

Housing for the urban poor in Cape Town: a post apartheid dream or nightmare? *

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Abstract

In order to deal with the growth of the urban population and to challenge some of the inequalities of the apartheid era, the post-apartheid government had established an ambitious development programme. In this Reconstruction and Development Programme it was regarded as particularly important to involve the community in the development of housing. This paper outlines the particular understanding of 'community' in South Africa that inspired its development practices. Through the case study of one particular township in Cape Town the local political consequences of development become apparent. Communities are far from homogeneous and peaceful. Moreover, it appeared that the housing schemes could fuel political tensions and support the use of violence and intimidation by powerful brokers. The attempts by opposing groups to challenge the way a new township was being built were unsuccessful, due to the ideologies and politics of the community that were at the core of the development process. Instead of a dream, housing for the urban poor became a nightmare for some.



Introduction

With the abolishment of apartheid and the first democratic elections of 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) put great emphasis on the eradication of the inequalities between Whites, Coloured people, and Africans. Central to the abolishment of the inequalities was the eradication of poverty through development. Poverty-stricken Africans, and to a lesser extent coloured people, had to have better communal facilities, such as sanitation, roads, adequate policing, and health care. More jobs had to be created and the appalling housing situation of many Africans had to change. The development aims of the new government were consolidated in the national Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (ANC 1994). The new government appointed a special temporary RDP minister without portfolio, Mr. Naidoo, and between 1996 and 1999 the numerous RDP projects became integrated into the portfolios of the other ministers or were stopped.

One of the most prominent parts of the RDP was the housing grant for the poor. From 1994 to 1999 one million low-cost houses had to be built, of which only a fifth was accomplished by the beginning of 1998 (Mail and Guardian 1998, p.4). In cities such as Cape Town, the housing shortage had already been tremendous under apartheid (see e.g. Cole 1987; Cook 1992). Under apartheid only Africans with a 'pass' were allowed to live in urban areas and others were forced to live in the impoverished homelands. The 1923 Urban Areas Act especially, restricted the residence of Africans in urban areas. Africans were only allowed to live in the city as workers and even family members were not permitted to live with them. This resulted in an urban population of mainly men, often living in migrant hostels under poor conditions (Ramphela 1991, 1993; Robertson 1990). The inability to enforce the pass-laws, the abolition of these laws in 1986, and the end of apartheid led to an increased growth of the urban population and women in

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particular (James 1999). The growth of the urban population increased the already existing housing shortage and increasingly more people, and Africans in particular, have established illegal squatter communities between existing formal settlements or on the outskirts of Cape Town.

The aim of this paper is to explore some of the consequences of the post-apartheid development policy on housing. A fruitful way to do this is to look at the impact of this policy in a particular township, Indawo Yoxolo, and analyse the different reactions, negotiations, and conflicts that are part of such policies. In 1995, Indawo Yoxolo was a small informal settlement tucked away between some bushes and without any communal facilities, houses, roads, etc. By 1998, large parts of Indawo Yoxolo had transformed in townships with tar roads, streetlights, schools, two public phones, and for the poor a clearly demarcated plot with an electricity meter, a toilet, a tap, and a small house. The new township Indawo Yoxolo was not only built for the residents of the already existing squatter camp. Also African residents of other squatter camps in Cape Town could apply for plots under certain conditions that will be outlined below. The building of Indawo Yoxolo was therefore one of the many government attempts to deal with the massive growth of the African urban population in Cape Town.

This paper will show that a particular understanding of 'community' is central to the RDP. The understanding of community and the resultant practices are problematic and can contribute to conflict. Development policy seemed to take a homogenous and peaceful notion of community. Through a case study, it becomes clear that such a notion of community is far from the reality of local conflicts and political dynamics.

Housing policy: The politics of community

In 1991, when the apartheid regime had already started to crumble, political organisations, grassroots organisations and government bodies in Cape Town had established the Development Planning Committee (DPC), consisting of different political parties, government institutions and community-based organisations.¹ Their aim was to provide serviced residential plots, houses, education, health, employment and other resources to the, mainly African, poor in some of the most destitute areas of Cape Town. Within five years the DPC wished to develop and upgrade 34,500 sites and improve the housing situation of more than 35,000 poor families. People from 21 informal settlements, eight areas of backyard shack dwellers and residents of three hostels had to benefit from this project and another 6200 Coloured families who were on a waiting lists for housing could obtain access to the housing scheme (DPC 1994, p.8).

