

**THE REGIONAL SERVICES COUNCIL DEBACLE IN DURBAN
c. 1984-1989**

by

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PREFACE

The research work described in this dissertation was carried out in the Department of Geographical and Environmental Sciences, University of Natal, Durban, from March 1989 to December 1990 under the supervision of Professor J.J. McCarthy.

This study represents the original work of the author and has not been submitted in any form to another university. Where use was made of the work of others, it has been duly acknowledged in the text.

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ABSTRACT

This research project explores the restructuring of local government in the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA) and, in particular, the delay in the implementation of Regional Services Councils (RSCs) in this region. During the late 1980's, both as an ongoing process of implementing apartheid and in response to various crises, the South African state has reformulated and restructured legislation and policies which have a regional dimension. The reform and restructuring of local and regional government have emerged as some of the central components of this strategy. The development which has changed the face of local government most obviously in recent years has been the introduction of RSCs. These bodies have been established in all the major metropolitan regions in South Africa, except Durban. While the Durban area was expected to host South Africa's first operational RSC, a protracted stalemate has developed over the implementation of these bodies.

Informed by a theoretical conceptualisation of the research problem, which was found to lie at the interface of the concepts of local government restructuring and questions on the nature of the region, and the direct and indirect methods of investigation and data gathering, the study documents and seeks to explain the RSC impasse in the region. The practical import and significance of the conclusions reached from this study extend beyond the explanation of the RSC debacle in Durban. They offer insights into the power and influence that locality-based structures can wield in defining and redefining concepts of the metropolitan region. In addition, they enhance an understanding of the Natal/KwaZulu region, its proclaimed 'specificity', and the way in which this specificity has impacted on political developments here.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Even before the Regional Services Council Act, 1985 (Act 109 of 1985) became law on 31 July, 1985, it was confidently expected both at central government and local level that the first Regional Services Council to be established under the Act would be in Natal, more specifically, in the Greater Durban Area. This was due to the high degree of acceptance of the principles of regionalisation already reached amongst local authorities and other representative bodies in the area, including commerce and industry, and because considerable progress had already been made towards the establishment of a regional authority for a metropolitan area long regarded as displaying a high degree of economic bonding and interdependence.

As things have turned out however, this has not been the case.

(METROCOM Memorandum accompanying letter to the State President, 19/6/87).

1.1 A DISCUSSION AND CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE BASIC RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1.1 SITUATING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM WITHIN THE BROADER CURRENTS OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL CHANGE

Since the late 1970's, the apartheid state has faced a sustained and deepening crisis of legitimisation. For some time, the state has been caught up with the immediate threat of escalating opposition in the townships, the symptoms of the deepening economic crisis, and spreading international hostility to apartheid. But while this has been happening, as Cobbett et al (1985, 1986) point out, elements within the ruling groups, both inside and outside the state, have been attempting to map out a longer term strategic offensive aimed at defusing political conflict and restructuring the economy. Faced with a shrinking material basis for concessionary economic reform and growing mobilisation behind the extension of political rights, the country's ruling groups have begun the search for political solutions to the crisis.

A number of scholars have mapped the major contours of the strategic offensive pursued by the state since late 1984 (Cobbett et al 1985, 1986; see also Greenberg, 1984; Posel, 1984; Glaser, 1984; Stadler, 1984; Morris and Padayachee, 1988). Most of them point to the offensive as significant in that it goes beyond the 'Total Strategy' formulated by P.W. Botha in the late 1970's. In contrast to these policies, it abandons most of the political and territorial premises of apartheid, though not necessarily those of race and ethnicity, and envisages the eventual reincorporation of bantustans into a single national South African state. As part of the search for more developed solutions, sections of the ruling class have begun to explore the possibility of demarcating new spatial units of planning, administration and representation that cross-cut or by-pass existing, highly politicised spatial units - such as bantustans and group areas. According to Cobbett et al (1985, 1986), the existing spatial units have been identified as a source of economic efficiency and political instability. New spatial forms (like development and metropolitan regions, and new approaches to political representation such as federalism) would therefore disorganise

oppositional groups that have challenged existing spatial boundaries and would provide the spatial framework for a renewal of capital accumulation.

It is in the above context, therefore, that what has often been referred to, since late 1984, as the South African state's emerging 'regional strategy' can be understood. The reform and restructuring of local government institutions is one of the central components of this strategy and, in broad terms, is part of a comprehensive constitutional initiative ostensibly aimed at broadening democracy. While there are a number of other components to this reform strategy, and notwithstanding recent political developments which are likely to change the course and direction of this process, it has become clear that the reform and restructuring of the local government system in South Africa has emerged as a key aspect of the state's reform programme. Accordingly, analyses of the political and constitutional context of developments at the local level, and of the specific aspects of the restructuring of local government institutions, have been prominent on the academic agenda.

State legislation has radically changed the face of local government especially in the last five years. The lynchpin of this new legislation is the Regional Services Council (RSC) Act of 1985. Under this Act, a two-tier structure of service provision has been established in urban areas (and will be established later in rural areas) in order to achieve economies of scale and increase efficiency by reducing the duplication of services by providing them on a joint basis, to improve the infrastructure of Black (that is Coloured, Indian and African) communities and to facilitate multi-racial decision-making. This is in keeping with the government's proclaimed intentions of maximum devolution of power and minimum administrative control at the local level.

Natal remains the only province, and Durban the only major metropolitan region, where RSCs have not been implemented. The dynamics of metropolitan state forms in the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA) have always been extremely fluid, and the functional interdependence of the various components of Natal's metropolitan areas is something that has

been recognised by a variety of groups over a considerable period of time. A guide-plan for the DMA produced by the Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission in 1973, was an important statement of such interdependence (McCarthy, 1988a). It was the catalyst for the development of the Durban Metropolitan Consultative Committee (METROCOM) in 1977. METROCOM was formed at the instigation of the Natal Provincial Administration (NPA) for the purpose of achieving co-operation between all local authorities within the DMA and as a means of achieving a co-ordinated approach to the economical and efficient planning of the area (METROCOM memorandum, 7/1/88).

In November 1979, the NPA requested METROCOM to undertake the task of examining the concept of regionalisation of services for the DMA. It also requested that the study specifically include the issue of services to the adjacent KwaZulu areas and areas under the control of the then Community Services and Administration Boards (METROCOM letter, 25/10/88). This culminated in a memorandum dealing with the regionalisation of services being submitted to the Provincial Secretary in November, 1981. However, it was not until late October, 1984 that a comprehensive report on the financial implications of the regionalisation of services in the DMA was released. The study, undertaken by Pim Goldby Management Consultants, was commissioned by METROCOM. It was the first such report in South Africa and served as a blueprint for other metropolitan areas estimating the cost of establishing certain municipal services on a regional basis (see the 1984 Pim Goldby Report).

The government drafted RSC Bill was introduced in Parliament in May, 1985. METROCOM was of the opinion that the new RSC for the Greater Durban Area would probably include all the areas covered by the 1984 Pim Goldby proposals. They also felt that a RSC could be set up in the Durban area within months because of the groundwork already done by them. METROCOM sources were quoted as saying that the RSC Bill did not appear to deviate substantially from their basic recommendations and they were optimistic that the council (RSC) which evolved would closely resemble that proposed by them.

This, however, has not been the case. Five years after the RSC Act has been passed, four and a half years after an RSC should have become operational in Durban (if METROCOM had anything to do with it) and three years after their implementation in the rest of the country, Natal remains the only province, and Durban the only major metropolitan centre, where RSCs have not been established. In fact, a recent Draft Bill aims to scrap the implementation of RSCs in Natal in favour of a new system of local/regional government covering the entire Natal/KwaZulu region.

It is in the above context that the specific research objective of this study is to arrive at a complete, comprehensive and accurate as possible an understanding and explanation of the RSC impasse in the region.

1.1.2 SITUATING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM WITHIN THE FIELD OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN GENERAL

A conceptualisation of the research problem in the following chapter identifies it essentially as a 'regional' issue - one whose explanation is rooted in questions on the nature of the region. The study of 'regions' has been a favoured research topic in geography particularly for those in the field of human geography, but also increasingly among social scientists in general. From the 1950's, for example, human geography, or at least a central part of it, was plainly about 'regions'. As Massey (1985) recalls, school and university courses were organised around sections of the world. There were courses on 'Africa', on 'Asia', on 'the regions of the British Isles'. The focus was on place, on difference, on distinctiveness - on uniqueness. The concern was to understand how localities come to be as they are, how they gained their particular character.

This emphasis was overthrown in the 1960's, when geography, along with the other social sciences, was influenced by the 'positivist revolution' - in particular in its quantitative guise. The old regional geography was hidden away in embarrassment, and the door closed firmly on it. According to Williams (1981), it was explained away as part of our own

'Dark Ages', whence we had now emerged on the high plains of truly scientific endeavour. Because of this, in the early 1970's, geography set itself up as the 'science of the spatial'. There were spatial laws, spatial relationships, spatial processes. There was a notion that there were certain principles of spatial interaction which could be studied devoid of their social content. At a less abstract, but possibly socially more significant, level, there was an obsession with the identification with spatial regularities and an urge to explain them by spatial factors. The explanation of geographical patterns, it was argued, lay within the spatial.

It was in this context that the study of 'regions' re-emerged on the human geographical and social science agenda. This time, the 'regional question', or what has often been termed the 'regional spatial problematic' came to the fore as an important theoretical and political issue. In broad terms, the 'regional spatial problematic' refers to the complex and problematic processes and forms associated with geographically uneven development at a national and intra-national scale. More recently, according to Massey (1978, 1979), the term 'regionalism', a related concept but referring specifically to the analysis of intra-national spatial differentiation, has gained currency in the field of human geography and has stimulated a significant amount of research. Sub-national regions she argues, are among the many created and constitutive locales of social life, contingent upon social and historical processes while simultaneously formative of society and history. As such, the manner in which these locales have been constituted, and the problems ('antagonistic' regionalisms) that they give rise to in a variety of contexts, require investigation.

In a discussion on the difference that space makes, Sayer (1985) points out that empirical studies which abstract from space can hardly be called concrete because they conceal the actual forms of combination of system elements. To those habituated by this kind of research, he argues, spatial variations are little more than deviations from the norm and only of interest as such. This is particularly so in studies which attempt to synthesise the concrete effects of the interaction of many systems, such as the history of the industrial revolution or the nature

of regional change. Researchers in such fields are faced with a choice of relying upon aggregates and averages which describe the whole system but which occlude causality by ignoring spatial form or conducting studies which allow concrete analysis and causal explanation of limited parts of the subject but which leave substantial areas uncovered. By arguing that what is required in concrete research is an adequate recombination of space and substance, Sayer (1985) provides the basis for a 'reconceptualisation' of a number of research problems, among them, those associated with questions on the nature of the region. It is an intervention which has also renewed a considerable amount of interest in the study of 'regions'.

The purpose of the preceding discussion has been to provide a necessary contextualisation of the research problem within the field of human geography and in the social sciences in general. Having done this, the following section turns to a discussion on the relevance of the specific research problem under consideration here.

1.2. A DISCUSSION OF THE SPECIFIC RESEARCH PROBLEM

While detailed historical work has been undertaken on local government in the Greater Durban Area (see Maylam 1982, 1983; Grest, 1985; McCarthy, 1983b, 1988b), and this provides a comprehensive coverage of the history of local government in Durban for the period 1910-1980, such accounts conspicuously fail to explain attempts to restructure the local state in the DMA. In this regard, the comments offered by Smit (1988:34/35) are apposite:

"....it is striking that so little work is currently being done on the process of political restructuring of Natal, KwaZulu and the Durban metropolitan area. The Kwa-Natal option and regional services councils (emphasis added) will involve massive restructuring of regional, sub-regional and local government and as a consequence, is bound to have major implications

for the variety of political groups in Natal. Research is badly needed into the way in which this restructuring provides opportunities or dangers for these groupings".

Apart from some preliminary investigative work by McCarthy (1988a), there has still been no attempt to address this issue, and Smit's (1988) comments therefore remain valid.

It is in this context that the present study provides a detailed account of the local government restructuring process in the DMA, and in so doing, offers a starting point for further research into a much neglected area. Admittedly, the complex nature of the situation in metropolitan Durban makes the process an extremely difficult one to document and interpret. Yet given the force and urgency with which local politics has emerged on the research agenda in South Africa, and more recently the small but growing interest in empirical documentation of the local restructuring of politics in the major metropolitan regions, the Durban case, for reasons elaborated above, merits urgent attention.

A second rationale for the research problem is that it provides an opportunity to enhance an understanding of the Natal/KwaZulu region and its proclaimed specificity.

It has often been claimed that the specificity (in spatial and historical terms) of the Natal/KwaZulu region has, in recent years, spawned a number of regional-federal political solutions with the support of powerful Natal-based interests. It was the explicit recognition of the economically and demographically interwoven sub-regions of Natal and KwaZulu, coupled with an awareness of a distinct political culture in the region, that provided the impetus for such solutions. According to proponents of these proffered solutions, any regional initiative that was to translate into a viable and successful option would have to take cognisance of 'Natal traditions'.

A number of reasons have been advanced for the delay in the implementation of RSCs in Natal. None, however, allude to the

possibility that failure on the part of central state planners to recognise the distinctiveness of the region (in attempting to establish RSCs in Natal) could have played a part in the ensuing debacle. After all, RSCs involve the regional restructuring of politics, and proponents of a special Natal dispensation have, as indicated above, always argued that a restructuring of politics in Natal would have to consider regional idiosyncracies.

An understanding of the Natal/KwaZulu region, and the notion that the distinctiveness of the region may have impacted considerably on political developments here, provides a means of conceptualising the nature of regional specificity. This, in turn, is a question of considerable theoretical significance in human and political geography.

Finally, the research problem offers the opportunity to assess the influence of locality-based structures (and the interests of the key actors that they represent) in defining and re-defining concepts of the metropolitan region: definitions that are often at odds with the central state. It has been suggested that the actions of key actors in the Durban area may have been responsible for the delay in the implementation of RSCs. If this is found to be the case, it may provide insights into the potential for the relative autonomy of the local state, and other locality-based structures, vis-à-vis the central state in the context of the changing political geography of the metropolitan region.

There is potential theoretical significance here for the analysis of the constantly changing relations between different levels of government. That is to say, it may be possible to conceptualise the empirical problem in terms of a theory of central-local state relations.

1.3 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY: AN OVERVIEW

The study is organised so that questions of theory and methodology are discussed first, since they guide the empirical study. The empirical material which elaborates the research problem is presented in subsequent chapters.

More specifically, Chapter Two critically reviews a range of theoretical literature which assists in the conceptualisation of the empirical problem. The chapter commences with a review of the international literature on the restructuring of local government. This provides a basis upon which comparisons can be made with the South African experience. A review of the geographical literature on regions follows, which offers a potential conceptualisation of the empirical problem as a specifically regional one. It is emphasised throughout this chapter that the highly complex nature of contemporary struggles over the spatial redelimitation of state powers in South Africa has led to inadequate theorization of the research problematic. The chapter concludes with a discussion of an alternative framework for the analysis and understanding of regional political processes (and associated problems) currently operating in South Africa

Questions of methodology are discussed in Chapter Three. The strategies of empirical research best suited to the elaboration of the specific research problem are outlined. These are classified into the categories of extensive and intensive methods. The intensive research methods employed are described as the direct mode of investigating the research problem, and the extensive research methods as the indirect mode of investigation. It is argued that both methods of investigation constitute complementary means by which the primary dimension of knowledge and understanding is generated, ordered and described.

Chapter Four provides an overview of the restructuring of local government in South Africa. The political and constitutional context of developments at the local level, as well as specific aspects of the restructuring of local government systems, are outlined. Some mention is also made of the specific local government experiences of two

metropolitan regions outside of the DMA. This chapter provides a backdrop against which the research problem can be situated.

Chapters Five and Six present the empirical evidence relating to the research problem. A number of hypotheses are advanced and tested and an understanding of the RSC impasse in the region emerges. Specifically, Chapter Five examines the restructuring of local government in the DMA. The changing political geography of the Durban local state from 1930 to mid-1970 is outlined followed by an elaboration of recent attempts to implement RSCs in Natal. This chapter considers the emerging political geography of Durban, and the actions of key actors in the DMA in defining and re-defining concepts of the metropolitan region. Chapter Six reflects on the veracity of some of the theoretical concepts considered earlier in the study. It argues that if the Natal region is constituted as an effect of analysis, and not an arbitrary spatial division of labour, it can be identified as politically distinctive. Indeed, it is argued that it is precisely because of the particularity of the region (and the way in which this has been ignored in attempts at the restructuring of local government) that an impasse over the establishment of RSCs has developed in Natal.

The final chapter returns to the content of this introductory chapter in order to assess whether the stated research aims have been satisfied, and to consider the practical import and significance of the conclusions reached. The broader, theoretical significance of the study is also evaluated here.

CHAPTER TWO

TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The 'regional restructuring of politics' in contemporary South Africa has recently become an important research frontier, with intense debates ensuing on theoretical interpretations of the political/regional developments in question (Tomlinson and Addleson, 1987). Interpretations of the highly complex and regionally specific nature of contemporary struggles over the spatial redelimitation of state powers in South Africa have, however, yet to emerge. Indeed, documentation of these struggles has only just begun. It is therefore difficult to situate any piece of detailed empirical research dealing with problems associated with the spatial redelimitation of state powers in South Africa within a broader theoretical framework. The researcher is forced to grapple with a range of theories and interpretations which have been developed in abstraction from local detail.

A conceptualization of this particular research problem, however, was eventually found to lie at the interface of the concepts of 'local state restructuring' and questions on the nature of the 'region'. The chosen research problem is, after all, one that deals with the restructuring of the local state, and the spatial parameters of the study reside at the level of the region (by virtue of the fact that Regional Services Councils (RSCs) involve a restructuring of politics at the regional level). The insights that are gleaned from literature on local state restructuring and regionalism therefore account for and explain different components of the research problem.

The section to follow comprises a critical review of the international literature on the local state and the restructuring of the local state. Comparisons are made and parallels drawn with the South African

experience. This is followed by a discussion of geographical perspectives on regions, and the extent to which social problems can be regarded as specifically regional, whose explanation is context-dependent. The contemporary literature on regions is then critically evaluated and an alternative framework for the analysis and understanding of regional political processes (and associated problems) is introduced. Finally, an integration of the literature review is provided.

2.2 A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE RELEVANT TO A CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE SPECIFIC RESEARCH PROBLEM

2.2.1 INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON LOCAL STATE RESTRUCTURING

There are two central issues that have been dealt with in the international literature on local government restructuring. Todes and Watson (1985) identify these as follows:

- (a) the context of local government reorganisation, under which the contextual factors which have shaped the reorganisation of local government and the nature of the problems which contextual factors have posed for local government fall, and
- (b) those issues that have been of greatest general importance in terms of the forms of reorganisation that have occurred in local governments. These include the consolidation of local authorities, the nature of the relationship between central and local government, the structure of the representative and administrative systems of local authorities, the issue of public participation and the issue of local government finance.

A review of the international literature on the local state and the restructuring of the local state provides both conceptual and informational tools which allow for an evaluation of local government structures in South Africa, and which permit lessons learnt in other countries to be brought to bear on the South African context.

A) THE CONTEXT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

An examination of the context within which local government reorganisation occurs allows insights to be gained into the relationship between a system of local government and its context.

(i) The contextual factors influencing reorganisation

There is extensive literature on those contextual factors which have provided a major imperative to local government reorganisation. Theorists of the local state now identify four contextual factors which have provided the impetus for a reorganisation of local government. These are: spatial restructuring of the cities, urbanisation and metropolitanisation, shifts in national economic policy and shifts in the balance of political power.

Regarding the latter, Cockburn (1977), reviewing the reorganisation of local government in the Borough of Lambeth in London, examines the relationship between what, in 1970, were two new trends in local government in Great Britain : corporate management and community development; the one an attempt to exercise tighter control over council finance and the workforce, the other an attempt to encourage democracy through participation. Essentially, both trends were responses to major contextual factors, in particular, the spatial restructuring of the City of London. This provided a major imperative to local government reorganisation in the Borough of Lambeth (see also Goldrick, 1977; Magnusson, 1981; Rondinelli et al, 1984).

(ii) Connections between the contextual factors and the kinds of reorganisation which have resulted

The second component dealt with by local state theorists who have paid attention to the context of local government reorganisation is the connections between the contextual factors affecting local government and the kinds of reorganisation which have resulted. Todes and Watson (1985) make the point that changes in the major contextual factors have

raised problems in relation to the structure of local government - problems of legitimacy, control, and the changing structure of capital and class composition. These problems, which are often experienced in combination with each other in any particular area, have in turn, promoted the restructuring of local government. There is also extensive literature around these issues. It has been suggested (Saunders, 1982) that local government plays a crucial role in guaranteeing the overall legitimacy of a social system. Local government is smaller and more accessible than national government, it deals with a number of distributional and welfare issues which directly affect people's lives, and it is highly visible. Thus, local government is frequently restructured in response to generalised legitimacy crises. According to Duncan and Goodwin (1982), central government has found it necessary to maintain control over local government operations as paradoxically, the characteristics of local government that allow it to be an instrument of legitimacy, also threaten the maintenance of state control (see also Dear and Clark, 1981; Magnusson, 1981).

Turning to South Africa, it is known that in the post-1976 period, the state embarked on a process of national reform which was to have significant implications for the already problematic situation of black local government. Seen as it was on the one hand as response to a crisis of racial capitalism, and on the other to a crisis of state interventionism (Glaser, 1984), the reform process was to generate a series of fundamentally new demands on state structures at the local level (see Greenberg, 1984; Posel, 1984; Stadler, 1984). These demands ultimately compelled the state to restructure the system of local government (in fact the restructuring of the local government system was to become one of a number of components of the state's post-1976 reform strategy).

Part of the context for the restructuring of local government in South Africa was the mass emergence of grass-roots civic and community organisations during the 1980's. These contested the neglect of their members interests by protesting against the geo-political forms that had emerged during the 1960's and early 1970's (McCarthy, 1988). Rent boycotts began in the state-owned housing areas that were created during

the 1960's and early 1970's, and the state-assisted bus monopolies and state-owned train services became politicised over commuter fare increases. A major consequence of this popular politics has been the near total collapse of legitimacy of the so-called Community Councils and Local Affairs Committees (LACs). These bodies had been set up to liaise with the state on the administration of black local affairs within the metropolitan areas (see Chapter Four). Both the Community Councils and the LACs were unable to command sufficient resources to attain legitimacy. Furthermore, as McCarthy (1988) points out, the late 1970's and early 1980's were also a period of extra-ordinarily rapid growth in African informal or 'squatter' settlements, and such areas posed problems for the state insofar as they remained unincorporated within the institutional framework of the nation, and raised uncomfortable questions about the legitimacy of state housing strategies.

