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Neighbourhood Politics in Transition

Residents’ Associations and Local Government in Post-Apartheid Cape Town

Sara Monaco
Abstract

This study focuses on the changing practices of South African residents’ associations and their relationship with political parties and local government from 1990 to 2006, with the aim to examine how associations in Cape Town respond when they are confronted with a new democratic institutional and political context.

Two empirical questions guide the analysis: How do residents’ associations perceive that the changing political context has affected them in their attempts to influence agenda-setting and decision-making? And how can we understand the process in which they decide to act, or not act, in response to important changes in their political environment?

Drawing on social movement theory, most importantly the notions of political opportunity structures and framing processes, an analysis is made of the most significant changes in Cape Town’s post-apartheid institutional and political context. The empirical findings – based on questionnaires, interviews and an in-depth study of the township of Imizamo Yethu in Hout Bay – show that associations in socio-economically distinct areas have different perceptions of their prospects of affecting agenda-setting and decision-making. Because of the close links with political parties, many associations interpret the political and institutional changes as either threats or opportunities depending on which party controls the City Council. In predominantly white affluent areas associations generally seem to underestimate their chances of being influential, whereas those in black poor areas tend to overestimate their ability to influence decision-making when the ANC is in a government position.

The study contributes to the development of social movement theory by its systematic application of the framework of political opportunity structures in a local urban context outside the US and Western Europe. The pattern suggested by theory, that movements choose their action repertoire according to the rule “as moderate as possible, as radical as necessary”, is largely confirmed by the findings.

Keywords: post-apartheid civil society–state relations, the dilemma of pluralist democracy, neighbourhood politics, social movements, residents’ associations, political opportunity structures, framing processes, South Africa, Cape Town, Hout Bay, Imizamo Yethu

Sara Monaco, Department of Government, Box 514, Uppsala University, SE-75120 Uppsala, Sweden

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To Anders
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLA</td>
<td>Black Local Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSATU</td>
<td>Congress of South African Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Cape Provincial Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPF</td>
<td>Community Police Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Democratic Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Independent Democrats</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Integrated Development Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>Local Affairs Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGNF</td>
<td>Local Government Negotiating Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Management Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNP</td>
<td>New National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>South African Rand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCID</td>
<td>Rondebosch Community Improvement District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDP</td>
<td>Reconstruction and Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACP</td>
<td>South African Communist Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>SANCO</td>
<td>South African National Civic Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLA</td>
<td>White Local Authority</td>
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Figure i. Map of the Western Cape Province and Cape Town

Acknowledgements

I first visited Cape Town in late 1995 and immediately fell in love with the city. More than a decade later my love remains but is coupled with a feeling of frustration over the many challenges that prevent Cape Town from being ‘a city that works for all’ as stipulated by its political leaders.

Love and frustration also pretty much summarise the process of writing this thesis. At times it has indeed been a wonderful experience and I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to be part of academia, and to devote several years to a fascinating subject. Other times – and to be honest quite often – I have felt that writing a PhD thesis is like a never-ending Sisyphusian task. It is therefore with an enormous feeling of satisfaction and gratitude that I want to acknowledge all the people who have been important in the writing process.

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Stockholm, January 2008
1. A study of neighbourhood politics in Cape Town: introduction

South African civil society–state relations under apartheid tended to be racially structured with a majority of white associations having collegial relationships with the state, whereas most black associations had relations characterised by conflict.¹ Following the democratic transition, culminating with the elections in April 1994, many studies speculated on how this fundamental transformation would affect the relations between civil society and the state. A majority of studies on post-apartheid civil society have been concerned with the fate of the urban black anti-apartheid movement after 1994. There were, for example, those who foresaw a deep identity crisis of the former anti-apartheid movement when its main objective was obtained with the introduction of democracy.² A common interpretation has been that the civic movement has gone from a conflictual to a more collaborative relationship with the state, which has often been presented as a transition ‘from protest to development’. There were also discussions on the role of civil society organisations in a representative democracy in relation to more institutionalised actors, most importantly political parties, which normally play little or no role in the earlier stages of transition.³

Also white civil society associations were obviously affected by the political changes taking place. As noted by Jeremy Seekings in 1998, ‘[i]n an ironic development, some of the most militant civic organisations today are

¹ Habib (2003), p. 228. See also Mamdani (1996) for a discussion on African and South African racialised civil society and its relation with the state in a historical perspective. I will use the terms ‘black’, ‘white’ and ‘coloured’ throughout the thesis but this does not imply that I agree with such racial classifications. These are however the official terms in use by the government. Also, most people in South Africa see themselves as belonging to one of these groupings, including the often used term ‘African’ that refers to black South Africans. Given the apartheid history of South Africa, race/ethnicity and socio-economic status still overlap to a large extent. Although Seekings and Nattrass note that the correlation between class and race has been eroded in post-apartheid South Africa and moreover that inequality levels are ‘increasingly based on intra-racial not inter-racial inequalities’ (Seekings and Nattrass 2002, p. 2), the poorest people in South Africa remain black and the richest white.

² It was, for example, estimated that more than 60 per cent of the senior leadership in the anti-apartheid movement took up positions in the new ANC-led government and the private sector. Anti-apartheid organisations also lost international funding that was instead channelled through the South African government (Habib and Taylor 1999, pp. 76, 79; see also, for example, Lanegran 1995, and Steinberg 2000).

based in formerly white suburbs, where residents have resorted to direct action and boycotts'. Nevertheless, far less research has been devoted to white civil society in post-apartheid South Africa or to white residential areas in general. Alan Mabin claims that ‘very little scholarship has explored what happened on the other side of the hill, valley or tracks, in areas reserved for whites, where immense changes took place and patterns of social segregation were transformed during the forty-five years of apartheid’. In 1986, Robert Cameron wrote that ‘white ratepayers still remain uncharted territory’. Twenty years later this seems to hold true still.

Aim and contributions

This study fills an empirical void by including residents’ associations in predominantly black and predominantly white areas, thus contributing to a more complete picture of changing civil society–state relations in post-apartheid South Africa. Most importantly, however, the focus on the changing practices of residents’ associations and their relationship with political parties and local government over a period of time – from 1990 to 2006 (with an emphasis on the democratic period from 1996 to 2006) – makes it possible to go beyond the initial speculations on how the urban political arena would be reshaped by the introduction of democracy.

More specifically the aim of the thesis is to examine how neighbourhood associations in Cape Town have responded to changes in the institutional and political context, resulting from the democratic transition. Two central empirical questions will guide the study: How do residents’ associations perceive that the changing context has affected them in their attempts to influence agenda-setting and decision-making? And how can we understand the process in which residents’ associations decide to act, or not act, in response to important changes in their political environment?

A central endeavour will thus be to trace the mechanisms by which changes in the institutional and political context are linked to the practices of neighbourhood associations. The notions of political opportunity structures and framing processes, as developed in social movement theory, are the ana-

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5 Mabin (2005), p. 47.
7 Saff (2001) is one of the exceptions. He describes how ratepayers’ associations in three areas of Cape Town, including Hout Bay, opposed the establishment of informal settlements. Another exception is Camay and Gordon who have studied the Sandton rates dispute in Johannesburg in 1996–1997, and presented their findings in Chapter 6 of their book (Camay and Gordon 2004, pp. 179–208).
8 The time period is motivated by the fact that South Africa’s transition to democracy started for real in 1990 when the ban on the ANC was lifted and Nelson Mandela released.
9 A more thorough definition of the institutional and political structure will be presented in Chapter 2.
lytical tools used to specify the institutional and political context, as well as the mechanisms by which a certain context is framed and transformed into action. By studying mechanisms at the very local micro-level – how associations based in different social and geographical contexts perceive and respond to a changing political environment – the study seeks to add to our understanding of the heterogeneity of civil society–state relations in post-apartheid South Africa.

Apart from this primary empirical objective, the study also aims at contributing to social movement theory by applying the framework of political opportunity structures and the concept of framing processes in a local context outside Western Europe and the US. The extent to which the theoretical framework has proved relevant for our purposes will mainly be discussed in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

Given the importance attributed to power shifts in social movement theory for explaining aspects of movement mobilisation, Cape Town is an interesting case for the study of the relationship between residents’ associations, political parties and local government over a period of time. The democratic era has been characterised by a volatile political situation and frequent shifts in political power. All the major parties – the African National Congress (ANC), the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the National Party (NP), from 1997 the New National Party (NNP) – have been governing the city council, sometimes in coalition. Cape Town is the only metropolitan area in South Africa that does not have an ANC majority of voters.

Theoretically the study is a response to a perceived lack of applications of social movement theory in contexts outside Europe and the US. It is also an effort to employ the framework of political opportunity structures in a local context. There are examples of studies that make use of social movement concepts in the developing world, also in a South African context. However, most of these studies tend to discuss aspects, such as political opportunities and mobilising structures, in a quite sketchy and non-systematic way. Furthermore there are no attempts to examine how changes at the macro level, in South Africa typically the transition to democracy, transform local opportunity structures.

Although initially it was common to discuss political opportunity structures in a local urban context, the majority of current studies employing this framework do it at the national-level. When we focus on urban-based

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12 Eisinger was one of the first to use the notion of political opportunities in a comparative study of protest movements in 43 American cities (Eisinger 1973). More recently again some scholars explicitly use the framework in a local urban context. See, for example Maloney et
movements and associations we need to take into account the local context in which they operate. In my study it becomes apparent that the local political opportunity structure differs from the national structure in some important aspects, although they are, of course, closely related.

Empirically an important contribution of the study is thus that it analyses the relationship between residents’ associations, parties and local government in different social and geographical contexts, which include predominantly black, white and, to a certain extent, coloured areas. In this respect the study is meant to counterbalance the predominance of studies about black civic associations in South Africa. There are indeed many, mainly good, reasons for this bias. Most importantly, neighbourhood associations in the townships played an important role in the anti-apartheid struggle and they are commonly considered to have initiated the democratic transition period. These associations also claim to represent an overwhelming majority of the South African people. A perhaps more controversial reason is that the study of white liberal or conservative associations has not been considered ‘politically correct’.

Relating to the international social movement discourse, it is clear that social movement scholars have often themselves been involved in the movements as activists in the peace movement, women’s movement, etc. On the one hand, Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg argue that this has helped researchers ‘gain access to movement activists and aided them in asking penetrating questions regarding movement organizations’. On the other hand, this ‘progressive bias’ has had the effect that little research has been devoted to other forms of organisations, such as right-wing movements and similar ‘less-politically correct’ organisations. ‘The partisan balance of the academy’, as expressed by David S. Meyer, clearly reduces


14 One of the exceptions is the study by Kuperus of the Dutch Reformed Church and its relation to the apartheid regime (Kuperus 1999).

15 This has been visible in many of the more recent studies that have emerged on new social movements in post-apartheid South Africa. These associations mainly deal with issues that organise the poor, and protest against the lack of efficient service delivery. Many of these studies, but not all, clearly take a stand against government and tend to romanticise social movements (see, for example, reports generated within the three-year research programme on social movements in post-apartheid South Africa co-ordinated by the Centre for Civil Society at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in Ballard et al. 2006). There is also a tendency to see all associations as opposed to the government and the state, although some of the most important movements, such as the trade unions and the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), have maintained their loyalty to the ANC while criticising certain government policies (Seekings 2007, p. 21). In line with, for example, Bratton and Nordlund, my argument is that the degree of conflict and congruence between the state and civil society is an empirical question, and not a theoretical assumption that can be decided by definition (Bratton 1989, p. 429, and Nordlund 1996, p. 243).

our possibilities to fully understand the larger phenomenon of social protest. Meyer therefore encourages us to study various movements in different contexts in order to ‘discern the factors that matter across cases, as well as case-specific, contingencies.’

Although associations differ substantially depending on their aim and field of operation, the type of neighbourhood associations that are the focus of this study share the overall objective to improve conditions generally in the area in which they reside. In post-apartheid South Africa all such associations have, at least in theory, the same formal possibilities to advance their demands in relation to local government. For this reason they are similar enough to be treated under the same civil society category. The inclusion in the study of different types of areas will also allow us to explore if and how a particular local opportunity structure, Cape Town in our case, has different implications for associations operating in different geographical and socio-economic contexts. This comparative aspect is important but impossible to analyse in studies that include only one specific type of association, for example, civics in townships.

Specifying the research problem: why residents’ associations?
Civil society consists of various types of associations and groupings. Why study residents’ associations? Compared to other types of civil society actors, for example, NGOs and traditional interest groups, neighbourhood associations have gained less interest among political scientists. One reason for this relative lack of attention could be that, as Matthew Crenson writes in a study on neighbourhood politics in Baltimore, ‘[p]olitics is more difficult to recognize when it occurs on street corners or front porches than it is when practiced in explicitly political institutions like legislatures or public agen-

18 Richard C. Rich defines neighbourhood associations as ‘institutions used by persons who identify themselves as members of a neighborhood to promote interests they share as a result of their residential location’ (Rich 1980, p. 562). In this study neighbourhood associations and residents’ associations are used synonymously. Neighbourhood associations are part of the much broader concept civil society, which in turn refers to the associational life in the public sphere between the state and the family. It includes a wide variety of associations, such as women’s groups, religious groupings, trade unions and interest groups. Naomi Chazan claims that a number of associations are excluded from civil society, among others ‘parochial associations that do not evince an interest beyond their immediate concerns’ (Chazan 1994, p. 256). Interpreted strictly, one could argue that residents’ associations, the focus of this study, would not be part of civil society according to Chazan’s classification. These associations are, almost per definition, mostly concerned with issues regarding their neighbourhoods. However, the problem with leaving out certain associations or individuals becomes evident when we turn to those that are based on ‘narrow’ interests, such as, for example, ethnicity and geographic location. That would exclude a number of associations, particularly more vulnerable groups, such as women and the poor, i.e. non-elite groups that do not necessarily engage with the state. It may also imply that we overlook their political significance (Hirschmann 1998, p. 235).
cies’. In the South African case, the study of neighbourhood associations can be motivated on empirical and normative grounds.

The empirical rationale: changing opportunities

In South Africa neighbourhood associations have been more involved in politics than have generally been the case in Western Europe and the US, which to a certain extent can be attributed to the non-democratic history of the country. Associations in black and coloured, but also in white areas, have been important actors in local government affairs, and during certain periods their role has been extraordinary. In the anti-apartheid struggle, for example, civic associations in black and coloured areas took on a highly politicised role. They emerged as an internal counterpart to the liberation movement when the ANC was banned within South Africa. In white areas, ratepayers’ associations ‘played an important, if less oppositional, role in local affairs, sometimes running candidates in local government elections’ and in the transition period both ratepayers’ and civic associations took part in the formal representative system by participating in local transitional councils.

More specifically there are two main reasons for why residents’ associations are interesting and relevant units of analysis given our purposes in this study. First, compared to the new social movements that have emerged in post-apartheid South Africa, many neighbourhood associations have been in existence for a longer period of time. This means that they have experiences of operating both in a non-democratic and a democratic context which is an important factor if we are interested in studying changing perceptions and practices over a period of time.

Second, neighbourhood associations clearly reflect the consequences of apartheid’s Group Areas Act that aimed at separating people on racial grounds. Racial segregation continues to characterise post-apartheid cities in South Africa and this is not likely to change in the near future. For this

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20 Note that the largest and most significant urban movement in Europe emerged in Madrid, Barcelona and a number of other major cities in Spain throughout the 1970s under General Franco’s dictatorship (Castells 1983).
22 Seekings (1995). As will be described later on, South Africa has a large number of citizens involved in the civil society sector compared to many other countries.
23 While still being aware of that many individual activists involved in the new social movements have a history in the anti-apartheid movement.
24 The Group Areas Act passed in 1950 was created to ‘ensure that people lived in residential areas that were inhabited solely, or if this was not possible, overwhelmingly, by a designated racial group and that a substantial buffer zone separate black townships from the nearest white neighbourhoods’ (Morris 1999, p. 669). This legislation, together with the Land Acts and the Population Registration Act, has been presented as a cornerstone of apartheid and was only formally abolished in 1991 (ibid.).
25 Robins argues that ‘the black townships’ of Cape Town have become even more segregated and disconnected from the ‘white’ middle class parts of the city (Robins 2002, p. 666). Still,
reason it is of major relevance to study if and how the introduction of non-racial democratic governance might have affected the practices of associations that continue to be based in racially segregated neighbourhoods.

In South Africa these associations are often referred to as civics, ratepayers’ and residents’ associations. Although most civics are found in predominantly black areas, and most ratepayers’ associations in predominantly white areas, this is not always the case. The term ratepayer entails that the members pay property rates (taxes), thus implying that they are property owners. There are also civic associations based in white areas. Generally these are considered more liberal than the ones named ‘ratepayer’, because they also include tenants. The term residents’ association is also common, and like civics such associations organise all residents in an area regardless of their residential form. When residents’ associations are referred to in this thesis, ratepayers’ and civic associations are included.

Given the socio-economic differences between the neighbourhoods, the activities of associations vary accordingly. In socio-economically weak areas, in South Africa typically black townships, associations work to improve housing in general. They are often also involved in community affairs and act to enhance the physical environment, for example, by encouraging improvement of schools and health centres. In more affluent areas, and in most cases these are predominantly white, associations often have more narrow functions. A common issue of concern is the monitoring of planning matters, such as land use and building developments. In crime-ridden areas, both rich and poor, security matters are frequently part of associations’ interest.

In spite of significant differences, the important common characteristic of these associations is the geographical aspect – members reside in the same area and therefore share the same interest to have a good living environment. As just mentioned, civics, ratepayers’ and residents’ associations in South Africa organise urban residents according to a geographical division that still, to a large extent, reflects the racial segregation that was institutionalised under the apartheid system.

Apart from their geographical basis, there are a few other characteristics that South African residents’ associations share, and that distinguish them from many other civil society organisations. Residents’ associations are multifunctional in that they aim at improving living conditions in general in the

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as formulated by Robinson, we can ask ourselves ‘whether re-arranging the spaces in question is really necessary for political transformation’ (Robinson 2004, p. 175).

26 It should be noted that many ratepayers’ associations in post-apartheid South Africa have a less rigid view of potential members and welcome also tenants. The Hout Bay Ratepayers’ Association, for example, is open to anyone regardless of whether they own or rent a property. People residing in informal settlements are free to join the association as long as they have taken title deeds of their property (Interview with Kelroe-Cooke, 1 October 2004).

27 The structure of metropolitan areas with wards as the lowest administrative tier of the municipality – in Cape Town there are 105 wards – also encourages public involvement on a geographical basis.
area in which they are based. Unlike single issue associations multifunctional associations are more likely to have a variety of different connections and relations to politicians and government actors.

Furthermore they are membership associations that are run by the members themselves and rely on relatively small resources. Unlike the study of professional NGOs, this can give us an understanding of the grassroots level of civil society. Although outside the main objective of the thesis, this type of civil society association is often highlighted in discussions on how to build social capital, and in the long run how to contribute to the consolidation of democracy.

Another common feature is that neighbourhood associations, at least in theory, are open to all residents in a particular area. In that sense they are different from, for example, trade unions and religious groupings as these, by definition, target their activities at employees and the faithful, i.e. a select group of residents. This makes neighbourhood associations potentially more representative of all neighbourhood residents, and a legitimate counterpart for the government in the decision-making process.

The normative rationale: the dilemma of pluralist new democracies

South African neighbourhood associations are also interesting from a normative perspective as they point to the inherent dilemma between public and particular interests known ever since Aristotle. Defined by Robert Dahl as the dilemma of pluralist democracies, the problem concerns the need for independent organisations on the one hand, and the risks implicated in the promotion of narrow individual demands on the other. In the words of Dahl, autonomous organisations

may use the opportunity to increase or perpetuate injustice rather than reduce it, to foster the narrow egoism of their members at the expense of concerns for a broader public good, and even to weaken or destroy democracy itself.28

According to the pluralistic ideal, autonomous civil society associations are indispensable in democracies for two main reasons: they create mutual control and are thereby able to prevent domination from the state, and they are needed for effective participation through the right to organise freely.29

Dahl, however, identifies four major problems implicated in democratic pluralism: organisations may help to stabilise injustices, deform civic consciousness, distort the public agenda and alienate final control over the

28 Dahl (1982), p. 36, quote on p. 1. The inherent dilemma between public and particular interests has been part of the political philosophical debate ever since Aristotle to Rousseau to the present day (see Dahl 1982, and Öberg 1994, pp. 7–8). For a related discussion on the problematic assumption that civil society is ‘inherently a benign or inclusive force’, see Hirschmann (1998). See also Berman (1997) and Armony (2004) for interesting studies of the ‘dark side’ of civil society.

agenda. In short, the fundamental problem lies in the fact that citizens tend to organise around cleavages in society, such as class, religion, status, occupation, ideology, language, region, race and ethnic group. In extremely authoritarian and centralist regimes, associations organised around such cleavages never have the opportunity to appear in public.\textsuperscript{30}

By organising along societal divisions, there is a great risk that the promotion of a ‘common good’ is replaced by a concern to protect the interests of the members in the particular organisation. This could have negative consequences since particularistic self-interests may strengthen societal divisions and conflicts. Furthermore the inequality in resources implies that some actors are more influential than others, thereby having the capacity and resources to control what alternatives are put on the agenda (and also \textit{not} put on the agenda). Finally, democratic pluralism entails that private groups (such as business organisations, labour unions, etc.) perform public functions or take important economic decisions that the government – and ultimately the demos – cannot control.\textsuperscript{31}

Although the pluralist dilemma exists in all democratic countries, the shape and significance of the dilemma vary between countries. Nations going through important political changes, for example, transitions from authoritarian rule, provide a particularly interesting context for the exploration of the dilemma of democratic pluralism because of the fundamental structural transformations implied in such major changes.\textsuperscript{32} South Africa’s democratic transition is a case in point given its recent transition from apartheid to democracy. The country’s vibrant associational life has been widely acknowledged, not least in the anti-apartheid struggle. The existence of organisational pluralism should be an important factor enhancing democratic consolidation and acting as a watchdog to hold the state accountable. Then again, however, considering the history of racial segregation, the perils of autonomous organisations seem obvious as many of South Africa’s civil society associations are still organised around societal cleavages.

One way of empirically capturing the problems of democratic pluralism in civil society–state relations – how to balance the need for autonomous organisations with the prospect of stabilising social and political inequalities

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., pp. 40–41.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., pp. 40–53. However, as Dahl argues, the crucial point is not whether citizens lose control of the agenda of public affairs – in our complex society the demos simply cannot control the final agenda – but rather if they have \textit{wrongfully} lost control. There are, for example, certain fundamental political rights that are inalienable in a democratic system, and these ‘are not properly within the authority of the citizens to delegate in the first place’ (ibid., p. 49). It needs to be mentioned that the aim of this study is not to propose in what way this dilemma can be reduced or overcome. This is done by Dahl who proposes remedies to the problem of democratic pluralism in the United States, reducing economic inequality being one of them (ibid., p. 166 ff.).

\textsuperscript{32} Dahl asserts that the dilemma is relevant also in authoritarian regimes, although more hidden from public view (ibid., p. 3).
– is by studying how neighbourhood associations try to influence the decision-making process, and the way in which local government officials and politicians respond to their demands. While Dahl is mainly referring to large-scale democracies like nation states, the dilemma may be just as visible and relevant at lower levels. What is the relation between the predominantly ANC-dominated state and the civic associations that used to be part of the joint struggle against apartheid? How do residents’ associations respond when they are confronted with a new institutional context based on representative non-racial democracy? Do public authorities encourage or discourage the political involvement of community-based associations in local government affairs?

On the one hand, public participation is needed to legitimate democratic policy- and decision-making, and residents’ associations have been important actors in the process of increasing public participation in post-apartheid decision-making. Historically as well as in present times community associations also have a function as service providers, particularly in poorer areas. On the other hand, associations can hamper decision-making by putting forward narrow demands, thereby disturbing and delaying service delivery. There is also a risk that some associations are more successful than others in advancing their claims, and that such successful associations represent citizens who are generally more resourceful in terms of social background, education, economic status, etc. What makes South Africa an interesting case for the study of Dahl’s dilemma is that large parts of the white community, political insiders during the apartheid years, are now political outsiders given the ANC’s position and support base. Therefore, while associations in affluent areas may have stable resources in terms of money and organisation, it is likely that their access to the state is today inferior to when they were under apartheid. And although associations in poor areas have less financial resources, one can hypothesise that this deficit may, to a certain extent, be compensated for by having greater access to those in power.

The structure of the thesis

After this first chapter that has outlined the objective of the thesis and specified the research problem, Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework that will guide the study. The main aim is to account for why and how the framework of political opportunity structure is considered relevant for analysing civil society–state relations in general, and for specifying the institutional and political context of neighbourhood associations in particular. The chapter also proposes framing processes as mechanisms by which a certain political opportunity structure is interpreted by associations and translated into action. Chapter 3 contains a discussion of the methodological considerations that have guided the study, including the selection of cases. Chapters 4,
5 and 6 are devoted to the empirical analyses of neighbourhood associations in Cape Town and their relation to political parties and local government.

Chapter 4 aims at answering the question of how Cape Town’s political opportunity structure has developed in a historical perspective from apartheid to democracy. It starts with a more general description and goes on to a systematic analysis of the most important changes in the democratic era. The underlying assumption in this thesis is that different associations, for various reasons, confront a different political opportunity structure in their attempts to influence decision-making and agenda-setting. As a consequence the description of the major changes in Cape Town’s local political opportunity structure in Chapter 4 will be quite general in order to provide a background to Chapters 5 and 6, which will focus on how different residents’ associations have perceived and responded to changes in the institutional and political context.

Chapter 5 is thus guided by the question of how the changes have been perceived by neighbourhood associations in different areas of Cape Town. After a historic background of neighbourhood associations in predominantly black, coloured and white areas respectively, an analysis is made of their situation in post-apartheid Cape Town. Drawing on survey responses from 1996 and 2004, a descriptive account is given of the way in which associations are organised, their membership base and financial situation. It is also outlined how associations perceive their abilities to influence decision-making and, for associations active in 2004, if they believe that their chances of affecting political decisions have changed in the last ten years. The last section of the chapter consists of a comparative case study of associations in a black township (Langa) and a white affluent area (Rondebosch). The aim is to gain a deeper insight in differences between how associations in different socio-economic environments perceive that the institutional and political context, and changes in that context, have influenced their chances of affecting decision-making.

Chapter 6 takes us to Hout Bay in order to further explore how residents’ associations have responded to changes in the political opportunity structure when attempting to influence decision-making in one particular case: the Imizamo Yethu township. This will be done by focusing on the framing processes in which associations in Hout Bay have interpreted the political opportunity structure and decided to act – or not to act. By carefully studying how different actors, including local government politicians and officials, have responded to various events in the development of Imizamo Yethu from 1990 to 2006, we can identify some of the mechanisms that link political opportunities to the practices of associations in this specific case. The focus is thus on the whole chain from changes in the political opportunity structure, through framing processes, to the practices and actions of associations.
Chapter 7 concludes our empirical findings and discusses the usefulness of the theoretical framework. Dahl’s dilemma of pluralist democracies is revisited and the empirical results considered within this normative context.
2. How to conceptualise civil society–state relations: theoretical and analytical framework

What analytical tools are suitable when we want to study how changes in the institutional and political context are linked to the practices of associations when attempting to influence agenda-setting and decision-making? This chapter aims at presenting a framework that can serve as a guide for a systematic analysis in the empirical chapters that follow. Drawing on social movement theory, it is suggested that the notions of political opportunity structures and framing processes are suitable for our purpose as they combine an interest in both structure and agency, thereby paying attention to stable as well as more dynamic aspects of the process in which a particular context is perceived and transformed into certain practices.

Institutionalised versus non-institutionalised politics and organisations

Sidney Tarrow defines social movements as ‘collective challenges based on common purposes, and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities’.¹ According to Tarrow, what distinguishes social movements from interest groups, such as trade unions, is that they lack hierarchical structures and more stable resources, such as money, organisation and access to the state. Contention, therefore, ‘may be the only resource movements control’.²

This narrow definition of social movements can be compared to broader ones that even include political parties. In a South African context, for example, with reference to the ANC, Mark Swilling and Bev Russell claim that political parties must form part of civil society (or the non-profit sector as they call it), ‘because many political parties have only very recently shed their “social movement” or “liberation movement” status and become estab-

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¹ Tarrow (1998), p. 4, italics in original.
² Ibid., p. 5. To put it bluntly it seems as if social movement scholars lose interest in movements once these become institutionalised. Tarrow, for example, writes that ‘movements institutionalise their tactics and attempt to gain concrete benefits for their supporters through negotiation and compromise – a route that often succeeds at the cost of transforming the movement into a party or interest group’ (Ibid., p. 101, my emphasis).
lished political parties’. The ‘standard distinction’ between political parties and other organised interests, namely that parties are the only ones active in the electoral arena, is not easily applicable in the South African case either. For example, residents’ associations sometimes contest local government elections, although seldom with any great success.

Nevertheless, while social movements and political parties may be difficult to distinguish empirically, for analytical purposes there is a point in keeping them apart as they are believed to fill different functions in a democracy. In this study the terms social movement organisation, interest group and neighbourhood/residents’ association are used to refer to the more or less formal organisation of a group of people for collective action that, unlike political parties, operate mainly, but not exclusively, in the civil society arena.

Social movements and interest groups have traditionally been analysed within separate theoretical frameworks. However, more recently social movement scholars have come to contest the neat division between institutionalised and non-institutionalised actors that used to distinguish movement organisations from interest groups. Consequently the practice of using separate analytical tools for the study of collective actors can also be questioned.

Jack A. Goldstone, for example, claims that ‘[n]ot only persons but also organizations frequently engage in both protest and conventional political actions’, and furthermore that ‘many social movements can barely exist and certainly not succeed without sponsorship from institutionalized political parties’. Lee Ann Banaszak argues similarly when she underlines that there are movement members who are also part of the state, using both insider tactics and extra-institutional forms of protest. Also McAdam et al., who for quite some time contributed to sustaining the division between institutionalised and non-institutionalised politics, have recently come to challenge this boundary and claim that ‘the two sorts of politics interact incessantly and involve similar causal processes’.

Because of the blurred boundaries between different forms of political actions (conventional and unconventional) and groupings (institutionalised and
non-institutionalised), they can be analysed within the same theoretical framework. This is especially the case when the main interest concerns the identification of mechanisms in order to understand how a particular context influences the practices of associations – it goes without saying that this context is perceived differently by different actors. The same line of reasoning is implicit in Michele Micheletti’s suggestion that pluralism and corporatism, the classic approaches to interest group analysis, can actually be understood as two ideal types of political opportunity structures.  

The important point here is that the framework of political opportunity structures, to which we turn next, can be used to analyse both more institutionalised actors and those that are less institutionalised. It should be an empirical matter what resources are available to them, how they are affected by the political context in which they operate, and how they choose to act. By using different theoretical perspectives in the analysis of social movements and institutionalised civil society actors respectively, we miss the possibility to compare how different actors operating within the same arena respond to a similar political opportunity structure.

Specifying the political context: the political opportunity structure framework

The so-called political process model developed by social movement scholars includes three basic theoretical components: the concepts of mobilising structures (as developed from resource mobilisation theory), political opportunity structures and framing processes. Most scholars concentrate on one of the main concepts, such as the effect of increasing political opportunities on movement mobilisation, or the organisational dynamics of collective action. According to McAdam et al., the challenge is to outline how political opportunities, mobilising structures and framing processes are linked to each other. This study accepts this challenge to a certain degree by focusing mainly on the linkages between two of the above-mentioned components: political opportunity structures and framing processes. The dimension of mobilising structures, and more particularly movements’ varying degree of material and other resources, will only be included in the analysis to the extent that they are considered important for understanding how associations have responded to a changing institutional and political context.

When the social movement research agenda started to expand after World War II, the irrational elements of protest were emphasised. Once this approach proved incapable of explaining the politics of protest in the US in the
1960s, resource mobilisation theory was launched as ‘something of a corrective to collective behaviour, emphasizing the intentionality and rationality of protesters’. The resource mobilisation theory stressed the importance of having access to resources in terms of money, facilities, a communication network and committed volunteers to gain influence.

One of the first scholars to explicitly refer to the structure of political opportunities was Peter Eisinger who in the early 1970s analysed protest behaviour in 43 American cities. Eisinger defines the structure of political opportunities as ‘environmental variables [that] are related to one another in the sense that they establish a context within which politics takes place’. This context was thought to ‘impose certain constraints on political activity or open avenues for it’. Political scientist Herbert Kitschelt argues that the perspective of political opportunity structures has enabled the systematic and comparative study of the institutional constraints that movements face, constraints that ‘have often been simply assumed.’ In contrast to the resource mobilisation discourse, where emphasis is put on internal resources, the concept of political opportunity structures thus underlines resources external to the organisation. In the decades that followed, the concept quickly gained ground in the study of contentious politics. Since it has often come to refer to a national context, it is interesting to note that one of its first applications was actually in an urban context.

More recently Tarrow’s definition has become ‘the standard definition’. He defines political opportunities as ‘consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for collective action by affecting people’s expectations for success or failure’. By stressing that opportunities do not only refer to formal structures, but also to more informal aspects of conflict and alliance structures, Tarrow highlights that even challengers that have weak financial and power resources may take advantage of opportunities that arise.

Meyer describes the essence of the political process theory, in which the political opportunity structure has become the most salient feature, in the following way:

The essential emphasis of the PPT [political process theory] approach, as it developed in the 1970s and 1980s, is that activists do not choose goals,
strategies, and tactics in a vacuum. Rather, the political context, conceptualized fairly broadly, sets the grievances around which activists mobilize, advantaging some claims and disadvantaging others. Furthermore, the organization of the polity and the positioning of various actors within it make some strategies of influence more attractive and potentially efficacious than others. The wisdom, creativity, and outcomes of activists’ choices – briefly, their agency – can only be understood and evaluated by looking at the political context and the rules of the games in which these choices are made (structure).\(^{19}\)

As will be discussed below one of the problems with the framework of political opportunity structures is that there is no agreement among scholars on exactly what should be included in the concept. Building on the definitions suggested by some of the most prominent social movement scholars, McAdam has proposed the following ‘highly consensual list of dimensions of political opportunities’:\(^{20}\)

1. The relative openness or closure of the institutionalised political system
2. The stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity
3. The presence or absence of elite allies

Empirically the three dimensions outlined above are not mutually exclusive but are interlinked in several ways. A distinction can be discerned between the first of these dimensions, and the other two in terms of the degree to which they include stable and formal elements. The first dimension focuses on the legal and institutional structure of a given polity. As such it is more stable and formal than the other two which refer to ‘the more informal structure of power relations that characterize the system at a given point in time’.\(^{21}\)

For my purpose the dimensions can be grouped under two headings. The first dimension would then be referred to as the institutional and legal structure whereas the other two would be grouped under the political power structure. Before we explore these dimensions in further detail, some of the problems implicated in the use of the political opportunity structure framework will be described and how we should deal with them.

\(^{19}\) Meyer (1999), p. 82.
\(^{20}\) McAdam (1996), p. 27. In the list McAdam adds a fourth dimension, the state’s capacity and propensity for repression, but it is not included in my list. The reason is not that it is not thought to be an important or relevant dimension. On the contrary, in a South African context it is definitely both important and relevant. However, I agree with Donatella della Porta who claims that ‘state repression is really more an expression of the general receptivity or vulnerability of the political opportunity structure, rather than a dimension of the same’ (McAdam 1996, p. 28).
\(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 26.
The political opportunity structure refers to the political context in which organisations act (and the two notions will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis). Expressed in these terms the concept has rightly been criticised for being conceptually too broadly defined. As Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper write in a critique of the political process theory: ‘What is being shown is that sensitivity to context is useful, or that some events and actors external to movements affect some movement actions. Is this news to anyone?’

Two of their main concerns are that a) the political process approach tends to be too structural, and b) the concept of political opportunities has been stretched to include almost everything in the larger environment, and is therefore less useful for analytical purposes. Goodwin and Jasper propose that greater attention should be directed towards ‘strategic choice, cultural meanings, and emotions’. They also stress the need to realise that the environments of social movements are complex and ‘contain far more actors than just the state’, which in turn ‘contains diverse agents and institutions’.

Part of Goodwin and Jasper’s critique is indeed justified. It is, for example, problematic that the concept of political opportunity structures is often quite vaguely defined, and that it tends to mean different things to different authors. These problems have, however, not been left unnoticed by social movement scholars. William A. Gamson and David S. Meyer, for example, acknowledge that as an analytical concept it is too broad – ‘[a]ny explanatory power comes from the specific variables that are part of it’. Against Goodwin and Jasper’s critique it could be argued that the term ‘structure’ does not imply that political opportunities are considered static, neither that the agency element is neglected. On the contrary, the very concept of political opportunities refers to a changeable environment, with interactive dynamics where social movements can modify at least some dimensions of the political opportunity structure. This implies that movement strategies may affect the strategies adopted by the authorities, which in turn means that social movements can create their own opportunities and change the political opportunity structure. The political opportunity structure as understood here includes both stable and more volatile aspects, both formal and informal dimensions, both structure and actor-oriented components.

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24 Ibid., pp. 51–53.
25 See also Meyer and Minkoff (2004) for a critique along similar lines.
28 Kriesi et al. (1995), p. xv. In methodological terms political opportunities may thus constitute both independent and dependent variables (McAdam 1996, p. 38). In this study political opportunity structures are considered independent or explanatory variables, as we are interested in their effect on the practices and actions of associations.
Another problem is related to the very notion of ‘opportunity’, which implies that the political context indeed offers opportunities to the actors. A more neutral concept would be simply ‘the political and institutional context’, followed by an open question about what opportunities or constraints that the context presents to social movements or others wishing to exercise influence.

McAdam et al. advocate that we should see opportunities and threats as subject to attribution, and not as objective structural factors. This more dynamic way of interpreting political opportunity structures may explain mobilisation of previously inactive people. In principle, I agree with McAdam et al.’s promotion of a more subjective and dynamic view of opportunity structures. However, we should for analytical purposes distinguish between an ‘objective’ definition of the political opportunity structure, and the subjective process in which actors make attributions regarding this structure. Such an approach acknowledges that it is indeed possible to single out reasonably objective dimensions of the political structure, and consequently that we are able to identify changes in this structure irrespective of how they are perceived by individual actors. One obvious such change is a change of government. An argument like that does not contradict the assumption that changes in the political opportunity structure must be perceived and seized by different actors (‘framed’) in order to have an impact on their practices.

In the next section, the specific dimensions that are part of the political opportunity structure are presented. It should be stressed that although the actual outcome of certain practices is not specifically focused on, whether or not people believe that their actions will be, or have been, successful or not is an important part of the framing process in which associations decide how to act (or not act). The account below therefore includes a discussion of how the dimensions of the political opportunity structure are thought to affect associations’ actual possibilities to influence.

The institutional and legal structure
Before we discuss the institutional and legal structure a few words should be said about the definition of the state. For analytical purposes we should strive to be as precise as possible when examining the state. Jenkins makes a distinction between the state as an overall unity that attempts to enforce the claims of monopoly of violence, ‘the regime’ or ‘the structure of rule and the legitimizing myths used to sustain that claim’, and ‘the government’, imply-

29 McAdam et al. (2001), p. 43.
30 See Gamson and Meyer (1996), p. 283; Tarrow (1998), p. 77; and Klandermans et al. (1998), p. 175. In the 1998 edition of Power in Movement, Tarrow describes how he has gone from the use of ‘political opportunity structure’ to simply ‘political opportunities’. He suggests that the use of the term ‘structure’ may have led critics to wrongly assume that opportunities do not need to be perceived in order to act as incentives for action (Tarrow 1998, p. 221, fn. 6).
ing the personnel who in fact make authoritative or binding decisions. In this study local government is the focus, which refers to the lowest organisational level of the South African state, and more specifically the administrative entity within local government, known as the municipality.

There are some dimensions that are normally considered part of the institutional and legal structure of a certain polity. First, is the institutionalised political system open or closed to those wishing to exercise influence? Are public representatives formally invited to participate? Tarrow shows that governments differ in their strategy towards challengers. Some governments have an open and inclusive strategy, which implies that they respond and absorb their demands and facilitate their entry into the polity, whereas other governments have an exclusive strategy. Tarrow also underlines that the extent to which states are characterised as strong, weak, inclusive or exclusive may differ between sectors and levels of the state. It is particularly this dimension of political opportunity structures that relates to pluralism and corporatism as proposed by Micheletti above. A corporatist system encourages participation by a select number of interest groups in the decision-making process, whereas others are excluded. In theory, a pluralist system is open to all, but in practice the ability to influence is a matter of having strong resources.

Secondly, are there legal restrictions to civil society activities? This dimension is closely linked to the degree of democracy since authoritarian systems often place limits on the right to organise freely as well as to the freedom of expression.

Thirdly, most scholars stress the degree of centralisation or decentralisation of the government system as one important factor that may explain the degree of access to political decision-making. According to theories of political opportunities, decentralisation provides more formal avenues for participation and engagement, the mechanism being that a decentralised system decreases the distance between associations and the administration. However, a decentralised system does not necessarily imply more success in terms of concrete outcome. Tarrow discusses how differences in state centralisation explain the different outcomes of the French and American student movements in the 1960s. ‘Federalism is a particular invitation to movements to shift their venues into institutions, because it provides so many alternative pockets for participation’, but a centralised state can be an advantage for social movements once the system is weakened because it offers ‘a unified field and a centralized target to attack’.

32 Tarrow (1998), pp. 82–83. According to this classification, the US is characterised as a weak state with an inclusive strategy, Italy as a weak state with an exclusive strategy, Sweden as a strong state with an inclusive strategy and France as a strong state with an exclusive strategy (Ibid., p. 82).
33 Ibid., p. 81.
In a local context, which is relevant in this study, the question concerns decentralisation within urban authorities.\footnote{The definition of decentralisation used here is one that includes the transfer of political and/or administrative powers and competencies from central institutions to institutions at lower levels (Pierre 2001, p. 107).} In a comparative study of church-based community organisations in two American cities, Heidi J. Swarts shows that although a decentralised system offers more points of access to challengers, there is no single entity that has the power or capacity to address critical issues. In contrast, a centralised government has the capacity to implement a certain policy ‘once persuaded of a course of action by a citizens’ movement’.\footnote{Swarts (2003), p. 79.} The same argument is put forward by Maloney et al. in their study of neighbourhood associations in Birmingham. For associations with a city-wide focus, a decentralised system may prove problematic ‘as resources cannot necessarily be stretched to engage in all localities’.\footnote{Maloney et al. (2000), p. 810.}

The fourth factor is the electoral system. It is likely that a proportional system, in combination with a heterogeneous society, results in a larger number of political parties which in turn represents a greater number of potential elite allies, who could help movements to influence decision-making.\footnote{Odmalm (2004), p. 106.} However, a fragmented party system could also have the same implications as a decentralised political system, namely a large number of potential avenues for influence with no real power.\footnote{It has, for example, been shown that governments in countries with majoritarian electoral systems are more likely to respond to strikers’ demands, than are governments in proportional systems, the reason being that legislative seats are more contested in the former system (Vernby 2006, pp. 55, 81).}

The institutional and legal structure is more stable as compared to the dimension of the political power to which we turn next. Still it is important to note that these dimensions affect each other mutually. Institutional and legal structures are not just created in a vacuum, but are the result of negotiations carried out by political actors. For example, a political party may promote a centralised or decentralised system. Also a large number of potential elite allies, a factor that is often highlighted as being important to social movements, may be the result of a proportional electoral system.

The political power structure

The political power structure as understood here includes dimensions 2 and 3 in McAdam’s list presented above. Starting with the second dimension – the stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity – this refers to political alignments, or, as Tarrow writes, ‘the changing fortunes of government and opposition parties’.\footnote{Tarrow (1998), p. 78.} In a system characterised by electoral instability, where there are two or more possible
government alternatives competing, it is suggested that the opportunities for those wishing to exercise influence vary accordingly. In short, if there is a great mobility of voters, the likelihood of power shifts is greater, which in turn can create possibilities for civil society actors to exercise influence.

From the politicians’ point of view there are incentives to ally with organisations and social movements in order to increase the number of votes. This in turn creates incentives and opportunities for social movements to influence the political agenda. In a US context, John W. Kingdon discusses how strong interest groups, in terms of geographical dispersion, ability to mobilise members, numbers, status or wealth, are thought to affect election outcomes.40

Heidi Swarts describes how neighbourhood activism can bring local issues on to the electoral agenda and ‘provide a resource for political entrepreneurs seeking to differentiate themselves from other candidates’.41 Tarrow also shows how electoral realignments created opportunities for the American civil rights movement when the decline of the Southern white vote made the Democrats seek black electoral support.42 A volatile political situation is thus likely to benefit actors who aim at influencing political candidates – on the condition that politicians consider such actors to be potential voters. In systems where the outcome of elections is already certain, one could assume that there are less incentives both for social movements and political candidates to interact.

The third dimension in McAdam’s table is the presence and absence of elite allies. Important allies may be found outside the political system, for example, in the business or religious spheres. In representative systems however, political parties are considered among the more influential. When the system is characterised by electoral stability, i.e. when one political party is dominant, allies outside the system (or inside, for example, the political opposition) are less likely to be a threat to those in power.

Social movement scholars often highlight the extent to which the political elite is unified or not as important in understanding the potential for social movement influence. If there are splits among elite actors, for example, politicians and officials at different government levels with diverging interests, there might be a chance to get support from one or several actors and increase the possibilities to influence the political agenda or a certain outcome.43 This logic also works the other way around – government representatives that have a weak position due to fragmentation may want to ally with influential actors outside government in order to legitimate a certain decision.

42 Tarrow (1998), p. 79.
Another aspect of the elite dimension that may constitute an important part of an association’s political assets, which is highly relevant in the South African case, is the close relationship that may exist between social movements and government in terms of ‘circulation of influential people’. For example, studies of city politics in Britain show that council members are often integrated into a wide range of community associations.44

Based on the discussion above, Table 2.1 summarises the most important dimensions of the political opportunity structure.

Table 2.1. The main dimensions of the political opportunity structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The institutional and legal structure</th>
<th>The political power structure</th>
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<tr>
<td>Open or closed</td>
<td>Political alignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal environment</td>
<td>Presence and absence of elite allies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Degree of centralisation

Electoral system

As has been touched upon already, these dimensions are not mutually exclusive empirically, nor are they necessarily simultaneously relevant. Some aspects may be more prominent during certain periods of time than others. In a South African context, for example, the overall non-democratic environment under the previous regime overshadowed the relevance of most dimensions. Likewise, when applied in a local context as is the case in this study, some dimensions of the local opportunity structure are dependent on the national political context. One such dimension is the legal environment where legislation is passed at national level but has implications for civil society at the local level. As a consequence not all dimensions of the political opportunity structure will be put forward concurrently in the empirical study. Instead we will see that the importance of the dimensions has fluctuated and that some of them have been more significant than others in specific time periods.

44 Casey (2004), p. 252. Also Banaszak underlines this relationship, or intersection as she calls it, and shows that some actors may be members of both the state and a social movement (Banaszak 2003, pp. 4–5).
Political opportunity structures and democratisation

In an African context the focus on the role of civil society can be seen as a reaction against the previous ‘(over)emphasis on the role of the state’. In a frequently cited article from 1989 Michael Bratton asked political scientists interested in African affairs ‘to devote more research attention to the associational life that occurs in the political space beyond the state’s purview’. At the same time he wisely pointed out that this should not be done at the expense of studies focusing on the state, but in the form of comparative analyses that aim at understanding state–society relations.

As should be clear by now it is argued that the political opportunity structure framework offers useful tools to study civil society–state relations in a changing local urban context. In line with Jenkins, the argument is that by focusing on the relationship between the state and social movements, we are able to deviate from theories of the state without losing focus on actors that question or challenge the state.

On an overall level this study is within a context of democratisation. The link between the democratisation discourse and the framework of political opportunity structures as developed in social movement theory might seem obvious, as democratic transitions in most cases fundamentally change the context in which social movements operate. However, according to Klandermans and Staggenborg, ‘[e]ven nationalism and democratization, which have spawned their own distinct literatures, are frequently studied as if they had nothing to do with the study of social movements’.

In the South African case it is difficult not to see the possible relationship between the introduction of democracy and a changing political and institutional context. Still, although the linkage might be obvious, we cannot say in what way the political opportunity structure will change with the introduction of democracy. For example, while it is often expected, a democratic

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45 Chabal (1992), p. 82.
47 Ibid., p. 427, italics in original.
49 Thus, as should be clear by now, my focus is neither on the role of civil society associations in democratic transitions, nor on whether civic engagement in South Africa in general has increased or decreased following the introduction of democracy. Such issues have been covered in the vast literature on democratic transitions (cf. Linz and Stepan 1996, and Bratton and van de Walle 1997, as well as in the many studies focusing on aspects of the anti-apartheid struggle (cf. Mayekiso 1996; Habib and Taylor 1999; Houston 1999; Seekings 2000a; Adler and Steinberg 2000, and Lodge 2001).
50 Klandermans and Staggenborg (2002), p. 337. Tarrow argues that ‘the democratic revolutions of 1989 in east central Europe served to remind scholars that democratization, however peaceful, is a contentious process with family resemblances to both movement cycles and revolutionary ones’ (Tarrow 1998, p. 159).
51 It should be noted that the definition of democracy used here stresses the procedural elements in the tradition of Dahl’s concept of polyarchy, and not the substantive or normative aspects of the concept.
system does not automatically imply increasing avenues for public participation. Although some associations may have gained access to the state, others may have lost avenues for influence. Furthermore, whether a system is more or less decentralised is not necessarily linked to its democratic qualities (although decentralisation is often associated with democratic governance). Hence, for the purposes of this thesis, the democratic transition in South Africa will be treated as an important institutional change whose implications for the local opportunity structure are the focus of our empirical investigations.

In the next section focus is on the processes by which a certain political opportunity structure, and changes in it, are transformed into the practices of associations. Drawing on social movement literature our interest is in the framing processes in which associations interpret the institutional and political context and decide to act accordingly.

