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**Insurgency and Spaces of Active Citizenship:  
The Story of Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign in South Africa**

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*Abstract*

This paper concerns the struggle waged by the poor in Cape Town, South Africa to assert their constitutional rights to shelter and basic services and protect their life spaces against neoliberal policies. Taking insurgent urbanism and active citizenship as its conceptual guide, this paper attempts to enhance our understanding of grassroots spaces for practicing inclusive citizenship, stretching beyond a limited interpretation of formal citizenship. In addition to "invited" spaces of citizenship, which are created or sanctioned by government and donors interventions and occupied by the grassroots and their allied non-governmental organizations, the paper highlights the significance of the "invented" spaces of citizenship, which are claimed through collective action by the poor often in defiance of authorities and the status quo. This paper, through the example of the Western Cape Anti-eviction Campaign in South Africa, aims to contribute to a recent opening in the planning inquiry by overcoming the selective definition of what constitutes civil society and public participation and underlining the significance of both invited and invented spaces of citizen participation in the formation of inclusive citizenship and just cities.

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It was in the year 2000. And that same day, we saw that they had a book with them with the addresses of the next families that they were going to evict. And we got a hold of that book. When we got a hold of that book, we saw the addresses there – the next address was on Jones Street and so we sent some of our civic members to Jones Street. We told them to ... do a sit-in in that house, and don't let anyone touch the people's furniture to carry it out. ... We were so busy because ... we had to carry the old lady in ... She was with her neighbors and sick in bed. The old lady didn't want us to leave because she thinks that if we were going to leave now then they were going to evict her again. So we had to stay by her and ... we knew they were going to Jones Street. So, we said: "You go into that house and you stay there and don't let them touch anything. We will be there soon. When they leave here, we will come there."

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And then myself and another member of the campaign went to the State office and . . . we phoned the city of Tygerburg and the people in charge of housing just to explain to them that this was an old lady of over 80 years. We wanted to know if we could go to the office to make an arrangement for the old lady to see how she was going to pay. Because definitely we were not going to have her be evicted and staying outside . . . Fortunately, they understood. The person in charge, I think it was Mr. . . . of the City of Tygerburg that I spoke to. Then he ordered the law enforcement and the sheriff to leave there. I told him that they have got more addresses and more people that they were going to evict, and we are saying that they are not going to evict those people. Understand? Then they left the area . . . they were forced to leave the area because then people started throwing stones at them, . . . And that was how we stopped them (Gretrude Square -- interview).<sup>1</sup>

This is one of many stories illustrating the struggles by poor people around the world to maintain adequate shelter and to access minimum services. This particular story belongs to Gretrude Square a 40-something year old woman, living in one of the many disadvantaged townships of Cape Town, South Africa, an area categorized as “colored” under the apartheid urban planning system.<sup>2</sup> During the era of apartheid, Grace was evicted on three separate occasions when her R150 income as a single mother of three small children was not sufficient to pay the monthly R80 for the council house she rented from the state. Still vivid in her memory is that experience of coming home from work and finding her children, too young to comprehend the calamity, crawling upon their furniture, which had been removed from her house and piled up on the street. She and many others in her community are members of a community-based group colloquially referred to as a civic (shorthand for community-based civic association). They also participate in the Anti-Eviction Campaign (hereafter referred to as AEC or the campaign), which resists the evictions of poor residents who are unable to meet their housing or service payments. Until due legal procedures and court hearings can take place, the AEC moves evicted families back into their homes and reconnects their water services (WCAEC Campaign Statement 2002). This campaign approach aims to defend the constitutional right of all South African citizens to access adequate housing and sufficient food and water (see article 26 and 27 of the 1996 constitution of the Republic of South Africa).<sup>3</sup>

The present paper is an attempt to better understand spaces of popular assertion of citizenship through which individuals strive to practice their constitutional right beyond those formal spaces that often exclude their needs and priorities. Drawing upon a series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with members and leaders of the anti-eviction and anti-privatization movements in Cape Town, South Africa, this paper attempts to render a clear portrait of people like Grace S. and their struggles for shelter and services.<sup>4</sup> Concentration is given to the particular grassroots actions engaged against evictions in the Western Cape in order to illuminate the processes and reasons by which such campaigns are created. Who participates in and creates them? What are the internal compositions of these movements, particularly in respect to race and gender? What are their practices of citizenship and collective action? How do they perceive their rights and how are they perceived by others, namely by the state and the media? And what are the implications of these spaces of insurgency for planning thought?

These are some of the questions that motivate this study. In this paper we hope to bring to light insurgent practices of the poor in their struggle for shelter, and reintroduce the conceptual notion of this act of creating spaces of inclusive and active citizenship. As the urban poor defy policies imposed on them from above, they shape their environment through resistance and insurgency. The effects of these practices on urban space and urban processes cannot go

unexamined. We use insurgent urbanism and insurgent citizenship, a concept first introduced by James Holston (1995), and further articulated by Leonie Sandercock (1998b) and John Friedmann (2002), as our conceptual guide in this endeavor.

The following paper is structured in six sections. **Section one** introduces the conceptual framework of the study, which will help analytically usher the reader through the stories of the AEC. **Sections two and three** introduce the historical perspective of the problem of housing and evictions. Enumerated here are the systems of urban inequality formed under apartheid and perpetuated under the government's current neo-liberal policy framework for housing and services. **Section four** presents an overview of the campaign, its conception, and its basic characteristics. **Section five**, which constitutes the thrust of the paper, utilizes interviews conducted with AEC members to provide a proximate look at the fine-tuned social and political fabrics of this grassroots campaign. This information is organized around two themes. Situated practices of citizenship: discusses the campaign's forms of association and strategies for collective action. Emphasized are the formal and informal ways that excluded people acquire knowledge and information about their status and rights and employ situational self-reflection. Identity and agency: highlights how people define themselves and are defined by others (i.e., the state and the media). The ways in which they perceive their rights and are perceived by others have important influences on their ability to exercise agency and challenge exclusion. **Section six** concludes the paper with remarks on the implications of these practices for the planning thought. It highlights the contribution of insurgent movements like the WCAEC to a recent opening in the planning inquiry by overcoming the selective definition of what constitutes people's organizations and civil society, and underlining the significance of both invited and invented spaces of citizen participation in the formation of inclusive citizenship and just cities.

## **1. Active Citizenship and Insurgent Movements**

Cities under different conditions create varied citizenship dramas, write Holston and Appadurai (1999). The protagonists of the drama of citizenship created under the conditions of neo-liberal urban policies are the urban poor, mobilized through their social movements to shape a distinct form of citizenship. As opposed to a statist citizenship that assumes the state as "the only legitimate source of citizenship rights, meanings and practices" (Holston 1998:39),<sup>5</sup> this alternative drama of citizenship is active, engaged and "grounded in civil society" (Friedmann 2002:76). It moves beyond formal citizenship to a substantive one which concerns an array of civil, political, social and economic rights, including the rights to shelter, clean water, sewage discharge, education, basic health — in short, the right to the city (Lefevbre 1996). This new drama of citizenship is performed not only in the high courts of justice and ministerial corridors of government institutions, but also in the streets of the city, the squatter camps of hope and despair, and the everyday life spaces of those excluded from the state's citizenship project. Cities are breeding grounds for these emerging citizenship practices (Isin 1999), which aim to expand the public sphere (Rose 2000) to generate "new sources of laws, and new participation in decisions that bind" (Holston and Appadurai 1999:20). The protagonists of this citizenship drama use non-formalized channels, create new spaces of citizenship, and improvise and invent innovative practices, all of which attract a captive constituency that embraces their just demands.

This alternative model of citizenship emerges from the existing disjunctions between the form and substance of citizenship. It challenges the assumption made by liberal citizenship models of a nearly linear progression of citizenship rights (Marshall 1964)<sup>6</sup> and depicts the internal contradictions of liberal and formal citizenship. For example, it highlights the

experiences of those Eastern European citizens who lost much of their social and substantive rights despite their newly attained civil and political rights (Friedmann 2002); or the experiences of the poor, black majority in post-apartheid South Africa who cannot access much of their constitutionally-inscribed, basic social rights, while their newly attained political and civil rights are buried under the devastating social and economic impacts of neo-liberalism (Friedmann 2002: 70).