Changes in the major contextual factors in South Africa (a crisis of racial capitalism and state interventionism) have raised problems in relation to the structure of local government (problems of legitimacy and control) which have in turn promoted the restructuring of local government. The South African experience therefore clearly reflects the experiences of other countries in the world insofar as the imperatives towards local government reorganisation are concerned.

B) ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE IN TERMS OF FORMS OF REORGANISATION

The second central component dealt with in the international literature on local government restructuring is the issues that have been of greatest general importance in terms of the forms of reorganisation that have occurred in local governments.

(i) The consolidation of local authorities

There is vast literature on the consolidation of local authorities as one subset of these issues. Two main forms of consolidation have been common: amalgamations of local authorities and the creation of regional or metropolitan governments. Consolidation has occurred for both economic and political reasons; however, even where economic reasons

prevail, the motivation to consolidate usually contains political undertones as well. Particularly since World War Two, rapid urban and metropolitan growth and the depopulation of rural areas in industrial countries have been associated with consolidation. On the one hand, local government has been called on to perform a wider range of services, and on the other, larger units of government have been required to facilitate the process of urban growth.

It is also significant to note, as does Magnusson (1981), that consolidation and particularly the creation of metropolitan/regional authorities have not automatically followed urbanisation and metropolitanisation - these changes have sometimes depended on the existence of strong social democratic parties which have seen the benefit in larger, stronger governments. In a number of cases, consolidation has occurred in response to purely political factors (an outcome of changes in the major contextual factors) such as legitimacy crises, and the inability of central government to maintain control over local government (see Pavic, 1980; Simmie and Hale, 1980; Stomberg, 1980; Siedentopf, 1980; Magnusson, 1983; Rowat, 1980; Carrol, 1980; Taras, 1980; Friedman, 1980). This literature has also dealt with the the forms of regional/metropolitan government as well as positions in favour/opposed to consolidation.

There has been a tendency in a number of countries to use local government reorganisation and particularly the creation of metropolitan forms of government as a 'cure-all' for urban ills. This strategy has frequently been used where other measures would have been more appropriate. It has also been used instead of taking more direct political action in relation to problems such as land use, transport, tax reform and planning (Axworthy, 1980). In effect, while the problems posed by proponents of amalgamation and metropolitanisation may be real ones, "the solution put forward is often based on assumptions (rather than well-researched facts) and is often inappropriate in terms of the problems faced by local government" (Todes and Watson, 1985:41). Consolidation and metropolitanisation may certainly be an appropriate strategy in particular circumstances, but the nature of these

circumstances and the form of reorganisation required must then be well understood.

The consolidation of local authorities in South Africa as a response to what could generally be called purely political factors (discussed above) has taken the form of regional or metropolitan government called Regional Services Councils (RSCs). These bodies correspond to a form of regional/metropolitan government identified by Todes and Watson (1985) as a two-tier structure. They describe the two-tier structure as one in which an executive second tier of local government is created above existing local authorities - the higher tier is considered as a level of government and it carries a defined set of (usually) area-wide functions. There are, however, differences in the allocation of functions and forms of representation. Chapter Four discusses RSCs in further detail.

(ii) The nature of the changing relations between central and local government

On the nature of the changing relations between central and local government as the second central issue in terms of the forms of reorganisation that have occurred in local government, one generally accepted reason for the existence of a number of tiers or levels of government is that certain functions and powers are better handled at the local or regional level than by the central state. There is, however, no accepted norm for the way in which functions and powers are divided between central and local levels: there are countries in which almost all functions and powers are centralised in the hands of the state, and countries where the bulk of these have been transferred to the local level.

In industrialised countries, the point has been made that "the general trend of central-local relations is one of increasing control by higher authority..." (Robson and Regan, 1972:84). The process is not necessarily a continuous one, however: frequently, a reallocation of functions and powers has occurred as part of a more general reorganisation of local government. It has therefore often been

presented as part of a reform package consisting of local authority amalgamations, the creation of new tiers of government, and the creation of hierarchies in decision-making processes. It has been hypothesised (through extensive documentation) that in a number of advanced capitalist countries such as Britain and the USA, local government has little independent power. In Britain, "local authorities have no powers other than those conferred on them by statute" (Richards, 1978:33) and in the USA, "the local state has no inherent legal authority or power" (Dear and Clark, 1981:127). In both cases, legal controls are paralleled by administrative and financial controls (see also Carrol, 1980; Newton, 1980).

The work of Rondinelli et al (1984) is particularly instructive in respect of the less developed countries which have also experienced a change in relations between central and local government as a result of local government reorganisation. Rondinelli et al (1984) point out that during the 1950's and the 1960's, many Third World governments became more centralised. To some extent, this was a result of 'nation building' exercises in recently decolonised countries and also as a result of approaches to development which placed a priority on the promotion of economic growth: this required large infrastructural investment programmes and central state initiative. This trend towards centralisation has been replaced in the 1970's and 1980's, mostly at the level of rhetoric, by an emphasis on decentralisation. Rondinelli et al (1984) identify the forms of decentralisation which have occurred in developing countries as well as the justifications for decentralisation by reviewing the case study material in the context of local government reorganisation in the developing world.

With regard to South Africa, since the promulgation of the 1983 constitution, devolution of political power has increasingly been emphasised by the government as a policy priority (Republic of South Africa, 1985), thus bringing the relations between different levels of government into sharper focus. The major initiative has been at the local level, largely through the introduction of RSCs. Some have argued that local government reorganisation in South Africa tends towards a general broadening of democracy and enhanced efficiency, while others

have argued that precisely the converse applies: viz. that the restructuring of local politics has led to an even greater centralisation of powers of the government, leaving a negligible amount of space for existing or new local authorities to manoeuvre in. Chapter Four elaborates these points further.

Other factors that have been of general importance in terms of the forms of local government reorganisation that have occurred include: the structure of the representative and administrative systems of local authorities (see Cockburn, 1977; Dearlove, 1979), the issue of public participation (see Jaggi et al, 1974; Cockburn, 1977; Simmie and Hale, 1978; Pavic, 1980) and the issue of local government finance (see Martlew, 1983; Bennet, 1984; Blackburn, 1984).

C) LOCAL RELEVANCE

The South African experience clearly reflects the experiences of those countries that have undergone a restructuring of their local government systems. On the other hand, these perspectives do not provide clear insights around which the empirical focus of this study can be orientated in theoretical terms: that is to say, conflict over local government reform. For this reason, the theoretical emphasis of the study moves beyond the literature on local state restructuring towards a discussion of alternative theoretical and conceptual frameworks in which the empirical problem can be situated.

The spatial co-ordinates of this study reside at the level of what is loosely termed the 'region' (Natal/KwaZulu). This raises the possibility of the empirical problem being a specifically regional one. In relation to this possibility, however, the question has to be asked, does the geographic boundary of the study, in political, economic and demographic terms, warrant the identification as a region pre-given to the study of intra-national spatial variation? Or is the study area to be constituted as an effect of analysis? That is to say, is the area a spatial entity or a spatial division of labour with distinctive characteristics and an overall pattern of variation in a social formation. Secondly, if the study area is identified as a region (either through a pre-given

'regionalisation' or as an effect of analysis), in what sense can the research problem be said to be effected by this? These issues will be considered in the following section in a broad discussion on the question of regions, regional specificity and the regional question.

2.2.2 GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON REGIONS

A) REGIONAL SPECIFICITY

The following discussion on regional specificity offers some insights on how regions come to be constituted as distinct spatial entities and the problems that arise from the identification of a region as such. The discussion opens with the introduction of the term 'regionalism' as a field of study with a valid general object. Following this, the different stages of analysis and distinct questions within this field are dealt with. The section concludes with some remarks on the important effects spatial differentiation can have in a variety of contexts and the relevance of these perspectives in terms of a conceptualisation of the research problem.

(i) Defining regionalism

Massey (1978) defines regionalism as the analysis of intra-national spatial differentiation. Its concern is to study the mechanisms by which the process of accumulation (investment in economic activity) generates uneven spatial development, and the effects of such unevenness on a national social formation and particular areas within it. Few of the Marxist classics treat the subject-matter of regionalism to more than a passing reference (see Massey, 1978, 1979; Urry, 1981). According to Massey (1978:109), "this lack of forebears has produced a sense of unease, an important effect of which has been a tendency to adopt methods of analysis developed at 'other spatial scales'".

(ii) Regions - an effect of analysis?

A summary of the literature concludes that the relations between nation states within world imperialism should not be equated with 'inter-

regional relations' within a nation, and suggests three reasons for doing so (Massey, 1978; Soja, 1985). First, there are empirical differences between nation states and their constituent regions. For example, the state as a focus for class relations is usually less strong at regional than at the national level. A second, and related implication of such transference is that there is a general problematic of 'the spatial', of which the basic idea is that geographical differentiation and 'inter-areal relations' at one scale are simply those of another writ large or small. Often therefore, objects of analysis become 'arbitrary' spatial divisions of space. Thirdly, and most importantly, the theories which adopt a method of analysis of regions at other spatial scales tend to take nation states as objects given to analysis. But, whether or not this is correct at an international level, Massey (1978) argues that regions are not necessarily pre-given to the study of intra-national spatial differentiation.

It is important therefore that regions be constituted as an effect of analysis: they must be defined in relation to uneven spatial development in the process of accumulation and its effects on social (including political) relations. Thus, the analysis of the production of uneven development does not imply a pre-given regionalisation. There have to be clear and valid reasons for taking regions as given.

Theories of underdevelopment that are concerned with questions of regions however, do not constitute regions as an effect of analysis. Instead, these approaches either imply or encourage an analysis of the production of spatial differentiation that starts from pre-defined regions. A consequence of this is that many of those authors take as given, without any analytical justification, particular 'places' or 'areas' as 'regions'. In other words, as adequate theoretical objects and social formations. The concept of a 'region' and concepts of 'inter-regional relationships' imply the definition of spatial entities with some degree of internal coherence whether economic, political, or both. Yet such a definition must be the result of analysis: it cannot be intuitive or an *a priori* starting point.

It is clear therefore, that in order to define what constitutes a region, the object of analysis should not be seen as an 'arbitrary' spatial division of labour. This refers to a geographical or spatial summary (for example, the identification of a region) without sufficient evidence to suggest that the defined unit represents a coherent spatial entity (in economic and political terms). Rather, we should seek an understanding of the social and political relations at both the national level, and at the level of its constituent regions. This must involve an examination of whether specific class relations, or cultural distinctiveness, for example, outweigh or overshadow national cohesion. This may or may not allow for an acceptance of pre-given regional boundaries. The important point is that an uncritical acceptance of regional boundaries should not form the starting point of analysis.

(iii) From accumulation to spatially uneven development

An alternative approach to the analysis of the production of spatially uneven development, suggested by Massey (1978) and followed up in her subsequent works (1979, 1980, 1984), begins from the process of accumulation and analyses this phenomenon without any pre-specified regionalisation of that space.

According to her, an understanding of the process of production and accumulation, and the relations that accompany it, as they have developed historically, is required. This facilitates an understanding of how boundaries come to be drawn in response to accumulation imperatives. It also provides an understanding of how new investment in economic activity (accumulation), out of which evolves a new spatial division of labour, will produce a new distribution of economic activity. This in turn will be overlaid on, and combined with, the pattern produced in previous rounds by different forms of spatial division, and the combination of successive layers will produce effects which themselves vary over space.

In other words, any new spatial division of labour (a new use of space) it is argued, when combined with the geographical pattern of previous uses, has as an effect both the production of the distinctive

characteristics of local areas, and the overall pattern of regional variation in a social formation. Effects of this combination on any particular geographical location or area are not confined to production or the economic level but may include locally differentiated effects on class structure, class struggle, urban social movements, the potential to forge political class alliances, and so on (see Liepetz, 1977; Gramsci, 1977; Castells, 1977). It is the combination of effects such as these which produce the complex form of, and the problems associated with, spatial variation which is the empirical phenomena with which regional analysis is faced.

(iv) Natal as an effect of 'analysis

It is argued here that if the Natal region is defined in the above way, in other words, not as an 'arbitrary' spatial division of labour, but as an effect of analysis (which is done at a later stage in this study), it may be possible to be more precise about why Natal has often been presented as regionally distinct and, as such, should be offered as a starting point for national restructuring along federal lines (see Cobbett et al 1985, 1986; Glaser, 1986; Grest et al, 1988). This is especially significant since it is the author's contention that an adequate explanation for the delay in the implementation of Regional Services Councils (RSCs) in Natal is inextricably linked to, and derives from, questions on the specificity of regions defined in both spatial and historical terms. However, if regions are taken as objects that are pre-given to the study of intra-national spatial differentiation, and therefore, by implication, regionalism is treated as the subject of an externally imposed regionalisation (Cobbett et al, 1985; 1986), it is possible to fall prey to serious errors of spatial fetishism (Soja, 1980; McCarthy and Wellings, 1988).

The discussion now turns to the second central component of the geographical literature on regions, viz. the 'regional question'.

B) THE REGIONAL QUESTION - REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESTRUCTURING

There have been a number of contributions since Massey (1978) which address the 'regional question' or what has sometimes been referred to as the 'regional spatial problematic'. The significance of these relationships in gaining conceptual insights around which the empirical focus of this study can be orientated is not entirely certain. A brief review of the work of some of the most influential regional theorists in contemporary human geography and social philosophy follows. As will be revealed, the question of regional specificity (a concept deemed to be of direct relevance to a conceptualization of the research problem) and the problems associated with this phenomenon are seldom raised in these debates. In fact, in some of the literature, its absence is conspicuous. What can be said of this literature, however, is that it addresses a number of important issues which, in the context of the re-emergence of the regional question on the contemporary political and theoretical agenda, are extremely significant.

According to Soja (1985), there is a small but growing literature which, with increasing effectiveness, traces the patterns of regional development and restructuring. In its concreteness, the regional question is directly linked to the complex processes and forms associated with the geographically uneven development of capitalism (see earlier discussion of Soja (1980)). Sharpening the focus a little closer fuses the regional question with the empirical history and geography of capitalist development and with a more specified spatial problematic, effectively described in the words of Harvey (1985:150):

"Capitalist development must negotiate a knife-edge path between preserving the values of past commitments made at a particular place and time, or devaluing them to open up fresh room for accumulation. Capitalism perpetually strives, therefore, to create a social and physical landscape in its own image and requisite to its own needs at a particular point

in time, only just as certain to undermine, disrupt, and even destroy that landscape at a later point in time. The inner contradictions of capitalism are expressed through the the restless formation and re-formation of geographical landscapes".

Most of the literature which seeks to analyse and understand the historical geography of capitalism, the regional question and the contemporary regional restructuring process do so against the periodization of the four major and prolonged periods of crises (followed by intense restructuring) that affected capitalist development (Mandel, 1975, 1976, 1980; O'Keefe, 1984; Massey, 1978, 1979, 1984; Carney et al, 1984). These periods are:

- the 'overaccumulation' crisis of the 1820's accompanied by two turbulent decades of change which eventually set into place the comprehensive foundations of competitive industrial capitalism, including the firm establishment of accomodative bourgeois states.

Similar periods of crisis and restructuring, intensification and extensification occurred during:

- the last three decades of the nineteenth century (considered at the time the 'Great Depression'),
- the 'Great Depression' of the twentieth century to World War Two,
- the deep world-wide recession of the early 1970's, continuing well into the 1980's.

Mandel's 'long wave' interpretation of the regional question springs from his assertion that "the whole capitalist system appears as a hierarchical structure of different levels of productivity, and as the uneven development of states, regions, branches of industry and firms, unleashed by the quest for superprofits" (Mandel, 1975:102). This search for superprofits (that is, greater than the average for all capital)

centres around three major sources, each existing throughout the history of capitalist development and underdevelopment, but each achieving particular prominence during different historical periods.

(i) The age of freely competitive capitalism

During what Mandel (1975) calls the age of 'freely competitive capitalism' (up to the end of the nineteenth century), the prominent form of combined and uneven development was regional, based on the geographical juxtaposition of industry and agriculture within the core capitalist countries. Industrial capital and production were concentrated and localized in only a few territorial complexes, surrounded by rings of agrarian regions serving to supply raw materials and food, markets for industrial consumer goods, and reservoirs of cheap labour. This distinctive regional division of labour was consolidated through the formation of integrated national markets and dependent territories.

Regionalism developed primarily out of an attempt to preserve distinct regional cultures and to resist the particular spatial division of labour being imposed through market integration. For the most part, this involved subsidiary agrarian regions, but relatively industrialised locales also responded (Mandel, 1980). Anarchist thought found fertile ground in many of these regional peripheries, with its anti-state and decentralist principles, but there also developed new 'regional hegemonic blocks' (Mandel, 1980 citing Gramsci) which welcomed, orchestrated and gained from regional underdevelopment (for a development of this theme, see Urry, 1981; Cox and Mair, 1988).

(ii) The age of imperialism

Harvey (1982) points out that in the age of imperialism and the rise of corporate monopolies and oligopolies, the primary source of superprofits shifted, very much as part of a scale-expanding spatial fix when superprofits from regional underdevelopment within industrialised countries became insufficient, and prolonged economic crisis ensued. The international juxtaposition of development in the imperialist states and

underdevelopment in colonial and semi-colonial countries (a new regime of accumulation) spurred recovery from the late nineteenth century depression and rapid economic growth in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

According to Mandel (1980), regional underdevelopment in the core countries did not disappear, nor did the pressure of 'antagonistic' regionalisms. There was some significant regional restructuring, however, shaped largely by the geographically uneven impact of internationalisation, and the accelerated concentration of capital associated with it.

(iii) Late capitalism

Mandel (1975:105) has described the new regime of accumulation following the Great Depression of the twentieth century as 'late capitalism' and argues that it marks a shift in the primary source of superprofits from geographically uneven development to "the overall juxtaposition of development in growth sectors and underdevelopment in others, primarily in the imperialist countries but also in the semi-peripheral colonies in a secondary way" (see also Massey, 1984; Scott and Storper, 1986; Walker and Storper, 1984). He is careful to note that these technological rents - surplus profits originating from advances in productivity based largely on technological developments - existed in earlier periods and were essential to the very origins of capitalism. In the absence of high levels of centralisation of capital however, their past importance tended to be sporadic and of short duration. Only with late capitalism, he argues, do they become predominant and systematic. They also become more central to an understanding of the changing regional divisions of labour and the changing nature of the regional problem over the past forty years.

(iv) The regional question in the 1950's

Muted during the Great depression and in the immediate post-war period, the regional question took on a new importance in the 1950's. The growing literature on the regional question during and immediately after

this period bears testimony to this. Soja (1985) notes that the period from 1950-1970 was a 'golden age' in the history of regional development theory and practice. It was a period when regional welfare planning was firmly put onto the public agenda. By 1970, most countries in the world had adopted some form of spatial planning program, in some instances placing it as the centrepiece of the national economic development plan (for an extensive treatment of this issue see the contributions by Dearlove, 1979; Cockburn, 1977; Goldrick, 1977; Rowat (ed.), 1980; Smallwood, 1965). The worldwide expansion of regional planning seemed to signal a commitment by the state to redress regional imbalances, in effect to change the regional division of labour. As O'Keefe (1984) points out, as long as the promises appeared potentially achievable, 'antagonistic' regionalisms remained relatively quiescent, even when the intended changes showed no sign of coming about.

(v) The contemporary restructuring process

Interpretations of the contemporary restructuring process typically hinge around a critical turning point in the late 1960's to early 1970's and its echoing of Great Depressions of the past; and there is an open acceptance of the general restructuring hypothesis: that we are currently in the midst of a period in which capital and labour are being significantly restructured in an attempt (not yet completely successful) to restore rising profits and reinforce labour discipline (Massey, 1984; Walker and Storper, 1984).

According to Soja (1983, 1985), technological rents have always been important, but over the past forty years, their pivotal significance has made regional change, much more than ever before, a product of sectoral change within the capitalist world economy. This has occurred as particular industries and specific branches and firms within industrial sectors are increasingly differentiated in terms of productivity, profitability and control over the labour force, especially in response to deepening crisis. According to Scott and Storper (1986), the aggregate effect of the search for sectoral superprofits has been to 'derigidify' long established spatial divisions of labour at virtually all geographical scales. One of the more obvious effects of the

'derigidification' of regional structures has been what Mandel (1980:117) calls the "role reversal of regions". He makes the point that over the past twenty years, many once highly industrialised and prosperous core regions have experienced accelerated economic decline and deindustrialisation, while many poorer peripheral regions have become new centres of industrial growth and economic expansion.

This regionalisation has become associated with a new regionalism, as various social movements and regional political coalitions respond to regional restructuring to resist, encourage, reorganise, or demand more, for there is no singular regionalist response. These multiple forms of regionalism, though, have repoliticised the regional question as a more general spatial question.

Having defined what is meant by the 'regional question' or the 'regional spatial problematic', it is clear that this literature raises questions, which, for the most part, deal with the complex processes and forms associated with the geographically uneven development of capitalism. It essentially concerns itself with the social production and reproduction of capitalist spatiality - what Harvey (1985:150) calls the "formation and re-formation of geographical landscapes" - as a continuous process. A process marked by an identifiable historical rhythm or periodicity arising in conjunction with the succession of major crises, which have punctuated the history of capitalist development. If there are claims about the practical import of this literature, it must surely (and perhaps only) be in the sense that, by revealing the spatial and locational strategies of capitalist accumulation, it has demonstrated the necessity for labour and all segments of society 'peripheralised' by capitalist development and restructuring to create spatially conscious counter-strategies at all geographical scales, in all territorial locales. As Soja (1985) points out, progressive social movements must become spatial movements as well.

C) CRITICAL EVALUATION

In the light of the unprecedented force and urgency with which the regional question has been placed on the political and theoretical

agenda, it is imperative that this literature be critically evaluated. If not, stoic interpretations of regional political processes within the historical geography of capitalism (the regional question) will persist. It is proposed here that as a framework for the analysis and understanding of regional political processes operating in South Africa therefore, this literature is in serious need of revision. Three criticisms are levelled at the literature in question

(i) The role of the state

The most far-reaching criticism of this literature, and the one that highlights the need for an alternative framework for the analysis and understanding of regional processes in South Africa, is that it, in large part, ignores the role of the state. If it is agreed that regions are both politically and economically determined, and as such should be constituted as an effect of analysis, then the inherent economism in much of this literature becomes evident.

According to these theorists, regions, while not pre-given to the study of intra-national spatial differentiation, are nevertheless determined, almost entirely, through the complex processes associated with the uneven development of capitalist accumulation. Capitalist accumulation is therefore placed at the centre of these theorists' notion of process. As Harvey (1985) contends, capitalism perpetually strives to create a social and physical landscape in its own image and requisite to its own needs at any particular point in time; only to undermine, disrupt, and even destroy that landscape at a later point in time. In this case, the inner contradictions of capitalism, according to Harvey (1985), are expressed through the restless formation and re-formation of geographical landscapes.