In 1993-94, the DPC and its projects became part of the national RDP. Because the DPC became part of the RDP, one has to understand the way the RDP was managed and what its central policies were. The RDP policy guided the housing process in Indawo Yoxolo, and the role of the DPC in the management of the process.

To build houses and infrastructure for the poor, the RDP ensured a subsidy of maximum R15,000² (approximately US\$ 2100) for the poor (see table 1). Private sector building companies, and in some instances NGOs, could be contracted to build roads, develop plots, and establish electricity connections, sewerage systems, toilets, and of course houses. The applicant would be allowed to occupy and own a plot in the new neighbourhoods. A lot of emphasis put was on public services and underground infrastructure, which meant that often little of the subsidy was left to build a house for the applicant, which led to many complaints about small matchbox houses.

Table 1: Individual housing subsidy provided for through the RDP

| Monthly income applicant and spouse | Subsidy |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| less than R 800 | R 15,000 |
| R 800 - R 1500 | R 12,500 |
| R 1500 - R 2500 | R 9,500 |
| R 2500 - R 3500 | R 5,000 |

Source: Masakhane (1995, p.4).

The DPC had secured extra funds from the Provincial Administration of the Western Cape and the Cape Metropolitan Council. This made it possible to raise the RDP subsidy for housing from R15,000 to a maximum of R17,250 for each plot and have more money for infrastructure and community facilities (DPC 1996a).

Central to the RDP, and therefore to the building of townships such as Indawo Yoxolo, was community participation. Community participation had to be achieved through the establishment of local community representative bodies in which all local political organisations and community-based organisations were to be represented. The community-based organisations had to participate in the development projects and discuss its implementation in their community.

The focus on community participation is in line with contemporary global development thinking. Experiences in development all over the world had shown that top-down development - development projects designed without the involvement of the ones to be developed - could end up in major disasters. An approach that would ensure the involvement of the community would do more justice to the wishes of the poor and would hopefully improve the chances of a successful development. Moreover, community participation fitted very well with notions of empowerment, government mentality and democratisation. Since the late 1980s, due to disappointing experience with structural adjustment lending following the end of the Cold War, and the dominance of neo-liberal thought, democracy was regarded as increasingly important (Leftwich 1994, p.366). In the South African context, in which the vast majority of its population was withheld the right to vote, an active approach towards promoting democratisation was seen as crucial for development (ANC 1994, p.119-135).

Just like the RDP, the DPC focused on community participation for development (DPC 1994, p.4). A Project Committee consisting of representatives of numerous community-based organisations should secure community representation and had to be responsible for the implementation and management of the projects. They would inform and consult the community about the DPC plans and, most notably, the Project Committee had to decide on the rules and procedures for the allocation of sites and manage the process (DPC 1994, p.14). Families who lived longest in a particular area were to go first to the new plots and that those older than 21 years and living with dependants would be given priority (DPC 1996d, p.1). The Project Committee became a powerful intermediary between the community, the DPC, government, and private construction companies. The role of the Project Committee was especially powerful in prioritising people's applications as it was difficult to ascertain how long the squatters had lived in a particular area. The Project Committee also had a say in the recruitment of labour for the housing projects: at least 50% of the labourers had to be recruited among residents of Indawo Yoxolo.

The results of the DPC and RDP policy on housing and development in general seemed to be a continuation of the forms of rule under colonialism and the apartheid era. Of course, the ideologies and aims of the post apartheid government differed tremendously from the colonial and apartheid era; instead of repression, the new government aimed to liberate and empower people; instead of exclusion, the post-apartheid government made efforts to integrate people by making resources available to non-whites; instead of dehumanising non-whites, the government

tried to emphasise humanity. The continuation of policy, therefore, can not be found in its aims and ideologies, but in the management of projects.

