tradition is almost that grouping now who is not willing to tolerate these new social movements.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

The strongest proponents for ‘social movement unionism’ within SAMWU at present is to be found within the Western Cape tradition, as shown by the sustained presence of the Cape Metro branch in the APF and the relatively benevolent attitude of the officials at the National Office.

The Western Cape province has always represented an idiosyncrasy in the South African context. During the apartheid era, its racial composition was chiefly based on Europeans and people of mixed creed. This latter group was labelled ‘Coloureds’ by the apartheid administration. Cape Town’s apartheid authority had designated the city a “Coloured Preference Area”. The Coloureds did not represent a uniform, cultural group and they were subject to an omnipresent, European cultural hegemony. Hence the influence of Africanism and Black Consciousness did not dominate political culture in the region in the same vein as in Eastern provinces, and, resultantly, ANC and PAC held a different position in the political landscape. Furthermore, there was an absence of the mining industries that fostered the militant unionism on the Rand. The Cape region had a long tradition of trade unionism, but due to a different industrial make-up with small manufacturing businesses lacking the collective strength of their Rand counterparts, earning them a reputation as “sweetheart unions” (Nasson 1991). The number of black immigrants from Eastern Cape and other regions skyrocketed during the Eighties and Nineties. During apartheid, they had been prohibited from settling in the central and suburban parts of Cape Town. Consequently, most of them were placed in gigantic townships on the Cape Flats. Most of the black population was therefore concentrated outside any economic activity. This eroded the premise for a strong community-union link. Racial, and spatial, separation made post-apartheid reconciliation, redistribution and development a difficult task. The political uprising in the black townships in the late Nineties must be seen in this context, also taking into account that many of these people left ANC strongholds, bringing with them a politicised culture.

METHOD AND APPROACH

There are many things to be noted on the method of the case study. After discussing the quality of data in a political study like this, I will go on to make some comments on the interview process, as well as on other sources of data. As a preparation for my fieldwork, I was able to live in Cape Town from February through June 2003 as an exchange student at University of Cape Town. This gave me an opportunity to ‘acclimatise’ to the country and the people, politics and nature of the Cape area. Furthermore, I was able to establish a few contacts and get in touch with the union. Thus I could evaluate my preliminary research questions in light of the political reality, and to modify these accordingly. This experience inarguably made me better equipped for my

fieldwork. Nevertheless, my trip as a student researcher to Cape Town in September the same year was a new experience to me, which I could never have been fully prepared for: Every step forward was appreciated as a success, while I became all the more aware of my own shortcomings.

QUALITATIVE QUALITY IN A POLITICISED FIELD

I have conducted a *theoretically informed, qualitative case study* in a Cape Town, South Africa. Opting to use theory, engaging in qualitative methods and concentrating on one specific case, were all choices I had done in advance of my fieldwork trip to Cape Town. It was partially through reading literature on trade unionism that I got interested in this study, and choosing to apply and let my approach be guided by this theory seemed reasonable to me. The choice of qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and document analysis followed naturally from the limited amount of statistical and numerical information, and its inapplicability in answering my research questions. Qualitative methods are more applicable to cases where the researcher seeks thoroughgoing information on fewer units, looking for interpretations and meaning. Numerous suggestions have been made on how to transfer quality indicators initially designed for quantitative research, such as validity and reliability, onto qualitative data (Thagaard 2002). Instead of entering a debate on what terms are applicable to assess qualitative research, I would rather raise some points that I consider to be of general concern for the quality of my data.

The organisational landscape in which I conducted my fieldwork was far from plain. It was rather a highly politicised field where personal interests, ideology, organisational allegiance and party politics influenced relations between people. Although I was prepared to enter a certain level of political controversy, I was confronted with this reality already when I met my South African supervisor, who explicitly expressed his personal political involvement and sympathies and how this would influence the nature of his supervision. Throughout the interview process, political intrigues became even more apparent, especially since my interview guide contained questions that challenged informants to reveal their positions on certain contested political issues (see Appendix 2). However, it was hard to see a clear tendency in how the politicised nature of my case influenced my informants. On the contrary it seemed to reveal diverse reactions within my selection. Some seemed to engage in what Raymond Lee (1995) has labelled a “competition of communication”, wherein informants attempt to convince the researcher and advocate their cause through their answers. Others gave vague answers, so that it was difficult to cite them in reference of a particular view. In some interviews I was even left with the impression that the

informant was eager to present me a 'politically correct' view. Fieldwork in unknown territories will always risk that informants might associate the interviewer with previous encounters with journalists, volunteers or NGO activists (Thagaard 2002). In spite of efforts to clarify the purpose of my research, I have reason to believe that there have been occasions where this confusion occurred, leading informants to mistake my mission and misjudge my authority. It appears likely that the whole of these circumstances have impacted on important criteria for the quality of qualitative research, such as strategic selections and relevant information.

Is there room for the *unpoliticised* researcher in such a politicised field? It would be naïve to think that my nationality, my distance to the field or my academic background would put me in a position to conduct research on a more neutral and objective basis than, say, the insider positions of Xali or von Holdt. On the contrary, according to Donna Haraway (1991), to uphold 'unlocatable' and general knowledge claims is irresponsible and not objective. As all knowledge is inseparably linked to a body, to a vision and to a certain position, the only way to secure objectivity in research is through allowing for *situated knowledges*. Therefore, it is important to acknowledging the fact that I am a male, white and Norwegian researcher. Simultaneously I should appreciate the partial nature of the accounts I am presented with. This attitude contributes to strengthen, rather than question, the objectivity of this research. It would be unethical to conceal how I entered this field with my own political sympathies, and how these were further shaped through my research. Moreover, the act of the research itself might trigger politically loaded responses. Throughout my research I sensed some scepticism on behalf of academics and intellectuals that at times was projected onto my role, and the fact that my interviews might have addressed touchy issues that were latent but not often explicitly voiced contributed to this. If debates have been reawakened in the aftermath of this research, it is certainly hard to argue for the unpoliticised researcher. Through being open about the purpose of my project, I tried to disclose my sympathies. At the same time I told my informants that my knowledge on these issues was relatively limited, and thus that I was open for their points of view. Understanding ideological and political divisions was required for me to answer my research questions. On the other hand, I had to consciously refrain from getting caught up in the political intrigue. The politicised field requires a researcher that acknowledges his or her position and the politicised nature of the research itself. The self-confessed *unpoliticised* researcher should therefore retreat before a *politicised* researcher committed to an open and reflexive practice.

This task does not end at the time of departure from the field, but continues to attract attention in analysing the collected data. In addition to an explicit discussion of the considerations accounted for above, a reflexive approach calls for clarity and transparency

throughout the text. I experienced a challenge in having to be clear on political positions and relations, while simultaneously not reduce the complexities of my case study down to vulgar dichotomies, and thereby create a tabloid depiction. Another challenge that arose partly out of these considerations was whether the interview material should be conferred anonymity and confidentiality. None of my informants requested their names be omitted. Out of consideration for the sensitive political context, I have chosen to state their position in the organisational landscape while leaving out their names, save a few indicated exceptions.

THE INTERVIEWS

Taking the nature of my research questions into account, while having in mind the limited documentation that often exists on contemporary, and often informal, political processes, I found *interviewing* to be the most serviceable method. Thagaard (2002) considers acquiring rich and comprehensive information about people's experience of their situation and lives as the main objective of interviewing. I conducted 25 semi-structured, qualitative interviews, most of them from October to December 2003 (see Appendix 1). All of them found place on locations in the Cape Town metropolitan area. Many of them were held in an office at the SAMWU head quarters in Athlone, Cape Town, but I have also had interviews at my apartment, in workplaces, in coffee shops and in a Volkswagen Beetle parked outside a shopping mall in Khayelitsha. Their duration ranged from 10 minutes to 2 hours. The informant and myself were sitting alone in a room in all cases save three: on two occasions did I interview two informants together, and one interview was done by telephone. 17 of the interviews were recorded on a minidisc recorder. These interviews were transcribed during my fieldwork and in the following months back in Norway. In all the interviews I jotted down notes, which I later reworked and structured.

Selection and access

In the period before my fieldwork interviews I prepared myself and planned my selection by having several informal talks and mail correspondence with people in the field, and the early interviews can be seen more as preparatory talks than as proper interviews. Even though I had set up a tentative list of informants in forehand, the selection of informants developed in a rather random fashion as the fieldwork went along. By following the lead of my initial academic contacts and a few key people inside the organisations, I started pursuing clues as if I was leading an investigation. I soon realised that these clues could carry me far away from my initial scope, however intriguing they might be. Therefore, I spent the last few weeks of my fieldwork being

rather systematic. I considered it important to pick a selection that went well into the union perspective, but also beyond that. In addition to informants representing the organisations related to the APF, I found it stimulating and helpful to speak to other people doing research in the field.

I tried to make sure I collected data specifically directed towards the core of my study, as well as aiming to cover the variety of perspectives of the political field I operated in. This latter point is yet another way of achieving data triangulation (Yin 2003). Although the importance of 'door-openers' and contacts cannot be overestimated, I became increasingly aware that being at the mercy of others heavily influences whom you end up talking to. As many political activists in Cape Town are hard to reach by e-mail and telephone, my selection was further complicated. Notwithstanding, looking at my interview list at the time of writing makes me confident that I have managed to span different perspectives and that I have reached most of the key information holders in regards to my research question. The fact that the informants' response to the core questions reached a point of saturation, wherein every new response seemed to support one of the earlier given positions, makes me confident that the selection was sound.

Interviewing

The process that started with formulating an interview guide at my desk in Norway, and ended in months of interview transcription and coding at the exact same spot, has challenged me in many ways. Thagaard (2002) pinpoints self-confidence as a crucial strength in the interview situation, but stresses that self-confidence and good interview skills does not come out of nowhere. It comes with experience. Although I had some previous interview experience, the course of the interviews was also a learning process to me. Gradually I mastered the interview technique better through listening more carefully and knowing when and how to probe. I learned from earlier mistakes and started to understand certain cultural codes. But as no interview is exactly as the previous, or as expected, interviewing is a craft that is always up for improvement as long as there are new informants to interview and new questions to ask.

I started the interviews by introducing myself and explaining my purpose. Although some of my informants by no means were unfamiliar with researchers and the interview situation, others had trouble in understanding what I was doing and why I wanted to speak to them. Making clear the purpose of my thesis was also important, in that the informants could reserve their right to maintain anonymous and be treated with confidentiality, and that participating in these interviews was voluntary. I also asked each of the informants for permission to use the

recording equipment. Thagaard (2002) argues that the interview generates data on how the informant understands experiences and events from his or hers own life. During my semester at the University of Cape Town, I was given the opportunity to conduct and analyse a life story interview with a South African man. Through this experience I became aware of how events in South African history, as well as the dynamics of race and class, appear in the life stories of all South Africans. This in turn informs their view on their society. With this in mind, I opened each interview by asking about their personal and political background. Although none of this information has been used directly in my analysis, it has certainly given me a better understanding of my informants and their opinions.

Although I had an interview guide worked out in advance (see Appendix 2), I usually made a hand-written interview guide for each informant, specifically designed with questions relevant to the situation. Most of the interviews developed into lively conversations, and I normally used the interview guide as no more than a checklist as the interview came to a close. I aspired to maintain a clear focus and establish an active contact between my informants and myself, and made use of probing beyond my pre-written questions. Simultaneously, I tried to make sure not to let the interview slide into a discussion or that I manipulated my informants to give me the answers I was looking for. Another source of concern was whether the recording equipment would make the informants refrain from giving wholehearted or controversial answers. Although all the informants accepted the use of minidisc, I did get one or two comments from informants that felt uneasy giving answering certain questions with “that thing on”. At times I also sensed informants displaying prejudice towards me, for many good reasons, and me towards them. Throughout the course of the interview, however, many of these prejudices were disproved on part of both. External researchers might be treated as ignorant on behalf of local conditions, keeping the interview from delving deeply into issues. To avoid this, I tried to give reveal that I had some knowledge about the field without coming across as arrogant. There is a fine line between being ‘treated as a tourist’ on the one hand, and to be seen as an intimidating interrogator on the other. According to Thagaard (2002), the behaviour of the informant indicates whether he or she feels manipulated or subordinated, and as most of my interviews were characterised by eager responses and strongly voiced opinions, I believe that relatively open and free conditions were achieved.

The most time-consuming part of the interview process proved to be the transcription and coding work. Previous interview experience and literature on qualitative theory made clear to me the importance of well-structured complementary work. I chose to transcribe my interviews *in vivo*, i.e. transcribing the entire interview word by word. This undoubtedly caused a lot of extra

work, but it gave me the benefit of having a written account that was very close to the actual situation. It also gave me the opportunity to make extensive use of quotes in my thesis. This was a deliberate choice on my part, as I am dealing with a case where discussions, dialogue and meetings constitute an important part of the organisational dynamics. When I am searching for answers to my research questions in such a field, I am searching for meaningful utterances. I regard it as crucial for the reliability of this study not only to give an analysis of the case but also to present to the reader statements from key actors of the field supporting and adding nuance to my account. Although the quotes are taken from *in vivo* transcriptions, I would like to make a few reservations on behalf of the authenticity of the quotes. Firstly, giving an exhaustive account of all meaning in an interview through written text stripped of body language and tone of voice is an impossible task. Therefore I have selected quotes that I consider to be subject to relatively unambiguous interpretations. Taking into account the oral language and the informal setting of the interviews, and in light of the fact that English is the mother tongue to only some of my informants, I have taken the liberty of doing some minor editing in cases of grammatical errors, word repetitions and local slang that would appear incomprehensible to non-South African readers. Concerning this latter point, I have come to the same conclusion as Kjæret (2000), in regarding a transition from oral to written language necessary in order to avoid 'stupefying the informants'. In the wake of the transcription I coded all my interviews by use of the *QSR Nvivo 2.0* programme, a software tool assisting the processing of qualitative data. This was a very helpful device for me to structure the extensive interview material and hence better prepare for the analysis.

OTHER SOURCES OF DATA

According to Yin (2003), the case study, perhaps even more than other types of research, will benefit from having multiple types of information sources. Attuning to this methodical virtue, by Yin labelled *data triangulation*, the researcher must go beyond comparing the conclusions of different types of studies, and include different kinds of data sources answering the same questions within the same study. Although the data collected for this study mainly consist of semi-structured interviews, I made use of direct observation and informal dialogue, as well as document analysis, in addition to these. This has enabled me to continuously corroborate my interview findings, as well as giving me new ideas on where to ask and what to ask for. Even though the brunt of the written documentation and the direct observation is not referred to explicitly in the text, they have provided guidance and correction during my fieldwork as well as

at the stage of analysis. I will here give an outline and briefly discuss these additional sources of data.

Documentation

In addition to theoretical literature and journal articles, several sources of documentation proved helpful to me. Many of these have been recommended and provided to me by contacts in the trade union, in other organisations and by academic contacts. I have been reading issues of the SAMWU magazine *Workers News* and getting hold of congress resolutions from the National Congresses of COSATU and SAMWU. Other documentation have been obtained thanks to institutions like the *Alternative Information and Development Centre* in Observatory, the *Trade Union Library* at the *Community House* in Salt River and the library at the *University of Cape Town*, which I was granted access to. In addition to these sources I have received updates and followed interesting debates in South African newspapers such as the *Mail & Guardian*. Being in Norway obviously limits my access to South African sources a great deal, but I have managed to access some information through trade union-based and other websites. Furthermore, a lot of relevant documentation was obtained through my informants. Thus I was granted access to an extensive, albeit not exhaustive, set of plenary minutes, working committee reports and workshop documents from the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum (see Appendix 3). These have been of invaluable importance in order to get an insight into the chronology and evolution of the forum, as a supplement to the data I have collected on the present state of the forum. It has also been instrumental in verifying statements from the interviews.

Direct observation

Meeting people, attending meetings, being in offices and at workplaces and visiting people at their homes have played a vital role in shaping my understanding of the data collected. One central weakness of the method of observation, as Yin (2003) points out, is how events might proceed differently due to the presence of researchers. Political organisations in South Africa have indeed been subject to countless research projects, and many of the activists in this arena might have become used to the company of academic onlookers. On the other hand, as personal or organisational financial assistance might have accompanied the presence of researchers in the past, there is no reason to believe that observers are regarded as invisible in all contexts.

Three experiences have stood out as vital sources of data obtained through direct observation. Firstly, I was invited by the trade union to sit in at a plenary meeting with the Cape

Town Anti-Privatisation Forum at the Community House in Salt River the 8th of November 2003. This was a useful experience in giving me an opportunity to see how the meeting procedures and the dynamics between individuals and organisations were played out in practice. Secondly, I joined my Norwegian supervisor to the Mandela Park Anti-Eviction Campaign on two occasions during his research trip to Cape Town in mid-November 2003. Visiting one of the central social movements in the APF network provided me with some perspectives on their reality that did not surface in formal meetings or through interviews. Thirdly, I was able to attend the Social Movement Indaba in Johannesburg taking place from the 18th-21st of March 2004, in the aftermath of my fieldwork. This was a good opportunity to see how the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum and the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign were represented in a national forum, and what their main agenda was on such an occasion.

SUMMARY

The case of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum accounts for the local cooperation between certain political actors, all of them subjected to limits and constraints on different geographical levels. By undertaking a case study in this context, I seek to explore the characteristics of this local setting, and furthermore to see how the local dynamics are articulated politically, economically and culturally within, and beyond, South Africa. Through this chapter, I have attempted to show that the quality and soundness of my research are conditioned by my methodological approach. On the one hand, I have tried to draw on previous research, both in my own field and in other in relevant cases. By incorporating others' experiences and insights, I do not only pursue one trajectory of socio-spatial change. Rather, this study is given a part in a broader critical work. On the other hand, I have attempted to maintain an open and reflexive approach as a politicised researcher in a highly politicised field, by acknowledging how the accounts of the informants, as well as my own account, are situated. My interviews represent particular views and positions from people playing a particular role in this political field. I believe that these two understandings increase the quality of my data material and form the basis of sound research.