Massey (1978, 1979, 1980) also defines regionalism as the analysis of intra-national spatial differentiation whose concern it is to study the mechanism by which the process of accumulation generates uneven spatial development (as a requisite for sustained capitalist growth and development), and the effects of such unevenness on a national social formation and particular areas within it. So while asserting that those

theories of underdevelopment that are concerned with regions do not constitute regions as an effect of analysis (as adequate theoretical objects and social formations), Massey (1978) still insists on beginning from the process of accumulation in her analyses of the production of spatially uneven development. From analyses of accumulation, Massey (1978), in short, produces concepts of geographical organisation in terms of the spatial division of labour. Her only objection to other studies in the regional tradition is that they produce 'arbitrary' spatial divisions of labour.

In other words, the theme running thread-like throughout these works is the argument that capitalism has recurrently responded to its internal contradictions and crises with attempts to achieve a 'spatial fix', a major reconstitution and restructuring of capitalist spatiality destined to restore advantageous conditions, open new sources for accelerated accumulation, and reinforce control over labour and the labour process.

In the sense that the political determination of regions has been denied a central role in this literature, notwithstanding claims to the contrary, the focus has been very much on the 'economics of location'. The literature is therefore, in a sense, imbued with the language of economic determinism. For very seldom in the literature does the role of the state (and all its appendages) appear to be of any importance. Certainly, it is the case that in some instances, the state is seen as the political support of the imperatives of capitalist accumulation (Jessop, 1985). However, it is also the case that the forms and functions of the state in capitalist society reflect the changing balance of forces in struggle (Jessop, 1985). And if this is the case, then surely, for a multiplicity of reasons, the state must impinge on the reconstitution and restructuring of capitalist spatiality. After all, states very often have their own interests and agendas. Bearing this in mind, any monolithic conception of the state and capital is an analytically dangerous point of departure.

Nowhere is this danger more evident than in the literature on the regional restructuring of politics in contemporary South Africa. As McCarthy and Wellings (1988) argue, the attempted regionalisation of

politics in South Africa today is not some simple base-superstructure adjustment process whereby regional-political forms become modified to suit allegedly new regional-economic functions. Besides obfuscating the class and racial dimensions of inequality, the newly attempted regionalisation of politics is the context within which new, non-racial class alliances are being forged within the South African power bloc.

Extending the above thesis, it can be argued that while Harvey, Soja, Massey and a host of other regional theorists may have been correct in assuming (and there is sufficient evidence to suggest that they were) that a major reconstitution and restructuring of capitalist spatiality followed periods of internal contradictions and crises of accumulation and development (in the U.K. and the U.S.A.), there is scant evidence to suggest that the restructuring of formal or political regional boundaries in South Africa will have some impact upon the trajectory of capital accumulation. As it stands, it is not certain whether any of the new development regions unveiled at the Good Hope conference in 1981, for example, are imbued with some power to constrain, order or deflect that process of accumulation. In other words, there is little evidence to suggest that the new initiatives towards regional-federal political organisation in South Africa today are some functional imperative towards enhanced legitimacy, a decreased fiscal crisis and enhanced conditions for capitalist accumulation as Cobbett et al (1985, 1986) insist.

It is in this context therefore that both the state's ideological propositions and functions in the delineation of development regions, as well as the internal contradictions of new power bloc initiatives (as well as those of the popular opposition) warrant serious consideration if the reasoning behind, and interpretations of the problems associated with, the restructuring process is to be analytically sound. Maverick, Soja-like analyses of the regional restructuring of politics in contemporary South Africa therefore tend not to correspond with the evidence. An alternative framework for the analysis and understanding of regional political processes (and associated problems) operating in South Africa today is therefore required, and will be offered shortly.

(ii) Regions - passive recipients?

A second criticism relates to the fact that notwithstanding the pronounced changes in the social and spatial organisation of capitalist societies that followed crisis periods, which subsequently succeeded in restoring capitalist accumulation, much of this literature treats as passive recipients of the process of geographical uneven development, those subnational spatial entities that have been restructured.

Soja (1985) may write of a regionalism that developed primarily as a result of an attempt to preserve distinct regional cultures and to resist the particular spatial division of labour imposed through market integration in the late nineteenth century, as well as a 'new regionalism' occurring in the wake of the contemporary regional restructuring process, but he does so in a perfunctory manner. This is not to suggest that all regions for example, lay claims to elements of distinctiveness and hence find a restructuring of the space economy problematic, but merely to assert that if constituted as an effect of analysis, a spatial entity may well be defined as a region with distinct characteristics and an overall pattern of variation within a social formation (Massey, 1978). And this may indeed retard the ability of capital and labour to restructure during a crisis period. It may also make difficult a regional restructuring of politics as envisaged by the state. The South African political landscape, for example, bears testimony to this. Why a region may retard this process is beyond the scope of present debate, but the point is that the potential to do so exists.

To acknowledge elements of distinctiveness and specificity that regions lay claim to, yet in large measure to ignore its importance in a variety of contexts, opens this literature to criticisms of economic determinism and spatial fetishism.

(iii) The changing form of the state

Finally, it is noteworthy that, apart from the role the state plays in the regional restructuring of politics and/or capitalist spatiality, the

actual form of the state may change in the process. It is, after all, the case that concomitant with a regional restructuring of the space economy and changing patterns of uneven regional development, comes a restructuring of politics (particularly at the local and regional levels). This has profound implications for the potential role to be played by local (and regional) government, and for the division of functions and powers between the central and local level. Any literature on the regional question will therefore have to consider this.

This chapter will conclude with a review of a seminal contribution to the field of urban and political geography which, it will be argued, offers some interesting insights towards an enhanced understanding of recent politico-geographic change in South Africa.

2.3 LOCALITY AND COMMUNITY IN THE POLITICS OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - THE QUESTION OF LOCAL DEPENDENCE

Cox and Mair (1988), and their notion of 'local dependence', provide an alternative framework for the analysis and understanding of regional political processes operating in South Africa today. This is a theme developed in the context of the contemporary restructuring of local economies in the United States. It will be argued that in the light of the weaknesses in much of the literature on the regional question (both the development and restructuring components of this literature), their concepts offer us a way of coming to terms with the highly complex nature of contemporary struggles over the spatial redelimitation of state powers in South Africa today. Of more immediate concern to this study is the usefulness of these concepts in conceptualising struggles that have emerged, and are continuing to emerge, over the restructuring of local government in particular. Drawing on the work of Jessop (1983, 1985), and his concepts of 'accumulation strategies' and 'hegemonic projects', Cox and Mair's (1988) notion of 'local dependence' provides a way of theorising the debate amongst geographers and sociologists as to whether locational relationships play any necessary role/s in social relationships (Gregory and Urry, 1985).

These concepts are discussed below, after which the practical import of this analytic framework in terms of its relevance to the empirical concern of this study, is briefly alluded to.

2.3.1 ALTERNATIVE ACCUMULATION STRATEGIES AND HEGEMONIC PROJECTS

Jessop (1985) argues that the main problem that has bedevilled materialist theories of the state in the past has been a false dichotomy between what he calls the 'capital theoretic' (where the state is seen as the political support of the imperatives of capitalist accumulation and where the assumption holds that there is only one logic of capital) and 'class theoretic' (where the forms and functions of the state in capitalist society reflect the changing balance of class forces in struggle) approaches.

A 'middle range theory' to bridge the gap between both approaches is suggested, noting that there is not only one logic of capital, but rather, a series of concrete, competing and contingent logics of capital. The need to go beyond particular class struggles to see how different particular interests and concerns are coerced and/or hegemonized into conformity with a "viable national-popular outlook and programme" is also emphasised by Jessop (1985:344). In the above context, Jessop (1985) proposes that the alternative logics of capital should be examined in terms of competing accumulation strategies and the field of class struggles should be examined in terms of competing hegemonic projects.

Bearing in mind the pervading economism in the international literature on the 'regional question', and indeed in much of the literature on the regional restructuring of politics in contemporary South Africa (see Cobbett et al, 1985, 1986; Glaser, 1986, Hindson, 1987, and contributors in Tomlinson and Addleson, 1987), Jessop's (1985) approach may well offer us a way of overcoming this bias.

2.3.2 LOCAL DEPENDENCE

Turning to Cox and Mair (1988), who rely considerably on Jessop's (1985) approach, the problem of local dependence is examined first as it is experienced by capitalist firms, and then as it is experienced by the popular classes.

A) FIRMS

Insofar as firms are concerned, they observe that there are exchange linkages which have a clear geographical expression. Operating at approximately the metropolitan scale, for most firms, are local labour markets, supplier networks and consumer markets. However, given the spatial dynamism inherent in capitalism, it is not likely that these localised linkages will remain stable over time, especially as large national or international capital will seek those labour markets which fit its requirements, and following the new international division of labour thesis, will look for a variety of markets, each being appropriate to its different fractional operations (Urry, 1981). This according to Cox and Mair (1988) provides problems for firms insofar as the value locked up in built environment investment (land, buildings, etc.) can be threatened, and insofar as there is a certain non-substitutability of localised exchange linkages: established agglomeration economies, relationships with local supplier and customer firms, and so on. As a consequence of these local dependencies of the firm, there is a tendency for firms to act collectively to protect or enhance those conditions of the local economy that interest them:

"In cases where a number of firms are dependent upon the same locality, there are often collective attempts to confront local dependence through the formation of local business coalitions. Like firms with their own economic development departments, local business coalitions try to encourage local economic growth. And they develop 'accumulation

strategies' for doing so" (Cox and Mair, 1988:6).

According to McCarthy and Wellings (1988), what Cox and Mair (1988) have in mind here are local and regional Chambers of Commerce and Industries, and their like. These organisations, it is noted, develop considerable influence over local and regional state structures - structures which are often mobilised as instruments of the local accumulation strategies favoured by business coalitions in the pursuit of a healthy local economy.

B) POPULAR CLASSES

But the local state is not insulated from popular demands, and the popular classes are themselves locally dependent. Cox and Mair (1988:11) argue that "personal social interaction usually takes place in a localised spatio-temporal context....and this generates resistance to change, including spatio-temporal change". It is surely this according to Urry (1981) that has heightened the importance of non-class based social movements centered around the axis: local social structure vis-à-vis capital and the state. Cox and Mair (1988) derive two major forms of popular local dependence: 'traditional' or 'modern'. They note that traditional social relations - those of family, ethnicity, religion, and the like - define not simply a sphere of predictability and self-confidence, but also sources of self-identification with a particular locality. McCarthy and Wellings (1988) point out that regional identity amongst the popular classes of the traditional type is essentially one that derives from a necessary dependence of religious, family or ethnicities upon specific localities. Cox and Mair (1988) then make the observation that whilst the material foundations of traditional local dependence may have been weakened (for example, through commodification, state intervention, and so on), the situatedness of social interaction of the modern type also provides some basis for popular local dependence. Peoples jobs, their homes and other items of exchange-value concern are not easily portable, and substantial cost and disorientation accompanies a move elsewhere. New material bases for the development of

a collective consciousness on the value of a shared locality now develop.

According to McCarthy and Wellings (1988), the meanings or interests that the popular classes invest in localities may, or may not, be at variance with those of local business coalitions. The potential areas of conflict between popular and business coalition definitions of the locality or region's value are often reflected in and around local and regional state structures (local states it must be noted have a twin local dependence: one part electoral, one part economic). Cox and Mair (1988:19) argue that this provides the basis for attempts to create "local hegemonic projects" by "co-opting the opposition into supporting business coalition strategies". They note that:

"The success of these attempts at co-optation depends upon the people having interests that business coalitions can address, and hence the form in which people are locally dependent" (Cox and Mair, 1988:19).

It is suggested that one important way that such hegemonic projects can be constructed is through the promotion of a localist ideology that is congruent with (i) the local accumulation strategy of the business coalition, and (ii) the traditional or modern form of local dependence of the popular classes.

2.3.3 LOCALLY DEPENDENT ACCUMULATION STRATEGIES AND HEGEMONIC PROJECTS - SOME INSIGHTS?

The integration of Jessop's (1985) propositions with those of Cox and Mair (1988) brings us to the notion of a series of locally dependent accumulation strategies and hegemonic projects. It is this seriality according to McCarthy and Wellings (1988) which accounts for the great diversity of experiments with new regional political forms in South Africa: for example, the regionally-specific Indaba project, Regional Services Councils (RSCs), and lesser known, locality specific projects (see Atkinson, 1988). And bearing in mind the errors of economism,

functionalism and spatial fetishism (McCarthy and Wellings, 1988) that has permeated much of the South African literature on regional political change (and indeed is manifest in the international literature on the 'regional question'), this reconceptualisation of the relationships under consideration offers worthwhile, although not definitive, starting points.

More than this though, certain of the concepts derived from this analytic framework raise a number of questions of considerable import in relation to the research problem considered in this study. These are discussed at length in Chapter Six in a section that deals with insights derived from the proclaimed specificity of the Natal/KwaZulu region.

It is the following questions which merit particular attention:

- (a) Given that firms in the Natal/KwaZulu region are locally dependent, and as a result of this local dependence confront this collectively through the formation of business coalitions, is it at a metropolitan or broader regional scale that these dependencies and linkages exist?
- (b) Given that the popular classes in the Natal/KwaZulu region are themselves locally dependent, (i) does this local dependence reside at a metropolitan or regional scale? and/or, (ii) do these popular classes provide business coalitions (and, in the context of state attempts to restructure politics at the regional level in South Africa, state structures) in the region with the potential to forge political class alliances and new hegemonic projects?

Seeking answers to the above questions enables the research to determine the approximate spatial scale at which the potential to establish locally dependent hegemonic projects resides. And given that RSCs themselves operate at a particular spatial scale (the metropolitan), a determination of the approximate spatial co-ordinates for the implementation of a hegemonic project in the Natal/KwaZulu region provides a number of useful conceptual insights in relation to the research problem.

2.4 CONCLUSION

The documentation of the highly complex nature of contemporary struggles over the spatial redelimitation of state powers in South Africa has only just begun. Inadequate theorization of this research problematic is therefore to be expected. Bearing this in mind, it is incumbent on the researcher to review a range of theoretical literature related to the explanation of the research problem. This was found to lie at the interface of the concepts of 'local state restructuring', and questions on the nature of the 'region'.

A review of the international literature on the restructuring of the local state leads to the conclusion that the South African experience reflects aspects of the the experiences of other countries that have undergone a restructuring of their local government systems. These perspectives, however, do not provide clear insights around which the empirical focus of this study can be orientated in theoretical terms. On the other hand, a review of the geographical literature on regions (specificity, restructuring, development) takes one closer to a conceptualization of the nature of the empirical problem - insights gleaned from this literature provide for a conceptualization of the research problem as a specifically regional one whose explanation is inextricably linked to, and derives from, questions on the nature of the region: in other words, an explanation which is context-dependent. This review was followed by a discussion of a more recent contribution to the field of urban and political geography which provides an alternative framework for the the analysis and understanding of regional political processes (and associated problems) operating in South Africa today. A number of insights are derived from this contribution which are ultimately brought to bear on the nature of the empirical research problem.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As traditionally defined, social research has been concerned with gathering data that can help answer questions about various aspects of society and thus can enable us to better understand society. The questions may pertain to very specific problems, or social researchers may be asked to provide answers to questions of theoretical interest to a particular social science discipline (Bailey, 1987). The implicit assumption in the traditional use of social science data gathering techniques is that the research method is a means to an end. As Smith (1975) points out, the method would be used to gather information that would benefit society either through the direct application of findings to the amelioration of social ills, or through the use of findings to test theoretical issues in social science.

In this regard, Gramsci (1971:438) has pointed out that:

"...every research has its own specific method
... and ... the method has developed and been
elaborated together with the development and
elaboration of this specific research ...".

A range of social scientific methodological tools were therefore reviewed by the researcher, and those that were deemed able to elicit the maximum amount of information relevant to an understanding of the research problem were chosen. This choice, in other words, was guided by the objectives of the study - an attempt to arrive at a complete, comprehensive and as accurate an understanding as possible of why an impasse over the establishment of RSCs has come about in the Natal/KwaZulu region. It must also be pointed out, however, that constraints on the availability or accessibility of data, as well as on

the relevance of data, naturally influenced the selection of an appropriate set of research methods.

The methods eventually chosen were a combination of those that allowed for the most adequate description and explanation of the empirical problem. They can be classified into the extensive and intensive research method categories. Sayer (1984) identifies typical methods of extensive research as descriptive and inferential numerical analysis and the large scale formal questionnaire study of a population, or a 'representative sample' thereof. These methods generally allow for the discovery of some of the common properties and general patterns of a population as a whole. Intensive research methods on the other hand, are mainly qualitative methods such as structural and causal analysis, participant observation and/or informal and interactive interviews whose concern it is to discover how some causal process works out in a particular case, or a limited number of cases.

The intensive research methods employed during the course of this study, otherwise described as the direct mode of investigating the empirical problem, involved person-to-person contact with key actors implicated in the research problem. The extensive research methods, described as the indirect mode of investigation, encompassed an analysis of the media and documentary materials.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODS

3.2.1 THE DIRECT RESEARCH PROCESS

It was the researcher's contention that people in the Greater Durban Area were generally not familiar with the controversy surrounding, or the reasons behind, the delay in the implementation of RSCs in Natal. For this reason, a sample survey, or any other survey research method which selected a subset of some pre-determined size from the population to be questioned, was deemed inappropriate (1).

Instead, the in-depth, person-to-person interview was chosen as the research method during the direct research stage of this study (as opposed to any other survey method). The researcher wanted to corroborate what had been observed during the course of the study through the analysis of other materials (for example, documentary sources). It was therefore decided that a number of persons, familiar with the empirical concern of this study through the nature of their work, should be interviewed in-depth. As Olson (1976) points out, one's interpretation of what one observes will most assuredly be influenced by what one is told. The researcher also hoped to glean accounts of events pertinent to the study that he may not have been aware of. And lastly, the researcher wanted to check on his own interpretation of observed events.

For reasons elaborated below, the semistructured interview was used.

A) SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

(i) An overview

As an alternative to the structured or standardized interview using a combination of open and close-ended questions, one can use a semistructured interview (Bailey, 1987). The most common semistructured interview is the focused interview which uses topics and hypotheses selected in advance. Runcie (1980) describes this method as one whereby several pre-identified topics guide the respondent in directions dictated by concerns of the research questions. At the same time however, the respondent has the opportunity to identify and elaborate areas that might not have been covered. This method clearly incorporates the interactive process of research. Standardizations and statistically supportable generalisations, are, however, not easily obtainable from this approach. This is because uniformity is evidenced with regard to identified topics, but high divergence on a narrow scale is possible (Reintges, 1986).

The strength of this method, however, lies in the belief that:

"Qualitative analysis of a limited number of crucial communications may often yield better clues to a particular speaker at one moment in time than more standardized techniques" (George cited in Holsti, 1969:7).

According to Bailey (1987), a crucial element in the focused interview is the structure provided by interviewing people all of whom experienced a particular event. The interviewer studies the event itself in advance, decides which aspects of it to probe, and constructs hypotheses. In other words, the social scientist analyses the hypothetically significant elements, patterns, processes and total structure of a particular situation and through this content or situational analysis, arrives at a set of hypotheses concerning the consequences of determining aspects of the situation for those involved in it (Merton et al, 1956). Thus, even though question wording is not fixed in advance, question content is. Without the structure provided by these topics and hypotheses, the interviewer might not know which questions to ask and the interview could degenerate into a worthless exercise in which questions are asked at random, and neither the interviewer nor the respondent knows what the interview is supposed to achieve.

Both Selltitz et al (1976) and Phillips (1976) argue that the focused interview goes one step beyond the open-ended question as used in a structured interview. In the focused interview, questions are also open-ended to promote flexibility and allow for unanticipated responses. But in addition, the focused interview allows flexibility in terms of questions asked. Since questions are not written in advance, they may be tailored to probe avenues of exploration that seem to be yielding information relevant for the hypothesis or topic being studied. This flexibility can result in questions that are really a long series of probes that can probe deeply into the subjective areas of the respondent's mind in an attempt to discover his or her real feelings and motives.

(ii) Process and analysis

Having discussed the method used in the direct research process, it is necessary to elaborate the actual research process and analysis stages.

Four semistructured/focused interviews were carried out with representatives of organisations/institutions in the Natal/KwaZulu region in order to determine why a delay in the implementation of RSCs has come about. A thorough review of the primary data (newspaper clippings, documentary material) of immediate relevance and concern to the empirical focus of this study revealed that the major actors in the Durban RSC debacle were the KwaZulu Government and Inkatha, the Durban City Council (DCC) and the Metropolitan Consultative Committee (METROCOM), the Natal Provincial Administration (NPA) and local organised business and commerce. Accordingly, it was decided to interview certain representatives/members of these organisations/institutions deemed to have a fair and accurate amount of knowledge of the experiences of trying to establish RSCs in Natal. The persons interviewed, the organisations/institutions they represent/represented and the dates at which the interviews were conducted are listed below as follows:

- Mr Gordon Haygarth, former Durban City Council (DCC) Town Clerk, former METROCOM Secretary and likely Chairman of Durban's first regional services body. The interview was conducted at Mr Haygarth's home in Durban on the 25 May 1989.
- Mr Ron Pistorious, retired Director of Local Government, NPA and former member of the Natal/KwaZulu Joint Executive Authority (JEA). The interview was conducted at Mr Pistorious' farm near Pietermaritzburg on the 11 October 1989.
- Dr Oscar Dhlomo, former KwaZulu Minister of Education, Culture and Local Government and former General Secretary of Inkatha. The interview was conducted at Dr Dhlomo's offices at the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) headquarters, Ulundi, KwaZulu on the 24 November 1989.

- Mr Rudy Heine, President of the Durban Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce (DMCC). The interview was conducted at the regional offices of SANLAM South Africa, Durban, on the 28 February 1990.

All interviews, except one, were telephonically pre-arranged (2).

The researcher, having studied the event (the delay in the implementation of RSCs) through an extensive primary data search, decided which aspects of it to probe and which hypotheses to construct in relation to the person being interviewed and the organisation/institution they represented. Questions during the interviews allowed for open-ended responses to provide flexibility and permit unanticipated responses. The researcher also allowed some flexibility in terms of the questions asked (3).

The array of responses to the series of probes were qualitatively interpreted in order to test initial hypotheses and, to the extent that it included unanticipated responses, gave rise to new hypotheses which were subsequently systematically investigated.

3.2.2 THE INDIRECT RESEARCH PROCESS

The indirect research process involved the use of the media and documentary material as data sources.