Under colonial times, South Africa, as many other parts of Africa, was governed by indirect rule. 'Natives' were controlled by separate institutions and laws, which were administered by a chief representing a tribe. The British colonial authorities strictly controlled the tribal chiefs. If such a tribe did not exist, the colonial government would create one in the process of indirect rule (Gluckman 1971, p.40; Mamdani 1996, p.62-65; Vail 1989, p.11-15). The system of apartheid resembled this form of indirect rule (Mamdani 1996, p.8). Under apartheid, the homelands had their African rulers who collaborated with the National Party and the urban townships had their illegitimate town councils (cf. Shubane 1991, p.65). The pretence of legitimacy of these chiefs under colonialism and rulers of homelands depended on the notion of tribe, race or ethnicity. Mamdani (1996, p.90) argues that:

Control and representation were two sides of the same coin, which would eventually make for a single fit: the mode of representation, whether racial or tribal, would shape the lines along which natives would organize and in turn avail the state corresponding avenues of native control.

Also in the post-apartheid era control of people and their representation seemed to coincide. The persistence on a naïve notion of community - although this notion was continuously contradicted in the media and by experience - served this form of rule. In the post apartheid era, with its emphasis on development, the seemingly non-political notion of community had taken over the functions of the terms race and tribe. The notion of community allowed the state to control and rule of groups of people via local bodies (cf. Ferguson 1990; Scott 1998).

Of course, under apartheid not everybody accepted the forms of rule based on race, and this rule not always functioned. Many neighbourhood organisations, in South Africa often known as 'civics' and organised in the 1980s in the United Democratic Front (UDF), were engaged in boycotts, stay-aways and protest marches against the state (Bähre 1996; Jacobs 1992, p.23-24; Matiwane and Walters 1986, p.72).

But after the 1994 elections, the role of the protesters against the government was expected to change. The local government transition act 209 (1993) ensured that 'civics' were represented in the local government.³ Furthermore, civics had a major say in the RDP forum. Thus, due to the political changes taking place in South Africa, civics had to change drastically from organisers of boycotts and other forms of protest against the government, into community organisations represented in local government and implementing government policy, such as the RDP housing projects (Bähre 1996; Seekings 1992, p.216).

In the post-apartheid era, however, new forms of resistance against government rule and development have emerged. Not all the residents of Indawo Yoxolo agree, or keep quiet, about development practices and housing projects. Let us look at the way this form of rule takes place in Indawo Yoxolo and how powerful yet problematic inclusive notions of community are.

The Project Committee

In Indawo Yoxolo, the township where the research took place, the local DPC was made up of representatives of residents of the areas that were eligible for a plot in Indawo Yoxolo. Opponents of the Project Committee preferred to call them the 'Old Committee' because they favoured a new committee, or the '*Big Five*'. The *Big Five* are known as the five powerful animals of South Africa's game parks: leopard, lion, elephant, rhino and buffalo. The adoption of

the name *Big Five* for the Project Committee emphasised the power and danger of this group, but was also a mockery about their status. Moreover, the name *Big Five* reminds one of the big men paradigm (see Thoden van Velzen 1973 for a critical analysis of the big men paradigm).

The members of the *Big Five* who were controlling Indawo Yoxolo were Mr. Bula, Mr. Zantsi, Mr. Nqasa, Mr. Posa, and Mr. Mtontsi. They were considered to be dangerous people and generally the residents of Indawo Yoxolo felt it was best to avoid them as much as possible. I once had a brief conversation with Mr. Nqasa. His reputation was that of ‘the gun’ of the *Big Five* who was careless enough to kill and get caught and involved in all kinds of dirty business, also outside of Indawo Yoxolo. Certainly, he was not the brain of the organisation, but had the reputation of being able to kill someone, which he eventually did and was convicted for. Mr. Nqasa was a big man of about forty years old, but possibly younger. He was always nicely dressed and had a small, trendy mobile phone and one noticed a gun bulging from under his jacket or sweater. I was playing soccer with two kids in front of my research assistant’s place while teenagers were playing street theatre where they pretended to rape a girl. Mr. Nqasa made a chat with my research assistant and I joined them. We shook hands, talked a bit about the weather, made some jokes, laughed a bit, and after a few minutes he strolled away. To an outsider it must have looked like one of those ordinary conversations neighbours have all the time. But, due to eye witness reports, I was convinced that he had recently killed Mr. Mabeqa: the man who had introduced me into Indawo Yoxolo and who was, together with my research assistant, one of the key figures that opposed the *Big Five*. Mr. Nqasa, of course, also knew that I had heard about his murder and Mr. Nqasa also knew that he and the other *Big Five* members had threatened to kill my research assistant as well. But we managed to have a friendly and open conversation about the weather.