The link between context and practice: framing processes

In 1995, Kriesi et al. argued that scholars using the political opportunity structure approach had not always been explicit about how, more precisely, the political context affected the mobilisation of collective actors.\(^5\) Since then there has been an increasing focus on the mechanisms that shape the mobilisation process, although, as noted by David S. Meyer and Debra C. Minkoff, the social movement literature is still unclear on the critical issue of understanding the relationship between context and action.\(^5\)

The mechanism approach goes hand in hand with acknowledging the usefulness of dynamic and relational methods, as opposed to ‘a static standard agenda for the study of social movements’.\(^5\) In simple terms mechanisms refer to the link between cause and effect, input and output, or *explanans* and *explanandum*, and aim at specifying *how* (i.e. through what process) a relationship was brought about, rather than focusing on the strength of correlations between variables common in quantitative social science.\(^5\)

The mechanism approach is grounded in methodological individualism, namely the recognition of individual actors as the core causal agents in social change.\(^6\) The challenge when analysing mechanisms is to explain how structures at the macro-level can lead to certain actions at the individual micro-level, and how these individual actions in turn are transformed into a collective outcome at the macro-level. James Coleman’s so-called *macro-micro-macro model* presents a typology of social mechanisms that conceptualise collective social action. ‘The general thrust of this model’, as expressed


\(^{54}\) McAdam et al. (2001), p. 305.


\(^{56}\) Ibid., pp. 11–12.
by Hedström and Swedberg, ‘is that proper explanations of change and variation at the macro level entails showing how macro states at one point in time influence the behavior of individual actors, and how these actions generate new macro states at a later time’.57

According to McAdam et al., the focus on individual-level processes and mechanisms in Coleman’s model and Hedström and Swedberg’s discussion has restricted our ability to interpret collective processes. Instead McAdam et al. identify three mechanisms that are relevant in the study of contentious politics: environmental, cognitive and relational mechanisms.58 Although McAdam et al. do point to a problematic issue in the study of collective action, it is not clear exactly how their proposed mechanisms would increase our understanding of how structures are transformed into collective action. To add to the confusion one of the mechanisms, the cognitive mechanism, is described as operating ‘through alterations of individual and collective perception’. Furthermore, when taking a closer look at collective action McAdam et al. note that ‘we will observe multiple cognitive mechanisms at work, individual by individual’.59 Although admittedly not unproblematic in this respect, this study acknowledges that mechanisms can serve to explain how social structures are translated into individual and group action, an assumption that is not uncommon in the study of collective action.60

In more concrete terms the question is how certain changes in the political context translate into the practices of associations. As discussed already, a link between the political context and movement activities requires that the political context is perceived by the relevant actors in the first place. McAdam et al. write:

At a minimum people need to feel both aggrieved about some aspect of their lives and optimistic that, acting collectively, they can redress the problem. Lacking either one or both of these perceptions, it is highly unlikely that people will mobilize even when afforded the opportunity to do so.61

57 Ibid., p. 21.
58 McAdam et al. (2001), p. 25. Environmental mechanisms refer to ‘externally generated influences on conditions affecting social life’, e.g. resource depletion or enhancement which affects people’s capacity to engage in contentious politics. Cognitive mechanisms include, for example, the individual mechanism of commitment ‘in which persons who individually would prefer not to take the risks of collective action find themselves unable to withdraw without hurting others whose solidarity they value’. Relational mechanisms, finally, ‘alter connections among people, groups, and interpersonal networks’. Brokerage is a relational mechanism linking two or more previously unconnected social sites by a unit that mediates their relations with one another, for example as new groups start interacting during periods of contentious politics (ibid., pp. 25–26).
60 As pointed out by Hertting (2003, p. 58), Elinor Ostrom sometimes includes individual and sometimes collective actors in her framework for analysing institutional choice.
61 McAdam et al. (1996), p. 5.
How then can we understand the process in which people decide that acting collectively – or not acting for that matter – is worthwhile? Although not always discussed in terms of mechanisms, the concept of framing processes, as developed in social movement theory in the last two decades, can actually be understood as the key mechanism linking the political context to the practices and actions of associations and movements. As such, framing involves ‘a collective process of interpretation, attribution, and social construction’, thereby mediating ‘between opportunity and action’. In the words of Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, two of the more influential social movement scholars,

> [c]ollective action frames are constructed in part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change.

Elizabeth Staggenborg suggests that the notion of collective action framing is particularly helpful in bridging the macro-micro gap as touched upon above, as collective action frames are produced at the meso level (i.e. by movement organisations). The literature identifies three main framing tasks that describe different elements of the framing process, out of which two – diagnostic framing and prognostic framing – are of particular relevance for this study.

**Diagnostic framing** refers to when organisations identify and describe problems that they intend to address. The process of diagnostic framing also includes the attribution of blame for or causes of problems. A common collective action frame has been so-called injustice frames ‘in which movements identify “victims” of a given injustice and amplify their victimization’. Some scholars argue that all collective action frames include an injustice component, but according to Benford and Snow this assertion cannot be empirically or theoretically supported. Nonetheless injustice frames seem to be present across almost all social movements promoting some form of political and/or economic change.

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63 Benford and Snow (2000), p. 615.
65 The third, motivational framing, refers to the process in which community values are articulated. In concrete terms this may include the way in which associations try to get people involved in activism, for example by urging individual residents to become active in neighbourhood matters in order to improve the physical environment (see, for example, Martin 2003, pp. 736–739). Motivational framing is thereby more focused on mobilisation as such, and not so much on the process of interpreting and responding to a certain context.
66 Benford and Snow (2000), p. 615.
67 Ibid., pp. 615–616.
Another important diagnostic frame includes the collective attribution of threat or opportunity to a specific political opportunity structure. As discussed by McAdam et al., threat-opportunity attribution often emerges from competition between activists of differing interpretations. Using the period of the Kenyan decolonisation as an example, they show how the white settlers interpreted major social changes as significant threats, whereas Kenyan nationalists saw them as opportunities.68 Hence, what is perceived as a threat in the political structure to one movement may be seen as an opportunity for another.

The second major framing task, *prognostic framing*, is used to define the process in which associations articulate proposed solutions to the identified problems, including the identification of suitable actions. In a comparative study of four neighbourhood organisations in St. Paul, Minnesota, the geographer Deborah Martin noted that actions to clean and maintain the neighbourhood were important practices for some associations. Residents were also encouraged to attend council meetings to influence planning matters, and there were marches against drug dealing and prostitution, protests against police inaction and the creation of neighbourhood watch schemes.69

It is empirically difficult to clearly distinguish between the two functions of the aforementioned collective-action frames, and they are not necessarily relevant to the same extent in each case. However, as noted by Martin, who focused on ‘place-framing’ in her study, although ‘it is somewhat artificial to separate dynamic, integrated organizational discourses about the neighborhood activism into such finegrained parts, theoretically it permits an examination of the construction of place-based agendas for activism’.70 In this study the aim is not to disentangle framing processes according to an analytical separation of diagnostic and prognostic framing. However, it may prove helpful to conceptualise framing as a process involving various forms. There is, for example, a difference between describing a certain problem, assigning cause or blame, and proposing specific solutions to the identified problem.

Before attempting to summarise the analytical framework that will guide the study, I will also discuss the dependent variable, namely the practices of residents’ associations, in concrete terms.

**Specifying the practices of neighbourhood associations**

The practices that we are interested in are those of neighbourhood associations in their effort to influence the behaviour of politicians, local government officials or other relevant actors with the purpose to advance the inter-

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68 McAdam et al. (2001), p. 95.
69 Martin (2003), pp. 742–743.
70 Ibid., p. 745.
ests of the associations. In classic social movement research, such practices are referred to as repertoires of contention. ‘Practices’ is a more suitable concept in this study as it includes also more conventional forms of political actions, such as participation in various committees, and not only contentious politics that are extra-institutional by definition.71

The practices carried out presuppose that some kind of interaction takes place, in our case between associations and the actors that they approach. As noted by McAdam et al., this is the way in which political-process theorists have traditionally defined movement repertoires, in which ‘repertoires represent the culturally encoded ways in which people interact in contentious politics’.72 For our empirical study this means that although the focus will be on the practices of associations, such an analysis cannot be made without taking into consideration also the responses by the actors they intend to influence.

It should be noted that social movement scholars have used the framework of political opportunity structures primarily to explain the degree to which people engage in contentious actions, i.e. the level of political mobilisation.73 In this study the focus is on the how-question: how do people act in response to a changing context? As I see it, mobilisation is part of practices, since mobilisation can hardly be understood without reference to the actions taken. Associations and movements may mobilise support for certain actions, for example, encourage people to donate money to a specific cause or participate in a demonstration, but they cannot ‘just mobilise’.

Internal activities, while they may constitute a substantial share of an association’s practices, are not of major concern to us. Although it is part of the research endeavour to find out what these practices are, building on previous research we can still discuss how civil society organisations normally go about attempting to influence decision-making. Do associations go through established institutional channels, for instance, by attending council meetings or by approaching the local elected representative? Or do they choose to go outside formal avenues to gain attention and influence, for example, by taking to the streets and demonstrating, or by taking advantage of influential allies that they may have?

The forms of practice that associations use may naturally depend on a variety of factors. Tarrow, for example, highlights the cultural and historical heritage as an important dimension explaining why actors draw on certain forms of contention. ‘Workers know how to strike because generations of workers struck before them’.74 This is a relevant aspect to consider when

71 Tarrow discusses three basic types of collective action as part of repertoires of contention: violence, disruption and convention. All forms are however considered extra-institutional (Tarrow 1998, p. 104).
72 McAdam et al. (2001), p. 16.
73 See, for example, Tarrow (1998), pp. 76 ff.
analysing the practices of residents’ associations in South Africa. Black and coloured civic associations that used to be part of the anti-apartheid struggle have a completely different frame of reference compared to white ratepayers’ associations. What actions that used to be taken in order to influence the political agenda and decision-making are likely to affect their choice of practices today.

The cultural and historical legacy is also important to take into account when analysing the complex role of the former anti-apartheid movement vis-à-vis the ANC-dominated state, a role ranging from a radical social movement encouraging direct protest actions to defend the interests of the poor, to an ally participating in corporatist institutions at local, provincial and national levels. Hence, depending on how such movements position themselves we can expect different types of practices.

As pointed out by Chris Pickvance, inaction may also be a reaction to dissatisfaction but as such it has been neglected in the social movement literature. Although Pickvance discusses inaction mainly at an individual level – poor individuals who do not act to improve their bad housing conditions – inaction may also be discussed in relation to collective (in)action and satisfaction. As suggested by Kriesi et al., most activists will only choose to engage in political protest if it is considered really necessary. ‘In situations of reform, in which established political actors are already working in the direction of a movement’s goal, collective action will not be necessary and it will, therefore, not be forthcoming’. Inaction can thus also be a reaction to contentment with a particular situation, and not necessarily a sign of a weak capacity to deal with a bad situation. Furthermore, relating to the discussion above on the different ways in which anti-apartheid movements interact with the ANC government, we could add yet another reason for inaction as a form a practice, namely loyalty to the ANC.

In sum, it is important to be aware of situations in which associations do not act as this may also be a response to a changing institutional and political context. For obvious reasons, however, inaction is far more difficult to study than action. One way of dealing with this problem is to study associations over a period of time, as in this study. If associations that have previously been active, for example, by encouraging protest actions, suddenly turn passive, we could suspect that inaction is actually a response to a changing context, for example, a change of government. The relevant mechanism could be that the association perceives that it is less costly to remain inactive as the

new government is more accommodating (or more repressive) of their demands.\textsuperscript{78}

As discussed earlier, civil society organisations may use a number of strategies to gain influence, and scholars have used various concepts to categorise different activities. Generally a distinction is made between institutionalised and non-institutionalised (or extra-institutionalised) politics. It is also common to discuss practices in terms of direct or indirect ways to influence.\textsuperscript{79} Yet another common division is the one between conventional and unconventional (or protest) approaches to gain influence, or insider versus outsider tactics.\textsuperscript{80} In the literature, social movements are often distinguished from more established organisations by their use of non-institutionalised politics. As should be clear by now, this must be a question open for empirical investigation. For the sake of simplicity, the terms ‘conventional politics’ and ‘protest politics’ will be used when discussing the way in which neighbourhood associations may choose to act in order to influence decision-making.

**Conventional politics**

In the literature on political participation, the number one variable of citizens’ participation in conventional politics is voting. Translated to civil society associations, conventional politics refers to activities that take place within the established political system.\textsuperscript{81} Lobbying, participation in committees and consultation in the decision-making process are examples of conventional forms of politics that are open to civil society associations. A particular form of conventional politics is to utilise the judicial system to gain influence. To prepare legal action is however often costly in terms of financial resources and demanding of human skills, but if successful a court order can be a powerful way to affect decision-making.

South Africa has a number of public and private programmes aiming at increasing rights awareness and assisting poor and disadvantaged people in litigation processes. There are, for example, NGOs that provide legal assistance and get senior lawyers to take on cases \textit{pro bono}. This phenomenon is largely a remnant of the anti-apartheid struggle in which legal academia and NGOs played a central role.\textsuperscript{82} In the democratic era the new South African constitution that was adopted in 1996 is considered to be one of the most

\textsuperscript{78} The opposite being when social movement actors feel threatened by a certain policy decision, and consider it more costly to remain inactive than to act collectively (Kriesi et al. 1995, p. 40).

\textsuperscript{79} See, for example, Uhrwing (2001), p. 56.

\textsuperscript{80} See, for example, Goldstone (2003), p. 4, and Swarts (2003), p. 85.

\textsuperscript{81} As discussed by Uba it is interesting to note that social movement scholars involved in collective action and scholars focusing on individual political participation rarely cite each other although ‘the major goal of these actions is the same: to inform policy-makers on public preferences regarding some specific or more general issues’ (Uba 2007, p. 15).

\textsuperscript{82} Gloppen (2005), pp. 165–166. See also Mandela (1994).
modern in the world, and it includes extensive socio-economic rights. In what has been called legal mobilisation, there are numerous examples of, particularly new, social movements that have taken advantage of the fact that such rights are now included in the constitution.  

It should be noted that conventional politics can be undertaken both formally and informally. Typical formal avenues include participation in public hearings or committees, and writing letters to authorities. Informal ways to influence are when politicians and civil servants are approached by actors outside public arenas, e.g. by telephone calls or personal meetings. As stipulated already it lies outside the primary scope of this study to assess to what extent conventional or protest politics have actually influenced the agenda or decision-making. The major interest instead concerns the process in which associations choose certain practices and the link between these practices and the political context.

**Protest politics**

We expect protest actions to be more frequent among associations without access to the decision-making process. Social movements have traditionally been associated with protest politics only, although going back in history it is clear that movements have used both conventional and less conventional forms of politics to mobilise and exercise influence. Protest politics refer to activities that are organised outside formal institutions and typically include demonstrations, marches and rallies, and acts of civil disobedience, such as occupying buildings and blocking roads.

In the anti-apartheid struggle the most common protest forms used to be illegal strikes, boycotts and refusal to pay rent and service charges in the townships. The overall strategy was to make such areas ungovernable in order to put pressure on the apartheid regime. Also in democratic South Africa these forms of protest actions are not unusual. Somewhat ironically, given the country’s history, some of these actions have taken place in affluent, predominantly white areas.

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83 Two of the more well-known cases are the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) case and the Grootboom case. In the TAC case the court decided that the state was obliged to, under the right of access to health, provide for anti-retroviral drugs to HIV/AIDS infected pregnant women and their newborns. The Grootboom case concerned the right to housing (or the right to have access to adequate housing as stated in the constitution), and the Constitutional Court ‘ruled that the state is obliged to implement a reasonable policy for those who are destitute’ (Gloppen 2005, p. 167). See also Oldfield and Stokke who describe how the United Civic Front won a High Court case against the City of Cape Town, which gave people in the informal coloured settlement of Valhalla Park the legal right to land and services (Oldfield and Stokke 2004, p. 16).


86 One such example is the Rates Action Group (RAG) that called on ratepayers in Cape Town to abstain from paying their rents as they considered the new provisional property
In the following, the practices of associations refer to the activities outlined above that can be classified as either conventional or protest politics. The question that is asked in this study is how these practices are affected by changes and variations in the political context. It is suggested that if associations perceive that changes affect the prospects of fulfilling their goals (positively or negatively), this will have an impact on their choice of strategy and consequently on their practices and actions. E.g. the degree of repression is expected to affect levels of movement mobilisation, although it is not obvious exactly how. Extremely high levels of repression are likely to reduce the amount of mobilisation, but lower levels have been shown to actually stimulate movement activism. As regards movement strategies, high levels of repression and high levels of facilitation tend to have a moderating effect, at least in democratic regimes.87

As with repression levels, it has also been shown that the relation between perceived chances of success and the level of mobilisation is curvilinear; if chances of success are thought to be low or very high, mobilisation tends to be lower. Perceived chances of success, and repression, are also likely to affect movement strategies. In a favourable environment moderate strategies, such as petitions, may prove sufficient to obtain movement goals.88 In a study of white liberal anti-apartheid organisations it was, for example, shown that such associations were less inclined to make use of protest activities compared to black associations. Instead they took advantage of their access to the institutional political system and favoured conventional forms of politics to put pressure on authorities.89

Summarising the analytical framework

It is time to summarise the analytical framework that will serve as guidelines for the empirical analysis. I started off by suggesting that the analytical distinction between institutionalised and non-institutionalised political actors has hampered fruitful comparative studies. Hence the theoretical framework applied in this study, although developed for the analysis of social movements (so-called non-institutionalised actors), can be used also when analysing more institutionalised actors, such as residents’ associations. As these actors, although they may indeed be very different in terms of resources, background, objectives, etc., operate in the same arena it is reasonable to analyse them within a common framework. It is a question for empirical investigation how they perceive and respond to the institutional and political context.

valuation roll and the sewerage charge structure ‘unfair and discriminatory’ (‘City wins the great rates debate’, City of Cape Town, Media release 198/2004, 1 December 2004).

88 Ibid., pp. 38–40.
Apart from facilitating comparisons, another advantage with this approach is that one avoids much of the definitional problems often implicated when attempting to distinguish between various actors in terms of formal/informal or institutionalised/non-institutionalised.

Drawing on literature on political opportunity structures a table including six dimensions was presented. These dimensions, sorted under two major headings – the institutional and legal structure, and the political power structure – are expected to capture the most important aspects of the political and institutional context in which associations operate. The question posed is how changes in these structures are linked to the practices of residents’ associations when attempting to influence agenda-setting and decision-making.

All political actors aiming at influencing policy-making make an interpretation of the context in which they are embedded. This process of interpretation, attribution and social construction is referred to as a framing process, and is seen as the key mechanism by which the political opportunity structure is linked to the practices of associations. The framing process is a highly subjective process in which associations (mainly leaders but also members) interpret the context and decide whether it provides incentives to act.

Some central mechanisms were identified that are often involved in framing processes. Among the most important were so-called diagnostic frames which include problem identification and attribution. It is likely that some of the mechanisms, for example the attribution of threat or opportunity, will be discovered in the empirical analyses. The challenge in our investigation will be to understand the process in which associations attribute for example threat or opportunity to changes in the political environment.

Finally, perhaps it goes without saying that this study presupposes that the actors involved behave rationally. While certainly not without problems, a ‘thin rationalistic approach’ implies that, as formulated by Jon Elster, we assume that ‘people usually do what they believe is likely to have the best overall outcome’. This approach acknowledges that acting rationally and acting objectively in the best way possible to reach a certain goal are not synonymous. A rational person only chooses what they believe to be the best way – this belief does not have to be correct.90

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90 Elster (1989), pp. 22, 25, my emphasis.
3. Methodological considerations

Every research endeavour implies that we make certain choices, favouring some designs ahead of others. This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the choices and decisions made in this study as regards case selection and methodology. It is also discussed how a changing political opportunity structure can be operationalised and finally the material and data used are described, including their benefits and weaknesses.

Case selection and research design

This thesis is an investigation of civil society–state relations in urban post-apartheid South Africa. More specifically it is a case of changing local political opportunity structures as experienced by urban residents’ associations. Methodologically the point of departure is that local-level analyses can give important insights into civil society–state relations that are more difficult to capture at national level.¹ Empirically, several scholars have noted the national bias in the study of civil society organisations and democratic transitions, both in South Africa and elsewhere.² In the next section the choice of Cape Town is motivated, and then the three separate studies included in the thesis are described.

Why Cape Town?

In the first chapter I argued that South Africa is a relevant context for the study of changing civil society–state relations as the country has recently gone through a democratic transition. Empirical and normative reasons were also given as to why neighbourhood associations are suitable units of analysis, the main arguments being that such associations are locally based and that many of them were established pre-1994. This hopefully makes them able to reflect upon changes in the political and institutional context. Also, the consequences of the apartheid policies have been most visible at the local

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¹ Joel Migdal expresses a similar line of reasoning: ‘For those interested in discerning how third-world societies are ruled and the influence of politics on social change, the local level often holds the richest and most instructive hints’ (Migdal 2001, p. 88).
² See, for example, Zuern (2001), p. 5, and Carmin et al. (2003), pp. 703–725. Cherry et al. claim that analyses of post-apartheid local politics in general are lacking (Cherry et al. 2000, p. 837).
level, where the entire government system has been restructured. Since residents’ associations were defined in terms of their strong geographical ties, the search for a suitable case of a local opportunity structure was bound to be guided by geographical considerations. In short, I asked myself what urban setting could provide variation in the local political opportunity structure (i.e. the independent variable of the study).

The choice soon fell on Cape Town. The most noticeable feature of its political opportunity structure is the frequent changes of power in the City Council in the period 1996–2006. In 2006, a local government official ironically stated that the only thing that has been constant in Cape Town is change. During a ten-year period, from May 1996 (the time of the first non-racial elections) to March 2006, there have been five changes of power in the Cape Metropolitan Area. Compared to the situation at national and provincial levels, local government in Cape Town has been far less stable and it is the only metropolitan area in South Africa where the ANC has less than 50 per cent of the vote; in the 2006 local elections they received 38 per cent. The volatility of the political situation was especially obvious in the period 2000–2006 during which no executive was in power for more than two years.

I have thus studied how residents’ associations located in different social and geographical contexts have responded to changes in Cape Town’s institutional and political context when attempting to influence agenda-setting and decision-making. For this purpose three separate but closely linked studies were carried out. Although they are all guided by the overall research aim, they have different sub-objectives and make use of different data collection techniques. The first two, what I call the Civic Survey and the comparative case study, were primarily guided by the question of how residents’ associations have perceived that the changing context has affected them in their efforts to influence decision-making. The third and main study, the in-depth study of Hout Bay and the township of Imizamo Yethu, was influenced by this question as well, but the prime focus was on understanding the process in which residents’ associations decide to act, or not act, in response to important changes in their political environment.

4 Interview with Ford, 7 April 2006.
5 In the other five major cities the ANC results were as follows in the 2006 local government elections: Mangaung (Bloemfontein) 73 per cent, Nelson Mandela Bay (Port Elizabeth) 67 per cent, City of Johannesburg 62 per cent, Ethekwini (Durban Metro) 58 per cent, and Tshwane Metro (Pretoria) 57 per cent (Independent Electoral Commission, Local Government Elections 2006 Reports).
6 With Yin’s terminology, this is ‘an embedded single-case design’ (Yin 1994, pp. 41–44).
The map in Figure 3.1 outlines the residential pattern of Cape Town in the apartheid years. The demographic distribution between areas largely remains unchanged today, although more than 15 years have passed since the Group Areas Act was abolished. This thesis includes more detailed studies of neighbourhood associations in three of Cape Town’s suburbs: Hout Bay, Langa and Rondebosch (see map for exact locations).

The Civic Survey
The Civic Survey was conducted in 1996 and 2004 (for details, see under the section on material and data), and consists of answers to questionnaires from 56 residents’ associations in Cape Town. The aim of the survey was to obtain a general picture of the character of such associations, their structures, membership base, as well as their view and perceptions of the Cape Town City Council and their possibilities to influence decision-making. The response rate was however low which makes it difficult to draw any general

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7 Lemon (1991), p. 31. As can be clearly seen the construction of the city was done so that railway lines and motorways would separate the racially segregated residential areas. The white areas are located closest to the central business district, followed by the coloured areas with black areas in the least attractive parts.
conclusions. Still the results, when complemented with other sources, enhance our knowledge of such associations.

A comparative case study
A comparison between associations in the residential areas of Langa and Rondebosch was also carried out. By comparing residents’ associations in two socio-economically different areas and the way in which they interact with local government, the aim was to explore how a similar opportunity structure (Cape Town) was perceived by different associations. Interviews were conducted with leaders of associations, politicians and civil servants. The township of Langa and the affluent suburb of Rondebosch are assumed to be reasonably typical of predominantly black and white areas in Cape Town. Given the differences between the areas, both in terms of demography, socio-economic status and politics, they are intended to serve as contrasting cases (or ‘maximum variation cases’), pointing to differences as well as similarities in the way in which the political opportunity structure was perceived by the associations.

Although the comparison was structured and focused in the sense that similar questions were posed to the interviewees in Langa and Rondebosch respectively, the study was far from exhaustive. The objective was to gain a broad insight into the differences between associations’ perceptions of the political opportunity structure. The findings also serve as a relief to the main study of Hout Bay.

In-depth process study of Hout Bay and the township of Imizamo Yethu
The third and main study is a process study of the suburb of Hout Bay with an emphasis on how residents’ associations in Hout Bay and local government have interacted in the particular case of the township of Imizamo Yethu. The term ‘process study’ refers to the study of a certain case over a period of time. Within the overall process, i.e. the development of Imizamo Yethu from its establishment in the early 1990s up to the present day, the main focus is on identifying the mechanisms, i.e. the micro processes, which may contribute to our understanding of how associations respond to changes in the local political opportunity structure.

Imizamo Yethu is a poor, predominantly black settlement in the midst of the affluent, predominantly white, suburb of Hout Bay located 20 kilometres south of central Cape Town. Following decades of illegal squatting, in early 1991 a group of informal settlers in Hout Bay were promised land for residential purposes. This was an extraordinary but not unique decision at the time. Although many, mostly white Hout Bay residents, opposed this devel-

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8 For a recent study of community associations and their relations to the local state in a predominantly coloured area of Cape Town, see Millstein (2007).
Development, optimists saw it as a sign of the new South Africa in which different communities would live side by side instead of segregated as was the case during the apartheid system.

The selection of Hout Bay for the study is motivated by its community dynamics that have been more intense and more complex than in many other areas. Three main communities live here; a black community in Imizamo Yethu, a coloured population in the harbour (Hangberg), and a predominantly white population in the valley of Hout Bay (see map in Chapter 6). The three communities live surprisingly separate from each other considering the small geographical area they all reside in. There are a number of neighbourhood associations in Hout Bay, and practically all of them have a homogeneous membership base in one of the population groups. Hout Bay is unique in the sense that the township of Imizamo Yethu, the main underlying reason for the active associational life, is centrally located in a socio-economically strong residential area. The problems stemming from this fact are not unique, however; Hout Bay has been described as a ‘microcosm of South Africa’, as ‘it epitomises many of the complexities associated with the breakdown of the apartheid city’. In sum, the interaction between associations, and between associations and local government, creates dynamics on a micro-scale that can help us understand the difficulties that urban areas in the new South Africa have faced in the last 15 years.

Although it would definitely be interesting to study the outcome of a certain decision-making process, i.e. if it results in a success or failure for the association(s) involved, this is not the prime focus of the investigation. Instead the interest concerns decision-making processes as such: which actors are involved, how do they interact with each other and how do they perceive and respond to a changing political context? However, this does not mean that results and outcomes are totally omitted from the analysis. Expected and realised outcomes constitute an important part in motivating associations to

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10 Community dynamics in Hout Bay are thus not representative of such dynamics in South Africa, or Cape Town for that matter, although there are definitely areas that display the same degree of internal conflict as Hout Bay. The major difference between Hout Bay and other areas plagued by conflict is that in the case of Hout Bay a racial component adds to the sensitivity of the conflict. Sophie Oldfield, who describes the fragmentation in neighbourhood-based community and political organisations in Elsies River (a formerly segregated coloured neighbourhood in Cape Town) notes that there are no unified organisations that speak for the whole Elsies River Area. Instead, community organisations represent different political parties, and there is a split between tenants and homeowners (Oldfield 2003, pp. 33–34).

11 Two other well-known exceptions are the informal settlements of Masiphumulele in Noordhoek (15 kilometres south of central Cape Town) and Marconi Beam in Milnerton (located 8 kilometres north of central Cape Town). What makes Hout Bay a special case compared to these two is the intensity and length of the conflict.


act in a certain way.\textsuperscript{14} But it needs to be mentioned that my main concern is not whether associations have actually gained an increased influence, but rather if they \textit{perceive} that they have, and how this in turn has affected their actions.

Grant Saff calls Hout Bay the ‘by far most publicized and well-researched case of deracialization’ in the Western Cape,\textsuperscript{15} and it is true that Imizamo Yethu and Hout Bay have received quite some attention from scholars, the South African state, NGOs, and also some international media coverage. In May 2004, the provincial government of the Western Cape identified Imizamo Yethu as a priority area for the upgrading of informal housing,\textsuperscript{16} and the City of Cape Town considers Imizamo Yethu a pilot project of how integration can work in the new South Africa, which is in line with the ambitions of the national government.\textsuperscript{17} Still, more than 15 years after its establishment, the prevailing conflict between residents in Imizamo Yethu and Hout Bay is as current as ever.

The relatively well-documented history of Imizamo Yethu facilitated this study although the material had an emphasis on the early days of its establishment.\textsuperscript{18} There are few studies that have an overall approach to the development of Imizamo Yethu over time however, including the roles played by civil society and state actors. The present study is the first that systematically seeks to give an account of how civil society–state relations have developed since the 1990s within a conceptual framework of political opportunity structures.

\textsuperscript{14} Similar thoughts are found in research on individual political participation and the term ‘political efficacy’. As discussed by, for example, Dalton, ‘[a] sense of political efficacy – the feeling that one’s political action can affect the political process – may stimulate individuals to participate’ (Dalton 2006, p. 52).

\textsuperscript{15} Saff (1998), p. 108.

\textsuperscript{16} The Premier of the Western Cape, Ebrahim Rasool, mentioned Imizamo Yethu as one of four important housing projects that the provincial government would prioritise during a 100-day period (Provincial Government of the Western Cape 2004).

\textsuperscript{17} Interview with Carney, 8 October 2004.

\textsuperscript{18} As pointed out by Bengtsson it is often a good strategy for case study researchers to select a case that is empirically ‘hot’, as this normally facilitates the collection of data (Bengtsson 1999, p. 16).
Table 3.1 provides a summary of the three empirical studies of the thesis. The use of multiple sources is meant to improve the validity of the results.

Table 3.1. The three studies included in the thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Civic survey</th>
<th>Langa and Rondebosch</th>
<th>Hout Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aim</strong></td>
<td>To give a general picture of civic associations in Cape Town, and how they perceive that the political opportunity structure has affected their chances of influencing decision-making.</td>
<td>To describe how associations in two typical areas perceive that the political opportunity structure has affected their chances of influencing decision-making.</td>
<td>To understand the processes in which associations respond to a changing political opportunity structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research strategy</strong></td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Comparative case study</td>
<td>In-depth process study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To search for mechanisms: the method of process tracing

A case study is not a method in itself, but a strategy that may include different research methods. Although case studies are often associated with qualitative methods, quantitative studies can also be seen as case studies in the sense that they are cases of certain phenomena. As argued by Charles Ragin, “[v]irtually every social scientific study is a case study or can be conceived as a case study, often from a variety of viewpoints. At a minimum, every study is a case study because it is an analysis of social phenomena, specific to time and place.” Qualitative case studies have many strengths, the potential for high validity being one of them. A problem often associated with case studies is the trade-off between high internal validity and good historical explanations of particular cases on the one hand, and generalisations that apply to broad populations on the other hand. However, the question of representativity should not be considered a problem for case study researchers as, according to George and Bennett, “[c]ase researchers do not aspire to select cases that are directly “representative” of diverse populations and they usually do not and should not make claims that their findings are applicable to such populations except in contingent ways.”

Case study scholars usually distinguish between generalisations based on a statistically representative sample and the generalisation of findings to theory. George and Bennett refer to the latter type of generalisation as ‘contingent’, which implies that the generalisation is done from unique cases ‘by
treated them as members of a class or type of phenomenon’.22 From this perspective case studies can contribute to theory development by filling ‘spaces’ in an overall theory. Contingent generalisations are thus narrower than ‘covering laws’, but they are more precise and may involve relations with higher probabilities.23 This study contributes to theory development by applying the framework of political opportunity structures in a local non-US and Western European context. David A. Snow and Danny Trom call such a logic theoretical extension, which means that existing theories are extended to new or different social categories, contexts or processes.24

In the Hout Bay case study particular focus will be on understanding the framing processes, i.e. the mechanisms by which changes in the political context are transformed into the practices of residents’ associations. McAdam et al. claim that the use of causal mechanisms in the explanation of events makes it possible to generalise on the basis of single case studies. We thus seek to explain particular episodes and periods of history by identifying explanatory principles – mechanisms and processes – that extend beyond these episodes and periods of history. In other words, ‘particular cultural understandings and practices can produce quite general effects through our intervening mechanisms and processes’.25

For example, increasing mobilisation and protest actions might be the result of actors having attributed opportunities to a changing context. This was, for example, the case when South Africa started to liberalise in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A changing institutional and political context encouraged the anti-apartheid movement to increase its protest activities against the state. The mechanism would thus be the attribution of opportunity and the outcome increasing mobilisation and protest actions. Although the South African case is particular in many ways, the mechanism of attributing opportunity to a changing context, in turn leading to incentives to mobilise, can be considered as a general mechanism and effect that may be revealed in other contexts as well. In the study by McAdam et al. this way of arguing becomes apparent as they analyse a number of contentious episodes from different parts of the world and identify a few widely applicable mechanisms.26

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22 Ibid., pp. 112–113. George and Bennett’s definition thereby comes close to the notion of ‘analytical generalization’, as suggested by Robert K. Yin. Yin argues that the goal of the case study researcher ‘is to expand and generalize theories (analytical generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)’ (Yin 1994, p. 10).
23 George and Bennett (2005), p. 78.
25 McAdam et al. (2001), pp. 345–346, quote on p. 346. Bengtsson and Hertting seem to reason along similar lines when they suggest that by assuming that actors behave rationally we are able to generalise on the basis of single cases (Bengtsson 1999, p. 7, and Hertting 2003, pp. 135–136).
26 McAdam et al. (2001).
‘How will we recognize a relevant social mechanism when we see one?’ ask McAdam et al.\textsuperscript{27} They argue that ‘when a mechanism is at work, we see interactions among the elements in question altering the established connections among them’.\textsuperscript{28} The question still remains how we can, in more concrete terms, go about identifying the mechanisms in our case.

Given the purpose of the in-depth study of Hout Bay – to understand how residents’ associations have responded to a changing political opportunity structure in the Imizamo Yethu case – we need a dynamic research design, i.e. one that can help us follow a certain phenomenon over time. In what has been referred to as ‘systematic process analysis’, ‘pattern matching’, but most commonly ‘process tracing’, the focus is on the process whereby an outcome is caused.\textsuperscript{29} The method of process tracing has become a well-used approach in case studies ‘to identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable’.\textsuperscript{30} It has been claimed that process tracing has come to historicize the social sciences, implying that it has a strong resemblance to historical explanations.\textsuperscript{31} The major difference between a historical narrative and a process tracing explanation is, however, that the latter is normally embedded in theory, striving towards some kind of generalisation. George and Bennett describe this as ‘converting historical explanations into analytical theoretical ones’.\textsuperscript{32}

In more concrete terms process tracing implies the study of a few cases in detail ’by obtaining documents, interviewing subjects, performing content analysis on documents and statements, and (...) establishing precise sequences of who knows and does what when’.\textsuperscript{33} The method of process tracing thus requires a number of different research techniques and data. In this study process tracing is used in the in-depth study of Hout Bay to identify the mechanisms that explain the process in which residents’ associations have responded to a changing political opportunity structure.

Measuring change in the political opportunity structure

A central question in this study is how changes in the institutional and political structure are linked to the practices of neighbourhood associations. Consequently an important issue is what we mean by change and how it can be operationalised. In the previous chapter the dimensions included in the political opportunity structure were discussed; the institutional and legal struc-

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 26.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} Hall (2003), pp. 391, 393.
\textsuperscript{30} George and Bennett (2005), p. 206.
\textsuperscript{31} Collier (1993), quoted in ibid., p. 205.
\textsuperscript{32} George and Bennett (2005), p. 225.
\textsuperscript{33} Bennett and George (1997), p. 18.
ture, and the political power structure. The dimensions listed under the legal and institutional structure are considered more stable than the ones under the political power structure. It is suggested that changes will be more easily noted in the less stable political power structure, particularly in contexts characterised by a volatile party political situation. However, given the fundamental change that South Africa has witnessed with the transition to democracy, the institutional and legal structure has also been subject to major changes.

The following section will operationalise changes in the political opportunity structure by presenting relevant questions guiding the analysis of each dimension. Although the main focus of the study is on the post-apartheid era, the political opportunity structure in the apartheid period will be described in order to trace changes in the structure. Hence, we need to discuss changes in the political opportunity structure both between pre- and post-apartheid, and in the post-apartheid democratic period. It should be stressed that the empirical analyses in the next three chapters will not aim at an exact classification of each single observation, but rather at capturing the main changes of the political opportunity structure.

**Change in the institutional and legal structure**

To establish if change has occurred in the institutional and legal structure we must first take notice of the fact that these changes may occur at various government levels (national, provincial and local). As the focus of this study is on neighbourhood associations, the institutional and legal structure refers to a context relevant for such actors. Relevant changes may still occur at national or provincial level as long as they have implications for neighbourhood associations. The questions that follow will help to clarify this point.

As regards *openness or closure*, the questions posed concern whether the state has an inclusive or exclusive strategy toward those wishing to exercise influence. In more concrete terms, are public authorities inclined to include civil society organisations, such as neighbourhood associations, in the decision-making process? And if this is the case, which associations are allowed to participate? Is the system open and pluralistic in the sense that authorities, at least in theory, allow any association to participate? Or does it show corporatist signs where only a select number of associations are invited to be part of the decision-making process? Changes in this respect thus mean that the system has moved from being less open to becoming more open, or vice versa.

The *legal environment* refers to legislation that concerns civil society and their activities. Has such legislation been passed, and in that case what are its contents? Following democratisation, the legal environment has become more enabling in terms of acknowledging civil society’s constitutional rights
What implications has this had for neighbourhood associations?

A dimension that is highlighted in social movement theory of particular relevance in a local urban context, is the extent to which the local government system is centralised or decentralised. For the purposes of this study the major relevant aspect is whether the local government system as such is decentralised or centralised, not its relation to central government. A decentralised local government system should increase the number of ways of public participation, although the actual influence may not increase. The question posed is whether political decision-making is spread out among various city councils, or if one city council covers a vast geographical area. In more concrete terms, are there many or few local authorities within the same area of jurisdiction, or even just one single authority? Has the trend been to increase or decrease the number of authorities?

The final dimension is the electoral system, and whether it is proportional or majoritarian. Here the assumption is that a proportional electoral system increases the number of potential ways to influence by multiplying the number of political allies. However, a majoritarian system may prove more effective for associations’ possibilities of influencing, as the relative impact of each vote in such systems tends to be higher, thereby increasing the competition for votes.

Change in the political power structure

The first dimension of the political power structure has to do with political alignments. It is affected by the outcome of elections or other events leading to a change of government. It also includes election results as such and consequent shifts in the constellation of opposition parties and their election successes or failures. If changes of municipal government are frequent, it is likely that the system is characterised by electoral instability which could give neighbourhood associations incentives to liaise with politicians, and vice versa. Questions relating to the dimension of political alignments are thus concerned with change of government. Are there shifts in political power, does the party political composition of the government alter in these power shifts, does the constellation of the opposition change accordingly, and what is its role in-between elections?

The second dimension relates to the presence or absence of elite allies. Are there elite allies and where are they located; within the ruling party, with the opposition, at other government levels, outside the political system (for example, in the judiciary, the religious sphere, the media)? We should be able to track changes in this dimension by analysing powerful arenas in society, including government at different levels, in order to find out if actors

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operating in these arenas change position. Understood in this way this dimension is likely to be closely connected to the previous regarding political alignments.

Material and data

In this study the empirical analyses draw on both primary and secondary sources. The primary material has been obtained through interviews, some 40 altogether, and a survey consisting of answers to a questionnaire from 56 neighbourhood associations. Secondary sources mainly include articles from local newspapers, information provided by the City of Cape Town and other government institutions, memos and notes from various neighbourhood associations, and academic articles and reports. As described above, the three studies were based on different, although sometimes overlapping, sources. In Chapter 5 the results from the Civic Survey will be discussed, complemented with information found elsewhere including interviews and secondary sources. As regards the comparative case study of associations in Langa and Rondebosch, the analysis was based almost entirely on interviews. In the main case of Hout Bay the method of process tracing was used which includes primary as well as secondary sources, mainly interviews, newspaper articles and reports.

The fieldwork was carried out in Cape Town during all in all around five months, with the majority of interviews conducted in October and November 2004 and February to April 2006. The timing of the last fieldwork period was appropriate as the third local government elections were held on the 1st

36 Apart from some excellent searchable archives (Independent Online, which has articles from a number of South African newspapers, including Cape Times and Cape Argus, Statistics South Africa, and the City of Cape Town) valuable information was collected at the African Studies section of the library at the University of Cape Town, and at the Hout Bay library (official planning documents and older minutes from the Hout Bay-Llandudno Ward Committee and some other associations). Furthermore the community papers Sentinel News, Southern Suburbs Tatler and Vukani, published by the Independent Newspaper group and covering Hout Bay, Rondebosch and Langa respectively, have provided information about events in these areas. These newspapers are not available online. I managed to get hold of some of them by going to the office of Independent Newspapers in central Cape Town, where I spent a few days going through piles of newspapers for the last three to four years. Roger Carney, project manager for Imizamo Yethu at the City of Cape Town, had a collection of newspaper clippings on Imizamo Yethu that he was kind enough to share with me. Apart from Sentinel News, this collection also included the community paper the Coastal Chronicle that is distributed in Hout Bay and nearby Llandudno. The Coastal Chronicle mainly represents the view of the Ratepayers’ and Residents’ associations of Hout Bay. The Hout Bay Residents’ Association, for example, publishes its newsletter in the Coastal Chronicle. Some important documents were also made available to me after I made a formal request to the City of Cape Town to see documents related to Imizamo Yethu.

37 One important interview with the former executive mayor of Cape Town, Nomaiindia Mfeketo, was conducted in Stockholm in March 2007.
of March 2006. This gave me an extraordinary opportunity to follow the last month of intense election campaigning in Cape Town and Hout Bay, as well as the negotiations in the city council that followed. Consequently the interviews that were carried out during this period often included some interesting and relevant reflections on Cape Town’s volatile political situation and its impact on civil society–state relations.

The interviews

The interviews were a combination of oral history and key informant interviews. Oral history interviewing is valuable when there is little written documentary preserved, and in social movement research it has been a common strategy to gain ‘information on certain historical aspects of social movements – such as the role of influential allies and other shifting political opportunities in movement success’.\(^{38}\) Given the subjective and often micro-level scale of oral history accounts, researchers using oral history interviewing should always strive for comparing accounts from different respondents and with other data. It is always problematic to rely solely on interviews to reconstruct a process that stretches over a period of time as is the case in Imizamo Yethu. People tend to forget important events, and there is also a risk that interviewees are biased given the political sensitivity of several questions. Partly these shortcomings have been overcome by interviewing people who represent different interests. Attempts have also been made to double-check facts by consulting other, mainly written, sources when possible.

There is often a fine line between treating the interviewee either as an informant or as a respondent. In the first case, the interviewee’s experiences and motivations are not the unit of analysis, but they are consulted as experts to provide the researcher with information on various aspects.\(^{39}\) Some of the people interviewed in this study have been both informants and respondents. In those cases the interviews were structured according to the respective role of the interviewee. In a few cases, two or more interviews have been conducted with a person, which made it possible to treat the interviewee as an informant in one interview and as a respondent in the other. This was, for example, the case with one of the local government officials who was responsible for the overall development of Imizamo Yethu. Also the vice-chair of the Hout Bay Ratepayers’ Association was a person that was regarded as both respondent and informant.

The process of interviewing typically implies that analysis and interpretation are ongoing processes throughout the research process, as opposed to quantitative research in which all data is needed before the analysis can begin. The initial interviews are normally open and broad in terms of themes

\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 106.
and topics, whereas as the process of interviewing proceeds, the questions become more narrow and focused. This was the case also in this study. The interviews carried out were semi-structured and the prime purpose differed depending on the person being interviewed. Respondents in Langa and Rondebosch were asked to give a general description of their perceptions as regards changes in Cape Town’s political development, and their relationship to various other actors. In the case of Hout Bay and Imizamo Yethu, these kinds of questions were included as well. But here also specific and detailed questions were asked about events related to Imizamo Yethu.

In Table 3.2 the people interviewed are sorted according to the three geographic cases, as well as a more general category of people with no direct relation to these cases (columns), and the three main categories: neighbourhood associations, local politicians and government officials (rows). The considerably larger share of people interviewed with a relationship with the Hout Bay case reflects the depth of this study as compared to the comparative study of Langa and Rondebosch.

Table 3.2. People interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hout Bay</th>
<th>Langa</th>
<th>Rondebosch</th>
<th>Other/ Cape Town</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood associations (leaders)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians (ward councillors)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government officials</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment: The categorisation of politicians and local government officials under geographical headings implies that their responsibility lies in these areas, but not necessarily only in these.

* The interviewee was an official of the Provincial Government of the Western Cape.

People were generally easy to get hold of and in most cases people were also willing to be interviewed. In total, there were 42 interviewees, and follow-up meetings or discussions have been held with nine of them. There has also been e-mail correspondence with some people to clarify certain aspects or to ask for details as regards specific events.

40 Ibid., p. 110.
At five of the interviews there were two interviewees present. This has both advantages and problems. On the one hand, there is a risk that the interviewees feel constrained by the presence of another person. This can be problematic if the topic, for example, is politically sensitive. On the other hand, two people can complement each other when, for example, describing a certain event or process. It is, of course, impossible to know for certain if these interviews would have been different with only one interviewee present. Generally the degree of openness and frankness did not seem to depend on whether there were one or two people present, but rather on other aspects, such as the position and seniority of the interviewee. Usually local government officials were diplomatic in their reflections and showed a high degree of loyalty to their political leaders. In general, DA politicians and DA-affiliated associations were far more critical of the political system as such, than ANC interviewees and ANC-affiliated associations. I can only speculate whether this was because of the political situation at the time (an ANC-run council in Cape Town), or a general unwillingness among mostly black and coloured respondents to share critical ideas with a foreign (white) researcher.41 Most of the interviews were recorded and have been transcribed. In one case the interviewee did not wish the interview to be recorded. One interview and several follow-up discussions were done over the phone and notes were taken.42

The interviews normally lasted for one and a half hours, the shortest for 45 minutes and the longest for two hours. In most cases the interviews were conducted in the workplace of the respondent, but a few times the interviews took place in cafés, in the respondent’s home or in my temporary home in Cape Town. The deep socio-economic divisions in South Africa in general and in Cape Town in particular were reflected during the interviews. Many of the interviewees were well-educated and had English as their mother tongue or working language. They were used to reflecting upon politics and events in society, and on their own role in such events. But there were also interviewees who were less able to do so. The quality of those interviews would probably have improved if a guide had been brought along who could have served both as an interpreter and as a bridge between my outsider and their insider perspectives.

In more concrete terms the contrasts were striking between the Protea sub-council office located in a Dutch colonial style house in Constantia (one of the most affluent areas of Cape Town), and the run-down building in Athlone that housed sub-council 17. Equally striking was the difference between a shack in Imizamo Yethu, lacking all facilities whatsoever, where one inter-

41 For interesting reflections as regards carrying out interviews in black townships when being a young, female white PhD student, see Louw (2003), p. 124 ff.
42 Transcriptions, as well as notes from the interviews that were not recorded, are in the possession of the author. See list of interviews for further details.
view was conducted, and the pleasant villa with garden and swimming pool less than a kilometre away in Hout Bay Valley where another interview was carried out. In sum, these differences contributed to my understanding of the contexts in which neighbourhood activists, politicians and government officials find themselves, and consequently the problems related to these particular contexts.

Furthermore I have attended two political meetings (DA and ANC local branches), three municipal meetings (sub-council, Housing Portfolio Committee and a special ward meeting) and a workshop organised by the South African Cities Network in February 2006. Observations from these meetings, together with a number of informal discussions with researchers and journalists, have further increased my general knowledge about the social and political life in Cape Town.

The Civic Survey

In March 2004, I met with Professor Jeremy Seekings at the University of Cape Town and was informed of a questionnaire that had been sent out in 1996 to civics, ratepayers’ and residents’ associations in Cape Town with the aim of gaining information about their organisational structures, membership base, finances, goals, objectives and political affiliations. Some 40 questionnaires were returned out of 100 that were sent out, but the information provided in them had never really been compiled or used for research purposes. I was encouraged to do a follow-up questionnaire, which would make it possible to compare the situation in 1996 with that in 2004. This proved to be easier said than done.