A) THE MEDIA AS A DATA SOURCE

(i) An overview

The media as a data source is inherently and by social definition, problematic. While it is not possible to de-problematise the media, awareness of its problematic nature is essential when utilising it as a data source (Reintges, 1986). According to Gramsci (1971), the media is an integral component of the hegemony created within civil society. Quigley (1972) points out that the media encompasses the area of professional persuasion and displays vested interests, as a commercial

enterprise, in the maintenance of capitalist hegemony. This view is reinforced by Byerley (1989) who contends that it cannot be overemphasized that the press is a commercial enterprise. As such, it is the business of 'news' to earn profits, and the major source of profits derive from advertising. As an article in the journal *Work In Progress* (1984 cited in Reintges, 1986:26) noted:

"Newspapers are commercial enterprises, intended first to make money, and only secondarily to supply information".

It is also the case that the nature of the media defines 'news' as 'events' without elaboration of the background to such 'events'. Thus, social processes are transferred into daily reactions as isolated, episodic, naively given social facts (McCarthy and Friedman, 1981). In South Africa, the problem/s of utilising the media as a data source have been exacerbated, until very recently, by heavy restrictions on what the media can report on, and how critical an interpretation it can provide (Byerley, 1989). This is however, not a situation peculiar to South Africa. In fact state legislation in countries throughout the world constrain the media to the degree that it is often not clear where state legislative control ends and self censorship, for fear of state retribution, begins (Gerbner et al, 1969).

Given the arguments outlined above, how is it possible to use the press as a data source in serious research? Reintges' (1986:27) comments are interesting:

"Some degree of scientific control over such bias can be effected, however, through comparison of news reports with the communications emanating from the grassroots organisations, primary research on the area, personal interaction in the area as well as published and unpublished sources which are relevant to the questions raised".

Indeed, the review of the newspaper reports that this study relies on, has been complemented by a review of other primary sources (interviews, documentary material such as memoranda, minutes of meetings, reports) as well as published and other unpublished sources (journal articles, newsletters, books). Only by doing this can an overall impression be gained of why a particular problem has come into being: in this case, why the implementation of RSCs has been delayed in Natal. As Olson (1976) has pointed out, the researcher has to 'plug the holes' (left open by a newspaper search only) in order to ensure reliable and objective analysis.

(ii) Generation of data and analysis

In order to achieve a broad-brush understanding of the RSC impasse in the region, the researcher began by obtaining all references to this issue in South African newspapers. The INCH (Institute for Contemporary History) computer search method was used (4).

While the INCH computer search dates back to 1978, the search began in 1984 and terminated in March 1989 - the date the search was requested. 1984 was year chosen to begin the search as it was the year in which the RSC Bill was introduced in Parliament as well as the year in which a comprehensive report on the financial implications of the regionalisation of services in the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA) was released (5). The search covered all South Africa's commercial newspapers. The following key words were used:

- Regional Services Councils (RSCs) - the bodies whose establishment in the Durban Metropolitan Region has been steeped in controversy.
- Durban - the only major metropolitan area in South Africa where RSCs have not been established.

The search yielded reference to 89 articles, of which 81 were relevant (6). These were distributed as follows:

Table 3.1 Number of news reports per year on RSCs in Durban

YEAR	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
NO. OF REPORTS	17	22	4	28	12	6

The press reports were interpreted and analysed, and then summarised and condensed in chronological order in order to provide an overall description of why an impasse has been created over the establishment of RSCs in Natal (7).

A second INCH search was conducted by the researcher in August 1989. This was to achieve a comparative review of the experiences of setting up RSCs in the Central Witwatersrand and the Western Cape regions (the two major metropolitan regions in South Africa) so as to determine why the process of establishing RSCs in these regions was seemingly unproblematic. This review, it was hoped, would implicitly raise questions about the nature of the Natal/KwaZulu region - its proclaimed specificity, and the constantly changing and shifting relations between different levels of government - which would in turn, help explain the empirical problem.

The years chosen for this latter search were 1986 and 1987. 1986 was the year in which local bodies in these regions, for the first time, reacted to the establishment of RSCs in their areas with any voice (they subsequently made recommendations to the Demarcation Board), RSC boundaries were delimited by the Provincial Administrations, and the Demarcation Board sat to hear recommendations and final boundaries were announced. 1987 was the year in which RSCs were implemented in the Central Witwatersrand and the Western Cape. The following key words were used:

- Regional Services Councils (RSCs) - the bodies whose establishment in the Central Witwatersrand and the Western Cape was of concern to the researcher.

- Western Cape - one of the two major metropolitan regions where, for comparative and inferential purposes, the establishment of a RSC was being reviewed.
- Central Witwatersrand - the other major metropolitan region where, for comparative and inferential purposes, the establishment of a RSC was being reviewed.

The search yielded 132 articles, of which 99 were relevant. These were distributed as follows:

Table 3.2 Number of news reports per year on RSC in the Western Cape and Central Witwatersrand

	<u>WESTERN CAPE</u>		<u>CENTRAL WITWATERSRAND</u>	
YEAR	1986	1987	1986	1987

NO. OF REPORTS	20	55	16	41

These press reports were not analysed nor interpreted in the same depth as the Durban RSC newspaper reports. Bearing in mind that the researcher was interested in a brief comparative review of the process of implementing RSCs in these two regions, and the fact that there is a reasonable amount of material (primary and secondary) on the experiences of these RSCs, it was found necessary to complement existing data by referring to these press reports only in certain instances - for example, to check whether budget allocations and expenditure figures for these RSCs (as stipulated in Juta's RSC Reports and other sources) were correct, etc. As a data source, therefore, the media materials played slightly different, although not conflicting, roles during the course of this study.

B) DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL

(i) An overview

According to Bailey (1987), a major source of data that is often neglected is the analysis of documents, by which is meant any written material that contains information about the phenomena one wishes to study. Smith (1975) refers to these documents as archival records (although it has been argued recently that records other than that classified as archival can be called documentary). Olson (1976) points out that these documents vary greatly. Some are primary documents, or eyewitness accounts written by people who experience a particular event or behaviour. Others are secondary documents by people who were not present on the scene but who received the information necessary to compile the document by interviewing eyewitnesses or by reading primary documents. In addition to the primary-secondary distinction, documents vary widely in terms of degree of structure and of purpose for which they were originally written. According to Bailey (1987), most documents are written for some purpose other than social research and that these purposes vary greatly. Personal, primary documents are generally, almost by definition, written for personal reasons. These include diaries, letters to friends or relatives, suicide notes, autobiographies and letters of confession (often anonymous). Many non-personal documents on the other hand are written continuously by businesses or organisations to keep a running record of events deemed important. Such documents tend to be more structured than personal documents. These include minutes of meetings, memoranda, financial records, reports, speeches, and files containing various other material relevant to the maintenance of the organisation. In addition to personal writings and business or organisational records and files, Bailey (1987) identifies a third major area of documents as magazines, journals and newsletters, and books of fiction or nonfiction.

Smith (1975:116) points out that document study may offer much observational material on "Who?" "What?" and "How?", but used singularly, they often fail to answer "Why?" questions. Thus, it is generally more useful to use documentary material in conjunction with

other methods. The main advantage of documentary sources, according to Smith (1975), however, is the general mitigation of 'reactive measurement effects' found in more traditional methods such as interview response set, observer fatigue, and so on. There are a number of other advantages of document study, but for present purposes, the one other that is of practical import is the fact that the method allows one to carry out longitudinal analysis. This is the method that is suited to the study of a phenomenon over a period of time.

(ii) Generation of data and analysis

All documentary material collected by the researcher was primary, of the non-personal type and generally can be classified as those written continuously by businesses or organisations to keep a running record of events deemed important. A preliminary review of the relevant newspaper articles (before the Durban INCH Report was actually written) revealed the key organisations/institutions involved in the Durban RSC debacle. The researcher, having identified these organisations/institutions, telephonically arranged to peruse the records of these bodies on the RSC issue (8). The organisations/institutions visited and the documentary material obtained are listed below as follows:

- The Durban Metropolitan Consultative Committee (METROCOM) - METROCOM and local authority proposals for the regionalisation of services in the DMA; correspondence (through letters, memoranda) to the Natal Provincial Administration (NPA), the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning (DCDP), the Development Services Board (DSB), local authorities and business over the question of RSCs for Durban; maps, plans and reports of the study area.
- The Natal Provincial Administration (NPA) - Correspondence (through letters, memoranda) with involved parties over regionalisation of services initiatives in the DMA; speeches made by NPA officials; NPA recommendations for RSCs in the Natal region.

- The Durban City Council (DCC) - The Town Clerk's records of the Durban RSC issue. These records were very similar to the ones obtained by the researcher from the offices of the NPA and METROCOM.
- The Inkatha Institute - speeches made by key KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) and Inkatha officials on the question of the proposed implementation of RSCs in Natal; copies of press statements released by the Inkatha Central Committee on the above question.

This primary documentary material was analysed and interpreted using the secondary analysis technique. Bailey (1987) defines secondary analysis as the analysis of a document or data gathered or authored by another person. The secondary analyst generally has a research goal different from that of the first researcher. This technique closely resembles the qualitative content analysis approach which involves the objective, systematic and qualitative description of the manifest content of communication. The documentary material, when interpreted and analysed in the above way (in conjunction with the other research methods), provided the researcher with an overall description of why an impasse has been created over the establishment of RSCs in Natal.

3.3 CONCLUSION

Research methodology in social science is a topic of never-ending fascination. As the subjects of our studies are active, thinking actors with the full complement of motives, intentions and purposes, how can we find explanations of what they do and make precise predictions of what they are likely to do next as the natural scientist has been able to do with such consummate success in the study of natural phenomena? This question takes us to the core of the continuing debate in the social sciences. How can we formulate a rigorous strategy for investigating social phenomena and how can we implement it? The mode of explanation we adopt, and the medium by which we ensure reliability, validity and

generalizability of the models we construct, constitute the principles and procedures of social enquiry.

It is precisely this with which this chapter has been concerned - it has elaborated the most appropriate available strategies of empirical research suited to the adequate explanation of the research problem. Moreover, it has revealed the extent to which methods of investigation constitute the means by which the primary dimension of knowledge and understanding is generated, ordered and described.

NOTES

- (1) This was verified in personal communication with social scientists on the University of Natal campus who had some experience with research methods and techniques (May, 1989)
- (2) Due to Dr Dhlomo being overseas when an interview with him was being arranged, I was requested, through his secretary, to Telefax all details, to which Dr Dhlomo would respond on his return. Respondents were informed during the telephone conversations (and in Dr Dhlomo's case through Telefax) of the aims of the research, the envisaged research processes, under whose supervision the research project was being carried out, and most importantly, why the researcher was particular interested in interviewing them.
- (3) Questions were not written in advance (points, addressing specific areas of concern, were however jotted down) and for this reason, the researcher was able to tailor them to probe avenues of exploration of concern and relevance to the study. In the end, this flexibility resulted in questions that were really a long series of probes which investigated the subjective areas of the respondents minds and discovered their (and their organisations/institutions) real feelings and motives.
- (4) The INCH computer search is a service offered by the University of the Orange Free State. Here, news articles from all South Africa's national newspapers are categorised and then coded by reference to a range of possible keywords pertaining to the article. Once categorised and coded, the articles are transferred onto microfiche. The researcher must identify keywords pertaining to the subject under study. The computerised search of the news articles itself is carried out at the University of the Orange Free State which provides the researcher with a printout noting all references to the identified keywords. The researcher can then proceed to locate the identified articles on the microfiche housed in the library at which the researcher is undertaking research.
- (5) This report was undertaken by Pim Goldby Management Consultants on behalf of METROCOM. It put METROCOM on a collision course with central government and marked the start of the RSC debacle in Durban. The search covered South Africa's commercial newspapers.
- (6) By comparison to other studies using the INCH computer search, it appears that the number of reports yielded are few (see McCarthy and Friedman, 1981; Reintges, 1986; Byerley, 1989). However, it must be pointed out that the restricted nature of this study, which concerns itself only with the delay in the implementation of RSCs in Durban, and not local government restructuring in South Africa or the implementation of this new system in other parts of the country, compelled the researcher to limit the newspaper search to those articles deemed to be of immediate concern to the study. And this the researcher did by selecting the above key words which, although they may appear broad, are in fact restrictive and talk directly to the empirical problem.
- (7) This summary eventually took the form of a report which has constantly been referred to (and referenced) during the course of the study to complement the other existing data (primary and secondary). This has enabled the researcher to come to an adequate explanation of the research problem.
- (8) Permission was requested to photocopy material of immediate and relevant concern. This was subsequently granted.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LOCAL RESTRUCTURING OF POLITICS IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

There is a new appreciation of the importance of local politics in South Africa. From all over the political spectrum comes the suggestion: in whatever direction future political developments in this troublesome society may go, sub-national institutions and processes seem destined to play a significant role (Heymans and Totermeyer, 1988). So concurs Atkinson (1987:1):

"Local government research has taken on a new life in the last eight years. Whether this is academics response to new government policies, or part of a political re-orientation to make use of one of the last areas of mobilisation and protest, or simply the last intellectual fad, is not yet clear...".

Local government institutions in South Africa are being reformed and restructured as part of a comprehensive constitutional initiative ostensibly aimed at broadening democracy. Analyses of the political and constitutional context of developments at the local level, and of the specific aspects of the restructuring of local government have been prominent on the academic agenda.

One of the most interesting insights that has emerged from the literature on the political restructuring of the local state in South Africa has been the extent to which different researchers and scholars, from vastly different perspectives, have identified key areas of concern in the study of the local state. Hence, there are numerous references to the issues of devolution of power and deconcentration of administration;

to the importance and problems of metropolitanisation; the political and financial difficulties of the ill-fated system of local government for blacks in South Africa; the much-talked about but little-known extension of the central state's security network into the realm of local government in particular; and the need to bring government 'closer to the people' through the development of local institutions.

Given that none of the above areas of concern are mutually exclusive, ideally, an analyses of each is required in order to promote a better understanding of the historical and recent development of local politics and government in South Africa. This chapter will, however, focus mainly on the political and constitutional context of developments at the local level, as well as on specific aspects of the restructuring of local government institutions. It is against this backdrop that the empirical problem of this study can be situated.

4.2 THE HISTORY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REFORM IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.2.1 REASONS FOR RESTRUCTURING

Todes and Watson (1985a), evaluating local government reform in South Africa, identify at the most general level, two main reasons for the reform of local government in South Africa. In the first place, problems had emerged in relation to the existing structure of local government: in particular, problems which related to the government of Coloured, Indian and African people (pre-reform period). In the second place, the current reform process (which started in 1976) in South Africa, in which is involved a change in the nature and role of the state, has required a reshaping of government institutions at all levels of hierarchy.

These reasons, as they have gained currency in the contemporary literature on the reform and restructuring of local government institutions in South Africa, are outlined and discussed below in the context of an overview of the history of local government and reform in South Africa.

4.2.2 1948-1976

The National Party's (NP) ascendancy to power in 1948 on the basis of a political and economic programme differed in a number of significant ways from previous United Party (UP) policy. Racial segregation and separate racial development, the halting of the African influx to the towns, and the promotion of Afrikaner interests formed the major planks of NP policy. The fulfilment of these election promises required far-reaching intervention in most respects of South African society and, in particular, it required intervention in the urban realm: that is, in the area of local government control (Todes and Watson, 1985a). The response on the part of the NP government was to attempt, over the next three decades, to change the nature of the relationship between central and local government and to restructure local government so as to facilitate the implementation of NP policy. As a member of the Natal Provincial Council remarked in 1954: "...the local authority is no longer an independent body, acting and answerable only to its inhabitants, but part of the body politic - a cog in the machinery of government..." (Wilks, 1954 cited in Todes and Watson, 1985a:202).

Cameron (1986;1987), exploring the institutional parameters of local government restructuring in South Africa, makes the point that from 1919 until 1983, the de jure relationship between the various tiers of government was as follows: Acts of Parliament promulgated what powers Provincial Councils had. Provincial Ordinances created local authorities and defined the scope of their legal jurisdiction. The regulation and control of municipal affairs occurred through such provincial ordinances. Local authorities could make laws only within the parameters of this legislation. The doctrine of *ultra vires* was strictly applied, viz. that local authorities may perform a statute only if specifically authorised by a higher tier of government. This doctrine existed to prevent local authorities from exceeding their powers or from spending money without authority. No court of law was competent to pass judgement on the nature of powers that had been devolved down to local authorities. This applied equally to Acts of Parliament and Provincial Ordinances (Craythorne, 1982). According to Cameron (1986;1987), unlike countries such as West Germany, where the rights of local government are

enshrined in the constitution, the South African system of local government has never had any form of constitutional safeguards.

Although different provinces were granted plenary powers, with the result that divergent local authority forms and practices developed in the respective provinces, it is hypothesised that the above factors contributed to the emergence of a form of local government which was less responsive to its electorate, or the conditions in the townships which it administered: as such, it became increasingly 'inward-orientated' and 'state orientated'.

The attempt to reduce local autonomy also took the form of an internal restructuring of local government so as to make it more amenable to 'top-down' control as well as to undermine its United Party/English speaking character (Van Rooyen, 1987). Corporatism became manifest in the operation of local government in the 1950's - local administrations in South Africa were restructured into a hierarchy under an executive Town Clerk, the councillor system was restructured into a hierarchy under a management committee, and attempts were made to make proficiency in Afrikaans a precondition for appointment to the position of Town Clerk (Todes and Watson, 1984) .

The other major area where the NP intervened in local government during this period was in relation to the administration and representation of Coloured, Indian and African populations. In relation to the African population, the implementation of influx control, the construction of urban African housing, and the removal of African freehold rights in the towns were continual sources of friction between government and local authorities, particularly in those towns where the level and rate of African urbanisation had been high. Ultimately, in 1972, the administration of African people was removed completely from local government control and placed in the hands of state-controlled Administration Boards. Administration Boards were established with the express purpose of terminating some municipalities inefficient and reluctant implementation of central state legislation and policy (Bekker and Humphries, 1985). The centre-piece of the NP's strategy towards the Coloured and Indian population was the Group Areas Act (1950), and

subsequent amendments. The 1950 Act proposed that Coloured and Indian Group areas should be entrusted with a certain degree of self-government, and the 1962 amendment provided for the development of local Coloured and Indian institutions in three phases. These are Advisory Committees, Management Committees/Local Affairs Committees (LACs) and full local authorities (1).

Importantly therefore, at an early stage, the notion of metropolitan government was hinted at as a possible solution to these problems (Todes and Watson, 1984,1985a; Grest and Hughes, 1983; Van Rooyen, 1987). The general trend of thought appears to have been that a metropolitan board could be used as a vehicle to take the task of developing Coloured and Indian areas out of the hands of the white local authorities, it could be used to "solve the problem of 'shared services' across racial boundaries and it could be used to remove the dominance of the 'core white city' in a metropolitan area" (Todes and Watson, 1985a:203/4). In 1966, the Slater Commission was appointed to look into the feasibility of metropolitan government in Cape Town, and in 1967 the Administrator of Natal requested ten local authorities to take part in discussion on the provision of regional services (Municipal Affairs, 1967 cited in Todes and Watson, 1985a)(2).

By the mid-1970's, it became clear, for a number of reasons, that the state was failing hopelessly to implement its plan for local government. Coupled with the events of 1976 and the structural economic changes that took place during the 1970's, it was abundantly clear that the legitimization of a system of local government for Coloured, Indian and African people was urgently required. Not surprisingly then, attention was given to a system of local government for urban African people, and after 1976, three commissions were set up to devise ways of establishing independent Coloured and Indian local authorities. All these reports attested to the impossibility of the task given the absence of financial resources to support these local structures and given that attitudes amongst Coloured and Indian people "had hardened" against Management Committees and LACs (Grest and Hughes, 1983:135). Significantly again, the reports also agreed that some form of joint local government structure for the white, Coloured and Indian population was essential.

4.2.3 1976-1984

In the post-1976 period, the state embarked on a process of national reform which was to have significant implications for the already problematic situation of black local government. According to Glaser (1984), the national reform process underway in South Africa by 1984 was a response on the one hand to a crisis of racial capitalism, and on the other, to a crisis of state interventionism. A number of indicators of the crisis according to McCarthy (1988b) were: the increasing militance of black students against so-called 'gutter education', and their dismal futures in a job market that was not expanding rapidly enough to accommodate school leavers; the spectacular growth in the membership and power of the progressive (non-racial) labour movement; and, during the 1980's, the mass emergence of grass-roots civic and community organisations which contested the neglect of their members' interests by protesting against the geo-political forms that had emerged during the 1960's and early 1970's (3).

It was the last of these developments that had particular consequences for the restructuring of the local state during the 1980's (Todes and Watson, 1985a; McCarthy, 1988b). A major consequence of the emergence of this type of popular politics has been the near total collapse of legitimacy of the so-called Community Councils and LACs. These were bodies set up to liaise with the state in the administration of black local affairs within the metropolitan areas. Community Councils were comprised of conservative African petty bourgeois groups, and were advisory to local state agencies in the administration of African townships, including such matters as service charges and rents. LACs were established to advise the local state on similar matters concerning Coloureds and Indians living within the jurisdiction of the municipalities (4).

McCarthy (1988b) points out that to complicate matters, the late 1970's and early 1980's were also periods of extra-ordinarily rapid growth in African informal or 'squatter' settlements. These settlements, according to him, arose largely because the state effectively ceased to provide

public housing estates since the late 1960's. Such areas posed problems for the state insofar as they remained unincorporated within the institutional framework of the nation, and raised uncomfortable questions about the legitimacy of state housing strategies.

It was developments like these, according to Greenberg (1984:4), that initiated a reform process, the aim of which was, at a most general level, to construct "a more incorporative ideology". He points out that this involved negating the racial character of the state, diminishing the direct and visible role of the state in the labour market and the workplace, and shifting the locus of prestige to the private sector. What was required was a greater separation between the economic and the political (5). The reform process in turn has served to generate a series of fundamentally new demands on state structures at the local level. It is in this context therefore that initiatives began to emerge in the late 1970's from the local, regional and central state to restructure metropolitan political forms.

According to Todes and Watson (1985a), in terms of this approach, local government for black people was to play a new and different role in South African society, although there was an element of continuity with pre-reform structures (such as the retention of ethnically based local authorities). According to this thesis, the reform process was imposing the following functions on local government: it was to play a role in legitimising government and the more 'incorporative ideology' being propounded; it was to aid the defusion of conflict and the disorganisation of opposition forces; and it was to ensure that ultimate control at the local level remained with those in power in the central state apparatus.

4.2.4 POST-1984

A) DEVOLUTION OF POWER

The notion of devolution of power has enjoyed wide popularity in South Africa over the last few years. Devolution implies the transfer of power to sub-national units (provinces, homelands, local authorities) so as to

give such units autonomous, discretionary decision-making powers within their geographical areas of jurisdiction and as regards the powers and functions accorded to them. Since the promulgation of the 1983 Constitution, devolution of political power has increasingly been emphasised by the government as a policy priority (Republic of South Africa, 1985a).

