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## uTshani BuyaKhuluma—The Grass Speaks The political space and capacity of the South African Homeless People's Federation

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### Abstract

The point of departure for this article is the contemporary tendency towards localisation of politics in the context of neo-liberal globalisation. Mediated through institutional reforms, political discourses and localised struggles, this localisation of politics produce new and transformed local political spaces. The purpose of the article is to examine the capacity of popular movements to use and transform such political spaces within the South African housing sector. This analysis is done through a combination of conceptual examination of *political space* and *actor capacity* and a concrete case study of the *political strategies* and *capacities* of The South African Homeless People's Federation. The article argues that the Federation has utilised political relations at different scales to mobilise resources such as land and subsidies for housing for its members. It has also influenced the formulation of housing policies through its discourses and practical experiences with people-driven housing processes. In consequence the Federation's ability to function as a civil/political movement has granted them a certain capacity to participate in the complicated process of turning de jure rights to adequate shelter into de facto rights for the urban poor as citizens of a democratic South Africa.

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### 1. Localisation of politics in the age of neo-liberal globalisation

The contemporary world is characterised by *both globalisation and localisation*, i.e. simultaneous tendencies towards global economic and cultural integration and local embeddedness (Castells, 1996, 1997; Cox, 1997; Held, 2000; Held et al., 1999). This global–local tension has generated a growing literature on local economic embeddedness and local governance in the context of neo-liberal globalisation, as well as discussions about the production of scale and inter-scalar relations (Collinge, 1999; Cox, 1998; MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999; Marston, 2000; Peck, 2002; Sheppard, 2002). A less examined trend in conjunction with globalisation is *localisation of politics*. Local-scale politics are

mediated through *institutional reforms* towards decentralisation, local democratisation and good governance, *discourses* on local participation and civil society, as well as localised *struggles* over local, national and global issues. Simultaneously, recent development theory and practice have been marked by various attempts to compensate for the negative effects of globalisation by turning *'the local'* into a prime site of socio-economic development and political democratisation (Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Nederveen Pieterse, 2001). The normative assumption is that mutually enabling relations between decentralised state institutions, local businesses and civil society will generate economic growth, poverty alleviation and good governance. These tendencies towards localisation of politics and localism in development call for critical analyses of the making and transformation of local political spaces and the strategies and capacities of different actors (e.g. local elites and political parties, trade unions and popular movements, local state institutions and governments) to utilise rights, institutional

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57 channels and discourses to promote their instrumental  
58 and democratic aims. The purpose of this article is to  
59 examine the ways in which popular movements may use  
60 and transform political channels and discourses within  
61 the South African housing sector. This is done through a  
62 combination of conceptual examination of *political*  
63 *space* and *actor capacity* and a concrete case study of the  
64 *political strategies* and *capacities* of The South African  
65 Homeless People's Federation (SAHPF). The aim is to  
66 analyse their capacity to make use of local and non-local  
67 political spaces and promote the social and political  
68 interests of the communities they seek to represent.

## 69 2. Local politics and democratisation in South Africa

70 In South Africa, institutional reforms towards local  
71 administration and government have been on the po-  
72 litical agenda for at least two decades. The National  
73 Party (NP) initiated various reforms, including the  
74 construction and operation of local authorities, towards  
75 the end of the apartheid period in an attempt to over-  
76 come economic and political crises and to split, depo-  
77 liticise and contain township struggles (Coovardia, 1991;  
78 Parnell, 1992). Simultaneously, local civic organisations  
79 and trade unions sought to make cities and townships  
80 ungovernable and ultimately to make a democratic  
81 transition unavoidable (Bozzoli, 1996; Parnell, 1992;  
82 Seekings, 2000). Politicisation of local single issues and  
83 specific interests, e.g. land rights and housing, were  
84 central to the ideological struggle for liberation and  
85 democratisation. Thus, local politics, dialectically re-  
86 lated to national politics, was an integral part of the  
87 anti-apartheid struggle in the 1980s and early 1990s  
88 (Maharaj, 1996; Mayekiso, 1996).

89 South Africa's democratic transition in the early  
90 1990s produced a radical constitutional reform that  
91 granted extensive formal rights for all citizens and nu-  
92 merous institutional reforms, including national elec-  
93 tions from 1994, to ensure their actual implementation.  
94 These changes at the national scale have been followed  
95 by local elections, extensive local government reforms  
96 and political discourses endorsing good governance and  
97 popular participation (Atkinson and Reitzes, 1998;  
98 Cameron, 1999). These transformations mean that his-  
99 torically well-organised political and civic associations  
100 have been placed in a situation with radically trans-  
101 formed and widened local, regional and national polit-  
102 ical spaces (Neocosmos, 1998; Smit, 2001). This  
103 combination of a vibrant civil society and a conducive  
104 political environment should, it seems, provide an ideal  
105 case for *substantial democratisation*, i.e. a situation  
106 where ordinary citizens have both the possibility and the  
107 capacity to make use of democratic rights, institutions  
108 and discourses to address their instrumental and dem-  
109 ocratic aims (Törnquist, 2002). Unfortunately, in prac-

110 tice, the post-apartheid political and socio-economic  
111 conditions have proven to be more complex and con-  
112 tradictory (Bond, 2000a,b).

113 One major obstacle for substantial democratisation  
114 in South Africa remains the persistent and increasing  
115 social inequalities and absolute poverty. While the im-  
116 mediate post-1994 period was characterised by a re-  
117 markable political liberalisation, the ensuing post-  
118 apartheid period has been marked by a transition in  
119 macro-economic policy with important bearings on the  
120 fulfilment of socio-economic rights and, thereby, the  
121 question of substantial democratisation. The early post-  
122 apartheid period was characterised by the state-led Re-  
123 construction and Development Programme (RDP) de-  
124 signed and concomitant with other restructuring  
125 processes to rectify systematic socio-economic differ-  
126 entiation and discrimination. The macro-economic context  
127 on which the RDP built was, however, constrained and  
128 circumscribed by the structural imperatives of the South  
129 African domestic and global economy. Thus, RDP  
130 state-led reconstruction and transformation battled with  
131 and, eventually, gave way to neo-liberal policy in the  
132 government's policy for Growth, Employment and Re-  
133 distribution (GEAR) (Marais, 2001). Current macro-  
134 economic policies, while designed to enhance economic  
135 competitiveness in the long run, have perpetuated and  
136 deepened absolute and relative poverty in the short run  
137 (Adelzadeh, 1996; Natrass and Seekings, 2001). Al-  
138 though South African citizens have been granted ex-  
139 tensive de jure socio-economic rights, the translation of  
140 these rights into de facto socio-economic empowerment  
141 has proven to be extremely complicated and persists as a  
142 fundamental problem of substantial democratisation in  
143 South Africa.