Feminists have been some of the most vocal critics of liberal citizenship, providing significant contributions to the construction of an alternative inclusive model (Young 1990; Fraser and Gordon 1994; Yuval-Davis 1997; Lister 1997; Sandercock 1998a; Tripp 1998; Wekerle 2000; Werbner and Yuval-Davis. 1999). Their critique exposes the fallacy of the liberal model, which assumes citizens are a single, all-right-bearing entity with equal rights and obligations. This becomes particularly cogent within the framework of the current eroding state of citizens' social rights and their fragile social safety net, whereby the state shifts its responsibilities upon households, thus relying on women's increased citizenry obligations (Miraftab 2001).

Scholars of citizenship in the global South have further pursued this critique by highlighting the irrelevance of the western liberal definitions of citizenship rights and obligations to the realities of Third World countries (Mamdani 1996, 1995; Kabeer 2002; Gaventa 2002; Cornwall 2002). Through his examination of the relationship between state and civil society in the former colonies, leading scholar in this field Mahmood Mamdani (1996) shows that, unlike in western modern societies, the distinction between state and civil society is blurred in colonies functioning under their colonizer's indirect rule. The state has a bifurcated character and a dual relationship with civil society: as citizens, constituted by colonial settlers and the minority native elites, and as subjects, constituted by the majority natives.

Reconceptualizing the notion of citizenship, shifting its center from the state to the people, and stressing a pluralist model (Young 1990) has led to a plethora of new definitions of citizenship, including: participatory citizenship, inclusive citizenship (Gaventa 2002; Kabeer 2002), active citizenship<sup>7</sup> (Kearns 1995; Lister 1997), and citizenship from below or "insurgent citizenship" (Holston 1998). These definitions signify an alternative conceptualization of citizenship, in which new meanings, agencies, and practices of citizenship are articulated. In this alternative model, practices of citizenship extend beyond "taking up invitations to participate" in what Cornwall calls *invited* spaces of citizenship. They extend to forms of action that citizens innovate in order to "create their own opportunities and terms of engagement" (Cornwall 2002:50). Miraftab (2003a) referring to these alternative spaces of participation as *invented* spaces of citizenship, has underlined the significance of expanding the arenas of practicing citizenship to include both *invited* and *invented* spaces of citizenship. In this paper by highlighting the practices of the Anti-eviction Campaign we hope to contribute to this recognition of insurgency as a fair and legitimate practice of citizenship by active citizens participating in the construction of inclusive citizenship from below.

As neo-liberal practices privatize the city, its infrastructure, and its life spaces, and increasingly exclude urban citizens who are not deemed "good paying customers," insurgent citizenship challenges the hypocrisy of neo-liberalism: an ideology which claims to equalize through the promotion of formal political and civil rights, yet through its privatization of life spaces, criminalizes citizens based on their consumption abilities. Insurgent citizenship is a strategy employed by the poor to hold city officials accountable to their civil and political rights

to decent housing conditions as well as to the city itself, and to reclaim their dignity despite the hypocrisy. The accounts of the Anti-eviction Campaign members, their visions and dreams, their situated practices, and their agency and identity are presented here with hopes to influence and assist planning theory and education to cultivate a grounded understanding of the range of citizenship spaces and the insurgent urbanism that emerges as an alternative response to neo-liberal urbanism.

## **2. Historical Context: Struggle for Shelter and Basic Services**

In the South African context, the exclusionary concept of citizenship has been woven together with the accessibility of housing and basic urban services to urban dwellers (Mabin 1993; Parnell 1993; Maharaj 1992). Hence, in any formulation or discussion of citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa, the question of housing and basic services occupies the center stage. This recognition is reflected in both the 1994 electoral platform proposed by the African National Congress (ANC) for the Government of National Unity and the 1996 South African Constitution, which recognize the rights of all citizens to access adequate housing and basic services (articles 26 and 27).

To overcome the ugly history of apartheid and tackle the state's nation-building agenda, the new government of South Africa initially promised to prioritize equitable access to land, housing and services through its proposed Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which placed the responsibilities of redistribution precisely on the state in order to achieve a universal and inclusive citizenship. Since access to socio-economic resources has been at the core of apartheid stratifications of citizenship, RDP guaranteed universal citizenship through the granting to all citizens substantive rights to socio-economic resources. Later, however, as explained by numerous scholars and researchers, the redistributive agenda of RDP was abandoned for a growth agenda made public in the state's more market-driven fiscal plan known as Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) (see Bond 2000a, 2000b; Cheru 1997; Moore 2001). The subsequent shift to this market-led development framework left the notion of universal citizenship in South Africa limited to its formal channels of participation, which are particularly inadequate in a society with some of the world's largest socio-economic gaps and ranks of disparity.<sup>8</sup>

Clear indications of the government's abandonment of a redistributive agenda include the stagnated state of low-cost housing production,<sup>9</sup> and the dwindling budget allocation to housing which has gradually decreased from the promised 5 percent to 3.4 percent in 1995/96, 2.4 percent in 1997/8, and 1.6 percent in 1999/00 (Khanya College 2001: 40-41). Together with this idle assisted-housing delivery system and shrinking budget have come escalating housing demands, due to the influx of urban populations, and a growing number of evictions.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, the housing deficit has not improved, still standing at around 3 million units for the whole of South Africa compared to the 3.4 million-unit shortage estimated in 1994,<sup>11</sup> and basic shelter is still beyond the reach of the impoverished majority.

Furthermore, despite the constitution's declared right for all citizens to access decent shelter and basic services, the neo-liberal state's prescription of "cost reflective pricing" for municipal services has led to extensive service cut-offs for disadvantaged households.<sup>12</sup> Since 1996, in Cape Town alone, the post-apartheid government has disconnected water service to an estimated 92,772 poor households<sup>13</sup>, or nearly 463,000<sup>14</sup> people (McDonald and Smith 2002: 30). In Khayelitsha, a black township in Cape Town, poor households experienced 14,355 water

cut-offs during a six-month period in 2000 after a moratorium on African households was lifted (MacDonald and Smith 2002: 30).<sup>15</sup> Most important, only one percent of South African land, the key issue cementing apartheid's exclusionary citizenship, has been redistributed as of today despite the RDP's land redistribution goal of 30 percent.<sup>16</sup>

It is true that service provision in South Africa has increased substantially. According to a report reviewed by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in 2000, access to clean, running water has been expanded to more than 5 million South African households and 2.8 million households gained access to electricity since the government came into power in 1994. However, the ability for vast numbers of poor residents to actually afford services has decreased tremendously.<sup>17</sup> In fact, a recent *New York Time* article reports water taps are often shut to South Africa's poor (29 May 2003-front page). Installation in impoverished townships of state-of-the-art public taps requiring pre-paid cards for their operation has created an unprecedented case in the developing world, whereby a growing number of the poor in informal settlements have been cut-off and thus denied access to water due to their inability to afford pre-payments and their lack of alternatives once money has run out on their cards.<sup>18</sup> Large numbers of township residents also require similar pre-paid meter cards to access electricity. Stretches of time without lights or clean water are not uncommon for populations living "hand-to-mouth"; yet, these periods between earnings often brew disastrous public health consequences like the devastating cholera outbreak that spread to seven of the country's nine provinces in 2000 and followed by 120,000 reported cases of cholera and nearly 260 deaths in 2000 (*New York Times* 5/29/2003).

An extensive body of literature has adopted the task of analyzing the ways in which neo-liberal policies lead to such devastating results for the poor; however, this will not be covered here (Bond 2000b; Heller 2001; Moore 2001; McDonald and Pape 2002; Flynn 2003; Deasi 2002; Heart 2002; Fiil-Flynn 2001). In respect to housing, several studies specifically interrogate the South African housing policy and the manner in which its neo-liberal, developer-driven goals have undermined the constitutional inspiration for housing as a human right (Miraftab 2003b; Jenkins, 1999; Mackay 1999; Laloo 1999; Ruiters and Bond 1996; Tomlinson 1999). A synthesis of these studies will be offered below in order to provide a foundation from which we can discuss the two eviction conflicts focal to this paper concerning the local government (council houses in Mitchell's Plain) and the private banks (bond houses in Mandela Park).

First, the post-apartheid housing policy mobilizes housing subsidies through private developers, instead of community-based groups and NGOs, with the assumption that the private sector can accomplish fast and massive delivery. Yet, developers have failed in terms of both speed of delivery and quantity, and the housing backlog persists (see Miraftab 2003b) for a detailed discussion regarding this aspect of South African housing policy).