3. HEGEMONY IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Through looking at recent South African history, as well as the dynamics of my case, I will examine the constraints placed upon civil society by the national political system since the fall of apartheid. With inspiration from Marais and others I make use of a Gramscian perspective on civil society to approach these dynamics. In the South African context, the rise of the ANC as the pivotal political power can be seen as a hegemonic project permeating society on a political, economic and cultural level. This project has not been uncontested, however, and internal frictions in the labour movement exemplify how hegemonic struggles are constantly fought out in civil society. I focus specifically on how the struggle over hegemony impacts on civil society alliances. I will do so through the following gates of entry: Firstly, I will trace the ideological content of the struggle over hegemony back to an exchange of words in a political journal during the time of transition. Secondly, I interpret resolutions made at COSATU and SAMWU National Congresses to see how political contestation around the newly emerging social movements is mirrored in these. Finally, against the backdrop of these discussions, I will use my own findings to show how local linkages between unions and communities are influenced and constrained by hegemonic struggles in civil society and the politics of the Tripartite Alliance in the case of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum. I will end this chapter with an account of the social movements' quest to establish a national structure through the Social Movement Indaba. In doing so, I assess the political capacity of South African social movements come together to strengthen alliances and generate synergy effects.

HEGEMONY

To Lenin, *hegemony* was the strategy of revolution, in which the working class forged alliances with other classes and parts of classes to unite in the national-democratic revolution, in his case the toppling of the Tsarist regime. Gramsci elaborated the concept of hegemony further. Whereas the Leninist understanding of hegemony ascribed a revolutionary coalition to seize power through capturing the state, Gramsci deemed this power to be located and fought over beyond the boundaries of the state, as well as within them. The seizure of state power is thus but one step towards the establishment of hegemony.

But what is hegemony? To him the concept could be used to describe the ways in which any ruling class managed to hold on to its power. To do so, the ruling class must not only build strategic alliances with other forces of society, but also transcend its own class' interests through

granting economic concessions to other groups and classes. However, the Gramscian concept of hegemony requires an even broader definition, ranging from economic and political control to cultural and moral leadership. The ruling class seeks to consolidate their hegemony in the political and economic sphere by winning the *consent* of the people on issues that go beyond the sphere of production, concerning the direction of social life (Simon 1991, Sassoon 1980). In other words, hegemonic domination is also cultural domination, playing an active role in defining ‘common sense’ in society. But there will always be limits to hegemony, and even if consent is won with the majority there will be enemies to the ruling power. To deal with your foes, as well as your friends, hegemonic rule rests on a set of dualities, taking the forms “of force and of consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilisation” (Gramsci cited in Sassoon 1980:112). The hegemonic power consolidates its rule through exerting corresponding levels of *direction* and *dominance*: “to the extent that a group is able to assert its direction over a second group, this latter can be considered an ally rather than an enemy” (Sassoon 1980:111). However, when the strategy of winning consent fails, the use of *coercion* strengthens hegemonic rule.

As shown above, hegemony covers all levels of society, from the economic to the cultural. Furthermore, Gramsci took this concept beyond the limits of the state. Closely related to his concept of hegemony is his understanding of *civil society*. In Gramsci’s terms, all aspects of economic and civic life outside direct state control are labelled ‘civil society’. Civil society is often contrasted to *political society*, being the state apparatus. Gramsci did not envision a clear division line between political and civil society, but regarded this distinction as methodologically useful. In terms of hegemony, the state dominates political society whereas the political party does so in civil society (Sassoon 1980). A class in quest of power has not prevailed when control of the state is secured, although hegemony could not be established without it. Rather, it must be preceded and succeeded by ‘trench warfare’ fought in a civil society where alliances are forged, and consent built. Gramsci used a military metaphor when he labelled this struggle a *war of position*. The war of position stands in contrast to the *war of movement*, representing a frontal assault on the state and referring to the Leninist quest for state power. In outlining civil society as a battlefield, he thus champions the classical idealist perspective of civil society as the sphere of individual freedom, and opens up for an understanding of civil society as the arena of hegemonic struggles.

The concept of hegemony has been interpreted in many ways, some of these being applicable to post-apartheid South Africa, allowing for a new understanding of the power struggles after apartheid. Gramsci’s thought was conceived in a different place and time, namely in Italy following the First World War, but under circumstances that nonetheless share some characteristics with contemporary South Africa, as he also was confronting the “intense reversal

of a revolutionary moment” (Hart 2002:27). Gramsci’s hopes of an Italian socialist revolution waned as the fascists took control, and this inspired him to develop his thoughts on the *passive revolution* (Sassoon 1980). This concept referred to how the bourgeois class managed to maintain economic control in a revolutionary phase while making political, and perhaps cultural, concessions to groups in opposition. As will be shown below, this train of thought could be used to interpret the political and economic development in South Africa since apartheid, wherein a political and cultural transition is granted in return for consolidated economic positions and class relations.

THE POST-APARTHEID HEGEMONIC PROJECT

Some observers, most notably Marais (2001), have employed the concept of hegemony to understand the post-apartheid experience, and ANC’s role in it. In contrast to the former regime, the new one was not supposed to merely dominate the people by force and control the economy, but to lead the people and mobilise consent around its project. Marais argues that as the ANC sprung out of a united struggle against an exclusionary regime, its inclusionary character was the perfect point of departure to realise its hegemonic ambitions. With inspiration from Marais I will try to identify some of the central building blocks of this new political order. It is important to emphasise that the rise of a strong ANC hegemony in South Africa is not solely the product of strategic ambitions within the ANC organisation. This hegemony has, on the contrary, evolved through constant struggles between class interests and negotiations between elite groups.

The conditions for hegemony can be traced back to the distinctive features of the political transition in the early Nineties. The South African transition to democracy stands as a remarkable event in world history. Remarkable because the looming danger of civil war never materialised. South Africa thus avoided the bloodshed and riot that many feared and facilitated a political shift without creating an economic collapse. On the other hand, the transition was also remarkable in the way the grassroots of the resistance movement were bypassed in a negotiated transition relying on the good judgment of a very few. The thrust and authority of the liberation struggle had moved away from the social movement unionism of COSATU and the broad society alliance of the UDF during the course of 1988. With the unbanning of the political parties in 1990, the trade unions lost their monopoly of struggle leadership (Buhlungu 2003). Instead, focus shifted over to the imprisoned Nelson Mandela and his secret talks with central strategists of the National Party (Seekings 2000). Mandela and the exiled ANC leadership once again became the leadership of apartheid resistance.

The negotiations took place from 1990 until the first democratic election in 1994. During this time the different interests comprising South Africa's racialised class society influenced the transition in various ways and to various degrees. The positions that surfaced during these negotiations are reflected in today's political landscape. Capital and business interests, the Reserve Bank, the International Monetary Fund and South African business, all acknowledged that there was a need for socio-economic redistribution for the sake of economic growth as well as for political reasons (Marais 2001). Nevertheless, their main role was to defend and strengthen the market economy as a system. COSATU was organised labour's most vociferous spokesperson. Together with the SACP and organisations of civil society, they acted as the counterpart to capital. But the main political actors fighting the battle of the state was the National Party and the ANC. The stakes were high. The future support of the parties' constituencies, not to mention the success of the transition *per se*, rested upon the leadership of these organisations. The lack of popular participation and the premises laid down by the National Party and white capital have since haunted the South African nation-building project by punctuating some of the potential for substantial democratisation and socio-economic redress.

Although direct popular participation was restricted in the transition to democracy, ANC did bring allies from the liberation movement into the decision-making processes at an early stage. Organised labour was facing a completely new task. The tactics of social movement unionism had been to render the country ungovernable. Labour representatives were now to sit around negotiation tables and to participate in talks and policy-making. Trade unions were to play a constructive role in the building of democracy. The labour movement was allowed influence and granted concessions in several ways. Through devising the RDP base document, as accounted for in an earlier chapter, organised labour was given an important voice. The RDP platform gave the labour movement legislative force through the passing of certain crucial labour relations acts. Besides, another significant political inroad was the Tripartite Alliance formed in 1991 between the ANC, the SACP and COSATU. Many of the political and ideological contestations of the next ten years played themselves out within this alliance, arguably reducing the influence of the South African working class over time, but sustaining a direct channel of communication between the union movement's leadership and the government. No significant event or development, national or local, in the post-apartheid era can be understood without acknowledging the Alliance and its role in South African political life.

The Alliance rested upon the symbiotic relationship between the ANC and the SACP, established in the early 1950s. Most members of the SACP are also members of the ANC. Although the SACP might be regarded as a miniscule power in terms of membership, the Party's

central committee and politburo boasts prominent members of COSATU and the ANC. The Marxist ideology of the Communist Party is seemingly in stark opposition to the broad, multi-class alliance of the ANC, but it is precisely in the SACP ideology that the rationale for accepting the vanguard role of the ANC is to be found. The SACP has, since the early 1960s, seen South Africa's mixture of a white capitalist society and a "non-white" colonised society as a global exception: *colonialism of a special type*. To overcome this division, the revolution must come in two stages. The two-stage theory, reminiscent of Stalin's argument, prescribed a national-democratic revolution to precede a socialist one, preparing the grounds for a workers' society (Marais 2001). Although the SACP's slogan in the Nineties was "Build Socialism Now!", its strategic position in the Alliance with its leadership positions in government fit nicely into the picture of the national-democratic revolution.

The partnership of the Alliance has no doubt benefited COSATU and the SACP in many ways. Notwithstanding the gains on their part, the Tripartite Alliance must first and foremost be considered a useful tool for sustaining ANC dominance in the liberation movement into the post-apartheid era. As long as the two other organisations run election campaigns for the ANC, any hope of a workers' party or Communist party displaying broad parliamentary support seems faint. Thus far, no political alternative on its left has proved viable. Despite failing policies on important issues such as poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS, and a steady orientation towards economic liberalisation, ANC's share in the parliamentary election votes have steadily risen from 62,7% in 1994 to 66,4% in 1999 and, finally, 69,7% in the 2004 elections. The latest result gave the party a 2/3 majority in parliament and hence constitution-amending powers (Mail&GuardianOnline 2004, Skjerdal 2004).

But the admittances made to popular organisations and the political alliances forged were part of a greater project, applicable to the logic of national and international capital and adept at invoking the sympathy of the black majority population. ANC's invitation to participate in the building of the new nation did also go out to business. Mandela's commitment to a nationalised industry by the time of his release was soon to change into an investment-friendly emphasis on 'efficiency and order', and the RDP platform was, as shown earlier, soon to be replaced by the GEAR plan. Moreover, the need for economic growth had to be coupled with the Africanism in ANC's ideology and the racial composition of its constituency. Through affirmative action and the Black Economic Empowerment programme did ANC create a 'patriotic' bourgeoisie whose interest coincided with those of white business and thus gave capitalism a multi-racial face (Marais 2001). For the hegemonic project to overcome challenges of race, ethnicity and culture in, it was also fought out on a discursive level. Accompanying the economic and political

compromises and concessions that served as the foundation of its inclusiveness, the ANC drew on a historical track record that fit nicely into this strategy (Marais 2001:262):

[I]t managed to deploy an array of ideological precepts and symbols, and assert their pertinence to the lived realities of millions of South Africans. The Freedom Charter was resurrected and popularised as *the* programme for change; the liberation struggle was personified in the form of Nelson Mandela; the colours, flags, songs and slogans of the ANC became ubiquitous features of resistance activities.

The ANC only managed to become one with 'the people' to a certain point. Successes achieved through appeasement and compromise have their limits and their costs: whites might feel alienated by Africanist discourse, Zulus perceive the organisation to be Xhosa-biased, capital warns against close ties Communists and labour, whereas workers and left-wings attack the macro-economic policies (Marais 2001). Still, the post-apartheid hegemonic project, with all its flaws, has yet to meet its match.

CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENTS

As Gramsci predicted the hegemonic project was not only played out on the level of national politics. Rather it moved onto a 'war of position' in civil society. Resultantly, the composition of South African civil society changed dramatically. One of the most striking developments was the emergence of NGOs committed to service delivery. These were either previous organisations with new mandates, or newly established NGOs. Many of these were externally funded, either by the government or through international donors. Moreover, many of the organisations rooted in the anti-apartheid movement were folded into the ANC, whereas others were dismantled. Outside the political Tripartite Alliance, ANC established a formal alliance with the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO), thereby forging close ties to the single biggest umbrella body of South African community organisations. Clearly, the dynamics of consent and coercion also came into play in this arena. Cooperation with the democratic state was strongly promoted by the Alliance. Civil society organisations with adversarial or non-cooperative attitudes towards local government or the ANC ran the risk of being vilified and demonised, or even physically repressed by the state (Marais 2001:284):

The state would stress that the success of transformation efforts required widespread popular initiatives in tandem with state activities. But it soon transpired that autonomous activities that involved criticism or contestation of government policies were not welcome.

Those who chose to cooperate and enter alliances however, SANCO being a good example, were promoted and allowed into influential or prestigious positions. An increasingly polarised civil society balanced between cooptation and elimination, challenging organisational autonomy on a general level. John Mawbey, SAMWU's National Educational Officer at the time, questioned whether the trade union's links to civil society should be constrained to ANC partners such as SANCO (Mawbey 1994:80):

The question is: will this [empowering civil society] best be achieved through backing SANCO's development or through establishing looser "Civic Forums" as a form of coalition which reinforces the "watch dog" capacities of civil society, and includes COSATU as one such organ?

This issue became an increasingly tense one as the decade moved on, but civil society as a whole did not collectively give in to the ANC/SANCO model. Gillian Hart draws on Marais' argument when she identifies sources of resistance and locates places of power exactly in the fractures of this hegemonic unity (Hart 2002:33):

Shot through with contradictions, this apparent populist unity co-exists with powerful currents of discontent and critique from within the alliance; from segments of the NGO community; and, most importantly, from the interstices of everyday life where large numbers of South Africans navigate between the emancipatory promises of official discourses and the glamour of the mass consumption economy on the one hand, and harsh material deprivation on the other.

Here, Marais (2001) discerns a potential counter-hegemonic project. As the strength of COSATU's voice in the Alliance wanes, the labour congress might feel inclined to break free from the ruling bloc. In such a scenario, the possibility of an alternative political force begins to grow. As labour has been pushed on the sideline along with other interest groups, it is now time to align with these in a renewed project of social movement unionism, and hence challenge the present hegemonic project.

The challengers to this hegemonic project are materialising at the local level. According to Marais (2001:286), "the space for innovative challenges and new bids to foster consent around programmes that privilege popular needs seems most pronounced". This observation is supported by Pieterse and Oldfield's (2002:6) research on local urban social movements, who argues that "the hegemony of the ANC has been weakened and in many cases actively eroded by newly politicised social formations". Finally, this reasoning seems to apply to Gillian Hart's focus on the intertwining between spatial scales, and how any progressive strategy "must be firmly located on the terrain of the local state, engaging with historically and geographically specific

configurations of social forces, but also extending out from there to connect to forces at play in regional, national, and transnational arenas” (Hart 2002:12).

DEBATING CIVIL SOCIETY

Moving on from this Gramscian exercise, I will now proceed to account for how these issues have been treated in intellectual debate within South African civil society and within the Alliance. I will therefore look at a debate on civil society that took place in the South African Communist Paper’s journal, the *African Communist*, in the course of 1992 (Nzimande and Sikhosana 1992a, 1992b, Mayekiso, Roji 1992). Although this debate is more than 10 years old, it holds relevance to this context in several ways: it takes up some of the previously discussed Gramscian concepts and incorporates it into a post-apartheid context, and it anticipates some of the lines of conflict that have emerged in later years, nationally as well as in my case.

Blade Nzimande, who later became the general-secretary of the SACP, co-wrote with Mpume Sikhosana (1992a) an article criticising the notion of ‘democratic socialism’, a term that became popular in left-wing circles after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc. It also served as a critique of the focus on an autonomous civil society as a way of building democracy in South Africa. The authors upheld the Leninist view that seizing state power was the only way to socialism, and that civil society had to be integrated in that process under the vanguard of the Communist Party. Socialism was inherently democratic, which rendered the concept ‘democratic socialism’ pleonastic. Those who propagated civil society as the ‘incarnation of reason’ and the ‘watchdog of the state’ based this, according to the authors, on a misreading Gramsci. Their false concept of civil society represented a liberal idealisation of civil society’s autonomy, stripped of any class content, thus making it counterproductive and even running errands for capitalism (Nzimande and Sikhosana 1992a:42):

[E]ven the apartheid regime’s programme of privatisation can be regarded as an attempt to relegate political and economic power to the sphere of a civil society without state interference. By so doing the regime is hoping to reproduce apartheid through ‘an independent and vibrant civil society’.

In their framework there was no room outside state- or party structures for civil society organisations with a political agenda. Rather, these organisations must be brought into the fold of the liberation movement and working class leadership, in other words the Tripartite Alliance, as “organs of people’s power”. Social movements fighting for single issues and basic services are seemingly excluded of Nzimande and Sikhosana’s idea of working class struggle.

One of several reactions to their paper was written by Mzwanele Mayekiso (1992), a township activist who later became an academic. He puts forward the concept of a *working class civil society*. Mayekiso conceptualises civil society as containing the same interests and class formations as South Africa itself. In Mayekiso's reading of Gramsci, the state does not automatically become an instrument of the working class when state power is captured. Recalling the 'war of position', the state is exempt from class struggle. Neither is civil society. A key issue for analysis will then be to identify and separate the bourgeois civil society from its working class counterparts. Surely, there is an essential difference between the clubs of Sandton, Johannesburg or Constantia, Cape Town on the one hand, and the "civic associations, trade unions, the women's groups, youth groups, churches, burial societies, and other organisations, formal and informal, that represent the interests of poor and working people" on the other (Mayekiso 1992:33). Contrary to Nzimande and Sikhosana's wish to incorporate progressive civil society groups into the state sphere, Mayekiso (1992:38) emphasises the need for an autonomous, working class civil society that "can analyse – and give direction to – a state that rapidly becomes confused". He reveals scepticism towards any state, once in the hands of a vanguard party. In the light of the decade of ANC rule since his article was published, his doubts were justified in writing: "If we didn't have the civics and trade unions, the regime would be dragging its feet even more than it is now" (Mayekiso 1992:36).

Although this debate was confined to the reader's of the *African Communist*, it did not occur in a vacuum. At one level this exchange of words merely represented two divergent readings of Gramsci. From another angle, of course, this was a debate between representatives of a party advocating a strongly state-led democratisation process on the model of Russian revolution, and those who saw no substantial democratisation without the autonomous and vibrant civil society they themselves represented. Tracing these positions into the current political debate, reveals a situation where these positions have been consolidated into two camps of opinion. On the one hand, views expressed through speeches public debate by ANC officials, clearly illustrated by statements from president Thabo Mbeki and ANC deputy secretary general Sankie Mthembi-Mahanyele, depict a civil society consisting of a constructive majority and a destructive minority (Oldfield and Stokke Forthcoming-b, Mbeki 1998).