144 Post-apartheid political participation has also proved  
145 complicated in practice. While democratic elections have  
146 placed the tripartite alliance from the anti-apartheid  
147 struggle—the African National Congress (ANC), the  
148 Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)  
149 and the South African Communist Party (SACP)—in a  
150 hegemonic political position at the national level, the  
151 actual political participation of popular forces is de-  
152 batable. The influence and power of organs of civil so-  
153 ciety such as civic associations and trade unions,  
154 instrumental in the struggle against apartheid, have  
155 generally been on the decline, not the least as a result of  
156 co-optation of civic leaders, a depoliticisation and nor-  
157 malisation of politics and the dominance of technocratic  
158 approaches to development (Adler, 2000; Adler and  
159 Steinberg, 2000; Smit, 2001). Although these organisa-  
160 tions continue to be active in cities and towns across  
161 South Africa, their activities are uneven geographically  
162 and tend to resonate on the local level in specific area-  
163 based issues (Habib and Kotzé, 2002; Huchzermeyer,  
164 2001). The translation of local interests and demands  
165 into national policy and ideological struggles has been

166 caught up in the multifaceted and fragmented ways in  
167 which policy and finance for services and basic infra-  
168 structure are directed from the national state, financed  
169 through provincial bodies, and implemented by munic-  
170 ipalities. Furthermore, the uneven capacity and power  
171 of state institutions, organs of civil society, and indi-  
172 viduals makes local power sharing arrangements prob-  
173 lematic in practice (Oldfield, 2000a,b, 2002). Although  
174 South Africa has made substantial progress towards  
175 formal democratisation at both the national, provincial  
176 and municipal levels, the experiences of ‘everyday’ South  
177 Africans and the diverse movements that represent them  
178 are mired in the complex ways in which the unequal  
179 legacies of the apartheid past are reinvented in the post-  
180 apartheid present. The majority’s transformation from  
181 apartheid subjects to democratic citizens remain bogged  
182 down in the fragmentation of political spaces and indi-  
183 vidual and community-based groups’ uneven capacities  
184 to utilise and transform democratic rights and institu-  
185 tions (Reitzes, 1998).

186 These challenges of substantial democratisation are  
187 especially visible in the case of social rights such as  
188 employment and shelter. Implementation of these rights  
189 for the urban poor remains a fundamental challenge of  
190 substantial democratisation in South Africa. The con-  
191 stitution guarantees a right to *adequate shelter* for all  
192 citizens, but it remains a daunting task to translate this  
193 into actual houses for marginalised groups. In this sit-  
194 uation, new popular movements have emerged around  
195 issues of housing provisioning (e.g. the SAHPF) and  
196 municipal practices of evictions from homes and dis-  
197 connections of municipal services (e.g. Western Cape  
198 Anti-Eviction Campaign and Soweto Electricity Crisis  
199 Committee) (Millstein, 2001; Oldfield and Stokke,  
200 2002). This raises conceptual and empirical questions  
201 about the political capacity of these new housing  
202 movements and about the nature of political spaces  
203 within the post-apartheid housing sector.

### 204 3. Conceptualising political space and movement capacity

205 Recent studies of social movements have drawn at-  
206 tention to the importance of political opportunity  
207 structures, mobilising structures and cultural framing  
208 for the emergence and success of collective actors (della  
209 Porta and Diani, 1999). These terms refer to political,  
210 social and cultural conditions for collective action, but  
211 also draw attention to the collective actors’ ability to  
212 comprehend, utilise and transform such conditions. One  
213 way of specifying the relevant contextual conditions—  
214 beyond ambiguous notions of conducive or hostile po-  
215 litical environments—is through the concept of *political*  
216 *space* suggested by Webster and Engberg-Pedersen  
217 (2002). This term, which refers to a political terrain that  
218 offers uneven possibilities for different political actors

and strategies, contains two main mechanisms for po- 219  
litical influence: *institutional channels* and *political dis-* 220  
*courses*.<sup>1</sup> 221

#### 3.1. Institutional channels 222

The first dimension concerns the cluster of constitu- 223  
tional rights and the institutions that uphold, promote 224  
or prevent the actual implementation of such rights. 225  
Equally important are the formal and informal proced- 226  
ures for affecting policy formulation and implementa- 227  
tion. In the case of social movements, this refers to what 228  
is commonly described as the *political opportunity* 229  
*structures* for collective action (Tarrow, 1994). Such 230  
opportunity structures are usually taken to include “the 231  
stability or instability of that broad set of elite align- 232  
ments that typically undergird a polity; the presence or 233  
absence of elite allies; the state’s capacity and propensity 234  
for repression” (McAdam et al., 1996, p. 27). While 235  
rights and institutions provide a formal framework for 236  
participation, such political channels may be decisive for 237  
actual access to and transformation of rights and insti- 238  
tutions (Holland and Mohan, 2000; McEwan, 2000). 239

#### 3.2. Political discourse 240

The second dimension in Webster and Engberg-Pe- 241  
dersen’s conceptualisation regards the discursive fram- 242  
ing of rights and responsibilities, institutions and 243  
popular actors, political injustices and goals. This means 244  
that there is a dynamic and competitive process of 245  
strategic framing in a variety of arenas, within and be- 246  
tween the political sphere and civil society (della Porta 247  
and Diani, 1999; Johnston and Klandermans, 1995: 248  
Melucci, 1996). At the most general level it can be ob- 249  
served that we are now, in the context of neo-liberal 250  
globalisation, seeing a powerful global development 251  
discourse that emphasises various institutional reforms 252  
in favour of democratisation, human rights, decentrali- 253  
sation, good governance and civil society. Such dis- 254  
courses and their institutional manifestations, define 255  
political spaces for various individual and collective 256  
actors who claim to be the legitimate expressions of 257  
these good causes and ‘the people’. The vital question 258  
then regards the capacity of diverse actors to claim po- 259  
sitions as representatives or to challenge competing 260  
claims, and thereby make use of and possibly transform 261  
political discourses. 262

Shifting the focus from political space to actors, it can 263  
be observed that the last two decades have seen a new 264  
interest among development researchers in questions of 265

<sup>1</sup> A third dimension is identified as *social and political practices* which may be a basis for influencing policy and programme agendas, decision-making and implementation. We will examine this as a question of movement capacity (see below).