In keeping with this objective, the powers of African local government have been increased under the Black Local Authorities Act of 1982 (6) and Black Communities Development Act of 1984 (7). Coloured and Indian Management Committees have been given the capacity to become autonomous and to undertake any local government function in terms of the Promotion of Local Government Act of 1983. The major initiative at the local level, however, has been the introduction of Regional Services Councils (RSCs).

Repeated government pronouncements regarding devolution and decentralisation have brought the relations between the levels of government in South Africa into sharper focus. The government's use of the term devolution covers two meanings. It is firstly supposed to affect the relationship between various ethnic/racially orientated bodies in line with the quasi-consociational objective of maximum 'self-determination' for different statutorily defined 'groups'. Its second objective is presumably to alter the historical relationships between institutions at central, provincial and local level for the sake of a general 'broadening of democracy' and to enhance the efficiency of government by delegating more decision-making power and administrative responsibility to smaller and less cumbersome sub-units of society (Cloete, 1984).

Local government occupies a particular place in government thinking because of the emphasis placed on devolution by Pretoria's constitutional engineers. Arising from the notion that South Africa is a society comprised of distinct 'population groups' - each with an own social (read cultural) outlook; each entitled to institutional protection of these values - the restructuring of state institutions is characterised by a strong emphasis on 'own affairs'. In the official

mind, control over 'own affairs' is best secured by devolving power to racially defined local authorities. Achieving the highest degree of self-determination possible through lower tiers of government (Cloete, 1984) is seen as a vital corollary to power sharing. This idea found expression in the form of the President's Councils' report on local government in 1982, which recommended extensive devolution of power to local authorities (8).

The 1983 RSA Constitution made provision for a tri-cameral system with a State President having extensive powers and white, Indian and Coloured chambers deciding exclusively on matters of 'own affairs'. The ethnic chambers have carte blanche to decide on all functions designated 'own affairs' subject to the existence of any general policy or general law. Local government is one of the functions termed 'own affairs'. However, the 1983 Constitution failed, as did the South Africa Act of 1909 and the 1961 Constitution, to enshrine the rights and status of local government. The State President has the power arbitrarily to change the status of local government from 'own affairs' to 'general affairs'. Further, this Act did not in any way affect the existing legislation applying to local government (see Boulle, 1984; Sidego and Heymans, 1986; Heymans, 1987b).

Ultimately, the new Constitution has created a framework of organisational relations relative to the position of local authorities in the government hierarchy. Its most important effect is to bring the central and local levels into a much more direct relationship than had previously been the case (Heymans, 1987b).

(i) Regional Services Councils (RSCs)

In the last five years, state legislation has radically changed the face of local government. The lynchpin of this new legislation is the Regional Services Council Act of 1985. In terms of the Act, a two tier structure of service provision will be established in urban areas and similar structures are proposed for rural areas as well. The Act makes provision for 21 functions to be performed by RSCs (9). At the base of the structure is a set of locally elected Primary Local Authorities

(PLAs) established on group area lines, which operate local or 'soft' services. City-wide 'hard' services will be provided by RSCs. Most of these functions will be transferred from the PLAs to the newly created multi-racial metropolitan bodies. Representation on a RSC will be by nomination from existing 'local bodies' within the jurisdiction of the RSC. The number of votes each 'local body' is entitled to is in proportion to the value of RSC services it consumes.

According to Cameron (1986;1987), government spokesmen point out that RSCs have been introduced, inter alia, to achieve economies of scale and increase efficiency by reducing the duplication of services by providing them on a joint basis, to improve the infrastructure in black (that is Coloured, Indian and African) communities, to reduce traditional white domination in the provision of some services and planning functions and to facilitate multi-racial decision-making. These bodies are responsible for 'general affairs', inter alia, bulk supply of water and electricity, sewage purification, land useage and transport planning. Ethnically based PLAs will be responsible for 'own affairs' which include 'culturally sensitive' functions such as parks, benches and swimming pools. According to the Act, RSCs foremost priority is the "establishment, improvement and maintenance of infrastructural services and facilities in areas where the greatest need therefore exists" (section 12[6]). The objective of the government is to defuse township unrest by uplifting the quality of life in such areas.

Du Toit (1987) points out that RSCs, along with the tri-cameral parliament, constitute the most important instruments of constitutional engineering in the ruling NP's reform programme in the 1980's. He maintains that the RSC Act of 1985 and the RSA Constitution Act of 1983 are complementary to each other, aiming to restructure the South African polity in a fundamental and comprehensive way. The economic, financial, social, administrative and political implications are far-reaching.

(ii) Primary Local Authorities (PLAs)

New Primary Local Authorities (PLAs) constitute the second component of the state's reformed local government system (10). Todes and Watson

(1985a) point out that these bodies are to play a role which matches far more closely the role played by local government in advanced capitalist countries. They are to play an important role as far as the state is concerned in sustaining legitimacy and enhancing the economic rationality of state action, as well as making citizens feel that they are participating in, and influencing the direction of, an institution which has 'real' powers. In this way, it is hoped that citizens will feel that they are improving the quality of their own lives (11).

According to the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning (DCDP, 1984), the new PLAs are to be unusually small in size to ensure a high councillor/voter proportion and they are to be subject to fewer overt administrative controls than under the previous system. The implementation of new projects is to be subject to public participation exercises and PLAs will be given the power to carry out detailed town planning programmes within the context of a centrally approved guide plan. The second way in which 'effective' local government is to be created is by giving PLAs control over functions which are of significance to their electoral constituencies, and funds which allow them to respond to demands. This is in contrast to the pre-reform period in which there was a tendency to reduce the funds available to local government and to remove more important functions to higher tiers. Under the proposed new system, certain functions are to be devolved from the central and provincial level to local government, thus supposedly countering a trend towards centralisation which had marked the pre-reform period.

Under the new system, the task of creating PLAs has been centralised and will be greatly speeded up. PLAs are to carry primarily 'sensitive' or welfare functions and their sources of funding will be guaranteed and augmented by RSCs (Todes and Watson, 1985a). According to Stadler (1984), the more 'sensitive' or 'legitimising' functions are to be located in the PLAs so as to remove a source of dissension from the RSC. It is at the RSC level that the more crucial 'accumulation' functions are to be located, it being vitally important to capital that services should be supplied on a regular basis at stable minimum prices. The provision of these services is then protected by the fact that there is

only indirect representation on the RSC, by the domination on the RSC by the wealthier PLAs and by the strong central controls over the RSC (to be dealt with shortly). The devolution of 'sensitive' functions to PLAs and to the private sector has, according to Todes and Watson (1985a), the potential to defuse conflict in a number of ways. The privatisation of housing is a case in point.

Significantly, one of the many legitimising functions to be played by local government relates to the diminished role of the state in society and the promotion of a free market ideology. The new proposals for local government therefore emphasise user charges, the privatisation of services and the reduction of subsidies (Republic of South Africa, 1982b).

4.2.5 DEVOLUTION - RHETORIC OR REALITY?

It has been pointed out that the new system of local government contains a number of measures which increase the ability of the state to intervene at the local level. The aim of these measures is to allow the state to avoid the kinds of problems which were emerging in the immediate pre-reform era: that is the obstructiveness of the more right-wing local authorities who are unwilling to consent to 'power-sharing' or a redistribution of funds in favour of Coloured and Indian areas; the obstructiveness of more liberal authorities such as the Cape Town City Council which have dissociated themselves from the Management Committee system and continue to demand the reinstatement of a common (qualified) municipal franchise for all (Todes and Watson, 1986); and the ability of popular organisations to place pressure on local authorities.

With respect to the PLAs, while it has been mooted that they are to be given functions which are of significance to their electoral constituencies, the fact of the matter is that the new PLAs will carry far fewer functions than existing local authorities. Thus, while the new system may represent devolution to the present Management Committees and LACs, it will mean a diminution of powers of white local authorities (those Indian, Coloured and African communities and areas benefiting from the more liberal stances of some of these white local authorities

will thus be severely affected). Further, the structure of PLAs will be such that a 'top-down' control is facilitated: the hierarchical structure of both councillors and administration/officials (a process initiated in the 1950's) is a state requirement (Republic of South Africa, 1982c).

A metropolitan form of government is potentially progressive in the sense that under certain conditions, it can ensure redistribution of wealth from richer to poorer areas in a metropolitan region (Cameron, 1986,1987; see also Todes and Watson, 1985b). In South Africa, fragmentation of local authorities has led to blacks contributing to the wealth of white areas in their capacity as workers and consumers. This wealth, however, is seldom redistributed, with the result that black areas are often characterised by the lack of even a minimum standard of services. Theoretically, a metropolitan body can redress such uneven financial burdens. RSCs, it has already been noted, are an attempt (apart from political considerations) to achieve this.

Dearlove (1979) points out that the redistributive potential of a metropolitan authority hinges on the political make-up of such a body. It has been argued by Cameron (1986;1987), Friedman (1987;1988) and Heymans (1986;1987b) that RSC voting procedures seem to constrain any major redistribution occurring through their conduit. According to this thesis, RSC decisions are taken by representatives of the participating local authorities. Voting is loaded in favour of high consumption white local authorities in that the amount of votes each local body is entitled to is in proportion to the value of the RSC services it consumes. Despite the fact that no participant local authority may have more than 50% of the vote, preliminary investigation by the Urban Foundation (Cameron, 1986) indicated that white local authorities will have more than two thirds of the vote in all major metropolitan areas (for eg. the combined strength of the Central Witwatersrand RSC amounts to 74,48%).

Analyses of a number of other aspects and provisions in the RSC Act (as well as scant analysis of early experiences of those RSCs in operation) to determine the extent to which RSCs embody the principles of

devolution of power, multi-racial decision-making and minimum administrative control have also occurred (12). There seems to be a certain amount of unanimity in the conclusions. Du Toit (1987:75) sums this up succinctly:

"Regional Services Councils represent an elaborate system of control whereby power holders at central level will gain crucial influence at local level. The system relies ultimately on co-opting subordinate elites into new multi-racial decision-making structures. These elites will have to comply with the rules of the political game dictated by the ruling group at national level - which is politically represented by the National Party. In due course, this state of affairs can be expected to cause severe political friction. With RSCs operating on a racialistic basis, and given the racial foundations of the institutions in them, their long-term political viability comes into question. They are already regarded as a means for the perpetuation of apartheid (see Bekker et al., 1986). As their practice confirms this assessment in principle, it is doubtful whether their legitimacy will ever be high - even if they do facilitate some form of redistribution".

The new system of local government therefore appears to extend the instruments of control at central level to the lower tiers. Both forms of local government structures, RSCs and PLAs (13), are going to be under such tight state control, so it is held, that the possibility of using them to challenge national structures is negligible. Rather, local government restructuring must be seen as a broader state strategy to defuse political unrest and restructure the economy. As Cameron (1986, 1987) concludes, government proposals for a new, ostensibly democratic system of local government have merely been accompanied by a rhetoric of devolution of power and minimum administrative control, when in reality,

precisely the converse holds true. While RSCs may symbolically be important departures from apartheid policies because they recognise the need to give black communities a more equitable share of wealth and power, "because they do this within a formula which entrenches both segregated local government and effective white control, they are seen more generally, by both decision-makers and their opponents, as an attempt to create credibility for segregated local government" (Friedman, 1988:12).

According to other analyses however, recent local government legislation in the direction of municipal autonomy could lead to actors at local government level having the space to enact legislation which could precipitate fundamental changes to national level structures. The law of unintended consequences could lead to results not envisaged by the state (Dewar, 1985). RSCs, it is argued, represent important instruments in achieving constitutional decentralisation. They form yet another institutional facet of a process through which local government institutions will acquire greater autonomy and a more substantial part in the process of governing (Cloete, 1984). Such analysts foresee that RSCs will have a bottom-up effect, since it is anticipated that component local authorities will be able to control their operations (Claasen, 1986 in Cloete, 1987; Dewar, 1985)(14).

Breytenbach (1987) concludes that both assessments are valid, within certain limits. Local bodies will undeniably be able to influence the agendas of RSCs, by pressing their demands and claims. At the same time however, the structure and context within which this will take place is determined to a great extent by the central authorities.

4.3 THE REFORMED AND RESTRUCTURED LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM AT WORK

4.3.1 AN OVERVIEW

Analysts of local government reform and reorganisation in South Africa have provided, for the most part, conceptual insights towards an

understanding of recent developments which have changed the role and structure of local government. Empirical analyses have therefore been neglected. Admittedly, it is too early to judge the extent to which the proclaimed aforementioned intentions of the new local government system in South Africa (for instance RSCs have only been operational for just over two years in the major metropolitan centres, except Durban) have, or have not, been borne out via empirical documentation. Preliminary investigation in this area has however revealed some interesting insights and developments.

4.3.2 RSCs - IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION IN THE MAJOR METROPOLITAN REGIONS

A) THE WESTERN CAPE RSC

The implementation of a RSC for the Western Cape area became shrouded in controversy from early 1986, following an attempt by the Cape Town City Council (CCC) to block the proposals on the grounds that a "local option" alternative should first be fully investigated and considered (Argus, 28/2/86). The CCC is the largest and most affluent local authority in the Western Cape region. It has a liberal political reputation; having a history of conflict with both central and provincial government over apartheid measures that the Council has been forced to implement at the local level (Cameron, 1988). The CCC has therefore made no secret of its hostility to racially-based RSCs. While acknowledging the "many and undoubted benefits of economy and efficiency" which could flow from rationalising the provision of regional services, the Council believed that the proposed RSC was not supported by the majority of Cape Town citizens and would have "their active and possibly violent rejection" (Argus, 28/2/86). RSCs were also rejected for a number of other reasons, among them the fact that citizens will have no direct representation on the regional government body since racially constituted local authorities, Management Committees and Community Councils will appoint representatives to the RSCs, and, commercial and industrial areas, which will contribute the bulk of the taxes to the RSC, will be excluded when calculating the voting power of the municipality (Cape Times, 3/3/86).

The dispute over the demarcation of boundaries for a Western Cape RSC began in early March 1986 when a number of local authorities in the area rejected the suggestion from the Provincial Administration for a single RSC that would encompass the Divisional Council areas of the Cape, Stellenbosch and Paarl as well as the vast Swartland area (Argus, 5/3/86). According to Steve Smith, chairman of the Stellenbosch Divisional Council, eighty percent of the local authorities within the Paarl and Stellenbosch divisions - including Management Committees and black Community Councils - were opposed to serving on the same RSC as Cape Town (Cape Times, 6/3/86). One of the reasons was that the local authorities in the area enjoyed "very close and effective communication with the local management committees and community councils" whereas the CCC had what was perceived to be an uneasy relationship with these racially constituted authorities (Cape Times, 6/3/86). The Paarl and Stellenbosch areas also considered themselves rural areas that did not have much in common with metropolitan Cape Town. However, according to Cameron (1988), the real reasons behind these objections had much to do with a fear of loss of autonomy and a reduction in their share of the funds that would accompany their incorporation into one metropolitan-wide RSC, one which could well be dominated by the liberal CCC. Furthermore, implicit in these objections was the Paarl and Stellenbosch Divisional Councils' desire to escape meeting the costs of subsidising services in poorer African and Coloured areas, most of which are located in the vicinity of the Greater Cape Town region.

A detailed submission from the CCC to the Demarcation Board recommended that the RSC should encompass the Greater Cape Town region because it is an economically integrated area (Figure 4.1). The CCC suggested the urban authorities in the region did not have the same community of interest as rural municipalities further north (CCC memorandum, 1985). The Divisional Councils of Paarl and Stellenbosch, for reasons already elaborated, recommended that there should be two RSCs in the region, an urban RSC with the boundaries roughly approximating the boundaries of the CCC proposals, and secondly, a rural and peri-urban RSC consisting of the two former Divisional Council areas.

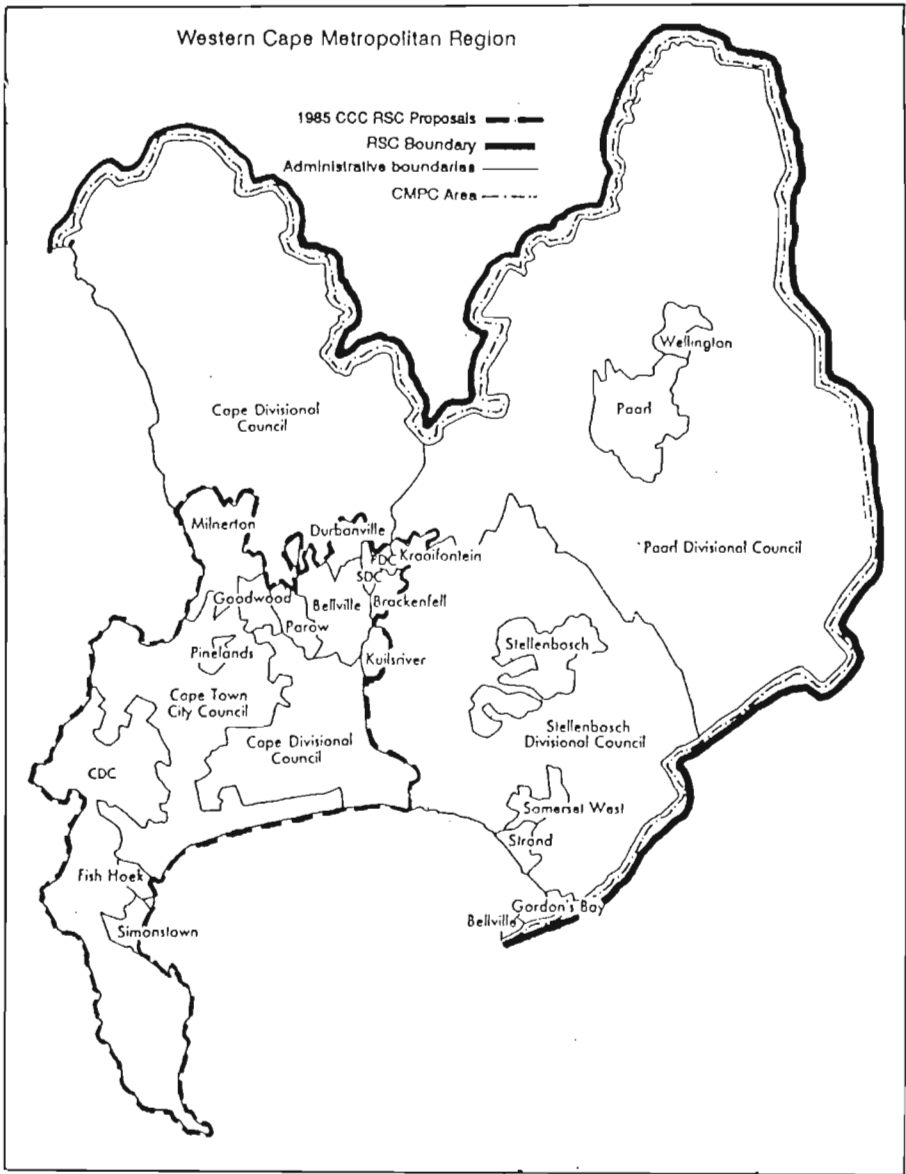


Figure 4.1

Western Cape Metropolitan Region illustrating RSC jurisdiction. Source: Cape Town City Engineer's Department.

Despite the fact that more than half of the local authorities in the Western Cape opted for two or more RSCs, the Provincial Administration recommended that a single RSC be established to include the Cape, Stellenbosch and Paarl Divisional Council areas (Argus, 11/4/86). It was a matter viewed with grave concern by local authorities in the region. Cameron (1988) points out, however, that despite initial misgivings expressed by a number of NP-orientated municipalities (for similar reasons as the Paarl and Stellenbosch Divisional Councils), most of the other rural local authorities eventually supported the Provincial Secretary's recommendations. The period under review was also one in which organised business and commerce in metropolitan Cape Town criticised the RSC structure on the grounds that its racial basis precludes popular acceptance, and that they are certain to become another heavy financial burden (Cape Times, 5/6/86).

The delimitation of the first three RSCs in the Cape was announced in January 1987 by then Cape Administrator Gene Louw (Business Day, 8/1/87). In the Cape Metropole area, the RSC jurisdiction covered the Divisional Council areas of the Cape, Stellenbosch and Paarl (Figure 4.1). The Demarcation Board recommendations for the region were overridden (the Demarcation Board had earlier recommended a smaller area for the Western Cape RSC after examining the CCC's proposals). The decision evoked widespread criticism from among others, the CCC, the then Progressive Federal Party (PFP) Federal Executive and the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce (CTCC), who described the boundaries as "beyond comprehension" (Argus, 28/1/87). Several councillors threatened to refuse to serve on the new body that was scheduled to begin in July 1987. According to Cameron (1988), the final delimitation was probably designed to achieve a more effective redistribution of RSC revenue by including rural areas. However, the larger RSC area also served the purpose of reducing the CCC's voting strength.

In the months preceding the establishment of the Western Cape RSC, the CCC did everything in its power to waive the RSC proposals and a concerted call was made by Cape Town's Mayor at the fifty sixth annual meeting of the United Municipal Executive (UME) to have more discussions before a Cape Metropolitan RSC was established (Argus, 12/3/87).

However, largely through an expressed fear that if the mother city did not have an elected presence on the RSC, its own standing would be in danger of being seriously downgraded, the City Council finally capitulated (Business Day, 27/5/87). The Western Cape RSC began operating on 1 July 1987.

It was announced just prior to the Western Cape RSC becoming operational that it would consist of fifty-six local bodies, namely, the three (now dissolved) Divisional Councils, nineteen white local authorities, twenty-four Coloured Management Committees, four African Town Committees and two rural Coloured Management Boards (CPA, 1987 cited in Cameron, 1988). Voting powers of the constituent local authorities were determined on the basis of how much each body pays for sewerage, water, refuse, civil defence, tourist promotion, land use and transport planning. These were the functions initially taken over by the RSC (Cape Times, 2/5/87). The initial total voting strength of the white local bodies amounted to 65,79%, the Coloured bodies 20,71%, the African Town Committees 12,6% and the Indian bodies 0,72%. The CCC had the highest number of votes at 36,51%, with the next highest being the Cape Town Town Committee at 11,82%. This gave the CCC a veto on RSC proceedings, bearing in mind all decisions require a two-thirds majority. However, as Cameron (1988) points out, the above outcome was nullified by subsequent developments - the CPA appointed three new Management Committees and appointed one other in the CCC's area of jurisdiction, thus effectively reducing the voting strength of the CCC and removing its veto power. It must also be pointed out that the Divisional Councils and the white municipalities together exercise sufficient votes to carry decisions, prompting concern by observers that Coloured and African representatives will remain dependent on the good intentions of white authorities on the RSCs given that they will be hard pressed to assemble enough voting strength to affect materially the decisions taken (Juta's RSC Report, December, 1987).