First of all, it was problematic to identify the associations. The City of Cape Town’s Directorate of Public Engagement and Empowerment provided me with a list of associations in March 2004, and an updated version in February 2006. However, I have strong reason to believe that this list was incomplete. There are more than 400 organisations classified as ‘Civic/Ratepayers’ Association’ in the list. Included, however, are associations, such as ‘Friends of Wynberg Library’, i.e. another category of associations than the ones considered in this study. With my ‘strict’ classification the number of residents’ associations amounts to roughly 260. Of these, around 145 are located in predominantly coloured areas, around 85 in predominantly white areas, but only 30 in predominantly black areas. Most likely quite a number of organisations are missing in primarily black areas. For example, there are four wards in the large township of Khayelitsha (wards 90, 91, 92 and 93) that have not reported a single residents’ association. It also turned out that many of the associations on the list did not have

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43 I simply classified the associations by their names. Associations that had the name ‘civic’, ‘ratepayer’, ‘resident’ or ‘community’ included in their name were considered to be residents’ associations.
the correct addresses and contact details, or seemed to be inactive. In the end, 92 questionnaires were sent out in late 2004. In the first round 17 were returned, but one came from an association that turned out not to be a residents’ association. In early 2006, another two questionnaires were returned; one after an e-mail reminder to some associations, and the other was completed during one of my interviews. The response rate was thus only around 20 per cent.

Secondly, the questionnaires in 1996 and 2004 were different in several aspects, which does not allow for a complete and systematic comparison. The 2004 questionnaire, for example, contained more detailed questions concerning how associations perceived that they had access to representatives of local government. There were also questions asking associations to reflect upon their possibilities to influence decision-making and if these had changed in the last decade.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the response rate was very low. All in all I had access to 60 complete questionnaires (42 from 1996 and 18 from 2004). Four associations provided answers in both 1996 and 2004, so the total number of responding associations is 56 (out of the total number of around 250–300 existing associations). The returned questionnaires in no way reflect the demographic distribution in Cape Town. For example, only one of the 56 associations is based in a predominantly black area (this was the one completed during one of my interviews), with the majority of associations located in predominantly white areas. (In Appendix 1, all associations are listed.) Because of this bias the results cannot constitute a basis for generalisations about neighbourhood associations in Cape Town.

We may well ask what conclusions can be drawn from the material given these weaknesses. It is argued that the answers to the questionnaires, in spite of the shortcomings mentioned, do provide us with important information as to how individual associations in predominantly white areas, and to some extent also predominantly coloured areas, have perceived that the institutional and political context has affected their possibilities to influence decision-making. The answers in the survey should thus be seen as a supplement to the other sources on which this thesis is based.

The Cape Area Study 2005

Finally, a few words about the Cape Area Study 2005 (CAS 2005), of which I make some use in Chapter 5. CAS 2005 is the fifth survey in a series of surveys conducted in Cape Town since 2000 by the Centre for Social Science Research at the University of Cape Town. The sampling for the 2005 survey was designed to generate a representative sample of 1,200 adults.

44 Thanks to the Centre for Social Science Research at the University of Cape Town and particularly Karin Alexander who did a Sisyphusian job when trying to locate all those associations.
spread across metropolitan Cape Town. All in all, 1,205 interviews were carried out; 420 in African (black) areas, 480 in coloured and 305 in white.

Although the CAS 2005 was not focused on residents’ associations, there were sections that asked respondents about issues such as their engagement in community associations, contact with elected representatives and trust in the political system.\textsuperscript{45} Some of the CAS 2005 results will therefore be presented in relation to the discussion of the Civic Survey in Chapter 5 to enhance our understanding of civil society and civic engagement in Cape Town.

Having thus laid the theoretical and methodological foundation of the study, it is now time to turn to the first of our three empirical chapters.

\textsuperscript{45} Seekings et al. 2005, pp. 12, 18.
4. From apartheid to democracy: a local political opportunity structure in transition

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the question of how the political opportunity structure in Cape Town has changed following the introduction of democracy. The chapter is divided in two parts with the first part focusing on Cape Town’s political opportunity structure under apartheid, and the second on the post-apartheid period. The analysis of the apartheid period will not be done in detail, as the purpose is to give a background to the analysis of the post-apartheid period. The questions that were presented in the previous chapter as regards how to establish changes in the political opportunity structure will guide us in the latter analysis. First of all, however, a short introduction to Cape Town will be given for readers who are not familiar with the ‘Mother City’ of South Africa.1

Cape Town and South Africa

Cape Town is the third largest municipality of South Africa in terms of population (2.9 million inhabitants), after Johannesburg (3.2 million) and eThekwini municipality, Durban (3.1 million).2 Cape Town has the highest net migration of all metropolitan areas, with around 200,000 people having moved there between 1997 and 2001.3 The whole of the Western Cape Province has some 4.3 million inhabitants.

The demography of the Western Cape Province and Cape Town differs from the country as a whole. Partly this is the result of the Dutch colonialisation initiated in 1652. The original inhabitants, Khoi pastoralists and San hunter-gatherers, were almost wiped out and replaced by Dutch settlers and slaves from East Africa, Madagascar and the East Indies. Generations later, the majority of Cape Town residents trace their origin from a mixture of

1 Cape Town is the legislative capital of South Africa and the seat of the national parliament. Pretoria is the administrative capital where the Government and its administrations are based. South Africa’s Supreme Court of Appeal is based in Bloemfontein and the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, p. v).
2 South African Cities Network, www.sacities.net. Approximately 65 per cent of South Africa’s population lives in metropolitan areas, cities and towns and the urban sector accounts for roughly 80 per cent of South Africa’s GDP (Williams 2002, p. 4).
different population groups. Referred to as ‘coloureds’, they differ from South Africa’s majority population that has its roots further north.

When the National Party (NP) gained power in 1948, Cape Town ‘was the most challenging case’ to the realisation of apartheid’s Group Areas Act as around one-third of the city’s population lived in mixed areas.\(^4\) The Cape Town City Council objected to the implementation of the Act but eventually the first Group Areas proclamations were made for Cape Town in 1957.\(^5\) Still, residential segregation had been a reality in Cape Town long before this; by the end of the 1890s suburbs were created for whites only.\(^6\) Also the Native Reserve Locations Act in the Cape of 1902, and the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 prohibited black people from entering white cities and towns except for labour purposes.\(^7\)

Furthermore, the so-called Coloured Labour Preference Policy explains why the black population residing in the area is relatively small. The whole of Western Cape was set aside as a Coloured Labour Preference Area from the 1950s and influx control of black South Africans was employed even more forcefully than in the rest of the country.\(^8\) The coloured population was relatively better off compared to the black population under the apartheid system with better housing, education and job opportunities. To a large extent these differences remain in the democratic era.

The black population of Cape Town is mainly Xhosa-speaking from the Eastern Cape, and constitutes 31 per cent of the inhabitants. The coloured residents make up 48 per cent of the population, the white 19 per cent, whereas Indians and other Asians make up around 1.5 per cent.\(^9\) This demography, together with the apartheid legacy, has resulted in a complex social, economic and political heterogeneity that is unique in South Africa.\(^10\)

Economically the Western Cape with the economic hub of Cape Town was the third-largest contributor to the South African economy in 2003 with 14.5 per cent of GDP. The province has the highest adult educational level, among the lowest official unemployment rates (15.9 per cent in 2006)\(^11\), the

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\(^6\) Barnett (1989), p. 1. These included Oranjezicht, Camps Bay and Milnerton. See also Bickford-Smith who rejects the previously held notion that Cape Town used to be ‘a haven of ethnic harmony and integration before 1948’ (Bickford-Smith 1995, p. 63).
\(^8\) Greene (1991), p. 2.
\(^9\) Figures based on the 2001 Census, Demarcation Board, www.demarcation.org.za. In the black population, 90.5 per cent have Xhosa as their home language, in the coloured 67.8 per cent have Afrikaans and 31.8 per cent English, and in the white 57 per cent have English and 41.3 per cent have Afrikaans (City of Cape Town [undated], Characteristics of population, Distribution of home language per population group 2001 Census).
\(^10\) According to Statistics South Africa, there were 47.4 million people in the country in mid-2006. Of these, 79.5 per cent were African (black), 8.9 per cent coloured, 2.5 per cent Indian and 9.2 per cent white.
lowest fertility and the highest life expectancy rates in the country.\textsuperscript{12} Still it is important to note that this does not mean that living conditions are necessarily better at a general level. It rather means that the socio-economic cleavages are substantial. This is particularly visible in Cape Town. In 2001, the unemployment rate among the black population was almost 50 per cent, 24.5 per cent among the coloured population and as low as 4.7 per cent among the white population.\textsuperscript{13} The mean household income per month in 2002 was around 2,000 Rands for the black population, around 5,000 Rands for the coloured population and 10,000 for the white population.\textsuperscript{14} Over 50 per cent of the black population lives in informal dwellings (backyard shacks and shacks in informal settlements).\textsuperscript{15} The housing backlog is estimated at 265,000 units.\textsuperscript{16}

Politically the Western Cape and particularly Cape Town differ from the rest of the country as it is the only metropolitan area that has experienced several periods of non-ANC councils in the post-apartheid era. It has seen several changes of power in-between elections as the so-called floor-crossing reform (see details under the discussion on the electoral system in this chapter) has had more fundamental consequences here than elsewhere because of the electoral instability. Also in the apartheid era, Cape Town differed politically in relation to the province. It used to be more liberal than the NP-dominated province and the segregation and the removal of coloureds from the voters roll was objected to as long as possible.\textsuperscript{17}

The apartheid years: a political opportunity structure of racial segregation

When the NP won the general election in 1948 South Africa saw the beginning of a more forceful implementation of apartheid policies. Initially the NP was supported mainly by white Afrikaners who managed to consolidate their election victory partly due to the Westminster-type political system. Rela-

\textsuperscript{12} Statistics South Africa (2001 Census).
\textsuperscript{13} City of Cape Town (2001a).
\textsuperscript{14} Seekings et al. (2005), p. 6. 100 South African Rand (ZAR) equalled around 15 USD in November 2007 (1 USD=6.5 ZAR)
\textsuperscript{15} City of Cape Town (2001a).
\textsuperscript{16} City of Cape Town, IDP 2006/2007, p. 177. In 2003, the backlog was estimated at 220,000 units, out of which 85,000 were informal settlements, 61,000 backyard dwellings, 51,000 overcrowded housing and 23,000 informal dwellings on serviced sites (City of Cape Town 2003b). South Africa has one of the most unequal economies in the world; white South Africans have a Human Development Index (HDI) similar to that of Canada or Israel whereas the HDI of black South Africans was lower than that of Egypt and Swaziland. By 2000 there was even a decline in the HDI among black South Africans, with the gap having widened between the richest and the poorest provinces (May and Hunter 2005, p. 103).
\textsuperscript{17} Atkinson (1991), p. 275. Propertied coloureds were removed from the voters’ roll in the Cape Province in 1971. Propertied black voters had been removed already in 1936 (Cameron 1991, p. 50, and Butler 2004, p. 15).
tions with the English-speaking white community were conflictual, but as the standard of living of the white population increased the NP managed to gain a wider support in the white community. Contributing to the success of the NP was also a common white fear of losing political power to the black population.18

The apartheid system denied a majority of South Africans fundamental civil and political rights. Still there were democratic elements, for example, governing bodies, that were elected, and for this reason the apartheid system is sometimes referred to as a pseudo-democracy.19 The local government system was structured along racial lines with white city and town councils overseeing the urban areas designated for the other population groups.20

After 1948 the power of local government diminished as certain functions were taken over by central government. To a large extent this can be explained by the fact that the NP wanted to assure a similar implementation of its apartheid policies all over South Africa.21 The ultimate goal of the apartheid regime was ‘separate development’ for the different population groups. A process of ‘retribalisation’ culminated in the establishment of ten Bantustans, or homelands, where all black South Africans were given citizenship by force. Four of the homelands were declared independent by the late 1970s and early 1980s, but were only recognised by the apartheid government.22 Through the Department of Bantu Administration and Development more than 700,000 black South Africans were removed from white urban areas in 20 years. The goal was to resettle the ‘surplus’ population (i.e. the ones not needed for labour) in the homeland villages.23 It has been estimated that between 1960 and 1989 there were 3.5 million forced removals in the country as a whole.24

The local government structure of white South Africa mainly followed the British model with a considerable degree of autonomy within certain limits, subject to the control of provincial and national authorities.25 In 1960, the government created Urban Bantu Councils for which black residents were supposed to vote. They existed in 14 cities but had merely control functions that were exercised directly through officials appointed by the white

21 Friedman (1990), p. 45.
22 Butler (2004), p. 20. The Bantustans created a black political and bureaucratic elite who were often drawn from existing traditional leaders. These leaders (sometimes referred to as ‘Bantustan puppets’) became notorious for the harsh methods with which they maintained apartheid law and order in their respective homelands (Butler 2004, pp. 21–22, and Mokvist Ugglå 2006, pp. 14–15). On the difficult task of accommodating South Africa’s traditional leaders with new democratic structures, see Mokvist Ugglå (2006).
authorities in which they were located. At the same time so-called Management Committees (MCs) and Local Affairs Committees (LACs) were established as separate local government structures for coloured and Indian residents respectively. The committees were partly elected and partly nominated and had advisory powers. They could also obtain certain powers by delegation from the white local authority.

The attempts to create separate local government structures failed however, the main reason being that black and coloured areas lacked the financial viability necessary to become independent municipalities. Apart from the economic aspect, there were also strong objections from the non-white communities, especially among Indian and coloured residents in the educated urban areas, since they wanted direct representation on the white local authorities.

Increasing representation for the non-white population

As a response to the failure of the previous systems, Black Local Authorities (BLAs) were introduced in 1982. These authorities introduced full local government rights to black people, still within the general apartheid framework. One severe problem was however that the main source of revenue for the BLAs was rents and service charges levied on residents. Since a majority of the township residents were simply too poor to pay, the tax base in no way corresponded to the needs in the black areas. Rent boycotts became a common tactic of protesting against the precarious situation, which further deteriorated the financial situation of the BLAs. The BLAs also had problems recruiting officials since there were few skilled black people who were willing to work for them, and therefore they became dependent on officials from the provincial administration. As noted by Khehla Shubane, some township residents managed to take advantage of the BLAs, for example, by expressing themselves politically and by offering some avenues for upward social mobility. However, the BLAs also encouraged corruption among councillors who saw the opportunity for financial gain when land and houses became commercialised.

With the introduction of the national tricameral parliament in 1983, limited power-sharing was introduced. Three uniracial chambers for coloured, Indian and white representatives respectively were to decide exclusively on so-called ‘own affairs’. Local government was one of the functions consi-

26 Friedman (1990), pp. 45–46.
27 Cameron (1991), pp. 49–50. An example from Westville, Durban, illuminates some of the absurdities in the system. An Indian Group Area, part of Westville, paid property taxes to the Westville Council, but only white residents had the right to elect the Town Council (Tomaselli and Tomaselli 1992, p. 279).
29 Friedman (1990), pp. 46–47.
ered to be own affairs and accordingly it became a responsibility of central government. There was a close relationship between the coloured MCs and the Indian LACs and their respective chambers in the tricameral parliament. For example, many Members of Parliament (MPs) graduated from the ranks of MCs and LACs, and a number of MPs were simultaneously members of MCs and LACs. This gave MCs and LACs greater possibilities to influence since they now had representation at national level.31

In spite of increasing decision-making powers, the new government structures continued to be dysfunctional. A majority of Indian and coloured voters boycotted the tricameral parliamentary elections as they considered a single multiracial chamber to be the only acceptable solution.32 And although individuals and community associations had formal representation through elected councillors in the BLAs, in reality these councillors had very limited possibilities to exercise any real influence as they had no direct links to central government.

In sum, three major reasons for the dysfunctionality of the BLAs can be identified. Firstly, a majority of the people in the townships saw the BLAs as politically unacceptable since they were created by the white minority government. They were also perceived as corrupt and as working in the interest of the illegitimate apartheid government.33 As with the management committees in coloured areas, the civic associations that started to grow in the early 1980s rejected the BLAs; many civic associations were actually created as a response to the introduction of the BLAs.34 Secondly, the BLAs did not have financial means to carry out tasks normally done by autonomous municipalities. Apart from the low tax base, the parent white municipality continued to control the local fiscal system.35 Finally, the third reason, and the most fundamental, was that democratic, representative local government structures simply did not exist in South Africa at the time. As noted by Seekings, ‘[t]he political system denied township residents avenues through which their grievances could be taken to the central government. (…) The only avenue through which township residents could express their discontent was open protest and demonstration, and support for extra-state civic and political organizations’.

In 1985, Regional Services Councils (RSCs) were introduced by the national NP Government in order to improve local government structures and infrastructure. They became functional in 1987, and by 1991 there were 21 such councils in the country. The councils consisted of representatives of the BLAs, coloured and Indian MCs/LACs and WLAs, and were responsible to

31 Cameron (1991), pp. 52–53.
34 Shubane (1991), pp. 64, 67.
the provincial administrators who were appointed by the central government. The RSCs meant an improvement in terms of increasing decision-making powers, especially for the black population, and involved some upgrading in poor areas. However, the fundamental problem remained, namely that the councils were based on racially defined local authorities. For this reason they were never accepted neither by white liberal city councils, nor by black and coloured extra-parliamentary civic associations.37

The degree to which party politics was part of local government during apartheid varied among the regions. For example, in the former Transvaal Province (Johannesburg) white local government was on party lines. However, in many provinces local ratepayers’ associations and civic groups were the major actors in local government. Louwrens Pretorious and Richard Humphries suggest that one reason for the lack of party political involvement could be that the limited areas of responsibility and political autonomy made local politics less attractive to political parties.38

The phenomenon of non-party political involvement was particularly prominent in the Cape Province. The political candidates standing for election represented their neighbourhood and not a political party. Although it was often obvious that a certain councillor was affiliated to a political party (and behind the scenes political parties influenced or even controlled the civic candidates), in elections they ran as independents, often backed by a residents’ association. In concrete terms this could mean that members would do volunteer work, for example, canvassing voters, organising public meetings and putting up posters, as well as donating money to election campaigns.39 No party funds were involved and although there were councillors who were party members, their prime loyalty was to the council itself and not the party.40 In 1988, the first nationwide local government elections took place, still on racial grounds. For the first time white local elections were then fought solely on party political grounds in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.41

**Liberalisation and the transition to democracy**

Great international and national pressure forced the NP leader PW Botha to initiate contacts with the ANC in mid-1987. In February 1989, FW de Klerk replaced Botha and in September the same year he became State President. His take-over significantly changed the political climate in the country. De

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39 E-mail correspondence with Sewell, 24 September 2007.
41 Cameron (2003a), pp. 2–3. Cape Town had witnessed increasing signs of party politicisation already in 1984/85. Still, as noted by Cameron, without a party whip ‘personality differences can be just as important as political differences’ (Cameron 1986, p. 42).
Klerk soon called for intensified negotiations with the ANC and other parties. On 2 February 1990 the ban on the ANC and other political organisations was lifted, and the release of Nelson Mandela was announced. Nine days later, on 11 February 1990, Mandela was released after 27 years in prison. The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) was established in 1991 and included 18 political groups which agreed to work towards the goals of an undivided South Africa, a bill of rights, a multi-party system, constitutional government, a separation of powers, civil liberties, and specified freedoms to be enjoyed by all citizens. In March 1992, a whites-only referendum was held asking if there was support for de Klerk’s reforms. Around 70 per cent of the voters said yes to a continuation of the reform process.

The important political changes at national level created a period of uncertainty in the country, perhaps most clearly discernable at local government level. The urban population grew substantially, which put increased pressure on local authorities to deal with the desperate housing shortage. Influx control was removed in 1986, and the Group Areas Act abolished in 1991. The already difficult situation of many local authorities became even more difficult as the abolition of much apartheid legislation, although necessary, created a period of confusion and new challenges. One consequence was, for example, that many black South Africans were now legal residents in previously white areas, but as the government system was still based on race they did not have the right to vote for the councils of the area in which they lived. Also, as the education system remained racially segregated, their children could not automatically attend the local public schools.

Hence, the institutional framework continued to be structured along racial lines during the liberalisation phase, meaning that there were different local government structures for black, coloured, white and Indian people. Out of these only the white local government could be defined as democratic and sustainable in terms of sources of revenue. The major challenge was therefore to create an integrated system of local government based on non-racialism and democratic rule. On 13 December 1990 President de Klerk declared that the government accepted the principle of ‘one city, one tax base’. This had been a slogan advocated especially by the extra-parliamentary civic movement to demand ‘reunited, undifferentiated, and completely non-racial cities’.

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44 Although a new policy of ‘Orderly Urbanisation’, together with other legislation (Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act, the Trespass Act, building regulations, health regulations and the Slum Act), was still used by authorities to force people to move to the townships (Development Action Group 1996, p. 4).
Negotiating a democratic local government

In 1992 and 1993 multiparty negotiations took place at national level, resulting in the adoption by the tricameral parliament of the Interim Constitution on 22 December 1993. The Constitutional Assembly had to ratify a final constitution with a two-thirds majority within two years. Soon thereafter, in February 1994, the formal process of democratising local government started with the promulgation of the Local Government Transition Act and the provisions of Chapter 10 in the Interim Constitution. The democratisation process was divided into three phases, and it was only after the completion of phase three in December 2000 that local government was fully democratised.

Negotiations started with the establishment of the Local Government Negotiating Forum (LGNF) in March 1993 with the aim ‘to contribute to the democratisation of local government and the bringing about of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and financially viable local government system’. The LGNF had 60 members; half of them were representatives from central, provincial and local government, the so-called statutory side, and the other half, the so-called non-statutory side, consisted of representatives from the South African National Civic Association (SANCO) and the South African Municipal Workers’ Union (SAMWU). Political parties were excluded from the forum.

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49 Cameron (1999), p. 85. Pre-interim phase: From February 1994 until the first local government elections that took place in November 1995, except for Western Cape (May 1996) and KwaZulu-Natal (June 1996). Interim-phase: Started with first local government elections and ended three to five years later with the implementation of the final constitutional model at local level, drawn up by the Constitutional Assembly (National Assembly and Senate). Final phase: Started with the implementation of the final constitutional model at local level and ended 5 December 2000 with the second local government elections (Cameron 1999, p. 85).
50 LGNF (1993), quoted in ibid., p. 84.
51 SANCO is the national umbrella body for civic associations that was established in 1992. The relationship between SANCO and the ANC has been complex ever since its establishment. At national level it is often referred to as the ‘tripartite alliance plus one’, where COSATU and the South African Communist Party (SACP) are the ANC’s closest allies and SANCO the ‘plus one’. (The SACP has never contested democratic elections, but encouraged their members to vote for the ANC.) Ever since SANCO was established in 1992 there have been discussions on its role in the new South Africa. Should SANCO and its branches mainly be seen as government partners involved in service delivery or rather, as SANCO prefers to see itself, as a watchdog overseeing government affairs? At local level a variety of relations exist, from being close partners to bitter enemies. On SANCO’s strategic dilemmas concerning its role as an ally or a watchdog, see, for example, Seekings (2000b); Heller and Ntlokonzulu (2001), and Zuern (2004). A concrete example of the problematic ANC-SANCO relationship comes from the 2000 municipal elections where many SANCO leaders resigned from the ANC to contest the elections as independents (‘Local poll renegades tackle ANC head-on’, The Sunday Independent, 25 November 2000).
52 Cameron (1999), p. 84.
Local negotiating forums were created to negotiate on a new model for local government. In these local forums, political organisations, such as the ANC and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), participated on the non-statutory side together with civic organisations, such as SANCO. On the statutory side were existing local government bodies ‘or persons or organisations approved by the forum as part of such a component, such as ratepayers’ associations’.

Not surprisingly many of the local negotiating forums experienced conflicts and tensions over diverging interests. The ANC had a more centralist vision, whereas the NP advocated a decentralised model for the new local government structures. It was at local level that the NP quest for power-sharing mechanisms saw the greatest results. Knowing that they would ultimately lose control at the central and provincial level, decentralisation to local authorities was seen as a strategy to protect the interests of the white minority. The NP therefore put much effort into proposing how local government should best be structured to keep a fair amount of autonomy vis-à-vis national and regional levels. For example, the party pushed strongly for ward councils with extensive functions and powers (e.g. taxation powers). Although in the end the ANC’s demands for strong metropolitan structures triumphed over the NP’s claims for strong ward councils, the result has been described as an unsatisfactory political compromise.

Interestingly, the NP and the civic associations were united in their demands for a local government sphere with extensive devolved powers and functions. Jo Beall et al. explain what they call ‘the decentralization paradox of the South African Local Government Transition’, i.e. ANC’s struggle against any substantial devolution of power. Apart from the resistance to the NP’s calls for federalism, the ANC representatives who took part in the local government negotiations were dominated by exiles, many of whom did not have a local power base or constituency.

Another factor that contributed to the marginalisation of the civic associations, and ultimately to their calls for decentralisation, was the alliance formed by the ANC, COSATU and SACP just prior to the negotiations. There were also disputes between SANCO’s national leadership, the UDF and the ANC, and in combination with SANCO’s decision to concentrate on grassroots mobilisation and local-level issues, thereby leaving its political function to the ANC, it is hardly surprising that SANCO was unsuccessful in its requests for a strong local government sphere. The paradox lies in the importance attributed to democratic local government by the anti-apartheid

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53 Ibid., pp. 86–87.
54 Ibid., pp. 83, 98, 109.
movement, and the ANC’s opposition to their demands for increased power at local level in the negotiation process.\textsuperscript{56}

The LGNF negotiations resulted in the adoption of an interim local government framework as a start of the reconstruction of local government. Non-racial transitional local councils were established by the local negotiating forums during the first phase of the democratisation process of local government, thereby replacing all existing local authorities. As with the negotiating forums, these pre-interim councils were established on a fifty-fifty basis with appointed statutory and non-statutory councillors. During this phase, one of the major controversies was the appointment of councillors.\textsuperscript{57}

In order to gain a seat on the transitional council, potential candidates first had to be nominated in the non-statutory group (this was done by obtaining 300 signatures from the community), and then to be approved by the negotiating forums.\textsuperscript{58}

The agreement to replace existing racially-based structures before the first local elections was reached for two major reasons. Firstly, it ‘would facilitate participation by sectors of society which had in the past been excluded from the local government process’, and secondly it would facilitate continuity in knowledge and experience.\textsuperscript{59} As representatives of the non-statutory side, SANCO committed itself to persuade township residents to start paying rent again.\textsuperscript{60} Cameron notes that these councils, although non-racial in theory, in practice did not help change the racially segregated local structures. ‘While the statutory/non-statutory distinction meant that councillors were more racially representative, many WLAs remained WLAs, and many BLAs remained BLAs in areas of jurisdiction’.\textsuperscript{61}

With the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the socioeconomic policy framework presented by the new Government of National Unity (GNU),\textsuperscript{62} local government was identified as the key implementer of the programme. Local RDP forums were created for this purpose, open to all relevant stakeholders in a particular area. Implementation was slow, however, since there were no legitimate local government structures to drive the development process.\textsuperscript{63} At the time of the first local government elections in 1995 and 1996, local government was thus in the midst of a fundamental

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{56} Ibid., pp. 71–72.
  \item \textsuperscript{57} Cameron (1999), pp. 86–87.
  \item \textsuperscript{58} E-mail correspondence with Kelroe-Cooke, 11 October 2007.
  \item \textsuperscript{59} LGNF (1993), quoted in Cameron (1999), p. 86.
  \item \textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{61} Ibid., p. 89.
  \item \textsuperscript{62} The Government of National Unity (GNU) was the multi-party executive under the interim constitution between the first democratic elections 27 April 1994 and 4 February 1997 when the new constitution took effect, and the NP withdrew. Apart from the ANC and the NP, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) was also represented (Cameron 1999, p. 83, and Butler 2004, p. 111).
  \item \textsuperscript{63} Cameron (1999), p. 107.
\end{itemize}
transformation. The greatest challenge was to unite the deeply divided and highly fragmented metropolitan areas.

The political opportunity structure in democratic Cape Town

This section aims to discuss the political opportunity structure in Cape Town with the purpose of identifying changes in the democratic period between the mid-1990s and to the present day. As mentioned already, it is not evident in what way a dramatic institutional change at national level – the transition from apartheid to democracy – affects the dimensions within the political opportunity structure, and even less so how it feeds into local opportunity structures. So the purpose here is to answer the question of what concrete effects the introduction of democracy has had on the local institutional and political context of Cape Town. It should be noted that the aim is to give a general account of the most important changes in the local institutional and political context. The question of how various neighbourhood associations have responded to these changes will be explored in Chapters 5 and 6.

The institutional and legal structure – towards a more open decision-making process

In terms of the institutional and legal structures the most dramatic change with the introduction of democracy was that these were now guided by the acknowledgement of the equality of all citizens. In principle, if not always in practice, the apartheid differentiation was replaced by the idea of political equality. The changing decision-making environment in South Africa was first noticed with the negotiations of the interim constitution, in which there was wide political and public participation. The South African scholars Gregory Houston and Ian Liebenberg argue that the constitutional negotiations signified a fundamental shift ‘from a previously semi-secretive, technocratic, and authoritarian mode of decision making to a more public and accountable decision-making process’.64

The White Paper on Local Government, the policy document upon which the new local government legislation was drafted, was presented in March 1998. The paper outlined a comprehensive programme of institutional reform and asserted that municipalities were to encourage active citizen participation. At the same time the paper warned against the perils of strong associations based on narrow interests.

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The participatory processes must not become an obstacle to development, and narrow interest groups must not be allowed to “capture” the development process. It is important for municipalities to find ways of structuring participation which enhance, rather than impede, the delivery process.\textsuperscript{65}

The White Paper identified four citizen roles in municipalities: as voters, as participants in the policy development process via stakeholder associations, as consumers and end-users of municipal services, and as organised partners involved in the mobilisation of resources for development. To encourage participation in the policy process – including policy initiation, formulation, monitoring, implementation and evaluation – various approaches were presented: forums initiated from within or outside local government, structured stakeholder involvement in certain council committees, participatory budgetary initiatives, and the encouragement of the organisational development of associations in particularly poor areas. An element of specific importance in terms of public participation requirements was that the paper outlined Integrated Development Planning (IDP), which was defined as ‘a process through which a municipality can establish a development plan for the short, medium and long-term’.\textsuperscript{66}

Municipalities thus have obligations to include the public at various stages of the decision-making process. Apart from more ad hoc and open participation opportunities that occur for example in public hearings or by approaching the Ombudsman,\textsuperscript{67} there are also more structured forms of participation. The White Paper on Local Government proposed two such forms: ward committees and metropolitan substructures (such as sub-councils) would act as the ‘key interface’ between local government and local communities.\textsuperscript{68} These two institutions will be discussed in more detail in the next section as they are permanent structures in which public participation by residents’ associations is encouraged.


\textsuperscript{66} Republic of South Africa (1998a), Section B: Developmental Local Government.

\textsuperscript{67} The Ombudsman represents the interests and rights of citizens, but so far only two municipalities have established this function, Cape Town being one of them. The Ombudsman is expected to work closely with community associations. However, there seems to be a lack of awareness of the Ombudsmans’s role among the citizens (City of Cape Town, Annual Report 2004/2005, p. 173).

\textsuperscript{68} Republic of South Africa (1998a), Section D: Institutional Systems. In August 2007, the Department of Provincial and Local Government invited public comments on how to develop the White Paper on Local Government (as well as on the White Paper on Provincial Government). The deadline for comments was 31 October 2007 (Republic of South Africa 2007).
Encouraging public participation through sub-councils and ward committees

Sub-councils and ward committees operate at different levels in the local government structure. Most sub-councils are composed of five or six wards (there are 105 wards in Cape Town) whereas ward committees are based in one ward. The majority of sub-council members are ward councillors. As each ward has two councillors (one ward councillor and one so-called proportional councillor69), there are around ten councillors belonging to one sub-council. Local government officials also participate in the meetings and are responsible for the necessary decision-making arrangements. Sub-councils hold meetings on a monthly basis to discuss matters that concern the wards, such as development projects and budget issues. They monitor the implementation of the Council’s budget and make recommendations to the Council on matters affecting their area of jurisdiction. Each sub-council has a budget that may be allocated to minor projects in the wards. Typical projects include the maintenance of public facilities within the sub-council area, such as sport and amusement facilities, parks and recreation, bus and taxi stops.70

The political composition of councillors corresponds to that of the City Council. This means that when a certain party is in a majority position on the City Council this is normally reflected in the appointment of sub-council chairs, as well as in the number of councillors representing the different parties. The meetings are open to the public, but the public does not have permanent representation.71

Ward committees are more locally based than sub-councils. There is only one politician participating (sometimes two if the proportional councillor wishes to attend), with the rest of the committee being community representatives. The maximum number of ward committee members is eleven, including the ward councillor who acts as the chairperson. The community members are elected by the residents in the ward and represent categories, such as women, the youth, the disabled, health, education, and civic and ratepayers’ associations. No political parties are allowed, only the chairperson is, by definition, representing their political party.72

Both sub-councils and ward committees may gain delegated powers from the municipal council, according to the Municipal Structures Act of 1998, but in reality such delegations have been quite modest. Ward committees, for

69 The difference between ward councillors and proportional councillors will be described in the section on the electoral system.
70 In a South African context ‘taxi’ in most cases refers to minibuses that are privately owned and serve as public transportation particularly in poor areas.
71 Field notes, Sub-Council meeting, 15 October 2004, and Republic of South Africa (1998b), p. 50. Sub-councils may only close its meetings ‘when it is reasonable to do so, having regard to the nature of the matter being considered and the right to privacy of third parties’ (City of Cape Town 2005c).
72 City of Cape Town (2005f).
example, only have advisory powers. They have a budget allocated from the sub-council over which they may decide.  

It is clear that sub-councils and ward committees serve different purposes. In the sub-councils the idea is that any public representative wishing to participate has the possibility to do so, at least in theory. Participation in the ward committees is restricted to a select group of community representatives. Although they are elected by the community itself, there are many associations that do not have representatives in the committee as the maximum number of committee members is eleven.

Ward committees are composed of community associations, representing their respective constituency in the ward. They participate regularly over a period of time (around two years) and therefore, if the ward committee is functional, members acquire an increasing knowledge of general community affairs as well as of local government administration. Ward committees also have the advantage of being close to the communities they are set to serve, thereby encouraging the ideal of participatory democracy. Ward committee meetings take place in the evenings, whereas sub-council meetings are held during office hours, which makes public participation more difficult.

Furthermore, sub-councils do not have permanent public representation, and from this perspective they are not close to their constituencies. On the other hand, sub-councils have more resources, such as staff and organisation, and can therefore be more efficient in the implementation phase. From the ward councillors’ perspective, it may also be instructive to learn from each other’s experiences. The chair of the sub-council receives a competitive salary while ward committee representatives are not remunerated. As noted by Cameron, this makes sub-councils an instrument for party patronage. An indication of this could be that the sub-councils remained when the ANC and the NNP came to power in 2002 even though the ANC had opposed the introduction of sub-councils by the DA. The number of sub-councils even increased from 16 to 20 during this period (and to 23 in 2006 when the DA returned to power).

Cape Town was the only metropolitan area that opted for sub-councils, and these were introduced in 2001 by the then DA-run council. In most other major cities of South Africa ward committees were introduced instead of sub-councils. In November 2004, the ANC municipal government established ward committees also in Cape Town, while still keeping the sub-councils. Following the ANC’s loss in the 2006 local elections, the DA-led coalition has envisaged that ward committees will be abolished and replaced with so-called ward forums.

73 Ibid.
75 City of Cape Town (2007a). Ward forums have many similarities to the ward committees; however, they are more flexible in their composition as they can consist of between five and twenty members who are elected either on a geographical or sectoral basis (or a combination
Given the history of apartheid for local government – extremely closed and bureaucratically dominated – the process of involving the public has been far from easy. There is, for example, a lack of experience of public participation, a lack of resources, and elected officials and local staff lack competence since many planning and budget issues are highly complex.\textsuperscript{76} An interesting, very self-critical reflection on why public participation has not been as successful as initially anticipated, was made in 2006 by one sub-council official in Cape Town.

\begin{quote}
[I]n reality we’ve not been very fair with the residents. So we’ve delayed proper notification, we’ve held meetings at the most inconvenient times, we’ve mystified the issues so that people feel totally overwhelmed and, you know, unable to engage in the debate. We haven’t been language sensitive. I can sort of enumerate for you a number of tactics that have been used with the local government to just (…) meet the legislative requirements which ask for public participation, but in reality (…) the substance of that public participation has been extremely weak.\textsuperscript{77}
\end{quote}

In the next chapter we will discuss the dimension of public participation from the perspective of residents’ associations to learn if they perceive that the requirements of a more open decision-making process have increased their possibilities to influence.

The next section will briefly describe how the legal environment has changed in the post-apartheid period when it comes to allowing civil society associations to operate freely.

**An enabling legal environment**

During the liberalisation phase some important apartheid legislation was repealed that had put restrictions on political activities. In 1993/94, the Abolition of Restrictions on Free Political Activity Act came into operation.\textsuperscript{78} Moreover the freedom of association is constitutionally guaranteed in the Bill of Rights in South Africa’s new constitution.\textsuperscript{79} The legal right to organise freely has been coupled with legal obligations for local government including the public in policy- and decision-making. The constitution states that one of the five main objectives of local government is “to encourage the
involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.  

Civil society organisations are also encouraged through the so-called Non-profit Act that was passed in 1997 with the main purpose ‘to provide for an environment in which non-profit organisations can flourish’. The Act outlined some key institutional issues as regards the formal relationship between civil society associations and the state. It was not compulsory to register under the new Act, and actually some associations that were already registered under earlier legislation did not see the benefits of doing it.

Centralisation of the local government system

Under apartheid the local government system had both centralised and decentralised tendencies. On the one hand, there were an extensive number of local authorities and the apartheid goal was separate developments for each population group – extreme decentralisation in a sense. On the other hand, the territorial decentralisation was not accompanied by real decision-making powers. The structures that were set up, such as the management committees and the black local authorities, lacked the legitimacy necessary to make them functional. As national government wanted to assure that the apartheid policies were implemented accordingly, it made provision for far-reaching central control. The Regional Services Councils that were established by the end of the 1980s were, for example, responsible to the provincial administration. Also the precarious financial situation in most non-white authorities made self-government impossible. In the following, centralisation and decentralisation will be discussed in the democratic context of local government post-1995.

The 1996 South African Constitution states that the national, provincial and local spheres of government are ‘distinctive, interdependent and interrelated’. This means that local government has the right to manage its own affairs, but that these are always subject to national and provincial legislation. In one sense, we can thus conclude that devolution of power has taken place in South Africa in that decision-making authority has been granted to the local sphere of government. However, for residents’ associations, which are the focus of this thesis, this aspect of decentralisation is not of major

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80 Ibid., § 152, Section 1(e).
81 Republic of South Africa (1997).
82 Camay and Gordon (2004), pp. 52–53. Associations that are registered need to provide, among other things, annual financial and narrative reports. The benefits include some tax reimbursements, but, most importantly, official recognition of the association. Many donors request a confirmation of NPO registration as this is supposed to guarantee a basic level of good governance, including a constitution and financial management (ibid., p. 53).
84 Ibid., § 151, Section (3), § 155, and South African Government Information. There are nine provinces in South Africa, each with a regional parliament, and 283 municipalities with the executive and legislative authority vested in Municipal Councils.
relevance. What is more important is whether the local government system as such can be characterised as decentralised or centralised, as previously discussed. The following analysis therefore refers to major trends within the local government system in terms of centralisation and decentralisation.

In Cape Town discussions on local restructuring started in 1991 and 1992 on the initiative of the Cape Town City Council. Further seminars were organised in 1993 and included representatives of local authorities, political parties, SANCO and other civil society actors. Not until late 1993, however, the Cape Town Local Government Negotiating Forum came into being. One of the major controversies in the Cape Town forum concerned the future boundaries of the areas included in the Cape Metropolitan Area. More specifically the NP feared that Cape Town’s boundaries would be drawn so that the ANC would win the local government elections.85

Following the elections in May 1996, a two-tier system was introduced with six local councils and a metropolitan council.86 Prior to these elections, metropolitan Cape Town was governed by more than 39 local authorities and administered by 19 separate administrations.87 Around 30,000 municipal employees remained and were accommodated within the new structures, not without tensions though.88 The trend was similar all over South Africa and as expressed by Bill Freund,

> cities were now being administered by an uncomfortable combination of bureaucracies from the old regime, sometimes very competent but only within the purview of serving a relatively affluent population along familiar lines, and inexperienced newly-arrived officials and elected representatives who often came from a struggle tradition.89

The White Paper on Local Government from 1998 envisaged the implementation of a single-tier system of local government. There were objections to the paper, in particular from the then opposition-controlled provinces of the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.90 The one-tier system became a reality in Cape Town at the time of the second local government elections on 5 December 2000. Now the Cape Town Unicity came into being, meaning that the previous seven councils were dissolved and their employees, assets and

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85 Cameron (1999), pp. 115–116, 146. Local government disputes also occurred elsewhere, for example, in Durban and Johannesburg.
86 The seven councils were Blaauwberg Municipality (Northern substructure), Oostenberg Municipality (Eastern), Helderberg Municipality, South Peninsula Municipality, the City of Cape Town (central), the City of Tygerberg, and the Cape Metropolitan Council.
90 Cameron (1999), p. 245.
commitments transferred to the new Unicity Council. Unicity metropolitan councils were introduced in six of South Africa’s major cities at the same time. In the Gauteng province, for example, 51 authorities were replaced by 3 metropolitan councils, 9 local councils and 3 district councils. All in all, South Africa went from having 843 local councils in the elections of 1995/96, to 299 councils in the 2000 elections, and 283 in 2007.

Patrick Heller describes how the creation of the Unicity structures was part of a national centralisation of representation forms initiated by President Thabo Mbeki, who succeeded Mandela in 1999. Heller notes how the President’s Office gained increasing powers under Mbeki, for example, by directly appointing ANC provincial premiers and Unicity mayors.

Metropolitan councils may choose between two systems of city government: a Collective Executive System (or Executive Committee System) or a Mayoral Executive System. Cape Town used to have a Collective Executive System but the Mayoral Executive System was introduced in June 2003 which centralised the power of the majority party in council. The difference is that membership in the former system was based on proportional representation, whereas in the Mayoral Executive system this is not required. In the Collective Executive System, the council elects the committee and delegates powers to it and the mayor acts as the committee chairperson. In the Mayoral Executive System the mayor is elected by the full council, and thereafter appoints councillors to the Mayoral Committee (Mayco). The committee consists of a maximum of ten people, and may thus consist of members from the governing party only. Each committee member is responsible for a portfolio, and acts as chairperson in a special committee for the same sector. The special committees have policy formulation and implementation monitoring tasks, and make recommendations to the Executive Mayor.

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91 The Unicity Commission (2000), p. 5. The Province of Western Cape has five district municipalities subdivided into 24 local municipalities and one metropolitan municipality (the City of Cape Town) (Cape Gateway, www.capegateway.gov.za).
92 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), § 155. There are three types of municipalities: metropolitan (category A), local (category B), and district (category C). Metropolitan municipalities are found in the six largest cities: Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Tshwane (Pretoria), East Rand and Port Elizabeth. The corresponding six metropolitan councils are Johannesburg, eThekwini (Durban), Cape Town, Tshwane, Ekurhuleni (East Rand) and Nelson Mandela (Port Elizabeth). Metropolitan councils have a single metropolitan budget, common property rating and service-tariff systems, and a single employer body (South Africa Yearbook 2006/2007, p. 324).
96 Education and Training Unit (2002), p. 11.
97 City of Cape Town (2007b).
meetings are open to the public and often include presentations from various actors, including external consultants. The ANC’s efforts to centralise within the local government structure was highly contested by the opposition parties, but must be understood within the context of the apartheid history of the urban areas. The dilemma concerns which model best promote local democracy; a centralised or a decentralised model. The centralised unicity model faces the risk of alienating minority constituencies. However, given the segregated character of South African cities, a structure based on smaller polities would inevitably be racially based.

Municipalities have traditional local government competencies, such as waste management, emergency services, building regulations, promoting local economic development and co-ordinating land development. The responsibility for housing is shared by the three government spheres. According to the Housing Act of 1997, the role of national government is to establish and facilitate a national housing development process, the role of provincial government to promote and facilitate the provision of adequate housing, and finally municipalities are responsible for the actual housing supply.

The electoral system at local government level: a mix of proportional and non-proportional traits

In the apartheid years elections were held within the respective local authorities based on non-proportional methods. The Westminster-type political system characterised the white political arena, producing a winner-takes-all system that contributed to the consolidation of the NP’s political position. In the democratic South Africa the electoral system at both the national and provincial level is based on proportionality (PR).

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98 Field notes, Housing Portfolio Committee meeting, Cape Town City Council, 13 October 2004.
100 Beall et al. (2002), pp. 72, 76. The budgets of the new councils amount to more or less the same as what was available to the previous white local authorities although the population to be served is much larger. As much as around 90 per cent of the revenue of the municipalities are raised by themselves, whereas the remaining 10 per cent are made up of provincial transfers and funds from national government (Oldfield 2002, p. 96). In Cape Town around half of the revenue comes from service charges and one fourth from property rates (47 per cent and 23 per cent respectively) for the budget year 2004/05 (City of Cape Town, Annual Report 2004/2005, p. 45).
101 Department of Housing (1997).
103 At national level the Parliament consists of the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). The NA has 400 members who are elected every five years, half of them come from the national lists of the political parties, and the other half from their regional lists. The NCOP consists of 10 members from each of the nine provinces. Each province is thus equally represented in the council, but its delegation is composed proportionally according to the representation of political parties in the provincial legislature. The pro-
According to the constitution, municipal council elections must include a PR system whereby candidates are elected from party lists decided upon by the party in question. This system can be combined with a system of ward representation.\textsuperscript{104} The electoral system at local government level is thus a combination of proportional and non-proportional structures.\textsuperscript{105} Elections are held every five years, in which councillors are elected through proportional or mixed systems. All councillors hold a seat in a single metropolitan chamber, the City Council, and elect either an executive mayor or an executive committee.\textsuperscript{106} The mayor is thus not elected directly.\textsuperscript{107} After the 2006 local elections, the Cape Town Unicity Council consisted of 210 councillors, of which 105 were so-called ward councillors – one for each ward – and 105 were proportional councillors (PR councillors), meaning that they were nominated in terms of proportional representation.\textsuperscript{108}

As will be discussed later, an important aspect of the electoral system, having had substantial effect on Cape Town’s political power structure, is the so-called floor-crossing reform. The 1996 Constitution included an anti-defection clause forbidding floor-crossing. This clause was, however, questioned by the NNP and the DP as they wanted to merge into the DA to contest the 2000 local government elections as one single organisation. Initially the ANC was against the proposed reform as it was seen as the ‘congealing of a race and class-based political opposition’. However, when the NNP wanted to leave the DA to form alliances with the ANC, the ANC’s view on the matter changed. In 2002, the Constitutional Court declared that floor-crossing was in accordance with the Constitution.\textsuperscript{109} In concrete terms floor-crossing means that elected representatives (no less than 10 per cent) in the legislature at national, provincial and local government level may leave their party but retain their seat to join another party, or form a new one, under limited periods (there are two so-called window periods in the life of the legislature, normally two weeks every second year). In 2006, the Institute for

\textsuperscript{104} The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), Chapter 7, § 157, Section 2 a–b.
\textsuperscript{105} Such mixed systems are also referred to as the Additional Member System (AMS), Mixed Member System (MMS) and Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) (Hague et al. 2000, p. 213).
\textsuperscript{106} Republic of South Africa (1998b).
\textsuperscript{107} Prior to elections each political party nominates their mayoral candidate, and at the first council meeting after the elections the mayoral candidate from the party that gained most votes is elected (Cameron 2005, p. 333).
\textsuperscript{109} Idasa (2005). The term floor-crossing, or ‘crossing the floor’, originates from the British House of Commons where members wishing to vote against one’s party literally had to cross the floor to sit with the ‘other side’. It has been more common in majoritarian systems, for example in Australia (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, Encyclopedia).
Democracy in South Africa (Idasa) reported that a total of 1,100 representatives had crossed the floor since the inception of the reform, and 15 new parties had been established.\textsuperscript{110}

The negative effects of floor-crossing have been widely discussed since its introduction, not the least in Cape Town, as it is considered to have increased voter apathy and contributed to the unstable political situation. It has been noted that an absurd consequence of floor-crossing is that ward councillors are allowed ‘to unilaterally change the representation accorded to their constituents without recourse to the will of the community through a by-election’.\textsuperscript{111}

Voters have two ballots in the local elections; one with the name of the person who stands for election in that particular ward, and one party ballot. Each party normally has one ward candidate who is seen on posters and in election rallies in the ward before the elections. Ward candidates may be independent, although this has been rare since the introduction of party political candidates. The ward councillors are directly elected to represent their respective wards in the council, whereas the PR councillors are elected from party lists to represent parties proportionally in the council. The ward candidate who receives the most votes becomes the elected ward councillor for that ward. The PR councillors are drawn from the party lists and are given seats according to the percentage of votes of the respective parties in the metropolitan area as a whole.\textsuperscript{112}

The difference in status between a ward councillor and a PR councillor is not clear. Cameron quotes one party organiser saying that ‘control of a ward is far more preferable to a PR seat. It gives you a constituency and linkages to local communities’.\textsuperscript{113} However, one could suspect that PR councillors are freer in that they are not ‘bound’ by a constituency, which in turn could increase their status.\textsuperscript{114} Regardless of status, unlike the PR councillor, the ward councillor is well-known to the residents’ associations included in this study. We can therefore assume that the system with ward representatives elected on a majoritarian basis puts particular pressure on individual politicians as they reside in the same ward as their potential supporters.

Councillors may be full-time or part-time councillors and receive competitive salaries for their work. This was an important change from the conditions during the apartheid era in which councillors only received some compensation for expenses.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{110} Idasa (2007).
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid. In December 2007 the ANC was to take a final decision on whether floor-crossing would remain or not, but claimed that they were willing to scrap it if it was the will of the people (‘Floor-crossing could be scrapped’, \textit{Independent Online}, 10 October 2007).
\textsuperscript{112} Republic of South Africa (1998b).
\textsuperscript{113} Cameron (2003a), p. 17.
\textsuperscript{114} Personal communication with Oldfield, 11 October 2004.
\textsuperscript{115} Interview with Watkyns, 22 October 2004.
After having accounted for the most important changes in the institutional and legal structure, we now turn to the political power structure. As mentioned these more unstable political dimensions are of particular interest in the case of Cape Town. A summary of the analysis is provided in the concluding section of this chapter, including a table (Table 4.3).