Second, the state offers a range of risk-reducing mechanisms to private financial institutions in efforts to entice their participation in housing loans provisions to the poor. However, banks have not only failed to deliver on their low-cost bonds,<sup>19</sup> but the government's support schemes have been used against low-income residents through mass evictions from poorly constructed bank units, as will be seen in the case of SERVCON in Mandela Park.

Finally, local governments adopt the cost recovery principles of the market by aggressively evicting poor households from the existing stock of rental units for reasons of non-

payment. This takes place despite the fact that most of those evicted are unemployed and without job prospects, as will be seen in the case of council houses in Mitchell's Plain. In short, market-led principles that place cost recovery at the center of local governments' policies and that prioritize the interests of the banks and private developers over the shelter needs of the poor have resulted in the failure of the housing policy to rectify the injustices of the past or to secure the new constitutional right to basic shelter.

### **3. The Eviction Crisis in Cape Town**

The poor in South Africa face the eviction crisis on two fronts: vis-à-vis the local governments and vis-à-vis the private banks. In Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town, the former is illustrated through the municipal government's evictions of poor council housing residents. Council houses are rental units built by the apartheid state during the 1950s through the 1970s to accommodate the population categorized as colored who were forcefully removed from their vibrant urban neighborhoods to desolate, controlled areas. Cape Town has one of the largest concentrations of council houses due to its identification as the preferred locale for labor by the population that the apartheid government called "colored", a process of legislation referred to as the "colored labor preference policy." Most council houses are in extremely poor condition due to nearly no maintenance or improvements. They are severely infested with ticks, lice, rats, and cockroaches, and possess high numbers of reported TB cases.<sup>20</sup> The majority of council housing residents are welfare cases such as seniors and the disabled or unemployed (Desai 2002: 17) who cannot afford to relocate and find it difficult to make payments on outstanding rental arrears with their monthly pension or grant incomes of R 620.<sup>21</sup> However, particularly distressing is the fact that many of these arrears include those accumulated during the apartheid-era rent boycotts.<sup>22</sup> Once evicted from their council homes, these individuals, some of whom have resided in their units for over 28 years, have no alternative but to set up makeshift shacks in informal settlements, squatter camps, or private backyards, adding to the millions of families who have spent the many years on the Housing Department's waiting list for appropriate shelter.

The struggle of the poor against private banks is illustrated through the eviction crisis in Mandela Park. The dispute between Mandela Park residents and the banks dates back to the late 1980s, just as the dismantling of apartheid was insinuated, during a period in which the state and commercial banks together offered poor working class black families a first-time opportunity to own affordable homes.<sup>23</sup> Shortly after the houses were delivered, many units' walls and foundations began to crumble and collapse. Because the banks failed to respond to their complaints, some of the new homeowners conducted repairs at their own expense and boycotted mortgage payments. Others were simply unable to make their bond payments, as the majority had no jobs<sup>24</sup> and many households consisted of multiple generations completely dependent on a single pension or grant.<sup>25</sup> Following the 1994 political transition, those banks that sponsored the construction of these units continued to ignore the reported structural problems and yielded to SERVCON for assistance with defaulters. SERVCON, a parastatal institution jointly established by the government and private banks to minimize the risks involved in administering housing loans to low-income groups through a guaranteed mortgage, proved useful as a tool to collect payments or expropriate housing for "non-performing" housing loans. The seized units are resold for twice their original price,<sup>26</sup> while the owners, unable to pay their debts, are relocated to more remote and smaller accommodations referred to as "right-sized" homes, which are in substantially poorer condition than bond houses.<sup>27</sup>

“[SERVCON] was supposed to lease between the community and the banks in terms of addressing the community demands,” states an AEC leader from Mandela Park, “but SERVCON ended up dancing to the music of the banks . . . [and] manipulated . . . We saw people being evicted without the banks ever having addressed the demands” (Goboza --interview). By May 1995, SERVCON had repossessed nearly 30,000 homes, and by 1996, 70,000 housing properties were classified as “non-performing loans” (Khanya College 2001: 60). Over 4,000 of these defaulters resided in the Western Cape and nearly 2,000 had homes in Khayelitsha, the black township in which this study was conducted (High Court 2002:8).

The anti-eviction movement has emerged within the poor townships of Cape Town in direct response to such threats against the more vulnerable populations of South Africa, creating spaces of resistance for average citizens to protect their livelihoods and claim their constitutional rights to access decent living conditions.

#### **4. The Birth of the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign**

An eviction procedure was slightly different the morning of 17 October 2000 in a part of Mitchell’s Plain known as Tafelsig. Unlike past episodes throughout the area that year, during which a small number of municipal police cogently removed families and their belongings from their council houses and installed new locks on doors, this time the sheriff brought with him a large number of armed policemen and special canine units to evict the family of Charles Lategan, a local black mechanic who repaired cars in exchange for food or goods. And though the community reacted in much the same way as they did during previous evictions, crowding outside the house in an attempt to block the police from entering, the response they received was nothing like before.

There were about 4 or 5 units of police, dog units, you name the units that are in the police force and they were here. Ashraf [my son] spoke to them about the Constitution, which just agitated them. They didn’t like what he said . . . After my son was bitten by the dogs, he tried to get away and ran . . . the guys of the SAP were lined up and started to shoot real bullets, not rubber, the real thing . . . The guy in charge of these people shouted: “I told you, man, not the real bullets. Rubber! Rubber!” . . . Then they put their guns down and started running towards Ashraf. I also started to run towards him. But before I could get to him, 3 or 4 of the police were on Ashraf already. They started hitting him in the face and to the ground they threw him . . . they kicked him in the mouth. . . . I could see white stuff coming from his mouth. . . . I went to the police and I hit him with my fist . . . [Then] the other police came from behind and I fell on top of Ashraf. From there, I can’t tell you anything anymore, [because] I have a heart ailment and I went into some sort of seizure. (Mrs. Cassiem --interview)

Photos of Ashraf Cassiem being placed bloodied and unconscious into an ambulance together with his unconscious mother made national front-page headlines and newscasts. Following this episode, the eviction process in Tafelsig was never the same. By 18 February 2001, five hundred people, including representatives from the townships of Valhalla Park and Lavender Hill, packed the hall of the Tafelsig Community Center to discuss ways in which they could collaboratively fight evictions and water and electricity cut-offs. The Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) was officially formed at this meeting.

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The AEC is a grassroots agglomeration of organizations whose members have been victims or face the threat of evictions or service cuts. Since arrears from non-payment of utility

services frequently constitute an eviction, the AEC resists service disconnections in addition to fighting evictions. The poor families threatened by these two concerns usually work collaboratively, thus, the people mobilized to resist evictions are often the same mobilized to oppose service disconnections.

These grassroots initiatives against evictions and services cuts work closely with a movement coalesced under an Anti-Privatization Forum (APF), which started in Johannesburg in late 1999, and launched an independent forum in the Western Cape in 2000.<sup>28</sup> The Cape Town Anti Privatization Forum is an umbrella organization that incorporates an array of members including unions, NGOs, political groups and activists opposed to the privatization of shelter and basic services. It is a voluntary organization that binds its members in only a few basic principles, the most prominent of which demands the provision of essential services on the basis of people's needs and not their ability to pay. While the grassroots campaign (AEC) maintains a grounded focus, concerning itself mainly with the immediate day-to-day problems of its member communities in respect to the singular issue of shelter (housing and services), the APF covers a wide range of struggles against neoliberal capitalism which includes but also goes beyond housing, water and electricity, e.g., access to education. It also organizes mass protests locally and nationally<sup>29</sup> and collaborates with other global movements opposed to neo-liberal policies.<sup>30</sup>

Most campaign activists were involved in the township struggles against apartheid and have maintained active membership in their community's civic organizations since then. For example, Max Ntanyana and Fonky Goboza currently lead the Mandela Park AEC and participate in the WCAPF, but have been active in their civic organization in the black township of Khayelitsha since their teenage years. Their involvement with the AEC is a natural continuation of their community development activism, which previously had been mobilized by NGOs and community-based organizations. They see their role in the prevention of evictions and services disconnections no different than their responsibility for ensuring the provision of shelter and services.

“What we want is community development . . . We've got rich experiences and the community knows us . . . People in large numbers come here reporting their cases to us . . . where they are robbing our people or criminals are shooting people. They will come to us before going to the police. They come to us when their water is cut off. They will ask us how to open the water [taps]” (Goboza and Ntanyana --interview).