Mr. Zantsi had the reputation of being the most powerful and smartest of the *Big Five* and some told me that whenever the *Big Five* resorted to violence to maintain their position, he was ‘accidentally’ away for a visit to his home in the former homeland Transkei. Due to my attempts to keep my distance from the *Big Five*, I had actually never seen him, except from a distance when he and some others drove with two cars to the old Indawo Yoxolo. Mr. Bula, the third member of the *Big Five* was also a powerful man who threatened and blackmailed people. The other two members of the *Big Five*, Mr. Posa, very much at the margins of the group, and Mr. Mtontsi, a poor drunkard, were not such powerful people.

Together, the *Big Five* formed a collective clientelism. Instead of relationships between individuals (patronage), collective clientelism is characterised by less personal relationship of a group of leaders with settlers of a community (Barth 1959, p.7; Burgwal 1995, p.27-28, 144; Van der Linden 1997). The *Big Five* attempted –often successfully- to control any initiative in the area, such as the building of schools, the appointment of teachers, the distribution of RDP plots to applicants, plans to build speed humps to slow down traffic, and they would ask for bribes to receive a plot. Their control was to the extent that they supported schoolteachers who allegedly took away the children’s lunch so they were forced to buy sweets and chicken feet from the women –also *Big Five* supporters- who had their little food stalls at the school ground. They co-operated with certain factions of the ANC, and at times also with other political parties, such as the National Party and United Democratic Movement. But the *Big Five* were particularly powerful because they were the DPC’s local Project Committee.

The opposition

The *Big Five* managed to stay in control over development but they were not unchallenged. As more people moved from the informal settlements around the Cape Flats to the serviced Indawo Yoxolo, politics in Indawo Yoxolo changed.

The most prominent leader of the opposition against the *Big Five* was Mr. Mabeqa, an ANC comrade who previously lived in Guguletu and moved to a plot in Indawo Yoxolo with his wife and teenage daughter. Because of his central position, I will call the opposition Mr. Mabeqa's group. Most of the supporters of Mr. Mabeqa's group lived in the serviced Indawo Yoxolo, which made them less dependent on the *Big Five's* willingness to put them on the housing list that would entitle them with the housing grant.

Politically, they were related with certain fractions within the local and provincial ANC. They also had some unclear relationships with the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), the civic body that was successive to the UDF. They claimed to be the legitimate SANCO committee in Indawo Yoxolo, which the *Big Five*, however, contested. The most important political stronghold of Mr. Mabeqa's group was their relation with councillor Gqoli. Mr. Gqoli was the only candidate for the local government elections of May 1996 for ward X of the Central Substructure.⁴ This comprised of three informal squatter camps including the squatter area without communal facilities and clearly demarcated plots that were going to be part of the developed Indawo Yoxolo.

The developed area of Indawo Yoxolo was not part of councillor Gqoli's ward X but part of ward Y. The councillors of ward Y were unknown to the residents of Indawo Yoxolo and they might have represented only other parts of ward Y. Because the councillors of ward Y were unknown, and because Indawo Yoxolo was divided between two wards (Ward X for the old squatter area and ward Y for the serviced area) Mr. Mabeqa's group tried to promote councillor Gqoli as the legitimate representative of the whole area.

The co-operation between councillor Gqoli and Mr. Mabeqa's group could have been motivated by the 'competition' between the local government structure and the RDP structure. The representatives of local government were elected but the Project Committee had much more control over resources and had a major say in the development of Indawo Yoxolo. Therefore, the local government was circumvented by the parallel structure of the RDP legitimised by community participation and community development. The Project Committee's control over the development project could undermine local government. The *Big Five* did not acknowledge councillor Gqoli as the legitimate councillor. Instead, they supported councillors from the illegal squatter camps where they had lived before or adjacent wards.

Future Dwelling

Instead of only focusing on the potency of these politically powerful *Big Five* and their social position (as often is done in an analysis of big men), political security has to be taken into the analysis as well (Thoden van Velzen 1973). Challenging the relationships with development offices, government institutions, and political parties, largely played out the struggle between the *Big Five* and Mr. Mabeqa's group. Moreover, the success of the *Big Five* in maintaining their position was to some extent a consequence of the actions of these institutions.