In its first year of operation, the Western Cape RSC raised a total of R53m from the levy on business - the services levy raised some R17m and the establishment levy R36m (Cape Times, 14/9/87). According to Cameron (1988), this revenue is far below the amount needed to meet RSC

objectives, and it has been periodically hinted that central government subsidisation may be forthcoming to meet the shortfall.

At the end of its first budget year, there had been little activity by the RSC in terms of achieving the objectives of socio-economic upliftment and rationalisation of services (although the Western Cape RSC claims that R45m was made available for improvements to infrastructure). According to the CCC, this was partly due to the fact that the RSC's priorities committee had not completed its examination of what further functions should be entrusted to the RSC (CCC Minutes, September 1987). However, Friedman (1988) points to the fact that bearing in mind that the Western Cape RSC is assuming the functions of the Divisional Councils, it is taking on not only the powers of these Councils, but their considerable deficits as well. Therefore, the levies which the RSC is collecting is unlikely to eliminate even these, let alone provide new funds for development. Thus, while RSCs were partly designed to reduce the need for black local authorities to raise rents, one of the Western Cape RSC's first decisions has been to do just that - a move which prompted protests and calls from the House of Representatives Ministry of Housing and Local Government for the increases to be frozen. Another possible reason for the lack of activity on the part of the RSC at the end of its first budget year was due to what was perceived to be the enormous power struggle going on behind the scenes (Argus, 30/5/88). The Western Cape RSC is attempting to colonise as many CCC regional functions as possible (the CCC operates a number of functions on a regional basis) but is facing fierce CCC resistance.

Both Friedman (1988) and Cameron (1988) argue that even though at the end of the Western Cape RSC's first year of operation it may perhaps be too early to make a final evaluation, it seems unlikely that it will generate sufficient funds to undertake the upgrading of black areas on a large scale. However, budget allocations and expenditure of the Western Cape RSC over the last two years seem to suggest that money is being spent to improve and upgrade areas where the greatest need exists. In the 1988/1989 budget year, for instance, of the R95m that had accrued to the Western Cape RSC in the form of levies, R76m was made available for improvements to infrastructure (1989 Budget Speech - Western Cape RSC).

Estimated expenditure on improvements to infrastructure in the region in the 1989/1990 budget year was put at R90m, approximately eighty percent of the revised amount expected to accrue from the levies. After three years in existence, the Western Cape RSC estimates that it would have spent over R200m on infrastructural upgrading (1989 Budget Speech - Western Cape RSC). The only problem with this according to Donald Craythorne, Assistant Town Clerk, Cape Town City Council, is that "while all this money is said to have been made available for the development of infrastructure, no one seems to know where and on what this money is being spent due to the secretive approach of the Western Cape RSC" (Personal Communication, 23/5/90).

B) THE CENTRAL WITWATERSRAND RSC

The process of establishing RSCs in the Witwatersrand, and in particular the central Witwatersrand area, was a less controversial and cumbersome process than in many other parts of the country. A number of factors, some to be alluded to below, point to why this may have been the case. It was announced in early 1986 that RSCs for the Witwatersrand and the Pretoria-Bronkhorst areas were to be set up in the middle of that year (Citizen, 7/2/86). The Demarcation Board was to hear representations on the establishment of a RSC or RSCs for the Witwatersrand region in August 1986, prompting many local authorities, Management Committees and Community Councils to begin drafting proposals that would eventually have to be handed in to the secretary of the Board (Citizen, 7/2.86).

The Johannesburg City Council (JCC) proposed the entire Witwatersrand region should form a single RSC area. This was opposed by organised business and commerce and by other local authorities on the grounds that it was too extensive an area for inhabitants to have genuinely shared interests, and the Council for such an area would be too large and unwieldy (Mandy, 1988). Eventually, the existence of three distinct regions in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) megalopolis was generally acknowledged (Figure 4.2) by key actors in the area, so argument before the Demarcation Board was directed mainly towards establishing where the actual boundaries should be drawn. Figure 4.2 in fact represents what was to become the actual boundaries of the

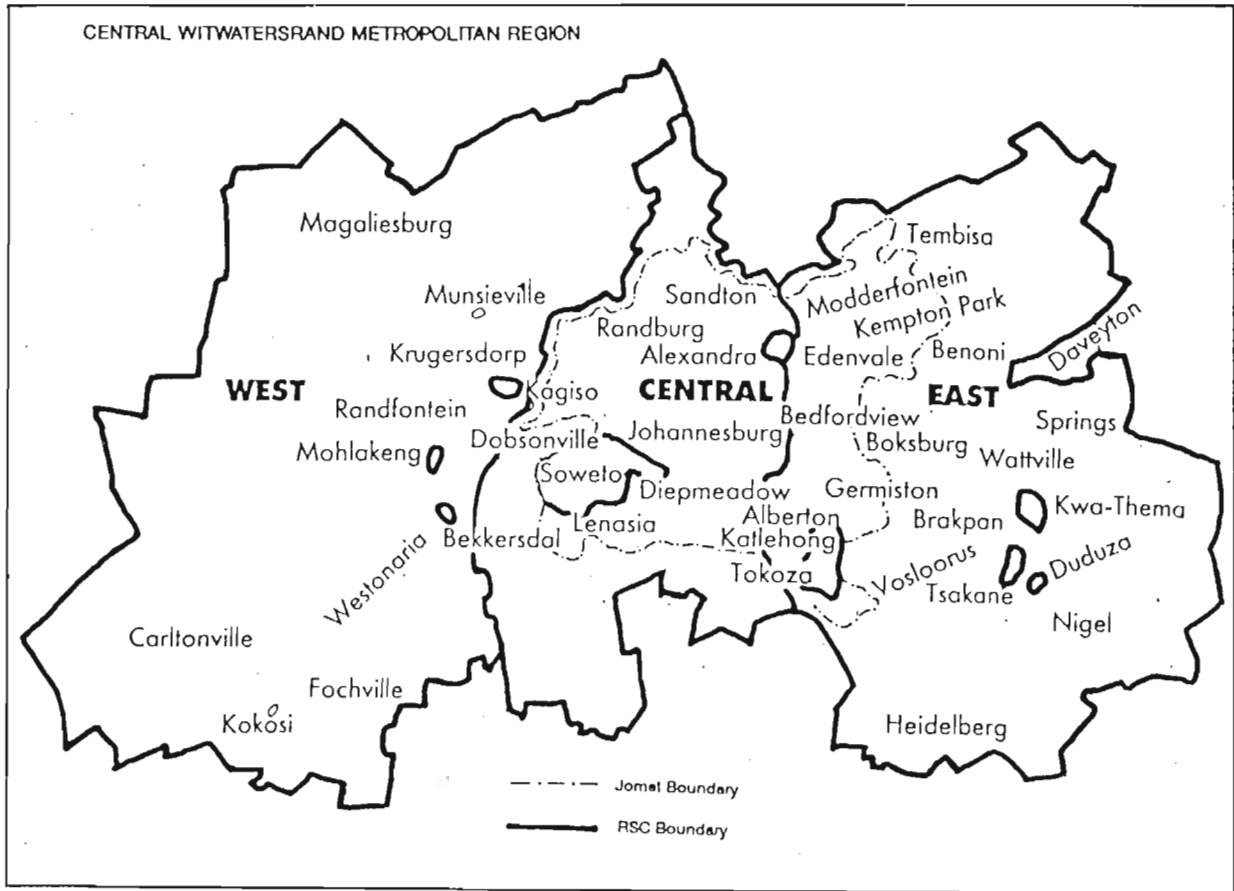


Figure 4.2

Witwatersrand Metropolitan Region illustrating RSC jurisdictions. Source: Johannesburg City Engineer's Department.

Witwatersrand RSCs. According to Mandy (1988), the deciding considerations in drawing the dividing lines between the three regions appear to have included :

- the desire that the Central Rand should not be of an overwhelming size relative to the other neighbouring RSCs;
- the need for the East Rand's finances to be underpinned by levy revenue from the powerful industrial and commercial components of Germiston, Alberton and Kempton Park; and
- the role of local political factors.

The demarcation of RSCs for the Witwatersrand coincided with the release of a draft Guide Plan for the inner Witwatersrand. The Plan was published by the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning on 8 August 1986. Debate and deliberation around the Guide Plan in the ensuing months appears to have diverted attention away from the establishment of RSCs in the region. The stated objective of the Guide Plan according to government sources "is to tame the growth of the inner Witwatersrand in favour of an east-west development axis from Brits to Bronkhorstspuit including large fragments of black homelands" (Sunday Star, 31/8/86). According to observers, it is another piece in a jigsaw of plans for the whole country and is characterised by an attempt to "deconcentrate job creation within the highly developed areas such as the PWV" (Sunday Star, 31/8/86).

The proposals were generally not well received by key actors in the area. Organised business and commerce were among the first to respond. The Johannesburg Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce (JMCC) and the Central Business District Association (CBDA) in a joint submission argued that it was impossible to propose "sensible and practical plans" for the future of the metropolitan core of the Witwatersrand while outdated and impractical restrictions held back multiracial development (Star, 11/11/86). A number of top planners in the region, the South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA), as well as influential white local authorities voiced their objections to the proposals and demanded that

the government shelve the entire plan "in the light of present circumstances" (Star, 19/11/86).

The point of raising the issue of the Guide Plan is simply to assert that its release did shift attention away from the establishment of RSCs in the Witwatersrand and in a sense facilitated the easier process of establishing these bodies without getting bogged down in too many details - political, administrative, jurisdictional (as was the case elsewhere in the country). Interestingly, once the Guide Plan was put on hold by the government, debate around the establishment of RSCs in the region did emerge, however muted the precise nature and form.

In May and June 1987, organised business and commerce in the Witwatersrand region unleashed a scathing attack on the RSC system. While acknowledging the undesirable social and economic conditions prevailing in some areas, which they expressed a willingness to improve through assistance, certain aspects of RSCs, in particular the method of funding, did not appeal to some (Business day, 24/6/87). Notwithstanding an earlier rebuke by the Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) in charge of local government in the Province for opposing the establishment of RSCs in the Witwatersrand (Business Day, 25/5/87), this lobby, led by the Association of Chambers of Commerce (ASSOCOM), remained defiant. Responding to the first budget speech of the chairman of the Central Witwatersrand RSC, in which he said that the cost of collecting the levies would be minimal, ASSOCOM argued that private sector costs in terms of manhours and administrative expenses would have to be added to the RSC costs thus making it a very expensive and ineffective tax collection mechanism (Star, 8/7/87). ASSOCOM also rejected the form of taxation on the grounds that the pending Margo Commission's report had not been considered (Star, 8/7/87).

Notwithstanding the last minute outcry by business and a few liberal councillors in core white municipalities, RSCs in the Witwatersrand region became operational in July 1987. It must be mentioned at this point that another very probable reason for the fairly easy establishment of RSCs in the region had to do with the fact that many of the core municipalities in the Witwatersrand were, at the time, NP-

dominated and controlled councils, who were in a sense duty-bound to comply with NP sponsored reforms. As the MEC for local government, TPA remarked at the time, "it is not possible to identify a single local authority in the Transvaal which is against the idea of RSCs" (Business Day, 28/5/87).

There are fourteen participating units on the Central Witwatersrand RSC - four African, two Coloured, four Indian and four white local bodies. Johannesburg, the largest local authority on the RSC has 48,5% of the votes, followed by Roodepoort with 13,4% and Soweto with 12,76%. The total voting strength of the white local authorities amounts to 74,48% giving it the necessary two-thirds majority required for decisions to be passed. According to Mandy (1988), the voting strengths of African municipalities, totalling 19,84% can be expected to increase steadily as the upgrading and redevelopment process leads to greater use of the services on which the calculation is based.

In delivering an inaugural budget of R504m for the Central Rand RSC, chairman Gerrit Bornman declared that the most important objective would be to eliminate the backlog in infrastructural facilities in African local authority areas by raising these to acceptable minimum standards (Sowetan, 8/7/87). Of the R504m, R70m (13,2%) was expected to accrue as levy income from registered businesses. The major source of revenue for the RSC is the user charges levied on constituent local authorities for bulk services. According to the December 1987 Jutta's RSC Report, this revenue is not available for infrastructural investment since an equal amount must be paid out in costs, including Electricity Supply Commission (ESKOM) charges, interest redemption on outstanding loans and salaries.

Four African townships were identified as those with the most pressing needs, and expenditure within these townships was estimated at 364m over the next four or five years - R58m for Alexandra, R98m for Diepmeadow, R18m for Dobsonville and R31m for Soweto. According to RSC chairman Bornman, although R74m was required to start upgrading the above areas, R66m from the 1987/88 levy income will be allocated as the first step towards the financing of these projects (Sowetan, 8/7/87) - R31m (more

than 33,3%) for roads and stormwater drainage, R14m (17%) for electricity and R12m (14%) for piped water supply. Only R2,6m was used for operating expenditure for the administration of the RSC (Friedman, 1988).

The Central Witwatersrand RSC started work immediately on some of these development projects unlike the case in the Western Cape. At the end of the first budget year, it was clear to observers that the Central Rand RSC was in earnest about redirecting resources and planning expertise to overcome the backlog in infrastructural facilities in black (mainly African) townships, thus overcoming apprehension that established white local authorities would use their voting preponderance on RSCs to favour their own suburbs (Mandy, 1988). It is interesting to note that expenditure and allocations for the 1988/89 and 1989/90 budget years reflect the above trend, ie. money is being spent to improve and upgrade infrastructural facilities where the greatest need for them exists, suggesting that the initial budget allocations were not a one off thing. For instance, of the R188m development budget in the 1988/89 financial year, R139m was allocated for projects, of which 92% was for the benefit of black local authorities (Mandy, 1988). Of a development budget of R250m in the 1989/90 financial year, African, Indian and Coloured communities received 85% of the budgeted capital expenditure. Of this, Soweto received R103m (41%) and Diepmeadow R40m (16%) of the total (Juta's RSC Report, June 1989).

According to Mandy (1988), debates and decision-making within the Central Witwatersrand RSC have been of a good standard, with the representatives of all local bodies co-operating in a harmonious spirit. White local authorities are also giving effective assistance on 'own affairs' matters to their black neighbours in many ways. On the question of the RSC developing into a bureaucracy which would impede the efficient allocation of resources and the effective provision of services on a regional basis (one of the chief concerns of critics of the RSC system), John Mortimer, Chief Executive Officer of the Central Rand RSC has pointed out that in the Transvaal, RSCs have adopted the policy of keeping their personnel as small as possible. According to him, unlike the Cape Province where Old Divisional Councils have been

replaced by RSCs, in the Transvaal, RSCs have limited their personnel to only core staff (Address to a seminar in Durban, September 1989).

Summing up the establishment of a RSC in the Central Witwatersrand area, Mandy (1988:17) remarks that "...the advent of the RSC has materially improved the prospects for peace, good order and good government within this most important metropolis".

C) SUMMARISING THE EXPERIENCES

A review of the implementation of RSCs in the major metropolitan areas suggests fairly clearly that the contemporary literature on the restructuring of local government in South Africa has been fairly accurate in predicting the precise form and nature the process of setting up these bodies would take. Furthermore, recent empirical evidence suggests that the literature has also been correct in predicting the initial outcomes of the operation of these bodies. In other words, notwithstanding the different experiences of the Western Cape and the Central Witwatersrand RSCs, there are points in common in both the implementation and operation phases of these bodies which clearly reflects what has been enunciated in the literature.

During the implementation phase of these bodies in both the Western Cape and Central Witwatersrand, a fairly heavy top-down, authoritarian approach was exerted by central government in the form of arbitrary powers being granted to the Administrator through amendments to the Act, the manner in which dissident groups were constantly berated by the Administrator and other senior government officials, the token attention paid to Demarcation Board recommendations, the manipulation of voting strengths, and so on.

During the initial phase of operation (to date, just over two years), empirical evidence points to the income generated by the RSCs being used to establish and improve infrastructural services and facilities in areas where the greatest need for them exists. Most decisions on these RSCs also appear to have been made by reaching consensus. There is also a feeling among some analysts that both RSCs have been playing a role in

achieving constitutional decentralisation. However, these developments have partly been off-set by the fact that black local authorities are almost entirely dependent on the goodwill of white local bodies to redistribute resources, since these authorities dominate both the Western Cape and Central Rand RSCs, and the fact that the Administrator has not hesitated to use his pivotal role in the RSCs to ensure government objectives have been met (as in the removal of the CCC's veto vote on the RSC). Other negative features in the initial operation phase include a large and growing Western Cape RSC bureaucracy (which spent 21,6% of its income on employees in its first year of operation), and the insufficient income derived from the levies to provide funds for development at the beginning of both these RSCs first year of operation (forcing the Western Cape RSC to raise rents in black local authorities, something commentators had warned against).

Friedman (1988), commenting on RSCs six months after their establishment probably sums it up best by pointing out that RSCs seem destined to realise neither the worst fears of their critics nor the hopes of their supporters. Based on the evidence presented above, it is a view which still holds true today.

In the end therefore, one is able to conclude that there is a remarkable similarity between what the literature on local government restructuring in South Africa has to say and the actual process involved in the implementation and operation of this new system in parts of the country. In this case, the Western Cape and the Central Witwatersrand. However, this literature does not tally with either the experiences or the current (and recent past) state of affairs in the Durban Metropolitan Region, which is the only major metropolitan region in South Africa where RSCs have not been established. This raises the question why, which in turn immediately raises a number of other questions, complex in nature about the region - its proclaimed specificity, the shifting and changing relations between different levels of government, political developments, and so on.

Some preliminary comments, to be discussed in detail in the following two chapters, will be made to illustrate essentially why things have turned out differently in Natal.

Firstly, it must be pointed out that there was a great deal of innovation from key actors in the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA), particularly local state agents and organised business and commerce representatives, spanning almost ten years from the late 1970's, to regionalise services. These initiatives, which had pre-empted government thinking on the matter, were eventually superseded by government-created RSCs. This situation gave rise to a profound change in central-local relations which was to impact considerably on the process of establishing RSCs in Natal. Secondly, the regional level (the different state forms, the distinctiveness of Natal/KwaZulu, political developments and the accompanying changing political dynamic) inserted itself between the local and national state levels in a way which had not been the case in either Cape Town or Johannesburg. As will be pointed out shortly, this development was to play no small part in the ensuing debacle.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The point has already been made that there is a new appreciation of the importance of local politics in South Africa, and that from all over the political spectrum comes the suggestion: in whatever direction future political developments may go, sub-national institutions and processes seem destined to play a significant role. While historically, lower-tier authorities have been established as instruments for administrative deconcentration, recent developments have placed local issues in an unprecedentedly prominent position on the political agenda. In addition to creating new institutions at the central level, the state has attempted to build new institutions at all other levels of government. Demarcated on the basis of either ethnic/racial, territorial or functional criteria, these bodies are supposed to perform a key role in the South African government's 'reform' programmes. Pretoria planners regard lower-tier institutions as vital instruments for facilitating and

institutionalising political devolution and further administrative decentralisation - and in general for what is being called the 'broadening of democracy'.

This chapter has attempted to map the political and constitutional context of developments at the local level, as well as specific aspects of the restructuring of local government institutions, in order to promote a better understanding of local politics and government in South Africa. It has also documented empirically, the experiences of two of the major metropolitan regions in the above context. It is against this backdrop that problems encountered in the implementation of the reformed and restructured local government system in South Africa needs to be situated if it is to be properly understood.

NOTES

- (1) According to Todes and Watson (1985a), problems were to arise in the implementation of these phases: firstly, the removal of Coloured and Indian people from white local authorities proved to be a difficult process, secondly, certain local authorities were opposed to the establishment of separate Coloured and Indian local authorities and obstructed their creation, and thirdly, it was clear that the problem of economic viability of Coloured and Indian group areas was a real one.
- (2) The proposals of the Slater Commission were never implemented. Apart from strong protest from the Cape Town City Council, the Slater report failed to provide an adequate solution to the problem of the financial viability of Coloured group areas.
- (3) Rent boycotts began in the state-owned housing areas created during the 1960's and early 1970's, and the state assisted bus monopolies and state owned train services became politicised over commuter fare increases. These developments created the conditions appropriate for the emergence of a type of popular politics rooted at the local level. The 1980's therefore saw the politics of rent and transport costs dominating popular political organisation (McCarthy, 1988b).
- (4) Both Community Councils and Local Affairs Committees were supposed to graduate to full municipal status in terms of central state policy, but could never command sufficient resources to attain legitimacy (Bekker and Humphries, 1985).
- (5) For a further and more detailed expose of the major elements which are determining the nature and direction of reform, the work of Cobbet et al (1985,1986); Glaser (1984); Greenberg (1984); James (1984); Posel (1984); and Stadler (1984) is particularly illuminating.
- (6) The Black Local Authorities Act of 1982 is responsible for the creation of autonomous black local authorities, especially in the larger urban areas.
- (7) The Black Communities Development Act of 1984 provides for the private sale of property in the townships (and also grants the the Administration Boards increasing development responsibilities).
- (8) However, as erstwhile leader of the PFP Van Zyl Slabbert remarked at the time: "Whereas the recommendations for central government concentrate on the increased centralisation of power, recommendations for local and metropolitan government on the other hand focus on the increasing decentralisation of power. How these two tendencies are going to be resolved in a final constitutional package is not yet clear" (The Argus, 13/5/82, cited in Cameron, 1986;1987). Cameron (1986;1987) makes the point that the government resolved this dilemma by "ultimately retaining the spirit of the President's Council report - it accepted the principle of maximum devolution of power and decentralisation of administration to the lower level of government and the desirability of minimum control of local authorities. However, he points out that actual local government legislation has led to centralisation of power on a scale hitherto unknown to local authorities in South Africa.
- (9) These functions are: bulk supply of water and electricity, sewerage processing and pipes, land and transport planning, road and drainage, passenger transport, traffic, abattoirs, produce markets, refuse dumps, cemeteries and crematoriums, ambulance and fire, health, airports, civil defence, libraries, museums, recreation, conservation, tourism, other infrastructure, other regional services (RSC Act 109 of 1985).
- (10) PLAs were initially intended as a new system of local government for the Coloured and Indian race groups. According to Todes and Watson (1985a), at the national level, a form of Coloured and Indian franchise had been reinstated within the context of a tri-cameral Parliament. At the

local level, however, the municipal franchise was insufficient on its own to guarantee hegemony - public participation exercises were needed as well. An effective and apparently 'legitimate' local government for Coloured and Indian it was hoped would bring government "as close as possible to the citizen" (President's Council, I/1982), provide a platform for those participating in the tri-cameral parliament and help legitimise all tiers of government. While this system of local government was the mooted one for the Indian and Coloured race groups, it was soon to become the envisaged one for all race groups.