The dynamic, constructive actors contribute to nation-building through service delivery, democracy-building and information, whereas a smaller minority of civil society formations are branded as 'adversarial', 'disruptive' and 'ultra-left', and hence undermining the radical potential of the Alliance, and even feeding the agenda of right-wing forces. This dichomotisation of civil society is not only restricted to ANC rhetoric. It can also be found in statements from COSATU

officials, as well as in media depictions of social movement activity. The oppositional view challenges the vilification of these movements, upholding that the social movements represent a progressive force focused on people's needs, possessing a radical political potential and contributing to substantial democratisation. The social movements themselves uphold this position through their press releases and media access. But perhaps more influential, in terms of addressing public debate, has been the advocacy for the legitimacy of these movements by affiliated or sympathising activists and academics through research reports, newspaper articles and various publications (Ngwane 2003, Desai 2003, Bond 2000, Oldfield and Stokke Forthcoming-a, Haffajee 2003, Habib and Kotzé 2002).

These debates are also echoed in my case. Autonomy in civil society is a burning issue in the context of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum. Although this will be given a detailed treatment on a later stage, I will at this point identify one aspect of this particular political discourse that has bearing on the discussion above, namely accusations of *vanguardism*. This was an observation I made through talking to my informants about ideology in the APF. Initially I addressed the issue of ideology to assess to what extent ideological differences posed an obstacle for cooperation between various organisations. Even though ideological differences do trigger political disputes here, as in most other political settings, ideological arguments can also serve to as a pretext to uphold political concerns, and even personal considerations. Furthermore, many informants did not so much criticise ideological positions *per se*, but rather the priority given to ideological debate and the role of intellectuals. Many activists are sceptical towards intellectuals who engage in ideological debate and the role they delegate to themselves (pers. comm., APF and AEC representatives). Predictably, the strongest anti-authoritarian sentiment is found with the social movements. This seems to mirror a longstanding intrigue of vanguardism in Marxist circles, fuelling the contention between anarchists and socialists for decades. The same rhetoric highlights differences in ideology and view of organisation in Cape Town. Representatives of the social movements tend to view union ideology as a bureaucratic of socialism, instead advocating a more anarchic and loose ideological approach. On a national level, allegations of vanguardism are directed to hegemony of the ANC and at the South African Communist Party's role in its own two-stage theory. COSATU's position in the trade union movement and in the broader workers' struggle has also been criticised as vanguardist. Insofar as there is consensus on working class leadership of the struggle, there are different opinions on the role of leadership and its implications for democracy. Consequently, the ghost of vanguardism continues to haunt South African politics, on the national scene and in local settings.

DANGEROUS LIAISONS

The *African Communist* debate must also be seen in light of other debates on the role of civil society, such as the previously discussed debate on ‘strategic unionism’. Building on this debate, and on the discussions above, I will proceed to look at how struggle for hegemony in civil society has influenced the relation between the ruling bloc and civil society actors outside this bloc from a policy point of view. To do so, I will make use of certain strategically important documents from within the labour movement, all dating from the period 1997-2003. As we saw in the historical account of South African unionism, the labour movement hosted debates on how to engage with civil society in general, as union strategy shifted from the social movement unionism of the resistance era to the strategic unionism of the post-apartheid era. A reading of these policy documents further unveils union ambiguity on the question of civil society alliances in the context of ANC hegemony and loyalty to the Tripartite Alliance.

Hardly anyone could disagree with this general idea of civil society involvement. But in turning it into a practical policy of alliance building, signs of tension surfaced at an early stage. South Africa saw the emergence of the social movements whom, in many cases, were in open conflict with the ANC. The privatisation plans following GEAR increased the friction within the Alliance, particularly between COSATU and the ANC. Within COSATU itself this tension was played out. Those who remained loyal to the ANC and committed to the Alliance were opposed to certain progressive unions and unionists. The latter wanted to join forces with other civil society organisations opposed to GEAR and privatisation operating outside the sphere of ANC and SANCO. COSATU was caught between a rock and a hard place. Remaining loyal to the partners of the Alliance on the national level was plausible only as far as political differences could be overcome. But ruling out cooperation with non-Alliance actors in the communities was not an ideal option. It could critically affect the popular support of the labour movement, in the face of stagnating membership figures and local activity. The previously mentioned September Commission also seemed to acknowledge these shortcomings on behalf of the Alliance and its eroding grassroots support:

The decline of the progressive organisation points towards the disintegration of our communities and the potential for increased conflict. The diminishing strength of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), the shift away from grass-roots activity in the Alliance, the widening gap between the ANC and those of its leadership in government, the declining influence of the Alliance in relation to policy-making, all suggest a move away from the politics of transformation, which the working class needs to be aware of and to counter.

(September Commission 1997, Section 3.1.2)

In prescribing a remedy, the commission clearly relates to the social movement unionism strategy, indicated by the seventh point of its 12-point programme:

COSATU should rebuild a powerful working class movement, entailing a strong organisational relationship with an ANC which is biased towards the working class, *as well as alliances with other social movements*, NGOs, intellectuals and students, etc. COSATU should retain its independence while building alliances.

(September Commission 1997, Section 2.4.vii)

But from 2000 onward the relationship between many of the social movements and the government worsened. There were frequent clashes with local government authorities and police. Moreover, the social movements in the Johannesburg area, united in the organisation Gauteng APF with an ex-ANC councillor as their leader, came to the fore as an oppositional political power, and hence a nuisance to the ANC. It was clear that the union movement and these social movements had some crucial interests in common, and that they both resisted the neoliberal political economy that was in the making. COSATU had launched an offensive with their national anti-privatisation strikes in 2000, 2001 and 2002. Notwithstanding how these strikes warned the ANC not to take the Alliance for granted, COSATU's loyalty was still with the ANC. At COSATU's 8th National Congress in September 2003 there was an acknowledgment of this problem and an expressed wish to overcome it:

The emergence of the social movements hostile to the alliance and the democratic movement as a whole is a wake up call to the Alliance.

(8th National Congress resolutions, COSATU 2003, Section 1.3.1)

As a way of keeping distance to certain social movements while maintaining commitment to civil society at large, the resolutions contained 6 criteria for collaboration, two of which bear particular relevance:

To use the criteria set out in precious COSATU Congresses in 1987 and 1989, as well as the following criteria, to determine *which social movements we will work with*:

6.5. Whether the agenda of these organisations does not aim to liquidate or undermine the Alliance partners.

6.6. Whether the organisation has a track record of disciplined organisational practice, and does not foster divisions within COSATU affiliates.

(8th National Congress resolutions, COSATU 2003, section 1.3.6.5-6, my italics)

One month earlier SAMWU arranged their 7th National Congress. The organisation did also have unsettled scores on the matter, and internal divisions concerning the ties to certain Capetonian social movements continued to cause tension. This can be traced back to a National Policy

Conference in late 1996, where the anti-privatisation campaign of the union was thoroughly debated. A number of recommendations emerged, and these were transferred to the National Executive Committee (NEC) in the end of the same year. The NEC made the following recommendation:

That for the campaign to succeed, it must be mass based. We should focus on getting worker and community support for our fight to retain services in public hands.

After a National Anti-Privatisation Workshop in December 1997, the campaign was sharpened and the rhetoric became more explicit. The Central Executive Committee (CEC) made an explicit recommendation in February 1998 that “[t]he Union should establish joint forums to draw support for the campaign” (pers. comm. by e-mail, Roger Ronnie, SAMWU). The 6th National Congress in 2000 followed up the CEC resolution with a specific resolution concerning the iGoli plan in Johannesburg. The congress opened up for an ‘anti-privatisation forum’, but simultaneously stressed its loyalty to the Alliance:

1. To intensify the campaign among our members and other COSATU members, in the broader community and in organisations opposed to privatisation, against iGoli 2002 and similar plans in other municipalities. [...]
5. To continue to work with COSATU into the anti-iGoli campaign and into building solidarity action for workers being victimised.
7. To seek appropriate political solutions to the current problems including engagement within the alliance.

(Resolutions adopted at SAMWU's 6th National Congress, 2000, sections 24.1,5,7)

Returning to the 7th National Congress, two such forums had been established, with the political unease that had followed. This experience complicated SAMWU's stance on the social movements this time around. Reading through the draft resolutions and the secretariat report reveals an ongoing contestation within the union. The participation in the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum by office bearers of the local branches and individuals at the national office had been met by reluctance and criticism by ANC-aligned forces. The documents from this conference might be seen as an attempt to accommodate diverging views that proved irreconcilable at the time of the congress. On one hand, some text extracts seem to approve the current civil society involvement (Secretariat report and draft resolutions from the 7th National Congress of SAMWU):

SAMWU's approach to the local government restructuring process has always seen a role for communities and their organisations, both in terms of building true participative democracy and in acting jointly to oppose forms of restructuring that are not in the interests of the working class.

(Secretariat report to SAMWU's 7th National Congress, 2003b)

We need to support social movement organisations that are progressive and further develop our approach on the forms tactical alliances should take.

(Draft resolutions to SAMWU's 7th National Congress, 2003a)

Other fragments from the same text, however, express reluctance towards this endeavour:

There is mushrooming of independent and new movements in the country but we do not have a close working relationship with them. [...] We should be cautious and selective about having relationship with these organisations, but build relationships with those with whom it is appropriate and participate and influence decisions in such organisations.

(Draft resolutions to SAMWU's 7th National Congress, 2003a)

What is striking is that all references to social movement involvement in the draft resolutions were in the final text replaced by the following resolution:

Further discussions should take place at all levels of the Union on the issue of social movements and that the CEC [Central Executive Committee] is mandated to finalise a position on the matter.

(Resolutions adopted by SAMWU's 7th National Congress, 2003a)

It seems clear that the National Congress did not reach a consensus on this issue, choosing to call for further investigation and caution on behalf of the relationship, and possibly await the COSATU congress the following month:

We have not taken very seriously our position to build links with civil society. An analysis of why this has not happened must be done. [...] This [lack of community involvement] is obviously in part due to the ongoing dilemma confronting COSATU and ourselves on how we link with community organisations that, in some instances, have taken a very strong anti-government view.

(Secretariat report to SAMWU's 7th National Congress, 2003b)

What this drift into vagueness implies in my case will be given subsequent consideration.

ALLIANCE AND LOYALTY

Through looking at my case, I will show how attempts at consolidating the hegemonic project in a local setting are made through manufacturing consent and creating allegiance, while

simultaneously exercising coercion in cases of disobedience and political threat. There are several issues related to the nation-state that union-community linkages and the activities of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum are conditioned by. Most important from the union point of view is SAMWU's relationship to the Alliance locally. This point runs as a red thread through this analysis. The institutional arrangements depicted in **Figure 2** illustrate the ambiguous position of the Cape Metropolitan branch of SAMWU, caught between the Alliance and the oppositional civil society organisations:

FIGURE 2: POLITICAL MAP

On a local level, the question of union-community links has highlighted how Alliance politics in recent years has created an increasingly polarised political civil society in Cape Town. A few years back, however, this issue was treated in a completely different way within the union:

I think that when we had that very active campaign in the late Nineties we constantly talked about the need to build relationships with the community organisations around the campaign, to mobilise the communities to support the campaign, et cetera. And that was a fairly uncomplicated issue at that point - everybody agreed, I think. I'm not sure that we were very successful, but that was a different issue from the fact that we all agreed that we needed to do that.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

The Metro Branch invited all organisations opposed to privatisation to the Local Government Transformation Forum (APF). Consequently, their invitation went out to radical anti-government formations as well as to ANC-aligned organisations. In doing so, the union became a contact zone for parties that had kept away from each other in terms of engagement, albeit not in terms of confrontation. When union officials try to describe the present situation, it becomes clear that the present situation no longer is “fairly uncomplicated”:

I think what has now shifted and changed is the emergence of the social movement organisations and some of the tensions that have emerged between the trade unions and the social movement organisations.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

Sometimes it becomes quite a heated debate on whether SAMWU should still participate in the APF.

(pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative)

The union is completely split on the matter, it's completely schizophrenic.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

The question of loyalty to the Alliance, and in particular to the ANC, became increasingly tense. Soon the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum with its close relations to the social movements was the fly in the ointment.

Relations between the new social movements organisations and the ANC bear out of an ambivalent history. Some of the activists are previous ANC-members who, through breaking with the organisation or through being expelled, have developed an antagonistic relationship to the ANC. So is the case with the leader of the Gauteng Anti-Privatisation Forum, Trevor Ngwane. In these cases personal experiences with the organisation, coupled with policy grievances might have further deteriorated the climate. Activists in the Cape Town APF emphasise that ANC *policies*, and not the ANC *organisation*, are their main targets:

What we try to do in the APF is not to landmark any political party, but to attack government policies in a much broader sense. Ok, indirectly, if you do that you also attack the ANC.

(pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative)

Unfortunately, many fail to appreciate this distinction. Activists tell of how the APF has an “anti-ANC” stigma attached to its name. The stigma has been built up through media, through utterances and actions by people affiliated to the AEC and through the harsh rhetoric and “mudslinging exercises” of ANC officials (pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative).

Nevertheless, the social movements’ outspoken antipathy to the ruling party might run ahead of popular opinion:

For historical reasons large numbers of workers have a loyalty to the ANC which their experience questions. But that loyalty itself has been built up over years of a different kind of experience, and it's not yet the moment in which they have simply broken that loyalty. So, I think that's a very key challenge. It's a challenge in the broader question of how to take forward the struggle against privatisation.

(pers. comm., APF representative)

The SAMWU memberbase, many of whom are active in the local branches of ANC and the ANC Women League (pers. comm., SAMWU member), is also unlikely to confront the government party head-on. This fuelled hostility towards some of the community groupings criticising the ANC amongst certain shopstewards and members (pers. comm., SAMWU shopsteward). According to the general-secretary of the union, the loyalty to the remnants of the liberation movement is still strong with the bulk of their membership, facing the union with a perplexing dilemma:

More than anything, this has been the single biggest dilemma for the union, whether here on in Jo'burg [Johannesburg]: How do we find the balance between still seeing the ANC, or at least the majority of members still seeing the ANC, as the only viable vehicle which creates space for workers to basically express themselves, but also then as a basis for advancing the struggle to its next stage, and the realities on the ground whereby communities are becoming more and more disillusioned, and are then forced to often take positions which go right at the heart of this relationship. And this places the union in a position where, in a sense, it is almost forced to choose. And in most instances the union has simply not been able to rise to the challenge.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

In light of this, any attempts to create a new political project outside the Alliance will be taken amiss. This concern was not limited to the rank-and-file. One National Office official, who withdrew from the early LGTF/APF meetings in 2000-01, was concerned with what he perceived as the forum's anti-ANC agenda and their ambitions to become a political party:

And as a political party it would then make sense to, at the drop of a hat and regardless of the reason, attack and become this couplet of the ANC government. And everything was to attack the ANC government. That became the focus of their *modus operandi*. Privatisation was no more than an excuse, with which to attack the ANC government.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

Hence, the fact that the regional branch of COSATU expressed similar reservations towards the forum is hardly surprising:

The APF, by their actions, have distanced themselves. You got to accept that within the unions, people are very loyal to the ANC.

(pers. comm., COSATU representative)

COSATU's political allegiance prevents them from embracing the APF. Still, the regional office in Western Cape sympathises with the forum. The COSATU representative acknowledges that organisations in Cape Town should not be held responsible for the more confrontational line of oppositional groupings elsewhere:

We have had much more of a cooperative relationship in the Western Cape [than in Gauteng]. I think we have been able to tackle issues jointly, and we have run campaigns jointly; like the war against Iraq and that sort of collaboration.

(pers. comm., COSATU representative)

The reference to "joint campaign", however, does not pertain to formal organisation collaboration, but rather to parallel mobilisation on the same issue.

Although the question of the Alliance in all probability will endure unless national political positions do not take a dramatic turn, the development of this conflict is very sensitive to contingent political events. The parliamentary elections of 2004 provide a good example in this respect. Political polarisation and discussions around the ANC overshadowed other political issues during the election times of 2003-04. COSATU were rallying for ANC, making statements and decisions in its affiliate unions subject to political tactics and strategy. This undoubtedly led to SAMWU watch their step on these issues, providing an excuse not to engage in any controversial activities concerning the social movements:

SAMWU's allegiance - being a part of COSATU, particularly with the elections coming up - will become intensified.

(pers. comm., AEC representative)

It [the elections] has a huge influence. We [SAMWU] will start toning down our criticism of the ANC.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

The new climate of the elections has started to hit in.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

But this 'new climate' did also have an effect on the social movements and individual activists:

I think now is a difficult period, because with all the social movements and different people from the AEC who wants to stand in the elections. [...] Now in election times, people often get sidetracked into different things.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

In summary, the manifestations of allegiance and antipathy towards the ruling bloc are likely to ebb and flow as long as local or national civil society actors do not feel compelled to make decisive changes in their political stances.

STATE REPRESSION

The other side of the coin is “what protesters usually refer to as ‘repression’ and the state as ‘law and order’; namely, the state’s ability to repress the political activity of social movements”, and how this has happened in Cape Town (della Porta 1999:209). COSATU’s backing of the strong victory of the ANC in 2004 elections led to a bigger share of the votes nationally as well as in Western Cape. It showed the Alliance had not lost its ability to manufacture consent in civil society. But as was suggested introductorily, this manufacturing of consent is escorted by the exercise of coercion. Even if ANC, the *political party*, dominates civil society, its hegemonic position is also sustained through *state* intervention: “hegemony armoured by coercion” (Gramsci cited in Sassoon 1980:110). SAMWU may be facing the formal political system in the guise of Alliance meetings, congress resolutions and everyday bureaucracy. Social movement organisations on their part face the system in a more confrontational and unpredictable manner. Many of the APF organisations have chosen, or have been forced to choose, a non-collaborationist and militant approach towards the state. Thus the state appears to them more often as police officers, a court or a prison. Social movements have been met with repression by police and civic authorities all over the country in later years, Cape Town being no exception (Desai 2003:9):

When members of the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign held a protest outside the provincial parliament on June 27, 2002, the police fired tear gas into the crowds, arrested forty-four members, and charged them with trespassing.