Future Dwelling co-ordinated the DPC development projects in Indawo Yoxolo. Future Dwelling was a private sector company that managed the relations with the private sector, subcontractors, and government institutions. The role of Future Dwelling as a provider of resources was central to the position of the *Big Five*. Future Dwelling was aware of the problems

caused by the *Big Five*. In 1996, there even had been a workshop organised with the participants of the RDP projects to discuss the illegal payments for plots.

The DPC workshops, and later its statements in newsletters, did not stop corruption and I heard of applicants paying bribes of up to R1200 in return for a place on the housing list. But not everybody was able, or willing, to pay such large sums of money. This confined them to the squatter camps that were part of Indawo Yoxolo: the *Big Five* only allowed them to live on a plot after they had paid a bribe. In September 1997, a resident of the squatter area of Indawo Yoxolo told me that the *Big Five* had tried to kill him because he would not pay a bribe. He had said that, while he was sleeping, one of the *Big Five* members shot at him through the window of his shack.

The opposition had made numerous attempts to challenge the relation between the *Big Five* and Future Dwelling. They had called meetings with Future Dwelling and at times also other development agencies. This, however, had always been unsuccessful. Future Dwelling would either fail to show up and if they would be present they were not willing to reconsider the co-operation with the *Big Five*. In November 1997, Mr. Mabeqa and other opponents of the *Big Five*, had finally managed to meet with the director in the office of Future Dwelling to discuss the violence and corruption in Indawo Yoxolo. There were no *Big Five* supporters present and therefore I could easily join the meeting. The director of Future Dwelling was unhappy about this meeting, but the presence of the residents of Indawo Yoxolo, and the support of their community leaders forced him to meet them. They told the director about the problems they had with the DPC's local Project Committee, i.e. the *Big Five*. Moreover, they had problems with Mr. Gwayi, their liaison officer responsible for the contacts between Future Dwelling and the Project Committee in Indawo Yoxolo. They repeated the allegations, which they had expressed earlier at a local town council meeting, that the liaison officer of Future Dwelling had sided with the *Big Five* and was also involved in corruption. They held Future Dwelling accountable for its support to the Project Committee. Instead of challenging the corruption and violence in Indawo Yoxolo, Future Dwelling was actually supporting the *Big Five* through the co-operation with their liaison officer.

Furthermore, they pointed out to the director that the *Big Five* were never properly elected and that the Project Committee did not include the new residents of Indawo Yoxolo. They told him that he was not the only one ignoring these problems. Also Mr. Mhloma, from the Department of Education, persistently ignored Mr. Mabeqa's group although they were the only legitimate SANCO committee in Samora Machel and instead kept on working with the *Big Five*.

After these allegations, the response of the liaison officer present at the meeting, Mrs. Dlamini, was that Future Dwelling wanted to wait until a larger ANC investigation into the housing and the RDP issues in the Cape Metropolitan Area was finalised. The director added:

'Things have changed in Indawo Yoxolo since we started. All political groups have to be included which represent the whole community. It has to be an inclusive community committee and should be elected. Then we have an accredited RDP forum in Indawo Yoxolo. It must include the entire community.'

Mr. Mabeqa and his supporters tried to explain that the tensions with the *Big Five* were too high to form a single committee. They asked the director how they could co-operate with someone who had threatened and tried to kill them. This was impossible, but the director kept on repeating his 'formula' that the Project Committee had to be inclusive and completely ignored the political problems in Indawo Yoxolo.

The director refused to take any actions concerning the allegations of corruption that were put towards his liaison officer and said: 'One can't change people's jobs based on some rumours'. However, he promised that the liaison officer would stop working in Indawo Yoxolo

and that another liaison officer would replace him. In practice, however, it seemed that the liaison officer kept control over the situation in Indawo Yoxolo. Some complained to me that the new liaison officer relied heavily on the previous liaison officer's advice, and that she continued to work with the *Big Five* and ignored Mr. Mabeqa's group. The ongoing support of the *Big Five* eventually led to rumours that Future Dwellings, including its director, were also involved in corruption. There were also increasing rumours about the ANC's involvement because the investigation into housing and RDP issues never seemed to be finalised. The slow investigation process was considered, at least by some, as a deliberate attempt of the ANC to hide corruption scandals. Although the National Party was the largest political party in the Western Cape Province and in the Cape Metropolitan Area, and thus might be considered, at least to some extent, responsible for the problems in Indawo Yoxolo, there were at this stage no allegations towards them.