Similarly, Valhalla Park AEC activist and local civic leader Gretrude Square builds on her past involvement in the rent boycotts and protests of the apartheid struggle. She underlines her all-encompassing activities as a member of the campaign and the civic body in her community: “I'm doing anything and everything. I'm just not only busy with evictions and all that stuff. In the civic body, I'm busy with people that are struggling to receive pensions, disability grants, [or] rent-payment grants, abandoned children, with everything” (Gretrude Square -- interview).

The vision that drives the campaign activists can best be described as one of achieving a just city, a city in which both the political and economic rights of its people are ensured and respected and where all residents feel confident that their voices will be heard and their basic needs will be met. Fonky Goboza of the Mandela Park AEC describes the campaign's vision as such:

We don't have supporters. We don't have followers. We have active participants. That is participatory democracy . . . [T]he statement that we are putting across is that we as a people want open transparency where everyone participates and everybody knows what is taking place . . . [O]ur struggle is genuine. We want to make justice in housing programs (Goboza --interview).

However, despite this grand aspiration for social justice, the campaign's composition and its internal dynamics in respect to gender are not much different from other community-based movements in that it is comprised of mostly female members, but led primarily by males. At the AEC's first annual general meeting, during which a management committee of ten members were voted into office, only one woman was selected for the committee. Though a third of the forty attendees were female, the first eight members nominated and voted into office were male, consequently filling the more demanding positions of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. When at one point a vocal female member spoke up about the gender disparity within the newly-established management committee, another female activist disagreed and the issue was not followed up. One highly regarded woman member, however, turned down the offer to serve on the committee, explaining that the position commanded too much responsibility and that she would be more effective maintaining her current role as a grassroots mobilizer for her community. An active female campaign member illustrates this gender controversy:

It is mostly women and not a lot of men [who participate], . . . but men have got all of the frontline things to do. There are no women going to the Council or going to Parliament or going to the Unicity or what have you. . . . I get very cross [because] I feel that I should also be there. Why not? . . . Most women are probably feeling like that . . . [but] I am the only one that says it. . . . I've been in the campaign since it started. I want to be all over the place and I'm not. . . . They [male leaders] do that because they know how to. I would if I could . . . I also want to be there . . . in the front line!

Racially, however, the campaign has been able to bridge the color lines among the poor townships despite the deep and entrenched social divides between groups stratified under apartheid as "blacks" and "coloreds". Since the eviction crisis affects most disadvantaged ethnic groups in Cape Town today, the movement against evictions derives strength from the camaraderie among its racially diverse campaign members. Though at first it was exclusively comprised of residents from "colored" townships, as evictions focused on defaulting tenants in council houses, the AEC later incorporated mass membership among black households when bond houses in black townships like Mandela Park were seized and black owners were evicted.<sup>31</sup> Considering that the majority of its constituency is unemployed and consequently struggles with transport fees to travel anywhere, the campaign's ability to recruit members of African townships to support evicted "colored" families in Mitchell's Plain (and vice versa) is particularly remarkable. The participation of campaign members in mass rallies and their demonstrated support to communities outside of their own townships involves notable sacrifice and illustrates a commitment and solidarity that likely ameliorates racial divides.

Deeply entrenched patterns of social exclusion and hierarchy cannot naively be expected to swiftly amend through processes of active participation or popular education. However, there is hope that creating and participating in spaces of insurgent citizenship and prolonged struggle might afford certain steps, though tiny and slow, towards a broader social transformation, which may influence changes in individual identity and consciousness.

## **5. The AEC and APF as Spaces of Active Citizenship**

The remainder of this paper will present a more detailed account of the AEC and APF based on the collected narratives of campaign members. These stories facilitate an appreciation of the two movements as examples of active citizenship and insurgent urbanism. Drawing on interviews conducted with members of the AEC, this section provides a magnified snapshot of the fine-tuned social and political fabric of this grassroots campaign. The discussion will be organized around two themes: situated practices of citizenship and the identity and agency of citizenship.

### **5a) Situated Practices of Citizenship:**

In order to move beyond a limited and liberal definition of citizenship to one of an inclusive citizenship, we need to recognize the various formal and informal ways that excluded people assert their citizenship rights. We need to understand the various ways in which they acquire knowledge and information, form associations, and mobilize collective action. We also need to recognize the perceived rights and status of the excluded as well as their capacity to reflect on their situation: a critical precondition to claiming rights is the extent to which people incorporate “the right to have rights” (Kabeer 2002:21). Questioning and acting on exclusion constitutes a common starting point in ensuing attempts to challenge it.

- ***Perceived Rights and Invited Spaces of Citizenship***

South Africa is situated well in this particular discussion as its recent history of constitutional change has created a heightened awareness about rights among those who were historically denied a citizenship. They are fully aware of their constitutional rights to shelter and basic services: the needs for which they have fought throughout their struggle against apartheid. “Water is a necessity. We must have water. And a roof over our heads, we must have it. These are not privileges,” says pensioner and member of the Tafelsig AEC, Mrs. Cassiem, who has lived through the difficult, “bossy days” of apartheid. Ironically, though the contemporary history of South Africa has established a foundation for people’s increased awareness of their right to have rights, this hasn’t been sufficient in creating spaces and avenues for claiming and practicing those rights.

AEC members are disenchanted with the main formal channel allotted to them for voicing their concerns and making demands: the local government and its councilors. Much of the hope that local activists had invested in these recently established, decentralized, formal structures to facilitate their greater participation in decision-making and inclusive governance has weathered in the past few years. “They [councilors] have forgotten where they came from . . . they don’t care a damn about the people on the ground . . . They just want to be in a position to fill their pockets and to empower themselves,” states a Valhalla Park resident. This sort of commentary regarding local councilors has been common among township residents with whom we interacted in Cape Town. Threatened by evictions and services cut-offs, they find their local councilors more committed to party politics than to the fellow community members who put them in power. Referring to local councilors’ incompetence at addressing the urgent problems of the poor, an AEC activists and civic leader explains: “[When people need things], it’s to us that they turn . . . to the people who are on the ground, volunteers, who don’t get paid, who are nothing and nobody. We are just people like them. When they are in a struggle and things get hot, then they run to us” (Women in Valhalla Park --interview).

Undoubtedly central to the ability of excluded residents to make citizenship claims is the creation of a progressive pro-poor constitution that expands “human rights” to include substantive “rights to livelihood” in South Africa (Beall, Crankshaw and Parnell 2002). But the existing spaces created from above for making these rights real are insufficient (Cousins 1997). The following extract of an interview with a member of the Cape Town APF Steering Committee is illustrative of the shortfall of legal procedures as formal, claim-making channels for the poor and the ineffectiveness of the existing “invited spaces” for practicing citizenship.

The law is against us in this case. People perceive that the law is not in their favor at all. There was a ruling made by the Supreme Court that nobody may be evicted from his/her house unless alternative accommodation can be provided. That is now known as the Grootboom case. It is named after of a person who was evicted from his home in the Wallacedene informal settlement outside Kraaifontein. His case was taken up legally and the court decided that the eviction was illegal and that he should be allowed to return to his home. But, even though ... according to the Constitution, everybody is entitled to reasonable shelter ... most town or city councils now dodge that requirement by saying, “That it is conditional on them being able to provide alternative accommodation.” So if they argue that in any instance they cannot provide alternative accommodation, people are once again helpless, and the councils proceed with their evictions regardless. They have found what they perceive to be loopholes in the Constitution, and people are faced with the legal recourse of appealing to this court and that court, which is extremely expensive. (Robert Wilcox. --interview).

The legal procedures and formal channels provided by the new constitution are not entirely ignored by the poor. Instead, they are used when advantageous, and defied when they are found unjust. Excluded South Africans take advantage of these formal channels whenever possible, but in many cases they find these invited spaces of practicing citizenship, created from above by the state, ineffective at addressing the immediacy of their needs and concerns and enforcing just laws. When formal channels fail, the poor utilize extremely innovative strategies, which create alternative channels and spaces to assert their rights to the city, negotiate their wants, and actively practice their citizenship.