266 political capacity. One key contribution to this shift has  
267 been analyses of the relative autonomy and capacity of  
268 developmental states to formulate goals and implement  
269 policies vis-à-vis the economy. Migdal et al. (1994)  
270 correctly observe that this approach has yielded an  
271 overemphasis on state institutions at the expense of so-  
272 cial forces and advocate a relational approach to the  
273 autonomy and capacity of actors within both state and  
274 society (Oldfield, 2000a,b). Unfortunately, they provide  
275 few analytical guidelines beyond this general observa-  
276 tion. Some useful pointers may, however, be derived  
277 from recent studies of movement politics. Based on  
278 observations of popular movements in Indonesia and  
279 Kerala, Törnquist (1999, 2000, 2002) proposes three  
280 questions that he sees as especially central to the analysis  
281 of movement political capacity. These regard (a) where  
282 in the political terrain the actors choose to work; (b)  
283 what issues and interests they promote and politicise;  
284 and (c) how people are mobilised into political move-  
285 ments and the political sphere.

### 286 3.2.1. Location in political terrain

287 Törnquist (2002) presents a schematic map of the  
288 political terrain for movement politics. This approach  
289 revolves around three major ways in which societal ac-  
290 tivities are organised at different scales: *state and local*  
291 *government*; *self-government units* (e.g. neighbourhood  
292 associations, co-operatives, ethnic and religious com-  
293 munities, clans, and families), and; *business units*. Pop-  
294 ular movements may be active within a relatively  
295 autonomous public space between these spheres. In this  
296 public space, actors form three main kinds of associa-  
297 tions: *political societies* (e.g. political parties, pressure  
298 groups, lobbying groups), which seek influence within  
299 the political arena; *civil societies*, which organise in re-  
300 gard to either business units (e.g. trade unions and  
301 peasant organisations) or to self-government units (e.g.  
302 religious movements that relate to various churches, or  
303 women's organisations against domestic violence), and;  
304 *civil-political societies* that combine or link the activities  
305 of political and civil societies (e.g. labour movements  
306 with a political party in addition to popular unions,  
307 women groups, co-operatives etc.; human-rights groups  
308 that both support victims of violence and seek to influ-  
309 ence state policies, and; peasant movements that mobi-  
310 lise against landlords but also campaign for public land  
311 reforms). Törnquist's argument is that reflexivity and  
312 strategic decisions regarding where and how to be active  
313 in this political terrain may provide movements with  
314 vital political capacity.

### 315 3.2.2. Politicisation of issues and interests

316 The second dimension in Törnquist's framework re-  
317 gards the content of movement politics, i.e. the issues  
318 and interests that actors choose to bring up to be in-  
319 cluded into politics. More specifically, Törnquist (2002)

argues that the politicisation of issues and interests may  
be analysed in terms of whether it is based on *single*  
*issues* and specific interests; *ideologies* and collective in-  
terests; or *moral and spiritual values* and communal  
loyalties. Social movement scholars have emphasised  
that collective actors play a vital role in constructing and  
communicating identities, grievances and political al-  
ternatives. This cultural framing is obviously located  
within a discursive field with a dynamic relationship  
between movement discourses and the populations they  
intend to mobilise and between movement discourses  
and those of political authorities (Alvarez et al., 1998).  
In this sense, successful construction of issues and in-  
terests constitute both a precondition and an outcome of  
collective action.

### 320 3.2.3. Political inclusion of people

The third dimension regards the mobilisation of  
people into politics. Here Törnquist follows Mouzelis  
(1986) in his distinction between *integration* on the basis  
of broad popular movements generated by comprehen-  
sive economic development, and elitist *incorporation* of  
less solid organisations into comparatively advanced  
politics in economically late-developing societies. In the  
latter case, Mouzelis makes a further distinction be-  
tween *clientelism* and *populism*. Clientelism, on the one  
hand, refers to networks of patrons at different levels  
with capacity to deliver some concessions in return for  
services and votes. Populism, on the other hand, gen-  
erally goes with charismatic leaders who are able to  
express popular feelings. Political inclusion of people  
also refers to the mobilising structures of collective  
movements, i.e. the organisational form within a  
movement and to networks and institutions in society  
that may serve as arenas for collective mobilisation.  
Such social infrastructure can facilitate communication,  
co-ordination and solidarity prior to and during col-  
lective actions. This means that a movement's ability to  
organise civil society and ensure a degree of political  
inclusion may be an important source of movement  
strength and political influence.

## 4. The post-apartheid political space for housing struggles

South Africa's democratic transition, with negotiated  
compromises and social compacts as key features, has  
radically transformed the political space for housing  
struggles (Lodge, 1999; Marais, 2001). This topic is too  
complex to provide any kind of comprehensive exam-  
ination here. However, a few remarks about key char-  
acteristics of relevant political discourses, institutional  
architecture and political opportunity structures are in  
order as a precursor to the concrete analysis of the  
SAHPF.