The reason for Future Dwelling's approach seemed to be politically motivated. Future Dwelling co-operated with the *Big Five* because they were the most powerful group in Indawo Yoxolo and were therefore likely to be successful in carrying out the development projects. Although Future Dwelling used the rhetoric of inclusive community representation, their main concern was to get the job done. Similar to indirect rule, the *Big Five*'s willingness to use violence was only a bonus because it suggested that they would be effective if called upon. Thus, Future Dwelling provided the *Big Five* with some of the resources to become men of influence (cf. Thoden van Velzen 1973). The main challenge to the *Big Five*'s opponents seemed to be to skew the distribution of resources and to undermine the political security which the *Big Five* received from Future Dwelling and the ANC. The project of rule, which, at least in Indawo Yoxolo, was so intrinsically interwoven with community participation, made it very difficult for the unbound weak to challenge the position of the big men. Although it might have been unintended, the control over the development process led to a control over people through violence and intimidation. Other objectives of the development process, such as empowerment, or democracy, did not lead to any changes by Future Dwelling, the ANC, and the Department of Education.

ANC

The opposition also made several attempts to challenge the support the *Big Five* received from the ANC. Complaints about the *Big Five* had reached the provincial body of the ANC. In October 1997, the ANC of the Western Cape Province established a Commission of Inquiry into the allegations of corruption and violence in Indawo Yoxolo. The information on the proceedings and results of the Commission of Inquiry is from the Commission's confidential report to the ANC. The Commission of Inquiry interviewed 27 residents of Indawo Yoxolo who testified about the intimidation, violence, and corruption of the *Big Five*. They told the Commission that they were forced to pay bribes of up to R700 to *Big Five* members in exchange for a plot to which they would have been entitled to in the first place. The *Big Five* were accused of 'stealing' plots from its owners and selling them to people who did not qualify for a RDP grant, but who were willing and able to bribe the *Big Five*. They also complained about the violence of the *Big Five*. One of the 27 complained that was beaten with a firearm butt and another man had been shot. Another person testified that a *Big Five* member threatened him with a gun.

When it was the *Big Five*'s turn to respond to the allegations they blamed councillor Gqoli. They were unhappy that Mr. Gqoli openly supported Mr. Mabeqa's fraction and felt he had no right to interfere in Indawo Yoxolo. To the allegations of bribery, they replied that they had collected a small amount of money from residents (R50 per household) to cover their

administrative expenses: 'for tipp-ex and petrol', as some of them put it. They denied that they sold houses illegally and told the Commission that they wanted to help people who had plans to sell their house to others.

After the Commission of Inquiry had heard the allegations and the *Big Five*'s response, they established a report for the ANC of the Western Cape Province. The Commission concluded that it frequently happened that comrades were accused of crimes without being guilty of misbehaviour. They stated, however, that the illegal selling of plots by the *Big Five* was probably true because this was known to happen in other informal settlements in the Western Cape, such as Crossroads. The Commission felt it had sufficient evidence that four comrades were involved in the illegal selling of plots in Indawo Yoxolo, even after the Commission of inquiry had already started its work.

The Commission recommended expelling two *Big Five* members for six months and Mr. Zantsi for life. He was accused of, amongst others, harassment, beatings with a firearm, and the illegal sale of houses. The Commission did not report the crimes to the police and the crimes did not seem to be the reason for the disciplinary actions that they recommended. Mr. Zantsi, for example, was not expelled for his crimes, but for publicly challenging the ANC and for giving the impression that he supported rival political parties. The ANC of the Western Cape enforced the Commission's recommendations. After one year, however, Mr. Zantsi was re-admitted to the ANC. It was not so much the criminal activities of the *Big Five* that concerned them, but, similar to indirect rule, the ANC could use a loyal Project Committee to establish control over this area. Thus, the ANC was able to give political security, one of the parameters of the big men paradigm, to the *Big Five* in return for their political loyalty.