- ***Invented Spaces of Citizenship***

AEC members describe their activities as a spontaneous response to the immediate problems and basic needs of the poor. Their strategies constitute a collection of ideas and actions, stretching from informal negotiations, capacity building and training to mass mobilizations in the form of peaceful protests, sit-ins, and land invasions, to defiant collective action such as illegal reconnection of services and repossession of housing. In certain respects, they perpetuate the strategies of anti-apartheid resistance and its tradition of mass mobilizations and non-violent direct action, which included the boycott of rent payments for housing and services in protest against the poor quality of services and the illegitimacy of an oppressive state (Adlers and Steinberg 2000; Seekings 2000; Mayekiso 1996).

The campaign members claim their rights to the city and to basic shelter and services by resisting the unjust exclusionary actions of the state. One of the main strategies employed is defiant collective action. For example, when they are unable to stop service disconnections, men and women members of the campaign, referred to as “struggle plumbers” and “electricians” in the Durban context, simply reconnect those services (Desai 2002). The campaign members also

help evicted households reoccupy their homes by breaking the new locks and returning removed furniture and belongings to the units.

Interestingly, the campaign does not follow a uniform blueprint. Their tactics are flexible and innovative and vary in each specific situation. For instance, Valhalla Park civic member and AEC activist Gretrude takes pride in her community's ability to display force and demonstrate power through spontaneous, cooperative action or informal, persuasive negotiating.

If someone saw a white man or somebody just hanging around a letterbox or by the water meter, then they [would] just call the people. A lot of people are out of work here and that is what makes us so strong. If something happens during the day, then we get all of the people together and we hop in our cars and we chase them right out. And we warned them, if ever you come in here again, there is going to be trouble . . . [But in one case] we talked [to them], and they said: "No, we don't want to come here to cut people's water off, but we are the contractors. The contract is a piece of bread." [We said to them]: "It's a shame . . . you leave me without water, you leave me thirsty with children, yet it's your piece of bread." [Then] they made an agreement with us. [They said]: "So, that my children can eat, we will come in here and we will issue the water cut-off papers." So they asked us nicely, can they come in here and issue the papers to the people, but if it comes to the point when the people don't pay, then they won't cut the water off. So we said fine. (Gretrude Square --interview)

Recent negotiations between a bank representative and Mandela Park residents over a long-term dispute regarding the structurally faulty, low-cost bond houses provide another keen example of how campaign strategies are inventing new spaces for practicing citizenship. On 12 June 2002, nearly 300 residents of Mandela Park gathered at their community civic center to meet visitors from the Johannesburg office of Khayeletu Home Loans, Senior Outsourcing Manager Henry Warden and a second bank representative, and discuss the scrapping of certain arrears.<sup>32</sup> During that meeting, Warden verbally agreed to the cancellation of accumulated arrears and interests and the halting of evictions for all elderly and disabled residents. However, the campaign members, aware of the limited credibility of verbal promises, insisted: "We do not take anything verbally. We want it in black and white . . . Please write it down now. Very simply, write it out, A, B, and C." Due to the community's persistent demands, the two representatives departed the center only after a dictated statement on official bank letterhead was faxed to the meeting and signed by Warden.

Instances like this are helpful in understanding "citizenship not as a given but as a practice" (Gaventa 2002:4); the sort of practice that Holston and Appadurai describe as aspiring to "new kinds of citizenship, new sources of laws, and new participation in decisions that bind" (1999:20). Although the 1996 constitution entitles all South Africans basic, political citizenship rights including accountability from leaders, campaign members are trying to create spaces of citizenship from which their rights can be ensured and actually practiced. Unlike lengthy legal procedures, informal innovative spaces for practicing citizenship created from below are far more responsive to the immediate needs and demands of the poor. These spaces emphasize the agency of poor people and are relevant to and inclusive of their personal realities.

But peaceful negotiations and clever, persuasive tactics are not always effective at expanding the spaces of citizenship practice. For example, in 2001, the campaign's resistance strategies incited more violent events in Tafelsig, the township in which the AEC was first established, when community members barricaded entrances to the township with burning tires

in efforts to prevent the disconnection of water supplies to more than 1,800 homes. Tires and mattresses were set afire on nearly every street and enraged residents chanted protest slogans as firefighters and police units appeared at the scene. Police security forces further agitated Tafelsig residents by firing teargas and rubber bullets at protestors, resulting in a brutal confrontation that injured one young boy (Cape Argus, 27 September 2001).

- ***Expanding the Public Sphere***

AEC activists organize and participate in capacity building, leadership training, and popular education initiatives in order to develop and enhance those skills necessary for active participation in the processes of citizenship construction, and consequently expand the public sphere. Through these various workshops, AEC members get training to conduct research and acquire media and computer technical skills, which not only help them to document the devastating effects of neo-liberal policies on their communities, but subsequently allow them to better assert their legal claim to the city. For example, some campaign members have received specialized training in video communication and basic journalism as a means to document their community's suffering and to disseminate information about their cause. These skills are extremely helpful, as they can be used to document the processes commonly excluded by the mainstream media. Capacity building and training sessions organized by the WCAEC and participated in by campaign members are important strategies, which not only respond to the immediate needs of their members, but also serve towards the long-term campaign goal of a just society.

Persistently striving to assert their rights, trained AEC activists have created their own local database of vulnerable households by conducting door-to-door surveys of residents and recording those households which have experienced or been threatened of evictions and service cuts. This information functions as an important tool, enabling the campaign to substantiate their acts of resistance, mobilize AEC members in solidarity, and challenge the officials in charge. Through participation in skill-enhancing initiatives, members take advantage of *invited* spaces of citizenship created from above by local and international donors and governmental interventions and participate in *invented* spaces of citizenship, spaces that are chosen, demanded, and seized through collective action from below.

Participation in capacity building and leadership training workshops also help members to overcome some of the obvious hierarchical barriers within the organization, an example of which exists in the context of gender. A campaign member who had expressed dismay regarding the apparent male domination of the AEC admits certain levels of change have been achieved through participation in the campaign's advocacy and education workshops. Reflecting upon her personal experience, she states:

I always thought that I better come up with the right words and stuff. But [now] I feel that if people talk out of the dictionary with expensive words . . . I must stop them and tell them, "Listen, I don't understand you and we speak plain language here." Because those people use words to get around. This is what I learned at the [leadership] workshop . . . I [also] learned to speak in front of people . . . I'm very proud of myself.

## **5b) Identity and Agency**

While conceptualizing the AEC as a space of active citizenship invented from below by the poor as an alternative to those invited spaces of citizenship organized and formulated from above by the governments or donors, we also need to recognize how others are characterizing the circumstances. The manners in which the media, the state and city officials portray these movements and respond to them is likely to influence the ability of campaign members to exercise the agency needed to challenge exclusion. This question will be examined further in the section that follows.

- ***The Media's Gaze: Construction of an "Inauthentic" Civil Society***

The media plays an important role in the construction of the movements' identities. The mainstream media's portrayals of the AEC and APF as "ultra left," and "free-riders embedded in a culture of non-payment," discredits them as relevant voices of civil society and delegitimizes their actions. Presented as "outcasts of civil society," movement members are stripped of the celebratory status which other organizations within civil society are granted. While NGOs and CBOs that take part in the invited spaces of citizenship are presented as "rightful" or "authentic" voices of the poor, the grassroots movements that create the innovative and invented spaces of citizenship are presented as "inauthentic," and their agency is often criminalized.

The role of the media in this construction is exemplified in the coverage of the 2002 World Summit of Sustainable Development (WSSD) that took place in Johannesburg. Leading international newspapers touted the WSSD as setting the platform for a "resurgence of civil society," and portrayed it as a gathering of all the "stakeholders" to the table. They celebrated the summit's inclusion of environmentalist groups, indigenous groups, lobby groups and multinational corporations, thus complimenting its emphasis on partnerships among governments, "civil society," and business.<sup>33</sup> However, when it came to actual coverage of civil society's participation at the summit, the media's selective definition of this particular body of actors contributed to the exclusion of certain sectors of civil society and the criminalization of their respective agency.