Police confronting the social movement organisations are not, however, restricted to occasions when activists rally downtown. Harassment and arrests have countered the resisting of forced removals and the re-instatement of evicted households, followed by court cases and imprisonment (Xali Forthcoming). Court procedures add a dimension to the struggle of these activists that is time-consuming, discouraging and costly:

It requires more money than fighting evictions. So, they’re constantly strapped for resources over lawyers.

(pers. comm., Martin Legassick, UWC)

State repression constitutes one of the most serious political obstacles for these organisations. On the other hand, it also represents an aspect of community struggle where the resources of a trade union and the possibilities of a forum like the APF potentially can play an important role. Thus far SAMWU support to the AEC has been given through helpful individuals at the offices in Athlone. It has mostly taken the form of phone calls, finding lawyers and attracting news coverage:

I think they just always came here because I was the most sympathetic person with an office and some resources.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

That kind of assistance, however, does not need the APF as a mediating partner. It has rather been a direct relation between individual unionists and the AEC. The APF has gradually engaged in issues around state repression. They have arranged a seminar for activists on how to deal with state repression, and tried to build a network of lawyers to support activists in need of legal aid. This potential, however, is not yet fully exploited.

BUILDING AN ALTERNATIVE

Although the visions of an alternative political project are many, and millions of South Africans still fail to see improvements in living conditions under the ANC government, a viable political alternative has yet to materialise. Returning to Gramsci's writings on hegemony, an important reason why ANC has managed to sustain and consolidate its supreme position is "the relative weakness of the rival progressive force [...]. It is necessary for the dominant social form to preserve this weakness" (Gramsci cited in Sassoon 1980:210). As long as COSATU stays in the fold of the power holders, any hope of a strong workers' party seems faint. Although the mobilisation of social movements has represented an oppositional voice in cities like Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, they have not been able to replicate their political strength on a national level.

Nevertheless, ambitions to co-ordinate these movements through a loose network of community movements or, alternatively, into a mass workers party remain strong. These visions attract support from social movements, as well as from the South African Left in general. I will here look at how local organisational actors have participated in an endeavour to build an opposite pole to ANC dominance. In so doing, I attempt to illustrate how organisations in a local setting are not only passive receivers of the repercussions of national political dynamics, but

rather that they themselves have the possibility to influence these dynamics through forging national alliances. Furthermore, it tells of the difficulties in such an endeavour. The most promising effort to build a nation-wide coalition of social movements can be found in the Social Movement Indaba (SMI):

I think that the formation that represents the broadest social forces at this point in time left of the ANC is the Social Movement Indaba, because it also has a national character to it.
(pers. comm., AEC representative)

The Social Movement Indaba can be traced back to when South Africa hosted the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002. A Civil Society Forum consisting of COSATU, SANCO, independent unions, NGOs and social movements was to be held parallel to the WSSD. As it developed, it became riddled with tensions to the extent that the social movements fractioned from the forum to launch their own conference and to protest against the ANC-led government. This fraction, called the Social Movement Indaba, overshadowed the initial Civil Society Forum when they took to the streets by the tens of thousands, creating an alternative anti-globalist, anti-neoliberal protest march. On several occasions in the wake of the Social Movement Indaba rally, attempts to create a permanent, nationally coordinating secretariat have been made. Thus far this potential has restricted itself to gathering representatives from various social movements to a conference on a yearly basis.

The accomplishments of the Social Movement Indaba have relevant bearings to my analysis, and affect the prospect of a viable social movement unionism in South Africa at least in two ways: Firstly, it would give the social movements greater political firepower on the level of national politics, forcing the labour movement to relate to it in one way or another. Secondly, if the Social Movement Indaba agrees on a joint political platform and this platform encourages collaboration with progressive trade unions, this would give an impetus for community organisations to establish such connections. To take on any of these challenges, it must successfully confront the hegemonic project of the ANC through participating in the building of an alternative project. I have contrasted my observations at the Social Movement Indaba with two main questions: Has the SMI managed to build unity amongst the social movements? And, has the SMI been able to consequently join forces with other progressive parts of civil society? In line with the understanding of hegemony outlined above, this relationship must transcend merely organisational arrangements, also aiming at building unity at a political and discursive level.

Starting off from observations made at the 2004 Social Movement Indaba in Johannesburg, I will take a look at how this forum has met these challenges. Both the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum and the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign are sending delegations

to these conferences. When the APF was granted 5 delegates to the 2004 Social Movement Indaba, these were to be selected on a basis of involvement, commitment, their organisation's mass base and gender (pers. comm., APF representative). Although they fell short of fulfilling the latter criterion by sending an all-male group, the delegation consisted of members of community-based organisations, the only NGO representative being one member of the working committee. The APF delegation was sent in addition to the delegation of 12 AEC activists. The separation and diverging sizes of these groups reflect the internal friction between the two groups, as well how the national SMI secretariat perceives the mass base of the two organisations.

Has the SMI been successful in establishing internal unity? The Gauteng-based conference secretariat, and many of the social movement representatives, saw a potential in being a political body with a coordinating and integrating function for South African social movements. The underlying agenda was clearly to unite and incorporate all these local and specific struggles into a greater class project. But many obstacles lay in front of fulfilling such an ambitious expectation. One of them was to get the participators to accept each other on equal terms. One of the focal issues discussed at the 2004 conference was the mass base of the participating organisations. Most representatives at the SMI strongly support exclusively accepting social movements in the structure. Although the conference has failed to generate a strong solidarity and identity under the Social Movement Indaba parole, the organisations have a strong identity and self-image as 'social movements'. These social movements want to make sure the SMI remains a community-based movement where democratic processes and a real commitment to the struggles on the ground are incorporated.

But this criterion is problematic. 'Social movements proper' turns out to be an elusive category, and a lot of time is easily spent on debating the actual mass base of the organisations. Furthermore, some of the social movements present at the conference are either descendants of trade union initiatives or sponsored by funded NGOs. Hence, an outright dismissal of all these organisations would spell organisational suicide. But the concern for the social movements' autonomy is a legitimate one. In being economically or otherwise dependent upon NGOs, political parties or trade unions, social movements without resources and inadequate means of communication will easily fall prey to the political ambitions of others. Hence, the lengthy discussions at this conference on the role of NGOs might be fundamental in making it possible to take the SMI further. The conference seemed to reach a consensus on allowing NGOs to play a *supportive role* on a case-to-case basis. While recognising the need for coordination, organisation and ideology, the social movements simultaneously guard their autonomy with suspicion and are unwillingly distracted from their direct commitment to their communities:

The problem is where the SMI will be able to locate itself within the current struggles. And not as a secretariat that must give political guidance and wisdom, but rather to be able to play the role as a facilitator bringing people together, and they themselves will make the decisions and will constitute the SMI.

(pers. comm., AEC representative)

Even if the SMI does not live up to its potential, it has played a role as a social arena. In many ways, the conference finds itself in a similar position to the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum. Its existence represents a potential for uniting organisations with shared interests. This being said, social movement mobilisation in South Africa keeps a consistently pragmatic approach. Immediate issues emerge on a day-to-day basis, and energy is therefore seldom wasted in vain. Hence, if the notion emerges amongst the participants that the synergy effects do not materialise, the existence of the SMI will be called into question. The limited resource base of these movements and the poor level of communication, in addition to the fragile political unity, pose a continuing challenge to the activities of the SMI.

The conference adopted an open, albeit waiting, attitude to the NGOs. However, other strategically important civil society actors, notably trade unions, do also represent potential allies. Has the SMI been able to join forces with these? The relationship between social movements and COSATU remains strained after the WSSD. The repeated 'ultra-left' branding of organisations such as the Gauteng Anti-Privatisation Forum and the Landless Peoples Movement has not bettered the climate for communication and interaction. In spite of this, certain COSATU-affiliated unions have through support and co-action built up goodwill in this segment of civil society, SAMWU being one of them. Conference participants emphasised that the social movements were a part of the working class, and that links with workers had to be forged. For the SMI in the future to enter a formal alliance with the single unions or the labour movement, concessions will have to be made on both sides. A Western Cape COSATU representative supported this view. His main concern was the accountability and democratic practices of the SMI structure:

We can't be told, as COSATU, that we'll go into an alliance with two organisations that are four people and two fax machines. And then we vote on the issues, and they force us into taking a programme of action that won't suit us. So we have got to work out the mechanisms.

(pers. comm., COSATU representative)

Taking into account these unsolved problems, it hardly comes as a surprise that the voice of the SMI has been rather silent on the level of national politics. With regard to political parties, the

representatives at the conference suggested not to involve in formal alliances with any existing parties. Certain leader figures among the social movements have on earlier occasions tried to stand for elections, although this has not proved effective. The main sentiment among the organisations has been one of non-participation or spoilt votes in the national elections. Although the ANC has not yet had any reason to fear these movements in a parliamentary sense, the potential political threat they represent is recognised by the state and the political leadership. Therefore, the use of force discussed in the previous section has also been visible in an SMI context. Police harassment and rhetorical vilifications are manifestations of this exercise of coercion. The latter is particularly evident in the allegations of ‘ultra-leftism’, an accusation heard in local meetings as well as from the president’s chair.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The historical development of the national political landscape imposes conditions on South African civil society. In this chapter I have tried to account for these through a hegemonic perspective. There are several reasons why these conditions can be better understood through making use of a Gramscian toolbox. The concept of hegemony allows for a complexity not only reflecting but also impacting on the political and discursive dispositions of class and race in South Africa’s unique history. Groups and organisations are not static, but are constantly evolved as political subjects through an ongoing contestation. This can help explain the ambiguous positions of certain political actors in South Africa, and their changing over time.

ANC’s unique position in South African political life can be traced back to its role in the anti-apartheid struggle, the strategic position it acquired in the transitional phase, and its ability to manufacture popular consent and build multi-class alliances in the post-apartheid era. The Tripartite Alliance has further consolidated the hegemonic position of the ANC in civil society. Parts of the labour movement are placed in a dilemma between their allegiance to the party in power on the one hand, and their political opposition to neoliberal policies and their sympathy with oppositional community formations on the other. The Cape Metropolitan Branch of SAMWU did, through initiating the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum, enter a contested terrain of political positioning. Through the brief course of its existence, SAMWU’s relationship to the APF has been incapacitated by the union’s allegiance to the Alliance. The ruling power still manages to manufacture consent with workers and unionists in spite of substantial political differences. Dissenting elements of civil society such the social movements in the APF circle are

faced with a constant threat of state repression through harassments and arrests. This illustrates how the hegemonic project develops through corresponding levels of consent and coercion. Challenging this hegemonic project is a daunting task. The attempt to unite social movement organisations through the Social Movement Indaba has not yet resulted in a dynamic political actor on a national level. But it undoubtedly serves an important purpose in bringing together the experiences of the different struggles fought in communities across South Africa. Observers try to identify the spurs of a counterhegemonic project in South African civil society. Regardless of what form a political alternative will take, it seems clear that any counterhegemonic project must acknowledge the complexity of ANC hegemony in order to successfully mobilise the people.

4. CHALLENGES TO LOCAL COOPERATION

Many of the challenges to cooperation in Cape Town are found in organisational, local characteristics. These cannot be reduced to articulations of economic and political dynamics on a national or global scale although they undoubtedly interact with these. Recalling the discussion in the first chapter, the theoretical discussion of social movement unionism was summarised into four main points: aiming at a broad political agenda through forging civil society alliances, maintaining an active union involvement, cooperating according to certain organisational principles and, lastly, involving in an exchange of resources to the benefit of all (Waterman 1995, Moody 1997, Munck 2002, von Holdt 2003, Castree, et al. 2004). By juxtaposing these generalisations with the findings of my case, I attempt to show how some of the challenges to cooperation in Cape Town are closely related to the principles of social movement unionism. I start off with accounting for the aims and objectives of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum and how they have developed over time. Subsequently, I look at the basis of SAMWU's involvement, the principles and issues of inter-organisational cooperation and the exchange of resources that has taken place between these organisations.

POTENTIAL AND REALITY

The aims and objectives of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum have been continuously shaped and contested since its inception, and different participating organisations have different views on what it ought to be. Hence, the visions of the forum are not identical with SAMWU's motivation behind its initiative, although the politics of the trade union inarguably has influenced the programme of the forum to a large extent. On the one hand aims and objectives are translated into a more operational mode by identifying practical roles the forum could play. On the other hand, this process still reflects the different perspectives of the participants. The first point in question is the rationale that prompted the trade union to launch the forum. Subsequently, I explicate how the aims and objectives of the forum have been worked out and developed since 2001.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In the time leading up to the establishment of the APF, three related motives can be identified on part of SAMWU and the political situation the union was in. Firstly, they had been running an anti-privatisation campaign in the union during the late Nineties. This was a high-profile campaign, and the union appointed a national campaign coordinator, spent resources on research and organised campaign structures. Throughout this campaign there was widespread agreement that a pivotal criteria for its success was to “mobilise the communities to support the campaign” (pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative). Notwithstanding how the active component of the union’s anti-privatisation campaign had faded by the time of the forum’s inception, the APF initiative must be seen in light of this. Secondly, the trade union saw a harmony of interest with communities that suffered from problems in relation to service delivery. SAMWU members felt these problems as employees whose working conditions and job security were under attack. But also as community members threatened by cut-offs and poor service delivery. The trade union and the social movements moreover drew their membership from the same working class communities, paving the way for organising on the basis of common interests, geographical proximity and a shared understanding. As both camps identify neoliberal policies as the main cause to their grievances, this shared understanding also implies what Xali (Forthcoming:27) refers to as “awareness of a common adversary”. Thirdly, SAMWU’s invitation was sent out at a time when the union faced a very specific political context, namely the Ucity Commission and their recommendations on the restructuring of the Cape Town Metropolitan Area. This process was formally open to community involvement and participation, and the local union officials wanted to make use of this while simultaneously lobby support from communities for their anti-privatisation policies (pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative).

As the APF was conceived as a single-issue forum, it was initially not perceived as particularly ideological (pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch official). However, the nature of privatisation encouraged a range of political actors to get involved, increasingly giving the forum a leftwing political profile:

The question almost inevitably came up: If we are against privatisation, then what are we for?
And then the issue of a systemic alternative to privatisation and capitalism arises.

(pers. comm., APF representative)

Box 2: APF COMMISSION DOCUMENT

During the first years of its existence, three commissions were appointed to discuss the role of the APF. A consolidated document proposing amendments were later put together. Not being a formalised platform, it nevertheless gives an indication of which issues the discussions have revolved around. The main aims and objectives are found under the **General** heading. The next two paragraphs, **Unifying struggles** and **Supportive functions** can be seen an operationalisation and concretisation of the former. In addition to these, there are also 25 points **On the form and structure** of the forum. The document in its entirety is attached, together with the notes from the 3 commissions (Appendix 4):

General:

1. The aim is to wage the struggle against neo-liberal policies that lead to privatisation
2. *To develop alternatives to the whole neo-liberal agenda* (to be replaced by a more concrete formulation)
3. To fight for transparent, participatory, democratic and accountable forms of government
4. Mobilise against attacks on the poor
5. Fight against anti-humanist tendencies and policies
6. Oppose privatisation in all its forms
7. Prepare the working class for the next stage of the fight against privatisation
8. Develop an independent and uniform policy on the fundamental questions
9. Develop the programme of action against privatisation

Unifying struggles:

1. Co-ordinate workers' and communities' struggles against the effects of privatisation
2. Link up with other struggles nationally and internationally
3. Facilitate and link existing struggles and campaigns
4. Co-ordinate and unify different struggles nationally and internationally
5. Co-ordinate and unify the struggles into one
6. Unite individuals and organisations against privatisation
7. Link shopfloor and community struggles
8. Co-ordinate workers' and communities' struggles against privatisation
9. Support rural struggles and link these to urban movements
10. Build the **United Front** of the working class against privatisation

Supportive functions:

1. Share information and knowledge to broaden consciousness of the neo-liberal agenda
2. Run educational programmes and mobilise communities
3. Highlight educational issues and mobilise student support
4. Engage worker-leaders to take up community issues
5. Task is to facilitate and guide struggles
6. Educate people at grassroots level about the causes and effects of privatisation
7. Educational and legal support should be given by the APF
8. Support, participate and engage in existing struggles
9. Support the building of mass organisations at grassroots level
10. Give direction and support to communities in struggle
11. Assist communities in building sustainable structures to defend themselves against the onslaught of the state
12. Build leadership
13. Develop a sound network of organisations within the APF and beyond
14. Build structures necessary to take the struggle forward through mass mobilisation
15. Monitor and expose all pro-privatisation legislation

But if condemning capitalism, imperialism, globalisation and privatisation was something they all agreed on, then identifying what they were for proved to be an intractable task. It was important to the union officials not to let other issues than privatisation create divisions. Still, political debate became an important part of the APF meetings in its formative phase. Looking at the proposed amendments under the “General” heading in **Box 2**, several comments can be made. Seemingly, the scope of the SAMWU’s anti-privatisation campaign and the municipal restructuring process has been attended to. However, opposition to privatisation and the claim for a democratisation of government are coupled with formulations such as “policies on the fundamental questions” and “preparing the working class”. By reading these amendments and other APF reports it becomes clear that issues far beyond the Capetonian political scene, such as GEAR and NEPAD, have been discussed since the forum’s early days. The different participants seem to agree upon the need to build an alternative political agenda. But at the same time they realise that developing a joint ideological and political platform can take time and focus away from more pressing issues of the forum. The unionists and the social movement activists alike seem to agree upon this (pers. comm., SAMWU and AEC representatives). Likewise, the notion that the forum could function as an embryo for a mass workers party has so far been put into cold storage.

In line with Munck’s (2002) vision of a social movement unionism, another interesting aspect of the APF is whether it has proved capable of incorporating gender-, unemployment- and environmental issues into its political agenda. Even though environmental organisations have participated in the forum, the direct action on these issues has been minimal. Furthermore, there is a long way to go to effectively include a gender perspective in the APF agenda:

Even us as women haven’t been focusing on the issue, addressing the issue of women, in the APF. I think that it is not necessarily because of an oversight or that you see it as a less important issue. But I think the area of the effects of privatisation, it’s so huge that you tend to focus more on what type of campaign should we have to oppose privatisation. And in that, the focus on women is then lost.

(pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative)

Xali also comments on how issues of gender pose challenges to union-community cooperation in his study of the relationship between SAMWU members and the various anti-eviction committees in Cape Town. The bulk of the active members of the AEC are women. Although he calls for further research on this issue, he notes that “actions and views on part of SAMWU that are not sensitive to an active female base of the AEC might undermine linkages between SAMWU and AEC” (Xali Forthcoming:39). This can also be said about the APF as a coordinating body. Xali’s research moreover shows how another of these issues, unemployment,

also has served to highlight differences between SAMWU members and communities. This has particularly been the case in instances where community members have participated in community projects such as meter reading for private companies. Although this has been a response to poverty and unemployment, it seems contradictory to AEC's commitment to oppose all forms of privatisation. Needless to say, participation in these projects does not go down well with SAMWU members, who view it as self-exploitation and categorically regard such projects to be the responsibility of the municipality, as opposed to being outsourced to private contractors (Xali Forthcoming).

I conclude that the aims and the objectives of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum have gradually evolved from the initial motivation behind SAMWU's initiative. The union was facing a political challenge in the Ucity Commission and their plans for the restructuring of Cape Town. In this situation they saw a harmony of interest between the objectives of their ongoing anti-privatisation campaign and the concerns of the communities. From this starting point, the forum has gone on to be a place of debate for a wide range of issues. A challenge that surfaced in this respect is to avoid being hamstrung by ideological intrigue. Although they have tried to be sensitive to new issues beyond the realm of production, the APF still has a long way to go to effectively take up pressing challenges related to gender and unemployment.

THE ROLE OF THE APF

Regardless of revolutionary ambitions there were, as SAMWU had envisioned, ideologically less pretentious tasks that could constitute the role of the APF. The objectives of the proposed amendments in **Box 2** might seem diverging and undefined. But the document attempts to operationalise them into two main purposes: On the one hand to *unify the struggles* of the various participating organisations, and on the other hand to assist these organisations through various *supportive functions*. The extent to which the forum has managed to pursue and tackle these questions indicates how they have succeeded in fulfilling their above-listed aims and objectives. But what of this potential has materialised since the beginning of 2000? The forum has been involved in demonstrations, pickets, workshops, campaigns and other activities directed at privatisation policies in the city (pers. comm., SAMWU and APF representatives). Some of these events have been initiated by the APF, whereas in others they have merely participated alongside other organisations.

Has the APF contributed to unify popular struggles? Clearly, the APF aimed to function as a coordinating body, facilitating networking and cooperation between various local

organisations as well as structures beyond Cape Town. The forum has, however, not achieved the organisational capacity, popular support or political strength allowing it to function as an effective coordinator of workers and communities in their anti-privatisation struggle. The APF has also been a driving force in trying to build links between the organisations in Cape Town and nation-wide networks. In this way local social movements, such as the Concerned Residents' Movement (COREMO), have been able to send representatives to the Social Movement Indaba in 2004 on an APF mandate. In addition to the 2004 conference, the APF's presence at the WSSD in Johannesburg in 2002 and at a National Exploratory Workshop organised by the Gauteng APF in 2001 indicates that the Cape Town forum has aimed at participating in national network building since its inception. The forum also aims to mobilise student support, but the APF has not been very visible at universities in Cape Town. Since 2002, however, activists from the University of Cape Town Workers Support Committee (UCTWSC) have attended APF meetings. The UCTWSC mobilise around the rights of the outsourced workers at the university, as they have minimal job security and are intimidated from getting unionised. In addition to these workers, academics and some students at UCT are active in the organisation. Those who represent UCTWSC in APF meetings are not outsourced workers, but members of the academic staff. In general, while falling short of building a 'united front', the APF's success has been on a more modest scale by having provided a network for dialogue. Regular meetings and a certain level of communication have contributed to creating an environment wherein organisations can cooperate and assist each other. In providing a regular meeting space and time, the APF has been described as the "home for the voice of progressive organisations" (pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative).

Has the APF proved capable of assisting and supporting participant organisations in their diversity? Has being the home for the *voice* of these progressive organisations also entailed accommodating and facilitating the *action* of these movements? An interesting point in relation to the supportive functions of the forum is whether the APF has managed to offer any assistance on education and guidance to communities. As evidenced by the document in **Box 2** the APF explicitly aims to run educational programmes, share information and build consciousness. Assisting communities with educational and organisational support would in turn fuel political consciousness and mobilisation on APF issues. There have been several initiatives to run educational workshops and meetings in communities on these issues. Nevertheless, these have been limited to isolated occasions where working committee members have organised meetings in the townships. Although many of those involved in the APF see a potentially important task for the forum in running educational programmes, the majority of these initiatives to date have

been initiated by SAMWU union officials or other political activists without any direct relation to the APF, one example being when SAMWU members taught community members to fix water leakages and reconnect disconnected water supply (Xali Forthcoming). On the level of education and guidance, the APF has not yet fulfilled its potential with respect to its supportive functions. Yet again, the question of organisational capacity, popular support and political strength can help explain why the APF fails to meet its own ambitions. The APF has, on the other hand, been instrumental in some of the resource assistance from the trade union and NGOs to the social movements. This issue will be dealt with later.

In light of the explicit aims of unifying and supporting worker and community struggles, the APF has a long way to go to meet its own expectations. Without disregarding what has been accomplished, the forum has still not advanced from a political potential to an organisational reality. The same holds true for the relationship between SAMWU as a workers' organisation and the community organisations of Cape Town. Through looking at the different aspects of this unrealised potential, a better understanding of the challenges to cooperation between these can be attained.

In the introductory discussion on social movement unionism it was characterised as a strategy of alliance building with other civil society actors organising around common interests. In a similar fashion was the SAMWU initiative a response to a particular context in space and time, where the union saw a political potential in such an alliance. This alliance took form as a loose network structure, but the differing views on organisational dynamics and methods of action nevertheless led the structure of the forum to evolve through constant contestation. Some literature on social movement unionism has suggested that these alliances are united behind a common class vision. Clearly, the struggle for workers and poor brought the various actors of the APF together, but that did not prevent the development of the forum to be characterised by ideological and political debate. By bringing together different practices of organisations, and in being a place where a multitude of identities and discourses meet, debate has been a necessary part of the formative phase. Unifying and supporting the struggles of the workers and the communities have been identified as the main roles of the APF. Yet being able to accommodate and stimulate diversity by taking on tasks beyond a narrow union mandate remains a challenge for SAMWU in the APF.

BASIS OF UNION INVOLVEMENT

In social-movement unionism neither the unions nor their members are passive in any sense. Unions take an active lead in the streets, as well as in politics.

(Moody 1997:276)

To Kim Moody (1997:276), the trade union as a whole, through “activation of the mass of union members”, involves actively in the social movement unionism strategy. Drawing from the historical experience of South African and Brazilian labour struggles, he upholds shop-floor democracy and flat organisational structures as pillars of the ‘social movement union’. An examination of the organisational make-up and procedures of a national union as SAMWU, or even the structure of the Metro branch, falls beyond the scope of this study. Here I will concentrate on the relation between the union and external actors in civil society. This approach raises three questions as particularly interesting in the case of the APF: Who in the union hierarchy are involved? Is there awareness of the union’s community involvement amongst the rank-and-file? And, are unionists participating in the APF doing so in an active manner?

ENGAGING LEADERSHIP

The local Metro branch of SAMWU initiated the APF, and office bearers from nearly every sector of the organisation have been involved (pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative). Union officials from the National Office also supported and participated in the early phase of the forum. As the two offices are situated in the same building in Athlone, this could presumptively facilitate conditions for cooperation on issues such as community involvement between the local and the national level of the organisation. But due to the reluctance to engage with social movement organisations as a national union, the activities of the APF remain wholly dependent on the local Metro branch office bearers and their personal commitment. The scepticism and alienation shown by officials at the National Office is illustratively described by one of the officials:

SAMWU’s Cape Town Branch is like a foreign beast. That’s the gate over there. That’s the border, and unfortunately that’s the way it tends to operate. [...] If those of us in the Head Office identified more with Cape Town APF, we’d be more directly involved. To my knowledge none of us are.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

The indisposition of the National Office does also find its explanation in strategic deliberations:

I think one of the failures of the past was precisely because the union involvement was not as rooted in the Western Cape and the Cape Town branch that it should have been. And that then meant that often it was seen as a relationship with the National Office of SAMWU, as opposed to workers on the ground. We had no constituency as the National Office. The people with the constituency are the shopstewards and the organisers who work on the ground in the Cape Town area. And therefore any success of the APF is going to depend on involving those people.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

There seems to be an attitude of trying to place the responsibility of the APF engagement at the next step down the organisational ladder. Depicting the leadership as unwilling might nevertheless be too easy. The idea of the leadership seems to be locating responsibility on the level where privatisation is most effectively counteracted:

It should primarily be the role of the Metro branch or the Western Cape region to lead this to the extent that we can provide support. Participating in any activities that happen at this point in time - we [the National Office] can do that. But I think that, strategically, it will be much more beneficial for the Western Cape region of SAMWU, through its Cape Town Metro branch to basically taking the lead in driving the process at this level. Because it would then link to the COSATU structure here, the regional structure of COSATU with other affiliates of COSATU on a regional level.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

By mentioning COSATU's regional office, another question surfaces: Could an involvement by higher levels of the union hierarchy reach into the regional office of COSATU? Trade union involvement in APF meetings has, apart from SAMWU, been restricted to the individual commitment of unionists from other public sector COSATU unions, notably NEHAWU. COSATU's regional office has not been visible in APF activities in Cape Town, save the exception of one COSATU official partaking in a strategy workshop. The APF has made an approach in writing to COSATU requesting formal support, but has to date not received any response.

We challenged COSATU why they were not involved actively with the APF. Their response was that because the unions are involved, they are involved. We represent COSATU. But what we would see happening is that the leadership of COSATU plays a vital role, an important role, jointly with us.

(pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative)

A COSATU representative defends this position. His rhetoric follows the same vein as the National Office representative above, by delegating the APF duty to a lower level in the union hierarchy:

We don't, as COSATU, necessarily lead every campaign, but the unions of COSATU lead it, they're there as COSATU unions. [...] Although philosophically we support them, because we support the fight against privatisation.

(pers. comm., COSATU representative)

In summary, it can be noted that while several factors would suggest that there are fertile conditions for a closer relationship to the leadership of the union, and even COSATU representatives, the APF has not managed to incite commitment from union leadership. Moreover, the initial goodwill on part of the upper ranks of the union hierarchy has gradually waned. The political scale on which some of the policies of privatisation are implemented can in part explain why the metropolitan branch is seen as the most suitable union structure to engage in this political mobilisation. But this is arguably also related to the wider political contestations described in the previous chapter.

RANK-AND-FILE PARTICIPATION

For the union-community links to sustain and matter in the everyday lives of workers and communities, cooperation between SAMWU members and the local organisations is even more important. An explicit ambition on part of the Metro branch officials was not only to maintain active support from the National Office, but to extend the union involvement down to the rank-and-file of the union: shopstewards and members. SAMWU members in general have a strong consciousness about the problems of service delivery along with a strong feeling of responsibility for their communities (pers. comm., Linda Cooper, CHED, UCT) They are virtually by definition opposed to privatisation, although the knowledge of the subject may vary:

They are all aware of these things. In the beginning when they talked about privatisation, the SAMWU members didn't really understand "What is privatisation and all that stuff?". But it became clearer, and the process goes on, so it became clearer to the members.

(pers. comm., SAMWU member)

But the rank-and-file of SAMWU appears to have very limited acquaintance with the APF as an organisation. Office bearers active in the APF meetings have briefed shopstewards either directly or through Joint Shopsteward Councils about APF activities, but this communication has mostly been a one-way report (pers. comm., SAMWU members). However, most workers are familiar with the social movements, such as the AEC. As previously mentioned, many of them live in the same communities as the community formations operate. Some shopstewards and workers have been involved in AEC and elsewhere during the formative stage of the movements, but many of

them withdrew at a later stage. The reasons given for their withdrawal range from the disapproval of their working methods to the social movements' perceived lack of democracy. Many SAMWU members are also having duties in other organisations like the local branches of ANC and SACP, making an active involvement in politically controversial social movements incompatible to their political allegiance (pers. comm., SAMWU members).

The ILRIG report (Xali Forthcoming) introduced earlier was based on interviews with workers and SAMWU members from three depots in the Cape Flats townships. The union representatives, as well as the representatives from the anti-eviction committees, expressed strong solidarity and support of each other's struggles. Many of them suggested they work together on various issues: resource and skills exchange, reconnections, strike action, empowerment and political education. Notwithstanding these observations, the report concludes (Xali Forthcoming:27):

With all these rhetorical commitments to collaboration and joint campaign there is however little evidence that SAMWU members actually play an active role in AEC activities even where they live in the same communities. There are almost no examples of joint campaign at local level or at the level of the Unicity.

Xali also pinpoints SAMWU's membership criteria as obstacles to this kind of cooperation, as those who get retrenched and those who go to retirement are disqualified from membership in the union. In an alternative scenario, where these people were welcomed in the trade union, the links between activists and unionists could be significantly strengthened. This could in turn forge stronger ties between the two organisations (Xali Forthcoming). The awareness of the rank-and-file and SAMWU workers' commitment to social movements in their communities remains a central challenge. In spite of few practical accomplishments, union officials, shopstewards, workers and community activists alike have acknowledged this challenge.

In conclusion, SAMWU members and shopstewards have an interest and potential commitment to the cause of the APF. But workers have very limited knowledge of the forum. Some are acquainted with the anti-eviction committees in their area, but their experience with these formations is ambivalent. Even when workers and community groups have been open-minded to each other, little actual cooperation has occurred.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Are unionists participating in APF activities and engaging with social movements doing so in an *active* way? The social movements stress the spontaneity and alert required to support their day-to-day struggle:

Communities respond based on the issues that confront them at that particular time, and they have to respond because it is a matter of life and death. People have been evicted; there have been direct confrontation with the police, the security forces, the sheriff and the court. So, it had this immediate nature to it. People have to respond now. They couldn't wait for a council to meet or a congress, a conference to happen.

(pers. comm., AEC representative)

Although my SAMWU informants acknowledged the need for continuous follow-up of the social movements in precarious situations, they felt hamstrung by time constraints. Officials involved in this kind of activity must dedicate energy, resources and time to assist activists while fulfilling professional and domestic obligations:

People have got their own time frame, their time constraints, their own communities, you see? It requires a lot of work. It requires a lot of commitment. [...] If we try to organise a hall for them, sometimes we have to pay for that hall. Some people pay out of their pockets for it.

(pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative)

But the immediate nature of many community issues requires a level of commitment on part of trade union officials that they are unable to fulfil:

The AEC has always done the work that needs to be done - without the APF. There comes the APF sometimes and the APF doesn't really do much to help them.

(pers. comm., AEC supporter, SAMWU)

I think the AEC's problem is that APF comrades are not always available to assist them. For example when they need lawyers, to fight the cases, nobody are available, nobody to advise them, nobody to assist them, they've got no infrastructure, they have no resources, et cetera. Although we are assisting with photocopying, telephones sometimes, faxes. We assist them where it's possible.

(pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative)

Nevertheless, there are many examples of trade unionists being actively committed to assisting social movements by spending time and resources on activism.

By way of conclusion, unionists and other activists in the APF have not been able to meet the expectations of the social movements, which need frequent assistance of material, legal or political nature. Moreover, this interaction often bypasses the APF structure and appears as direct

contact between individual unionists and social movement activists. Hence it is questionable whether the forum in its present form is necessary to channel union commitment to the struggles of the social movements.

In summary, the engagement of Metro branch officials in the APF has drawn limited and waning leadership support and commitment. Furthermore, the potential commitment of the union rank-and-file has been blocked by limited knowledge of the forum and ambivalent relationship to present community formations. This places more responsibility on the commitment of a few individuals, whose time constraints limit their availability. Finally, the union's role in social movement activism is not necessarily channelled through the APF, although the contact network around the forum has facilitated this cooperation.

ISSUES OF ORGANISATION

Whereas the previous section dealt with the basis on which the union entered this cooperation, I will in what follows look at the issues of organisation that emerge when a variety of organisations, and organisational types, meet in the APF. The principles posed by Waterman (1995) as guarding inter-organisational relations, namely autonomy, equality and democracy, have a strong intuitive appeal and are frequently used by unionists and community activists alike. However, as will become clear through the following section, they also represent a bone of contention in the organisational interaction between trade unions, social movements and other actors. Three issues surfaced as distinctive challenges to cooperation with my informants: The question of the mass base of the organisations, and thus how they are represented in the APF; the differing views and practices of organisational democracy; and, finally, their working methods. These questions are related to each other and pertain to the abovementioned principles of organisation.

MASS BASE AND REPRESENTATION

The 'mass base' concept has argumentative force in the political environment the APF is placed within, where solidarity towards workers and poor is strong. The extent to which the forum is perceived to represent the masses determines its legitimacy of the APF. But identifying the mass base of the APF, or the lack of it, can easily become a rhetorical exercise. Alongside discussing the distinction between organisations with a mass base and those without, there is a related

debate on drafting what role NGOs and other organisations without a constituency in the communities can play.

The membership base of SAMWU and the community-based make-up of the social movements suggest that these organisations could provide the mass base of the APF. But as shown above, the trade union has in effect not incorporated or mobilised their mass base in the activities of the APF:

If the Anti-Eviction Campaign or the APF has something they will invite a SAMWU speaker. But that is very different from SAMWU ousting all 12,000 members to go to an APF action.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

The idea behind the APF initiative was to involve communities in political resistance through community-based mass movements. But the actual mass base of the various organisations remains a contested issue. The social movements claim to represent an extensive popular constituency (pers. comm., SAMWU and AEC representatives). However, certain union officials from COSATU and SAMWU are throwing doubt upon the veracity of this claim:

I suspect that it's not nearly as large as the leaders suggest. But of course, theoretically and potentially, they represent a large number of people – in exactly the same way as the Anti-Privatisation Forum does. [...] I think we need not to be persuaded by our own propaganda.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

Who's the APF? It's a couple of activists, with maybe now and then a few people from the community. They haven't been able to build a sustained base around their issue.