The political power structure – shifting political alignments

The major elements of the political power structure are political alignments and shifts of power, and the presence and absence of political allies. As discussed in Chapter 2, this dimension is, in most cases, more volatile and less concrete than the institutional and legal structure.

The political power structure in Cape Town has always differed from the rest of the province and country. Under apartheid, relations between the liberal Cape Town Council and the surrounding conservative municipalities and the Cape Provincial Council were characterised by a high degree of mutual dislike. As a result the provincial authorities continuously removed autonomy from the Cape Town Council in order to restrict its influence.\(^{116}\) In the democratic period Cape Town has been the only council that has not had a stable ANC majority in an otherwise ANC-dominated provincial (from 1999) and national context.

The first democratic elections were held in South Africa on 27 April 1994, and the same day the interim Constitution came into operation, representing the final demise of the tricameral (racial) constitutional order and the apartheid order.\(^{117}\) The ANC gained 63 per cent of the vote and was allocated 252 seats out of 400 in the national parliament, followed by the NP with 82 seats and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) with 43 seats. In the Western Cape Province the NP obtained 23 seats out of 40 in the provincial parliament and the ANC 14.\(^{118}\)

In November 1995 municipal elections were held in all provinces except two: the Western Cape elections were instead held in May 1996 and in KwaZulu-Natal in June 1996. The delay in the Western Cape was mainly due to controversies about boundary demarcation in the Cape Metropolitan Area. The NP wanted to avoid having Cape Town and Tygerberg municipalities demarcated in a way that could lead to an ANC victory in the upcoming elections.\(^{119}\) In KwaZulu-Natal and Durban, similar disputes between

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\(^{116}\) Cameron (1986), pp. 60–61. One concrete example was the establishment of management committees, against which the Cape Town Council was opposed from the very beginning as it was against the principle of universal civic rights. However, since the management committees were centrally controlled, this was a way for the NP to better control the, in their view, far too liberal Cape Town through the Cape Provincial Administration (Atkinson 1991, pp. 275–276, and Cameron 1986, p. 60).


\(^{118}\) Independent Electoral Commission, Results for the 1994 elections.

\(^{119}\) Cameron (1999), p. 146.
the ANC and the IFP occurred.\textsuperscript{120} In the elections eligible voters could vote for councillors in the new Transitional Metropolitan Councils.\textsuperscript{121}

The municipal elections in 1995/96 saw the real introduction of national party politics at local level, although in some smaller towns and rural areas this was still not the case. The second municipal elections, held on 5 December 2000, were fought almost entirely on party political grounds and there were only a few independent candidates participating.\textsuperscript{122}

**Shifts of power and changing political alignments**

Table 4.1 shows the results of all provincial and local elections in Cape Town since the first democratic elections in 1994.

*Table 4.1. Percentage of votes for major parties in elections in Cape Town 1994–2006*\textsuperscript{123}

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP/NNP</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>ID</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parties: Democratic Alliance (DA), Democratic Party (DP), National Party/New National Party (NP/NNP), African National Congress (ANC), Independent Democrats (ID). (The grey boxes indicate that the party did not contest that election.)

In 2000, the NP and the Democratic Party (DP) formed the Democratic Alliance (DA). The coalition only lasted until 2001, however, due to severe disagreements as regards the Cape Town mayorship of Peter Marais, but also

\textsuperscript{120} Pillay (1999), p. 204.
\textsuperscript{121} Cameron (1999), p. 95.
\textsuperscript{122} Cameron (2003a), pp. 9, 18.
because of quite different ideologies between the NNP and the DP. In August 2004, the NNP decided to disband the party and most of its representatives joined the ANC. The Independent Democrats (ID) was formed in 2003 and quickly managed to gain a substantial share of the vote. The ANC shows the most stable pattern throughout the years and has managed to keep around 40 per cent of the vote even when other parties have been successful.

Seekings argues that the ANC’s relative gains during the period were mainly the result of demographic changes and not due to a successful recruitment from the opposition parties. It has been predicted that if the rate of immigration continues at its present pace, Cape Town will have a majority of black voters before or by 2012, thereby most likely securing a majority of ANC votes.

One explanation for the NP/NNP’s initial electoral successes was that the party managed to mobilise a substantial share of Cape Town’s coloured population. Given the relatively better status of this group under apartheid rule, many coloureds feared that the ANC would neglect their needs and prioritise the poorer black population if the ANC was to gain the elections. This fear was also heavily supported by the NP in the earlier election campaigns and has contributed to the polarisation of the two population groups.

Thus there is a strong correlation between race and voting patterns, with most black voters opting for the ANC and most white voters for the NNP and the DA. However, also class plays a part in explaining voting behaviour. Particularly the coloured voters of Cape Town have shown this to be the case, with working-class coloured voters choosing the NP in the 1990s, and middle-class voters mainly the ANC or other parties. In 2005, the pattern was more complex, with coloured voters in rich and poor households more likely to vote for the ANC than middle-income coloured households. According to Seekings, this might mirror the difficulty among poor coloured voters to choose party following the collapse of the NNP, as the DA in general does not attract poor voters.

Table 4.2 shows the changes of power in Cape Town in the period 1996–2007. Apart from regular elections, the frequent shifts of power are explained by specific institutional arrangements that have benefited the ANC in the first place.

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124 For a good description of the so-called ‘Street naming saga’ that eventually led to Peter Marais leaving the Mayorship, see Cameron (2003b).
125 Seekings (2005), p. 22.
128 After the 1996 elections the ANC won control over some important municipalities, including central Cape Town, thanks to ‘the legislative provision that former “black” areas received half of the wards in the new “interim” councils, even if they were home to a much smaller proportion of the electorate’ (Seekings 2005, p. 3).
Table 4.2. Party in power in Cape Town’s metropolitan council from 1996 to 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Party in power</th>
<th>Representation in council</th>
<th>Mayor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First local government elections, May 1996</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Second local government elections, December 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Floor-crossing, October 2002</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Floor-crossing, September 2004</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 2004–March 2006</td>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>ANC 106, DA 70, ACDP 6, NNP 5, ID 4, UDM 3, others 9</td>
<td>Nomaindia Mfeketo, ANC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third local government elections, March 2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2006–Sept. 2007</td>
<td>DA coalition</td>
<td>DA 90, ANC 81, ID 22, ACDP 7, AMP 3, UDM 2, others 5</td>
<td>Helen Zille, DA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Floor-crossing, September 2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2007–present</td>
<td>DA coalition</td>
<td>DA 95, ANC 81, ID 16, ACDP 7, AMP 2, UDM 1, others 8</td>
<td>Helen Zille, DA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{129}\) The NP was in the majority in six out of the seven councils during this period. The central substructure, the City of Cape Town, was governed by the ANC.
More recently the floor-crossing reform, in combination with the NNP’s weakening position, has resulted in the ANC being able to seize control even without winning an election. In October 2002, former NNP councillors left the DA and returned to the NNP, entering into an alliance with the ANC. In September 2004, a new period of floor-crossing took place in which a number of NNP councillors joined the ANC.130

As can be noted in Table 4.2, the ANC held the mayorship of the City of Cape Town for as long as eight years in the period between 1996 and 2006 (the first four years it was one of six municipalities under the Cape Metropolitan Council). In that sense one could claim that Cape Town politics has been characterised by stability rather than turbulence. However, when taking a closer look at the different councils we note, for example, the inauguration of five mayors during the whole period from 1996 to 2007 – and three mayors in the course of only two years: December 2000, November 2001 and October 2002.131

**Shifting elite allies**

Elite allies are actors with certain resources that, when used, may help social movements to gain increased influence by, for example, putting issues on the political agenda. In democratic nations typical elite allies are therefore politicians both within and outside government, government officials, business actors and journalists.

In Cape Town the most obvious elite allies for residents’ associations are ward councillors, local government officials in various positions, and the local media. The most powerful of the political actors is the Mayor of the City Council. Given the local government reforms that have occurred in the democratic period – most importantly the introduction of a Unicity in 2000 and an Executive Mayoral System in 2003 – the mayor’s political power has increased. Political elite allies may also be found at higher levels in the government system; for an actor operating at local government level it may be advantageous to liaise with actors at the provincial or national level.

The question whether certain actors may be considered allies or not is dependent on the agenda of the association(s) being studied. Elite allies may

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130 In April 2005, the Federal Council of the NNP voted to disband the party with 80 in favour and 2 against (‘New National Party vote to disband’, *Sapa*, 9 April 2005). It is perhaps the twist of fate that the former architects of apartheid have now joined the former liberation movement. In March 2004, I met with two NNP ward councillors (Samuels, 3 March and Beerwinkel, 5 March). While they probably knew what was coming, they made quite clear that although the ANC and the NNP were then in coalition, they were two distinct parties with different agendas. Six months later they both joined the ANC. With the local elections in March 2006, the NNP ceased to exist as a legal entity.

131 See Jolobe for an interesting account of Cape Town’s coalition politics 2000–2006 (Jolobe 2007), and Lodge for a description of the municipal elections in 2000, including the intense election campaigns carried out in Cape Town by the DA and the ANC (Lodge 2002, pp. 104–110, 117–118).
also change over time. As a consequence of this somewhat fluid and relative character of the dimension of elite allies, it is difficult to conclude that the factor of elite allies has changed in Cape Town. We can assume, however, that as elite allies often refer to political parties, potential allies have fluctuated with the shifts in power.

Cape Town’s changing political opportunity structure: summary
The aim of this chapter was to account for the most important changes in Cape Town’s political opportunity structure. As has been touched upon already, some of these changes have taken place in relation to the transition to democracy; the most obvious example is the abolition of apartheid legislation restricting civil society activity. Others have occurred in a democratic context, for example the increasing centralisation within the local government system. Table 4.3 presents a summary of the major changes identified.

In general, the institutional and legal structure has thus enabled civil society participation. This was particularly the case for associations that represent previously excluded segments of society. There are now democratic constitutional requirements to encourage community participation in local government matters, particularly in poorer areas, which gives residents’ associations a potentially influential position in decision-making. Sub-councils and ward committees were two formal structures with the purpose of enhancing public participation. Although legislation suggests that they may obtain delegated powers from the municipal council, their functions have been mainly advisory.

The local administrative system has seen a clear move towards centralisation. Instead of having a large number of separate administrations and authorities, Cape Town is now one single Unicity. In general, the NP/NNP and the DA have encouraged the delegation of powers to sub-structures within the local government system whereas the ANC has been against.

In the parliamentary arena the new electoral system at local government level has both proportional and non-proportional traits. Half of the councillors on the Cape Town City Council are elected as ward representatives and the other half as proportional councillors from the respective party lists. A proportional system (PR) is thought to increase the number of potential allies of the associations, whereas a first-past-the-post system (FPTP) reduces the number. The potential effect on associations’ possibilities to exercise real influence was however not clear. With the introduction of an Executive Mayoral System the position of the mayor has been strengthened, as it is the mayor who appoints the executive committee members in this system instead of, as in the Collective Executive System, the full council.
Table 4.3. Changes in Cape Town’s political opportunity structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political opportunity structure</th>
<th>Most important changes observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The institutional and legal structure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open or closed</td>
<td><em>More open and inclusive decision-making</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encouragement of public participation (White Paper on Local Government).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establishment of sub-councils and ward committees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal environment</td>
<td><em>More enabling towards civil society</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Abolition of apartheid legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Freedom of association (Bill of Rights).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Constitution encourages involvement of community associations in matters of local government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Non-profit Act 1997.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of centralisation</td>
<td><em>Increasing centralisation within the local government system</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Two-tier system in 1996 (seven councils).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Single-tier system in 2000 (Cape Town Unicity).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increased powers to the mayor, e.g. Mayoral Executive System introduced in 2003.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral system</td>
<td><em>Introduction of proportionality</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A mixed electoral system at the local government level (PR and FPTP).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Floor-crossing reform introduced 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The political power structure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political alignments</td>
<td><em>Frequent shifts of power</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Three elections and three periods of floor-crossing 1996–2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In the same period the Cape Town City Council has been governed by the NP, the DA, an ANC-NNP coalition, the ANC and a DA-coalition, and all together five mayors. (However, relatively stable ANC-rule 2002–2006.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence and absence of elite allies</td>
<td><em>Shifting elite allies</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Influential allies have fluctuated with the shifts of power.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The most prominent feature in the political power structure has been the frequent shifts in power in Cape Town. In other contexts a volatile political situation has been shown to create openings and opportunities for actors wishing to exercise influence. An unstable political environment has implications for some of the potential allies that residents’ associations may seek to approach. This is particularly the case when elite allies are found within the political system, as power relations are likely to change with each change of control. The supply of possible external allies, such as the media and the business sector, are most likely less affected by changes of control.

In the next chapter we start exploring how these changes have been perceived by the associations being studied.
5. The political opportunity structure of residents’ associations in Cape Town

This chapter has two major aims. Firstly, to provide a general picture of residents’ associations in Cape Town, and secondly to explore how residents’ associations in different areas of Cape Town perceive that the changes in the political opportunity structure, identified in the previous chapter, have affected their chances to influence decision-making. The chapter is divided in two parts where the first part starts with a brief description of Cape Town’s neighbourhood associations in a historical perspective. The focus here is on their function during the apartheid era. The second part concentrates on the democratic period to discuss in more detail what residents’ associations are, how they operate and who they represent. Based largely on information gathered through questionnaires in 1996 and 2004 (i.e. what I call the Civic Survey), focus is also on their perceptions of the changes that have taken place. The last section of the chapter presents the comparative case study of civil society–state relations in Langa and Rondebosch.

Civil society and residents’ associations in a historical perspective

Historically all population groups in South Africa have a tradition of organising in the civil society arena. The apartheid state systematically aimed at separating community welfare associations along race, meaning that each population group would have their own associations. This policy intensified in the 1960s and 1970s, and the government prohibited associations that would not amend their constitutions accordingly.1

Black and coloured civil society

In Cape Town the history of locally-based associations dates back to the late 19th century, and reflects the residential segregation of the city. In the 1880s African (black) notables formed location committees and vigilance associations to represent urban residents in some of the towns in the Cape Prov-

1 Camay and Gordon (2004), p. 38. The Fundraising Act of 1978, for example, was used to control associations that were considered opposed to the state by preventing them from raising funds from the public (ibid.).
ince. Typically associations in the townships were dealing with issues of ‘survival’, such as stokvels (savings clubs), burial clubs, church associations and sports clubs. The white state showed a dual attitude towards these black associations. While repressing oppositional organisations, it allowed those that were service-oriented, as long as they were apolitical, as a way of justifying that the black welfare was not part of the white state’s responsibility. The real growth of civic associations in black and coloured areas took place in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, following the shift in state policy when PW Botha became Prime Minister in 1979. Botha introduced reforms; ‘unnecessary race discrimination’ was to be removed, the strict enforcement of the Group Areas Act was relaxed and in 1986 the pass laws were abolished.

Botha’s reforms encouraged civic associations to mobilise, and protests were organised against increasing rents and bus fares, evictions, influx control, the housing shortage, inadequate township infrastructure and unaccountable township councillors. With the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983 – an umbrella body for 575 organisations – the protests intensified and were transformed into direct confrontation. Marches, demonstrations, transport, rent and consumer boycotts, and mass stayaways from work were part of the strategy to put pressure on the apartheid regime. There was, however, severe state repression during certain periods. In 1986, for example, around 20,000 people were detained under the state of emergency declared, mostly UDF members, and a number of criminal and political trials followed. Meetings were banned, and there were curfews, door-to-door searches and the occupation of townships by the security forces.

Following the deep divisions among civic groups in the Cape peninsula the UDF tried to act as a unifying force, but it was largely unsuccessful. This was partly the result of how civics were organised in the Western Cape – along ethnic/racial lines – which was not in accordance with the UDF’s principles of non-racialism. The inability to unify civic associations in the province was also due to the situation in the coloured areas. Although associations in these areas enjoyed high legitimacy in their constituencies, their growth was restrained due to greater heterogeneity in the coloured communities as compared to the black areas in terms of class, ideology and housing tenure (homeowners versus tenants). In 1990, a consultative civic conference was organised with the purpose of uniting civics in the province. However, the emerging plans to form a national civic association (what was to

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5 Houston (1999), pp. 180–183. See also Seekings (2000a) for an account of the history of the UDF.
7 Staniland (2005), p. 69.
become SANCO in 1992) prevented the initiative from succeeding with its plans.\(^8\)

In sum, most black and coloured civil society associations under apartheid had a relationship with the state that was characterised by varying degrees of conflict. In general, the civics enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy among their constituencies, and their function in the anti-apartheid struggle cannot be underestimated. However, the intense focus on one goal – the removal of the apartheid regime – held back the potentially heterogeneous organisation of black and coloured citizens in other aspects. South African political scientist Shireen Hassim, for example, argues that the anti-apartheid struggle had a homogenising effect both on civil society as such, and on its relationship with the state. The women’s movement, for instance, was inhibited from developing a political identity of its own.\(^9\)

Furthermore, the repression and security concerns that prevailed in the apartheid system meant a need for secrecy and subterfuge for politically active associations. As noted by Piroshaw Camay and Anne Gordon, this entailed that the leaders of civic associations ‘were not regularly called to account by the communities they purported to serve’. Several of the problems that are present today in many civic associations, for example ineffective governance structures and lack of internal and external accountability, can be explained by the way in which many of the anti-apartheid organisations were forced to operate in the struggle years.\(^10\)

**White civil society**

During the apartheid regime the racially exclusive white civil associations were mainly involved in service delivery, such as health, social services, education, culture and sport. According to Swilling and Russell, white civil society was characterised by a corporatist pact from 1910 (when the Union of South Africa was established) to the 1970s that was racially structured and restructured during this period. On one side were the British colonial power and the English-speaking settlers, and, on the other, armed Afrikaner social movements rooted in agrarian society. Following industrialisation and urbanisation, an Afrikaner working and middle class emerged that organised into community welfare associations to administer health and welfare benefits to white society.\(^11\) Tracy Kuperus acknowledges a tendency among white civil society associations at the time to monopolise certain functional or political spaces in society, which militated against the creation of a pluralistic and autonomous civil society.\(^12\)

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\(^8\) Maseko (1997), pp. 367–368.
\(^10\) Camay and Gordon (2004), pp. 41, 44, quotation from p. 44.
\(^12\) Kuperus (1999), p. 13.
Adam Habib describes white civil society during this period as a major political contest between pro-apartheid institutions and associations, and liberal-oriented organisations. In a comparative study including South Africa, Megan Meyer shows how the white associations that were involved in the anti-apartheid struggle operated on fundamentally different premises compared to their black counterparts. As they had access to political institutions, they were less inclined to turn to protest activities. Instead liberal white associations often focused on bridging work in order to increase contact between white and black South Africans, for example, by conducting independent research and by lobbying officials for change in the apartheid legislation.

The three main objectives of ratepayers’ associations in white areas used to be (1) to exert pressure for the allocation of resources to the ward; (2) to monitor the performance of municipal administrators, and (3) to participate in the electoral process by supporting electoral demands. In 1977, a report from the Cape Town City Council stated that the influence of ratepayers’ associations was not reflecting their actual membership base and that they were ‘accorded status far exceeding their strength’. Up to 1977, the Cape Town City Council had provided free copies of the Council agenda and permission to use municipal halls at nominal fees for any applicant association with 50 signed-up members ‘irrespective of race’. The 1977 report stated that 10 per cent of the registered white voters were members of ratepayers’ associations, and that the associations were not very representative of their wards. Following these results the City Council decided that only associations with at least 100 paying members would be recognised.

The notion that ratepayers’ associations were not representative of their ward is confirmed by the observation that the associations’ ‘official’ candidates often were defeated at municipal polls. Cameron’s tentative hypothesis is that generally ratepayers’ associations were dominated by conservative-oriented and older people. Most associations were close to the NP, and not to the liberal Progressive Federal Party (PFP) that used to win a great majority of Cape Town’s council seats. Cameron points to an interesting paradox concerning ratepayers’ associations. He concludes that:

despite their unrepresentativeness and other shortcomings, ratepayers’ associations have often had some type of influence on policy. They are often consulted on specific issues concerning their ward. Similarly, when following up appeals, the CPA [Cape Provincial Administration] also consults them. The fact that they are the only real forum where ratepayers’ demands are articulated ensures that they cannot be ignored. Often their demands are translated

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16 Ibid., p. 74, quotation also from p. 74.
17 Ibid., pp. 75–76.
into major action. [...] For the same reasons, councillors must keep a way
eye on their ratepayers’ associations even if they often regard them as a small
but vociferous minority. Their monitoring of the performance of ward coun-
cillors ensures that councillors must articulate some of the demands of rate-
payers’ associations, otherwise the latter can make things very awkward for
them come the next election. Ratepayers’ associations are also found useful
by the CPA in their virtual vendetta against the CCC [Cape Town City Coun-
cil].18

We thus note that the homogenising effect that the apartheid framework had
on black and coloured civil society was also the case for white civil society.
Although white associations operated within quite different structures com-
pared to black and coloured associations, they were also restricted by apart-
theid legislation. This was most noticeable for the liberal organisations that
were part of the anti-apartheid movement. Still they had fundamentally dif-
ferent opportunities to influence policy- and decision-making from within
the system as compared to their black and coloured sister organisations. A
majority of white associations were, however, neither progressive nor in-
volved in the anti-apartheid struggle. From their perspective, the transition to
democracy and most noticeably the ANC’s strong position were most likely
considered major threats to their privileged position.

**Concluding remarks**

In conclusion, it can thus be noted that the apartheid policy of racial segrega-
tion and administrative division created separate and internally uniform civil
society spheres in which associations operated within an overall repressive
environment. There were few arenas, if any, where civil society associations
from different population groups interacted. The first real experiences of
operating within the same institutional structures came with the transitional
arrangements of the democratisation of local government. This was also the
first time that black civics participated in the formal institutional system
through the new transitional councils that were set up prior to the first de-
mocratic local government elections.

When the first elections were held in 1995/96, residents’ associations had
to make room for elected political representatives. The shift from an ‘intra-
institutional’ (albeit under a very short period) to an ‘extra-institutional’
position has been interpreted as the marginalisation of civic organisations.
However, according to Janet Cherry et al., the so-called crisis of civic activ-
ism was rather ‘a crisis of adjustment, as civic activists redefine their roles in
the new institutional context and accept that their roles will be more limited
than in specific extraordinary periods in the past’.19 Nevertheless many asso-
ciations, and particularly SANCO, have experienced a difficult time finding

18 Ibid., p. 77. The Cape Provincial Administration used to be dominated by the NP.
the appropriate balance – ally or watchdog – in the interaction with the national and local state.\textsuperscript{20}

At the dawn of a new democratic local government, residents’ associations were thus in the process of adjusting to the new structures. How have they perceived that the changing institutional and political context has affected their possibilities to influence decision-making? This question will be analysed in the remaining parts of this chapter.

Residents’ associations in democratic Cape Town

In a study from 1996/97, Seekings estimated that there were around 300 residents’ associations in metropolitan Cape Town. Around 200 of these were located in residential areas that used to be classified as coloured or white, and the other 100 in African (black) townships and shack settlements.\textsuperscript{21} The overall figure remains more or less the same in 2006, according to the information provided by the City of Cape Town.\textsuperscript{22} As a background to the analysis of the Civic Survey, some results from the Cape Area Study 2005 (hereafter referred to as CAS 2005) will be presented with the focus on the extent to which residents of Cape Town participate in community associations.\textsuperscript{23}

Civic engagement in Cape Town

In the CAS 2005, the phenomenon of drunks, vagrants or beggars in the neighbourhood, and homes or cars being broken into were singled out as being the most common problems in the residential areas. Around 60 per cent of the respondents claimed that these problems often or sometimes occurred in the neighbourhood. From the perspective of this thesis, it is interesting to note that when people were asked what groups of people help to keep the neighbourhood safe, the alternative ‘people from your neighbourhood or a community/residents’ association’ was mentioned by almost 30 per cent of the respondents, with only the police getting more answers (57 per cent). This indicates that residents’ associations are important neighbourhood actors.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{20} Zuern (2006), p. 185 ff.
\textsuperscript{21} Seekings (1998), p. 3. The distribution between different areas seems to have changed a bit though, see details under the section ‘Civic Survey’ in Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{22} City of Cape Town, Civic organizations database, February 2006.
\textsuperscript{23} The section below draws on data from the Cape Area Study 2005 (CAS 2005). For details, see Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{24} Another example supporting this claim comes from the \textit{The Southern Suburbs Tattler} (the community paper covering the affluent southern suburbs of Cape Town) reporting that ‘the lack of legislation is making it difficult for civic associations and councillors to effectively deal with the problem of vagrancy in their area’ (‘Civics battle vagrant issue. Lack of legislation keeps homeless on the streets’, \textit{The Southern Suburbs Tattler}, 4 November 2004).
The percentage of the respondents who said they participated in a community-based group was 13 per cent. Around 55 per cent of those participating were active members, and 20 per cent took part in activities without being members. Some 10 per cent of Cape Town’s population was thus taking part in activities organised by community-based organisations, out of which 6 per cent were also members. The figure may seem low, especially when compared to the almost 63 per cent who stated that they participated in a religious organisation, out of which 63 per cent were active members (i.e. 40 per cent of all Capetonians). However, people were more likely to participate in a community-based organisation than in a political party (11 per cent of the total population) or in a charity or volunteer organisation (9 per cent). Participation in trade unions scored as low as under 4 per cent.

In a study of associational engagement in Sweden, often highlighted as one of the most organised countries in the world, 23 per cent said that they were members of a residents’ association. Out of these 15 per cent were board members and 8 per cent were active in other ways. Only around 5 per cent of the respondents were thus active members of a Swedish residents’ association. Like in Cape Town residents may well, however, participate in activities organised by the association without being members. It should also be noted that in a comparative perspective the share of South Africans involved in the non-profit workforce is larger than the average.

Even though information from the Cape Town Council indicated that almost every ward had at least one, and often several, civic and ratepayers’ associations, the knowledge of these associations among residents in the wards was quite low. In the CAS survey 31 per cent of the total population said that they knew there was such an association in their area whereas 49 per cent said there was not. The remaining 19 per cent did not know.

Two thirds of those who knew of a residents’ association were satisfied with its performance. Among black respondents the contentment with the performance of residents’ associations was as high as 75 per cent, followed by almost 69 per cent in the white group and nearly 65 per cent in the coloured group. Women in all population groups were slightly more satisfied with the performance of the organisations. A similar pattern could be noted.

25 CAS 2005. Similar results were registered in the Cape Area Study 2003, where it was commented that ‘outside of religious life, most respondents are quite inactive in terms of associational membership’ (Centre for Social Science Research 2003, p. 21).
26 Bengtsson (2004), p. 349. In CAS 2005, as much as a third (32 per cent) of the respondents said that they had attended a community meeting in the past year (CAS 2005).
27 In a 1999 survey, including 28 countries, South Africa had a larger share of the formal non-agricultural workforce involved in the non-profit workforce (including paid and volunteer workers); 7.9 per cent as compared to the average of 6.7 per cent. When it comes to the percentage of volunteers only in the non-profit workforce, South Africa comes sixth with 47 per cent. The countries with higher shares were (in order) Sweden, Norway, Romania, Finland and France. The average for all 28 countries was 35 per cent (Swilling and Russell 2002, pp. 17–18).
when referring to even more local associations, such as street committees and so-called neighbourhood watches. As regards neighbourhood watches – local community initiatives, most often in predominantly white areas, aimed at preventing crime – the satisfaction with their performance was as high as 86 per cent among white respondents.\textsuperscript{28}

When it comes to citizens’ knowledge of and contact with their elected ward representative, CAS 2005 showed that around 30 per cent of the respondents could name their local ward councillor.\textsuperscript{29} Taking a closer look at the three areas highlighted in this study – Langa, Rondebosch and Hout Bay – reveals an interesting difference. In Langa, 19 persons living in the Joe Slovo informal settlement answered the CAS survey. Out of these, 17 could give the correct name of their ward councillor (Xolise Gophe). In Rondebosch 15 residents answered, out of which five could name their ward councillor (Owen Kinahan). Finally, in Hout Bay, all the 14 respondents lived in Imizamo Yethu and only one of them could correctly name their ward councillor (Pieter Venter).\textsuperscript{30} Although we are not able to draw any strong conclusions from these results, we note that the Joe Slovo residents differed substantially from most other citizens of Cape Town in that their ward councillor was a well-known person in the neighbourhood.\textsuperscript{31}

Having presented some individual-level data on civil society participation, we now turn to the main focus of this thesis, residents’ associations. As discussed in Chapter 3, the material from our surveys has some important shortcomings. The answers should therefore be taken for what they are, namely responses from individual associations on their organisational structures, objectives and relations with local government, among other things. Interpreted in this way they complement the other empirical results presented in this thesis.

\textbf{Residents’ associations in Cape Town}

As associations were geographically based, the racial residential segregation that continues to characterise Cape Town is strongly reflected in their membership base.\textsuperscript{32} Consequently, a vast majority of associations had members who were racially homogeneous. Out of the 56 associations included in the 1996 and 2004 surveys, 29 were located in predominantly white areas, 13 in predominantly coloured areas and only one in a predominantly black area.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} CAS 2005.
\item \textsuperscript{29} This figure is considerably higher than the 14 per cent of all South Africans who knew the name of their councillor (Bratton and Sibanyoni 2006, p. 12).
\item \textsuperscript{30} Interestingly, two respondents in Imizamo Yethu referred to their ward councillor as ‘Whitey’, and two others mentioned the name of a SANCO leader.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Of course we do not know whether this relationship was considered to be fruitful or not.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Although Cape Town has experienced some desegregation in terms of the number of so-called heterogeneous residential areas (defined as areas where none of the population groups reach more than 60 per cent), it still remains highly segregated with different population groups residing in different areas (Haferburg 2003, p. 73).
\end{itemize}
There were 6 associations in areas that can be categorised as mixed, and for the remaining, the racial composition of the members is not known (see Appendix 1 for details).

The oldest association was founded in 1890 and the youngest in early 2000. The real growth of civic associations in black areas took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the early 1990s many associations joined SANCO, the national umbrella body established in 1992. In Cape Town its greatest support can be found in predominantly black areas; it is estimated that two-thirds of SANCO’s branches are located in these areas, with the remaining one-third in predominantly coloured areas. Initially SANCO was concentrated in the formal black townships, particularly Gugulethu and Nyanga, but later branches were established also in informal settlements.33

The average number of members is difficult to estimate due to the low response rate. Other studies reveal that SANCO branches have from 25 members up to ‘more than a thousand’.34 In the questionnaires some associations in predominantly white and coloured areas reported to have 20–30 members, whereas others said that they had a membership of more than 2,000 families. The average for all associations that answered the questionnaire was around 400 members.

Almost all associations claimed to have an overall support in the area, although many admitted that active members were not many. Among active members there was an over-representation of middle-aged and elderly residents.35

The gender distribution among members was subject to some speculation. The question was not asked in the 1996 questionnaire, and in 2004 only eight associations answered. In most of these associations the share of women and men was about equal. Two of the older associations, founded in 1964 and 1974 respectively, stood out as different, with men representing 90 and 80 per cent of their members respectively. In SANCO, women and men participate at local levels, with women often forming the core, but above the branch level, men dominate the organisation.36

The organisational structures varied between associations. There was normally a chairperson, a vice-chair and a secretary. Some associations had

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33 The first SANCO branch in a formerly white group area was opened in Seapoint in 1996. ‘Progressive’ civics in formerly white areas, such as Observatory and Rondebosch, did not join SANCO (Seekings 1998, p. 4).
34 Lodge (2001), pp. 10–11. In 1997, the medium-sized township branch of SANCO Gugulethu Section 4 claimed to have 261 paid-up members (Seekings 1998, pp. 10–11). In 2002, SANCO said that it had 4,300 branches in fifty-six regions and over six million members (SANCO 2002). These figures have not been confirmed though.
35 To some extent, the over-representation of middle-aged and elderly reflects the fact that in many affluent areas the property owners are rather old. They may also have more spare time to become involved in neighbourhood affairs than, for example, families with young children.
36 Zuern (2004), p. 2. This is the situation also in the new social movements that have emerged since 1994; women make up at least fifty per cent of the activists but are marginalised in terms of leadership positions (Hassim 2004, p. 16).
an extensive committee system with portfolios for a number of sectors, such as housing, environment, youth, sports and recreations, arts and culture, senior citizens, the disabled, etc. These types of structures were more common in civic associations in predominantly black and coloured areas. The people responsible for portfolios constituted the Executive Committee. A typical civic association has a committee of between seven and fifteen people, elected at annual general meetings by its members.\(^{37}\) In ratepayers’ associations, structure is normally less developed, and typically includes a chairperson, a vice-chair, a secretary, a treasurer, an auditor and an executive committee. However, there were also associations in predominantly white areas that had portfolios, for example, for police, environment, heritage, marketing, the constitution and traffic.\(^{38}\)

In terms of financial resources, civic associations in predominantly black and coloured areas were relatively well off until the mid-1990s. They could normally rely on foreign donors and membership fees. But when South Africa democratised and the ANC took office in 1994, donor funds were channelled through the national government instead of directly to the civics. For this reason, and because of maladministration in certain associations, for example, SANCO, funding quickly decreased.\(^{39}\) Not all associations in coloured and black areas have membership fees, but SANCO’s annual subscription amount was R10 in 2007. Members without regular income could pay a reduced fee.\(^{40}\)

In predominantly white areas the main source of income was also membership fees according to the survey answers. Donations were quite common, typically by members helping with photocopying and printing. Among the associations that answered the questionnaires in 1996, the lowest yearly income was R100 and the highest R30,000, with an average around R1,500 per year. In 2004, the wealthiest association reported an annual income of R35,000 (350 members paying R100 per year), and the poorest R250 (46 members paying R5 per year), the average being around R12,000. Very few associations have employed staff, which means that they are all dependent on voluntary work.\(^{41}\)

**Objectives and activities of residents’ associations**

According to their constitutions, one of the main aims of the associations is to promote and safeguard the interests of the community of the area, includ-


\(^{38}\) Civic Surveys 1996 and 2004.

\(^{39}\) Seekings (1998), p. 11.


\(^{41}\) Civic Surveys 1996 and 2004.
ing the supervision of effective delivery of municipal services.\footnote{For example, in constitutions and information leaflets from residents’ associations in Rondebosch and Rosebank (Rondebosch, Rosebank Ratepayers’ & Business Association, and Rondebosch Civic Association), Observatory (Obs Civic Association), Hout Bay (Hout Bay Civic Association and Sinethemba Civic Association), City Bowl (City Bowl Ratepayers’ & Residents’ Association), and SANCO.} This is irrespective of whether the association operates in a disadvantaged or an affluent area. Most residents’ associations in the 2004 survey had not changed their main objectives since they were founded.

A large number of the residents’ associations stressed that they were apolitical. In SANCO’s constitution this was not spelt out clearly, but it says that ‘membership is open to all residents irrespective of race, sex, political affiliation, class and geographical location’.\footnote{SANCO Constitution (2001).} Associations in predominantly white areas were even clearer as regards their non-involvement in party politics. One association said it did not ‘have a clue of their members’ party political affiliation’. Another wrote: ‘The associations’ constitution forbids party politics. Each individual may favour whatever party they prefer. The association is APOLITICAL’.\footnote{Civic Survey 1996. Capital letters in original.} A third association in a predominantly white area explicitly stated in its constitution that the ‘elected or co-opted management shall avoid becoming embroiled in party political disputes’.\footnote{Civic Survey 2004.}

In both surveys associations were asked what their main activities had been in the last year. Among the answers were representing the community by participation in different municipal forums, such as community police forums, and participating in ad hoc meetings called by the council, i.e. conventional forms of political activities. Many associations followed and commented on new developments in the area, for example, when planning documents were out for public scrutiny. Some also participated in, or organised, social events, such as fairs and cultural events in the neighbourhood.

Another question concerned whether the main activities of the associations had changed since its foundation. In the 1996 questionnaire around 10 out of 40 associations claimed that activities had changed, (three in predominantly coloured areas and five in predominantly white).\footnote{The other two were based in areas with an unknown demography.} A common view among these associations was that they were now more involved in wider local government issues. In affluent areas this perception seemed to be linked to an increased public commitment. As expressed in 1996 by one association based in an affluent area:

Initially the major issues surrounded garbage removals, aesthetic issues such as grass verge cutting, road signs etc. This altered from 1990 when [name left out to avoid identification] squatters became an emotional issue. This led to seeking constructive housing solutions. With the advent of democracy in
1994 the association became more involved with local government restructuring and more mainstream politically involved. As transparency took root more issues needed community participation and approval. Hence [there is now in 1996] wider involvement.47

One of the three coloured associations in the 1996 survey argued that there was indeed a fundamental difference in activities, closely related to the transition from apartheid to democracy:

The organisation is now officially part of local government representation as its candidate won the ward seat. The organisation previously boycotted the local management committee.48

This quote clearly demonstrates how conventional politics has come to replace protest politics for associations previously excluded from democratic local government.

In the 2004 questionnaire, 5 associations out of 18 explicitly stated that their main activities had changed since the association was founded. Two associations based in coloured areas said that their activities had become more focused on community needs, such as job creation, service delivery by local authorities and urban renewal. One association in a white area mentioned that its activities now covered wider concerns and that it had a more professional approach. Another association said that its activities had become more focused on security concerns. The only association based in a black area answering, claimed that its activities had gone from covering more general issues to dealing with individual problems.49

Thus, only a minority of associations included in the surveys (15 of 56) claimed that activities had changed since they were founded. The responses would, most certainly, have been different if more representatives of associations based in predominantly black and coloured areas had been included in the surveys.

**Goal fulfilment and government contacts**

In the 2004 survey, associations were asked to give examples of instances in which they had successfully influenced decision-making. A common reply, particularly among associations in white areas, was that they had stopped or influenced building plans, or limited commercial events, such as trading, in the area.

A related question concerned if associations perceived that it had become easier or more difficult to achieve their objectives in the last ten years. (This question was also asked in my interviews in Langa, Rondebosch and Hout

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47 Civic Survey 1996 (Association not based in Hout Bay).
48 Ibid.
Bay carried out in 2004 and 2006.) Many associations in predominantly white areas claimed that it had become more difficult, or even much more difficult, to achieve their objectives. A common belief was that the city was ruled ‘by a council hostile to leafy suburbs’. Associations argued that municipal services had deteriorated and that it had become more difficult to get hold of the officials responsible.50

Some associations linked their deteriorated and more remote relationship with officials to the creation of the Unicity. One association in an affluent area expressed it in the following terms:

What has and is changing is that we now fall under the Unicity, so access to officials and service delivery standards are dropping. Call centres are impossibly impersonal as is the concept “Unicity”. The geography of Cape Town with mountains, sea, railway lines and an impossibly inadequate road system did nothing to deter the City council from centralising services. For example (...) many of the “new” civil servants have never visited our area ever and have no idea of our needs or problems51

Other associations argued that there had not really been a change in this regard; it was equally difficult or easy to fulfil the objectives of the association as compared to ten years ago.52 One association in a predominantly coloured area wrote that ‘the more things change, the more they remain the same’. In the answers to the questionnaire, only one association explicitly said that it had become easier to fulfil its objectives. We will return to this association in the discussion below.

Most associations were recognised by the City Council as the ‘official’ representative body in the ward. This meant, among other things, that they were to be consulted on municipal matters and might be invited to comment on or contribute to the drafting of council policies that concern the area.53 A question in the questionnaire concerned whether associations perceived that they had access to their local government representatives (politicians and officials). In the 2004 questionnaire most associations (14 out of 18) claimed that they had both formal and informal access to their representatives. Many mentioned a very good relationship with their ward councillor. He or she often attended meetings held by the associations, and some associations par-

50 Expressed by ten associations in the Civic Survey 2004.
52 Four associations in the Civic Survey 2004.
53 See, for example, the information leaflet from City Bowl Ratepayers’ and Residents’ Association. The membership list of the ward committees (2004–2006) indicated that several wards had competing associations that could not reach a consensus as regards which association would represent the community in the ward committee. Although most ward committees had one association representing the civic/ratepayers’ sector, there were ward committees that had two and even up to five representatives of the sector. Since the number of committee representatives could not exceed ten, committees that had more than one civic/ratepayers’ representative excluded other sectors (City of Cape Town 2005f).
participated in sub-council meetings.54 (Ward committees were only in the process of being established by the time the questionnaires were sent out.)

The ward councillors were said to be easy to get hold of by phone (in one association the ward councillor was actually the chairperson). Many associations noted that the city officials were easily accessible, and that they had a good relationship with them. However, although most associations claimed that they had access to local government, a majority seemed to question the possibility of influencing through these channels. ‘It’s not worth anything’, said one of the associations. ‘The local councillors are well disposed but often powerless’, said another.

One association was of another opinion. It liaised with its local ward councillor like all the other associations, but the difference was that the councillor was the deputy mayor at the time (until March 2006, Gawa Samuels). The association believed that the possibilities of influencing were greater compared to ten years ago, with local government representatives being more co-operative today.55 This was also the only association that explicitly stated that it had become easier to fulfil its objectives, thus pointing to the importance attributed to having influential elite allies in order to be able to influence decision-making.

As regards more formal access to the local government, e.g. through sub-councils, these were not deemed particularly useful for exercising influence or putting issues on the council agenda, and associations preferred direct contact with their ward councillor instead.56 These results contradict the council’s expectations of the sub-councils as important arenas in which the public can raise issues of concern.57

**Concluding summary**

What conclusions can be drawn as regards residents’ associations in Cape Town and their perceptions of the changing political context? The analysis of the surveys presents a quite varied picture. Most associations based in white affluent areas that answered the questionnaire in 2004 claimed that it

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54 In some interviews with associations in Rondebosch and Langa in 2006, it was noticed that still after the introduction of ward committees it was not uncommon that the ward councillor attended meetings organised by the residents’ associations. Some associations preferred this procedure since it gave them a better opportunity to put forward their demands, instead of competing with nine other sector representatives during the ward committee meetings (Expressed, for example, by Sutherland in an interview, 18 April 2006).


56 One reason that was mentioned in the interviews explaining the low rate of public participation in the sub-councils was that the meetings were held during office hours when many people were at work (Interviews with Mxolose, 18 October 2004, and Gray, 20 October 2004). Considering the high unemployment rate in South Africa and Cape Town, and the seemingly high age of those most active in white associations, the fact that sub-council meetings were held during office hours could only be part of the explanation.

57 See, for example, decision taken by the Executive Committee as regards recommendations to encourage public participation in sub-councils (City of Cape Town 2001b).
had become more difficult to fulfil its objectives as compared to ten years ago. In many cases they attributed the reduced possibilities to a more centralised government system.

Party political reasons were also put forward, not always spelt out clearly though, implying that the council (which was ANC-led by the time of the questionnaire) neglected the needs of more affluent suburbs. The civic associations’ open support for the ANC hardly needs further explanation. The strong links that developed during the anti-apartheid struggle are present, to a great extent, also today. Residents’ associations in formerly white areas of Cape Town have a totally different frame of reference. Until the local government elections in 2000, party politics had not been part of white municipal politics, at least not in theory. Local elections used to be a battle between independent candidates, where ratepayers’ associations supported a particular candidate in their ward. To select suitable candidates for nomination and to secure their election to the Municipal Council was often one of the main objectives of ratepayers’ associations.58

Almost all associations were satisfied with the relationship with their local ward councillor. Councillors were said to show an interest in the associations, for example, by participating in their meetings. There were, however, many associations that questioned the benefits of this good relationship in terms of concrete outcomes. In short, associations were satisfied with their access to local government, both to politicians and civil servants, but less so when they reflected upon their possibilities to influence decision-making.

A majority of associations had not changed their main activities since they were founded. They continued to use a combination of formal and informal means to influence decision-making and agenda-setting. Commenting on development plans by writing letters was an example of the former, whereas direct contacts with ward councillors via phone or personal meetings were common forms of informal politics. Hence, the practices of associations had not changed to a large extent, but the assessment of their possibilities to influence had. Associations that did report a change in activities saw a trend towards wider community concerns. This was the case both in predominantly white and coloured areas. We must, however, remember that only one association in a black area was part of the survey, so the picture is incomplete.

All research techniques have their benefits and limitations. One of the limitations with questionnaires, even when they include open-ended questions as in our case, is that one cannot ask respondents to clarify their answers or expand on a certain theme or issue. The most serious shortcoming

58 Cameron (1986), p. 74, and Constitution of the Milnerton Ratepayers’ Association. One of the associations in the 1996 survey noted, for example, that the associations’ main activities in 1995 concerned preparation for the local government elections.
in this survey is, however, the low response rate, in particular the lack of responses from associations in predominantly black areas.

One aim of the last part of this chapter, the comparative case study of associations in Langa and Rondebosch, is to give a more complete account of how residents’ associations perceive that the political changes at local government level have affected their chances of influencing decision-making. Apart from interviews with the associations, actors who interact with these associations in one way or another have also been interviewed. By including local politicians (ward councillors) and civil servants, it is hoped that civil society–state relations in post-apartheid Cape Town are further disentangled. The two areas, Langa and Rondebosch, are thought to be fairly typical of black and white areas respectively, which would include different perspectives on civil society–state relations.

The case of Langa

Langa was established in 1927 as a result of the 1923 Urban Areas Act. It is the oldest township in Cape Town (and South Africa’s oldest planned township). It is located close to the city centre, less than 20 kilometres away. The overwhelming majority, more than 99 per cent, of the population of around 50,000 is black. The design of Langa was made in accordance with apartheid strategies to ensure surveillance of black people, which meant ‘wide streets, floodlights, and a police station situated at its only entry point to monitor and control residents’. Historically dormitory-style hostels intended to accommodate male labour from the former Transkei and Ciskei homelands dominated housing in Langa. Overcrowded, they offered very poor living conditions. In March 1960, one of the more famous marches against the pass laws was held in Langa.

Today the quality of housing in Langa varies on a scale from formal houses with piped water, electricity and gardens, to shacks made of wood, corrugated sheeting and plastic. This reflects the informal division of Langa into one more established area, and one informal settlement named Joe Slovo. Due to its central location, Langa attracts many people moving into Cape Town in search of work which results in increased overcrowding.

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60 The City of Cape Town provides statistics per ward based on the 2001 census data supplied by Statistics South Africa. The population density in Langa 1996 was almost 13,000 per km², which can be compared to Rondebosch’s 2,000 (City of Cape Town [undated], Suburb profiles: 1996 Census). The per capita monthly income was 492 Rand in 1996, as compared to Rondebosch’s 3,077 Rand (CMC Administration [undated], Socioeconomic characteristics of suburbs: 1996 Census).
61 Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (2005b).
62 Ibid.
crime and violence, and poor health and living standards particularly in the Joe Slovo settlement.63

SANCO
Langa has a number of community associations aimed at various segments of the population. In the ward committees there were, for example, representatives from women’s, youth and sports’ associations. SANCO is, however, the only official civic association, and as such it was represented in each of the three ward committees.64 The development of SANCO in Langa is quite typical of the way in which many of black South African civic movements have developed in the last 15 years. In the 1980s, boycotts were organised as a way of trying to influence the government. In 1992, when SANCO was formed, the four major civic associations of Langa joined and merged into SANCO.65 According to Seekings, the disunity and fragmentation of civics in the Western Cape in general, and in Cape Town in particular, could also be traced in Langa back to at least the late 1990s.66 In Langa, SANCO is not considered particularly strong in terms of membership base and administrative capacity.67

SANCO’s executive committee in Langa consists of 15 members, including the housing, safety and security, and health portfolios. It has not been possible to obtain information about the number of paid-up members. Townships are normally organised according to street committees; in Langa there are 52 such committees. They meet weekly and then report back to SANCO, which in turn also has weekly meetings. Street committees typically deal with a range of everyday problems, such as neighbours playing music too loud, cars driving too fast in the street and even family matters, such as a young person in a family not obeying their parents.68 For SANCO the major concern of its members in Langa was housing, and related problems, for example, ownership disputes when new houses are being built.69

63 Ibid.
64 City of Cape Town (2005f).
65 Interview with Gugushe, 16 October 2004.
66 Apart from SANCO, there was a Committee of Ten and a Langa Civic Association (Seekings 1998, p. 6). It is unknown to the author whether they still exist, but in interviews in 2004 and 2006 I was informed that there are no other residents’ associations in Langa apart from SANCO (Interview with Gugushe, 16 October 2004 and 20 April 2006).
67 Seekings (1998), and Sewell (2005).
69 Interview with Gugushe, 16 October 2004. As noticed, for example, in the so-called N2 Gateway Project (a housing project aiming at building 22,000 units within the next couple of years). See, for example, ‘Langa outrage about Gateway integration’, Cape Argus, 23 June 2006; ‘Protest mars handing over of Gateway units’, Cape Argus, 18 July 2006, and ‘N2 Gateway situation “very tense”’, Cape Times, 14 August 2006.
Relations between SANCO, local government and politicians

Langa is divided into three wards, and a democratically elected ward councillor represents each ward. Two of the wards (51 and 52) are situated in Langa only, and consequently have ANC ward councillors, as the majority in Langa votes for the ANC; in the 2006 local government elections the ANC received around 90 per cent of the vote. The third ward (53) includes one part of Langa (Ndabeni, approximately 25 per cent of the population in the ward), but the majority of the ward is made up of Maitland Garden Village, Pinelands and Thornton. Ward 53 was represented by a DA ward councillor who received 64 per cent of the vote in the 2006 local elections.