Though assorted members of civil society held two concurrent marches at the WSSD, the mainstream media covered these marches very differently. The "Civil Society Global People's Forum," a rally/march organized by the South African government and its alliance partners, at which President Mbeki addressed an estimated 3,000 representatives from trade unions, relief agencies, and various international NGOs, was consistently called the "civil society" march by newspaper correspondents. By contrast, more than 20,000 farmers, squatters, rural and urban dwellers, and international activists marching under the Social Movements Indaba, a coalition jointly organized by the APF and the Landless People's Movement, against what they called the "South African government's anti-poor policies" and the summit's "corporate-friendly" agenda, were repeatedly referred to as "radical" protestors, "renegades," and members of the "ultra left."<sup>34</sup>

The discriminatory coverage of these particular marches exposes the way in which media participates in the stratification of civil society; in this case, classifying them as two distinctive groups: the "authentic" who participate in invited spaces of citizenship, and the "inauthentic" who join in spaces of citizen participation outside the formal invited channels of participation. Hence, they criminalize<sup>28</sup> the avenues of participation described in this paper as "invented" spaces of citizenship construction that emerge not necessarily by endorsement of the government

and donor agencies or the formal official channels, but as a result of the practicing agency of the citizens struggling to expand the public sphere. Further discussion follows regarding the role of the state in this dimension.

- ***The State's Responses***

The South African state, like all states, cannot be understood as a homogeneous entity with a unified interest. Hence, its responses to AEC and APF actions vary depending on its existing internal power dynamics and political context, and range from direct oppression of the movements to appropriation of their discourse to accommodation of their demands.

The mass mobilizations organized by the AEC and APF have in some cases faced the state's repressive machinery. Those who courageously voice their dissent have been routinely beaten, shot at, arrested and charged, and banned from associating with the two movements. This is represented in the repeated arrest and imprisonment of AEC activists<sup>29</sup> and the use of tear gas and detainment against non-violent AEC and APF demonstrators.<sup>30</sup> But such criminalization of the poor's declaration of its inability to afford service and shelter costs ultimately criminalizes poverty and amalgamates with the dehumanization of the poor. From the perspective of APF activists, the state's policies of privatization and cost recovery should be understood as policies that *in and of themselves* dehumanize the poor.

Privatization . . . is the commercialization of human rights. You are not entitled to things as a human being. It depends on your ability to pay. If you can't pay, you virtually become a criminal. The poor are being criminalized for being poor. That is the case in Mandela Park now. And that [is what] we believe must be resisted. (Robert Wilcox -- interview)

The state's response, however, is not always through direct oppression. It also retaliates through the appropriation of the opposition's discourse in efforts to diffuse the effects of their defiance. The case of electricity cut-offs in Soweto, Johannesburg, represents a good example. When the APF's Soweto affiliate, the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) led by former ANC councilor Trevor Ngwane, launched a campaign called "Operation Khanyisa" (Zulu for "light up") to illegally reconnect electricity services to poor Soweto residents, local officials adopted an alternative operation to impose payment. ESKOM, a government parastatal, renamed its project to install pre-paid meters and replace cables "Operation Lungisa" (Zulu for "to fix"). The manipulation of language employed by the state to obtain consent from the poor resulted in the accidental signing of new service agreements with ESKOM by many residents after mistaking the government's operation for the APF's campaign<sup>38</sup> (Trevor Ngwane --interview).

When the South African government has responded positively to the demands of the movements, the issue has been around the implementation of those progressive policies and guidelines used in the ANC's electoral platform, the RDP, but abandoned following the adoption of GEAR. The two movements have strategized vigorously to induce the state to implement its own constitutional promises, such as its RDP proposal to secure a free lifeline of services to all South Africans independent of their levels of affordability or its indigent policies prohibiting evictions and service disconnections when non-payment is a result of sheer poverty.<sup>39</sup>

The significance of the AEC exists precisely in its ability to disseminate knowledge about these rights among the poor and to hold the state accountable for its constitutional promises and policy provisions. For that its strategies promote governing through citizenship contributing to a notion of inclusive governance. Therefore, its strategies promote a governing through

citizenship, which contributes to a notion of inclusive governance. But the immediate actions of the present are not risk-free. As Nicolas Rose poses, they “may connect up and destabilize larger circuits of power. [But they may also] be refused, or reversed and redirected as a demand from citizens for modification of the games that govern them, and through which they are supposed to govern themselves.” (Rose 2000: 100).

The AEC is still a relatively new movement. It lacks organizational coordination with the APF and other AEC at national level. Because they strive to remain focused on the immediate needs of their communities, the short and long-term demands of each local campaign sometimes tend to be at odds with similar movements in other towns or regions. They have not yet found ways to “character-proof” the structural organization of their campaigns and protect them from personality clashes, nor have they overcome the hierarchies of patriarchal social relations within. Local AECs might prove ephemeral and disappear with the satisfaction of their short-term, immediate demands, or they might sustain themselves and possibly expand should their long-term interests or solidarity with others intensify. They will undoubtedly face many challenges in their future struggles against privatization of essential services in South Africa. However, despite the uncertainties that the future holds, the processes of their resistance creates spaces of active citizenship which need to be valued as legitimate voices within the civil society. This recognition, consequently, raises critical questions for planners about the ways in which they define their roles and their arenas for action. These questions require careful consideration and are addressed below.

## **6. Conceptual Implications for Planning Education and Research**

The global neoliberal policies of privatization and state withdrawal in provision of basic services discussed in this paper have launched simultaneous and contradictory processes of exclusion and inclusion for the poor. On the one hand, it has brought about the erosion of their livelihood where they are excluded from access to the most essential of the services; and on the other, it has opened up certain public realms of decision making that they were previously excluded from. This simultaneous opening of certain spaces and closing of others has important implications and deceptions for the planning practice that needs careful attention.

Traditionally, urban planners, assuming a “problem solving” role worked for the state, and their practices centered primarily on the state’s definition of needs and priorities. In the 1960s this planning paradigm started to be challenged and alternative formulations of planning were offered on the grounds that planning needs to foster the disadvantaged groups (Davidoff 1965; Krumholtz and Clavel 1994; Webber 1983). These critical stray within the planning theory and practice advocating for public participation, however, gained strength in the 1980s with the withdrawal of the neo-liberal state from its role as provider of public services, which shifted many of the state’s previous responsibilities to non-state actors like private corporations and civil society organizations. Community participation consequently inherited increased rationale within mainstream planning processes.

Within this heightened attention to and interest in participatory planning, some have challenged the possibility of achieving meaningful change warning against cooption of processes that need to stay within the community and independent of the state and its power brokers, referring to the planning professionals (Piven 1970; Krumholz 1994). Others, problematizing the notion of “public” and the contradictory interests within it, warned against conflating the community and deceptively using the notion of participation. They have underlined the role of

planners in the present era as facilitators who enable the inclusion of diverse and often conflicting interests in the planning practice (Sandercock 1998a; Marris 1998; Friedmann 1998; Forester 1989).

The more recent re-interpretation of the notion of citizenship has started to offer planning theory new understandings to conceptualize planning beyond participatory planning to one of insurgent planning. Holston (1995, 1998), Sandercock (1998a, 1998b) and Friedmann (2000), articulating this influence for planning theory, stress an expansion of the realm of planners' inquiry and commitment. "If modernist planning relies on and builds up the state, then its necessary counteragent is a mode of planning that addresses the formations of insurgent citizenship" (Holston 1998:47). This alternative insurgent mode of planning, writes Sandercock, recognizes "the contradictions between formal and substantive citizenship and works on behalf of the expansion of citizenship rights" (1998a: 189). Planning practice centered primarily on the state's identification of needs and priorities amongst modernist planners for whom the state had a monopoly in the construction of citizenship. But for an emerging wave of planners who take into account an expanded realm of citizenship construction, the sources of information and guidance for planning practices are the everyday spaces of citizenship (Douglass and Friedmann 1998; Marris 1998; Friedmann 1998; Sandercock 1998b, Beard 2002). This wave within the planning thought tries to uncover/recover the insurgent practices that shape the cities and their environments, and thus understand the processes of insurgent urbanism. A planning practice that relies not merely on the high commands of the state but on situated practices of citizens, entails an epistemological shift (how we know what we know) with important implications for planning education, moving away from the notion of an expert and scientific knowledge to an ethnographic one (Holston 1999:158).

Echoing with them, this paper stresses the need to rethink how the planning profession possibly engages certain community-based groups who are celebrated as civil society representatives and concurrently licensed for inclusion in participatory processes, and perhaps disengages others who are criminalized as "ultra-left" and excluded from decision-making processes. It uncovers that the revision of planning's role from a problem-solving exercise to an actual facilitating approach needs to be refined further to include a range of spaces for public participation. Planning theory and education in articulation of the citizens participation need to be explicit about working with both the resources of the state and the resources of citizens but the latter should not be limited to those spaces of public participation sanctioned by the state as invited spaces of citizenship, but needs as well to include the *invented* spaces of citizenship. Inclusion of those who are in direct conflict with policy makers and planners and who resist their displacing policies may indeed be the most effective strategy to guarantee accountability, democratization, participatory decision making and inclusive governance.