- (11) There has been a general underplaying of the role of these bodies in the context of the contemporary restructuring of local government in South Africa. This has been so given the "participation" functions PLAs are to fulfil according to the President's Council Report (I) of 1982 and the fact that RSCs have come to be seen as one of the most important instruments of constitutional engineering in the NP's 1980 reform initiative.
- (12) These are:
- the role of the Provincial Administrator as the pivotal figure in relation to the RSC;
 - the provisions pertaining to the Appeal Board;
 - the contention by the government (and embedded in the Act) that devolution of power has occurred in respect of finance by the provision in the Act for two regional taxes raised and allocated to jurisdictions by local representatives;
 - the significance attached to the removal of the 'important' functions of the PLAs into the jurisdiction of the RSCs;
 - the justification (one of many) for the Act in that it will increase cost-effectiveness in service provision;
 - the bureaucracy the RSC entails.
- (13) While it is true that RSCs and PLAs have formed the lynchpin of recent state legislation aimed at changing the face of local government in South Africa, it has been argued that other institutional adaptations on different levels, as well as other major local government legislation promulgated by the state, has resulted in further visible centralisation of power (see Cameron, 1986;1987 and Heymans, 1987b).
- (14) The most enthusiastic supporters of RSCs appear to be central government planners, provincial executives and black councils. The optimism at central and provincial level is based, among others, in a belief on the ability of such bodies to promote mutual decision-making and so promote racial reconciliation. The other major benefit of RSCs, it is claimed, would be that they would facilitate the redistribution of wealth and the upgrading of black areas (Heymans and Atkinson, 1987).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RESTRUCTURING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE DURBAN METROPOLITAN AREA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the restructuring of local government in the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA). The first section sketches the history of the political geography of the Durban area from 1930 to the mid-1970's. Since RSCs amount to an effective extension of local state boundaries, the strategy adopted is to emphasise the history of extensions to local state boundaries in Durban. The next section elaborates upon attempts to implement RSCs in Natal. Specifically, this section outlines the historical development of regionalisation of services initiatives in the DMA, out of which the impasse over the establishment of RSCs emerged. The key actors involved in this process and their motivations, intentions and rationales are then discussed. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of an alternative constitutional structure that has been proposed for the regionalisation of services in the Natal/KwaZulu region - Joint Services Boards (JSBs).

5.2 THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE DURBAN LOCAL STATE c. 1930 - MID 1970

5.2.1 THE 1930's AND THE 1940's

The Durban Housing Survey (1952) described Durban as not only an all-year round holiday resort, but at the same time a manufacturing centre which contributed significantly towards the Union's output. According to McCarthy (1988b), by the late 1930's, Durban was still a relatively small holiday resort cum port city, with some industry clustering around the wharf facilities immediately to the west of the Bay (Figure 5.1). The ethnic composition of the town was such that approximately 30

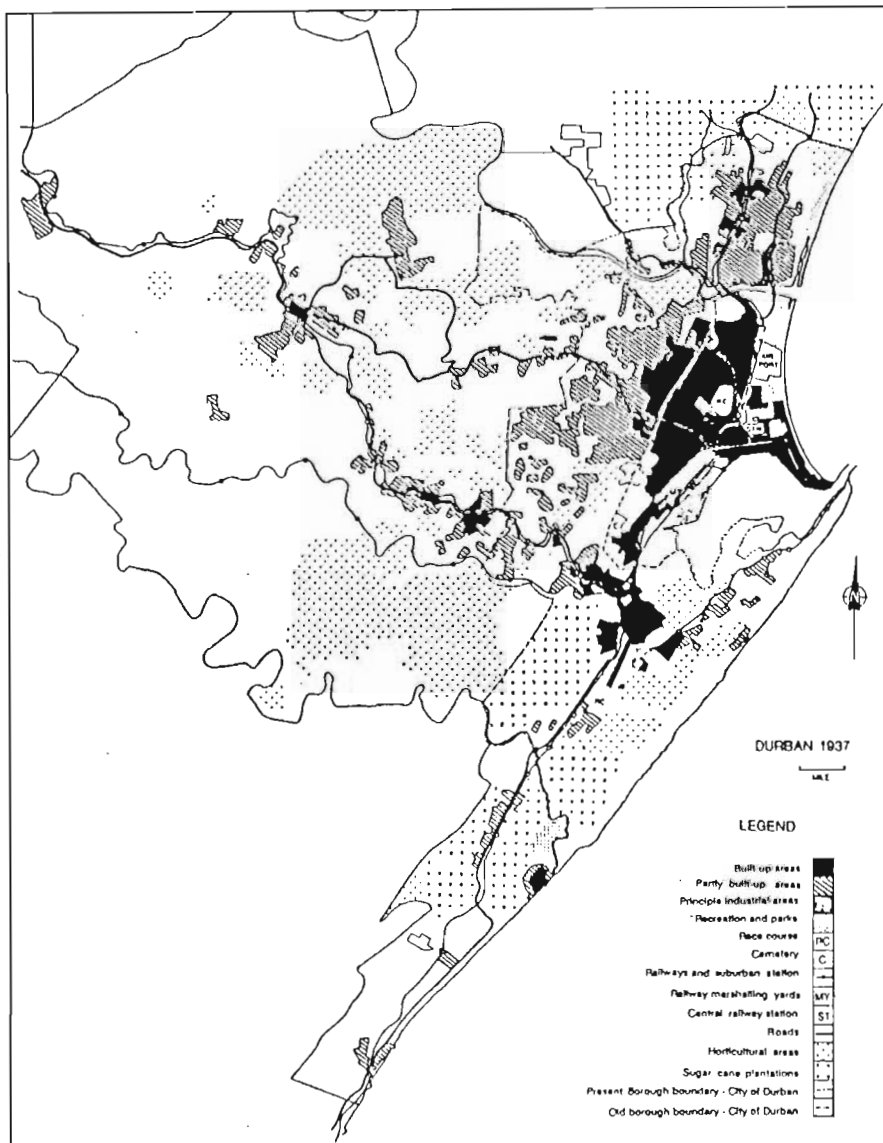


Figure 5.1

Spatial Form of Growth of the DMA (1937). Source: Department of Geography, University of Natal.

percent of the population was of European descent, 35 percent of Indian descent, 31 percent of African descent, the balance being the so-called Coloureds (Durban Mayor's Minutes, 1937). The close correlation of ethnic background with class positions, together with discriminatory clauses in property title deeds, determined that a high degree of racial or ethnic segregation existed, with the majority of Indians and Africans being located outside of the Old Durban Borough Boundary, which had applied until 1932 (1). Those Africans who lived within the Old Borough Boundary did so in terms of 'servants quarters' accommodation attached to larger houses, or single sex 'compound' accommodation attached to factories and harbour areas. Wealthier Indians who were able to compete relatively freely in the urban land market, on the other hand, gravitated around the central business district where they also successfully practised commerce. For the rest, the Old Borough area was dominated by white occupance (McCarthy, 1988b).

The question of the extension of the boundaries of the Borough of Durban would seem first to have been seriously mooted in 1910. This followed a period of rapid population growth and a concomitant shortage of housing in the Durban area. Regarding the matter of incorporation as a question of paramount importance, the Borough Council established a number of committees in the period 1910-1930 to look into the matter (2). All of these committees and representations testified to the desirability of incorporation from the point of view of principles tending to economy and efficiency in local administration. From time to time, residents of the peri-Durban area also made representations in favour of incorporation (Durban Borough Boundaries Commission, 1930).

However, it was not until the Administrator-in-Executive-Committee appointed the Durban Borough Boundaries Commission (on a request from the Borough of Durban), which reported in 1930 and recommended boundary expansion, that the issue was brought to the fore. The principal motivations raised by the Boundaries Commission for boundary expansion can be classified into two groups according to McCarthy (1988b). First, there was an emphasis on the unhealthy and insanitary conditions in the 'black belt' outside the old boundaries which, it was alleged, were potentially contagious but could be improved through the extension of

the area of the Borough's jurisdiction. As the Commission itself pointed out:

"....unsatisfactory conditions in regard to sanitation are widely prevalent in the peri-Durban area, and constitute a most serious menace, not only to the districts in which they prevail, but also to contiguous districts" (paragraphs 75-87).

The other major consideration emphasised by the Boundaries Commission was the question of land consolidation and rezoning to facilitate industrial expansion:

"It is possible that Durban will be hampered seriously in the carrying out of its policy of industrial development, if its present boundaries are to be maintained, with local authorities pursuing possible divergent policies in the outside areas" (paragraphs 145-146).

The recommendations of the Durban Borough Boundaries Commission, after consideration by the Administrator-in-Executive-Committee, were implemented in 1932. The areas incorporated into the Borough of Durban are diagrammatically illustrated in Figure 5.2.

The perception that the local state needed to expand its borders to facilitate industrial expansion was one that was reinforced in the 1940's when urban-based industrial capital underwent a period of rapid expansion throughout South Africa. The Durban Council, in anticipation of the planning problems that might be raised by such acceleration, appointed a Special Committee to investigate a "programme of post-war development" (Report of the Special Committee, Programme of Post-War Development, 1943:107). The Durban Post-War Development Committee reported in 1943 and made sweeping proposals for land use planning which were adopted by the Council (McCarthy, 1988b).

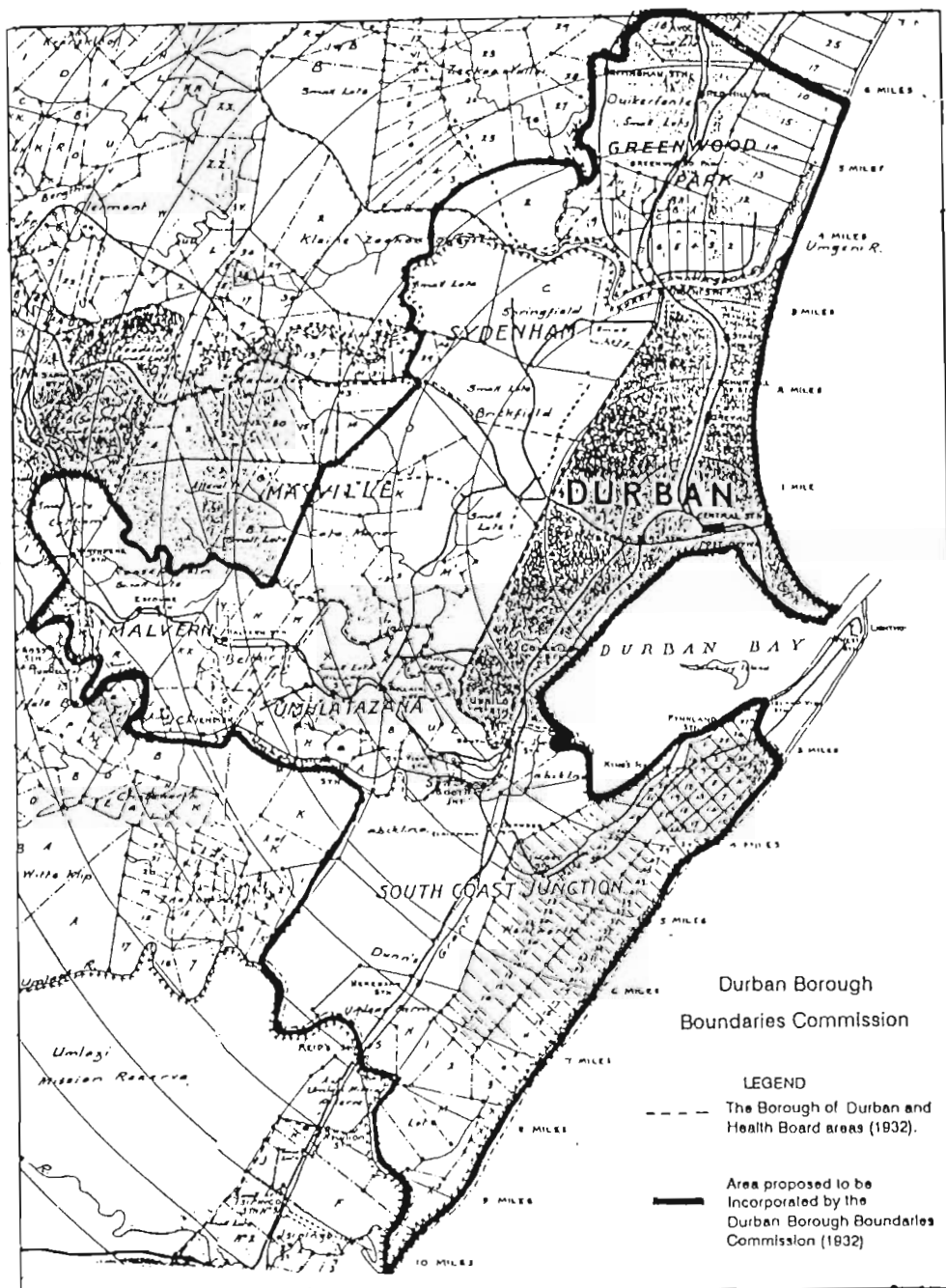


Figure 5.2

Borough of Durban and Health Board areas (1930) and area proposed to be incorporated into the Borough of Durban. Source: Durban Borough Boundaries Commission (1932).

Against a background of repeated investigations into patterns of changing racial occupance in urban neighbourhoods and allegations by white ratepayers about associated declines in property values, the Durban City Valuator and Estates Manager submitted a plan on "Race Zoning" to the same Committee in late 1943 (see Durban Housing Survey, 1952:399-416). He argued that the interests of all racial sections could best be served if they were housed in separate areas:

"Durban is faced with the problem of housing a community made up of four distinct sections, viz. Europeans, Natives, Indians and Coloureds. It is in the racial interests of all sections for them to be housed separately, one from the other" (Post-War Development Committee Report, 1943:19).

The Committee accordingly recommended the principle of racial zoning. According to Purcell (1974), this notion of racial zoning of areas (to be set aside for eventual exclusive use) clearly prefaces the philosophy implicit in the Population Registration and Group Areas Acts, brought into the level of the national state some ten years later.

Apart from the changing patterns of racial occupance and associated declines in property values that characterised this period, other imperatives were perceived as being equally important in precipitating the need for a particular form of racial zone planning. The mutual interdependence of race groups in the production process, according to the City Valuator and Estates Manager, was one such imperative (Durban Housing Survey, 1952). He argued that it appeared that the main future source of employment would be in the commercial and industrial areas of the Old Borough, and in the industrial areas of Maydon Wharf and Sydney Road, the Bayhead lands, Lamont Estate, and along the flats towards Isipingo. In other words, the areas to the west and south of the Bay appeared to be the logical zones for future industrialisation. Figure 5.3 illustrates the direction in which industry was proceeding by the 1950's. Since it was important that employees should be near to their places of employment, the four racial groups would need to be

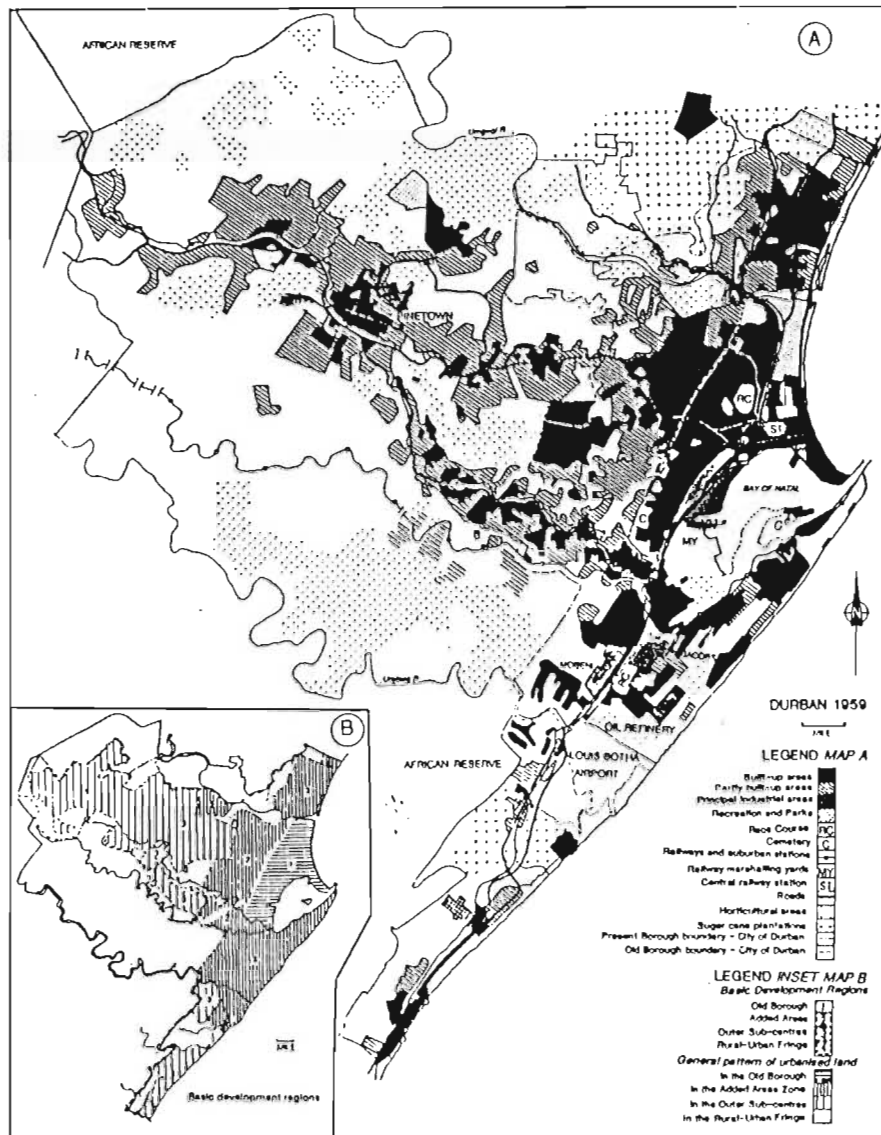


Figure 5.3

Spatial Form of Growth of the DMA illustrating direction in which industry was proceeding (1959). Source: Department of Geography, University of Natal.

accommodated both in the Old Borough and in the industrial area (Durban Housing Survey, 1952).

The City Valuator and Estates Manager diagrammatically illustrated his vision of the direction in which housing accommodation in the future should proceed, emphasising that his plan was not intended to set out boundary lines in detail (Figure 5.4). Comparison of Figure 5.4 with actual group areas in Durban today (Figure 5.5) reveal a remarkable degree of congruence of boundaries.

5.2.2 THE 1950's TO MID-1970's

According to McCarthy (1988b), the patterns of land use and housing development between 1950 and 1970 (Figure 5.6) correspond with those envisaged earlier in Durban's local state bureaucracy, and dovetail with patterns of racial segregation achieved during the period. Further adjustments to local state boundaries during this period were part of the process of accommodating such changes.

In this period, not only did actual industrialisation proceed in the direction envisaged in 1943, but by 1975, almost all industrially zoned land (ie. zones permitted by local government for industrial use) were located in areas which, in terms of the 1960 population census, had residential populations which were more than 60 percent black. Secondly, displaced populations were rehoused largely in public housing schemes, administered by the local state in those locations identified in 1943 (see recommendations of the 1944 Provincial Post-War and Reconstruction Commission in the Durban Housing Survey, 1952).

Significantly, the only extensions made to the Borough Boundary since 1932 were extensions in the Chatsworth, Reservoir Hills and Phoenix areas, which were areas of Indian housing (McCarthy, 1988b). As far as Africans were concerned, they were relocated into central or regional (bantustan) state administered public housing townships, also in the areas projected in 1943 (Umlazi and KwaMashu). The older, smaller formal African townships within the Borough Boundaries (Lamontville and

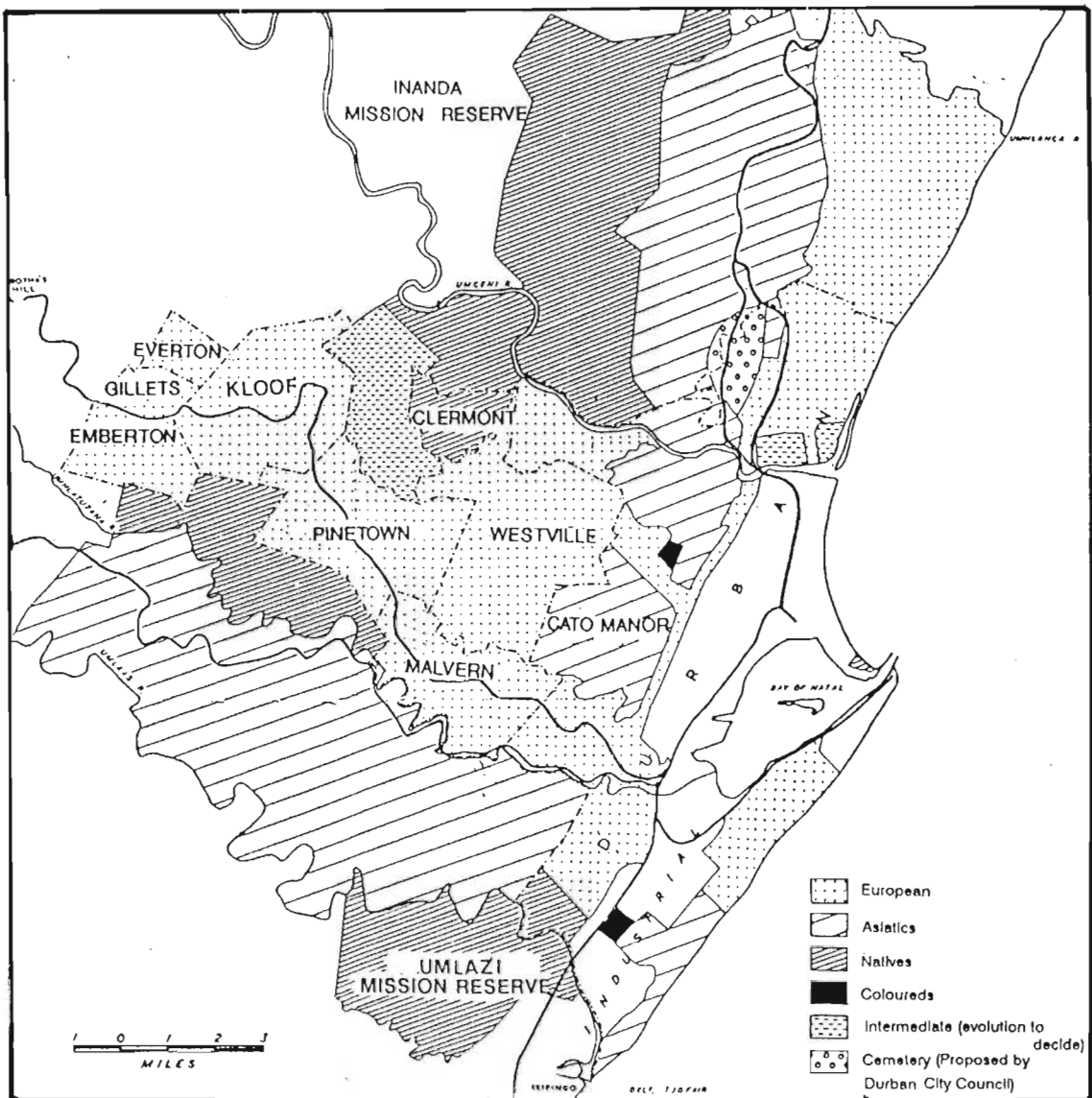


Figure 5.4

The 1943 plan of Group Areas in the DMA as recommended by the Provincial Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission. Source: Durban Housing Survey, 1952.