In Langa, the vice-chair of SANCO, Monde Gugushe, described a collegiate relationship with the ANC with roots in the common history of the liberation movement. For example, the then Mayor of Cape Town Nomaindia Mfeketo used to be a member of the Executive Committee of SANCO at the provincial level. When most of the interviews were carried out in late 2004, the ANC controlled the Cape Town City Council and had done so since 2002 (during the period from October 2002 to September 2004 in alliance with the NNP). According to Gugushe this had increased SANCO’s possibilities of influencing decision-making. SANCO’s feeling of having allies in the City Council was expressed like this:

Now it’s easy. Because if people [within SANCO] talk to people in the Civic centre [that they already know] (...) you can have everything you need (...) I can make appointment to go see Mayor tomorrow.

It was difficult to confirm to what extent SANCO’s perceptions of the open access to Mayor Mfeketo were accurate. It was also problematical to establish if the contacts with the mayor actually led to concrete benefits for SANCO and its members, for example, in terms of improved infrastructure or services in Langa.

According to William Mxolose, one of Langa’s ward councillors in 2004, the general situation in Langa had improved following the party political change. The councillor claimed that it was only with the ANC in power that the City Council had started to prioritise the poorer areas and outline strategies that aimed at addressing the needs of the black townships. Mxolose asserted that the fact that the Western Cape was governed first by the NNP and then the DA, had delayed service delivery in poorer areas. In words bearing witness to the ANC’s background as a liberation movement, Councillor Mxolose also said that ‘Cape Town nationally is regarded as one of the

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70 Independent Electoral Commission, Local Government Elections 2006 Reports.
71 These are more affluent areas inhabited by white and coloured residents (50 and 22 per cent respectively) (City of Cape Town 2001a).
72 Independent Electoral Commission, Local Government Elections 2006 Reports.
73 Interview with Gugushe, 16 October 2004.
last provinces (...) to be liberated (...) because of the results of the elections.\textsuperscript{74} The perceptions of the ward councillor and the vice-chair of SANCO point to the importance attached to having the ANC in control of the council in order to improve living conditions.\textsuperscript{75} Leaving concrete outcomes aside, the interesting results for this thesis are that SANCO perceived that its possibilities of influencing decision-making had increased with the ANC in control.

In Langa, the co-operation between SANCO and the ANC was described as close and frequent. The ward councillor was seen as the link between the community and the City Council, and was mainly approached concerning local government issues. The ward councillors normally attended SANCO’s meetings. Ward Councillor Mxolose described SANCO and the ANC as being ‘partners in development’ where SANCO represented ‘the people on the ground who understands, and who knows the needs of the [community], who communicates the needs to local government’. According to Mxolose, the major reason for this good relationship was that the ANC councillors and SANCO shared the same background. ‘It is easy to work if you’re coming from the liberation movement’.\textsuperscript{76}

One concrete example of the close relationship between the ANC and SANCO was that the latter participated in the nomination process for councillors. Furthermore, Ward Councillor Mxolose was part of the committee that established SANCO in Langa. SANCO in turn was allowed to use some of the ANC’s offices in Langa for holding meetings.\textsuperscript{77}

SANCO perceived the relationship with the DA councillor in the third Langa ward as more problematic. Vice-Chair Gugushe claimed that Ward Councillor Brian Watkyns was rarely seen in the ward.\textsuperscript{78} This view was, however, not supported by the ward councillor himself (perhaps not surprisingly), and neither by the City of Cape Town administration, nor by ANC Councillor Mxolose.\textsuperscript{79} On the contrary, it seemed as if Watkyns saw the need to be even more involved in Langa, as he was aware of the difficulties in becoming accepted by this community.

One particular illustration supporting Watkyns’ claims was when representatives of the new ward committee were to be nominated at a meeting in

\textsuperscript{74} Interview with Mxolose, 18 October 2004.
\textsuperscript{75} In the study by Louw on the culture of non-payment, this view was common among the interviewees. The interviews were carried out while the Cape Town Unicity was governed by the DA (2000–2002). As expressed by one township resident: ‘[T]hat man who is controlling on the top, at the Unicity, he is a white man, it makes a difference for what we get. Our councillor is ANC, there’s no ANC in the Unicity. The whities know what’s going on but they don’t care. It’s still apartheid here!’ (quoted in Louw 2003, p. 163).
\textsuperscript{76} Interview with Mxolose, 18 October 2004.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Interview with Gugushe, 16 October 2004.
October 2004. In the category ‘NGO’ there was no representation, and Watkyns put SANCO there which meant that the association was automatically represented, instead of competing with four other major residents’ associations in the category of ‘civic associations’. Watkyns argued that this was a deliberate strategy as he feared that Langa would not be represented at all in the committee because of its minority status in the ward.80

According to the sub-council area co-ordinator responsible for Langa, Mariette de Reuck, the party politicisation of local government affairs has increased. She claimed that this had hampered service delivery as party political struggles within the council were delaying implementation. Still she was convinced that the ward committees, although being party political, were useful mechanisms to encourage interaction between citizens, politicians and the City Council.81

In April 2006, when the ward committees had been operating for a little longer than one year, the overall impression among local government actors was that relations had improved between the various stakeholders in the Langa wards. This was expressed by both DA and ANC councillors, SANCO and the sub-council area co-ordinator. It is no great surprise that the ANC councillors and the ANC-affiliated organisations were positive, as the initiative to establish ward committees came from the ANC. But the DA councillor also found the ward committee system more useful than he initially anticipated.82

In sum, SANCO perceived that the political power structure, with the ANC in control of the City Council, had greatly improved their possibilities of influencing decision-making. The close relationship with the ANC ward councillor was also seen as facilitating access to those in power. Compared to SANCO, residents’ associations in Rondebosch have a substantially different perception of how the changing institutional and political context has affected their chances of exercising influence. In the next section the situation in Rondebosch will be described, with focus on the major residents’ associations in the area.

The case of Rondebosch

Rondebosch is one of the oldest suburbs of Cape Town, founded in the late 17th century. South Africa’s oldest university, the University of Cape Town, is located here. Rondebosch became, and still is, a predominantly English-
speaking area, and was declared a whites-only area under the Group Areas Act. The suburb of Rondebosch is mainly made up of middle and upper-middle class residents, and housing, to a large extent, consists of one-family houses, but also some multi-storey buildings with apartments. The racial composition is far more mixed than in Langa. According to the 1996 census, the population was around 16,000 excluding Rondebosch East. The majority of residents were white (78 per cent in 1996), with the remaining population being black (9.5 per cent), coloured (5.6 per cent) and Indian/Asian (3 per cent). Since 1996 the demography is likely to have changed slightly as the student population is more diverse today than ten years ago; the result being a larger black and coloured population than in 1996.83

Residents’ associations in Rondebosch

The Rondebosch Civic Association was founded in the 1930s under the name ‘Rondebosch Ratepayers’ Association’. It changed its name in the late 1980s following the political changes taking place. ‘Civic’ instead of ‘ratepayers’ was a symbolic but important change since it implied that all residents of Rondebosch could be members and not just those who pay rates (i.e. own a property). It was not only the question of the name that was debated during this time though. When South Africa started to change the association also opened up for politicisation. The major division was between ‘conservative groupings’ and those who were considered by others to be ‘too progressive’.84 The inability to co-operate lead to a split in 1993, and the Rondebosch, Rosebank Ratepayers’ and Business Association was founded. According to this association, the civic association had become too political and was run by ANC politicians.85

The two associations claimed to have some 400 members altogether, out of which 300 were members of the Rondebosch, Rosebank Ratepayers’ and Business Association, and 140 of the Rondebosch Civic Association. Compared to the more recently established Rondebosch Community Improvement District (RCID), which dealt solely with security matters and had some 1,800 members, the difference was noticeable. Because of the decline in membership, the Rondebosch Civic Association initiated discussions regarding a merger either with the RCID or with the Rondebosch, Rosebank Rate-

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83 CMC Administration [undated], Socioeconomic characteristics of suburbs: 1996 Census. The City of Cape Town provided statistics at the neighbourhood/suburb level in 1996, but only at ward level in 2001. Rondebosch belongs to two wards (58 and 59) and it is therefore difficult to estimate the current racial composition. A rough estimate, taking into account that the large student population has changed the demography in Rondebosch, is that there are 60–65 per cent white residents in the area, 15 per cent black and 15 per cent coloured.
84 Interview with Sewell, 27 October 2004.
85 Interview with Sutherland, 29 September 2004, and ‘Myth of democracy as newies “hijack” civic’, Southern Argus, 1 July 1993.
payers’ and Business Association. In 2006, the civic association merged with the RCID, and the RCID was recognised by the City Council as a representative body in ward 58 (with the ratepayers’ association representing ward 59), meaning that it needs to be consulted by the City on matters concerning local town planning and municipal services. The main focus of the RCID continued to be safety and security, but the agenda of the Executive Committee and general meetings included also wider municipal issues.

**Relations between residents’ associations, local government and politicians**

As Rondebosch belongs to two wards, there were two ward councillors. Traditionally Rondebosch has been a liberal stronghold. During the two terms of democratically elected councillors, Rondebosch has had DA ward councillors and in the 2006 local government elections the party received around 80 per cent of the vote here.

The general impression of the associations in Rondebosch was that it had become more difficult to influence local government since the early 1990s. Partly this was attributed to local government reforms, such as the creation of the Unicity and sub-councils. Bill Sewell, former Chairperson of the Rondebosch Civic Association, recalled that the wards used to be much smaller prior to 1995/96. In Cape Town there were between 1,000 and 5,000 inhabitants per ward, as compared to between 10,000 and 30,000 per ward today. The fact that the councillors were usually elected from local residents’ associations made them more easily accessible and accountable to local residents. There were also local councils that held monthly meetings open to people in the area.

The associations in Rondebosch perceived that the City of Cape Town had neglected the needs of their community and that the overall standard in

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86 Interview with Sewell, 27 October 2004, and with Sutherland, 18 April 2006. Burmeister was the Chairperson of both the civic association and the RCID.
87 E-mail correspondence with Sewell, 4 November 2007.
88 Partly this can be explained by the University of Cape Town’s location. Established in 1829, the university had the nickname ‘Moscow on the hill’ during the years 1960 to 1990 because of its sustained opposition to apartheid, especially in higher education (University of Cape Town, www.uct.ac.za).
89 Independent Electoral Commission, *Local Government Elections 2006 Reports*. The fact that citizens may only register for the voting district in which they are ordinarily resident may explain why the larger share of black students, most likely ANC-supporters, has not had an impact on the election results in Rondebosch. There is a local ANC branch in Rondebosch, and one of its main objectives is to increase the number of ANC members in the area. At a local branch meeting in September 2004 some 25 people attended, around half of them were black domestic workers, and the other half white and coloured residents. The Rondebosch ANC branch has some high profile members. Kader Asmal, for example, Minister of the National Government between 1994 and 2004, participated in the local branch meeting just referred to (Field notes, ANC meeting, Gaby Saphiro branch, Rondebosch, 30 September 2004).
90 E-mail correspondence with Sewell, 10 January 2007.
the area had been declining. They agreed that less privileged areas of Cape Town should be prioritised, but were frustrated over increasing taxes in combination with declining services. Monica Sutherland, Chairperson of the Rondebosch, Rosebank Ratepayers’ and Business Association, linked many of the perceived deteriorations to the then present ANC-run council.

Because we’re white and live in so-called leafy suburbs, we’re penalised for being there. They don’t really listen to us. They have listening campaigns but as I said in a letter to the Mayor [Nomaiindia Mfeketo] she might listen but then she goes back home and tears up all our input and does what she wanted to do in the first place. (…) We don’t get consulted as often as we used to. (…) One thing I must say of the old government and Council, if you wrote to them you got a very well-researched reply. Now you can write to any government official, from the State President down, and you don’t even get the courtesy of a reply. They just ignore you. I get really annoyed and I write stinking letters to them.91

Also Bruce Burmeister, Chairperson of the Rondebosch Civic Association, claimed that using the previous way of approaching the council had proved fruitless. Burmeister had given up writing letters, instead establishing direct contact by meeting the officials responsible to...

…introduce myself and say “ok, I will deal with you and I will hassle you to death until you give me what I want”. Generally from that point of view it works. (…) A lot of them are actually quite nice people and they do try hard. (…) We’ve also found that complaining (…) actually doesn’t really help. It depends what kind of complaints you’re going to complain about. If you’re going to complain let’s say the park hasn’t been mowed, well you could sit there for five years complaining. (…) [Therefore] what we try to do now is devolve a little bit of power around, so where there is a park in Rondebosch then we say to the immediate neighbours around: “You’re in charge of the park. It’s your job. If it doesn’t get mowed on a certain day, one of you must phone up and check that it’s mowed”.92

Burmeister further stated that the residents needed to deal with matters themselves instead of being confident that local government would necessarily solve potential problems. According to him, the RCID was an example of such successful community empowerment. The initiative was created as a response to escalating crime rates in the area. A few devoted individuals, including Burmeister, knocked every door in the area and managed to mobilise substantial support (some 86 per cent of the property owners of Rondebosch, according to Burmeister) for hiring a security company to patrol the streets of Rondebosch. Burmeister claimed that because of the large support,

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91 Interview with Sutherland, 29 September 2004.
92 Interview with Burmeister, 29 October 2004.
the RCID managed to negotiate an exceptionally good deal with one of the security companies.93

Over the years the Rondebosch, Rosebank Ratepayers’ and Business Association had developed a good relationship with DA councillor Owen Kinahan. The councillor regularly attended the meetings of the association, as well as meetings of other residents’ associations in his ward. However, Chairperson Sutherland expressed concern over the fact that Councillor Kinahan, as a member of the opposition (2002–2006), did not have much power to influence political decision-making. According to Sutherland, what had proved more constructive in terms of dealing with area-related problems, such as vagrants and crime, was to co-operate through the Police Forum in which she was also the chairperson. Furthermore, the ratepayers’ association used the local media, particularly the weekly Southern Suburbs Tatler, as a channel to raise neighbourhood issues.94

The experiences of the ward committees established in 2004 were less positive in Rondebosch than in Langa. According to some sub-council managers, who co-ordinate the administration of ward committees in the wards within their respective sub-councils, the success or failure of ward committees, to a large extent, seemed to be dependent on the commitment of the ward councillor.95 Also the role played by the administrative leaders was mentioned as being important in this regard – ‘they need to be passionate’.96 One official, Brian Ford, manager of Sub-Council 20, which includes the Rondebosch wards, noted the different approaches to ward committees among ‘his’ councillors. He was a bit surprised that some councillors did not see that the ward committees could really be helpful and work in the interest of the councillors and not against them.97

Sutherland of the ratepayers’ association did not think that the ward committee had been effective in terms of increasing possibilities of influencing decision-making. Since the committee did not have any real powers, she did not see the use of it. Instead Sutherland continued to liaise directly with Ward Councillor Kinahan when she had a problem. According to her, this was a much more efficient strategy as she did not have to compete with the other ward committee members for getting the ward councillor’s attention.98

Ward Councillor Kinahan had been sceptical of ward committees ever since the beginning. Following the change of control in the City Council in March 2006, he foresaw that ward committees would be made optional. ‘If

93 Ibid.
94 Interview with Sutherland, 29 September 2004 and 18 April 2006, and interview with Kinahan, 6 October 2004. Community Police Forums consist of a number of community associations and the local police, and exist in many areas of Cape Town.
96 Interview with Carolissen, 29 March 2006.
97 Interview with Ford, 7 April 2006.
98 Interview with Sutherland, 18 April 2006.
they work for community it is good. If they are superfluous because there are [already] existing structures, there is certainly no need for a further layer without any powers whatsoever’.  

The other Rondebosch ward councillor, Ian Iversen, was of the same opinion. He went even further saying that the experiences of ward committees were even worse than expected. In his ward 59 they never managed to fill all the ten positions due to the difficulty in getting people to become involved. Their lives are too busy and they cannot ‘waste time on “talk shop” committees’. Councillor Iversen also mentioned some areas where the ward committees were ‘used by political opponents of the sitting councillor as a platform to attack the councillor and promote themselves’. He added, however, that some of his DA colleagues had fairly active and well functioning ward committees.  

Hence, the difference between how associations in Rondebosch have interpreted changes in their political environment, as compared to SANCO in Langa, is noticeable. In the next section the perceptions of residents’ associations in the two areas will be compared.

Comparing the political opportunity structure of Langa and Rondebosch

Two dimensions of the institutional and legal context were directly and indirectly highlighted by the associations in Langa and Rondebosch; the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of the local government system, and the degree of centralisation. As regards the political power structure, both political alignments and elite allies were mentioned as important by the associations, either enabling or hampering their attempts to influence decision-making. The way in which the associations in Langa and Rondebosch perceived that the changes in the institutional and political context affected their possibilities of influencing decision-making differed substantially however.

Starting with Langa we could note that the political context was perceived as favourable by SANCO because of the ANC-run council at the time of the interviews. SANCO described how elite allies, such as the mayor, facilitated access to those in power, which in turn had a positive effect on the possibilities of influencing decision-making. It was, however, not possible to tell to what extent the perceived advantages of these elite contacts were indeed transformed into concrete benefits for SANCO and its constituencies.

In Rondebosch the associations being studied instead perceived that the political structure had become more excluding with the party in control neglecting the needs of more well-off areas. The political alignments, with the ANC governing the city (2002–2006), contributed to the feeling of exclu-

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99 E-mail correspondence with Kinahan, 19 May 2006.
100 E-mail correspondence with Iversen, 21 May 2006.
sion, a feeling that was accentuated by the ward councillors’ perceptions. At the time of the study they were part of the opposition and in a minority position on the council as well as on the sub-council.

The centralisation of the local government system was mentioned by the associations in Rondebosch as having reduced their access to the administration. The Rondebosch Civic Association linked its change of strategy to the new political context. The association claimed that, given that council officials were more remote in the new centralised Unicity, the most efficient model for influence was to establish personal contact with them. In the previous council system personal communication was easier as the council administration was more decentralised, and the new system therefore seemed to require some effort by associations to liaise directly with the officials responsible, or with other actors.

Associations in both Langa and Rondebosch were satisfied with their relationship with their ward councillors. In both areas the ward councillors regularly participated in the meetings of the associations in order to keep updated on neighbourhood issues.

SANCO mentioned a good working relationship with local government officials and appreciated the formal structures in place to influence decision-making through ward committees. The ratepayers’ association in Rondebosch, however, doubted that ward committees could actually increase the chances of influencing decision-making. Outside the immediate political sphere, the ratepayers’ association highlighted actors, such as the Police Forum and the local media, as important channels for raising issues of concern.

In the interviews, relations between SANCO and the ANC were described as being mainly unproblematic and harmonious. The relative political homogeneity in Langa might have reduced some of the conflict potential that may be present in more heterogeneous areas. Although in reality the picture is probably somewhat more complex, it is still likely that any severe conflicts would have been discerned in the interviews in one way or another. The uncritical attitude can, to some extent, be explained by the fact that the ANC is renowned for not encouraging critique neither from within the party, nor from its major allies.101 It should be noted that in the third ward, in which a DA councillor represented a part of Langa, some cleavages did exist between the actors. This was evident in the case of SANCO’s relations with the DA councillor, as SANCO claimed to have virtually no contact with him.

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101 See, for example, Butler’s article (2005) discussing the ANC’s anti-democratic tendencies in this regard, pp. 732–733. It should be stressed, however, that there are several reports of cases where SANCO and the ANC do not work well together in the wards. See, for example, Cherry et al. (2000), p. 899, describing how SANCO leaders in Guguletu, a township of Cape Town, accused ANC ward councillors of taking decisions without consulting the grassroots, and Cherry (2001), describing a variety of forms of opposition to the ANC in Port Elizabeth from SANCO, as well as from within local ANC branches.
In the concluding summary of this chapter, the comparison between the associations in Langa and Rondebosch will be further developed. On the basis of the comparison and the results from the surveys, some general conclusions will be drawn on how residents’ associations in different areas have perceived that the political and institutional context has affected their possibilities of influencing decision-making.

The political opportunity structure of residents’ associations in Cape Town: concluding summary

The primary aim of this chapter has been to explore how residents’ associations in Cape Town have perceived that the changes in the political opportunity structure have affected their chances of influencing decision-making. Associations in black and coloured areas used to be excluded from decision-making. During the height of the anti-apartheid struggle their main goal was to remove the undemocratic system. Residents’ associations in formerly white areas have lost their previously privileged position and now have to compete for resources with areas in much greater need.\(^\text{102}\) Hence, an overall conclusion is, perhaps not surprisingly, that the perceptions differ depending on the particular association(s) being studied. The most visible differences have to do with how associations related to party politics.

Associations mainly used conventional politics in their attempts to influence decision-making and in spite of the changing political context, a majority of associations in the 1996 and 2004 surveys claimed that they had not changed their main activities since they were founded. However, the majority of these associations were based in predominantly white areas (and, to some extent, in coloured areas). Associations operating in black poor areas would most likely have answered differently. In the case of SANCO in Langa there was a shift from protest politics, particularly boycotts, to conventional forms of politics, such as participation in ward committees. The associations in the surveys that had noted a change in activities pointed to a greater and wider involvement in community affairs.

Both the surveys and the interviews show that most associations were satisfied with their contacts with particularly the ward councillors. Many associations also had close and personal contacts with local government officials. Still several associations in predominantly white areas perceived that the centralisation of local government had made it more difficult to reach the officials responsible. This, in combination with the ANC’s dominance in the

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\(^\text{102}\) Many residents in affluent areas do acknowledge the greater needs in poor areas. Ward Councillor Watkyns, for example, told me how he organised a tour of his ward for all ward committee members. This resulted in members from the affluent area of Pinelands wanting to allocate funds originally designated for their neighbourhood to Langa instead, since they saw that there were much greater needs here (Interview with Watkyns, 21 April 2006).
years between 2002 and 2006, contributed to a feeling of exclusion as most white areas had a majority of DA voters.

The relationship between the local SANCO and ANC branches in Langa can be characterised as one of mutual dependence and loyalty. The ANC was stronger in terms of resources, for example, by having offices which SANCO could make use of. SANCO, in turn, had the advantage of being closer to its constituencies, and the ANC was therefore eager to maintain its good relations with SANCO. Thus there are some corporatist features in the relationship between SANCO and the ANC also at the very micro level.

In both Langa and Rondebosch the councillors were of the opinion that interacting with the residents’ associations (and other community associations) was important to keep updated on neighbourhood issues. The interviews with the councillors did not, however, reveal if this was done for strategic reasons to secure re-election as stipulated in social movement and interest group theory. The importance of keeping good relations with residents’ associations to facilitate policy-making was pointed out by one DA councillor in Observatory, Salt River and Woodstock (mixed/coloured areas of Cape Town). He said that ‘you won’t get anything done if you don’t have the support of the civics’, claiming indeed that the associations were capable of obstructing a policy proposed by the councillor.103

The relations between associations and ward councillors did not differ much between Langa and Rondebosch. What did differ was the way in which associations perceived that they were able to influence decision-making. SANCO in Langa described how access to the City Council had improved with the ANC in control. Still, the effect seemed to be a confident feeling of having ‘allies on your side’, rather than concrete benefits.

Associations in predominantly white areas, including Rondebosch, were more disillusioned and claimed that the changing political context had reduced their chances of affecting decision-making. Nonetheless their advantage when it comes to organisational skills seems to compensate for some of the perceived deteriorations. The Chairperson of the ratepayers’ association was also the Chairperson of the Rondebosch Police Forum for example, and the Chairperson of the now defunct Rondebosch Civic Association managed to mobilise substantial support for the new single-issue initiative the RCID.

In conclusion, changes in two main dimensions of the political opportunity structure are more prominent than others. Firstly, in predominantly white and affluent areas associations perceived that a centralised government structure had distanced associations from local government, particularly from the civil servants. Secondly, the dimension referring to political alignments was stressed, especially in the interviews carried out in Langa and

103 Interview with Chapple, 20 October 2004. In the 2006 local government elections the DA gained 34 per cent of votes in this ward (57), the ANC 26 per cent and the ID 24 per cent (Independent Electoral Commission, Local Government Elections 2006 Reports).
Rondebosch. The SANCO representative in Langa expressed mistrust of the DA councillor, and the ratepayers’ association in Rondebosch of the ANC-controlled council. These perceptions in turn influenced how associations looked upon their possibilities of influencing decision-making.

A third dimension of the political opportunity structure that indirectly contributed to a feeling of being unable to influence decision-making among associations in DA-dominated wards was the electoral system at municipal level. In this system ward councillors who represent their ward are elected through a non-proportional method whereas the distributed seats on the City Council and the sub-councils are on a proportional basis. In a solely proportional system the party political composition of ward representatives would correspond to that of the council, probably reducing some of the tensions just described.

It has previously been argued here that Langa and Rondebosch are seen as reasonably typical of how residents’ associations in black and white areas in Cape Town perceive that the changing political context has affected their possibilities of influencing decision-making. Many of the views expressed by the associations here were confirmed by the answers in the survey. In Langa, the cordial relations between SANCO and the ANC were explained by their common history in the anti-apartheid movement. In many other areas, including other townships in Cape Town, the relations between SANCO and ANC branches are less friendly. However, in spite of occurring conflicts and rivalry, the ANC continues to enjoy an overwhelming support in all black areas in Cape Town. In that sense, the mechanisms for SANCO’s support of the ANC in Langa, namely that this political party is the most likely to benefit the residents of the area, are likely to exist elsewhere too.

As mentioned, most residential areas in Cape Town continue to be racially and socio-economically segregated. Can we expect similar patterns of relations between local government and residents’ associations in more heterogeneous areas? In Hout Bay, where we will go in the next chapter, community dynamics differ from most other residential areas in South Africa. Although the permanent establishment of the township of Imizamo Yethu in the early 1990s did not result in residential desegregation in the sense normally understood (i.e. that people of various origins live side by side), the fact that people live in a geographically small area has forced residents’ associations in Hout Bay to interact with one another. Unlike Langa and Rondebosch, Hout Bay consists of diverse population groups with large socio-economic variation. This in turn has created a politically more complex situation with various residents’ associations interacting with local government and with each other.

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104 Instead of desegregation, Grant Saff refers to the Hout Bay case as a process of ‘deracialisation of space’ (Saff 1998, p. xviii).
So far the purpose has been mainly descriptive in that the aim has been to account for how associations have perceived that the changing political context has influenced their ability to affect decision-making. In the next chapter we will examine the mechanisms between a certain political opportunity structure and the practices of associations, including their interaction with local government officials and politicians, i.e. the framing processes of neighbourhood associations in Hout Bay.
6. A process study of Hout Bay and Imizamo Yethu

With the case study of Hout Bay we enter more deeply into the question of how residents’ associations have responded to changes in the local political opportunity structure. This will be done by investigating the framing processes – the mechanisms between structure and practice – in which associations interpret the institutional and political context, and decide to act, or not act, accordingly. With this purpose I have carried out a process study of the political development regarding Imizamo Yethu, the township whose establishment and growth has been Hout Bay’s major cause for concern ever since the early 1990s. At the centre of analysis are Hout Bay’s major residents’ associations, representing different sectors of the heterogeneous population, and their relationship with local government politicians and officials.

The main thread throughout the chapter is thus the settlement of Imizamo Yethu, as its development has involved most of Hout Bay’s community associations. The chapter is chronologically organised and follows the development of Imizamo Yethu from its legal creation in the early 1990s up to 2006.¹ From 1996 the structure of the chapter corresponds to the shifts in political power at municipal level, as these are highlighted in the literature on political opportunity structures and hence expected to be critical events for both state and civil society actors. Within each time period the following are accounted for: the most important developments in terms of changes in the political opportunity structure, how these were perceived by the residents’ associations and what were their responses. The chapter is long and empirically detailed which reflect the length and complexity of conflict in Hout Bay. In the concluding discussion a table (Table 6.1) is presented, summarising the most important events with focus on the changing political opportunity structure, the framing processes and practices of associations.

The case of Hout Bay – an anomaly?

Hout Bay is situated about 20 kilometres south of central Cape Town. Located in a bay by the Atlantic Ocean and surrounded by spectacular moun-

¹ The development after 2006 has been left out of the analysis but an epilogue in the last section of the thesis summarises the most important events after 2006.
tains, its natural beauty is indeed stunning. Following the implementation of the Group Areas Act in 1950, Hout Bay was classified as a white Group Area. In line with the Coloured Labour Preference Policy the coloured population residing in Hout Bay was allowed to remain but only in a designated township by the harbour, named Hangberg. As late as 1981, beaches in Hout Bay were actively re-classified as reserved for whites-only.² Today Hout Bay has between 25,000 and 35,000 inhabitants. Although Hout Bay is geographically quite small, and the Group Areas Act was abolished in 1991, the three major population groups continue to live in highly segregated areas. As noted by Jan Froestad who has carried out research in Hout Bay, ‘[p]eople of the various communities in Hout Bay do interact on a daily basis, but this interaction is, with few exceptions, limited to the economic domain’.³

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**Figure 6.1. Satellite image of Hout Bay.** The image clearly shows Hout Bay’s natural boundaries with the surrounding mountains and the ocean, and hence the restrictions on increasing residential development. The highly contested 16 hectares, set aside for community facilities by old provincial legislation, are pointed out (the white circle). (One hectare is 10,000 square metres.)

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The black population of between 8,000 and 16,000 lives in Imizamo Yethu, and is mainly Xhosa-speaking (around 80 per cent), most of them having migrated from the Eastern Cape Province in search of work. The remaining 20 per cent consist of Zulu speakers, Angolans, Nigerians and people from neighbouring states. The around 6,000 coloureds live in Hangberg and are mainly Afrikaans speaking, and a majority of the around 10,000 whites have English as their home language and live spread out in the valley (see image above).

The situation in both Hangberg and Imizamo Yethu is considered to be better than in other townships – the crime rates are, for example, lower than in other similar areas. However, this does not mean that the two areas are not struggling with poverty-related problems, such as high rates of unemployment (40–50 per cent are unemployed in Imizamo Yethu), criminality, drugs and alcohol, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS and TB.

Hout Bay has been described as an anomaly referring to the fact that, despite the attempts to enforce apartheid policies of residential segregation, it has a large black settlement located in the midst of a predominantly white and affluent area. The Hout Bay area has had illegal settlements since the 1970s when an increasing number of white residents created a demand for domestic workers. Also, overcrowding in the coloured Hangberg township forced people to find accommodation elsewhere. The only housing for black male workers employed in the fishing industry was in overcrowded single-}

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6 The number of Imizamo Yethu residents has been the subject of much debate. In a survey of Imizamo Yethu carried out in 2003 by the Development Action Group (DAG), the estimated total population was 7,874 (Development Action Group, Imizamo Yethu Survey 2003). This was far less than the 16,000 people often referred to (see, for example, ‘Work starts on Imizamo Yethu homes’, Cape Argus, 31 August 2004). It is a matter of dispute between SANCO, which refers to the DAG survey, and the Ratepayers’ Association which claims that there are ‘more than double that number of people living in IY’ (Sentinel, 13 February 2004). According to a survey report by the School of Economics and Management Studies, University of Cape Town, the total population of Hout Bay was 42,632 in 2001 (SALDRU 2006, p. 4). Aerial photos of Imizamo Yethu from 2000 revealed an estimated population of 13,000 (assuming that there were four persons per dwelling). Yet another figure is based on the 2001 Census, where Imizamo Yethu is reported to have a population of 8,000 (Harte et al., 2006, p. 3). Based on the 2001 Census the official population of ward 74, to which Hout Bay belongs, is estimated at 26,232 in 2006, according to the City of Cape Town. Out of these, 32 per cent are classified as black African, 23 per cent as coloured and 43 per cent as white (City of Cape Town 2006).
7 Froestad (2005), p. 339. Overall, in Hout Bay the crime rates were increasing with a peak in early 2005. After the creation of the Hout Bay Neighbourhood Watch, local media reported a sharp decrease of 21.7 per cent in the overall crime rate. Many of the problems were linked to the shebeens (local pubs) in Imizamo Yethu, as many of them were illegal and did not stick to closing time agreements (‘Housing break-ins cut by more than a third’, Sentinel, 27 January 2006). It should be noted that the neighbourhood watch also includes Imizamo Yethu that has its own neighbourhood watch scheme with some ten men patrolling every night (see ‘Paradise residents home in on crime’, Financial Times, 6 July 2007).
sex hostels in the harbour. In order to be able to live with their families they chose to settle down in the mountains and bushes around Hout Bay.\textsuperscript{9} The supply of jobs in combination with Hout Bay’s location, far away from the established townships on the Cape Flats, made it attractive to stay in the area in spite of the risk of repeated evictions and arrests. By the late 1980s there were approximately 2,000 people living in five different settlements around Hout Bay.\textsuperscript{10}

The background of the people in the settlements differed substantially. Some of them, mainly coloured residents, had for generations been living and working on white farms in the area. When Hout Bay developed in the 1970s as a suburban residential area most farms disappeared and their workers were evicted. Other settlements were made up of black newcomers from rural Transkei and Ciskei with no relatives in Hout Bay. With the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983, attempts were made to mobilise some of the settlements.\textsuperscript{11}

Throughout 1985 and 1986 the informal settlers continued to approach the Divisional Council\textsuperscript{12} to protest against forced evictions, and to demand land and proper houses. One of the main demands was that permanent houses should be built in Hout Bay Valley (if there was no space in Hangerberg), instead of the council’s proposed temporary solution of providing only for site and service camps.\textsuperscript{13} The liberalisation initiated at national level in the late 1980s led to an intensified political mobilisation in the black and coloured communities of Hout Bay. Each settlement formed a squatter committee and a central squatter co-ordinating committee was set up to represent all communities.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{9} ‘Hout Bay’s fisher folk are taking to the hills’, \textit{Grassroots}, March 1980.
\textsuperscript{10} Greene (1991), and Oelofse (1994), pp. 6–7.
\textsuperscript{12} The system of divisional councils was created in 1855 and existed in the Cape Province only. These councils had more or less the same functions as municipalities but covered rural and peri-urban areas outside municipal boundaries (Cameron 1986, p. 35). Jurisdiction over the whole Hout Bay area was held by the Cape Divisional Council, but African (black) squatters came under the Bantu Affairs Administration Board (from 1980 called the Administration Board Western Cape). The Divisional Council and the Administration Board controlled coloured and black squatters through their respective squatter control divisions until 1989 when the responsibility for squatters was taken over by national government. National government in turn delegated the responsibility for squatters to the provincial administrations, which made the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA) responsible for all Hout Bay squatters from 1989. The CPA used the local Regional Services Council to carry out squatter control activities (Greene 1991, Ch. 5).
\textsuperscript{13} ‘We want houses in Hout Bay’, \textit{Grassroots}, May 1986. The informal settlers continuously tried to make the Divisional Council provide them with houses. At one meeting the council said that it could not do anything to solve the problem since it was the national government that was responsible for the forced removals (‘Piet Koornhof, we want houses’, \textit{Grassroots}, November 1983).
\textsuperscript{14} Greene (1991), Conclusion.
The relaxation of the policy of forced removals increased the number of informal settlers in Hout Bay, and it was only then that the settlements were perceived as problematic by the white residents of Hout Bay. Earlier the white families that employed many of the informal settlers turned a blind eye to the settlements as it suited their interests as well to have their employees close to work. But when the numbers increased and, perhaps most importantly, started to occupy ‘prime recreation area’, both white and coloured formal residents reacted.¹⁵

The conflict in brief and the main actors

At the heart of the struggle lies an area of 16 hectares that the provincial authorities set aside for community facilities in 1992 and 1993. Residential development was only allowed on the other 18 hectares of the totally 34 hectares of the area. In the course of events this technicality has become highly politicised, and today it is considered to be ‘one of the most highly contested pieces of lands in South Africa’.¹⁶

On the one side of the conflict there are those who are in favour of building houses on the remaining undeveloped 16 hectares. The main residents’ association here is the Hout Bay SANCO branch that was established in 1991 as the Imizamo Yethu Civic Association. Also the Hout Bay Civic Association, based in the coloured Hangberg area, supports residential development on the 16 hectares. Their main argument against the old decision is that it was taken by an apartheid government in line with the apartheid policies of having separate facilities for different racial groups. In the new South Africa, community facilities, such as schools and sports fields, should be shared by all. To improve integration the residents of Imizamo Yethu should thus use existing facilities located in the Hout Bay Valley where the majority of white residents live.

On the other side of the conflict, the main actor is the Hout Bay Ratepayers’ Association (HBRPA) that was established in 1971 representing the white ratepayers in Hout Bay. As such it has been very active in influencing the development of Imizamo Yethu. The prime objections to Imizamo Yethu have concerned the security aspect (i.e. increasing crime rates) and the decreasing property prices of estates close to the area. The association is strongly against the building of houses on the undeveloped 16 hectares. There are also a number of other associations that support the view of the Ratepayers’ Association. Mostly those are associations with a support base in the white Hout Bay Valley, and their prime fear has been the environ-

¹⁵ The informal settlements of Princess Bush and Sea Products were located right next to the homes of white residents and in attractive areas; Princess Bush in the sand dunes behind Hout Bay beach and Sea Products along the river Disa (Sowman and Gawith 1994, p. 4).
¹⁶ Idasa Newsletter (2007).
mental hazards that would follow from Imizamo Yethu’s expansion on land classified as a national park. In addition, there is the Sinethemba Civic Association, based in Imizamo Yethu, which has collaborated closely with the Ratepayers’ Association in attempting to restrict residential development on the 16 hectares. These associations claim that in order for Imizamo Yethu to become an integrated part of Hout Bay, it needs to develop into a complete suburb with community facilities within its borders. It should be underlined that none of the mainly white associations active today are actually fighting for the removal of Imizamo Yethu; the prime concern has been the size of the settlement.17

Opening up political access: signs of liberalisation and the transition to democracy, 1990–1996

The events in Hout Bay in the early 1990s, ultimately leading to the establishment of Imizamo Yethu, must be understood within the framework of the fundamental political changes that South Africa was going through at the time. The signs of liberalisation created an uncertain political context for many actors, not least for local government. The official response to informal settlers had previously been forced evictions and removals. This strategy now became a sensitive issue for the authorities, which may explain the somewhat unprecedented events that eventually led to the formal establishment of Imizamo Yethu. Instead of eviction authorities aimed at resettling squatters by providing ‘site-and-service schemes’, that is, areas supplied with water and electricity but no housing.18

The changing political power structure, most notably the NP’s recognition of the ANC as a legitimate political actor, together with a rapid growth of black urbanisation due to the infamous pass laws19 being repealed in 1986 and eventually the Group Areas Act in 1991, resulted in large numbers of land invasions and the establishment of informal settlements. In 1992, it was estimated that the Cape Town Metropolitan area had approximately 705,000 people who were either living in unserviced squatter areas and backyard shacks or were homeless.20 Most of the informal settlements grew in connection with the established townships, which, as noted by Alan Mabin, rein-

17 Initially, however, many white ratepayers recommended that the permanent settlement of the informal settlers should have taken place outside Hout Bay (Oelofse 1994, p. 249).
19 Already in the 1760s slaves and Khoi people in the Cape Province were obliged to carry passes that verified that they were not fugitives (Worden 1994, p. 67). Over the years the legal obligations to carry passes increased, for example, with the Native Amendment Act of 1937, and the Natives Urban Areas Amendment Act of 1955. The aim was to regulate black South Africans’ movement into urban areas. Outside their designated homelands blacks had to carry pass books that noted the purpose of their stay (ibid., p. 61, 98).
forced ‘the pattern of peripheral, segregated African residential areas’. There were, however, also a number of land invasions in established, predominantly white, residential areas, such as Hout Bay, Noordhoek and Milnerton in the Cape, and Midrand in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand region. In Noordhoek, following intense negotiations between representatives of the Noordhoek communities and the authorities, land was expropriated for the permanent establishment of some 600 informal settlers in 1989–1990.

An overall changing political power structure thus made it possible for previously excluded actors to successfully put pressure on the authorities. The still undemocratic government system denied a majority of people participation on equal terms. This was especially the case for informal settlers since they did not legally occupy the land and therefore had no formal avenues for participation whatsoever. However, the opening up of political access at national level encouraged mobilisation and created new opportunities. Mobilisation had been relatively high during the apartheid years, but with the dismantling of the apartheid system, those challenging the state now managed to take advantage of these new opportunities in a more concrete way.

Towards a more inclusive decision-making process: negotiations begin in Hout Bay

How did the changes in the political opportunity structure influence the practices of the main civil society actors in Hout Bay at this point in time? It is highly probable that the developments in the nearby Noordhoek had a substantial effect on how the involved actors in Hout Bay chose to act. The success of the informal settlers in Noordhoek is likely to have encouraged the Hout Bay informal settlers as they perceived that their access to decision-making was facilitated by the provincial authorities. They saw chances of success which increased their mobilisation. The white ratepayers instead saw the changing political opportunity structure as a threat that might lead to negative effects on the affluent character of Hout Bay. As we will see mobilisation increased in both the white and black communities but for different reasons.

In August 1989, the Hout Bay Ratepayers’ Association noticed new settlements in an area called Princess Beach. In May 1990, some members of the association formed an interim committee, called the Property-Rights Committee (PRC), as they were frustrated at a perceived inaction towards ‘the squatter problem’. Some 350 residents refused to pay their rent until

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24 In June the same year the Hout Bay Property Rights Association (HBPRA) was formally constituted from the interim PRC. The HBPRA took part in all the negotiations regarding Imizamo Yethu, but disbanded after the first few years of negotiations. The task was then
the ‘squatter problem was solved’. The increased level of mobilisation in parts of the white community indicates that they felt the need to act to prevent collective ‘bads’. As mentioned above, at this time informal settlers in Noordhoek had already been successful in obtaining land for permanent settlement. The specific purpose of the PRC was to put pressure on the Rate-payers’ Association and the national government. The PRC sent a letter to the provincial minister in charge of informal housing and only five days later, on 16 May 1990, a first meeting was organised by a ministerial representative. Judging by the quick government response, it was a high priority issue. Present at the meeting were representatives from ten different groupings. Out of these, eight were ‘pro-squatters’ and two were ‘anti-squatters’.

Dicki Meter from the coloured township in Hangberg was one of the members of the Squatter Co-ordinating Committee. His anti-apartheid involvement started in the early 1980s when he co-ordinated Hangberg’s youth within the UDF, and he was detained several times for his activities. Later on he became the first democratically elected ward councillor in Hout Bay. Meter recalls those days of negotiations. He felt that he was under a lot of pressure from the communities that he was representing. At the same time he had to negotiate with authorities that ultimately could exercise a veto over ‘unacceptable’ decisions.

Remember, I’m now talking still pre-94. We had an apartheid government with no representation in government. It was only us, small folk against powerful government officials and very arrogant white leadership. (...) And they forced a lot of stuff onto us. Even today they are trying to get rid of us. And it brought into the arena different players. For the first time in decades everyone was sitting around the table and discussing. But the irony of it was they

28 The first group included the following representatives: Squatter Co-ordinating Committee (SCC), which represented all informal settlements in Hout Bay, Development Action Group (DAG), a foreign-funded NGO dealing with development issues, Legal Resources Centre (LRC), foreign-funded legal consultants dealing with eviction litigation, Harbour Village delegation, some RPA members, Hout Bay church representatives, a Member of Parliament for Hout Bay, and individual representatives of the informal settlements. On the other side, there were two types of representatives: The Property Rights Committee and officials from different levels of government (town planners, etc.) (ibid.).
30 The process of negotiation has been well documented in an article by Sowman and Gawith (1994), and in a Masters thesis by Gawith (1996).
still thought they knew what was best for us. So there was a very unbalanced situation. I think we didn’t do too badly.31

Unlike the situation in Noordhoek, where representatives of the informal settlements managed to make the authorities start negotiations, in Hout Bay the authorities only responded when the white Ratepayers’ Association approached them. As pointed out already, this contributed to the feeling of an uneven power balance in the negotiation process.32 The representatives of the informal settlements were dependent on the authorities’ goodwill to exercise influence. Most of the apartheid legislation was not yet abolished at the time, with the Group Areas Act only repealed in 1991. The political liberalisation affected the local authorities in that they felt the need to turn to a more inclusive strategy to legitimise their decision-making. This created some windows of opportunity in the otherwise closed institutional structure, and made it possible for the informal settlers to take part in the negotiations.

In both the white and black residents’ associations we could thus see an increased mobilisation but for different reasons. The informal settlers attributed opportunities to obtain the legal right to remain in the area as a consequence of the opening up of political access. This in turn encouraged them to organise and become more involved in the policy process. For the white ratepayers the authorities’ new policies were seen rather as a threat which encouraged their mobilisation. In such cases the cost of inaction may be considered higher than the cost of mobilising, even though the result may be just ‘a mere reduction of the expected deterioration’, as expressed by Kriesi et al.33

**Negotiations continue: Imizamo Yethu is legally established**

The decision-making on Imizamo Yethu was speeded up by an unprecedented event. In late December 1990, on Christmas Eve, a fire broke out in the settlement of Sea Products and a number of homes were burnt down. As a consequence, an urgent decision was taken by the National Minister of Housing, Welfare and Works to allocate 18 hectares of the Western Cape Regional Services Council’s forestry site for permanent occupation by the informal settlers of Hout Bay.34 In a press statement dated 18 January 1991 Minister Sam de Beer said:

> Since the Government has undertaken to identify land in Hout Bay where the squatters can be settled, and after having heard the viewpoints of the parties concerned, I have decided that a portion of the site which at present is being utilised as a nursery by the Western Cape Regional Services Council, be used for the purpose. Negotiations are presently being undertaken with the RSC to

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31 Interview with Meter, 21 February 2006.
32 This is also highlighted in the study by Sowman and Gawith (1994).
obtain this site. The squatters will be moved to a portion of this site shortly and provided with basic services until the permanent sites can be developed. (...) In the meantime effective control will be instituted to ensure no further unauthorized influx of people to the newly designated site occurs and landowners are requested to ensure adequate control of their own property.\textsuperscript{35}

It should be noted that the plan only provided for services, such as sewerage, electricity and some community facilities, for the around 500 sites on the 18 hectares.\textsuperscript{36} The building of houses was thus left for the residents themselves to cater for. The Hout Bay Action Committee had opposed this solution much earlier, rejecting an interim move to site and service camps and demanding acceptable permanent housing.\textsuperscript{37} Although a planning process involving the most important actors had indeed preceded this decision, many actors were dissatisfied with the government’s decision. As Sowman and Gawith write, it ‘was a unilateral decision made without the full participation of the informal communities or the broader Hout Bay community’.\textsuperscript{38} Many white residents considered it to be an ‘undemocratic and bad decision’, whereas the Hout Bay Squatter Co-ordinating Committee protested ‘against the decision to resettle all the communities on the forestry site and the disregard of the plight of the homeless in the harbour [Hangberg]’.\textsuperscript{39}

In spite of the protests, the residents of the five settlements were moved to the 8-hectare temporary site in March/April 1991. It was named Imizamo Yethu by the community (meaning ‘through our collective struggle’), but was also commonly known as Mandela Park.\textsuperscript{40} The resettlement had a disruptive effect on the community structures that had existed in the informal settlements. People were busy building new homes and the Hout Bay Squatter Co-ordinating Committee was disbanded. From a democratic point of view this proved problematic as there no longer existed a representative body with a mandate to discuss the planning principles. Public meetings were held to discuss the planning of the permanent site, but not many people from Imizamo Yethu attended. Those who did attend were individuals who came to ‘express dissatisfaction with living conditions and inadequate services on the temporary site’.\textsuperscript{41}

The process was also complicated by the fact that many actors mistrusted the authorities responsible and thought that they were neither representative, nor legitimate. In June 1991, the management and control of Imizamo Yethu was transferred to the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA) from the Housing and Works Unit at the National Department of Local Government. The

\textsuperscript{35} House of Assembly (1991).
\textsuperscript{36} CPA Communication Services (1993).
\textsuperscript{37} ‘‘We want houses in Hout Bay’’, \textit{Grassroots}, May 1986.
\textsuperscript{38} Sowman and Gawith (1994), p. 5.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., and Oelofse (1994), p. 8.
provincial minister responsible was granted ultimate decision-making powers should disputes arise. The general mistrust of the CPA seriously undermined its attempts to involve the various communities in the planning process.42

At the same time Imizamo Yethu was declared a township in terms of the Less Formal Township Establishment Act (Act No. 113 of 1991).43 This Act was created in order to speed up the process of establishing townships for low-cost housing. However, although the act made the delivery of serviced sites possible at reduced costs, it did not place any obligations on the authorities to see to it that low-income developments were indeed carried out or houses actually built in the designated areas.44

Participation improved around six months later, in August 1991, when an interim civic association was elected with the assistance of political and social development workers,45 and in October the Imizamo Yethu Civic Association (later on SANCO) was established.46 In March 1992, at the CPA’s insistence, the Hout Bay Liaison Committee was set up with the purpose of liaising with the CPA. It included five representatives of each of the three main groups in Hout Bay (ratepayers, informal settlement and harbour delegation). On issues that one could not agree upon, a mediator would be appointed. If the dispute could not be resolved by the appointed mediator, it was approved that ‘the controlling authority (CPA) will have the right to make the final decision on the issue at hand’.47

In the following months, intense meetings and negotiations took place with the purpose of agreeing upon a plan for the layout of Imizamo Yethu.48 The CPA’s consultants presented different versions of plans after comments from the Liaison Committee, the Ratepayers’ Association, a technical advisory committee (set up by the Liaison Committee), an independent group of planners (Novalis) and representatives of Imizamo Yethu. On 19 October 1992, the plan was finally formally approved by the Imizamo Yethu representatives after approval by the Liaison Committee.49 Still, when one of the leaders of the Imizamo Yethu Civic Association, Kenny Tokwe, recalled those days he was very critical.