The insurgent grassroots actions by the poor to protect the roof above their head and their access to basic services, as described in this paper, are as important as officially sanctioned grassroots actions to produce shelter. Should the planning profession hope to improve its relevance to those grassroots processes that shape and reshape the urban reality, it will need to include in its recognition of the poor's self-help strategies those insurgent practices they employ to achieve their right to the neoliberal cities. The elimination of the latter from planners' scopes of investigation and education will only defeat their effectiveness in situations of this kind, which they are bound to face. Tension undoubtedly exists between these arenas, but can

certainly be productive and, as Holston advises, “planning needs to encourage a complementary antagonism between these two engagements” (1998:54).

The story of the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign aims to contribute to this recent opening in the planning inquiry by overcoming the selective definition of what constitutes people’s organizations and civil society, and underlining the significance of both invited and invented spaces of citizen participation in the formation of inclusive cities and citizenship.

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**Postscript:**

Since this paper was written, Mandela Park Anti-Eviction Campaign has achieved settling its case in favor of residents threatened with bank’s eviction orders. A letter signed by Servcon in May 2004 indicated that residents who have defaulted on their house payment will not be evicted, rather they can buy off their house using the once-off housing subsidy government pays to all poor households.

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## Endnotes:

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- <sup>1</sup> Where consent of the respondent has not been acquired, for reasons of confidentiality, fictitious names have been used in this paper to protect the anonymity of interviewees.
- <sup>2</sup> According to the apartheid state people who were unclassifiable as either black, white or Indian and those of mixed decent were categorized as "colored." Cape Town as a port city has had a large concentration of people with mixed African, Asian and European decent and was declared by apartheid state as a "colored labor preference area."
- <sup>3</sup> Article 26 of the 1996 constitution states: "everyone has the right to access to adequate housing ... No one may be evicted from their homes, or have their homes demolished, without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances. No legislation may permit arbitrary evictions." Article 27 states: "every one has the right to have access to ... sufficient food and water and social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance."
- <sup>4</sup> The preliminary study was conducted by Miraftab in 2001 and followed up by Wills in summer of 2002.
- <sup>5</sup> For the conceptualization of citizenship in western democracies, the writings of T. Marshal are commonly taken as benchmarks. Marshal defines citizenship as "a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed" ([1950] 1977: 92; in Friedmann 2002: 168).
- <sup>6</sup> In his often-quoted essay, Marshal (1964) articulates different forms of citizenship and an almost linear progression from civil rights in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to political rights in the 19<sup>th</sup>, to social rights in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Friedmann 2002: 70).
- <sup>7</sup> The Right, initially the conservative politics of Thatcherism, has also mobilized a conceptualization of active citizenship as a means to justify removal of the state's responsibilities towards citizens and hence underlining the obligations of "active" citizens to take care of the many social welfare functions of the state. For more see Lister 1997.
- <sup>8</sup> South Africa has the world's most unequal income distribution as measured by Gini coefficient. It has a Gini coefficient of 0.65, compared with 0.61 for Brazil, 0.50 for Mexico and 0.41 or less for the advanced industrial countries (Castells 1998: 125).
- <sup>9</sup> Elsewhere, Miraftab (2003b) has discussed in detail the failure of South Africa's housing policy in low-cost housing production for the poor. In short, the grassroots spaces created by the poor to access housing, such as those by the Homeless People's Federation, are increasingly frustrated by a lack of subsidies (Bolnick 2002; authors' interviews with the Federations' saving schemes), and the developers are less enthusiastic to participate in the projects due to reduced profitability of the projects in the context of limited subsidies, increased inflation, and elevated construction costs including land. The crux of the problem is the policy expectation to deliver low-cost housing through a dependency on developers rather than on homeless households.
- <sup>10</sup> Data is unavailable regarding the exact number of evictions by category or region. However, the Municipal Services Project and the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), drawing from a stratified sample of 2,530

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people, indicate that since 1994 nearly 2 million South Africans have been evicted from their homes due to service non-payments (see McDonald 2002b: 22).

<sup>11</sup> See page one of chapter on Housing in South Africa Yearbook, 2000/01, available at [www.gcis.gov.za](http://www.gcis.gov.za).

<sup>12</sup> “Cost reflective pricing’ refers to a full recovery of service costs “wherein the entire cost of service delivery, including infrastructure maintenance and replacement, is structured into rates” (Flynn 2003:10). In this system, black areas with inferior infrastructure require higher service delivery costs while white suburbs, historically subsidized by the apartheid state for their infrastructure development, enjoy lower service delivery costs. Such “cost reflective pricing” of services does not allow for a cross-subsidy between the areas; hence, residents in black townships pay more than those in affluent white areas for identical services. (For more see Sean Flynn 2003.) Despite the high rate of unemployment, intense poverty and greater service delivery costs among black townships, impoverished residents who cannot afford to make their service payments have increasingly experienced service disconnections.

<sup>13</sup> About 75,400 of these cutoffs occurred in two of the former substructures of CT alone (Cape town and Tygerberg) between 1999 and 2000. Using average low-income demographics of five persons per household, this represents a total of 377,000 people in these two areas of CT for that short period (McDonald and Smith 2002).

<sup>14</sup> This assumes an average of five persons per household in low-income areas.

<sup>15</sup> The number of service disconnections is controversial, thus a brief elaboration of existing estimates follows. Municipal Services Project and the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), extrapolating from their stratified sample group of 2,530 people, estimate that in South Africa entire nearly ten million people have experienced water cut offs, and a similar number have had electricity disconnections, since 1994 (Mc Donald 2002:170). Official sources challenge this assessment but do not offer alternative numbers. SA Minister of Water Affairs & Forestry Ronnie Kasrils, in his budget speech of 6 June 2003, reporting monthly cut-offs within the three largest municipalities of South Africa at that time, declares 17,800 disconnections (Kasrils 2003). The Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) (RSA 2002) proclaims 83,000 net disconnections based on a survey of municipalities for the fourth quarter of 2001. Assuming an average of five persons per household and a comparable number of disconnections in the period since 1994, these numbers cumulatively suggest that 10 to 13 million people have been affected by disconnections in the past nine years (see Mc Donald 2003).

<sup>16</sup> The most commonly quoted target for redistribution of white-owned land to blacks is that of 30% of the area in five years, which was first set in the RDP 1994. In the LRAD document, the time frame is extended to an additional 15 years. According to Director of Tenure Reform Siphso Sibanda of the Department of Land Affairs, “to date, the land reform program has delivered some one million hectares of land, that is 1.3% of land over six years. If delivery continues at this rate, only 4.6 % of the land will have been redistributed by 2015” (Sibanda 2001: 6).

<sup>17</sup> Statistics South Africa reports a growing income gap between 1995 and 2000. “In real terms, an average African household has seen a 19% fall in income, while the average white household has enjoyed a 15% increase. As a result, in 2000, the average white household earned six times as much as the average black household, up from four times as much in 1995 ... The poorest 40% of all households saw a 16% drop in their share of total incomes. Meanwhile, the richest 20% of households get about 65% of all household income. The decline in incomes meant that the percentage of households earning less than R 670 a month grew from 20% in 1995 to 28% in 2000” (Makgetla 2002). The author interpreting these statistics links the growth of poverty “to the massive increase in joblessness which has soared from 16% in 1995 to almost 30%,” and blames unemployment in large on “the public sector and the private firms shed[ding] their lower-level permanent posts on a large scale; [flagging that] job losses peaked in the late 1990s, as tariff barriers fell and government reduced spending” (ibid).

<sup>18</sup> A new effort established by Johannesburg Water, which merges with its larger plan of water privatization, is the installation of pre-paid water meters in townships around the country’s business capital. The first pre-paid meters were installed in 2002 in Orange Farm, Kwa Dukuza municipality, from which the cited New York Times’ article reports, and led to the formation of the Orange Farm Crisis Water Committee. Under this prepaid system, families insert their digital cards into water-meters that activate the taps, thus dispensing as much water as has been paid for in advance. The installation of these pre-paid water taps are contractual aspects of partnerships formed with private companies, like France-based conglomerate Suez, in Johannesburg and other surrounding municipalities (*New York Time* 29 May 2003).