371 Contemporary *political discourses* within the housing  
 372 sector must be understood against the background of  
 373 the *National Housing Forum*, which was established in  
 374 the transition period as an arena for negotiations over  
 375 future housing rights and strategies to resolve the crises  
 376 of inadequate and segregated housing. The Forum,  
 377 which included multiple interests and stakeholders, was  
 378 marked by a polarisation between the interests of eco-  
 379 nomic elites in the housing sector, expressed through the  
 380 *Urban Foundation*, and the interests expressed by ANC,  
 381 the South African National Civics Organisation (SAN-  
 382 CO) and progressive non-governmental organisations  
 383 (NGOs) (Bond, 2000a,b; Huchzermeyer, 2001; Lalloo,  
 384 1999; Wilkinson, 1998). Whereas the coalition of ANC,  
 385 SANCO and NGOs emphasised the state's role in re-  
 386 ducing the apartheid legacy of social and racial in-  
 387 equalities, the Urban Foundation was unwilling to grant  
 388 the state a prominent role unless this was deemed nec-  
 389 essary to ensure economic development. The Urban  
 390 Foundation held a clear majority within the Forum and  
 391 possessed a superior organisational capacity (Lalloo,  
 392 1999). Consequently, the Forum came to favour market  
 393 rather than state-led housing policies. As housing be-  
 394 came a politicised issue during the election campaign in  
 395 1994, the political discourse on housing strategy turned  
 396 towards short-term goals of speedy delivery of large  
 397 numbers of housing units (Bond, 2000a). In the end,  
 398 these constellations yielded a hegemonic discourse on  
 399 housing strategy that was product- and delivery-ori-  
 400 ented rather than process- and participation-centred,  
 401 and where self-help and market mechanisms were  
 402 granted a central role (Hart and Parnell, 1999). The key  
 403 mode of state intervention in the housing process be-  
 404 came *housing subsidies* to identified target groups, for  
 405 houses that would be delivered through a partnership  
 406 between state planning agencies and private developers.  
 407 These post-apartheid discourses and development  
 408 mechanisms have to a large extent framed housing  
 409 policies and strategies in the post-apartheid period (Hart  
 410 and Parnell, 1999; Huchzermeyer, 2001; Oldfield, 2000b;  
 411 Parnell, 1992). Shortly after assuming power, the ANC  
 412 expressed its own vision for the housing sector through  
 413 *The White Paper on Housing* (Republic of South Africa,  
 414 1995). The overall aim was to: "Establish a sustainable  
 415 housing process which will eventually enable all South  
 416 Africa's People to secure housing with secure tenure,  
 417 within a safe and healthy environment and viable com-  
 418 munities in a manner that will make a positive contri-  
 419 bution to a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and  
 420 integrated society, within the shortest possible time  
 421 frame" (Republic of South Africa, 1995, p. 20). More  
 422 specific targets were to provide 1 million houses within  
 423 five years and allocate 5% of the annual national budget  
 424 to the housing sector. The chosen provisioning mecha-  
 425 nisms were largely similar to those prescribed by the  
 426 National Housing Forum. An alternative discourse on

427 people's participation in housing development was  
 428 subordinated to this hegemonic discourse's emphasis on  
 429 top-down technocratic planning and commercial hous-  
 430 ing contractors. Thus, Kotzé observes that: "the origi-  
 431 nally progressive notion of *people's participation* in  
 432 development, once so central to the RDP, seems to have  
 433 gone the same way as the notion of *self-help* in that it  
 434 has often become a mere gesture" (Kotzé, 1998, p. 98,  
 435 emphasis in original). One of the main achievements of  
 436 the SAHPF, which will be discussed in the next section,  
 437 has been a discursive shift away from top-down tech-  
 438 nocratic development management to a participatory  
 439 people-centred housing process in the late 1990s.

440 Regarding *institutional architecture*, the democratic  
 441 transition has yielded an overall reorganisation of state  
 442 institutions at different scales with an increasing degree  
 443 of democratic decentralisation to the provincial and  
 444 local levels. Following *The White Paper on Housing*, a  
 445 division of labour has been established between policy  
 446 making and overall resource allocation (e.g. state land  
 447 and housing subsidies) by national government and  
 448 decentralised implementation by provincial and local  
 449 state institutions. The provincial level, which has limited  
 450 autonomy in regard to national government, is granted  
 451 significant powers in regard to the local state, both in  
 452 terms of decision making on resource allocation and in  
 453 terms of intervention in actual implementation at the  
 454 local level (Republic of South Africa, 1997). The Pro-  
 455 vincial Housing Boards, for instance, can make strategic  
 456 decisions on minimum standards for housing and pri-  
 457 oritise among development projects within parameters  
 458 set by national policies and budget allocations, but have  
 459 limited power to influence the fiscal mechanisms that  
 460 determine the availability and allocation of economic  
 461 resources (Kihattoo, 2000). The present regime has ac-  
 462 tively sought to redesign the ensemble of local state in-  
 463 stitutions and government as *developmental local states*,  
 464 with an embedded autonomy in regard to local civil  
 465 society and economy as well as to political institutions  
 466 and actors at provincial and national levels (Oldfield,  
 467 2000b; Ramutsindela, 2001). The expectation is that  
 468 such local developmental states will generate efficient  
 469 and relevant economic and social development and also  
 470 contribute to a substantial democratisation from below.  
 471 More time and research is clearly required before any  
 472 conclusion can be drawn about these experiences. What  
 473 seems clear at the present conjuncture is that the polit-  
 474 ical autonomy of local institutions is constrained by  
 475 political processes and decisions at the other levels and  
 476 that this may have prohibited the local state from  
 477 playing the anticipated developmental role. Thus, Hu-  
 478 chzermeyer observes that "the centralised nature of ur-  
 479 ban policy in South Africa in which local government  
 480 acts merely as implementer, has discouraged the explo-  
 481 rations of alternatives from within local government"  
 482 (Huchzermeyer, 2000, p. vii). On the other hand, critical

483 insight is also required regarding the local embedded-  
484 ness of the local state. The national and local politics of  
485 land allocation may provide an illustrative example.  
486 Land is a crucial component in any integrated housing  
487 process and, thus, for the de-racialisation of South Af-  
488 rican cities (Republic of South Africa, 1995, 1997). *The*  
489 *White Paper on Housing* (Republic of South Africa,  
490 1995) and *The Housing Act* (Republic of South Africa,  
491 1997) called on provincial and local governments to  
492 utilise needed means to ensure a supply of land for  
493 housing and established the principle that unoccupied  
494 land should be transferred to the local state.<sup>2</sup> This  
495 gradual transfer of land to local authorities may con-  
496 tribute to more flexible, speedy, simple and ultimately  
497 more efficient land allocation. However, it also opens up  
498 the local politicisation of land issues. It seems likely that  
499 elite interests may ensure that land in desirable locations  
500 will be allocated to other purposes than social housing,  
501 but local control also opens up channels for popular  
502 struggles for land. In any case, it is obvious that the  
503 democratising and developmental effects of decentrali-  
504 sation cannot be taken for granted.

505 South Africa's democratic transition has radically  
506 transformed the system of formal and informal *political*  
507 *channels* that are available to popular movements. Civics  
508 were, prior to 1994, generally opposed to the apartheid  
509 state and operated with a high degree of political au-  
510 tonomy vis-à-vis state institutions and government.  
511 Maharaj (1996) demonstrates that the local reality was a  
512 bit more complex as certain local political channels did  
513 in fact exist in the 1980s. Civics involved in housing  
514 struggles used these channels and thereby contributed to  
515 the transformation of the local state and to emerging  
516 tensions between the local and the national state. Nev-  
517 ertheless, this pattern does not fundamentally alter the  
518 understanding of state/civics relations as principally  
519 antagonistic prior to the democratic transition. Post-  
520 apartheid political opportunity structures are clearly of  
521 a very different nature.