42 Ibid., p. 6.
43 Gawith (1996), Appendix F.
46 Gawith (1996), Appendix F.
48 In her thesis, Gawith refers to at least 12 Liaison Committee minutes between May and October 1992 (Gawith 1996, p. 272).
49 Ibid., Appendix F.
And remember, when that programme (…) was being politically led, our community was not represented. It was before the first democratic election that was 1993, so we didn’t have a voice to put our opinions on the table. (...) That is why it is for us to challenge the decision that was taken (…) against our will.\textsuperscript{50}

Part of the problem with the accepted plan was that Imizamo Yethu was set up as an ‘emergency settlement camp (…) with no town planning or building regulations’,\textsuperscript{51} As we have seen, this was a solution that the Hout Bay Action Committee already opposed in 1986. However, by the time of the negotiations the pressure on the informal settlers was so strong that they agreed to this imperfect solution.\textsuperscript{52} Many of the activists in Imizamo Yethu were obviously tired of negotiating and longed for some peace and stability. At least they had obtained the legal right to permanently settle down in an area that provided nearby job opportunities.

The Ratepayers’ Association continued to mobilise however. It was concerned with restrictions on the settlement size and the number of plots, and therefore negotiated with the provincial authorities on these issues. Representatives of the Liaison Committee or Imizamo Yethu community did not attend these meetings however. At a meeting on 15 October 1992, it was agreed that residential development would only be allowed on 18 hectares out of the total 34 hectares designated for Imizamo Yethu. The remaining 16 hectares were intended for ‘buffer zones’ and some community facilities. The minutes from that meeting were confirmed by the provincial authorities on 28 October, and the decision published in the Official Gazette of the Province of the Cape of Good Hope on 23 July 1993.\textsuperscript{53} In August 1993, the Provincial Administration once again assured that the remaining 16 ha of land will not be utilised for residential purposes but that it will be reserved for future community facilities e.g. sports fields etc, as determined by the Administrator of the Cape Province.\textsuperscript{54}

It may be concluded that in the end none of the main actors in Hout Bay were satisfied with the government’s decision as it turned out. This is important to keep in mind if we are to understand the sustained mobilisation among civil society actors in Hout Bay. However, as noted by Jan Froestad, the establishment of Imizamo Yethu was probably to the advantage of both the government at the time and of many white residents. Instead of having illegal settlements all over Hout Bay, these were now concentrated in one

\textsuperscript{50} Interview with Tokwe, 12 October 2004.
\textsuperscript{51} Minutes from Hout Bay and Llandudno Ward Committee Meeting, 20 February 1997.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Province of the Cape of Good Hope (1992), and Province of the Cape of Good Hope (1993).
\textsuperscript{54} Provincial Administration of the Cape of Good Hope (1993).
location, thereby facilitating control of the ‘squatting problem’. Interpreted in this way, the establishment of Imizamo Yethu was actually a way of further marginalising the black residents of Hout Bay.\(^\text{55}\)

**Preparing for local government elections**

As part of the democratisation of local government, non-racial transitional councils were established, mostly in 1995, which meant new formal avenues for participation for black and coloured neighbourhood associations.\(^\text{56}\) The councils consisted of appointed councillors and were supposed to replace existing local authorities and to take on their functions until the first local government elections.\(^\text{57}\)

Local negotiating forums proposed which councillors were to be nominated to the new transitional councils from statutory and non-statutory bodies on a fifty-fifty basis. The statutory body consisted of members of existing (white) local government structures, such as councillors from the Regional Services Council and ratepayers’ associations, and the non-statutory body of those who were not part of the statutory side, i.e. the ANC, SANCO and other previously excluded political organisations. There were, however, disagreements as to who exactly could be part of the respective bodies, mainly as a result of the loosely worded legislation. Cameron describes how political parties tried to maximise their voting strength by manipulating the composition of forum members. In some cases, the NP and the DP managed to claim membership of non-statutory structures, and many NP-oriented civic organisations were successful in gaining seats on the negotiating forums.\(^\text{58}\)

As will become clear below this is exactly what happened in Hout Bay.

In the apartheid era the white community of Hout Bay had no representation on the Divisional Council, or on the Regional Services Council that followed. Because of this previous non-representation, the Ratepayers’ Association came under the non-statutory grouping even though they were white. Graham Kelroe-Cooke of the Ratepayers’ Association was nominated to the non-statutory group and was then approved by the negotiating forums.\(^\text{59}\) An interim local council was established which covered the areas of Hout Bay and Llandudno.\(^\text{60}\) The council was composed of twelve council-

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\(^{57}\) Cameron (1999), p. 87.

\(^{58}\) Ibid.

\(^{59}\) E-mail correspondence with Kelroe-Cooke, 11 October 2007. According to Kelroe-Cooke, it was a deliberate choice by the white community not to participate in the apartheid local government structures ‘specifically because of the apartheid policy (no black representation) that existed’ (E-mail correspondence with Kelroe-Cooke, 11 October 2007).

\(^{60}\) Llandudno is an affluent residential area next to Hout Bay along the coast. In 1996, the per capita monthly income was 3,942 Rand, compared with Hangberg’s 788 Rand, Langa’s 492
lors; eight from white areas and four from coloured and black areas (four from the Hout Bay Ratepayers’ Association, four from Llandudno, two from Hangberg, and two black councillors from outside Hout Bay). The final composition of the council confirms Cameron’s claims about large deviations from the original intention of a fifty-fifty representation of previously advantaged and disadvantaged groupings.

Dicki Meter was one of the councillors from Hangberg and he was elected mayor of the transitional council by ballot at its first meeting in early March 1995. Interestingly enough, he did not mention his ANC affiliation in public, at least not initially. Instead he was referred to as a civil society representative in the media. Meter saw the provision of basic services to all people of Hout Bay and Llandudno and the introduction of affirmative action as priority issues during his term. The powers of the council were limited however, mainly because of financial constraints, and its main function was overseeing the process leading to the first local elections. There was also a capacity development component involved as inexperienced non-statutory members were supposed to learn about local government affairs from their more experienced white colleagues. In the short period (a little more than a year), Meter tried to exercise as much influence as possible within the existing local government legislation.

[During the time of the transitional council] nobody was evicted from their homes, no shacks were broken (...). And we’ve also tried to push, you know, basic services to everyone. And of course in that short period no money was budgeted for it so (...) what we’ve done is we tried to tap (...) unspent money. We would channel that to non-white areas. Try to get extra taps, trying to clean up the areas, trying to provide basic services, that was about it. And we couldn’t do much more.

Probably Meter’s limited success was also related to the regional dominance of the NP, with its agenda at the time very much concerned with preventing an ANC victory in the upcoming local elections. In addition, Cameron claims that part of the general problem with the transitional councils was that many of the councillors were only temporary and had no real chance of being elected. In some cases, this led to a lack of long-term commitment and reluctance to take unpopular decisions.

Rand and Rondebosch’s 3,077 Rand (CMC Administration [undated], Socioeconomic characteristics of suburbs: 1996 Census).

61 Interview with Kelroe-Cooke, 1 October 2004. For details as regards councillors, see ‘New mayor: It’s time for us to work together’, Cape Argus, 7 March 1995.

62 More specifically he was referred to as coming from the Development Action Group, an NGO dealing with housing matters (ibid.).

63 Interview with Meter, 21 February 2006.

64 Cameron (1999), p. 89. Some councillors also tried to delay the elections in order to continue to receive allowances (ibid.).
As mentioned, one of the more concrete functions of the council was to prepare for the upcoming elections by nominating candidates. Party politics was in the process of entering local government politics in Cape Town, and this was clearly reflected in the new council. Kelroe-Cooke of the Ratepayers’ Association on Hout Bay’s transitional council was strongly against the increasing politicisation of local government, and wanted to put up an independent candidate in the local elections. He feared that the ANC would gain a majority of votes in Hout Bay as their view of Imizamo Yethu differed substantially from that of the Ratepayers’ Association. In the end there were three candidates in Hout Bay: ANC (Dicki Meter), DP and an independent candidate. Kelroe-Cooke claimed that because there were two non-ANC candidates, the white Hout Bay community was divided, which ultimately led to the ANC’s and Meter’s victory. However, another analysis is made by Seekings who argues that the Ratepayers’ Association had already at this stage developed good relations with the NP, and that the independent candidate was in reality (unofficially) NP-aligned. According to this interpretation, the division of the white vote was thus a ‘normal’ party political contest between two ideologically different political parties.

The transition to democracy: concluding discussion

During the negotiation process (1990–1993), the relative power balance between the actors involved was very uneven. Although it was indeed a breakthrough that representatives of the different groups sat down and negotiated on the future plans of Imizamo Yethu, the fundamental problem of the pre-democratic local government was obvious. The government, in this case the provincial administration, had decision-making powers that could overrule any proposal coming from the other representatives. As demonstrated above, these inequalities in terms of decision-making powers were clearly perceived by those representing the informal settlers. The process with a relatively stronger executive is not unique in itself – the democratic deficit lies in the inability of the actors concerned to hold the government accountable for its decisions, ultimately through democratic elections.

But even without this basic caveat, the white Ratepayers’ Association was at an advantage in the negotiations with the authorities due to knowledge of how the system worked. The negotiations as regards the 18-hectare restriction took place without the involvement of representatives of Imizamo Yethu. Although a democratic decision-making process could obviously have led to the same result, it would have required the involvement of Imizamo Yethu representatives. A more democratic and inclusive decision-

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65 Interview with Kelroe-Cooke, 1 October 2004.
66 E-mail correspondence with Seekings, 17 July 2007. Although I have not been able to confirm the information from Seekings, his analysis corresponds well to the way in which ratepayers’ associations used to operate and liaise with the NP. See, for example, Cameron (1986), pp. 74–76.
making process could have contributed to a final decision accepted by all major stakeholders.

The exclusiveness of the process can be understood when taking into account the political power structure at the time. Many whites saw the increasing number of land invasions as a way for the UDF and the ANC to increase their number of future votes in predominantly white areas, ultimately posing a threat to the privileged position of the whites. Among the white groups that felt particularly threatened was the South African civil service, notoriously conservative and corrupt, with a close relationship with the NP. The Ratepayers’ Association probably saw an influential ally in the CPA, which would facilitate their attempts to restrict the designated area in Hout Bay to 18 hectares. Although not confirmed in this particular case, attitudes of wanting to maintain the status quo as long as possible were common in the public administration in this period.

As has become clear in retrospect residents’ associations had a prominent role in the decision-making process during the first phase of local government democratisation. As representatives of the interim councils they had formal access through the new structures that were set up. Jonny Steinberg describes the status of the civics on the transitional councils as ‘a symptom of an anomaly, for they earned this status, not through a process of formal representation, but by virtue of organising those who were denied the opportunity to be represented at all’. Still, as touched upon, their chances of exercising real influence were restricted because of aspects, such as lack of funds, time constraints and, most importantly, a political power structure that continued to favour established actors, such as ratepayers’ associations.

McAdam et al. note that ‘[e]pisodes of contention typically grow out of and depend on a perception of significant environmental uncertainty on the part of the state and non-state elites and challengers alike’. In our case this perception seems to be verified. Among both the Ratepayers’ Association and the representatives of Imizamo Yethu we saw increasing levels of mobilisation associated with a rising sense of threat or opportunity.

The early years of local democracy: an NP-controlled Cape Metropolitan Council, 1996–2000

The first non-racial local government elections were held in May 1996 in the Western Cape, including Cape Town. In Cape Town Municipality the ANC became the largest party, whereas the remaining municipalities were won by the NP. Hout Bay, including Imizamo Yethu, now became the responsibility

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71 McAdam et al. (2001), p. 97.
of the South Peninsula Municipality. Its council had 36 seats out of which the NP had 26 and the ANC 4.72 The NP thus continued to control the majority of municipalities in the Cape Metropolitan Area, and as previously mentioned the public servants also remained. We would thus not expect any major changes in the authorities’ policy position regarding Imizamo Yethu. This is likely to have favoured those hoping for a status quo in terms of keeping the 18 hectares restriction for residential development.

Changes in the local political power structure: a Hout Bay ANC councillor in an NP-controlled municipality

Dicki Meter thus became the first democratically elected ward councillor in Hout Bay, representing the ANC. Although it should have been positive for the associations in Imizamo Yethu and Hangberg to have an ANC ward councillor who was ‘on their side’, his minority position on the municipal council clearly restricted their prospects of influencing. Being only one out of four ANC councillors in the otherwise NP-controlled South Peninsula Council Meter perceived that this period was perhaps even more difficult than pre-1994 in terms of influencing decision-making and agenda-setting. But in the end he was satisfied with what he managed to achieve in terms of allocating funds to his ward.

Guess which ward spent the most? Not an NP ward, the ANC ward. And of course I was always of the opinion that it’s better to try to persuade by very little force. I think that’s what paid off for us and local government politics also.73

The Hout Bay Ratepayers’ Association’s strategy to remain apolitical proved untenable due to the party politicisation of local government that became apparent in the elections. The vice-chair described how the association approached the NP at the time as it was hoping that the NP would work in the interest of the association. But he also recalls the close collaboration with the local ANC councillor.

After the election took place, out of 200 councillors (…) [in the Cape Metropolitan Area], there was only a hand full of independent councillors that were elected. We realised at that moment that the future of local government was definitely going a political route. We then approached the National Party at that stage. They had been very co-operative. They were in fact running the [South Peninsula] Council at that stage, they had the majority. We started working quite closely with them. I then for the first time joined a political party. I signed for the NP. I have been involved in politics ever since then. (…) In fact we worked closely with Dicki Meter as well.74

73 Interview with Meter, 21 February 2006.
74 Interview with Kelroe-Cooke, 1 October 2004.
The frequent interaction between the Ratepayers’ Association and Councillor Meter was mainly a result of Meter’s attempts to establish joint community structures in Hout Bay and Llandudno. So-called Reconstruction and Development Forums (RDP) were national government initiatives that were used to implement the policies outlined in the RDP programme at local government level. In 1997, the Hout Bay Reconstruction and Development Programme Forum was established, followed by the Hout Bay-Llandudno Ward Committee. These structures were not initially Meter’s own initiatives, but he encouraged them and facilitated their establishment to improve communication between the ward and the South Peninsula Council. Generally the initiatives were backed by most of Hout Bay’s community associations. The major difference between the RDP Forum and the ward committee was that the forum generally had a wider participation. The RDP Forum was open to all organisations in the ward, but limited to three representatives from each association. These representatives would have speaking and voting rights, whereas other residents would have observer status. There were 15 organisations represented on the RDP Working Committee responsible for the launch of the RDP Forum. The RDP Forum was not active for long but the ward committee lasted for around six years, albeit with varying degrees of activity. In the next section it will be discussed how the ward committee operated, and if it affected the way in which associations perceived that they were able to influence decision-making.

From protest to conventional politics: working through the Hout Bay-Llandudno Ward Committee

The Hout Bay-Llandudno Ward Committee was thus created in 1997 to serve as a link between the South Peninsula Municipality and the ward. Councillor Meter presented the council’s agenda at the meetings and ward committee representatives had the chance to comment on issues that he as a councillor could in turn report back to the council. The ward committee was set up on a voluntary basis by Meter as a response to what he perceived as negative competition between the communities of Hout Bay. The committee had a broad composition with representatives from all major associations, including Imizamo Yethu Civic Association (SANCO), the Ratepayers’ and the Residents’ associations. Although it did not have any real powers, it was informally encouraged by the South Peninsula Municipality which regularly attended its meetings. Local authorities favoured such initiatives as they were trying to improve their relations with the public, relations that had been seriously undermined because of mutual distrust during the apartheid years.

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75 Hout Bay RDP Forum, Minutes of the interim committee meeting, 9 April 1997; Hout Bay RDP Forum, Constitution (Draft), 23 April 1997, and letter from the Hout Bay RDP working committee, 8 May 1997.

76 Interview with Meter, 21 February 2006. This was thus prior to the compulsory introduction of ward committees in Cape Town in 2004.
However, in a discussion document the South Peninsula Municipality reflected on the major difficulties in encouraging public participation.

The politicisation of local politics since the 1995 elections within the SPM [South Peninsula Municipality] have generated some practical problems: Participation itself has been politicized. Many community structures have clear partisan alliances. It is therefore extremely difficult to ascertain representativity and legitimacy of community structures. (…) Any (…) councillors struggle to find a good combination between their representative and participative roles. (…) Local mobilisation of communities has generated an extremely diverse range of community organisations. In effect civil society structures present an extremely fragmented picture. It is impossible for the SPM to engage effectively, or resource, such a wide range of interest groups.77

One important explanation as to why the relations between communities and local government were not working properly is, of course, the non-democratic history when public participation was not encouraged. Edward Thomas became involved in Hout Bay and Imizamo Yethu in 1997 as a government official with the South Peninsula Municipality. He recalled some of the difficulties encountered as a representative of the authorities.

[From the perspective of] the community leadership, and not only in Imizamo Yethu, but in many areas you know (…) the municipality isn’t always seen as a good guy. We already carried baggage from the boss and no matter what your good intention is, if you’re going to be seen in a certain light, it’s going to take you to convince them otherwise, you know…78

Judging by some of the notes from the ward committee meetings, tensions between the different Hout Bay groupings continued to hamper fruitful collaboration. In one meeting Ward Councillor Meter voiced his fears about certain individuals, not being representative of their constituencies, having too much influence on the committee. He also criticised that civic groups from Imizamo Yethu and Hangberg had not been invited to a meeting organised by the Heritage Trust, a ‘white’ association dealing with environmental issues.79

A planning sub-committee was also set up in September 1997, with the specific purpose of allowing a co-ordinated response from the public to applications that affected the broader Hout Bay community. Graham Kelroe-

78 Interview with Thomas, 11 April 2006.
79 Minutes from Hout Bay and Llandudno Ward Committee Meeting, 4 August 1997. There were some serious attempts to unite the communities during this time, however with no visible results. For example, in June 1998, a workshop was organised by the Centre for Conflict Resolution at the University of Cape Town. The purpose was to come together and discuss ‘needs, fears and aspirations so as to build a community with a common goal’ (Minutes from Hout Bay and Llandudno Ward Committee Meeting, 1 June 1998).
Cooke from the Hout Bay Ratepayers’ Association acted as the Chairperson. At a ward committee meeting he reported ‘that he had been disappointed that the representatives from Hout Bay Heights, Imizamo Yethu and the Harbour Action Group had not attended the first meeting’. He was however assured that they would do so in the future.\textsuperscript{80}

There were not only tensions between the different communities, but also within them. The\textit{ Hout Bay Residents’ Association} was created in 1997 following disagreements in the Ratepayers’ Association. According to Kelroe-Cooke, the reason was that some members of the Ratepayers’ Association had actively campaigned to obtain representation on the transitional council in 1995 without the knowledge of the full Executive Committee. When this was known to the rest of the committee, the members who had been campaigning were asked for an explanation and decided to leave the association. One of them was the person who later on was the DP candidate in the local elections in 1996. Kelroe-Cooke claimed that, apart from the party political division, the split took place because of large differences in opinion between the two groupings. Apparently they also had different support bases, with the Residents’ Association having a majority of elderly, mostly retired members, and the Ratepayers’ Association had a membership of mainly younger working people.\textsuperscript{81}

Len Swimmer, the Chairperson of the Residents’ Association gave basically the same account of the background to the disagreement between them and the Ratepayers’ Association. He further underlined the party political differences, arguing that the Ratepayers’ Association was considered by him and his followers to be too right-wing and politically conservative. In addition, the Ratepayers’ Association was thought to be ‘pro-development’ as opposed to the Residents’ Association that stressed the environmental risks of densification of residential developments in Hout Bay.\textsuperscript{82} The main reason behind the dispute between members of the Ratepayers’ Association, ultimately leading to a split and the creation of the Residents’ Association, can thus be traced to party political competition between the NP and the DP. The tension between the two associations spotlight the difficulty even for a supposedly united white Hout Bay population to reach a consensus and act on behalf of the entire white community.

A recurrent issue at the ward committee meetings was Imizamo Yethu. In February 1997, there was a special meeting devoted only to this subject. Councillor Meter was concerned that permanent development was still not taking place in the area because land had not been transferred to the provin-\textsuperscript{80} Minutes from Hout Bay and Llandudno Ward Committee Meeting, 6 October 1997.
\textsuperscript{81} Interview with Kelroe-Cooke, 1 October 2004.
\textsuperscript{82} Interview with Swimmer, 12 October 2004. One of the Residents’ Association’s main tasks is to oversee planning proposals out for public scrutiny. The association often objects to developments taking place in the area and works closely with environmental associations in the area, such as the Hout Bay and Llandudno Heritage Trust (ibid.).
cial authorities as agreed. The land should then in turn be transferred to the South Peninsula Municipality and down to the Imizamo Yethu residents. Only then could the process of confirming the names of the rightful occupants of each designated plot continue, and, in the end, the issuing of title deeds. The Ratepayers’ Association in turn voiced fears about the increasing number of people coming in. It was estimated that there were more than 1,000 informal dwellings in the area which was originally anticipated for 631 sites, or 1,400 people. The Ratepayers’ Association was also concerned that the buffer strips, although not intended for housing, were now being occupied. At the meeting it was agreed that a letter would be sent to the provincial administration to remind them of the transfer of land.83 In July 1997, the Imizamo Yethu Civic Association (SANCO) ‘voiced its concern that the promised title deeds had still not been issued’ and asked Councillor Meter to urgently discuss the matter with the authorities responsible.84

Only when people had their title deeds could they gain access to the subsidy for the building of houses. The identification of the rightful occupant proved difficult however. Part of the problem was that, as the years went by, more and more people moved into Imizamo Yethu. When the authorities came to identify the original occupant of a certain site, there were often several families on it.85 There were also accusations of corruption and a number of ‘official’ housing lists having been circulated, which created a delicate situation.86

Although a more open and inclusive decision-making process was now in place, the political power structure in Hout Bay and Cape Town led to a feeling of dissatisfaction among the associations in Hout Bay. The Imizamo Yethu Civic Association (SANCO) did not have any success in having their demands met concerning the provision of formal housing and access to the 16 hectares, even though they had an important ally in the ANC ward councillor. The Ratepayers’ Association in turn was frustrated at a perceived inaction by the authorities to deal with the increasing number of people who came to live in Imizamo Yethu.

To put pressure on the local authorities, the Imizamo Yethu Civic Association also mobilised outside the sphere of conventional politics. In May 2000, about 100 Imizamo Yethu residents demonstrated in Hout Bay for access to the 16 hectares of undeveloped land. Councillor Meter accused the municipality of neglecting previous recommendations to redevelop the land and of not involving the Imizamo Yethu community in a consultative process regarding the future development of the area. The Municipal Director of Housing Services, Hans Smit, responded that the land needed to be trans-

83 Minutes from Hout Bay and Llandudno Ward Committee Meeting, 20 February 1997.
84 Ibid., 7 July 1997.
85 Interview with Dick, 14 February 2006.
86 Sinethemba Civic Association (2003).
ferred from its present owners, the Cape Metropolitan Council, to the South Peninsula Municipality before serviced plots could be transferred to identified Imizamo Yethu beneficiaries. So the protest did not lead to any substantive results.

A report from the South Peninsula Municipality confirms that the administration found the increasing party politicisation of local government affairs disturbing in the particular case of Imizamo Yethu and the informal settlement of Masiphumelele in Noordhoek (also part of the South Peninsula Municipality). The report by the Urbanisation and Housing Planning Directorate to the Executive Committee lamented that there was ‘no evident active support from local councillors for the control of growth’ in the settlements. This proved problematic when informal structures were to be demolished. The municipality’s policy was to inform councillors of upcoming demolitions, but ‘this frequently results in the creation of aggressive reception [by a] party well prepared to oppose our staff, even when police backup is present’. The report concluded that there was a need to encourage local leadership and councillors to assist and co-operate in the control of structures, and to not necessarily inform local area councillors of demolitions as this could leave council staff at risk. The conclusion is perhaps understandable, but yet alarming as it indicates that the democratically elected political representatives of the ward were not to be informed by the municipality of important activities carried out in ‘their’ wards.

The early years of democracy: concluding discussion

Public participation was encouraged by local government during the first years of democracy. This was visible in Hout Bay, for example, through the South Peninsula administration’s positive attitude towards the work carried out by the ward committee. However, several associations were displeased with the effectiveness of their participation, and sometimes protest activities were used instead to put pressure on the authorities.

Dahl’s dilemma of pluralist democracies becomes evident in the concerns of municipal officials about the politicisation of residents’ associations, and about their alignments with political parties. As many areas had competing community associations, not least Hout Bay, no association could claim to represent the whole community, which in turn made communication with local government fragmented and less efficient. A more unified community structure would perhaps have been more effective from this perspective, but would risk excluding certain actors.

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87 ‘Hout Bay squatters march for their land’, Cape Times, 10 May 2000. The Director’s response is somewhat puzzling considering the legal restrictions on the residential development of the 16 hectares.
88 South Peninsula Municipality (2000).
The Ratepayers’ Association responded to increasing party politicisation at local government level by becoming more politicised as well. The association became clearly aligned with the NP, ultimately leading to a split in 1997 when a DP faction left and established the Residents’ Association. In spite of having elite allies on the South Peninsula Council (i.e. the NP councillors), the Ratepayers’ Association considered the overall situation in Imizamo Yethu a continuous threat as there were new people moving in, also occupying the so-called buffer strips that, according to the old provincial notices, were to be left undeveloped.

The ANC councillor in turn worked closely with the civic association in Imizamo Yethu as well as with community associations in Hangberg. However, the NP’s dominance created a context that was rigid and unresponsive to the demands put forward by the Imizamo Yethu representatives. Although the ward councillor was representing them, he had only a minority position on the South Peninsula Council. There was a growing feeling of being neglected in discussions with the South Peninsula administration. Conventional forms of political activities, most importantly participation in the ward committee, were complemented with protest actions. In 2000, Councillor Meter organised a demonstration of some 100 participants to demand access to the 16 hectares of undeveloped land.

In conclusion, we note a strengthening of party political alignments during this period. During Councillor Meter’s short period on the transitional council (1995–1996) he did not officially represent the ANC. However, in the upcoming local elections he ran as an ANC candidate and managed to beat the independent candidate as well as the DP candidate. After the elections, the Ratepayers’ Association increased its co-operation with the NP. Hence, the racial and class dimensions of the conflict over Imizamo Yethu (white property owners against black and coloured homeless) were now clearly accompanied by a third: a party political dimension.

Change of power in the new Unicity: the DA, 2000–2002
In Cape Town, the newly formed national alliance between the DP and the NP, the Democratic Alliance (DA), managed to win the second local government elections held on 5 December 2000. At the same time the overall responsibility of Hout Bay was transferred from the South Peninsula Municipality to the newly established Unicity. This resulted in the officials responsible being physically spread out. As discussed by Roger Carney, the project manager in charge of Imizamo Yethu since 2003, the creation of the Unicity did not necessarily create a unified organisation. He perceived that there were tensions between the ‘old’ officials in the South Peninsula ad-
ministration, and the ‘new’ ones located in the Civic Centre building in cen-
tral Cape Town.89

The DA’s success in Cape Town was also discernable in Hout Bay where
the ANC’s Dicki Meter found himself beaten by the DA’s Pieter Venter.
Partly the DA’s electoral success in Hout Bay can be explained by a change
in the ward boundaries prior to the 2000 election, as the ward was enlarged
to include also Camps Bay – an affluent area with a majority of non-ANC
voters. The DA received around 60 per cent of the vote in ward 74 and the
ANC 30 per cent.90 Pieter Venter used to be the head of the ANC’s media
liaison department in the national parliament, but left that position in May
2000 due to disagreements concerning the government’s view on Zimbabwe.
At the same time he resigned his membership of the ANC, of which he used
to be Chairperson of the Camps Bay/Clifton branch.91 Shortly thereafter he
was persuaded to stand for elections for the DA in the upcoming municipal
elections.

With a DA ward councillor in Hout Bay, and a DA-controlled Cape Town
City Council, the political power structure clearly changed including the
political elite allies for the main actors SANCO and the Ratepayers’ Asso-
ciation. SANCO’s chances of gaining access to the undeveloped 16 hectares
in Imizamo Yethu were further reduced as their political ally Dicki Meter
had now stepped down. The new DA ward councillor Pieter Venter soon
made it clear that his view on Imizamo Yethu was the same as that of the
Ratepayers’ Association, namely to restrict further residential development.

Venter continued to organise meetings in the ward committee established
by Dicki Meter. In January 2001, he formed the Ward Consultative Council
with 14 organisations attending the first meeting. Minutes from the meeting
reveal that there was an intense debate as regards membership criteria, for
example, if small associations could have the same representation as the
larger ones. There were also discussions on whether the drafted constitution
could be accepted at the meeting, or if it first needed to be referred back to
the respective membership associations. When the representatives were to
vote on the matter, one person from Imizamo Yethu, Charles Mguga, ‘called
into question the credentials of Mr Nongabe and Mr Towke to vote on IY’s
[Imizamo Yethu’s] behalf’. Tokwe responded by claiming that ‘Mr Mguga
had resigned as secretary of IY [Imizamo Yethu Civic Association] in No-
vember’. Because of the incident it was decided not to count the vote from

89 Interview with Carney, 20 February 2006.
90 More precisely the DA received 60.45 per cent of the ward vote and 61.78 per cent of the
PR vote, and the ANC received 30 per cent of the ward vote and 28.61 per cent of the PR vote
Imizamo Yethu. The episode points to the growing conflict within Imizamo Yethu between those claiming to be part of the original settlers, to which Mguga belongs, and SANCO represented by Tokwe and Nongabe.

As a result of the increasing tensions between those two groupings in Imizamo Yethu, a new civic association was established: the Sinethemba Civic Association. The association was founded in 1999/2000 and allegedly represents the original settlers of Imizamo Yethu. As such it claimed to have some 1,000 members in 2006. Members of Sinethemba’s Executive Committee used to be SANCO members before 1999. However, due to various disagreements, mainly on who were the original beneficiaries of residential plots in Imizamo Yethu, relations with SANCO seriously deteriorated. Members of Sinethemba felt neglected and argued that SANCO was a corrupt community structure favouring only its allies. SANCO in turn claimed that Sinethemba was simply an association constructed by the Ratepayers’ Association and the DA to ‘deracialise’ the conflict in Imizamo Yethu by using ‘blacks to fight against blacks’. While there seems to be some truth in many of the accusations, the important point here is that the fragmentation of community structures increased, making it more difficult for local government officials to constructively collaborate with associations in Hout Bay because of the mutual suspicion. A local government official described it in the following way.

I mean, whenever I start doing something there, I get a phone call from Sinethemba representatives: “Work is being created in the area, and only SANCO members are being offered jobs.” (…) and then I must beg Kenny [Tokwe of SANCO] and plead to just stick one person in or something like that. (…) So, you see, further politics in that area has actually deteriorated conditions much further.

The conflicts between SANCO and Sinethemba eventually led to the demise of the consultative council. The continuous disagreements, not only between these two associations but in the meetings in general, led Councillor Venter to conclude that the council was not very useful. ‘[I]t really was a very pointless exercise. We would spend hours debating issues trying to reach a compromise on issues’. The triggering event leading to the termination of the council in June 2003 was that Venter and the Sinethemba Civic Association withdrew from a meeting because the Hout Bay Residents’ Association had

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92 Minutes of Meeting on the Formation of a New Ward Consultative Council, 29 January 2001. The change of name from ward committee to ward consultative council was made to distinguish it from the formal ward committees established in the rest of the country.
93 Civic Survey 2004 (answered in 2006).
94 Interviews with Ngwangwe and Zungu, 12 October 2004, and Ngunga and Ball, 28 March 2006.
95 Interview with Tokwe, 12 October 2004.
96 Interview with Hendricks, 13 March 2006.
97 Interview with Venter, 1 November 2004.
opposed that Sinethemba could be part of the powerful sub-committee called the Hout Bay Planning Committee.\textsuperscript{98}

\textbf{From conventional to protest politics: increasing mobilisation among Hout Bay’s residents’ associations}

In September 2001, some 350 residents of Imizamo Yethu damaged a fence and attempted to occupy adjacent municipal land. The police, called upon by the property caretaker, prevented the group from trespassing with support from the South Peninsula Municipal Law Enforcement Section. The land ‘invaders’ threw stones at the police, who responded by firing rubber bullets. In spite of the violence no one was injured and the group of invaders eventually dispersed. The Unicity obtained an urgent Cape High Court interdict against the invaders the day after and charged them with trespassing and damage to public property.\textsuperscript{99} The two main respondents were Morris Nongabe and Nkhosinathi Mazele of SANCO’s Executive Committee.\textsuperscript{100}

The next day a group of Imizamo Yethu residents marched to the Cape Town Unicity offices and handed over a memorandum to the city officials. Hout Bay’s Ward Councillor Pieter Venter accused the local Imizamo Yethu branch of the ANC of having mobilised the group of people who invaded the land, and called on the provincial ANC leadership to condemn the actions. The provincial ANC spokesperson, Cameron Dugmore, denied such accusations and responded by urging the DA-controlled Unicity and the Provincial Government to speed up the transfer of land. One of the invaders was reported as having said that the land invasion was carried out because the Imizamo Yethu community perceived that the Unicity was neglecting them. ‘Last year we sent four letters to the Unicity and they came here once and did nothing’.\textsuperscript{101}

The protest action resulted in a number of meetings with the council and Imizamo Yethu representatives, but with no real outcome.\textsuperscript{102} Some of the meetings also included the Ratepayers’ Association which made it clear that it would strongly oppose any move by the local authorities towards handing over more land to Imizamo Yethu. This statement resulted in a protest action in which Imizamo Yethu representatives held a placard demonstration outside the venue where the Ratepayers’ Association was having a meeting. The former Ward Councillor Dicki Meter accused Councillor Venter of never consulting with any area residents who were not white and for using ‘race-
hate language’. Venter in turn blamed the ANC for encouraging land invasions.103

It was not only in Imizamo Yethu that residents were frustrated at a perceived feeling of being ignored by the Unicity. The combination of a DA ward councillor in Hout Bay who was in favour of the demands put forward by the Ratepayers’ Association and a DA controlled Unicity Council should have been seen as opening up possibilities for the Ratepayers’ Association. However, according to Kelroe-Cooke, when the association tried to make the council pay attention to the problems in Imizamo Yethu, for example, by discussing the matter with the Executive Councillor Bryan Watkyns, ‘the officials were just ignoring us and the politicians just had too much so they weren’t really concerned about our situation’.104

The Ratepayers’ Association’s main concern still was the influx of people to the area. Because of the perceived inaction from the council – ‘even when the DA controlled the council’ – the Ratepayers’ Association ‘went to some rather extreme length to get their attention’.105 In March 2002, the Ratepayers’ Association organised a joint protest with the Sinethemba Civic Association, the newly established civic association representing some of Imizamo Yethu’s original settlers. Around 150 people managed to bring posters into a new City Council chamber that was being inaugurated by the DA’s Mayor Gerald Morkel. This was only possible with the secret support of Ward Councillor Venter who brought the posters along in his car as he had access to the building through the garage.106 At a given signal the protesters began to chant loudly ‘Rule of law! No Zimbabwe in Hout Bay!’ and posters were unfurled with slogans, such as ‘Honour Legitimate Title’, and ‘Stop Land Invasions’. Mayor Morkel stressed that the action was illegal but eventually agreed to meet with the demonstrators and a memorandum was handed over to him. The Imizamo Yethu Civic Association (SANCO) claimed that some of the Imizamo Yethu participants had been ‘tricked into attending the protest under the false pretences that they were “going to Cape Town to receive their long awaited title deeds”’. The action was seen as a way to ‘divide and rule’ the Imizamo Yethu residents. Not surprisingly the Ratepayers’ Association denied such accusations.107

According to the Ratepayers’ Association, the protest had the intended effect on the authorities, and it perceived that the City Council was now willing to solve the dispute over the unused 16 hectares in Imizamo Yethu. A meeting was organised by the council, to which representatives of SANCO and the Ratepayers’ Association were invited. SANCO continued to claim

104 Interview with Kelroe-Cooke, 1 October 2004.
105 Ibid., and ‘Hout Bay’s “rule of law” cry rattles unicity dignitaries’, Sentinel, 15 March 2002.
106 Interview with Venter, 25 April 2006.
that the 16 hectares should be used for residential purposes, whereas the Ratepayers’ Association persisted that the original plan should be adhered to. The council agreed that it would pay for the services of a senior counsel who would take submissions from both sides and come up with a formal legal opinion. The council would then adopt that as its formal policy regarding Imizamo Yethu. Kelroe-Cooke of the Ratepayers’ Association recalled that ‘[b]oth parties agreed beforehand that whatever the outcome was, we would accept that in good faith and we would abide by that…’.108 Two legal opinions were obtained, both indicating that residential development would still only be allowed within the designated 18 hectares. This became the official approach from the council.

At the council’s executive meeting on 23 April 2002 a proposed development procedure was adopted as a response ‘to the current impasse with regard to the development of Imizamo Yethu, which has resulted in attempted land invasions and disturbances during Council meetings’. The report proposed ‘for adoption, the implementation of a rigorous informal dwelling growth control programme together with an accelerated transfer of the registered sites to the beneficiaries’. The council also acknowledged the need to find alternative land outside Hout Bay in order to house all people.109

Soon thereafter, on 9 May 2002, the High Court issued a court order against ‘trespassers and persons attempting or intending to unlawfully occupy’ a large number of ervens110 in Imizamo Yethu. The court order stated that the City of Cape Town was authorised to demolish structures erected on the property and to remove building material and demolished structures from the property.111 It should be noted that, unlike the situation under apartheid, in the democratic era authorities need a court order to evict people unless the person putting up an illegal structure is caught in the act.112

Additionally the executive committee approved two multi-disciplinary teams consisting of town planners, architects, etc., to plan for separate sections of Imizamo Yethu. One team, led by Chittenden Nicks de Villiers, was appointed to plan for the 16 hectares intended for community facilities, whereas the other, Liebenberg and Stander team, would plan for engineering services and densification of the 18 hectares of residential land. The proposed plans of how to develop Imizamo Yethu were presented to a team of councillors and officials on 18 September. Apart from the appointment of the development teams, the process of transferring title deeds to the rightful

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108 Interview with Kelroe-Cooke, 1 October 2004.
109 City of Cape Town (2002a).
110 An erf (erven in the plural form) is a plot.
111 High Court of South Africa, Cape of Good Hope Provincial Division (2002).
112 The South African Constitution reads: ‘[N]o one may be evicted from their home, or have their home demolished, without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances’ (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, Chapter 2, Bill of Rights, 26 Housing).
owners was resumed. There were 290 transferable sites in the residential part of Imizamo Yethu, and the owners would apply for housing subsidies through the so-called Mahukhanye Development Trust. The Chairperson of the Mahukhanye Trust was Kenny Tokwe, one of SANCO’s executive members, which allegedly caused some mistrust among the Imizamo Yethu community as to what extent the trust was objective in accessing the housing subsidies.

Frustration remained great in Imizamo Yethu. In May 2002, there were reports of new land invasions with 20 families erecting illegal structures and clearing 70 plots, and the Cape High Court issued eviction orders for the city to remove the structures. Another major event took place on 9 September 2002, when a march involving a few hundred members of the so-called Land Campaign Committee from Imizamo Yethu was organised. The march was led by Dicki Meter, the former ANC Ward Councillor in Hout Bay, and headed to the Civic Centre to hand over a memorandum to the mayor. As the mayor was not available, the City Manager Robert Maydon received it in his place. In the memorandum the Land Campaign Committee accused the DA run Unicity of racism and discrimination, and demanded that the mayor set aside the whole of the 34 hectares within 30 days to address the housing needs.

Power shift in the new Unicity: concluding discussion

In sum, it is interesting to note that the change of control at the City Council influenced the practices of associations in Hout Bay similarly in that they both made use of protest activities in addition to conventional forms of politics. For SANCO and many Imizamo Yethu residents it was not an exceptional form of activity, but for the Ratepayers’ Association it was definitely a new type of action. What were the mechanisms behind their mobilisation? In both cases, the triggering factor seems to have been a general frustration at what was perceived as negligence by politicians and government officials to the situation in Imizamo Yethu. Social movement theory stipulates that increasing mobilisation takes place when the chances of success are moderate. When the chances of success are instead very high or very low, mobilisation is less likely to occur as the cost of mobilising is either considered unnecessary (in a favourable context), or too high (in a repressive environment).

In the case of the Ratepayers’ Association, the DA-led Unicity was at first considered unresponsive to the association’s attempts to influence. What did facilitate its attempts to attract the mayor’s attention was the political ally

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113 City of Cape Town (2002a); ‘City launches action plan for Imizamo Yethu’, City of Cape Town, Media release, 27 August 2002, and interview with Bedderson, 5 April 2006.
114 Interview with Dick, 14 February 2006.
now present in their ward: Councillor Venter. He shared the concerns about Imizamo Yethu and was active in the protest action that ultimately led to intense negotiations with the Unicity. The Ratepayers’ Association and the Sinethemba Civic Association also benefited from some of the changes in the institutional structure taking place. The creation of the Unicity in 2000 centralised political decision-making, and the new metropolitan mayor was given more political power than before, now acting as the chair of an executive committee.\textsuperscript{118} Having attracted the attention of the mayor and, more importantly, having him on the same side in the conflict about future plans for Imizamo Yethu, proved effective. The mayor had the capacity to see to it that a number of the association’s demands were indeed implemented, stricter influx control being one of them. Another decision that was taken in line with the association’s wishes was the City of Cape Town’s resolution to keep the 16 hectares for community facilities and not use it for residential development.

The DA council’s decisions on the future development of Imizamo Yethu meant that SANCO’s claims to gain access to the 16 hectares were further weakened. It is probable that as the years went by without any visible upgrading of the area (services and housing), frustration grew. In 2002, more than ten years after its establishment, Imizamo Yethu was still estimated to contain 2,700 informal dwellings (self-constructed shacks made of plywood, masonite, plastic sheeting, advertising boards and corrugated iron) and only a few brick houses, with rudimentary access to water from communal taps and electricity (often accessed illegally by rigging connections to existing lines).\textsuperscript{119}

The protest actions in 2001 and 2002 were results of this growing discontent, and the DA council was accused of racially discriminating against Imizamo Yethu residents. The Ratepayers’ Association’s success in making the council start negotiations again benefited SANCO in that they were invited to participate. The land invasions were also mentioned by the council as one of the reasons for starting a new planning process for developing Imizamo Yethu. Although in the end the council decided to keep the 18-hectare restriction on residential development, as opposed to SANCO’s claims, the action plan that was agreed upon in 2002 did mean a breakthrough in the development of Imizamo Yethu, ultimately to the advantage of its residents. However, the upcoming floor-crossing in October halted the council’s ongoing plans.

\textsuperscript{119} ‘City launches action plan for Imizamo Yethu’, City of Cape Town, Media release, 27 August 2002, and Harte et al. (2006), p. 3.
Power shift without elections: the ANC-NNP alliance, 2002–2004

The floor-crossing at municipal level was preceded by intense negotiations about the constitutionality of this new reform. On 4 October 2002 the Constitutional Court eventually ruled that floor-crossings at the national, provincial and local level were not unconstitutional.\textsuperscript{120} Due to some technicalities relating to legislation at national and provincial level, parliament was required to redraw such legislation. However at local government level floor-crossing came into effect immediately on 8 October.\textsuperscript{121} The floor-crossing period in Cape Town that followed was filled with accusations of mainly DA councillors having been bribed by the ANC and the NNP to defect.\textsuperscript{122} When the period ended on 22 October, the NNP and the ANC were the major winners. The NNP, having left the DA coalition in 2001, now had 32 councillors and the ANC 80, meaning that the ANC-NNP coalition that was formed had absolute majority in the Unicity Council.\textsuperscript{123} The ANC-NNP coalition proved much more stable than the previous DP-NNP coalition (i.e. the DA), and managed to develop the necessary structures for maintaining an alliance between two ideologically very different parties. The DA coalition was more focused on just winning the elections, and turned out to be unable to survive the challenges that it encountered.\textsuperscript{124}

The first area that the new Cape Town Mayor Nomaindia Mfeketo visited after having become mayor again on 29 October 2002 was Imizamo Yethu where she met with residents and community leaders as early as on 31 October.\textsuperscript{125} Her visit indicates the importance attached to the area. Although living conditions in Imizamo Yethu were not exceptionally bad compared to other informal settlements around Cape Town, its history and location made it a highly symbolic issue for politicians to solve. It has come to represent the new integrated South Africa and as such it has been considered a pilot project for the City of Cape Town.\textsuperscript{126}

For the Ratepayers’ Association the power shift was seen as a major setback as many of the decisions taken by the DA-led council were only in the process of being implemented at the time of the shift of power. The association perceived that the new NNP-ANC council seriously reduced the chances

\textsuperscript{120} Constitutional Court of South Africa (2002).
\textsuperscript{121} At the provincial and national level the first so-called window period opened on 28 March 2003 (Idasa 2004).
\textsuperscript{122} See, for example, ‘Councillors offered bribes to defect – Morkel’, Sapa, 18 October 2002.
\textsuperscript{123} ‘Nomaindia is city’s new mayor, again’, City of Cape Town, Media release 184/2002, 29 October 2002. Mfeketo used to be the Mayor of the City of Cape Town (1998–2000) when it was still one of six municipalities in the Cape Metropolitan Council.
\textsuperscript{125} ‘Mayor gets down to work’, City of Cape Town, Media release 186/2002, 30 October 2002.
\textsuperscript{126} Interview with Carney, 8 October 2004.
of promoting its interests. According to the association, the new mayor neglected the ratepayers and excluded them from further discussions on Imizamo Yethu. Adding to the Ratepayers’ Association’s feeling of exclusion was that one of its closest allies, Ward Councillor Venter, now found himself in a minority position in the ANC-NNP controlled Unicity. This in turn clearly reduced the chances of making the council approve of his and the association’s demands. Kelroe-Cooke described the feeling of having far less chances of influencing decision-making after the change of council in the following way:

Unfortunately, the way things have changed now with the political situation as it is, he [Ward Councillor Venter] carries very little weight. (…) The decisions that the Mayor is taking in terms of Imizamo Yethu, our councillor doesn’t seem to have any influence on at all. So that’s one of the reasons that this ward council thing [the Ward Consultative Council led by Councillor Venter] broke down. We just felt that it wasn’t accomplishing anything.\(^{127}\)

Towards the end of 2002, the ANC-dominated Executive Committee of the City of Cape Town formed the Imizamo Yethu Improvement Project (IYIP) ‘in order to create some momentum for the project’\(^ {128}\). In May 2003, the City Manager Wallace Mgoqi called for nominations to form a steering committee for the project. There would be four council representatives, six members from Imizamo Yethu and ‘an additional six members from the broader Hout Bay community’.\(^ {129}\) Richard Timms of the Hout Bay Heritage Trust was one of the (white) nominated Hout Bay Valley representatives.

In the end, the council set up a placard on all your houses: “We will appoint people to this committee”, and they did and a committee was thus formed with decisions by the councillors to who the representatives should be. I was one of them. An hour or so before the first meeting was due to take place we were told that it had been postponed and it has never ever met.\(^ {130}\)

According to the project manager of Imizamo Yethu, the reason for the committee never being realised was that the valley organisations (i.e. those outside Imizamo Yethu) could not agree on their representation on the steering committee. A few months later, in August 2003, the executive mayor approved a recommendation that the steering committee would be abandoned. It was decided that a technical committee, consisting of mayoral committee members, city officials and representatives from the Imizamo Yethu community, would be set up instead.\(^ {131}\) The event shows how the

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\(^{127}\) Interview with Kelroe-Cooke, 1 October 2004.  
\(^{128}\) Carney (2004b).  
\(^{129}\) Imizamo Yethu Improvement Project Steering Committee (2003).  
\(^{130}\) Interview with R Timms, 24 March 2006.  
\(^{131}\) Carney (2004b).
mayor ultimately excluded the Hout Bay Valley associations from being represented in the further planning of Imizamo Yethu. More noticeable perhaps is that also the elected representative of the ward, Ward Councillor Venter, was not part of the committee.

In early 2003, the mayor had launched the so-called ‘Mayor’s Listening Campaign’ with the purpose of inviting comments from the public on community needs in order to provide input to the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Around 5,000 submissions were made by fax, e-mail, workshops and telephone by communities in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and 19 public workshops were organised.132 The DA opposition was critical of the mayor’s initiative and claimed that she and the ANC have marginalised and excluded the only official public participation mechanism the council has, namely sub-councils, in favour of fabricated public relations exercises with little structure and no claim to inclusivity in terms of consultation with the various communities that make up this city.133

Imizamo Yethu was one of the areas in which special meetings were organised as part of the campaign. The Ratepayers’ Association’s feeling of exclusion grew when, according to Kelroe-Cooke, the association was not formally invited to attend the meetings organised in Imizamo Yethu during the Listening Campaign.134 Indeed, the avenues through which the Ratepayers’ Association had previously communicated with the council now appeared to be closed.

A shift in council policy: no more evictions

The change of control at the City Council in October 2002 proved to have clear consequences for the mobilisation of the Ratepayers’ Association. Only a few days after the NNP-ANC coalition took over the City of Cape Town, the new council placed a six-month moratorium on water cut-offs and the eviction of people from their homes due to unpaid municipal accounts. The intention behind the moratorium was to ‘give Council time to come up with an indigent policy and to consult with affected communities to jointly find solutions’.135 The motion was strongly opposed by the DA, whose councillors eventually left the council meeting.136

132 The key areas, as measured by the frequency of comments, were housing, economic development, policing/law enforcement, and social development (City of Cape Town 2003a).
133 ‘Communities tell Nomaindia: We want better housing’, Vukani, 5 June 2003.
134 Interview with Kelroe-Cooke, 1 October 2004.
136 Ibid. The reconstituted executive committee following the transfer of power from the DA to the NNP-ANC alliance in 2002 consisted of ten councillors, including Mayor Nomaindia Mfeketo. Five were ANC, three NNP and two DA (City of Cape Town, Media release, 29 October 2002).
In Hout Bay, the DA Councillor Pieter Venter and the Ratepayers’ Association feared the consequences in Imizamo Yethu of the decision. Initially, the new council followed the decisions taken by the previous DA-controlled council. In a report to the executive committee on 22 November 2002 it was recommended that the council review the decisions taken in April, continuing the rigorous control of the informal dwelling growth, the transfer of registered sites to beneficiaries, and the identification and provision of alternative serviced land to resettle people who could not be accommodated in Imizamo Yethu. What differed from the previous decision that proposed to develop Imizamo Yethu in two separate parts (16 hectares for community facilities and 18 hectares for residential development), was the recommendation to ‘establish a multidisciplinary team to prepare a plan and strategy to develop the whole settlement on an integrated basis’. At the meeting of the executive committee a few days later, it was decided accordingly. The same day the media reported that the mayor had insinuated that the undeveloped 16 hectares would be released to cater for ‘hundreds more houses’. For the Ratepayers’ Association and DA Councillor Pieter Venter the decision to continue with the influx control must have been reassuring. However, the indication that there would be a team planning for the whole 34 hectares on an integrated basis, and not separately for the 16 and 18 hectares respectively, was not in accordance with their demands.