(pers. comm., COSATU representative)

Although these statements suggest that activists exaggerate the size of their organisations, it might also reveal prejudice on the unionists' behalf. Trade unions have formalised membership figures and information about their size is public and verifiable. Union officials do not only question the mass base of non-union structures in relation to the Social Movement Indaba, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also in a local Cape Town context. Regardless of how well founded these suspicions might be, it can lead to arrogance on behalf of the social movements whose constituency is defined otherwise (pers. comm., COSATU representative). The APF participants strive to accommodate differing views on constituency and mass base into their activity:

The community of Mandela Park is the rank-and-file. At any moment in an APF meeting we don't expect the community of Mandela Park to arrive. We are very happy when representatives of the Mandela Park AEC arrive, because of their connections with the

community of Mandela Park. So, reaching the rank-and-file doesn't mean sitting in the same room with every unemployed or low-paid worker in South Africa at the same time.

(pers. comm., APF representative)

In spite of lack of involvement on part of the union rank-and-file and the uncertainty around the constituency of the social movements, the common understanding is that they form the mass base of the APF. It is to these organisations APF owes its mandate:

The key areas of struggle are the municipal workers, the communities and the workers' support committee [UCTWSC]. Those are three key areas of struggle that has been taking place the last three or four years. Those are the struggles around which the APF must base itself.

(pers. comm., AEC representative)

Notwithstanding participation by these organisations, the make-up of the APF has been distinguished by a strong NGO presence:

The Anti-Eviction Committee is very strong and very powerful, and they have the masses, while the Anti-Privatisation Forum doesn't have the masses. We [the APF] have NGOs, small NGOs, which don't have the masses behind them.

(pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative)

Some of these are organisations with a level of funding, such as ILRIG and AIDC, with employed researchers and access to resources and means of communication. Others are groups without funds. Ideologically they represent a continuum of red shades from social democrat to revolutionary Marxist. While some NGOs have a mandate of trying to formulate government policies to communities, others view themselves as the embryo of a revolutionary vanguard party. In a similar manner to the representatives at the Social Movement Indaba mentioned above, the APF has hosted numerous debates on the role of these NGOs. Social movements activists have experienced how political dictates and ambitions have gone hand in hand with NGO assistance (pers. comm., AEC representatives). People affiliated to the NGOs suggest that their organisations have an important part to play in the forum, although they themselves also seem to be aware of the issues raised by social movement activists. They often stress the importance of helping to "build organisation" or to offer "educational programmes" (pers. comm., Gauteng and Cape Town APF representatives).

Amidst the misgiving of the social movement activists on behalf of the NGOs, they do recognise that some of them have made valuable contributions through material resources and otherwise. NGO access to funding has on several occasions benefited the social movements in the APF. Certain social movement organisations have also on occasion invited people from

NGOs and political groupings to hold workshops on political issues. Representatives from the NGOs acknowledge that they benefit from this collaboration as well, through getting a better sense of what the issues on the ground are at every single time, and thus directing their research (pers. comm., APF representative). The debate on social movements has followed the APF since its inception and was amplified by the WSSD and the discussions at the Social Movement Indaba (pers. comm., APF representative). In a similar vein to the SMI, the NGOs are assigned a supportive role within the APF environment. They are not to lead the anti-privatisation struggle (pers. comm., APF and AEC representatives). This reflects the political commitment of individual activists, trade unions and NGOs to let the anti-privatisation struggle be taken forward by those affected most directly, municipal workers and poor communities.

The procedures of representation do also reflect the difference between supportive and active roles. The APF is an informal structure and has, with the exception of the working committee, no organisational hierarchy and is open to all sharing their political goal. Initially, when the Local Government Transformation Forum started out as a specifically issue-based forum. They had a set goal of countering the Unicity Commission. Issues of internal democracy and community representation were of a secondary nature. As the organisation took on different roles and were confronted with the organisational dynamics over time, these issues and the question of form gradually came to the fore (pers. comm., SAMWU and AEC representatives). Given the forum's NGO character, this could easily become a think-tank for intellectuals and NGO professionals. Nevertheless there are examples of organisational procedures that try to accommodate its allegiance to communities and workers.

The APF is not a general assembly with one representative from each organisation regardless of constituency. They rather invite all members of all groups to the plenaries:

Say out of the 500 or 1000 members of the Anti-Eviction Committee, two delegates will attend the meeting of the AEC. Now we are saying: Send all your delegates, even if it is fifty or sixty, send them to represent each community. They don't want to be locked up in the AEC discussions only. Then they'll understand more of the issues of privatisation, the effects of privatisation, and the consequences and how it impact on people's lives.

(pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative)

Only a few representatives of each organisation tend to attend the meetings, usually selected according to their own internal democracy. At the time of writing, all attendants enjoy equal voting rights, but a proposition to give each mass-based organisation a maximum of 3 votes and each supporting organisation a maximum of 2, is under way (APF 2005). Furthermore, giving report-back in plenaries is reserved trade unions and social movements. This report-back consists in giving a brief account of their recent activities concerning privatisation. The NGOs, on the

other hand, do not report. They rather join in with the other organisations in commenting on the issues of fellow APF representatives. Social movement activists have occupied very few positions in the working committee of the APF. An explanation might be that working committee members need access to resources and offices to handle correspondence, summoning and paper work. The dominance of SAMWU in the working committee and the general activity of the forum has been decreasing. Certain social movement activists view this tendency as unfortunate if this space is filled by political groupings (pers. comm., AEC representative).

In conclusion, the forum identifies a direct link to the workers and communities as crucial to its own mandate. In spite of heated discussions on the factual constituency of the participant organisations, a general consensus identifies SAMWU, the social movements and the university worker support committee as representing the mass base of the forum. Organisations without a popular base, such as NGOs, do have a role to play in the forum. However, as their mandate has been contested, their role are seen to be supportive and not as a political leadership. The way APF organisations are represented, internally and externally, reflects this position.

RHYTHM AND PACE

Another important point that was repeatedly mentioned by informants was the challenge of bridging the different organisational dynamics of the participant organisations. The way this is operated on an everyday basis puts the interaction between union and community to the test. It also serves as a reminder of the wide-ranging interpretations of organisational democracy. To delve into this issue, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign provides the most illustrative gate of entry:

The Anti-Eviction Campaign emerged from the involvement of communities within the APF, but it started also to develop its own character and its own rhythm and its own pace. This is something which I raise quite often within the Anti-Privatisation Forum, because the communities think it is difficult to understand what role it has within the APF, and how the APF assists them within their particular struggle. This is part of the complication. Because within the APF you have a wide range of different forces, starting from the trade unions, to the NGOs, to the academics, then you have various left organisations within there, and then you have the community organisations that came in as well. Now, having this wide range of forces in this forum raised different issues, but also there were different rhythms operating at the same time.

(pers. comm., AEC representative)

The AEC exemplifies the complexity the trade union faces when it seeks collaboration partners in civil society. Being a spin-off of the APF, it soon became a much more wide-ranging

organisation with closer ties to the local communities on the Cape Flats. The AEC operates on a day-to-day basis. As mentioned above, the organisational dynamics of trade unions, NGOs and social movements are different. Moreover, the dynamics within a social movement organisation can vary substantially. The strains put on the APF operations due to the different rhythms of the organisations is also found within the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign. Bringing together community organisations from Coloured and black townships with different histories and cultures, they display different modes of operation and organisation. Some of them rely on an action committee with a mandate on behalf of the community, whereas others make decisions exclusively on the basis of community meetings. Some summon their constituency on a monthly basis, others have mass meeting twice a week (Xali Forthcoming).

Notwithstanding their diversity, the social movements share certain characteristics that set them apart from other APF participants. Although they have a mass base like the trade unions, theirs is loosely networked in contrast to the bureaucracy of a trade union. They may share the horizontal organisation of an NGO, but lack their resources. Many activists share ideological points of view with many of the intellectuals and left groupings, but they come from different class backgrounds. In general, these movements are more flexible in form than trade unions and NGOs. From the point of view of other organisations, this may threaten their organisational democracy. The lack of formalised leadership and the swift decision-making coupled with poor communication make the organisations less accountable. Furthermore, through being open to the strong influence of certain individuals, certain NGO professionals and union shopstewards have characterised the social movements' internal affairs as "undemocratic" (pers. comm., APF and AEC representatives). In the same vein, some union members who have been working with social movements have voiced concerns over the "vague mandates" of the social movement representatives on behalf of their constituencies (pers. comm., SAMWU and NGO representatives).

The APF faces a challenging task in bridging these different rhythms and paces. As one of the explicit objectives of the forum is to unite the different struggles of Cape Town, another question might be raised: on what organisational basis can unity be achieved? Given the multitude of organisations and the different make-up of their constituencies, several informants have identified this as a central challenge (pers. comm., APF representatives). Should there be an umbrella structure for anti-privatisation struggle in Cape Town? SAMWU initially conceived the forum to be a "networking body" with a coordination function, but this has not yet come to fruition:

The AEC is their own formal structure, and the APF is their own formal structure. I am saying: No, they must come together and form an umbrella body. Otherwise it wouldn't be good to have two separate bodies fighting the same struggle.

(pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative)

Neither the APF working committee nor union officials aspire to be granted authority over participating organisations. Rather, the APF aims to be the forum wherein autonomous organisations see the best opportunity to come together and join forces around issues of privatisation in Cape Town. However, the idea of an 'umbrella body' seems to trigger mixed reactions amongst the social movements, which in their minds seem to imply a hierarchy in which they are to be subordinate. This has led to some contestation between the APF representatives and those affiliated to the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign:

They [the APF] expected to be the umbrella body, and that the community should come and report to them, and kind of ask them for guidance. And they didn't understand that in the communities things are happening every day on a regular basis. And the communities also weren't interested in having kind of a body to oversee them.

(pers. comm., AEC supporter, SAMWU)

The communities think it is difficult to understand what role it has within the APF, and how does the APF assist them within their particular struggle. This is part of the complication.

(pers. comm., AEC representative)

The relationship between the APF and the AEC in terms of affiliation has been through a tumultuous process, and is not yet defined. It was highlighted by the organisations' attempts to establish a regional conference secretariat and arrange the 2004 conference in Cape Town. This collaboration stranded, and it was decided to move the conference to Johannesburg where it was coordinated by a Gauteng-based secretariat. Their differences were further evidenced by the fact that two separate delegations were sent from Cape Town to attend the SMI.

In conclusion, the loosely networked umbrella body might be the closest the APF will come to organisational unity. But lack of rigidity can also fail to give participants an assurance that they are treated as autonomous bodies on an equal basis, and that their notion of organisational democracy is attended to.

WORKING METHODS

Whereas organisational democracy refers to the internal make-up of the various organisations, the organisations brought together by the APF display differences also in the approach in which they meet their surroundings. Ungovernability, ‘noncollaborationalism’ and militancy were considered appropriate by wide layers of the resistance movement during the anti-apartheid struggle. Now, the complex post-apartheid reality prompts different political actors to employ different working methods. One of the most visible ways to differentiate the organisations linked to the anti-privatisation movement in Cape Town is to look at their repertoire of action. On the one hand, this concerns the controversy around civil disobedience and militancy. On the other hand, the issue of working methods includes whether to engage formal authorities or not.

This is yet another example of an area where the anti-eviction committees’ strategies are contested. But as in the case of organisational dynamics, the AEC displays an internal variety of working methods, and cannot be treated as a homogeneous body. The actions of anti-eviction committees in certain areas, including reinstatements and street blockades, suggest the AEC affiliates have adopted an increasingly militant line. Notwithstanding the attention and press coverage these episodes might attract, other anti-eviction committees have chosen a more technical approach (pers. comm., AEC representative). Even those who have been in confrontation with the police on several occasions have a day-to-day agenda that is characterised by legal aid to community members and low-profile organisational work. But the symbolic effect of these episodes has further stigmatised the AEC as vigilant and controversial. Those cases where community activists have attacked council property have in particular served as an impetus for many SAMWU shopstewards to refrain from participating in AEC activity, regardless of their opposition to evictions (Xali Forthcoming, pers. comm., SAMWU member). In the opinion of certain AEC activists, the attitude of the APF civil disobedience poses the opposite problem, namely the lack of activism and militancy:

I remember [the community activist] came to the APF and said: “OK, I’ll arrange an opportunity for the APF to come and address all the workers there about privatisation.” And it went into a two-hour long debate, and eventually they decided not to go, because they said: “We can’t do just one workshop, we have to have a program.” I mean: Make a program, but at the same time do the other stuff! [...] There’s no action! Another time we went to invade a meeting at the Unicity, and that almost didn’t happen because people were saying: “Comrades, we don’t see how this action will build organisation.” - just basically making excuses not to do anything.

(pers. comm., AEC supporter, SAMWU)

Although this is partly explained by the time constraints of full-time union officials, it is also clear that not all APF participants are as eager to partake in activism as the AEC members.

Also the level of engagement with formal authorities displays a wide range of approaches within the AEC and among the various APF participants. As the different anti-eviction committees mobilise around different issues and with different targets, engaging the local state is not always the most effective way to go about. Furthermore, activists within the AEC have different experiences with ANC councillors, the police and other actors, leading to different attitudes towards formal authorities:

Within the Anti-Eviction Campaign there are unevenness in terms of approach towards government, and how to engage. What's the form of engagement? There are differences in terms of that. Some would say we don't work with the government, and we don't need whatsoever to discuss those issues. Others would say must meet to discuss those issues in order to get them to deliver. So there's a range of positions. Other would say we must reject all forms of engagement. So, it is not that there is a coherent position. We don't force our position onto communities, right? Communities make their own decision – what it is we want to struggle about and how far do we want to struggle and by what means?

(pers. comm., AEC representative)

SAMWU does not share this general suspicion towards formal authority engagement, as their activity is based on negotiations with the local state as employer. Certain NGOs have also actively engaged with the state. The APF as an organisation has made few or no inroads into the formal structures of power:

We have made request with the Council, and the Provincial Government and to COSATU to correspondence to engaging on behalf of the communities, and on behalf of the fight against privatisation and effects on community. To date, we have not received a response - neither of the Council, the Provincial Government or from the ANC, or from COSATU.

(pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative)

The union officials have initiated attempts to make the APF engage with formal state structure. However, the faith they put in the willingness of the system to allow voices of workers and communities to be heard is less than solid (pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative).

By way of conclusion, I would argue that the multitude of organisational types in the APF poses an additional challenge in bridging different working methods. In particular, the social movements and their approach to militancy and collaboration with formal structures call for flexibility and diplomacy on part of the forum cooperation. Likewise, the confidence in working with the system will vary according to the organisations' experience with own methods and their perception of the local state as a channel of influence.

Autonomy, equality and democracy are useful principles for inter-organisational cooperation, and are advocated by most political actors in Cape Town. Nevertheless, the different understandings of these concepts and how they should be translated into situated practices have made these concepts subject to contestation. Community organisations and activists might find their autonomy at risk in the face of resourceful and politically ambitious NGOs. Another central challenge is that of equality. Participating on an equal basis as organisations is not unproblematic, as this implies treating organisations with and without popular constituencies as identical. Trade unions, social movements, NGOs and intellectual groupings represent a multitude of political subjects, and by incorporating this multitude the APF becomes a host of unequal power relations. The APF experience has shown that the task of bringing together civil society actors in Cape Town is also the task of bringing together different views on how an organisation should work, how a struggle should be fought and what lies in the concept of organisational democracy.

EXCHANGE OF RESOURCES

The explicit policy of the Mandela Park Anti-Eviction Campaign is to build alliances with those who support them in their struggle, but not spend time on talks that can take away the focus from the collective struggle. So far, no councillors, political parties, trade unions or NGOs have taken up this supportive role on terms that are acceptable to the community.

(Oldfield and Stokke Forthcoming-a:19)

The APF has been playing an important role in facilitating dialogue and coordination, but the forum had an explicit aim to be an arena negotiating more substantial support between participators. As the quote above suggest, this was also an expectation and a rationale for the social movements to participate in this forum. Kim Moody's (1997) conception of social movement unionism rests on an idea of mutual exchange. In relation to my case, it is then relevant to see whether SAMWU is able to provide physical or financial resources to the APF or to participating organisations, and to use organisational resources such as the capacity to strike on these issues. I will also assess whether external funding could supplement or substitute the role of the trade union. Regarding the social movements, it raises the question whether they manage to create strong and direct links to communities, and if this support can be translated into mass mobilisation on anti-privatisation issues.

THE ROLE OF THE UNION

If the question of what role the unions play in the anti-privatisation struggle is a matter of debate, then answering whether they *should* be playing a pivotal role appears an uncomplicated issue. APF representatives, community activists and COSATU officials agree fully on this point:

The trade unions have a very specific role, which they should be playing in the APF. The trade unions are, by far, the most powerful mass organisations of workers. So they should be bringing that mass power into a co-ordinated, unifying struggle against privatisation.

(pers. comm., APF representative)

The *character* of the Anti-Privatisation Forum entails that it must be led and driven by the workers and community formations. I think that's important.

(pers. comm., AEC representative)

The critical mass is the unions. You got to have the unions on board.

(pers. comm., COSATU representative)

But when reflecting upon the APF activities of the last few years many seem to admit that the union contribution is limited. In the opinion of a former AEC activist, the union contribution made to the APF and the AEC could just as well have been aided by an NGO or another organisation. The fact that trade unions represent workers living under the same conditions and communities as the social movements, has not prompted their role in the forum to be substantially different from that of an NGO (pers. comm., AEC representative). Others disagree with this point of view, stressing how collaborating with unions brings exchange of information:

Many of the APF's ideas and projects are taken into COSATU by NEHAWU [National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union]. If NEHAWU and SAMWU wasn't there in the APF, it would not have been that kind of structure that links civil society to the labour movement - whatever their shortcomings and failings.

(pers. comm., APF representative/NEHAWU member)

Another frequently mentioned factor that makes the trade union a unique collaboration partner is their specific repertoire of action:

The only way we can contribute to prevent privatisation is to go on strike. That's all. Because there is nothing we as workers, ordinary workers, can do about privatisation – nothing.

(pers. comm., SAMWU member)

The trade unions have the capacity to do what the communities that are sometimes most active within the APF or the Anti-Eviction Campaign don't have the capacity to do - and that is to go on strike.