In February 1998, a member of the *Big Five*, Mr. Nqasa, had murdered Mr. Mabeqa who had led the opposition against them. After some time, Mr. Nqasa was found guilty for this murder and served a prison sentence. Others, who had been critical about the *Big Five*'s rule, had told me that they had been intimidated and there were also powerful allegations of other murders in Indawo Yoxolo. This had, at least temporarily, caused the disappearance of any opposition to the *Big Five*. Through violence, terror, and the continuous support from Future Dwelling and fractions within the ANC, the *Big Five* were able to maintain their powerful position. Mr. Nqasa was imprisoned for the murder but about a year later he was 'working' again in Indawo Yoxolo.

These problems were not only confined to Indawo Yoxolo. The eruption of violence in Cape Town led to an independent investigation by the Cape Town City Council, which was released in December 1998. The report suggested that the violence was related to the ANC dominated development projects. City manager and local electoral officer Mr. Johnson stated that the distribution of resources in a poor area made a few people very powerful. Although the problem was recognised, the report failed to point out that development policy created the parameters for such powerful brokers. Instead, the report focused on the community as an independent area with warlords, a possible 'third force' and intolerant politicians (Steenkamp and Bateman 1998) The development project itself was not regarded as part of the problem and hardly any reference was made to the role of development planning.

Conclusions

With the collapse of the Apartheid State, the hopes that the ANC and many South Africans had about the future were high, and in retrospect these hopes were considered to be too high. Before, and some years after the 1994 elections, people expected the new government to solve many inequalities of the past. Adequate housing for the poor was regarded as one of the key issues in this transformation process. But, the building of houses for the large numbers of poor Africans

was a tremendous task. Many of the policy requirements for development proved to work out differently in practice and had caused, or contributed to, political conflicts, violence, intimidation, and corruption. Numerous development policies, development workers and journalists adopted a seemingly unproblematic image of the community as a homogenous group of people. A person was not seen to represent himself, but everybody in 'the community', in a powerful and naive way. Such simplistic images of community served a form of rule similar to indirect rule in colonial Africa: The goals might have been different, but the means to achieve them seemed similar.

It seems a contradiction that a political party that is rooted in the struggle for democracy and freedom has been able to neglect the oppressive aspects of the development process. Unfortunately, at least some government agencies and development institutions did not wish to deal with the problematic use of 'communities'. Instead of dealing with the establishment of violent power brokers in places such as Indawo Yoxolo, and instead of listening to the objectives raised by opposing groups, they kept repeating their mantra of adequate housing for the poor through community participation. Notwithstanding numerous protests by the victims of this policy, the projects were not adjusted and powerful and violent brokers were not seriously challenged. To some degree, the management of housing for the poor was continued along repressive lines of rule of the past. This means that, both on a theoretical and policy level, more attention should be paid to the possibilities that poor people have to question or challenge the delivery of housing, and their involvement in the development process.

The many incidences of violence and intimidation might be specific to South Africa, where violence and crime is one of the major challenges of the democratic government. The high occurrence of violence in society unfortunately affects development and the resources that are provided for were, at least to some extent, protected and skewed through violence. Although development practices in many other countries are not this violent, the South African case provides some insights in the consequences of a particular conceptualisation of community. Representatives of 'communities' tend to emphasise ideological assumptions of solidarity, homogeneity and co-operation. Although 'communities' differ largely over the world, this case has shown that development planning should be sensitive to the local socio-political dynamics in the development of housing and be critical about the, sometimes ideologically motivated, presentations of 'communities' in the development of housing.

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¹ The forum consisted of the African National Congress, Cape Provincial Administration, South African National Civics Organisation, Western Cape Regional Services Council, Western Cape United Squatters Association, Cape Town City Council, Western Cape Civics Association, Ikapa Town Council, Umzamo Development Project, Crossroads Town Council, and at a later stage the Pan African Congress joined (DPC 1994, p.1).

² R1 (one Rand) is approximately 0.15 Euro or about \$ 0.14.

³ See the Provincial Gazette Extraordinary 4943 (1995) for the participating civics in the Western Cape Metropolitan Area.

⁴ The local government elections in the Western Cape Province and Kwazulu Natal (the only provinces where an ANC victory would not be sure) were postponed for half a year. In the Western Cape was a political battle over electoral borders because the way the borders were drawn had important consequences for the election results and tax revenues.