In April 2003, the local community paper *The Chronicle* quoted the city’s Director of Public Housing Seymour Bedderson saying that the council would change the decision as regards the undeveloped 16 hectares, and that it intended ‘to erect three-story low cost flats on all of the 16 hectares forestry station land adjacent to Imizamo Yethu’. Next to the article in *The Chronicle* was a request by the Ratepayers’ Association to donate money to the ‘Stop Land Invasions Fund’ with the aim ‘to increase the financial resources that were necessary to provide the legal assistance that was required to ensure that legitimate rights were not transgressed’. The Ratepayers’ Association was thus starting to prepare for legal action as a response to the indications that the new ANC council would disregard old decisions concerning Imizamo Yethu.

In May 2003, the Directorate of Public Housing, being aware of the litigation prepared by the Ratepayers’ Association, suggested the provision of a second legal opinion on the various provincial notices dated 1992 and 1993 as regards the use of the overall 34 hectares. The legal counsel would also ‘protect the City’s interest in the event that litigation is brought against it

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137 City of Cape Town (2002b), my italics. It was also noted that ‘[t]he development of Imizamo Yethu is a high profile media issue and all actions taken must be carefully communicated to all parties and the media’ (ibid.).
138 City of Cape Town (2002c).
139 ‘Irish tycoon’s project gets mayoral backing’, *Cape Argus*, 3 December 2002.
arising out of the development of Imizamo Yethu’. At the executive committee meeting on 4 June, it was decided accordingly. Among the present councillors were Hout Bay’s representative Pieter Venter. Minutes from the meeting record that the DA did not support the resolution.

In June 2003, City Manager Wallace Mgoqi stepped in at the last minute and called off a court-ordered demolition of 189 squatter shacks in Imizamo Yethu. The court order had been applied for by the office of the executive councillor in charge of housing, Gawa Samuels (NNP). Council officials were unaware both of Mgoqi’s and the mayor’s decision to cancel the destruction of the illegal structures, and the media reported ‘heated discussions between (…) housing department officials and the city leadership’. According to the spokeswoman for Samuels, the main reason for the escalating problems could be attributed to Imizamo Yethu’s fragmented leadership that was ‘unable to properly control the community’, and had ‘failed to abide by an agreement with council to “police” the land to ensure that no new people moved in’.

The city manager was quoted as saying that attempts were made to ‘try to persuade these people (squatters) to move voluntarily. The present administration is not like the previous one which was about the enforcement of law and order. (…) This is a more sensible, prudent and humane way of doing things’. In July, the mayor once again visited Imizamo Yethu to discuss some of the problems in the area.

The timing of the mayor’s decision not to evict people from illegal dwellings in Imizamo Yethu coincided with the change from the Collective Executive System based on proportionality, to the Executive Mayoral System which gave increasing powers to the mayor. The introduction of the Executive Mayoral System was highly criticised by members of the opposition. Their main concern was that the system centralised power and excluded the opposition from being part of the executive committee. In addition, the meetings of the mayoral committee now closed to the public and the media, which was interpreted as a way of further withholding important information and decision-making. As a consequence of the DA’s impression of being marginalised, the chances of the non-ANC aligned civil society associations

141 Carney (2003).
142 City of Cape Town (2003c).
147 ‘Mayor Mfeketo to address issues in Imizamo Yethu’, City of Cape Town, Media release 189/2003, 16 July 2003.
finding influential political allies outside the ANC sphere diminished. SANCO in turn had a potentially very influential ally in the executive mayor although, as will become clear later on, in terms of concrete opportunities the favourable political context did not have much effect on SANCO’s attempts to get access to the 16 hectares of undeveloped land in Imizamo Yethu.

The incidence in Imizamo Yethu was interpreted in party political terms by the DA and the Ratepayers’ Association, contributing to further politicising the dispute. The DA opposition believed that the moratorium on evictions was an attempt to accommodate as many people as possible in Imizamo Yethu to secure an ANC victory in the next local government elections in 2006. Be that as it may, the votes of Imizamo Yethu have been considered important for both the ANC and the DA. The DA branch in Hout Bay has, for example, been very active in Imizamo Yethu canvassing for votes. Apparently around 90 per cent of the audience at the annual general meeting of the Hout Bay DA branch in 2003 was made up of Imizamo Yethu residents.

In 2004, the DA community newsletter covering ward 74 reported that “no less than 37% of the local members now reside in Imizamo Yethu, where the party and its predecessors have never previously had any members”. At the annual general meeting of the DA branch in October 2004, approximately half of the around 70 people attending came from Imizamo Yethu. The specially invited guest MP Helen Zille also noted and congratulated the DA branch for having an exceptionally integrated membership base. At the meeting three or four members of the Sinethemba Association were among the ten persons appointed to the branch executive. The Vice-Chair of the Ratepayers’ Association, Kelroe-Cooke, was elected vice-chair of the executive.

The officials involved in the development of Imizamo Yethu perceived that the mayor’s decision made their working conditions more difficult and complex. According to Edward Thomas, the mayor’s decisions even deteriorated living conditions in Imizamo Yethu.

[I]t just lengthened the period of suffering with more people coming in. That’s how we as practitioners see it. We have no problem with the political intent, but the realities and the practicalities on the ground tell you otherwise.

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149 For example, interview with Venter, 1 November 2004, and one respondent who wished not be quoted on this matter. Eligible voters are South African citizens who possess a valid identity document or certificate (Independent Electoral Commission).
152 Field notes, DA annual general meeting, Hout Bay branch, 7 October 2004. The Chairperson of the Residents’ Association, Len Swimmer, sent his apologies for not being able to attend the meeting (ibid.).
You know, you cannot build, you cannot develop on top of people and if you cannot relocate them, what do you do?153

Roger Carney, project manager for Imizamo Yethu, was also critical of the moratorium on evictions and the relaxation of influx control.

When I first started on the project in the year 2003, informal settlement enforcement guards used (...) court orders to demolish shacks if the people were illegal. And they had quite a few, about 40 or something, I think. And that was just after the floor-crossing (...) [when the ANC] took power. And the Mayor stopped it, right across the Unicity. Unfortunately that resulted in sort of like a big sign saying “Welcome to Cape Town”. So they sort of lost control of influx settlements. (...) After that we did notice a sharp increase in people coming in. Unfortunately, you see, the law says that if somebody erects a shelter and occupies it you have to get a court order to knock it down and evict them. So you can’t do that any more, so you got to catch them putting it up and then you can say “Knock it down”. The Mayor’s point of view was that it was inhumane to just chuck people out, rightly or wrongly. But they must have come from somewhere. So, yeah, that was frustrating (...) for me because I’ve got to handle that growth.154

The quotes clearly indicate that there was a growing frustration in the bureaucracy at the decisions taken by the political leaders as regards Imizamo Yethu. Theory suggests that conflicts within the local government structure may create opportunities and openings for associations.155 In the interviews no associations explicitly said that they had taken advantage of existing tensions. The impression was instead that several associations considered the bureaucratic officials to be loyal to their political superiors, and consequently associated with the political party in power at a particular point in time.156

Making use of the judicial system: the court order

The ANC-NNP council’s policy as regards Imizamo Yethu was thus considered a major threat to the Ratepayers’ Association’s prime concern of restricting the further influx of people to Imizamo Yethu, and keeping the 18 hectares for residential development. Apart from the removal of influx control there was also another event that contributed to increasing the number of informal dwellings, ultimately leading to the Ratepayers’ Association’s decision to make use of the judicial system to affect decision-making.

153 Interview with Thomas, 11 April 2006.
154 Interview with Carney, 20 February 2006.
156 For example, in interviews with Kelroe-Cooke, 1 October 2004, and Lynkers Byrne, 21 February 2006.
In 2002, the Irish businessman Niall Mellon set up the ‘Niall Mellon Township Trust’ and promised to build 450 houses within three years. Although the building of proper houses was indeed of great benefit to many of Imizamo Yethu’s residents, it also led to an expansion of illegal settlements up along the environmentally sensitive slopes of the mountains in the national park. When a plot was being developed this meant that the people occupying that area, sometimes up to three or four families, were forced to move to make room for a house that could accommodate one family. Consequently, overcrowding increased in other parts of Imizamo Yethu. Furthermore, Mellon chose to collaborate with existing community structures, meaning SANCO, which led to suspicion and accusations of corruption from the Ratepayers’ Association, the Sinethemba Civic Association and their allies.

A number of factors thus explain increasing levels of mobilisation among the Hout Bay Ratepayers’ Association and the Sinethemba Civic Association. Some were clearly political, such as the change of control at the City Council and the policy changes resulting from it. Others were unprecedented, such as the Niall Mellon project. But they contributed to the same outcome, namely an increasing number of informal structures in Imizamo Yethu, which in turn was seen as a threat to the objectives of the Ratepayers’ Association and the Sinethemba Association; to limit the expansion of Imizamo Yethu. The Ratepayers’ Association perceived that the political power structure, with the ANC governing at the municipal, provincial and national level, made it impossible to succeed by going through the normal avenues for influencing the political agenda (i.e. sub-council meetings, letters, etc.). Instead the association decided to prepare legal action, and, starting in 2003, it asked for donations to the ‘Stop the Land Invasions Fund’.

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157 Niall Mellon came to visit Imizamo Yethu during a vacation in 2002, and decided to act to improve living conditions in the township. He donated one million euros for charity, and through a so-called one week ‘Building Blitz’ (having taken place annually from 2003 to 2007), volunteers from Ireland have participated in the building of hundreds of houses in various coloured and black areas of Cape Town. Each volunteer has to raise 5000 euro before arriving to cover travel expenses and material for the houses. Apart from Imizamo Yethu, building has taken place in Netreg, Mfuleni and Freedom Park (Niall Mellon Township Trust, www.irishtownship.com). The initiative has been widely acknowledged by for example Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, the Mayor of Cape Town Helen Zille (from 2006), and the Provincial Minister of Local Government and Housing, Richard Dyantyi (see Niall Mellon Township Trust 2006).

158 Interview with Hendricks, 13 March 2006.

159 For example, one of Sinethemba’s executive committee members, Sophie Ngunga, claimed that she was the only one in that part of Imizamo Yethu who was still living in a shack. All her neighbours had benefited from their SANCO contacts in that their shacks had been replaced by brick houses through the Niall Mellon project (Interview with Ngunga, 28 March 2006). See also the Sinethemba Civic Association (2003).

160 See, for example, ‘Showdown on IY: Ratepayers vs Mayor’, The Chronicle, 23 April 2003.
On 8 February 2004, a fire destroyed approximately 570 informal structures in Imizamo Yethu. The council needed land to relocate some of the people affected by the fire, and therefore the mayor, in discussion with the city manager and Imizamo Yethu representatives, decided to remove some of the trees in the council-owned forestry area within the 16 hectares. The decision was announced by Housing Director Bedderson in a meeting of the Imizamo Yethu Project Committee on 12 February 2004. The information was passed on to the Ratepayers’ Association by the Sinethemba Civic Association that was participating in the meeting. Four days later, on 16 February, the Sinethemba Civic Association and the Ratepayers’ Association made an application to the High Court to prevent the City of Cape Town from felling trees on the forestry station’s land and in the buffer zones, and to prevent the erection of informal structures on the land.

The conflict between SANCO and the Sinethemba Civic Association escalated after the application of the court interdict. The media reported serious threats and assaults on Sinethemba members by SANCO affiliates. In early March 2004, the home of Goodman Ngwanga, the Chairperson of the Sinethemba Civic Association, was burnt down. This was allegedly done by a group of SANCO members.

The reasons behind the Ratepayers’ Association’s objections to allowing residential development on the 16 hectares were mainly related to a fear of further increasing the number of Imizamo Yethu residents in an already overcrowded area. It is perhaps more difficult to understand why the Sinethemba Civic Association, consisting of Imizamo Yethu residents, also objected to further residential development in the area. Their main concern was primarily that the influx of people prevented the original occupants from obtaining their title deeds and government grants due to ‘disorder and corruption’. Instead they claimed that these were given to relative newcomers, mainly from the rural province of the Eastern Cape, coming to look for work.

We are not saying that maybe the Mayor must take people out of Hout Bay. No! Our aim is first come, first served. If you did that, we are satisfied, but now...

In April 2004, Cape Town’s Mayor Mfeketo approached the National Minister of Housing Bridget Mabandla to start a process aiming at amending the Less Formal Township Establishment Act 113 which would enable the removal of the 18-hectare residential restriction by the Premier of the Western

161 Carney (2004b).
162 The High Court of South Africa, Cape of Good Hope Provincial Division (2004).
164 Interview with Ngwangwa, 12 October 2004.
However, in May, after having received legal advice, the City Council decided to consent to the court order being made final. The mayor announced that the reason for the council withdrawing from the High Court case was that the ‘prospects of success were limited on legal and technical grounds, though it had moral and constitutional arguments it could advance’. The council strategy would instead be to urgently work to lift the current planning restrictions, ultimately allowing the continuation of the plans to use the 16 hectares for residential development. On 19 May 2004, the court order was finalised, ruling in favour of the Sinethemba Civic Association and the Ratepayers’ Association.

The City Council’s planned development of the 16-hectare area was thus halted. In late June 2004, the Western Cape Minister of Local Government and Housing Marius Fransman said that there was a need to ‘speed up housing delivery in Imizamo Yethu’ and that meetings had been held with the city to fast-track the building of houses not included in the 16-hectare legal restriction. As a consequence, the City of Cape Town made a provision to allow for settlement on conservation land. The land belonged to the council but was administered by the Table Mountain National Park. Although it was considered an imperfect and temporary solution also by the council, it was deemed necessary as there was no other land. The Ratepayers’ Association claimed that this would increase the number of settlements in the sensitive area high on the mountain, but the council representative argued that a 24/7 monitoring process would assure that no further shacks would be erected.

According to the City of Cape Town project manager, Roger Carney, the council’s attempts to expand residential development outside the overall 34 hectares was just one of the ways in which the Ratepayers’ Association’s legal action proved to be counter-productive. Carney claimed that formal residential development on the 16 hectares would have prevented some of the uncontrolled settlements now spreading because as soon as there were rumours of new developments, people started erecting informal structures in the areas concerned. Noahmaan Hendricks, another government official, reasoned similarly and said he was certain that if the interdict had not been there, and the 16 hectares were to be developed, ‘there would be far better control’.

At a media briefing in Pretoria in early September 2004, National Housing Minister Lindiwe Sisulu announced that each province would work with

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165 Carney (2004c).
166 ‘Statement by the Executive Mayor of the City of Cape Town, Ms Nomaindia Mfeketo’, City of Cape Town, Media release 78/2004, 17 May 2004.
167 ‘“Racist clique wants to keep Hout Bay white”’, Cape Argus, 20 May 2004.
170 Interview with Carney, 8 October 2004.
171 Interview with Hendricks, 13 March 2006.
two housing projects that would be assessed nine months later. In Cape Town, the two pilot projects were the informal settlements along the N2 (‘the N2 Gateway project’), and Imizamo Yethu.\footnote{‘SA’s ambitious housing plan’, \textit{Daily News}, 6 September 2004.} Her statement indicates that the national, provincial and local governments were united in their view of developing the whole of Imizamo Yethu. Thus, with the ANC governing at all levels, the court interdict would mean just a postponement of a political decision bound to be taken sooner or later.

Apart from the obvious frustration expressed by the mayor and the bureaucracy, the court interdict further polarised an already divided Hout Bay. There were some attempts during this period to reach a common solution that would unite the different communities of Hout Bay. \textit{Imagine Hout Bay} was a network that was formed in 2002. One of its major activities was a survey carried out in 2004 to obtain information about the priorities of Hout Bay residents. A representative sample was selected and around 60 interviews were conducted in Hangberg, Imizamo Yethu and the Hout Bay Valley respectively (i.e. some 180 in total). The results were presented at several meetings to which government officials were invited. The mayor also attended one of the summits of Imagine Hout Bay in July 2004 and expressed her satisfaction with the initiative.\footnote{Interview with Lynkers Byrne, 21 February 2006; Interview with Mfeketo, 5 March 2007; “I will support 110%” – Mayor’, \textit{Sentinel}, 13 August 2004. It turned out that all interviewees had more or less the same visions of how to improve life in Hout Bay. E.g. it was agreed that poverty alleviation was a priority and that a ‘self-interested, narrow-minded and uncooperative leadership’ would destroy the dream of social harmony (Interview with Lynkers Byrne, 21 February 2006).}

Another attempt to mediate between the various interests as regards Imizamo Yethu was made by Cape Town’s Anglican Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane. The first meeting was held in March 2004, but SANCO was absent as it claimed not to have been ‘officially invited’. A few other meetings were organised with no concrete results.\footnote{‘IY: Archbishop steps in. Concerned cleric launches initiative to help resolve land and housing crisis’, \textit{Sentinel}, 26 March 2004.}

The \textit{Imagine Hout Bay} Network was still in existence in 2006, but its impact on the decision-making process has been marginal. Part of the explanation, once again, goes back to the politicisation of civil society actors. Bronwen Lynkers Byrne of Imagine Hout Bay was certain that SANCO and the Hout Bay Civic Association had been obstructing the work of the network because they believed that it was aligned with the Ratepayers’ Association, which in turn worked closely with the DA. According to her, these associations also approached the mayor which resulted in government officials blocking future attempts by the network to influence political decision-making (e.g. concerning plans for a new high school in the area). In 2006, Lynkers Byrne described how ‘non-events’ acquired a political undertone because of the sensitivity of the matter.
The propaganda made people frightened to be part of it [the Imagine Hout Bay network], because it had been so... lot of suspicion, yeah, and... I just sat next to Kelroe-Cooke [of the Ratepayers’ Association] in fact at a meeting. And I mean, suddenly it was told to everyone here (…) that we were aligned with the Ratepayers’ Association. Just because I sat next to the man who happened to sit there because I went to the toilet!\textsuperscript{175}

Imizamo Yethu thus continued to be one of the most complex areas of Cape Town in terms of the number of actors involved with diverging views. Minutes from the council’s Housing Portfolio Committee meetings testify to an increasing number of illegal structures being erected. In one of the meetings ‘SANCO raised concern about increased number of people from Somalia moving into houses and these owners taking up land in the mountain, thus placing further pressure on the shortage of land for displaced fire victims’.\textsuperscript{176} According to the minutes, some of the attempts to occupy land were being prevented by council staff in the area.\textsuperscript{177}

**Power shift without elections: concluding discussion**

The shift in political power with the ANC-NNP alliance controlling the City Council meant some important policy changes that had an effect on Imizamo Yethu. Firstly, there was a moratorium on evictions, and, secondly, it was recommended that the whole 34 hectares should be developed. The Ratepayers’ Association’s increasing mobilisation to prepare legal action can be seen as a direct response to what it perceived as being a major threat to its pleas to restrict the growth of Imizamo Yethu, and the negative consequences resulting from such a growth. Kelroe-Cooke of the Ratepayers’ Association claimed that it simply ‘had no alternative’.\textsuperscript{178} However, although the interdict did mean a major success for the Ratepayers’ and the Sinethemba Associations, the overall political context in which they were operating was considered a continuous threat. Most importantly, the fact that the local and provincial governments were governed by the ANC, with a common interest in residentially developing the whole 34 hectares in Imizamo Yethu, indicated that the court interdict was bound to be lifted sooner or later.

The mayor made several visits to Imizamo Yethu and SANCO perceived that it had an important ally ‘on their side’, working towards the same goals – most importantly to lift the 18-hectare restriction on residential development. The underlying critique from the ANC as well as SANCO was that the

\textsuperscript{175} Interview with Lynkers Byrne, 21 February 2006. The reason for the Imagine Hout Bay Network being associated with the Ratepayers’ Association was most likely not only the above-mentioned seating incident. A more straightforward explanation is based on the simple fact that the main leader of the network, Bronwen Lynkers Byrne, also acting as the spokesperson, is white and therefore associated with the ‘white associations’ of Hout Bay.

\textsuperscript{176} City of Cape Town (2005b).

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., and City of Cape Town (2005a, d–e).

\textsuperscript{178} E-mail correspondence with Kelroe-Cooke, 11 October 2007.
court interdict was based on decisions taken by a non-democratic provincial government under apartheid.

Finally, it is worth noting the conflicts within the local government structures between the top leaders, most importantly the mayor and the city manager, and the bureaucracy at lower levels. The conflict was particularly visible in relation to the decision to impose a moratorium on evictions. At that time the executive councillor in charge of housing, Gawa Samuels, belonged to the NNP. Most likely the ideological differences between the ANC and the NNP, even though they were governing together in an alliance, have intensified the dispute. The civil servants at operational level expressed great frustration at the mayor’s decision not to evict people erecting shacks. These tensions were however not perceived by the residents’ associations and do not seem to have influenced their practices in any particular mode.

**Absolute majority on the City Council: ANC, 2004–2006**

Between 1 and 15 September 2004 there was a new period of floor-crossing at local government level. In Cape Town, 27 NNP councillors joined the ANC which resulted in the ANC controlling 106 out of 200 seats on the council. Nomaindia Mfeketo continued as Mayor of the Unicity. With the Executive Mayoral System that was introduced in 2003, the ANC now had full control of the mayoral committee. The ten members were appointed by the mayor and were all ANC councillors. This change in the institutional structure created an even more influential ally for those associations that were aligned with the mayor, and vice versa for those excluded, with it becoming even more difficult to influence decision-making and agenda-setting. Still, as we will see, the court interdict prohibiting residential development on the 16 hectares hampered any attempts by the ANC council to proceed with its plans for Imizamo Yethu.

**Fragile stability: status quo and decreasing mobilisation**

SANCO in Hout Bay was confident about the prospects of promoting their interests with the support of the ANC council. They painted an extremely rosy picture of how the new council would facilitate their chances of success.

> Now it’s easy because you can just go and put your plan on the table and discuss the plan and implement the plan. But before you had to struggle even before you put the concept on the table. To change that concept, to an implementation process, was going to be very hectic and somebody would tell you how to do it although they didn’t initiate it. But these years we can easily initiate, implement and also reap the product. That’s where the difference lies.179

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179 Interview with Gqoboka, 12 October 2004.
The Hout Bay Civic Association was hopeful that the new ANC council also would address the needs of the coloured community in the Hangberg harbour area. At the same time the association showed a great deal of solidarity for the needs of Imizamo Yethu.

We believe that being an ANC council, things will materialise, (…) and we stand a hundred per cent towards the council that we have because it’s now only that the council is realising that Hout Bay needs to be upgraded, uplifted. (…) They’re not looking at one side of Hout Bay but they’re looking to both sides. There’s housing needs in Imizamo Yethu and housing needs in Hangberg. (…) We believe that Imizamo Yethu is in far greater need when it comes to housing because that people have been living there in shacks for 14 years. (…) [T]here are 500 people on this side [Hangberg] also living in shacks, but we found there’s about 2,000 families living in shacks on that side [Imizamo Yethu] (…) We’re having patience. We just want the Rate-payers, and the Sinethemba, and the Residents’ Association and the Heritage Trust to stop objecting.¹⁸⁰

Comparing Hangberg and Imizamo Yethu, it has been noted that Hangberg is more organised and contains more community structures than Imizamo Yethu. The lack of such structures is particularly noticeable in the upper parts of Imizamo Yethu where most newcomers end up.¹⁸¹ In part, this is probably explained by the fact that Hangberg has a much longer history than Imizamo Yethu, and a tradition of organising dating back to the years of the anti-apartheid struggle. Imizamo Yethu has ever since its establishment experienced a larger influx of people, also from non-South Africans, which is likely to have hampered community organisation.

Froestad notes that petty corruption in Imizamo Yethu seems to be well known to public authorities, and this was confirmed in several of my interviews. There were, for example, repeated accusations that SANCO leaders were involved in selling and reselling land entitlements. Still officials saw no alternatives to working through ‘official’ community structures, which, in most cases, meant ANC and SANCO leaders.¹⁸² When so-called community development workers were established by the Provincial Government in order to increase communication between disadvantaged communities, local

¹⁸² Ibid., pp. 343–344. Given the sensitivity of the matter, no references to specific interviewees will be made. A somewhat more modest but telling example that I witnessed concerns the battle to become the ‘official’ tour guide of Imizamo Yethu. Township tours for tourists are important sources of income. During my visits in 2004 there was a poster by the main road leading to Imizamo Yethu that advertised a particular tour guide (Mr Africa). When I returned in 2006 the poster had been replaced by one promoting Mr Tokwe, the Secretary of the Hout Bay branch of SANCO. Mr Africa’s tours were still in operation though.
and provincial government, the position in Imizamo Yethu was given to SANCO’s secretary, Kenny Tokwe.183

SANCO’s actual support base remains unknown and although the association claimed to have a strong membership base, no figures have been presented. Several interviewees claimed that SANCO was led by a few ANC aligned individuals and that democratic elections to the branch executive committee had not been held for years. Froestad, in his case study of environmental health problems in Hout Bay, also questioned SANCO’s claims to represent the whole community.184

As noted in the previous chapters on the associations’ relationship with their ward councillors, these contacts seemed to be well-functioning when the ward councillor was ideologically close to the associations. We can only confirm that picture in the Hout Bay case. Social movement theory suggests that when cleavages exist among elite allies, these can be exploited by civil society associations. In this particular case, cleavages existed in terms of ideology with a DA ward councillor in Hout Bay and the ANC in a majority position on the sub-council, the City Council and in the Provincial Government. The relations between SANCO and the Hout Bay Civic Association with the DA Ward Councillor Pieter Venter had been quite frosty from the very beginning. The strategy from both Venter and the associations was to deal with each other as little as possible. Referring to these associations, Venter in late 2004 said that ‘with regard to those two there’s virtually no contact’.185 Consequently, instead of collaborating with the ‘normal’ link to the council, namely the ward councillor, SANCO and the Hout Bay Civic Association developed contacts directly with other local government actors.

One example of such collaboration was the linkages that evolved between the Hout Bay Civic Association in Hangberg and sub-council 16 to which Hout Bay belongs. Because of the difficulties in co-operating with Venter, the association preferred to work with the sub-council office and Chairperson Lydia Anderson (ANC).186 The sub-council assisted in formalising a Memorandum of Understanding, meaning monthly meetings with the council’s Housing Directorate to discuss issues of concern to the Hangberg community. There were also plans to provide Hangberg with a council building where the civic association would establish an advice office, with the council

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183 Interview with Muller, 28 March 2006. Provincial government official Rika van Rensburg described community development workers, participating in a programme which was initiated by the State president, as being ‘the ear and voice’ of the provincial government in the communities. The community development workers take part in accredited training programmes to learn about government matters and are to serve as the link between the community and the provincial government (Interview with van Rensburg, 25 April 2006).

184 Froestad (2005), p. 343. It should be noted that the associations based in Hout Bay Valley do not, obviously, necessarily represent the entire white Hout Bay population. (However, they do not claim to do so either.)

185 Interview with Venter, 1 November 2004.

186 Interview with Anderson, 26 April 2006.
paying for water and electricity. The aim was to encourage collaboration with the council as the contact with the ward councillor was not functioning properly.\textsuperscript{187} The DA Councillor Pieter Venter interpreted the support in clear party political terms, and in the community paper \textit{The Chronicle} he was quoted as saying that it was ‘a disgrace that ratepayers’ money is going to be spent on an office for any civic, especially one that is formed in the run-up to an election and appears to be openly politically aligned’.\textsuperscript{188}

The Hout Bay Advice Office opened in August 2004, and the sub-council manager was satisfied with the arrangement as it had indeed improved communication with Hangberg which was often, compared to Imizamo Yethu, a neglected part of Hout Bay.

Also they [the Civic association] volunteered to acquire computer equipment, to record all the queries and complaints of the area and they would forward that to me on a weekly basis to the sub-council. (…) They felt they could not access the ward councillor. He was inaccessible. I had to find a way to bridge that gap and to give the community a voice again and a means of channelling their problems, their complaints etc.\textsuperscript{189}

SANCO stressed the common history in the liberation movement as a reason for the informal manner in which they were able to liaise with ANC government officials and politicians in general.

[I]t makes our way very easy and also in terms of them coming down and consulting with us. There are people that are familiar with us, they know us. We have been working together for all those years. So it’s easy.\textsuperscript{190}

In Hout Bay, it was difficult to even separate SANCO from the ANC, as the two executive members interviewed were also part of the executive of the ANC branch. SANCO and the ANC also shared the same office building. The local branch of the South African Communist Party (SACP) was another close ally.\textsuperscript{191}

If SANCO perceived that the political power structure with the ANC in a majority position on the council made communication easy, the opposite was expressed by the Ratepayers’ Association. The association felt neglected, which was one of the reasons for it preparing the court case against the City Council.

\textsuperscript{188} ‘Ratepayers’ money to create office for ANC civic’, \textit{The Chronicle}, 22 October 2003.
\textsuperscript{189} Interview with Jacobs, 7 April 2006.
\textsuperscript{190} Interview with Gqoboka, 12 October 2004.
\textsuperscript{191} During my interview with Tokwe on 20 February 2006, just prior to the local elections, the small office was crowded with campaign workers, mostly women, who were preparing posters of the ward candidate Gqoboka to be put up. One SACP representative was also present (name unknown) and he discussed the SACP and the ANC election alliance, implying that the SACP did not contest the elections but encouraged their members to vote for the ANC.
The communication has just become worse and worse and worse. Since the time that she [the Mayor Nomaindia Mfeketo] moved in, there’s been a complete breakdown. (…) To this day I still haven’t even met our new Mayor and we’ve been through a lot of conflict you know. There’s been no communication. We’ve written letters that haven’t been answered and there is a lot of conflict taking place.192

The political power structure with the ANC governing at the local and provincial government level thus seems crucial in explaining how associations perceived that they were able to influence decision-making, in turn affecting their practices. The Ratepayers’ Association’s view of an unresponsive council intending to lift old legal restrictions on Imizamo Yethu’s development explains its mobilisation. SANCO in turn seemed to be satisfied with the fact of just having potentially influential allies on the council and exaggerated the concrete benefits resulting from it. Although the association was aligned with the powerful mayor of the city, the prospects of gaining access to the 16 hectares were hamstrung by the court interdict.

In November 2004, an application prepared by the planning consultants Chittenden Nicks de Villiers in May the same year was presented to the Spatial Planning, Environment and Land-Use Management Committee of the City Council. After having been recommended by the committee, the application was submitted to the provincial administration of the Western Cape for a decision.193

The application concerned the approval of 175 new residential plots on a parcel of land previously not developed or covered by legal restrictions, as well as a lay-out plan for the same area (parcel 8a). The application had been preceded by a public participation process, which started off in mid-September with a meeting in Hout Bay where comments were invited. In the final application twelve objections to the amendment and four supporting it were attached. Not surprisingly the objections came from, among others, the Ratepayers’ Association, the Sinethemba Civic Association, and the Hout Bay and Llandudno Heritage Trust. The main concerns were the size of the plots (around 50–80m², which was considered far too small), the inappropriateness of the proposed three-storey buildings, and the environmental and social impact of the densification of the area. Letters supporting the council’s plans came from SANCO, the Hout Bay Civic Association, and the Hout Bay branch of the ANC and the SACP respectively.194

192 Interview with Kelroe-Cooke, 1 October 2004.
193 Although the land is legally the property of the City of Cape Town, ‘the Provincial Administration grants final approval for applications within areas covered by the proclamations, [CPA proclamations issued under the Less Formal Establishment Act 113 of 1991]’ (City of Cape Town 2004).
194 Ibid., and ‘City’s piecemeal planning “will destroy IY dream”’, Sentinel, 24 September 2004, and City of Cape Town (2004).
The mayor expressed frustration at the fact that the application for the subdivisions required such a wide public participation process, as ‘the initial guidelines indicated that the City needed letters of support from the two affected community organisations [only], namely SANCO and Sinethemba, as well as the YMCA as the adjoining property owner’. Mfeketo was quoted as saying that ‘“[m]y biggest concern is that this process, which is necessary to ensure democracy in action and full transparency, is slowing down the momentum of the rehabilitation”’. The quote clearly points to the dilemma between ‘more democracy’, interpreted as inviting more actors into the decision-making process, and efficiency, referring to visible political decisions. Even though the proposal was approved in the end, the plots on the YMCA property were never planned or developed as the area quickly became occupied by new informal structures.

The ANC council continued the process aiming at lifting the 18-hectare restriction on residential development by an amendment to the Less Formal Township Establishment Act 113 of 1991. The process was slow however, partly as a result of uncertainties as to which government level was responsible.

Given the ANC’s strong political position at the time, governing at the local, provincial and national level, the question is why the City Council did not speed up the process and put pressure on the provincial authorities to amend the Act. According to a later interview with Mayor Mfeketo this was the result of a very frustrating bureaucratic process. The respective ministers at national and provincial level all agreed on the need to amend the Act in order to allow for the development of the 16 hectares. What delayed the process was that there were officials at the provincial level who passed the case on to the national level, which in turn resubmitted it to the provincial level. With no particular reference to Imizamo Yethu, Mfeketo argued that some government officials in Cape Town were ‘getting very, very smart’ in taking advantage of the frequent power shifts. Mfeketo further claimed that in certain cases officials ‘dragged their feet’ when it came to the implementation of policies that they did not agree with, waiting for the next power shift that could alter their directives.

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196 E-mail correspondence with Kelroe-Cooke, 11 October 2007.
197 It was only in late 2006 that it became clear that the Western Cape Provincial Government had the power to amend the Less Formal Township Establishment Act (E-mail correspondence with Thatcher, 7 December 2006). It should be pointed out that an amendment to the Act could not in itself lift the High Court interdict. An amendment would, however, give the premier of the Western Cape the authority to ultimately rule on a new rezoning process, which could effectively overturn the interdict, if it would result in a decision that the land should be zoned specifically for residential purposes. However, it would still require another full process, including further public participation, before it would affect the interdict (E-mail correspondence with Kelroe-Cooke, 11 October 2007).
198 Interview with Mfeketo, 5 March 2007.
Such a claim is, for obvious reasons, hard to confirm. In the interviews several local government officials admitted that the frequent power changes had delayed implementation and service delivery, but this was rather presented as being the fault of the politicians as every power shift meant new agendas and policies.199

New forms of community participation: ward committees

In late 2004, ward committees were introduced in Cape Town by the ANC-controlled City Council with the intention of increasing public participation. The sub-councils, introduced by the DA in 2001, remained and were intended to co-ordinate the ward committees. At least in theory ward committees had greater means of encouraging public participation as they were based in the local ward, physically closer to their constituencies, with meetings held outside working hours. In practice, the feeling of success or failure of the attempts to exercise influence seemed to be dependent on the attitude of the ward councillor acting as the Chairperson. Because of the party politicisation of the matter – the DA wanted sub-councils and the ANC ward committees – most DA councillors were negative prior to the establishment of the committees whereas ANC councillors and SANCO representatives were positive.200

In November 2004, during the process of the establishment of the compulsory ward committees in all of Cape Town’s then 100 wards, Hout Bay’s DA Councillor Pieter Venter was certain that he would have difficulties acting as the Chairperson of the new ward committee.

Essentially, what the ANC strategy will be, and I am making no illusions about it, is that they will use the ward committee. (…) If they manage to get a majority on the ward committee, at every month’s meeting they’ll propose a motion of no confidence in me. (…) Nobody realises how political these things are. You know, [if] they [the residents of Hout Bay] read every month in the local newspaper that there’s been another motion of no confidence in the ward councillor…and that rather undermines [my position]…201

It turned out that Venter’s fears were groundless. The nomination process for representatives to the committee in November resulted in a minority of ANC-aligned representatives on the committee. The sector ‘Civic Associations’ was represented by Malibongwe Gqoboka from SANCO and Graham Kelroe-Cooke from the Ratepayers’ Association.202 According to the Hout Bay Civic Association in Hangberg, Venter was ‘scared that the blacks were

199 For example, in interviews with Hendricks, 13 March 2006 and Bedderson, 5 April 2006.
200 Expressed, for example, in interviews with Chapple, 20 October 2004; Iversen, 13 October 2004; Mxolose, 18 October 2004; Tokwe and Gqoboka, 12 October 2004; Venter, 1 November 2004, and Watkyns, 22 October 2004.
201 Interview with Venter, 1 November 2004.
202 ‘And now the election that wasn’t…’, Sentinel, 26 November 2006.
going to make a black government here [in Hout Bay], and Venter was accused of having manipulated the process, in order to reduce the potential influence of SANCO and other ANC-aligned associations. This was not denied by Venter and he explained how he passed on nominations directly to the electoral committee ultimately responsible for the composition of the ward committee, instead of passing them via the sub-council manager as anticipated. As the sub-council manager would notify the sub-council chair, an ANC councillor, Venter suspected that the chair would turn to SANCO and other ANC-aligned associations to inform them of what they needed to do to obtain majority on the committee. ‘You see, we caught the ANC asleep here because we submitted it [the nominations] directly to the [electoral committee], they didn’t realise we were doing that’.

The final composition of the committee excluded the representative of the Sinethemba Civic Association who had originally been nominated for the sector ‘NGOs/Community-Based Associations’. Furthermore, a representative from Hangberg was chosen to represent the sector ‘Sport, Youth, Arts and Culture’ instead of the initially proposed SANCO representative. Although the Chairperson of SANCO, Malibongwe Gqoboka, was dissatisfied with the final constitution of the ward committee, he expressed an understanding of Councillor Venter’s attempts to set up a committee consisting of more allies than opponents.

[When] you become a councillor you have to elect a new ward committee that is going to constitute the way you wanted it… The Chairperson of the ward committee is the councillor himself. Therefore you’ve got… you don’t have more power, but you’re able to put out a structure that is going to in a way work with you, not against you. That is why Pieter Venter managed to put more whites in that ward committee. There’s nothing that we can do to stop him.

Because of SANCO’s mistrust of the ward committee – there were, for example, claims that several of the associations on the committee were not legitimate – its strategy was to skip working through the committee, instead collaborating directly with the ANC City Council. This approach was also pointed out to me shortly before the local government elections in March 2006. Gqoboka, SANCO’s Chairperson and also the ANC candidate in Hout Bay, was very clear on the matter. If he was to win the election and

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204 Interview with Venter, 25 April 2006.
205 City of Cape Town (2005f).
206 Interview with Gqoboka, 21 February 2006.
207 SANCO also expressed mistrust of the joint structure of the Community Police Forum and chose not to be part of it (Interview with Tokwe, 20 February 2006).
…if the Unicity belongs to the DA, we’ll skip the Unicity and work with the provincial government, which will be something that is going to be difficult but we have to make way… 208

It has however been difficult to obtain information about what these linkages and contacts consisted of in more concrete terms.

The Ratepayers’ Association was also critical of the ward committee, but their arguments concerned the structure and administration of the committee as such, not the representation. 209 Due to Councillor Venter’s health that deteriorated during this period, not many ward committee meetings were however held. This further increased the feeling of the ward committee as a not very useful avenue for influencing decision-making.

**Absolute majority in the council: concluding discussion**

The floor-crossing in September 2004 resulted in a number of NNP councillors joining the ANC, and the reconstituted council now had 106 ANC councillors out of the total of 200 on the council. The strengthening of the ANC’s position was seen as a continuous threat to the Ratepayers’ Association, most visible in terms of the council’s attempts to rezone previously unused land in Imizamo Yethu. The Ratepayers’ Association protested against such plans through conventional forms of politics, such as writing letters objecting to the proposed plans. Also the association’s ally, DA Councillor Pieter Venter, felt increasingly neglected by the council, and more specifically by the sub-council that established direct contacts with the Hout Bay Civic Association instead of going through the councillor.

SANCO and its local allies in Hout Bay, most importantly the ANC and the SACP branches, in turn openly supported the council’s intentions of developing the new area. SANCO expressed a confident opinion of having elite allies on their side on the council which would facilitate decision-making as well as implementation. However, the court interdict was effectively impeding any attempts by the ANC council to carry on with its intentions of developing the 16 hectares.

The new ward committee that was established by the end of 2004 was not perceived as changing the associations’ chances of influencing decision-making. SANCO argued that it had an overrepresentation of white community members who were loyal to Councillor Venter and the DA. The Ratepayers’ Association complained that the committee was badly administered by the sub-council responsible and questioned its usefulness as it did not have any decision-making powers.

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208 Interview with Gqoboka, 21 February 2006.

209 Interview with Kelroe-Cooke, 16 February 2006.
Local elections and the return of the DA: 2006

On 1 March 2006, the third democratic municipal elections were held. In some parts of the country elections were preceded by massive violent unrest, highlighting service delivery, corruption and job creation as important issues. In the township of Khutsong in the Gauteng Province, for example, there were fierce protests targeted at the ANC in the light of a proposed transfer from a richer municipality to a municipality in poorer North West Province and there were even discussions about postponing the elections.210

In all provinces, except the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, the ANC was certain to secure comfortable victories.211 However, in Cape Town the battle was tough between the ANC and the DA, sometimes referred to as ‘the battle of Cape Town’. Adding to the general uncertainties of all election outcomes was the fact that since the last local elections the NNP was no more, and the ID emerged as a potentially dangerous challenger.212 Consequently, the ANC’s and the DA’s election campaigns in Cape Town were fierce. The opposition accused the ANC of corruption, general misconduct, and of being racists only favouring their own allies. The ANC in turn stressed that the City of Cape Town was in need of political stability, not a new power shift.213 After two weeks of serious negotiations and horse-trading, with alliances shifting day by day, the DA’s candidate Helen Zille was elected the new mayor on 14 March, with only 106 council votes to 103. She managed to present a coalition alternative that included all smaller parties, except the ID. One of the more immediate and visible changes introduced by the new council was the opening up of all mayoral committee meetings to the public and the media.214

In ward 74 the DA’s Pieter Venter was re-elected as ward councillor. His main opponent had been Malibongwe Gqobokwa who ran for the ANC. The DA received 56 per cent of the vote (both ward and PR) and the ANC 33 per cent. The new DA-controlled council’s policy as regards Imizamo Yethu differed from that of the ANC in that it was against allowing residential development on the 16 hectares.215 For the ANC and SANCO in Hout Bay this

211 Compared to the local elections in 2000, the ANC strengthened its position from just under 60 per cent to 66.34 per cent of the votes in the 2006 local elections (South Africa Yearbook 2006/2007, p. 330).
212 ‘ANC landslide is less certain this time’, Sunday Independent, 26 February 2006.
213 Some of the DA’s election posters in Cape Town read: ‘Take your city back’, and ‘End ANC racism’. Interestingly, the ANC strategy was apparently not to mention the DA in their pamphlets or on billboards (See ‘ANC and DA get ready for the last lap’, The Star, 23 February 2006).
214 ‘It’s Mayor Zille for Cape Town’, Cape Argus, 15 March 2006. A Freedom Front Plus One councillor was elected speaker of the council and a councillor from the African Christian Democratic Party was elected deputy mayor (ibid.).
was, of course, a major setback even though the process to amend Act 113 of 1991 to allow for residential development was already in motion, and ultimately in the hands of the ANC-led Provincial Government. But a City Council lobbying against such an amendment was likely to further delay the decision, even if the council would eventually be overruled by the province.

The words of the city’s former Director of Housing Seymour Bedderson sum up many of the sentiments expressed by government officials shortly after the shift in power:

[N]ow the problem is (...) that at the time that we did the application for (...) the amendment of (...) this piece of legislation, we were under an ANC-led government City Council. We are now under a DA multiparty-led council. I do not know at this stage and I would be guessing what the sentiments are of the new Mayor and her executive with regard to that particular (...) government. Because the party in government right now is the party to which Mr Pieter Venter [the ward councillor in Hout Bay 2000–2006] belongs. And Pieter Venter has long been very, very against any formal extension of Imizamo Yethu. Now, it’s anybody’s guess at the moment what way politically that decision may go. (...) [A]ll the amendments and legislation and the legislative environment may be there for us to do development but we may not get the political blessing to do so, and I’m not saying that it won’t happen or that it will happen – there are possibilities. And until such time that we present that challenge to them and say, now give us direction, as housing officials we now have to sit back and wait for direction from them.216

The first months after the power shift were characterised by somewhat desperate attempts by the ANC to regain power. For example, the ANC at local level tried to make the Provincial Government take over control of the City Council with the argument that the weak majority position of the alliance had resulted in a defunct council.217 Also, the Provincial Government proposed an amendment to the present Executive Mayoral System, which would give the ANC representation on the mayoral committee.218

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216 Interview with Bedderson, 5 April 2006. Although this particular quote refers to Imizamo Yethu, all the council’s civil servants interviewed were indeed fed up with the implications of yet another shift in power with new politically appointed officials replacing the old ones. Many of them, speaking off the record, claimed that even if they were not ANC supporters they would have preferred the ANC to win the elections as this would contribute to some stability.
217 ‘Call for province to take over Cape Town’, Cape Times, 13 April 2006.
218 ‘ANC’s coup a “blatant abuse of power”’, Cape Times, 20 September 2006. The change from an Executive Committee System based on proportional representation, including all major parties, to a single-party Mayoral Executive Committee system was made by the ANC in 2003. When I asked the former mayor about this during an interview in 2007, she claimed that the reasons behind it were simply to attempt to get a more co-operative and functional City Council by including ANC councillors on the executive committee (Interview with Mfeketo, 5 March 2007). However, the DA stated in its election manifesto that it advocated the Executive Committee System as a more legitimate form of local government than the Executive Mayoral System (The Democratic Alliance 2006, p. 27).
In Imizamo Yethu the environmental conditions continued to deteriorate as a result of an increasing number of informal structures. These were being established higher and higher up along the mountain slopes and close to a water reservoir (greater Hout Bay’s water supply) posing serious health risks. According to Kenny Tokwe of SANCO, the association had asked the city for more public toilets without receiving a response.\(^{219}\) In October 2006, the City of Cape Town announced that it intended ‘to act on the fire safety and environmental health hazards posed by overcrowding’. Among other things, interviews were being conducted with people in Imizamo Yethu ‘who have expressed a willingness to move out of Imizamo Yethu to other, less overcrowded areas in Cape Town’\(^{220}\)

**Increasing protests in Cape Town and Hout Bay**

By the end of the year protests started to spread around Cape Town’s townships against the DA-controlled council. In Imizamo Yethu there was also an increasing mobilisation targeted at the council. In the last weeks of October, the media reported on regular protest actions organised by SANCO in a number of communities on the Cape Flats and in Imizamo Yethu. The actions included overturning rubbish bins, breaking into local DA offices and preventing council workers from coming into these areas. The reason behind the actions was to protest against a perceived lack of service delivery and exclusion from decision-making. The ANC’s regional deputy secretary denied that the ANC was involved in the actions, but said that the party provided the SANCO branches with ‘moral support’. He defended the protests by explaining that their ‘affiliates feel that the mayoral committee reflects the privileged elite, not the broader community’.\(^{221}\)

In early November the Provincial ANC Minister of Local Government and Housing Richard Dyantyi made a visit to Imizamo Yethu and discussed the increasing health hazards with residents in the area. He was quoted as saying that the City of Cape Town and the Provincial Government had to work together to resolve the housing crisis in Imizamo Yethu. However, in opposition to the City Council’s policy, he said that he had not ruled out the possibility that the 16 hectares could be made available for more housing in the area.\(^{222}\)

Two days later the SACP held a community meeting in Imizamo Yethu where the Secretary of the Cape Metropolitan area heavily criticised the

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\(^{219}\) ‘Water crisis forces council to move squatters’, *Cape Times*, 3 November 2006.

\(^{220}\) ‘City takes step to address over-crowding in Imizamo Yethu’, City of Cape Town, Media release 359/2006, 24 October 2006. According to the city, the high density was due to three major reasons: the Niall Mellon initiative, the fire in February 2004, and Mayor Mfeketo’s moratorium on evictions issued in 2002 (ibid.).

\(^{221}\) ‘SANCO protests against services backlog’, *Cape Argus*, 31 October 2006, and ‘Daily protests to continue until “the people have been heard”’, *Cape Times*, 31 October 2006.

\(^{222}\) ‘City, province need to resolve Imizamo housing crisis’, *Cape Times*, 6 November 2006.
Ratepayers’ Association for its ‘patronising attitude’ and for wanting ‘to use the 16 ha of land as a buffer zone between themselves and the black people’. The following day the media reported a demonstration of around 30 Imizamo Yethu residents protesting against the lack of housing. The demonstration was eventually stopped by the police as it was illegal. Yet another community meeting was organised in Imizamo Yethu by the SACP a week later. At the meeting the SACP demanded that Premier Ebrahim Rasool and Minister Dyantyi speed up the release of the 16 hectares, and said that the SACP was ‘considering a legal challenge to the city over the lack of housing, land and service delivery’. The meeting also planned for a march to the local offices of the city and to those of the Hout Bay Ratepayers’ Association a few days later.

Another grouping in Hout Bay threatened to sue local, provincial and central government for ‘not guaranteeing the constitutional rights of citizens’. The main concerns were the bad living conditions in Imizamo Yethu and the rising crime rates in Hout Bay. Preparations had already begun in 2005 by the Hout Bay and Llandudno Community Police Forum (CPF) by encouraging membership organisations and individuals to make financial contributions. Although the CPF has a broad membership base, some 20 members, including the Ratepayers’ Association, the Sinethemba Civic Association, SANCO and the Hout Bay Civic Association, the initiative was driven primarily by Chairperson Marga Haywood. Kelroe-Cooke of the Ratepayers’ Association claimed that the executive committee of the CPF was opposed to organising the campaign under the auspices of the whole CPF; he was never personally involved, nor the Ratepayers’ Association. SANCO was also critical of the CPF and was not actively participating as it considered the forum to be an illegitimate structure aiming at overruling SANCO and the ANC.