(pers. comm., APF representative)

But have the social movements been able to assist the trade union with their organisational resources, namely popular mobilisation? SAMWU and COSATU have gone on strike against privatisation on several occasions. Members of the APF and the AEC have on occasion joined these and other strikes. The parades of the anti-privatisation strikes have included community-based issues concerning service delivery as well as worker demands. In this way the joint action leads to a greater turnout at the strikes as well as a broader agenda. In addition, one of the focus groups members in Xali's study found other ways in which the social movements could assist workers on strike:

We can also assist them in their strike, by appealing to community members not to take council workers' jobs when they are on strike.

(AEC representative cited in Xali Forthcoming:26)

When taking into account the authority and respect certain social movement individuals enjoy in their communities, this is likely to be more than an empty phrase. However, the APF as an organisation seems to be too weak at the present moment to be able to contribute any substantial political leverage to SAMWU activities:

APF comrades usually attend these activities. But whether this is effective questionable. Samwu is so much bigger and stronger than us that it is not clear that we can meaningfully contribute to their struggle, except at the level of ideas. Here it becomes necessary to take the long view that says whatever the present constraints the relationship we are building will become more important as the struggle develops.

(Working Committee Report, APF 2005)

Once again, the *potential* of the forum is being contrasted to its achievements. The APF and the community organisations are not yet strong enough to represent a heavyweight ally in the political struggle of the municipal workers. Even though, SAMWU shrinks from being the bystander of a powerful popular uprising:

At the end of the day, if these organisations truly come to represent a mass movement in our communities, how can the unions stay outside such an arrangement?

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

In turn, the strategic role the union can play in supporting the development of such formations, could prove instrumental in staging such a mass movement.

There is, by way of conclusion, an overall consensus on the need for strong union support in the forum. Notwithstanding the unique repertoire of action the union possesses through its capacity to strike, evidenced by its participation in nation-wide anti-privatisation

strikes, SAMWU has yet to display this strength in relation to the social movement agenda in Cape Town.

RESOURCE ASSISTANCE

Has the union been able to provide physical resources to other civil society actors through the APF or otherwise? Practical resource assistance is the most direct and visible way in which the union-community links are materialised in Cape Town. The resource-lacking social movements and their communities can benefit from the trade union through material and communicatory resources and individual commitment. Even though SAMWU is a blue-collar union with limited resources, it has a paid-up membership making possible a full-time staff and office facilities in the service of workers. Compared to the social movements a trade union like SAMWU is a wealthy institution. The lack of resources in the communities manifests itself through trivial challenges: transport to meetings, summoning communities to rallies or meetings, communication with other organisations, access to media and assistance in court cases. Trade unions can assist in these circumstances through basic means such as photocopying, phones and e-mails (pers. comm., SAMWU national and local representatives 2003). Most of the physical resources aided by the trade union is related to facilitating communication within and between community formations. Minor material contributions made can make a huge difference in solving judicial problems, facilitating political mobilisation and building organisation. However, the time constraints and duties of trade union officials make every contribution reliant upon the goodwill and commitment of individuals. Without this commitment, mobilising communities in the Western Cape would be even more difficult.

Most of the assistance SAMWU has offered activists has been on an individual basis through Metro branch officials and individuals at the National Office. The office facilities in Athlone have also been made available for meetings. The APF and the AEC have both had their meetings in this building. Moreover, in 2002 the union accepted to open up for a closer and more formalised assistance through availing office space for community activism:

Because a lot of those community people were coming in asking for very specific assistance, it was eventually agreed to give them some space downstairs.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

Activists affiliated to the AEC, but also other APF-affiliated social movements such as Youth for Work, made use of the Internet access, telephone and photocopying facilities of this office (pers. comm., Youth for Work representative). The use of the office appeared to have few political

strings attached. The union administers limited office facilities. A year later the office was closed and the office space was used by another function of the trade union. The circumstances around this decision have been subject to different interpretations:

Partly because we were running out of office space, but also partly I think because it was becoming completely uncontrolled, and there were fights beginning to develop between organisations and people using that office about who had access to resources and. There was supposed to be some kind of a roster: which organisations used the office on which day; that was beginning to cause a lot of tension. So I think for all those reasons, it was eventually shut down.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

They say it was the abuse of resources, and they blame the Youth for Work. But I think that the official position at the moment is that SAMWU is kind of distancing itself from social movements in a way.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

The decision of kicking us out of office - I know some people they say we misused the resources, whatsoever. It was not the issue. It was a political act.

(pers. comm., Youth for Work representative)

The decision to shut down this office marks the failure of the most direct and formalised attempt for SAMWU's part to establish links and offer assistance to the social movements in Cape Town. In contrast to the APF network, the direct interaction between AEC and SAMWU through the office in Athlone took the form of direct practical assistance. SAMWU's ability to dedicate the energy of its officials to APF-related work appears severely strained by time constraints. This is not made easier by the current restructuring process in the union (pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representatives).

The way resources can contribute to facilitate and enhance organisational communication must be emphasised. The need for channels of information and report is strong, and the obstacles many. Only a few community activists have cell phones and distances are vast on the Cape Flats. This might prevent people from attending meetings and maintain good communication with their constituencies. Furthermore, the cost of pamphlet production and other means of political action are hard to bare for unemployed and poor. In addition to legal aid and media contact, this is the most vital area where external support is needed (pers. comm., AEC representative). The lack of effective communication does not only pester AEC and the other social movement, it has also been acknowledged as a weakness of the APF structure:

What is also a problem is correspondence: How actively we correspond with the media, how actively we correspond with members, with the affiliates. I think that's a bit lacking – our correspondence.

(pers. comm., SAMWU Metro branch representative)

As the quote suggest, media relations is also an aspect of communication where the trade union and the APF can play a role. The APF has released several press releases on behalf of the social movements, and officials at the union offices have assisted AEC in contacting media (pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative). The interest shown by media in the message of the Capetonian social movements, however, has been minimal, albeit a liberal newspaper like the *Mail & Guardian* has treated the AEC with a few sympathetic articles. On the other hand, the reinstatements of evicted families into their houses by the AEC attracted negative media attention and was described as gangster behaviour (Makinana 2003). Similarly, the extent to which the progressive elements within SAMWU attracted any media coverage, they were viewed in a negative light:

We became the target of kind of conservative media. We became the target of bourgeois elements in society.

(pers. comm., SAMWU National Office representative)

The viewpoints of these organisations are given a voice in independent media such as *IndyMedia*, albeit to only a fraction of the audience of the daily newspapers.

In conclusion, the need for physical and financial resources is strong with the political mobilisation in the communities. Moreover, this remains the most direct way the union can offer and has been offering assistance to these formations. Insofar as there are shortcomings in this support, it can be explained by the capacity of the union organisation, the time constraints of individual unionists and even by political will.

EXTERNAL FUNDING

Because of limited access to resources and the ambivalent relationship to SAMWU, certain APF representatives have addressed the issue of external funding. The potential of donors has been raised in light of the experiences of external funding by the Anti-Privatisation Forum in Gauteng. When assessing the differences between anti-privatisation mobilisation in Western Cape and Gauteng, this issue is mentioned by several of the involved (pers. comm., AEC and SAMWU representatives). Through receiving funding from international donors, Gauteng APF has been able to employ full-time staff, hence avoid additional time constraints on individuals.

Furthermore, these organisations can operate more independently in relation to local NGOs and trade unions and maintain a greater level of autonomy (pers. comm., Gauteng APF representative). None of the Cape Town-based organisations have managed to establish channels of funding. The AEC has tried, but has not been successful in “pushing programs” to attract international or national donors (pers. comm., AEC representative). Likewise, the APF/AEC-based SMI secretariat did not manage to attract funding when the plans of arranging the conference in Cape Town still persisted.

But the experience of international donor funding in Gauteng also tells of difficulties. The employment of full-time staff has created tensions between the organisations in terms of influence and benefits. Moreover, some of the funding has been used to pay activists to conduct research. This arrangement has been criticised within the forum: researchers are valued through receiving money, while activism and mobilisation is done for free (pers. comm., Gauteng APF representative). Tensions around activists being paid for conducting research has also surfaced in Cape Town. Another problem caused by external funding in umbrella organisations like the APF in Cape Town is how to distribute these resources out to the activities of the various organisations. Money can facilitate community activism. But external donor funding can easily become subject to suspicion, envy and tension in local communities. The lack of communication mentioned earlier can further aggravate the confusion and uncertainty that at times has given rise to rumours of corruption and disloyalty.

In conclusion, the lack of funding is an important reason why the anti-privatisation forum in Cape Town has not managed to mobilise as forcefully as the comparable formation in Gauteng. Resources remain what community mobilisation lacks the most. But it can also be a source of worries for the movements and their relations to others. A local organic relationship between organisations might be better suited to convey financial assets. Substituting trade union assistance for external donors is not unproblematic.

As mentioned previously, the ideal type social movement unionism strategy uses the strongest of society’s oppressed to organise those who are less so (Moody 1997). In enabling these formations to sustain self-mobilisation their joint force become stronger than the sum of their parts. Unionists and social movement activists alike hope for SAMWU to play such a role. The union has not yet lived up to its potential, neither in terms of effective resource assistance, dynamic leadership nor through exercising their strike force. The forum has not got external donors to fall back on. But drawing on the experience from Gauteng APF, it is not unproblematic to replace union support with international funding. Openly supporting some of the community formations

of Cape Town, even by a progressive trade union, is a politically controversial move. As long as the political climate discussed in the previous chapter sustains, it seems implausible that political concerns will not continue to permeate the union's official stance on resource assistance to social movements, with or without the APF.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

A scrutiny of the challenges to local cooperation in the case of Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum has been undertaken through four different gates of entry: its aims and objectives, the basis of the trade union presence in the forum, issues related to organisation and working methods as well as problems and possibilities of resource assistance between organisations. The trade union strategy behind initiating the forum was to "practically help the struggle around privatisation of service delivery". SAMWU has offered some resource assistance by facilitating communication and providing organisational infrastructure. Furthermore, it seems to be a general consensus on the need for a strong union presence in the forum. Although SAMWU might have withdrawn from an active lead in the forum, it is still an active opponent of privatisation policies, and has gone on strike several times on this issue with support from APF affiliates. The commitment within union ranks to these civil society actors is limited. Only parts of the SAMWU hierarchy have maintained their APF commitment and the awareness amongst the rank-and-file of APF activities is low. Herein lies an important explanation as to why SAMWU's potential for providing economic and organisational leverage to social movements is not fully exploited. Resultantly, mobilising broad layers of the people behind the union's political agenda must also be regarded a potential rather than an actuality. Hence, in the context of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum, union-community mobilisation still has a long way to go in becoming a dynamic political factor. In addition to the range of issues discussed in this chapter, challenges to cooperation is also found in the political allegiances and antipathies at play in South African civil society in general, where the struggle over hegemony pervades organisational life. All participants in the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum seem to agree upon the importance of a network where organisations can cooperate and exchange resources. But one of the crucial factors identified for the success of such a forum is a strong and active presence by organised labour.

While my observations are based on the findings of this particular case, the myriad of challenges and obstacles that emerged have been set against the general points on social movement unionism dealt with earlier. In doing so, I have found that some of the most

contested issues in the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum are directly linked to the pillars of social movement unionism. This chapter juxtaposed general observations of this trade union strategy with the specific constitution of local political contexts. In this particular case, the challenges to cooperation are many: defining and meeting a political mandate, sustaining a whole-hearted union involvement, coming to terms with differing views on organisational practices, and finally, establishing an exchange of resources through the forum that effectively works to the benefit of all parties. These case characteristics have their explanation in the distinctive organisational landscape of Cape Town, the national political context, and in certain general issues of organisations most likely to be found in the interaction between trade unions and community groupings elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

This study started by outlining social movement unionism as conceived in labour theory and on the basis of the South African trade union experience. Against this backdrop, an inquiry into the possibilities of social movement unionism in present-day South Africa led me to analyse the case of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum. Firstly, the case was investigated in light of national politics and the hegemonic struggles of the post-apartheid era. Next, the challenges of cooperation in this specific case were scrutinised by juxtaposing my case findings with the ideal type social movement unionism depicted in the theoretical discussion. While this text visited the research questions in the opposite order, I will in the following conclusion answer them one by one in the order they initially were put forward.

CHALLENGED COOPERATION

What are the main challenges to cooperation between trade unions and social movements in the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum? The APF has outlined two main roles they aim to play: playing the part of the *coordinator* by uniting the different struggles, and aspiring to be a *supporter* through providing or facilitating assistance to the mass based organisations. I have tried to show how the activities of the forum, and in particular the relationship between the trade union and the social movements, still represent a potential rather than a reality in fulfilling these aims. Much of the cooperation between these organisations bypasses the APF structure. The limited resource assistance that has been implemented is not seen as satisfactory. Also, the forum has not managed to emerge as a visible actor in local politics.

Difficulties that have emerged in the cooperation between organisations in the APF can be explained in part by the different constitutions of the participating political subjects. The composition of the forum includes loosely organised movements based on mass meetings, via funded NGOs run by a few academics, to the bureaucratic structure of a trade union. They all bring their political history and agenda, their organisational make-up, their view on democratic practice and their specific mandates into the APF meetings. Resultantly a lot of energy and time has been spent on overcoming these differences since the beginning of the forum. What they do have in common is an obligation towards the workers and communities affected by privatisation and commercialisation in Cape Town. The challenge has been to find practices and arrangements that can facilitate these organisations working together, and not just talking together, despite the

difference they represent. Living up to this coordinating role has yet proved a size too big for the APF. Notwithstanding these remarks, the forum does play an important function as a space for dialogue and as a social arena.

Moving on to the supportive role reveals another set of obstacles. The social movements operating in Cape Town experience a constant scarcity of resources, being one of the most important motivations for these community organisations to enter dialogue and cooperation with other civil society actors. SAMWU has, without relying on the APF, provided some important assistance to the social movements in the form of office facilities, communication and individual commitment. But whatever the relative resourcefulness of a municipal workers' union suggests to the contrary, SAMWU has not been able to sufficiently meet the resource needs of the social movements. By looking at the basis of SAMWU's involvement in the APF, it seems clear that the trade union's commitment to its own initiative is inadequate. Individual office bearers in the local union branch have exercised strong commitment, but the trade union as such has failed to maintain a wholehearted engagement in the forum. This is reflected from both ends of the hierarchical ladder. The union rank-and-file has negligible knowledge of the activities of the APF, and their relationship to some of the social movements is ambivalent. Similarly, with the exception of certain well-disposed individuals, the commitment from the leadership of the organisation has become increasingly hesitant and unenthusiastic.

Although there might be several reasons why the national leadership does not involve actively in a local anti-privatisation forum, it nonetheless raises the other important question in my analysis, namely: *how do national political dynamics assert themselves in this cooperation?* My approach to the political dynamics of post-apartheid South Africa has drawn inspiration from Gramsci, and his conception of hegemony. To Gramsci, hegemony was the way in which a ruling bloc seized and consolidated its power. This was not only done through acquiring control of the state apparatus, but through simultaneously exerting hegemonic dominance in civil society by building alliances and consent on an economic, political and cultural level. When the ruling power fails to manufacture consent, the tactics of repression used towards its enemies display how hegemonic consent is 'armoured by coercion'. Marais (2001) has showed the applicability of such an analysis to the post-apartheid experience. Through its role in the transition and its resultant position in government, the ANC has risen to a hegemonic status in South African society. This hegemonic project was made possible through granting political concessions to its partners in the liberation movements. In return the government could cultivate their relations with the established economic regime and consolidating the power of both. As far as COSATU, South Africa's biggest labour congress, is concerned their participation in making the Redistribution and

Development Programme and their entrée into the Tripartite Alliance with the South African Communist Party and the ANC have been of particular importance. The ANC managed to maintain consent among the majority of the people through their unique position in South African history, and through the racial, symbolic and cultural aspects of their policies. As a result of this hegemonic quest, South African civil society has been increasingly polarised between the ANC-aligned majority and a smaller, but significant group of dissident forces. As these division lines are constantly contested, many organisations and movements find themselves in ambiguous positions in this political landscape. The labour movement is one of them. The signs of this ambiguity have become increasingly evident in intellectual debate within the Alliance and in the policy-making of trade unions. Predictably, one of the most contested issues in this regard is the relationship between trade unions and the emerging social movements.

Returning to the hesitant approach of SAMWU in the APF cooperation, the national dynamics above are shown to have a tremendous impact on the issues of my research. The manufacture of consent among workers, union members and union leadership hamstrings the outlook for strong civil society alliances in the case of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum. They have a strong sympathy for each other's issues. Moreover, municipal workers are affected by the crisis of service delivery in a double sense, as producers and users. Still, SAMWU's allegiance to the ANC and hence the hostile approach to the anti-ANC formations, remains strong. The authorities have exercised an active use of force to repress dissenting elements in civil society. Consequently, the social movements are portrayed as politically controversial, even criminalised, cooperation partners. Repression further weakens their organisational ability, and hence reduces the impetus to seek their support. In addition to explicate the exercise of hegemony in South African civil society, an alternative take on Gramsci and Marais is to investigate the attempts to create a counterhegemonic project. Insofar as the Social Movement Indaba can be seen as such a project, it seems clear that there is a striking similarity in the challenges accounted for in the case of the Cape Town APF and the obstacles the SMI has met in their quest for organisational unity and a political voice.

LOCAL SOCIAL MOVEMENT UNIONISM?

I have shown that the cooperation between trade unions and social movements in Cape Town has been prevented from rising to its occasion. Hence, it seems reasonable to conclude that SAMWU's social movement unionism strategy in this case has not materialised in practical terms, at least not to the other side of the ANC-affiliated ranks, where this study sets its focus. Looking

at how local social movement unionism has been hampered allows for certain comments to be made in light of a *general understanding of social movement unionism*.

In brief, social movement unionism has been envisioned as joint political mobilisation: unions and communities share a set of aims and objectives, involve actively with each other and exchange organisational resources, and base this cooperation on principles of autonomy, equality and democracy. This ideal type provides the backdrop with which I have contrasted the reality of my case. Insofar as the participating organisations have been able to agree on a set of political objectives, these become the subject of time-consuming debate without spilling over into an effective programme of action. Perhaps more important than ideological differences have been differing views on the priority assigned to political and intellectual debate in the forum. When recalling the visions of *transformative* links between unions and communities, this case illustrates that in moving from a single-issue forum to a more intimate alliance, new challenges of ideological and political consensus are added.