522 The South African democratisation process has ob-  
523 viously created new opportunities for access to and  
524 strategic alliances with political elite groups, but also  
525 tendencies towards co-optation and de-politicisation. A  
526 few key mechanisms should be mentioned here. First,  
527 the character of the democratic transition in South Af-  
528 rica, with a strong emphasis on negotiations and com-  
529 promises between diverse stakeholders, means that

<sup>2</sup> While discussing the political mechanisms for land allocation, it should be kept in mind that the market remains the main mechanism for land allocation in urban areas. High land prices and relatively modest housing subsidies, combined with the requirement that land must be in hand before the housing subsidy can be made available to the builder, contribute to the reproduction of urban segregation with housing schemes for poor people located at the urban periphery and other less desirable areas.

political participation of civics has been institutionalised  
through various advisory boards and forums. This re-  
structuring has opened up a number of formal and in-  
formal channels for political influence. However, several  
observers have also pointed out that this has depoliti-  
cised civics and placed them in a role as stakeholders  
rather than as a critical political force (Bond, 2000b;  
Jones and Datta, 2000; Lodge, 1999; Marais, 2001;  
Napier, 1998; Smit, 2001). Second, the ANC has  
throughout the 1990s had a somewhat ambivalent re-  
lation with civics. On the one hand, civics have been seen  
and treated as useful political allies. On the other hand,  
they have also been perceived as instrumental commu-  
nity organisers within a technocratic and top-down de-  
velopment process. This view has rendered a role for  
civics as parastatal development agencies or state-sup-  
ported NGOs (Marais, 2001; Napier, 1998; Smit, 2001).  
Finally, several civics leaders and activists have been  
integrated into formal politics through political and  
bureaucratic positions. Although civics sought to build  
popular democratic structures in local communities,  
they often remained somewhat hierarchical and top-  
down. In practice the loss of key leaders and activists  
has constituted a significant weakening of their organi-  
sational capacities (Levine and Weiner, 1996).

In sum, the identified post-apartheid changes in po-  
litical discourses, institutions and channels may have  
created new opportunities but also reduced the necessity  
and ability of civics to function as independent watch-  
dogs. This shift means that the political transition has  
been an ambiguous political process for popular move-  
ments—producing new and widened political spaces but  
also tendencies towards de-politicisation.

## 5. SAHPF as a post-apartheid civil/political association 563

The SAHPF is a popular movement whose aim is to  
realise fundamental socio-economic rights for the urban  
poor.<sup>3</sup> The SAHPF emerged from a conference of  
homeless people from informal settlements and back-  
yard shacks, held in Broederstrom in 1991. This con-  
ference identified the primary needs of the urban poor to  
be shelter and land for houses, and argued that access to  
credit was a critical precondition for fulfilment of the  
right to adequate shelter. Following from this, local  
saving groups started to appear in October 1992 and  
were consolidated as a co-ordinated movement—*uMfe-*  
*landawonye waBantu BaseMjondolo* (The SAHPF)—in

<sup>3</sup> The analysis is based on fieldwork in Cape Town in the fall of 2000. Primary data was gathered through qualitative interviews with representatives from the People's Dialogue, the SAHPF and from local government institutions in the Cities of Cape Town and Tygerberg (now incorporated in the Cape Town UniCity), the South Peninsula Municipality and the Western Cape Province.

576 March 1994. As one of the fastest growing and most  
577 visible social movement in the 1990s, SAHPF has been  
578 upheld as a paradigmatic case of post-apartheid popular  
579 mobilisation (Billy and Ismail, 1998; Bond, 2000a; Smit,  
580 2001). The Federation is, in several critical ways, dif-  
581 ferent from the civics that emerged under apartheid.  
582 First, whereas civic associations mobilised around local  
583 socio-economic demands to form a front against  
584 apartheid, post-apartheid popular movements like the  
585 Federation strive for the realisation of socio-economic  
586 rights within the political context of the new democratic  
587 state. Second, while the civics grew out of domestic ex-  
588 periences of oppression and exploitation under apart-  
589 heid, the Federation has also relied on inspiration from  
590 international discourses, experiences and practices re-  
591 garding social housing. Third, whereas the Federation is  
592 a loosely connected network of autonomous local  
593 groups with a high degree of political autonomy, the  
594 civics have close political affiliations with the ANC  
595 through the SANCO. Fourth, there are distinct differ-  
596 ences in organisational form. Every community-based  
597 organisation (CBO) within the Federation has a high  
598 degree of autonomy with a decision making process  
599 based on equal participation of all members. Civics, on  
600 the other hand, have commonly been hierarchically or-  
601 ganised with elected representative committees holding  
602 extensive powers to make strategic decisions and ensure  
603 their implementation (Levine and Weiner, 1996). These  
604 differences mean that SAHPF and the civics represent  
605 two organisational models, with potentially different  
606 capacities to mobilise society, exert political influence  
607 and advance the political inclusion of the urban poor.

### 608 5.1. Location in the political terrain

609 Törnquist (1999) argues that analyses of movement  
610 politics should pay close attention to the collective ac-  
611 tor's strategic deliberations over *where and how* it is  
612 meaningful to be active. Prior to 1994, the Federation  
613 chose to concentrate on building a network of local  
614 groups in informal settlements that would eventually  
615 yield a strong popular movement of the urban poor  
616 (Bolnick, 1993, 1996). The Federation has gradually  
617 transformed itself from such a civil association to a *civill*  
618 *political movement*, i.e. from concentrating solely on  
619 community mobilisation to gradually combining com-  
620 munity work with political engagement with state actors  
621 at different scales. A decisive factor for the Federation's  
622 capacity to influence relevant political processes, both  
623 locally and nationally, has been exactly their capacity  
624 building in local civil society (Joel Bolnick, personal  
625 communication). Thus, it can be argued that the com-  
626 bination of social and political mobilisation has ensured  
627 a degree of political inclusion for socially and politically  
628 marginalised groups. Conversely, their political relations  
629 with state actors and NGOs at different scales have

granted access to vital resources such as housing subsi- 630  
dies for the empowerment of SAHPF's constituencies of 631  
urban poor. 632