In November, media reported on the CPF applying to the Cape High Court for ‘a structured interdict’ against the City of Cape Town, the charge being that the city allowed an unchecked expansion of Imizamo Yethu. It has not been possible to obtain information on the most recent developments

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224 ‘Journalists assaulted during protest’, Cape Argus, 10 November 2006.
225 ‘Residents consider legal action against state’, Cape Argus, 16 November 2006.
227 E-mail correspondence with Kelroe-Cooke, 29 October 2007.
228 Interview with Tokwe, 20 February 2006.
229 ‘Hout Bay community unites in fight for land’, Cape Times, 27 November 2006. The Chairperson of the Community Police Forum used to be Marga Haywood, later to become DA ward councillor in Hout Bay.
in this regard, but, according to Kelroe-Cooke, the application was not actually made.\textsuperscript{230}

In December 2006, Ward Councillor Pieter Venter passed away after several years of battling cancer and by-elections were scheduled for February 2007.

**Local elections and the return of the DA: concluding discussion**

The third democratic local elections meant yet another shift in power in Cape Town. For the residents’ associations in Hout Bay this meant yet another council policy as regards Hout Bay. The new DA-controlled City Council indicated that its intention was to abide by the previous proclamations and court interdict to restrict residential development to 18 hectares, and keep the 16 hectares for community facilities (or at least not do anything on the 16 hectares as long as there were legal restrictions). Several council officials expressed frustration at the power shift and claimed that the restructuring of the council would further delay policy implementation and service delivery. The underlying conflict between the DA-controlled City Council and the ANC Provincial Government was noticeable also in Hout Bay as they had diverging views on the future development of Imizamo Yethu.

The increased mobilisation that was observed among various actors in Hout Bay can be linked to the changing political power structure and the new DA-controlled City Council. SANCO and its ally the SACP framed their criticism of bad living conditions mainly in party political, and, to some extent, also in racial, terms. The DA-controlled council was accused by the ANC of representing only the ‘privileged elite’ (i.e. the white community), and the SACP claimed that the objections to developing the 16 hectares was to ‘keep the buffer zone between themselves and the black people’.

The initiative by the Police Forum to litigate began in 2005 while Cape Town was governed by the ANC. The first letter containing their charges was, however, not sent to the various governments until April 2006. Considering that the Chairperson of the Police Forum was Marga Haywood, later on to become the new DA ward councillor in Hout Bay, one could ask why the forum decided to take action when it now had an influential ally on the council. Possibly the DA-controlled council was considered an opening in the political opportunity structure, meaning increased chances of success in putting the issue on the council’s agenda. Another possibility is that the court action was mainly targeted at the ANC provincial and national governments.

\textsuperscript{230} E-mail correspondence with Kelroe-Cooke, 29 October 2007. The Chairperson of the CPF Marga Haywood was replaced when she became the new ward councillor in Hout Bay in February 2007.
The process study of Hout Bay and Imizamo Yethu: concluding overview and discussion

The aim of this chapter has been to explore how residents’ associations in Hout Bay have responded to changes in the local political opportunity structure. This has been done by following the major associations and their involvement in the development of the township of Imizamo Yethu from its establishment in the early 1990s up to 2006. The focus has been on the framing processes in which associations interpret the institutional and political context, and decide to act – or not to act – accordingly. What are the major conclusions in terms of their perceptions and practices throughout the years? In Table 6.1, the chapter is summarised by focusing on the most important changes in the political opportunity structure (POS), how these were framed by the associations involved, and what were their practices.

As can be noted the party political alignments have resulted in different practices depending on the party in power. For SANCO this has been particularly visible. When the ANC controlled the City Council (2002–2006) there were no major protest actions taking place on SANCO’s initiative. Interviews with leaders of SANCO and the Hout Bay Civic Association revealed a strong confidence in the council’s intentions to work in the interest of their constituencies.

For the Ratepayers’ Association the choice of action has been less the result of the party political composition of the council, and more of an assessment of the political power structure as such. For example, in 2002, the association organised one of its few protest actions when the DA was controlling the City Council. This seems to confirm social movement theory in that mobilisation may increase when actors perceive that changes in the political opportunity structure create new openings and chances of success.

Interestingly, SANCO, the ANC and their allies have been more prone to frame their grievances in ‘old apartheid language’, referring to racial categorisations, than have the Ratepayers’ Association and the DA. The latter have often discussed the problems associated with the growth of Imizamo Yethu in more politically correct terms, covering concerns regarding environmental hazards and health risks, particularly for the Imizamo Yethu residents themselves. Also common, but somewhat less pronounced, has been to link a growing Imizamo Yethu to decreasing property prices and increasing crime rates in Hout Bay.
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<td>SANCO Ratepayers Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>Continuous feeling of security and loyalty. Attributions by the council and the mayor are on our side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SANCO Ratepayers Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attribution of an increasing threat as the new council imposed a moratorium on evictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SANCO Ratepayers Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>Continuous threat to council proceedings, framing along racial lines, accusations of racism and discrimination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SANCO Ratepayers Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increasing mobilisation, protest actions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SANCO Ratepayers Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consent and loyalty is maintained, council proceeds to amend old legislation.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>SANCO Ratepayers Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>Letters supporting council plans to develop further land in Imizamo Yethu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004–2006</td>
<td>Consolidation of ANC position on the council.</td>
<td>SANCO Ratepayers Association</td>
<td>No particular actions reported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SANCO Ratepayers Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consent and loyalty is maintained, council proceeds to amend old legislation.</td>
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<td>SANCO Ratepayers Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>Letters supporting council plans to develop further land in Imizamo Yethu.</td>
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Table 6.1: Summary of the process study of Hout Bay and Imizamo Yethu
The study of residents’ associations in Hout Bay also revealed that party political conflicts within the local government system contributed to our understanding of the perceptions and practices of associations. If a certain level within the system was dominated by the ‘wrong’ party, some associations found it more efficient to turn to other, often higher, levels in order to advance their interests. This was evident in the case where the Hout Bay Civic Association worked directly with the sub-council, and SANCO claimed that this was a necessary strategy as it was almost impossible to work with the DA.

When it comes to influential allies these were most often found within the political system, and consequently changed over time with the outcome of elections or periods of floor-crossing. After the introduction of the Unicity in 2000, the Mayor of Cape Town became one of the most important allies. For the ANC-aligned associations, and particularly SANCO, the fact that the ANC governed at the provincial and national level created a certain feeling of security even during periods when the ANC did not control Cape Town. The concrete benefits of any of these alliances were, however, unclear; generally they seem to have been exaggerated by SANCO.

In terms of the establishment of sub-councils and ward committees, formal forums to encourage public participation, the associations did not perceive that they were helpful in influencing decision-making. Instead they preferred to have more frequent and direct contacts with politicians and government officials. There were, however, other changes in the institutional structure that, when they coincided with party political changes, proved important for the opportunities of associations to successfully promote their interests.

A concrete example was that the creation of the Unicity more or less coincided with the DA’s success in the second local government elections in 2000. The Ratepayers’ Association benefited from having the new DA ward councillor in Hout Bay as a political ally on its side, which contributed to its success in getting the mayor start discussions on the Imizamo Yethu issue. Likewise, the change to an Executive Mayoral System benefited SANCO as the ANC mayor became even more powerful in this system. This also confirms the view that a decentralised system may provide more formal avenues for influence from neighbourhood associations, whereas a centralised system may prove more efficient in terms of real influence. Still, it is striking how little was achieved in terms of meeting the demands of SANCO during the period of relatively stable ANC rule between 2002 and 2006. Although SANCO, through the ANC, had allies in the strategically important Provincial Government, the old legislation continued to restrict the development of the 16 hectares. It is likely that the bureaucracy, although not necessarily intentionally, greatly contributed to maintaining this status quo.
7. Neighbourhood politics in transition: summary and conclusions

The main objective of this thesis has been to empirically examine how neighbourhood associations in Cape Town have responded to a changing institutional and political context resulting from the democratic transition. This concluding chapter is structured in three parts. Based on the main research questions, the first section sets out to conclude the empirical findings. The second part is guided by the second objective of the thesis; to contribute to the development of social movement theory. It will do so mainly by discussing the usefulness of this theoretical perspective in our case with its particular features. Finally, in the third section I will discuss how Dahl’s dilemma of pluralist democracy has manifested itself in the study, and compare residents’ associations with the new social movements emerging in South Africa in a perspective of societal cleavages.

Summary of the main empirical results

The first empirical part of the thesis specified and analysed changes in the political opportunity structure of Cape Town from apartheid to present time. It was noted that changes in the institutional and legal structure were particularly visible in the period of transition and early days of democratic local government reform. Most importantly, decision-making became more open to, and inclusive of, civil society participation. The new local government legislation encourages public participation in the decision-making process, for example, through sub-councils and ward committees. At the same time all metropolitan areas in South Africa have witnessed substantial administrative centralisation with the creation of the Unicities in 2000, also increasing the powers of the indirectly elected mayor.

The electoral system at local government level is a mix of proportional and non-proportional mechanisms, and therefore it was difficult to confirm (or refute) social movement theory suggesting that a proportional system increases the number of potential allies. We could note that in the wards the councillors who were elected on a first-past-the-post basis seemed to be more important for the neighbourhood associations than the PR councillors. Furthermore, although proportionality prevailed at the level of the City Council (i.e. through the party proportional composition of councillors on
the council), the fact that there are only two dominant parties in Cape Town makes the system more similar to a non-proportional one, thus reducing the number of political allies. Additionally, the mayoral committee was not proportionally composed, indicating that the relative power of those in the executive was stronger than in a system with a proportional executive committee.

In terms of the political power structure, the most noticeable aspect has been the frequent changes in political alignments resulting from the shifts of power in the City of Cape Town. In the still relatively short democratic period, all the major parties have controlled the City Council, sometimes in coalitions. It was more difficult to establish in general terms to what extent the dimension of elite allies had changed. Whether or not certain actors are considered as elite allies is dependent on the specific association. It is, however, likely that as elite allies are often found in the political system, this dimension is heavily influenced by shifts in political power. That is, if the ANC is in power it is more probable that ANC politicians are considered to be elite allies, and consequently they are regarded as less influential allies if they lose their government position. However, as has become clear, because of the close links with political parties, most associations align themselves with ‘their’ party regardless of that party’s current position in government.

**Practices of residents’ associations**

The empirical analysis was made through three separate but closely linked studies. In the first two studies, the Civic Survey and the comparative case study of Langa and Rondebosch, the main aim was to analyse how residents’ associations in various areas of Cape Town perceived that the changing political opportunity structure had affected them in their attempts to influence decision-making. The in-depth process study of Hout Bay and Imizamo Yethu was also guided by this question, but was directed more specifically at understanding the framing processes in which associations decide to respond to important changes in the institutional and political context. Hence, the focus was on the mechanisms that link the political opportunity structure to the practices of associations.

The inclusion of socio-economically distinct areas in the study is one of its major strengths, and not surprisingly associations had different perceptions of their prospects of affecting agenda-setting and decision-making. They had also framed the political and institutional changes in various ways. Most associations in predominantly white affluent areas perceived that the institutional and political context had become more unfavourable. They particularly pointed to the creation of the Unicity, and to the ANC being in power at the time, as having had a negative effect on the chances of promoting their interests. The administrative centralisation had increased the distance to local government and there was a common perception among these associations of being neglected when the priority was, although admittedly
necessary, given to the poor areas. Associations in coloured associations that answered the questionnaire were more inclined to stress the status quo in terms of their abilities to influence decision-making.

Kriesi et al. claim that ‘social movements are likely to choose their action repertoire according to the rule “as moderate as possible, as radical as necessary”’.\(^1\) To a large extent this pattern seems to be confirmed in our findings. Following the introduction of democracy most associations in post-apartheid Cape Town used conventional forms of politics in their interaction with local government. The most common form was liaising with the local ward councillor. Associations believed that it was more difficult to influence decision-making in areas where the ward councillor represented another party than the one controlling the City Council. The interaction between associations and the City Council in such cases tended to be more conflictual than in areas where the ward councillor belonged to the same party as the majority on the council.\(^2\) In more heterogeneous areas, such as Hout Bay, associations that were ideologically close to the ward councillor worked well with him, whereas those who were not close found other ways of liaising with ideological allies. The Ratepayers’ Association’s decision to work with the NP after the first municipal elections in 1996, in which Hout Bay gained an ANC ward councillor, was one indication of this. Another example was that the Hout Bay Civic Association co-operated with the ANC-controlled sub-council when almost no interaction took place with Hout Bay’s DA ward councillor.

An additional regular form of interacting with local government was through meetings of various kinds; sometimes ad hoc, other times formal and structured (e.g. ward committees). There were also letters and memorandums sent from residents’ associations to local government. A special form of action that has been common in South Africa, both under apartheid and in the post-apartheid period, is litigation. As pointed out by Gloppen, this strategy may have a positive impact ‘even if the case is not decided in favour of the claimants’, as authorities may decide upon an out-of-court settlement. Furthermore, certain cases may generate intensive public debates – this has been the case in several of the social rights litigations under the new constitution – which may create a political momentum.\(^3\)

In Hout Bay, the High Court ruled in favour of the Ratepayers’ Association and the Sinethemba Civic Association, which effectively put an end to

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\(^2\) As touched upon earlier, one can speculate on whether a completely proportional system would reduce some of these tensions. Such a system would replace the present arrangement in which one councillor is considered to be the official political representative of the ward, with a system where each ward is represented through proportional structures, such as the sub-councils. The downside of such a change could be the council being alienated from its citizens, as residents would liaise with a sub-council rather than with a representative residing in the area.

the ANC council’s plans to expand residential development in Imizamo Yethu. In this particular case reference was made to a previous judgement made under the apartheid regime. But there were also more recent litigation attempts by, for example, the Community Police Forum in which all government levels were accused of violating the constitutional rights of Hout Bay’s residents.

Protest politics were also part of the practices of associations, although less common. In the Hout Bay case such actions included demonstrations and marches. In general, SANCO and its allies were more prone to make use of protest politics than the Ratepayers’ Association and its supporters which confirms the view that most people ‘employ a form of collective action they know how to use’.4

Residents’ associations and party politics

As a consequence of the party politicisation of many neighbourhood associations, and the increasing importance of party politics in local government affairs, many associations also framed the political opportunity structure in party political terms. When the ANC controlled the City Council, associations and politicians that were not affiliated to the ANC felt threatened and excluded – and vice-versa. The main contribution of this thesis is that this picture of the significance of political alignments has been empirically specified and developed. As will be discussed below, associations in white affluent areas in reality underestimate their chances of influencing whereas associations in black poor areas seem to overestimate their ability to influence when they have a political ally in a government position.

The two SANCO branches included in the study both had very close relations with the ANC and consequently perceived that their chances of influencing decision-making increased when the ANC was controlling the City Council. They were also affected by the ANC’s strong position at the provincial and national government level, which created a feeling of having centrally located influential allies. The perceptions of the SANCO branch in Langa revealed an uncritical and loyal attitude towards the ANC at all government levels, and there was a somewhat naïve view of the benefits of having direct access to the ANC mayor.5

In Rondebosch the opposite observation was made; in spite of complaints about being excluded and neglected, the associations were successful in mobilising support and liaising with other associations and allies, such as the media. These findings point to the relative advantage that most associations in affluent areas still enjoy in terms of greater organisational skills and fi-

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5 It should not be ruled out that my outsider status to some extent contributed to this view (see the discussion about the interviews carried out in the section on material and data in Chapter 3).
nancial resources. Hence, although the associations in Rondebosch perceived that it had become more difficult to *directly* influence decision-making and agenda-setting, we may conclude that they were able to *indirectly* achieve important results in line with their demands.

Also in the case study of Hout Bay these differences were noticeable. The Ratepayers’ Association, for example, managed to influence decision-making throughout the years also when they perceived that they were working in an unfavourable political and institutional context. In the early 1990s when Imizamo Yethu was about to be formally and legally established, the Ratepayers’ Association had a decisive influence on the decision by provincial authorities to restrict residential development to only 18 hectares out of the total 34 hectares. During this period mobilisation was high both in the Ratepayers’ Association, and among associations that represented the residents of Imizamo Yethu, but for different reasons. The Ratepayers’ Association was threatened by the Provincial Government’s decision to allow the permanent settlement of the Imizamo Yethu township, whereas the informal settlers saw new opportunities and chances to succeed in obtaining legal rights to settle in the area.

During the first years of democracy, 1996 to 2000, the Ratepayers’ Association was in an advantageous position in that it had established good working relations with the NP-controlled South Peninsula Council. For example, the council and the Ratepayers’ Association both saw a need for a strict influx control of Imizamo Yethu. It seems like the Ratepayers’ Association was reasonably satisfied with the municipality’s policy as regards Imizamo Yethu at this point in time, and no signs of increased mobilisation were seen during this period. The associations did, however, voice fears about a growing number of people moving in, occupying the buffer strips that were to remain undeveloped according to the old provincial legislation. SANCO and the ANC ward councillor in turn continued to show dissatisfaction with municipal policies through demonstrations and land invasions.

After the change of municipal government late in 2000 and the formation of the DA coalition in the new Unicity, the Ratepayers’ Association perceived that the new council did not pay attention to their concerns despite several attempts to approach the politicians responsible. The view of the council as being unresponsive to and ignorant of the Ratepayers’ Association’s demands led it to prepare a protest action directly targeted at the mayor. The action would not have been possible without the practical support of the Ratepayers’ Association’s new ally – the DA ward councillor in Hout Bay. After this event the council did initiate a process of consultation with the Ratepayers’ Association and SANCO to discuss the situation in Imizamo Yethu. Although we do not know the relative impact of the Ratepayers’ Association’s protest on the council’s decision to start discussions, the important point in our perspective is that it was perceived by the Ratepayers’ Association as a successful outcome of its action. It is likely that the
association, given the potential of increasing influence on the council through the DA ward councillor, perceived that the chances of success were relatively high and decided to act collectively in the protest action.

When the ANC-NNP alliance took over control of the City Council in late 2002, the Ratepayers’ Association perceived that its previous avenues for influence were closed. The association as well as the DA ward councillor were, for example, excluded from participation in the Imizamo Yethu Improvement Project. In combination with some crucial political decisions taken at the time, most importantly the mayor’s moratorium on evictions, and the indication that the 16 hectares would be used for residential development, this led to increased mobilisation in the Ratepayers’ Association and to the decision to prepare legal action. The High Court interdict was a success for the Ratepayers’ Association as it, although most likely only temporarily, halted any plans to develop the 16 hectares for other purposes than community facilities. Hence, although the Ratepayers’ Association in general expressed dissatisfaction with how the City Council had dealt with the situation in Imizamo Yethu, the association has indeed been successful in several of its attempts to influence decision-making, which is worth highlighting.

**Framing within the apartheid legacy**

The phenomenon of party politicised associations was particularly visible in SANCO’s diagnoses of the political power structure. SANCO’s close relations with the ANC has led to a feeling of having important allies during periods when the ANC has controlled the City Council, although there is not much evidence of concrete benefits resulting from these elite alignments. Even though other cases show that SANCO’s relations with the ANC are not necessarily harmonious, in my study the SANCO branches in Hout Bay and Langa showed a high degree of loyalty towards the party. The loyal attitude was also visible in SANCO’s choice of action (i.e. its so-called prognostic frames); in the Hout Bay case no protest actions were reported during periods when the ANC was controlling the City Council. SANCO’s attribution of loyalty and solidarity to the political context when the ANC was in control of the City Council can thus explain its decision not to act. As will be touched upon later, what can be referred to as ‘loyalty frames’ have been scarcely explored in the social movement literature.

It was also noted that in the Hout Bay case, SANCO framed grievances in a language bearing witness to the apartheid history and its focus on race. The 18-hectare restriction on residential development was diagnosed as a means for the white residents of Hout Bay to keep their distance from their black neighbours in Imizamo Yethu. Furthermore, the white Hout Bay community was accused of being racists, mainly by SANCO allies, such as COSATU. Also so-called injustice frames were relevant when explaining SANCO’s sustained mobilisation and choice of practices during periods of non-ANC
rule. Most importantly, the fact that the decision to restrict residential development to 18 hectares was taken by a non-democratic provincial government has been perceived as a constant injustice.

The Ratepayers’ Association and its allies have responded by claiming that the reasons for their objections to further restrict residential development were primarily based on environmental and health concerns. The changing institutional and political context since the early 1990s has been considered as a permanent menace although the attribution of threat has been more pronounced in periods of ANC rule.

One potential explanation for the diverging views on the possibilities of influencing decision-making between white ratepayers’ associations and black and coloured civic associations can be traced to important differences in their background and history. The introduction of democracy has resulted in a less advantageous position for white residents’ associations as there is now more competition for municipal resources. This has created a general belief among numerous white associations that their chances of being influential have diminished. The opposite can be said about associations in predominantly black areas that now take part in local government on equal democratic terms, at least in theory.

In the particular case of Hout Bay the most important implication of the liberalisation was naturally the formal establishment of the Imizamo Yethu township; such a decision would never have been taken during the height of apartheid. SANCO in turn has gone from being excluded from democratic decision-making to being (unofficially) aligned with South Africa’s dominant political party. The way in which these associations have diagnosed the political and institutional context (i.e. described the problems and assigned causes and blame), proposed solutions and acted in response to their interpretation of the context, is necessarily linked to the diverging points of reference just accounted for.6

A general conclusion is that most residents’ associations in this study, even those that do not openly support a political party, are deeply embedded in the apartheid history and have become highly party politicised. As mentioned, most associations hold on to their political alignments regardless of whether that party is in a government position or not. In a less party politicised context one can assume that associations would be more inclined to make an objective assessment of any government’s ability and willingness to work in line with the association’s objectives. It has been demonstrated elsewhere that when residents’ associations align themselves with political parties, they tend to politicise and personalise disputes that arise to the extent

6 Interestingly enough, survey results of South Africans’ satisfaction with government performance showed that political partisanship did not play a role in popular assessment of local government performance. At the national and provincial level however, those who ‘felt close’ to the ANC were more positive about service delivery than others (Bratton and Sibanyoni 2006, p. 14).
that viable solutions become more and more difficult. In the Hout Bay case this conclusion is very much confirmed.

In the mid-1980s Cameron speculated upon the possible future role of ratepayers’ associations in local government affairs. He foresaw that Cape Town City Council elections would be fought on party political lines in the near future.

The experience of Johannesburg has shown that when party politics enters the fray political parties supersede ratepayers’ associations as the main conduit at local government level. When the CCC [Cape Town City Council] takes this step, it is likely that ratepayers’ associations will end up being a lot less influential on policy than they are at the moment.

This study has shown that the role of both civics and ratepayers’ associations has changed following the institutional and political changes at local government level. Political parties are indeed the prime actors in policy- and decision-making. In that sense, ratepayers’ associations in Cape Town today are less influential as they were previously more closely and directly aligned with those in power (e.g. through councillors who they supported). As a matter of fact civic associations were also more dominant under apartheid and in the interim phase of local government transformation. Although they were extra-institutional, in the apartheid era many civics enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy among black and coloured residents, which could be used as forceful means to put pressure on the white municipalities. While not always successful in the often highly repressive environment, the capacity of mobilising large numbers of coloured and black residents was a major strength that seldom went unnoticed. Furthermore, in the period of local government democratisation, civics as well as ratepayers’ associations were granted important positions on the transitional councils.

Although the role of residents’ associations has changed and their direct influence on policy-making might have decreased, they continue to take an active part in local government affairs. With the introduction of democratic governance public participation has become important in order to legitimate

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7 Camay and Gordon (2004), p. 305. Camay and Gordon discuss the Sandton Ratepayers’ dispute in which ‘white-led ratepayers’ associations positioned themselves alongside an opposition political party (the Democratic Party) in their dispute with the metropolitan council. This only served to further alienate the council leadership (ibid.).
9 An interesting example of the City of Cape Town’s awareness of the relative strength of the civics in coloured areas is given by Cameron. He describes how the strong opposition to the management committees in the coloured areas (established in the 1960s) contributed to complex relations between the management committees, the City Council and the civic associations. The council did not allow management committees permanent representation on standing committees as they knew that civic associations would not attend such meetings if there were committee members present. Management committees in turn accused the council of favouring civics over them (Cameron 1986, p. 129).

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the political decision-making process. This may partially compensate for the apparent loss of influence among residents’ associations.

Applying the notions of political opportunity structures and framing processes in a South African local context

This study also aims to contribute to social movement theory by applying the framework of political opportunity structures and the concept of framing processes in a local urban context outside the US and Western Europe.

Starting with the framework of political opportunity structures, we note that it has been used primarily to explain the emergence of social movements, why movements mobilise at a certain point in time, and why they succeed or fail. These questions were not of major concern in this study; instead the main interest was in how changes in the political opportunity structure were perceived by residents’ associations and how they responded to these changes.

To make the framework more useful for analytical purposes, it has been attempted to specify the dimensions included in the concept. This led to the construction of two major components: the institutional and legal structure, and the political power structure. Six dimensions were sorted under these two headings. Striving for conceptual clarification and operationalising the various dimensions have enabled a systematic analysis of how residents’ associations have responded to changes in the political and institutional context. This makes the analytical framework more ambitious than in many other studies in this perspective.

Still there were problems involved in the framework. Although conceptually the various dimensions were fairly easy to distinguish, they were more difficult to keep empirically apart. One concrete example was the creation of sub-councils and whether these could be considered part of a commitment to enhance public participation, or rather a way of decentralising certain elements of decision-making. Another example was that the dimension of elite allies turned out to be closely linked to the political alignments, i.e. the party controlling the City Council.

Generally, applying the framework of political opportunity structures in a context far from Western Europe’s stable party systems and the pluralistic character of politics in the US proved to be fruitful. It was possible to define important and relevant dimensions of the political context that were also pinpointed by the associations as having affected their ability to influence decision-making and agenda-setting. In the institutional and legal structure the most important factor was the degree of centralisation of local government structures. The findings here seem to confirm social movement theory in that a decentralised structure can offer more ways of influencing due to the closer distance to municipal government officials and politicians, but that
a centralised structure may be more effective in providing concrete results for those who do manage to exert pressure.

At the time when Hout Bay was still under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government (i.e. a centralised structure), the Ratepayers’ Association’s discussions directly with provincial authorities resulted in the 18-hectare restriction on residential development. In the years 1996 to 2000 Hout Bay was under the South Peninsula administration as one of six municipalities in the Cape Metropolitan Council. This period was primarily characterised by a high degree of administrative restructuring and a search for new routines. When Imizamo Yethu representatives attempted to make the South Peninsula Municipality transfer more land, the official response was that the decision was in the hands of the Metropolitan Council, as the land first needed to be transferred from them. We obviously cannot know whether a more centralised structure would have benefited Imizamo Yethu actors, such as SANCO – probably not – but we can speculate that the odds would have been greater for SANCO to put their concerns on the agenda of the Metropolitan Council if Hout Bay would have been under its jurisdiction.

With the creation of the Unicity in 2000, a more centralised local government structure was introduced. Although the Ratepayers’ Association perceived that the reform made it more difficult to obtain a response from the politicians and officials responsible, once the association managed to put Imizamo Yethu on the council’s agenda, this proved effective in terms of concrete results.

The dimension of the political power structure turned out to be the most important factor influencing the way in which associations perceived that the political context in general was favourable or not to their claims. As mentioned, one of the main reasons for this is that many residents’ associations have party political affiliations. While in the end we do not know to what extent these alignments are actually decisive in terms of affecting the success or failure of movement outcomes (and this was not the primary purpose of the thesis), the crucial issue is that associations frame their grievances in party political terms.

The analytical framework developed for this study also included a way of conceptualising the linkages between a certain political opportunity structure and the practices of residents’ associations. Framing processes were identified as the key mechanisms in which associations urge others to act (i.e. mobilise), attribute cause, blame, threat or opportunity to the institutional and political context, and propose specific actions to deal with the situation. Although an analysis of this kind can never reveal all possible explanations as to why associations decide to act in a particular way, the assumption that actors behave rationally makes it possible to identify the mechanisms that were considered most likely to have had an important effect on the actions of the associations.
The most common forms of framing processes among Hout Bay’s residents’ associations included the attribution of threat and opportunity. As discussed already these were linked in particular to the dimension of the political power structure, and fluctuated according to shifts in power in the City Council. In most cases, when associations attributed threats or opportunities to the structure, we saw increasing mobilisation although the type of actions taken varied.

In SANCO’s case we noted two other frames that contributed to our understanding of its decision to act, and, perhaps more importantly, not to act. We have already touched upon injustice frames which are also among the most common in the social movement literature on framing processes.\(^{10}\) The injustice component was most visible when referring to the old provincial legislation to restrict residential development in Imizamo Yethu. Another important frame that was noticed in the case of SANCO was what may be referred to as ‘the attribution of loyalty’. SANCO’s loyalty to the ANC explained why they did not act in spite of the new opportunities arising when the ANC won control of the City Council. The difference is noticeable compared to the Ratepayers’ Association which, for example, continued to mobilise also when it had allies controlling the council (i.e. the DA, 2000–2002). Such ‘passive’ frames have not been explored to a large extent in the social movement literature.\(^{11}\)

The dilemma of pluralist new democracies revisited

In the introductory chapter of the thesis the study of neighbourhood associations was also related to Dahl’s dilemma of pluralist democracies. The essence of this dilemma is that independent associations are necessary for democratic pluralism while at the same time being capable of ultimately destroying democracy by stabilising injustices, deforming civic consciousness, distorting the public agenda and alienating final control of the agenda. The dilemma was considered particularly relevant in our case considering the history of racially based associations in South Africa, and the tensions inherent in the process of replacing the apartheid system with a democratic one.

**Residents’ associations and Dahl’s dilemma**

Before we discuss the dilemma in more detail we should ask ourselves if the associations being studied can be considered autonomous in the sense proposed by Dahl. According to Dahl, political autonomy is a quantitative con-

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\(^{10}\) Benford and Snow (2000), pp. 615–616.

\(^{11}\) Kriesi et al. do touch upon the issue when they write that collective action will not occur when established political actors are already working towards a movement’s goal (Kriesi et al. 1995, p. 40). However, in the case of Imizamo Yethu there were few signs of an improvement of the overall situation that could be ascribed to the ANC.
cept which implies that we can talk about less or more autonomy. In this study we have noted that the degree of political autonomy varied considerably between associations. SANCO and other associations in predominantly black and poor areas were found to be less autonomous than the residents’ associations in affluent, predominantly white areas. The stronger party political linkages that existed in many of the black associations, in spite of their potential benefits, indicated that such associations were to some extent controlled by political parties. This in turn has implications for their potential role as autonomous organisations and watchdogs holding the state accountable to its citizens.

Turning to the question of how the pluralistic dilemma has been articulated in this study, it can be noted that in democratic South Africa the state considers community associations to be important mechanisms for local democracy, and that their involvement in local government matters is encouraged in the constitution as well as in practice. At the same time the White Paper on local government from 1998 showed an awareness of Dahl’s dilemma of democratic pluralism in that the potential dangers of special interest groups influencing the development agenda were highlighted. The organisation around socio-economic characteristics is not necessarily problematic by itself. Nevertheless, as noted by Charles Tilly, when such differences translate directly into public politics, as has been the case in South Africa, this may impede democratisation and undermine democracy.

Residents’ associations are, almost per definition, mainly interested in what can be considered limited particularistic needs as their prime objectives concern the well-being of the residential area in which they are based. However, we can still discuss residents’ associations in terms of the extent to which they promote the public good of their neighbourhood, or more narrow demands. From this perspective we note that some associations in our study were more inclined than others to enhance short-term particularistic needs, which may be an example of deforming civic consciousness in Dahl’s terminology. In the heterogeneous Hout Bay this problem was more visible than in the more homogenous areas of Langa and Rondebosch. The many asso-

\[\text{Dahl (1982), p. 22. To be politically autonomous is defined by Dahl as to ‘be not under the control of another’ (ibid., p. 16).}\]

\[\text{An interesting reflection as regards SANCO’s relations with the ANC was made by a secretary of a SANCO branch in Uitenhage, Nelson Mandela Metropole (Port Elizabeth). In terms of the political power structure Port Elizabeth has witnessed a much more stable post-apartheid development as compared to Cape Town, with the ANC gaining almost 70 per cent of the votes in the 2006 local government elections. The SANCO Secretary was far more self-critical of SANCO’s and the ANC’s respective roles as community actors than the SANCO representatives who I interviewed in Cape Town. He claimed, for example, that SANCO needed to broaden its support base as it was considered to serve only the disadvantaged. ‘[Black] doctors and graduates do not even know where to make their input’ (Interview with Sitoto, 4 November 2004). This might indicate that in a context where the ANC is stronger, the civics also become stronger and more autonomous vis-à-vis the ANC.}\]

\[\text{Tilly (2007), p. 10.}\]
ciations in Hout Bay, each claiming to represent different sections of the population, were primarily promoting the concerns of their particular constituencies. We also saw how the organisation of citizens, when based on cleavages, such as race and class, *stabilised political inequalities*. Dahl claims that organised pluralism may be

a stabilizing force that is highly conservative in the face of innovative structural change. Each of the major organized forces in a country prevents the others from making changes that might seriously damage its perceived interests. As a consequence, structural reforms that would significantly and rapidly redistribute control, status, income, wealth, and other resources are impossible to achieve – unless, ironically, they are made at the expense of the unorganized.15

Although Dahl refers to large organisations at national level, such as trade unions and political parties, the same line of reasoning is discernable also at the very micro-level. Particularly the white Hout Bay residents’ reactions throughout the years can be seen as emanating from a fear of the consequences of a larger Imizamo Yethu. The protests against what the Ratepayers’ Association and others have perceived as a threat to their interests (higher crime rates, lower property prices, environmental and health hazards, etc.) have definitely contributed to keeping the status quo in the Imizamo Yethu case.

The stabilisation of political inequalities, resulting from the inequalities in organisational resources, was also visible in this study where associations in affluent areas were more successful in advancing their claims – with or without the support of local government. They had the financial means and organisational resources, for example, to see to it that a security company patrolled the streets, as in Rondebosch, or that a court case was prepared as in Hout Bay. Associations in poor, most often black areas relied on less tangible resources, such as political allies, which proved less efficient in terms of influencing decision-making. SANCO’s loyalty to the ANC was one example of this; the feeling of having influential elite allies led to decreasing mobilisation although no specific gains appear to have resulted from these elite contacts. Hence, in Dahl’s terminology we could notice that some actors were more influential than others in affecting decision-making and the political agenda, i.e. *distorting the public agenda*.

Translated into our local context, the last of Dahl’s identified problems involved in democratic pluralism refers to the question of whether residents’ associations have taken over the final agenda from the political leaders (and ultimately from the demos). Dahl’s point is that important political and economic decision-making may be delegated to organisations that the govern-

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ment cannot control. In Hout Bay, we noted how the Ratepayers’ Association managed to obstruct the decision-making process by its successful court case. Although in the end the Provincial Government may amend Act 113 of 1991, which in turn may overturn the interdict, its legal action can be seen as a way of alienating the final agenda, at least temporarily.

In conclusion Dahl’s dilemma was particularly evident in Hout Bay, where there were no signs of a weakening of societal divisions and conflicts. Furthermore it seems doubtful to what extent the associations have the ability or interest to uphold the autonomous role that Dahl sees as essential to pluralist democracy.

This study has concentrated on one specific locally active category of civil society actors. In the next section the new social movements that have emerged in post-apartheid South Africa will be discussed, and whether they can be considered more successful in reducing some of the tensions associated with the dilemma of pluralist democracies.

South Africa’s new social movements and Dahl’s dilemma

Democratic South Africa has witnessed a substantial growth in so-called new social movements, which Ballard et al. explain by the fact the old opponents (i.e. the anti-apartheid movement) were absorbed into the post-apartheid government. As a response to the new situation a large number of new social movements emerged. Some of them focused on new issues, such as HIV/AIDS treatment, and crime and safety. Others organised around old problems that earlier were considered subordinate to the anti-apartheid movement, for example, land equity, gender, sexuality, racism, environment, education, formal and informal labour, access to infrastructure and housing. Many of these movements describe themselves as being anti-neoliberal, anti-globalisation, anti-market, pro-poor, pro-human rights, socialist and Trotskyist, and have seriously criticised the ANC government’s slow implementation of basic services for South Africa’s poor. Their geographic coverage varies greatly from those focusing on issues in one city only, to global movements with local offices in South Africa.

Several new social movements have been successful in mobilising supporters in the townships in protest against the government. As noted by Seekings, this has given the impression that they have a large support base. However, in those cases where movement leaders have contested local elections they have not been successful, and the ANC has continued to receive an overwhelming majority of votes. For the purpose of this thesis, the interesting question is whether South Africa’s new social movements have

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managed to bridge some of the old cleavages that are still visible in, for example, residents’ associations. The answer is yes and no.

On the one hand, there have been accusations from activists that many of the new social movements only reinforce previous patterns of white racial domination. As expressed by one member of the Landless People’s Movement: ‘what has happened in these social movements in South Africa is that historically dominant voices – primarily white-left intellectuals – have been the mediators of the identity and aspirations of the poor’.19 Another factor which indicates that the new movements have not radically changed from previous organisations on a segregated basis is that many of these movements are involved in poverty related issues. Access to land and housing, adequate health care, etc., are issues that mobilise the poorest sections of society, and do not appeal to socio-economically stronger segments of the population.

On the other hand, some movements have managed to show that it is indeed possible to ‘co-operate across race barriers in search of a common interest in social equity’, as observed by Friedman and Mottiar in a study of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC). Still they note that the TAC has not fundamentally ‘transcended race’; it is rather a matter of managing the complexity of the notion of race. If the TAC were to ignore the history of racial disadvantage, this would most likely lead to black frustration and therefore the organisation is committed to developing black grassroots leadership.20

Finally, an analysis of civil society–state relations in South Africa must take into account the ANC’s hegemonic position at national level. According to Beall et al., the ANC’s dominance has actually ‘reinforced race and nationalism as the central ideas for political mobilisation’ which in turn has discouraged mobilisation based on socio-economic interests.21 The main problem is rather that race and socio-economic status continue to overlap to a large extent, thereby making it more difficult to find other grounds for mobilisation.

The prevailing dominant one-party system, and the lack of a party political opposition capable of challenging the ANC (outside Cape Town), have lead scholars to conclude that the new social movements can take on this role. Habib, for example, claims that there is a need to reintroduce substantive uncertainty (i.e. uncertainty of the outcomes of the game) in the South African political system in order to ‘re-establish the accountability equation between political elites and citizens’.22 To do this Ballard et al. suggest three ways of challenging and breaking up the configuration of power in South

21 Beall et al. (2005), p. 688.
African society: the growth of a party political opposition, the break-up of the Tripartite Alliance (the ANC, COSATU and the SACP), and the emergence of social movements. Out of these elements only social movements are present today and the other scenarios are not likely in the near future.\textsuperscript{23} However, there is a danger in relying on social movements to take on the role of opposing the ANC-dominated state given the dilemma of democratic pluralism just discussed.

Hence, it may be concluded that Dahl’s dilemma of pluralist democracies is highly visible in post-apartheid South Africa and Cape Town. To a large extent residents’ associations – and to all appearances the new social movements as well – continue to organise along old cleavages, mainly race, coinciding with socio-economic and ideological differences. The fundamental problem thus persists: as long as South African society remains so deeply divided, it is difficult to see that a common agenda could replace the organisation of civil society along mainly racial lines. Although the organisation along such cleavages is not necessarily problematic \textit{per se}, it often results in a stabilisation of inequalities which in turn may strengthen societal divisions and conflicts, and work against the consolidation of democracy.

\textsuperscript{23} Ballard et al. (2006), p. 415.
Following Ward Councillor Venter’s death in December 2006, by-elections were scheduled in ward 74 for 7 February 2007. Given the DA coalition’s fragile position on the City Council with only three councillors more than the ANC and ID together, it was considered important to secure the re-election of a DA councillor. Executive Mayor Helen Zille urged residents in the ward to vote for the DA’s candidate Marga Haywood in order to ‘stabilise multi-party government in Cape Town’. An ANC election rally in January created headlines all over South Africa when COSATU’s provincial leader Tony Ehrenreich said that ‘[t]here is a need to take some of the land from the white communities and redistribute this to the townships that are going up in Hout Bay’.

This move once again put the spotlight on the 16 hectares of undeveloped land. The amendment to the Less Formal Township Development Act was out for public scrutiny and comment in February/March 2007. Mayor Zille was, however, reported to have opposed the rezoning of the unused land in Imizamo Yethu. Apparently she had approached the Provincial Minister of Local Government and Housing Richard Dyantyi ‘warning him against tampering with the land’. A few days later a crisis meeting was organised by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR). The meeting was attended by representatives of SANCO, the ANC, the SACP and COSATU. The Ratepayers’ and Residents’ Associations had both been invited but did not attend the meeting.

In the end, Marga Haywood of the DA secured a comfortable victory with 61.8 per cent of the vote in ward 74, compared to the ANC’s George Banjwa who received 37.8 per cent.

In March 2007, the COSATU leader once more demanded the municipal government expropriate more land for the poor, suggesting municipal land in the nearby Llandudno and Constantia, both extremely up-market areas, instead of the proposed Happy Valley on the Cape Flats. The mayoral commit-

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1 For example, in a video speech on Youtube (Zille 2007).
tee member for housing responded that there was an urgent need for relocation of at least 2,300 households and that it could take 18 months to prepare new land for relocation.7

In his budget speech for 2007/08, the Provincial Minister of Local Government and Housing particularly mentioned that the department aimed to facilitate ‘an amendment to the Less Formal Township Establishment Act, 1991 (LEFTEA). This amendment has particular relevance to Imizamo Yethu (Hout Bay) as it would provide for the extension of residential areas and inter alia for fast-tracking development of land for informal settlements’.8

One of the most serious attempts to solve the conflict and move forward was initiated in March 2007. The IJR was asked to continue its involvement in Hout Bay by facilitating a process aimed at producing a proposal to address the housing crisis in Hout Bay. The first meeting was held on 1 March 2007 and saw representation from all major stakeholders in Hout Bay, except SANCO. (SANCO’s close allies the ANC and the SACP participated however, and in later meetings SANCO also took part.)9

At the first meeting a working committee was elected, which in turn appointed two sub-committees. The first committee was given the task to draft a document of consensus principles on how to deal with the housing crisis, and the second committee was expected to liaise with the City of Cape Town and the provincial government to ascertain what vacant land was available in Hout Bay and its surroundings. All in all, six meetings with the working committee were organised, including a final public meeting. Anyone with an interest in the issue could attend those meetings, although the question of who had the right to attend was a recurrent issue at the meetings. Another source of frustration was the apparent lack of co-ordination between the three government spheres towards solving the housing problems. Parallel to the committee meetings there were a number of smaller and one-to-one meetings with the IJR facilitators.10

On 29 May 2007 a final public meeting was held where thirteen consensus principles were presented along with a land audit identifying vacant land in Cape Town. As private land was considered too expensive to acquire, the land audit focused on public land owned by the city or the provincial authorities.11 Among the most important principles presented were that solutions must cover Imizamo Yethu and Hangberg, that the 18-hectare restriction on residential development must eventually be lifted, that houses should be made available on a first-come-first-served basis, and that the movement

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7 ""Give Imizamo folk Llandudno”", Cape Argus, 22 March 2007.
8 Province of the Western Cape (2007).
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
of some residents was inevitable. The documents were submitted to the city and the executive mayor on 1 June with the recommendation that

[a] comprehensive development plan for the Greater Hout Bay area should be completed by government and communicated back to the community before December 16, 2007 – paving the way for construction to start in 2008. For this to be realised there needs to be maximum co-operation between all three tiers of government and the Greater Hout Bay community.12

One must remember that Imizamo Yethu is but one of 222 informal settlements in Cape Town and currently only number 27 on a recent needs-based priorities list from the Housing Directorate. The city’s total housing budget for 2007/08 was R450 million of which R6 million was budgeted for Imizamo Yethu and Hangberg. It thus remains to be seen whether the joint effort by the Hout Bay community can break the deadlock that has hampered constructive solutions to the problems related to Imizamo Yethu for well over a decade. As noted by Charles Villa-Vicencio, the leading facilitator of the IJR, it is a fragile consensus and the political leaders need to show a high degree of commitment to solve the crisis in order for the ‘newfound rapprochement’ to last.13

Appendix 1. List of associations responding to the civic surveys 1996 and 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of association</th>
<th>Year founded</th>
<th>Number of members</th>
<th>Racial distribution</th>
<th>Year of Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgravia Estate Civic Association</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellville (ward 1) Ratepayers’ Association</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellville (ward 4) Ratepayers’ Association</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellville (ward 6) Ratepayers’ Association</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellville Federation of Ratepayers’ Associations</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>6 ratepayers’ associations</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergvliet/Meadowridge Ratepayers’ Association</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>1,290/1,175**</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996/2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop Lavis Concerned Residents’ Association</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishopscourt Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Downs Civic Association</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Downs Community Based Organisation</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>21 exco members only</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camps Bay Ratepayers’ and Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2004 (2006)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Bowl Residents’ and Ratepayers’ Association (CIBRA)</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned Citizens’ Association</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantia Property Owners’ Association</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1,308</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Six Rent Residents’ Ratepayers’ Association</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>scattered through the townships</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgemead Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Hoek Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodwood Ratepayers’ Association</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Blue Downs Residents’ Association</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Point, Sea Point, Fresnaye and Bantry Bay Ratepayers’ and Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This question was asked specifically only in the 2004 survey. Only 16 answers in the table were provided by the associations themselves. In the other cases I have classified the associations myself based on demographic statistics provided by the City of Cape Town, with some support from Jeremy Seekings and Bill Sewell. ** The first figure refers to the number of members in 1996, the second to the number of members in 2004. *** The questionnaire was sent out in 2004 but only answered in 2006.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association Name</th>
<th>Year Established</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Year Answered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kalk Bay, St James and Clovelly Ratepayers’ and Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirstenhof Residents’ and Ratepayers’ Association</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kommetje Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuilsrivier Inowners Belangevereniging</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1,200 households</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Gardens Ratepayers’ + Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marina da Gama Association</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milnerton Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>60–80</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistycliffs Village Association</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muizenberg/Lakeside Ratepayers’ Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Retreat Estate Residents’ Forum</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfields Estate Ratepayers’ and Civic Association</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noordhoek and District Civic Association</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northpine Civic Association</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2,000 families, 7 organisations</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parow Belastingbetalers en huurdersvereniging wyk II (Parow Ratepayers)</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>400/20</td>
<td>Coloured and white</td>
<td>1996/2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parow inwoners en besigheide organisasie Parow</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parow Ratepayers’ and Tenants’ Association ward 1</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinelands Ratepayers’ and Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retreat/Steenberg Civic Association</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocklands Ratepayers’ Association</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rondebosch, Rosebank Ratepayers’ + Business Association</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosebank, Mowbray, Observatory Civic Association</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996/2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simonstown Civic Association</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>White and coloured</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Montague Village Association</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>400 families</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steenberg Self help Association of Residents, Steenberg Area A</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>329 households</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strand Belastingbetalersvereniging</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Greens Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>White and coloured</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnydale Ratepayers’ Association</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>White and coloured</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sybrand Park Civic Association</td>
<td>late 1940s</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table View Community Association</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Table Valley Residents’ Association</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 14 + 15 Ratepayers’ Association</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welgedacht Homeowners’ Association</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeekoevlei Civic Association</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** The questionnaire was sent out in 2004 but only answered in 2006.
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Adams, Ruth, Acting Sub-Council Manager, Good Hope Sub-Council 16, City of Cape Town, 23 March 2006 (notes taken).
Anderson, Lydia, PR Councillor (ANC) and former Chairperson, Good Hope Sub-Council 16, City of Cape Town, 26 April 2006.
Ball, Susan, Secretary Sinethemba Civic Association, 28 March 2006 (notes taken).
Bedderson, Seymour, former Director Housing, City of Cape Town, 5 April 2006.
Beerwinkel, Carol, PR Councillor (NNP), 5 March 2004 (notes taken).
Burmeister, Bruce, Chairperson Rondebosch Civic Association, 29 October 2004.
Carolissen, Edgar, Sub-Council Manager, Athlone and District Sub-Council 17, City of Cape Town, 29 March 2006.
dereuck, Mariette (nee Griessel), Sub-Council Manager, Sub-Council 15, City of Cape Town, 2 November 2004, and 20 April 2006 (by telephone, notes taken).
Dick, Peter, Head People’s Housing Process and Empowerment, Directorate: Human Settlement, City of Cape Town, 14 February 2006.
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Gray, Brian, Chairperson Observatory Civic Association, 20 October 2004 (by telephone, notes taken).
Gugushe, Monde, Vice-chair, SANCO Langa, 16 October 2004, and 20 April 2006 (by telephone, notes taken).
Hendricks, Noahmaan, Manager: MIG Strategic Programmes, City of Cape Town, 13 March 2006.
Jacobs, André, former Sub-Council Manager Good Hope Sub-Council 16, 7 April 2006.
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Meter, Dicki, former Ward Councillor Hout Bay (ANC), 21 February 2006.
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Ngunga, Sophie, Executive Committee member, Housing, Sinethemba Civic Association, 28 March 2006 (notes taken).
Samuels, Gawa, Ward Councillor (NNP) ward 17 and member of the Mayoral Committee, 3 March 2004 (notes taken).
Sitoto, Mncedisi, Secretary SANCO Uitenhage Mandela metropole, 4 November 2004.
Sutherland, Monica, Chairperson Rondebosch and Rosebank Ratepayers’ and Business Association, 29 September 2004, and 18 April 2006 (by telephone, notes taken).
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Timms, Tessa, Treasurer Hout Bay and Llandudno Heritage Trust, 24 March 2006.
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