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<sup>19</sup> The subsidy scheme relied on availability of credit in order to top-off the limited amount offered to low-income families through subsidies. But 70 percent of the poor could not secure bank loans from private financial institutions. For example, “between 1994 and 1996, only 18 percent of houses built under the subsidy scheme were linked to credit” (Bond 2000b: 304). The South African government primarily tried to address this problem by arranging an array of mechanisms that reduce the private financial institutions’ risks, assuming this would secure an increase in housing loans offered to low-income applicants (Jenkins 1999:435). These mechanisms include: Mortgage Indemnity Fund and SERVCON to resolve the problems of non-payment with properties in possession; or National Housing Finance Corporation to provide wholesale funding to retail banks and increase their low-income loan portfolios; and a warranty fund against defective building (Bond, 2000b: 302; Jenkins, 1999:435). But despite these support mechanisms, banks failed to deliver the 50,000 bonds they promised to deliver in the first year, granting only 20,000 bonds in the applicable areas within the intended price range (Bond, 2000b: 303). They favored the upper range among low-income subsidiaries for increased security of repayment, and aiming to reduce operation costs, they made relatively fewer, but larger loans to groups of applicants through developers rather than many small loans to individual applicants (Bond 2000b). Of the Housing Facilitation Fund, for example, 43 percent was directed “to those beneficiaries who, because they were in higher income categories, were more likely to secure these loans” (Bond 2000b: 304).

<sup>20</sup> The number of cases of pulmonary tuberculosis reported in the City of Cape Town has increased steadily during the past three decades (City of Cape Town, 1995/96). According to the Western Cape Provincial Health Department records, there were 367 deaths due to tuberculosis in the Cape Metropolitan Region in 1997. Because of the overcrowded living conditions, rampant unemployment, and lack of accessible healthcare in the Cape townships, many of these TB cases have originated from council housing flats like those in Elsie’s River, Mitchell’s Plain.

<sup>21</sup> 10 R exchanged for 1 USD in summer 2002.

<sup>22</sup> According to a report conducted by Khanya College, there were as many as 49 rent boycotts happening at one time throughout the country (Khanya College 2001: 29).

<sup>23</sup> An average unit started at between R 19,000 to R 24,000 and needed an initial deposit of R 500 in 1986. By 2002, many families who stopped paying their bonds when their homes began to disintegrate were in debt as much as R 100,000 for these same units (Desai and van Heusden 2003: 2).

<sup>24</sup> The unemployment rate in Mandela Park is estimated to be at least 60% (WCAEC. Press Statement. 17 September 2002).

<sup>25</sup> In Mandela Park, many households depend on a single pension or grant of R 620 and find it difficult to meet their bond payments of R 600 p/month.

<sup>26</sup> In Khayelitsha, bond houses were reportedly sold for as much as R 55,000 in 2002.

<sup>27</sup> A Western Cape AEC press statement describes these right-sized units as “breeding grounds for persistent ill health and respiratory problems . . . old people and children die like ants in these conditions.” Since 2001, four pensioners, healthy prior to evictions, died and many more were hospitalized after being right-sized from their bond houses in Khayelitsha to Thubelisha units during the harsh Cape winter. These “right-sized” homes are part of an alternative, affordable housing option made possible through a grant from RDP funds (High Court 2002: 9).

<sup>28</sup> The Anti-Privatization Forum (APF) surfaced following the introduction of two major privatization initiatives in Johannesburg. These were: the iGoli 2002 privatization plan for the city of Johannesburg, which aimed for the sale of major council assets to private industry, the transfer of council services to private agents and contractors, and the commercialization of basic services like water, sanitation, electricity and transportation; and the 2001 plan to privatize and commercialize the University of Witwatersrand. The Anti-iGoli 2002 Committee and the Wits University Crisis Committee formed in opposition to these initiatives (Anti-Privatisation Monitor 2000). Today APF incorporates more than 20 affiliate organizations including civic associations and political groupings, which struggle for a range of issues. Key affiliate of the Gauteng APF, which has received the international exposure, is the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), led by die-hard socialist Trevor Ngwane, a former ANC Councilor of Soweto who was expelled by the ruling party in 1999 when they learned of his opposition to Johannesburg’s privatization strategy.

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<sup>29</sup> The APF has co-organized two internationally renowned mass protests held at UN-sponsored events in South Africa. During the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in August 2001, the APF joined 35,000 protestors under the Durban Social Forum, a united front including multi-regional campaigns, civic bodies, committees and progressive NGOs, in a march against the ANC, its economic policies and the leadership of Thabo Mbeki. One year later, the APF helped mobilize a similar constituency under the Social Movements Indaba with an estimated over 20,000 participants (per BBC) at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD), which marched and rallied to expose the ANC government's anti-poor policies of privatization.

<sup>30</sup> The AEC also links itself transnationally with similar movements of the South fighting neo-liberal policies of privatization, most recently participating in an exchange visit with a Brazilian grassroots movement. Appadurai (2000) articulates this growing trend as the globalization of the grassroots.

<sup>31</sup> Residents from black townships like Khayelitsha, Guguletu and KTC joined the "colored" townships of Delft, Elsie's River and Mannenburg in the campaign's first organized mass action, a march on the mayor's office in Cape Town, establishing an instant solidarity among the AEC's racially and regionally diverse participants.

<sup>32</sup> A full account of this meeting is documented in a video recorded by local campaign members who were trained at WCAEC capacity building workshops.

<sup>33</sup> See *London Guardian*, 11 September 2002, p.9; *The Boston Globe*, 5 September 2002, p. A10; and *The Washington Post*, 18 August 2002, p. B04.

<sup>34</sup> See *The Washington Post*, 31 August 2002, p. A 18; *The Mail & Guardian*, 24 May 2002. *The Chicago Sun Times*, 1 Sept. 2002, p. 27; and *Times Media Limited Business Day (South Africa)*, 23 Sept. 2002, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> The media's delegitimization of certain kinds of grassroots and/or community-based groups coincides with the implicit and explicit attitudes of the state through which certain spaces of citizens' participation are criminalized. At the WSSD, despite the fact that prior permission had been obtained for a peaceful protest, the Social Movements Indaba's activities were implicitly criminalized by the government when it dispatched police units in armed trucks and helicopters to follow the protestors as they marched.

<sup>29</sup> Max Ntanyana and Fonky Goboza of the Mandela Park AEC have received monthly interdicts banning them from interfering with evictions or participating in AEC activities, and have each been arrested for violating this ban dozens of times since June 2002. Max was additionally held without bail at Pollsmoor maximum security prison for a month and one week in September 2002 due to his continued work with the AEC, and has been banned from participation in any meeting and community event.

<sup>30</sup> For example, in July 2002, when nearly 300 AEC members occupied the lobby of the Western Cape provincial parliament in Cape Town to request a meeting with the Housing MEC Nomatyala Hangana, they were met with teargas and the arrest of 44 campaigners, 24 men and 20 women. Another non-violent demonstration in 2002, held outside Johannesburg Mayor Amos Masondo's home by Guateng APF members protesting his policy of forcibly cutting off recently privatized water and electricity to low-income Soweto residents, led to the arrest of 87 APF protestors, including a five-year old girl. Despite the fact that the mayor's bodyguard shot eight bullets into the crowd, injuring two campaigners, no charges were brought against him. This high profile case was later settled in court in favor of the activists.

<sup>38</sup> Over a period of six months in 2001, more than 3,000 families had their electricity supplies switched back on through "Operation Khanyisa" after being left in darkness when they couldn't afford to pay their large monthly bills. SECC volunteers risked electrocution to make the reconnections, charging their neighbors nothing for the service (Bond 2002: 1).

<sup>39</sup> Although the South African government in 2001 mandated all municipalities to deliver for free the first six kiloliters of water per month to all households, some municipalities have failed to abide by the decree due to struggles to recover costs within their constrained financial environments, and many communities are yet to see this policy established beyond paper. Similarly, there is no cohesive, unified indigent policy to which South African municipalities adhere, nor is there much knowledge among poor populations about such policies. Hence, moratoriums on evictions and service cut-offs function as a series of ad hoc provisions sporadically issued by local governments in response to pressure from their communities.