The Federation advocates a *people-driven housing* 633  
*process* (Bolnick, 1993, 1996; Heldal, 1997). They em- 634  
phasise that the poor are the foremost experts in 635  
building their own houses and that their latent capacities 636  
should be captured in housing strategies (People's Dia- 637  
logue, 1998a,b, 1999a,b, 2000a,b,c). Still, the actual 638  
construction of houses is only seen as an element in a 639  
larger development process that also involves income 640  
generating activities and overall community building 641  
(Bolnick, 1993, 1996) (Qxoliswa Tiso, personal com- 642  
munication). The core of the SAHPF's *community mo-* 643  
*obilisation* is the local saving groups. These saving groups 644  
are different from conventional micro credit schemes in 645  
the sense that saving is a collective activity that is de- 646  
signed to strengthen collective identities and organisa- 647  
tional capacities. Since the *act of saving* is considered to 648  
be as important as the actual amount of money saved, 649  
loans are granted on the basis of active and long-term 650  
engagement in saving groups rather than the actual ac- 651  
cumulation of funds (Joel Bolnic, Qxoliswa Tiso, per- 652  
sonal communication; Heldal, 1997; Huchzermeyer, 653  
2001). While some groups deposit their savings in 654  
commercial banks, a growing number are using the 655  
Federation's own regional funds (*Inqolobane*), which 656  
also mobilise funds and offer loans for other purposes 657  
than housing. 658

The SAHPF is occasionally accused of being little 659  
more than a conventional NGO that idealises self-help 660  
in civil society and allows the state to shift the respon- 661  
sibility for adequate shelter onto the poor communities 662  
themselves (Bond, 2000a). Leaders and activists that we 663  
have interviewed counter this critique by pointing to the 664  
aforementioned collective and ideological nature of the 665  
local groups. The organisation of saving as a group ef- 666  
fort rather than as individual resource mobilisation 667  
makes the saving groups a mechanism for collective 668  
mobilisation and identity formation (Huchzermeyer, 669  
2000, 2001). This idea is expressed in the slogan: "*When* 670  
*we collect money, we collect people*" (Qxoliswa Tiso, 671  
personal communication). Such community mobilisa- 672  
tion forms the basis for political inclusion and negotia- 673  
tions with state actors. Furthermore, SAHPF's people- 674  
driven housing process is also about developing and 675  
demonstrating the sustainability of an alternative to the 676  
hegemonic state discourse and housing strategy. Com- 677  
munity mobilisation thus constitutes a critical precon- 678  
dition for both material and discursive political 679  
inclusion of homeless people, i.e. a strategy of political 680  
engagement rather than disengagement in regard to the 681  
state. Expressed in the following way by one informant 682  
within People's Dialogue: "*The aim is to get the state on* 683  
*the hook, not off the hook*" (Joel Bolnick, personal 684  
communication). 685

686 5.2. Political channels for resource mobilisation

687 A key feature of a collective actor's strategic delib-  
688 erations around location in the political terrain is an  
689 active interpretation of institutional architecture and  
690 political opportunity structures. There were few and  
691 weak links between the South African Federation of  
692 Homeless People and the state prior to 1994. Federation  
693 leaders saw it as meaningless to develop relations to  
694 state institutions that remained embedded in the apart-  
695 heid regime and chose instead to concentrate on ca-  
696 pacity building in poorly organised informal settlements  
697 (Pieterse and Simone, 1994; Seekings, 2000). The dem-  
698 ocratic transition created a political space that made it  
699 possible to establish a network of CBOs. However, the  
700 Federation still chose to abstain from the negotiations in  
701 the National Housing Forum and other similar arenas.

702 SAHPF's strategy regarding where to be active  
703 changed after the first democratic elections in 1994,  
704 when there was a shift towards critical and selective  
705 engagement with the state (Joel Bolnick, personal  
706 communication; Bolnick, 1996). Thereafter, the Feder-  
707 ation has developed informal links to centrally placed  
708 political actors and has been engaged with key institu-  
709 tions like national and provincial housing boards. They  
710 have utilised new policies, like the housing subsidies  
711 programme, to mobilise resources (e.g. land and fund-  
712 ing) for members, while also seeking to influence policies  
713 on land and housing and on the role of poor people in  
714 the housing process. Access to alternative sources of  
715 credit has always been an important issue for the Fed-  
716 eration simply because the members are unable to ob-  
717 tain loans from formal financial institutions. Even  
718 though most Federation members are entitled to subsi-  
719 dies from the government, it has been a common expe-  
720 rience that the funds are insufficient and normally  
721 received after the project is started or the houses are  
722 built. Access to bridging finance is therefore important.  
723 An important breakthrough came in 1994/1995, when  
724 the Federation established its own revolving fund  
725 (*uTshani*). The *uTshani* fund grants the members access  
726 to small loans for housing. *uTshani* has also been used  
727 as a channel through which national and provincial  
728 governments release subsidies and other resources to  
729 local Federation groups. The institutionalisation of  
730 *uTshani* and subsequent *uTshani* agreements with the  
731 national or provincial state have granted the Federation  
732 control over vital economic resources that they can use  
733 to enable local people-driven housing processes.

734 This engagement with the state has not, according to  
735 our informants, yielded any extensive co-optation and  
736 de-politicisation. The Federation has avoided political  
737 affiliation with any political party but has built flexible  
738 alliances across party boundaries. Their emphasis on  
739 building community capacity has given the Federation  
740 considerable bargaining power towards the state. The

Federation had already built functioning community  
structures and houses through a practical and people-  
driven strategy that was consistent with new state dis-  
courses on participatory development. Whereas civics  
within SANCO have focused on citizenship rights and  
have made political demands about their realisation, the  
Federation has focused on the practical fulfilment of  
formal rights through resource mobilisation and com-  
munity mobilisation (Charles Croeser, Joel Bolnick,  
personal communication). Thus, SAHPF has something  
to offer vis-à-vis a state troubled with economic and  
institutional constraints within the housing sector  
(Charles Croeser, personal communication). In dealing  
with the state, the Federation could legitimately claim  
that: "*We do what you say you would like to do but  
cannot handle; if we get sufficient resources we can handle  
this together*" (Joel Bolnick, personal communication).  
In effect the Federation has utilised their organisational  
capacity, created through mobilising structures in local  
communities, to strengthen their political relations and  
capacities vis-à-vis other central actors in the housing  
sector.