Another challenge, being particularly relevant in situations with scarcity of resources and high inequality, is the skewed relationship between a relatively resourceful trade union and community organisation in need of the most basic organisational resources. Although it provides an important opportunity to assist marginalised groups, it does create an asymmetrical relationship between the social movement organisation and its 'benefactor'. This observation leads to the most general point of my analysis, namely that any cooperation between trade unions and other civil society actors, being on a local, national or global level, involves cooperation between different organisational subjects. Therefore, a successful social movement unionism is as much about encompassing different working methods and organisational democracies, as it is about political agreement. For reasons accounted for above, the political situation of the union has prevented SAMWU from taking on an active and leading role. COSATU might speak up defending civil society alliances in international forums. On the local level, an individual SAMWU branch can aspire to take on such a role in its locality. Still, the most fundamental challenges to social movement unionism lies in national political arrangements, and in the hegemonic struggles over civil society spurred by these arrangements. The prospects for such a strategy in a local setting, or alternatively on the global scale, must take into account the momentous importance of the politics of the nation-state. This has bearings for the nomination of South Africa as an example of social movement unionism. The historical circumstances under which the social movement unionism of the Eighties took place are qualitatively different from the conditions for my case. As the national political dynamics of South Africa have gone through dramatic shifts, so have the strategies and approaches of trade unions and other civil society actors in the country.

By way of conclusion, my analysis can add detail to a general conception of social movement unionism as understood in space and time. My geographical argument is based on the fact that the APF experience in Cape Town seems to be intrinsically bound to the specific political constitution of the locality. Hence, the strategy of the trade union must acknowledge this context to be effective. Furthermore, insofar as my case is a local case, an even more striking feature is how national politics have permeated through nearly every facet of this local cooperation. Hence, the strategy of the local trade union must be dynamically incorporated into a broader agenda covering the local *and* the national political scale. As the neoliberal dogma conditions service delivery globally, not just in South Africa, the union strategy is more likely to be successful by also participate in global union campaigns. These insights are also relevant to the social movements involved in this cooperation, although it has been shown that their ability to manoeuvre across spatial scales has been constrained.

My case also contains a time argument, providing yet another example supporting the historical assertion presented by von Holdt (2003) and Buhlungu (2003). As the historical conditions are qualitatively different, it seems problematic to proclaim South African unionism as a role model for social movement unionism. At least without acknowledging the specific time and place this union experience developed in. This is not least of interest with regards to the perspective on hegemony presented above. The classical social movement unionism took place at a time when repression was omnipresent, but hegemony non-existent. But South Africa has changed. Current attempts to pursue this trade union strategy take place as a powerful hegemonic project is in the making.

Identifying and defining social movement unionism can prove useful not only to better understand the trends and dynamics of labour, but also from a practical point of view as a tool to shape strategies and draw inspiration from past experience. However, as have emerged from research on South African labour, social movement unionism is not conceived on the basis of a rational selection of organisational virtues. It rather grows out of the social structure of local political life. The potential of social movement unionism within this local setting can be forced into reality, or decisively blocked, by the political and economic reality it is located in.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW LIST

Names and personal data are omitted.

ORGANISATION/AFFILIATION	INTERVIEW LOCATION	TIME	DURATION	MEANS
1. Western Cape AEC	Muizenberg, Cape Town	07.05.2003, 10:00	1 hr	Notes
2. UCT	Rondebosch, Cape Town	30.10.2003, 16:00	1 hr 30 min	Notes
3. SAMWU Metro Branch	Athlone, Cape Town	14.10.2003, 10:00	1 hr	Notes
4. SAMWU Metro Branch	Athlone, Cape Town	18.10.2003, 17:15	1 hr	Tape/Notes
5. SAMWU Metro Branch	Athlone, Cape Town	29.10.2003, 10:30	45 min	Tape/Notes
6. Cape Town APF	Salt River, Cape Town	29.10.2003, 13:45	45 min	Notes
7. SAMWU Metro Branch	Athlone, Cape Town	30.10.2003, 08:30	1 hr	Tape/Notes
8. Cape Town APF	Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town	31.10.2003, 13:30	1 hr	Tape/Notes
9. Cape Town APF	Observatory, Cape Town	04.11.2003, 10:30	1 hr 15 min	Tape/Notes
10. SAMWU National Office	Athlone, Cape Town	06.11.2003, 10:00	30 min	Tape/Notes
11. SAMWU member	Athlone, Cape Town	06.11.2003, 13:00	30 min	Notes
12. Cape Town APF/UCT	Rondebosch, Cape Town	07.11.2003, 13:30	1 hr 30 min	Tape/Notes
13. Western Cape AEC	Khayelitsha, Cape Town	11.11.2003, 12:00	30 min	Notes
14. SAMWU National Office	Athlone, Cape Town	12.11.2003, 09:30	30 min	Tape/Notes
15. UWC/AEC supporter	Mowbray, Cape Town	13.11.2003, 11:00	1 hr 15 min	Tape/Notes
16. SAMWU member	Eerste Rivier, Cape Town	27.11.2003, 18:30	30 min	Tape/Notes
17. SAMWU member	Khayelitsha, Cape Town	28.11.2003, 11:00	30 min	Notes
18. SAMWU National Office	Athlone, Cape Town	28.11.2003, 15:00	1 hr 30 min	Tape/Notes
19. Gauteng APF/AIDC	Wynberg, Cape Town	29.11.2003, 17:00	1 hr 15 min	Tape/Notes
20. SAMWU National Office	Athlone, Cape Town	01.12.2003, 09:00	1 hr	Tape/Notes
21. SAMWU National Office	Athlone, Cape Town	01.12.2003, 10:00	1 hr 15 min	Tape/Notes
22. COSATU	Salt River, Cape Town	02.12.2003, 12:00	1 hr	Tape/Notes
23. Western Cape AEC	Gatesville, Cape Town	02.12.2003, 14:30	2 hrs	Tape/Notes
24. SAMWU/Gauteng APF	Johannesburg	03.12.2003, 13:00	20 min	Notes (Phone)
25. Youth for Work	Observatory, Cape Town	04.12.2003, 12:00	10 min	Tape/Notes

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

SAMWU Representatives (National Office, Metro branch, shopstewards, others)

- Why is SAMWU opposed to privatisation?
 - How does SAMWU define 'privatisation'?
 - How would you describe SAMWU's engagement in the anti-privatisation struggle?
 - To what extent would you characterise this struggle as ideological, and to what extent would you characterise it as pragmatically and practically motivated?
- How do the different organisations and actors collaborate in the anti-privatisation struggle?
 - Does the anti-privatisation struggle in particular facilitate a space for co-operation between the different organisations and unions in civil society?
 - What are the major obstacles or challenges in engaging with other organisations and actors in the anti-privatisation struggle?
 - What does SAMWU gain from doing this?
- What role does SAMWU's involvement in the Anti-Privatisation Forum play in the union's anti-privatisation struggle in Cape Town?
 - What parts of SAMWU as an organisation are involved in this co-operation?
 - What role has the Metro branch of SAMWU played in the establishment and activities of the Anti-Privatisation Forum?
 - Is the collaboration with the APF supported unanimously by the union organisation?
 - To what extent is the APF co-operation marked by differing opinions between the various organisations?
 - What are the long-term prospects for the alliances and co-operations in the anti-privatisation struggle?
 - Do you recognise a potential for strengthening, deepening or broadening the existing co-operative and organisational networks?
 - Do you recognise a potential for including new issues, besides the opposition to the privatisation of municipal services, in the existing networks?
 - What does SAMWU gain from doing this?

APF Representatives

- Why is the APF opposed to privatisation?
 - How does the APF define 'privatisation'?
- How do the different organisations and actors collaborate in the anti-privatisation struggle?
 - How is the relationship between the APF and the various anti-eviction campaigns in Cape Town?
 - How do you perceive SAMWU's role in the Anti-Privatisation Forum?
 - Which implications does the fact that SAMWU is trade union have for the forum's work?
 - Is the co-operation with SAMWU in any way problematic?
 - In what way does the interests of the APF and SAMWU align?
 - How do you perceive the prospects for continued co-operation with SAMWU?
 - To what extent do you perceive SAMWU's engagement in the APF as ideological, in contrast to a practical or pragmatic approach?
- Is the anti-privatisation struggle first and foremost a national, regional or a local task?
 - How does this affect the organisational structure of the APF?
- Is the fight against privatisation a fight against the ANC?
 - How does the fact that SAMWU is a part of COSATU impact on the APF co-operation?

Academic resources and others

- How do you define 'privatisation'?
 - Who are the driving forces behind the ongoing privatisation processes?
 - How is the opposition against privatisation organised in South Africa generally, and Cape Town specifically?
- In what way does the struggle against privatisation as a political issue create an opportunity for trade unions and other civil society actors to co-operate?
 - What role does SAMWU play in the anti-privatisation struggle in Cape Town?
 - How does a trade union such as SAMWU co-operate with various organisations in civil society?
 - In what way does the Anti-Privatisation Forum provide a space for SAMWU and other civil society actors to co-operate?
- To what extent would you describe SAMWU civil society strategy as representative of or diverging from other South African trade unions?

APPENDIX 3: DOCUMENT LIST

Below is provided a list of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum documents I have had access to. In addition, I have also made use of numerous pamphlets and other written material.

DOCUMENT TYPE	DATE	FORMAT
Workshop paper	10.02.2001	<i>Digitally stored</i>
Working committee report	04.04.2001	<i>Digitally stored</i>
Plenary minutes	10.04.2001	<i>Photocopy</i>
Plenary minutes	28.07.2001	<i>Photocopy</i>
Plenary minutes	30.07.2001	<i>Photocopy</i>
Plenary minutes	18.08.2001	<i>Photocopy</i>
Working committee report	20.08.2001	<i>Photocopy</i>
Plenary minutes	15.09.2001	<i>Photocopy</i>
Media committee report	08.10.2001	<i>Photocopy</i>
Working committee report	16.10.2001	<i>Photocopy</i>
Working committee report	22.10.2001	<i>Photocopy</i>
Plenary minutes	27.10.2001	<i>Photocopy</i>
Workshop paper	30.11.2001	<i>Photocopy</i>
Plenary minutes	26.01.2002	<i>Photocopy</i>
Plenary minutes	23.09.2002	<i>Photocopy</i>
Workshop paper	05.10.2002	<i>Photocopy</i>
Plenary minutes	10.05.2003	<i>Digitally stored</i>
Working committee report	12.05.2003	<i>Digitally stored</i>
Working committee report	06.06.2003	<i>Photocopy</i>
Working committee report	19.07.2003	<i>Digitally stored</i>
Plenary minutes	02.08.2003	<i>Digitally stored</i>
Working committee report	20.08.2003	<i>Digitally stored</i>
Plenary minutes	20.09.2003	<i>Digitally stored</i>
Working committee report	22.01.2005	<i>Digitally stored</i>

APPENDIX 4: APF COMMISSION DOCUMENTS

The following text is a word-by-word transcript of the photocopied document.

APF Workshop

Mandelapark

05-10-2002

Notes from the 1st Commission

Aims & Objectives

Principles:

- The aim is to wage the struggle against neo-liberal policies like GEAR, NEPAD that lead to privatisation
- To develop alternatives to the whole neo-liberal agenda
- To co-ordinate and unify different struggles nationally and internationally
- Support, participate and engage in existing struggles
- Share information and knowledge to broaden consciousness of the neoliberal agenda
- To fight for transparent, participatory, democratic and accountable forms of government

Role of the APF

- Facilitate and link existing struggles and campaigns
- Educational and legal support should be given by the APF

On the form and character of the APF

- To be discussed at the next meeting

Notes from the 2nd Commission

On the role of the APF

- Co-ordinate and unify the struggles into one
- Give direction and support to communities in struggle
- Oppose privatisation in all its forms
- Educate people at grassroots level about the causes and effects of privatisation
- Mobilise against attacks on the poor
- Support the building of mass organisations at grassroots level
- Unite individuals and organisations against privatisation
- Link shopfloor and community struggles
- Engage worker-leaders to take up community issues
- Highlight educational issues and mobilise student support
- Create networks to link students, workers, unemployed.
- Provide leadership
- Build structures necessary to take the struggle forward
- Prepare the working class for the next stage of the fight
- Support rural struggles and link these to urban movements
- Restore human dignity
- Engage government and council on privatisation issues
- Facilitate the social movements
- Develop an independent and uniform policy on the fundamental questions
- Develop the programme of action against privatisation

On the form and structure

- Not bureaucratic or hierarchical structures (flat-horizontal structure)
- Need good leaders – transparent, accountable and responsible
- Avoid top-down decision-making process
- Must exercise the right to recall
- Allow affected communities to participate in decision-making
- Focus on issues of common concern
- APF is to be made up of organisations taking up present-day struggles and these must have representation on the APF
- There must be facilitators in each area
- Organise campaigns
- Must build structures where none exist
- Elect co-ordinators
- Task is to facilitate and guide struggles
- Secure direct representation from the workplace – delegates
- Rotate the leadership positions, delegations and powers
- Spread the skills base to empower individuals
- Form task-teams (sub-committees)
- Task teams must draw on expertise and build capacity
- Structure should be simple: Plenary as highest decision-making body; sub-committees and a Steering Committee (representation??)
- Leadership of the APF must be drawn from the mass movement

Notes from the 3rd Commission

Aims & Objectives

- Link working class communities in struggle, in order to develop alternatives to the present system of privatisation
- Fight for quality service delivery based on people's needs and not on their ability to pay. These services should be provided by a local government acceptable to the people
- Fight against privatisation by informing and mobilising workers' organisations

Role of the APF

- Co-ordinate workers' and communities' struggles against the effects of privatisation
- Run educational programmes and mobilise communities
- Monitor and expose all pro-privatisation legislation
- Develop a sound network of organisations within the APF and beyond
- Link up with other struggles nationally and internationally
- Assist communities in building sustainable structures to defend themselves against the onslaughts of the state

Form and Character of the APF

- The APF is a forum
- It should consist of organisations and individuals who share the principles of the APF. (Voting rights and decision-making??) This is to be discussed thoroughly.
- An elected Steering Committee with administrative and political functions accountable to the Plenary
- It should also act on functions assigned to it by the plenary from time to time.
- Communication and media committees are vital for the smooth functioning of the organisation – this is also open for further discussion
- Funding: without the necessary finances we will not be able to operate effectively – ways and means should be worked out

On the role of the APF

Consolidated document with the proposed amendments drawing on the notes from the 3 APF Commissions on the role of structure:

General:

1. The aim is to wage the struggle against neo-liberal policies that lead to privatisation
 2. *To develop alternatives to the whole neo-liberal agenda* (to be replaced by a more concrete formulation)
 3. To fight for transparent, participatory, democratic and accountable forms of government
 4. Mobilise against attacks on the poor
 5. Fight against anti-humanist tendencies and policies
 6. Oppose privatisation in all its forms
 7. Prepare the working class for the next stage of the fight against privatisation
 8. Develop an independent and uniform policy on the fundamental questions
 9. Develop the programme of action against privatisation
-

Unifying struggles

1. Co-ordinate workers' and communities' struggles against the effects of privatisation
2. Link up with other struggles nationally and internationally
3. Facilitate and link existing struggles and campaigns
4. Co-ordinate and unify different struggles nationally and internationally
5. Co-ordinate and unify the struggles into one
6. Unite individuals and organisations against privatisation
7. Link shopfloor and community struggles
8. Co-ordinate workers' and communities' struggles against privatisation
9. Support rural struggles and link these to urban movements
10. Build the **United Front** of the working class against privatisation

Supportive functions:

1. Share information and knowledge to broaden consciousness of the neo-liberal agenda
 2. Run educational programmes and mobilise communities
 3. Highlight educational issues and mobilise student support
 4. Engage worker-leaders to take up community issues
 5. Task is to facilitate and guide struggles
 6. Educate people at grassroots level about the causes and effects of privatisation
 7. Educational and legal support should be given by the APF
 8. Support, participate and engage in existing struggles
 9. Support the building of mass organisations at grassroots level
 10. Give direction and support to communities in struggle
 11. Assist communities in building sustainable structures to defend themselves against the onslaughts of the state
 12. Build leadership
 13. Develop a sound network of organisations within the APF and beyond
 14. Build structures necessary to take the struggle forward through mass mobilisation
 15. Monitor and expose all pro-privatisation legislation
-

On the Form and Structure

1. The APF is a forum
2. It should consist of organisations and individuals who share the principles of the APF. (Voting rights and decision-making??) This is to be discussed thoroughly
3. An elected Steering Committee with administrative and political functions accountable to the Plenary
4. It should also act on functions assigned to it by the plenary from time to time
5. Communication and media committees are vital for the smooth functioning of the organisation – this is also open for further discussion
6. Funding: without the necessary finances we will not be able to operate effectively – ways and means should be worked out
7. Not bureaucratic or hierarchic structures (flat-horizontal structure)
8. Need good leaders – transparent, accountable and responsible
9. Avoid top-down decision-making process
10. Must exercise the right to recall
11. Allow affected communities to participate in decision-making
12. Focus on issues of common concern
13. APF is to be made up of organisations taking up present-day struggles and these must have representation in the APF
14. There must be facilitators in each area
15. Organise campaigns
16. Must build structures where none exist
17. Elect co-ordinators
18. Secure direct representation from the workplace – delegates
19. Rotate the leadership positions, delegations and powers
20. Spread the skills base to empower individuals
21. Form task-teams (sub-committees)
22. Task teams must focus on areas on struggle and build campaigns – eg. around education
23. Task teams must draw on expertise and build capacity
24. Structure should be simple: Plenary as highest decision-making body; sub-committees and a Steering committee (q. of representation??)
25. Leadership of the APF must be drawn from the mass movement

APPENDIX 5: SAMWU ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

Name:	South African Municipal Workers Union
Established:	24th and 25 th of October, 1987
Founding organisations (1987):	Cape Town Municipal Workers Association (CTMWA) General and Allied Workers Union (GAWU) Municipal Workers Union of SA (MWUSA) SA Allied Workers Union (SAAWU) Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU)
President:	Petrus Mashishi
1st Vice President:	Xolile Nxu
2nd Vice President:	Nyameka Mafani
Treasurer:	Reggie Mabogoane
General Secretary:	Roger Ronnie
Deputy General Secretary:	Tom Ngobeni
Membership 1987:	14 892
Membership 2001:	119 792
All-time high (1997):	120 109