The Federation is also involved in an active part-  
nership with a registered non-governmental organisa-  
tion called the People's Dialogue (PD). The role of  
NGOs in South Africa has undergone marked changes.  
Many NGOs, who organised and supported local  
struggles against apartheid, now function as non-gov-  
ernmental service providers in local communities, i.e. as  
the bottom tier in a relatively top-down and centralised  
development process controlled by the national state  
and international aid donors (Napier, 1998; Smit, 2001).  
Partnerships between NGOs and community organisa-  
tions are often characterised by uneven power relations  
and the NGOs' ability to represent the poor in efficient,  
transparent and accountable manners may be called into  
question. Our informants assert that the partnership  
between SAHPF and PD deviates from this pattern,  
describing it as a key asset for the Federation. PD plays  
a key role as a mediator between the Federation and the  
formal political sphere, making formal political proce-  
dures, politics and bureaucracy intelligible to local  
Federation groups while also communicating and ex-  
plaining the Federation's grievances and practices to  
politicians and bureaucrats (Michael Hoffman, personal  
communication). They handle all matters that require  
formal legal status, including fund raising from domestic  
and international sources, and thereby facilitate actual  
people-driven housing processes in informal communi-  
ties (Heldal, 1997; Michael Hoffman, personal commu-  
nication). By using the PD as a channel into the formal  
political system, local Federation groups can maintain  
their informal and flexible character.



794 5.3. *Political discourses and politicisation of issues*

795 Another important meeting point between SAHPF  
796 and the state is in the field of housing discourses. *The*  
797 *White Paper on Housing* introduced a state discourse on  
798 people's power, participatory development and em-  
799 powerment which to a large extent has defined the post-  
800 apartheid discursive field in housing. The state discourse  
801 on housing has been characterised by a firm belief in a  
802 non-conflictual process of negotiations, compromises  
803 and social compacts involving all relevant stakeholders,  
804 including influential private economic interests. This  
805 discourse is also marked by a tension between the need  
806 for speedy delivery of a substantial number of houses  
807 and the desire to involve people and communities in  
808 their own housing development (Bond, 2000a; Lalloo,  
809 1999).

810 The state discourse on housing stands in contrast to  
811 the Federation discourse which persistently advocates a  
812 truly bottom-up, people-driven housing process where  
813 housing is a means towards actual participatory devel-  
814 opment, self-reliance and empowerment rather than the  
815 principal end itself. Federation activists have accused  
816 the state of promoting a top-down and delivery-oriented  
817 housing approach that reifies the power of state insti-  
818 tutions and private developers while civics and NGOs  
819 are assigned the role of suppliers of services. The state  
820 approach, it is argued, rests on the assumed existence of  
821 well functioning community structures with community  
822 interests articulated through democratic civic associa-  
823 tions (Thami Maqelena, personal communication). In  
824 opposition to this understanding, the Federation insists  
825 on the need to build inclusive and representative com-  
826 munity structures as a precondition for a participatory  
827 housing development process (Joel Bolnick, Qxoliswa  
828 Tiso, personal communication). This means that both  
829 state and Federation discourses on housing revolve  
830 around notions of participation, local civil society and  
831 empowerment. However, this apparent convergence  
832 hides real differences in the conceptualisation and im-  
833 plementation of participatory housing development.  
834 These differences can be summarised in the Federation  
835 slogan that *housing development should not just be peo-  
836 ple-centred but also people-driven and controlled.*

837 The Federation's counter-hegemonic discourse has  
838 been an important source of inspiration for the gov-  
839 ernment's strategy for a *People's Housing Process* that  
840 was launched in 1998 (Joel Bolnick, Charles Croeser,  
841 Belinda Fortune, Nicky Sasman, personal communica-  
842 tion). This strategy reiterates the importance of partici-  
843 patory development and insists on the active  
844 participation of poor people, in partnership with local  
845 state institutions, private developers, NGOs and civics.  
846 This conceptualisation represents a significant discursive  
847 concession to the Federation (People's Dialogue, 1998b,  
848 1999b, 2000c). Nevertheless, the Federation maintains

849 that the implementation of the process remains within  
850 the neo-liberal frame with an emphasis on delivery of  
851 houses, participation as consultation and a continued  
852 neglect of the importance of building community ca-  
853 pacity (Joel Bolnick, Michael Hoffman, personal com-  
854 munication). They argue that systematically uneven  
855 power relations between marginalised communities and  
856 their state, non-governmental and private partners in  
857 the housing process remain unaltered (Huchzermeyer,  
858 2000, 2001). Consequently, the Federation continues to  
859 work for land and funding for its members, despite the  
860 fact that the state's People's Housing Process is sup-  
861 posed to obtain the same results and through mecha-  
862 nisms that are presented as identical to those of SAHPF.

5.4. *Scale and the politics of land* 863

864 The point of departure for this article was the ob-  
865 served general and South African tendency towards lo-  
866 calisation of politics in the context of neo-liberal  
867 globalisation. The post-apartheid institutional architec-  
868 ture in South Africa is organised in three tiers of gov-  
869 ernment and administration; national, provincial and  
870 local, with different responsibilities and degrees of au-  
871 tonomy and capacity (Atkinson and Reitzes, 1998;  
872 Cameron, 1999; Oldfield, 2000b). This structure creates  
873 a situation where popular movements like SAHPF have  
874 to make strategic decisions about where to be active in  
875 terms of spheres, as already discussed, but also with  
876 regard to scale. The latter can be briefly illustrated by  
877 the contemporary politics of land allocation in Cape  
878 Town (Millstein, 2001).

879 The Federation is a key urban social movement and  
880 actor within the housing sector in the Western Cape and  
881 Cape Town. Approximately 400 saving groups are cur-  
882 rently operating within the province, most of them  
883 within the Cape Town metropolitan area. These groups  
884 organise more than 30 000 members, mainly women.  
885 The Federation has constructed more than 5000 houses  
886 in Western Cape during the period 1995–2001 and close  
887 to half of these have been erected without state subsidies  
888 (Joel Bolnick, Qxoliswa Tiso, personal communication;  
889 People's Dialogue, 2000b). The Federation's most pub-  
890 licised housing scheme, Victoria Mxenge, is located in  
891 Philippi. Victoria Mxenge, which also functions as a  
892 regional network node and education centre (*ufundu*  
893 *Zufe*), has been expanded through two new housing  
894 schemes (Hazeldean and Vukuzenzele). These three  
895 Federation projects illustrate three modes of land ac-  
896 quisition. Victoria Mxenge was built on land that was  
897 owned by the Catholic Church and acquired after pro-  
898 longed negotiations with church and local state repre-  
899 sentatives; Hazeldean was constructed on land that was  
900 purchased from a private land owner, and Vukuzenzele  
901 is developed on land that was taken over after a col-  
902 lective land occupation and subsequent negotiations

903 with the registered land owner (Joel Bolnick, personal  
904 communication; People's Dialogue, 1998b).

905 Contemporary South Africa is marked by a complex  
906 system of ownership and institutional responsibilities in  
907 regard to land as well as relatively weak integration of  
908 land issues in housing policies. This system is to a certain  
909 extent a product of the apartheid era, when the admin-  
910 istrative responsibility for state land was fragmented  
911 between diverse institutions and tiers of the state. It  
912 constitutes a major impediment for state and popular  
913 housing development initiatives, for instance through  
914 the difficulties involved in identifying the owner of a plot  
915 of land. Billy and Ismail (1998), for instance, describe  
916 one case where land negotiations ensued for two years  
917 between a local Federation group and the City of Ty-  
918 gerberg before it was discovered that the plot of land  
919 was the property of the Western Cape Province. Fur-  
920 thermore, successful negotiations about land acquisition  
921 require functional relations with a diversity of political  
922 and private actors operating at different scales. The  
923 Federation has traditionally built strong formal and  
924 informal political relations at the national and provin-  
925 cial levels. Such relations have granted a certain influ-  
926 ence on policy formulations, but have also been crucial  
927 for the instrumental interest of acquiring land. Direct  
928 interventions by the Minister of Land and the Ministry  
929 of Housing ensured, for instance, that the Vukuzenzele  
930 group gained access to housing subsidies which could be  
931 utilised to purchase the land that had already been il-  
932 legally occupied by the group. Federation groups in the  
933 Western Cape have on several occasions been able to  
934 purchase land at subsidised cost from the Provincial  
935 government (Michael Hoffman, personal communica-  
936 tion). Land purchases have also been facilitated by  
937 uTshani agreements at the national and provincial lev-  
938 els.

939 An on-going process of transferring responsibility for  
940 state land to the local state means that while land  
941 ownership should become less convoluted, the political  
942 opportunity structures for housing movements are being  
943 recast and new needs for local political relations im-  
944 posed. At the local level in the Western Cape, the Fed-  
945 eration has had quite different experiences with the cities  
946 of Tygerberg and Cape Town (now merged within the  
947 Cape Town UniCity). Several informants observe that  
948 local authorities in the City of Tygerberg subscribed to a  
949 significant degree to the Federation discourse on hous-  
950 ing and also provided organisational and technical as-  
951 sistance (Thami Maqelena, Qxoliswa Tiso, personal  
952 communication). SAHPF was, at the time of our field-  
953 work, involved in three major partnerships with the City  
954 of Tygerberg, where local groups had been allocated  
955 land from the city. This arrangement stood in contrast  
956 to the much more problematic relationship to the City  
957 of Cape Town, with numerous conflicts over the nature  
958 and extent of popular control and participation in the

housing process, over allocation of land and regarding 959  
the construction and operation of infrastructure and 960  
public services (Qxoliswa Tiso, personal communica- 961  
tion). Thami Maqelena (personal communication) as- 962  
serts that these conflicts with the City of Cape Town 963  
were generated in the meeting of established political 964  
actors and constellations and the SAHPF as a relatively 965  
new political actor at this level. Strong local Federation 966  
groups, which advocate and implement an alternative 967  
and participatory housing process, pose a challenge to 968  
existing institutions and actors within the housing sector. 969  
Such groups demonstrate that the current institu- 970  
tional architecture and channels for participation are 971  
insufficient to ensure substantial local democratisation 972  
within the housing sector (Thurman, 2000). In conse- 973  
quence SAHPF groups now find themselves within a 974  
local political context that is characterised by changing 975  
institutional responsibilities and capacities. This dy- 976  
namic poses challenges in terms of developing mean- 977  
ingful political relations and strategies in regard to land 978  
and other issues. 979

The difficulties involved in gaining access to land 980  
have initiated new strategic deliberations within the 981  
movement. SAHPF and People's Dialogue advise local 982  
groups to avoid land occupations since negotiations and 983  
agreements with local governments are seen as more 984  
likely to succeed than confrontation. Land occupation is 985  
only recommended as an instrumental mean for initi- 986  
ating such negotiations. However, the difficulties experi- 987  
enced in getting access to land combined with recent 988  
legal reforms that should reduce the propensity of local 989  
governments to retort to violence, may lead to more 990  
frequent use of force by local groups (Joel Bolnick, 991  
personal communication). The future is likely to hold an 992  
intensified politicisation of land at the local level in- 993  
volving diverse state and non-state actors in complex 994  
systems of conflict and alliance. The local political 995  
spaces and capacities of key popular actors such as the 996  
SAHPF will be crucial in determining the outcome of 997  
this potentially conflictual situation. 998

## 6. Conclusion

999

Contemporary tendencies towards localisation of 1000  
politics call for critical analyses of the making and 1001  
transformation of political spaces and the political ca- 1002  
pacities of local actors to utilise rights, institutional 1003  
channels and discourses to promote their instrumental 1004  
and democratic aims. In South Africa, post-apartheid 1005  
changes in political discourses, institutions and channels 1006  
have created new opportunities for popular movements 1007  
but also disabling structures of co-optation and de-po- 1008  
liticisation. While the political spaces and experiences of 1009  
local groups are diverse, we believe that the SAHPF has 1010  
had a certain capacity to make use of and transform 1011

1012 local and non-local political spaces within the housing  
1013 sector. The Federation has utilised political relations at  
1014 different scales to mobilise resources such as land and  
1015 housing, but it has also influenced the formulation of  
1016 housing discourses and policies through its practical  
1017 experiences with people-driven housing processes. The  
1018 prime source of the SAHPF's political capacity has been  
1019 their ability to mobilise local communities and achieve  
1020 results through an alternative housing development  
1021 model. These achievements and their own housing dis-  
1022 course have been crucial for successful political negoti-  
1023 ations with state actors at different scales. Mediated  
1024 through the partnership with People's Dialogue, these  
1025 political relations have granted access to state resources  
1026 that could enable further community work. Thus the  
1027 SAHPF's ability to function as a civil/political move-  
1028 ment has granted them a certain capacity to participate  
1029 in the complicated process of turning de jure rights to  
1030 adequate shelter into de facto rights for the urban poor  
1031 as citizens of a democratic South Africa.

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