Figure 5.5 Existing Group Area boundaries in the DMA. Source: Department of Geography, University of Natal.

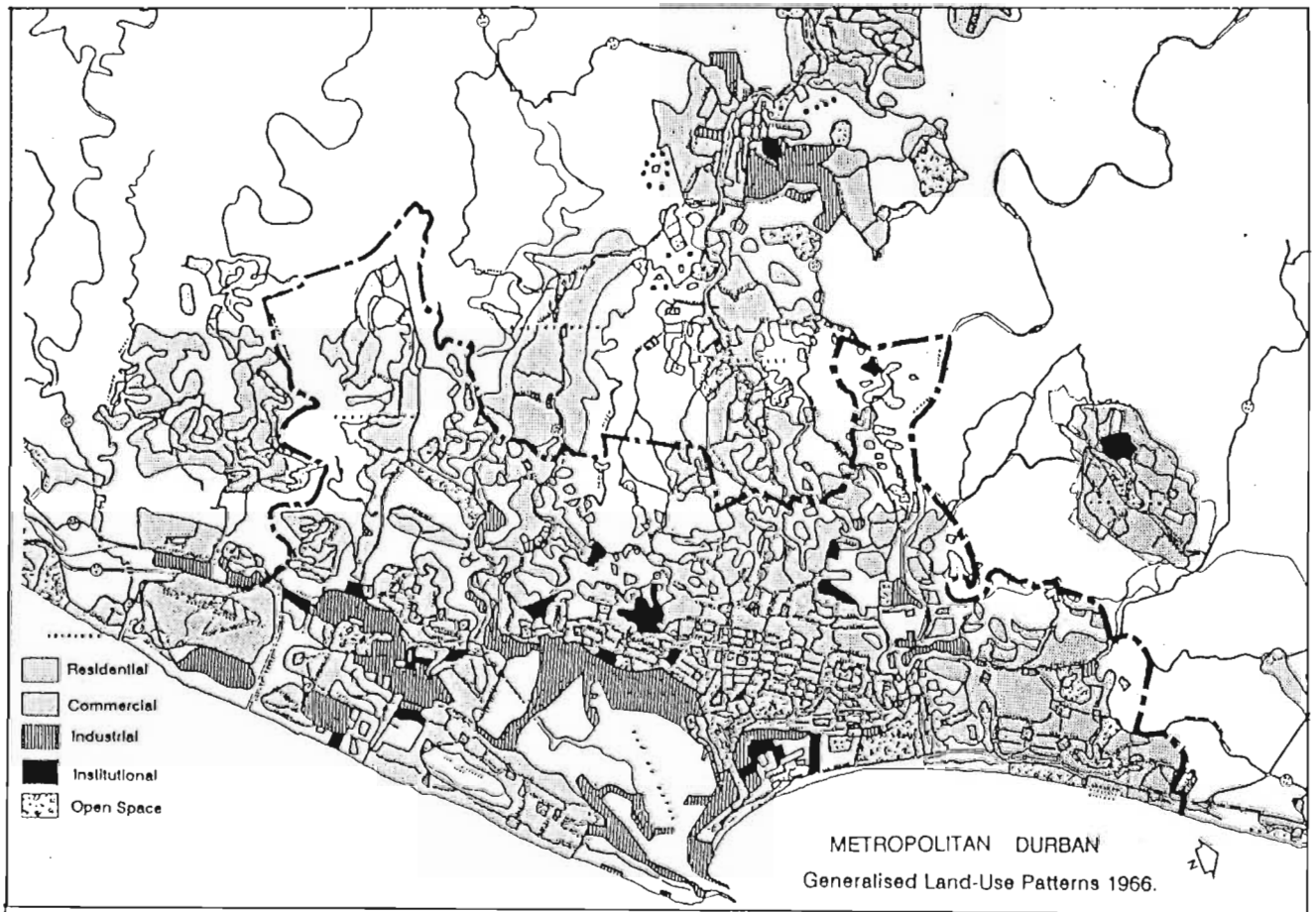


Figure 5.6 Generalised Land Use Patterns in the DMA. Source: Natal Town and Regional Planning Report, vol. 26.

Chesterville) were also taken over as the responsibility of the central state during this period.

The Group Areas Act (no. 41 of 1950) had as its main objective the establishment of separate areas for different racial groups (3). In terms of this Act, local authorities were to make specific submissions to a central state appointed Group Areas Board. In the Durban case, a Technical Sub-Committee was appointed by the Council in November, 1950 to devise specific proposals for submission to the Group Areas Board. The Technical Sub-Committee requested a pattern of race zoning very similar to that proposed by the City Valuator and Estates Manager in 1943, with an emphasis placed upon the population's interdependence in production and exchange.

Whilst accepting the broad principles of racial segregation, the Sub-Committee emphasised that "the most important determinant of the situation of a race zone is its proximity to employment" (Durban Housing Survey, 1952:421). Whilst it asserted that "if possible settled and racially homogenous populations should not be disturbed", it nevertheless offered the view that "race zoning in some cases is almost indistinguishable from slum clearance and ordinary housing programmes" (Durban Housing Survey, 1952:421). In the Technical Sub-Committee's view, in short, the implementation of the Group Areas Act meant many things other than merely 'tidying up' the few remaining racially integrated neighbourhoods in the city. The recommendations of the Technical Sub-Committee are diagrammatically reproduced here as Figure 5.7 (compare with Figure 5.4)(4).

It is within the above context that the patterns of popular resistance in the 1960's and early 1970's, weak though they may have been, can be appreciated. The agenda of popular organisations during the 1950's, 1960's and early 1970's was heavily dominated by the forced removals issue. In Durban, this was no exception.

It is generally agreed that following the recession which began in 1975, South African society entered a protracted period of 'organic crisis' (Saul and Gelb, 1977). A number of indicators of this crisis have been

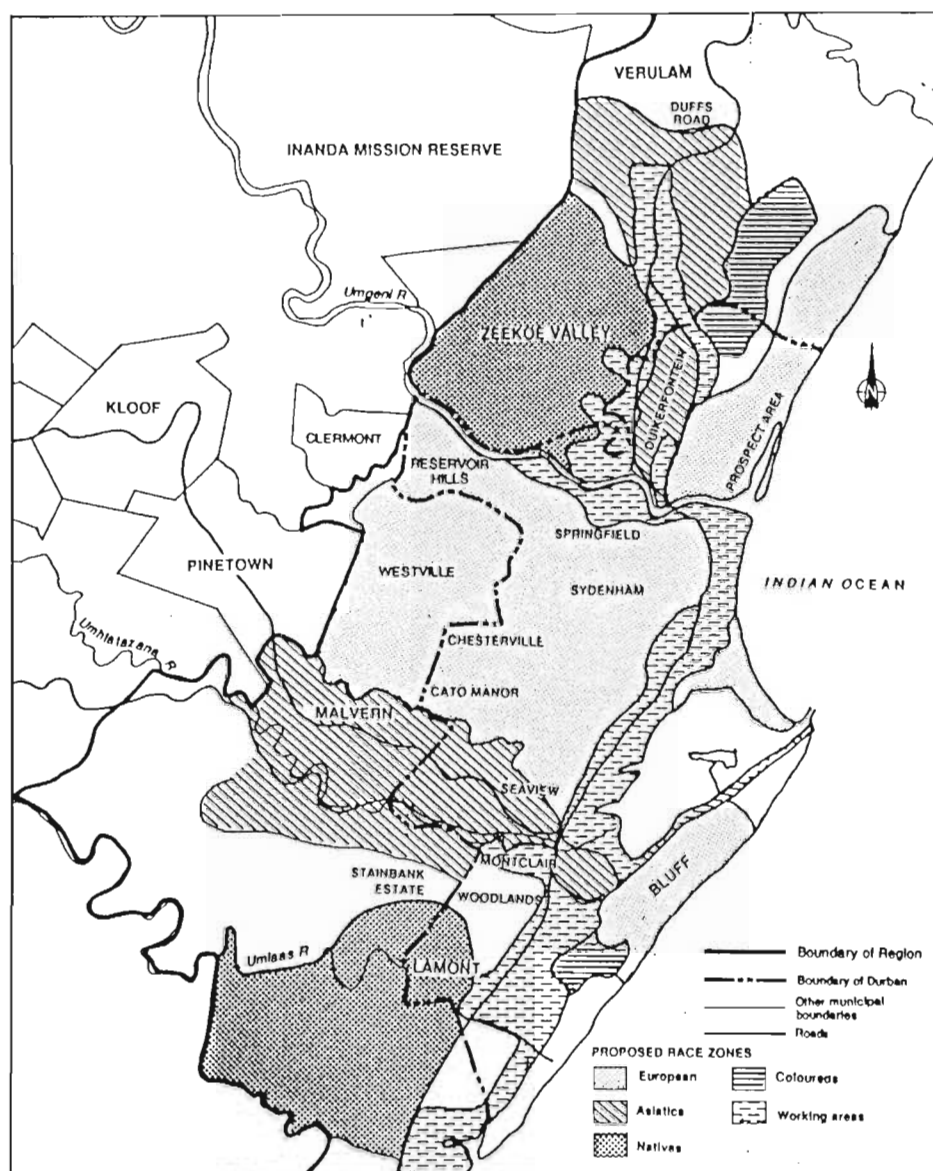


Figure 5.7

Race Zones in the DMA as proposed by the Durban Technical Sub-Committee (1951). Source: Durban Housing Survey, 1952.

outlined and explained in Chapter Four as the impetus behind the state's post-1976 reform programme. One of the chief components of this reform programme was a restructuring of the local government system. Initiatives emanating from the central state to restructure metropolitan political forms have also been discussed in Chapter Four. Local and regional initiatives to restructure metropolitan forms in the Durban area, as well as the problems associated with their implementation, are discussed in the following two sections of this chapter in the context of the broad analytic frameworks considered in previous chapters.

5.3 IMPLEMENTING RSCs IN NATAL

5.3.1 THE METROPOLITAN CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (METROCOM) AND THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONALISATION OF SERVICES INITIATIVES IN THE DURBAN METROPOLITAN AREA c. 1977-1988

A) THE FORMATION OF METROCOM AND INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Durban Metropolitan Consultative Committee (METROCOM) was formed in January 1977 at the instigation of the Natal Provincial Administration (NPA) for the purpose of achieving co-operation between all local authorities within the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA) and as a means of achieving a co-ordinated approach to the economical and efficient planning of the area (METROCOM memorandum, 7/1/88; interview with Mr Gordon Haygarth, 22/5/89). According to the memorandum, a spirit of co-operation has been built up between members with regard to matters of common concern, and mutual assistance is provided when required. Representation has at all times been available not only to local authorities within the region, but to other interested bodies, including the NPA and the KwaZulu Government.

In November 1979, the NPA requested the Consultative Committee to undertake the task of examining the concept of regionalisation of services for the area, and to submit a memorandum on the Administrator's proposal that a Metropolitan Utilities Board be established to deal with all services in the DMA (METROCOM memorandum, 7/1/88; METROCOM letter,

25/10/88). Extensive investigations commenced (5) and arising from these, a number of fundamental decisions were made by the Committee which formed the basis of the proposed Metropolitan Services Board. These were listed in early 1980 and included the following:

- (i) As there can be no artificial boundaries in the supply of essential services, the area of jurisdiction of the proposed Board be the complete area as defined by the Town and Regional Planning Commission and the Durban Metropolitan Transport Advisory Board, including the adjacent KwaZulu areas and areas under the control of Community Services and Administration Boards (Figure 5.8).
- (ii) The Services Board should not be a fourth tier of government and should be structured as a horizontal extension of local government, providing regional services to local authorities.
- (iii) The Services Board must be structured to ensure the autonomy of individual local authorities.
- (iv) The composition of the Services Board should ensure representation of all consumers of services provided in the entire metropolitan area. To achieve this, a system would have to be formulated to ensure representation from consumers in townships and informal settlements in the region. Although all consumers would be represented on the Board, voting would be in accordance with municipal valuations.
- (v) Services which by mutual agreement would be provided on a regional basis must be proved to be cost effective and efficient.

(METROCOM memoranda, 25/11/81; 7/1/88).

The memorandum for the establishment of the proposed Metropolitan Services Board was submitted for approval to all members of METROCOM in September 1981. These proposals, and the comments thereon of the various

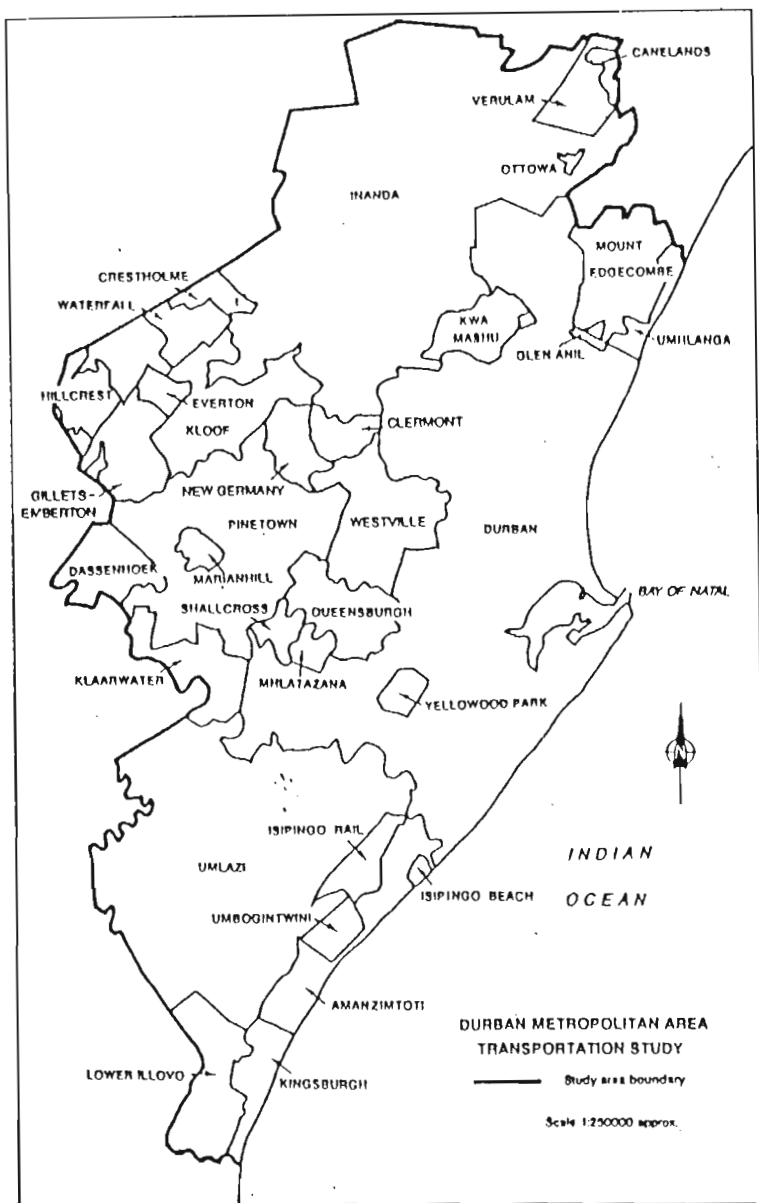


Figure 5.8

Durban Metropolitan Area Transport Study Boundary (1980-1985) and recommended boundary of Metropolitan Utilities Board for the DMA. Source: Durban Metropolitan Transport Area Interim Transport Plan (1980-1985).

local and other authorities, came before the Metropolitan Committee and the proposals were approved on 30 October 1981 (METROCOM memorandum, 25/11/81)(6).

The memorandum was submitted to the NPA in November 1981 and in view of the fact that METROCOM is a non-statutory Committee, members were given the opportunity of submitting their own comments on the memorandum to the Provincial Administration. In a letter accompanying the memorandum to the Provincial Secretary, METROCOM stated that they had approved the memorandum subject to an intensive financial investigation being undertaken into the costs and the financial implications of the regionalisation of services (METROCOM letter and memorandum to the Provincial Secretary, 25/11/81). Attention was also drawn to the fact that considerable technical research into those services being regionalised was undertaken by the various working parties of the Metropolitan Committee (7). A request was made to the NPA to engage and finance the services of consultants, who would be responsible to and report to METROCOM, to undertake an in-depth study of cost structures and benefits arising from the proposed regionalisation of services.

B) THE PIM GOLDBY REPORT

Pim Goldby Management Services (Pty) Ltd was commissioned by the Committee in 1983 to undertake an intensive investigation into the costs and financial implications of the proposed regionalisation of services defined by the Committee. The investigation was completed in October 1984 and highlighted the fact that substantial savings would occur if minimum standard of services were provided by a regional authority. According to the Natal Mercury (18/10/84) :

"....savings of up to more than R5 000 000 could be achieved if services were controlled by one authority in the Durban Metropolitan Area instead of by the current 43. The regional body would be the proposed Regional Services Council (RSC) which is to be established in terms of the new constitution".

The area proposed for the regionalisation of services was the area bounded by Umhlanga in the north, Lower Illovo and Kingsburgh in the south and Hillcrest in the west - the planning boundary as depicted in the metropolitan Durban Draft Guide Plan (Figure 5.9). According to the report, services provided by local authorities in the above area had cost more than R146 000 000 in 1984. If separate authorities continued to provide services at minimum standards, costs would increase by nearly R13 000 000 or 9 percent to R159 000 000. If the same minimum standard of services were provided by a single regional authority, R5 000 000 or 3,3 percent of the costs would be saved (Table 5.1).

The report went on to recommend that the regionalisation of most services could best be done by appointing individual authorities and established corporations that already provided these services as agents of the regional body. This, it was hoped, would avoid the creation of a massive and costly administrative body for the region. The proposed RSC would then contract agents to provide services on its behalf with the ownership of assets remaining with the agents. Authorities involved in providing many of the services would continue to do so, but the operating costs would be borne by the RSC, not the local authority (Pim Goldby Report, 1984). It was envisaged that the total costs of the proposed regional services board or RSC would be funded through tariffs, contributions by other levels of government and recoveries on the net deficit of the RSC (Pim Goldby Report, 1984).

The Pim Goldby Report was accepted by METROCOM in late October 1984. The response of the local authorities to the consultants findings (and METROCOM's acceptance of the report) were positive if not a little cautious. While endorsing the concept of regionalisation of services, the town clerks of Durban, Pinetown, Umhlanga and New Germany, for instance, were of the opinion the "local authorities will have to consider the report and they may not agree with all the assumptions made" and "an awful lot of sorting out of criteria acceptable to all local authorities would have to be done" (Daily News, 19/10/84). According to a Financial Mail article a week after the METROCOM report was announced, the main concern of the local authorities was how much

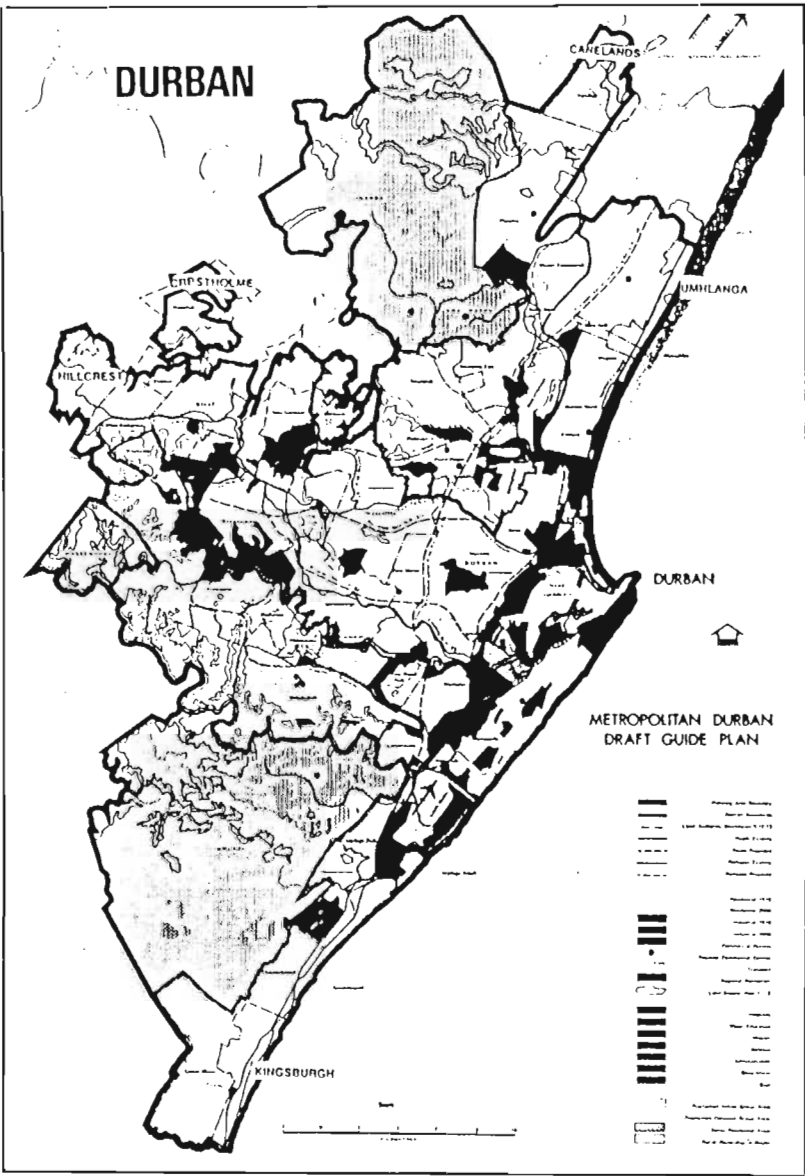


Figure 5.9

Metropolitan Durban Draft Guide Plan (1974) and recommended boundary for regionalisation of services in the DMA. Source: Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission.

(R'000)

	THE AGGREGATE EXISTING NET COSTS POINT X	THE AGGREGATE NET COSTS WHERE THE MINIMUM STANDARDS ARE PROVIDED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS POINT Y	THE AGGREGATE NET COSTS WHERE THE MINIMUM STANDARDS ARE PROVIDED ON A REGIONAL BASIS POINT Z
Durban	R 108 900	R 110 717	R 111 231
Amanzimtoti	3 617	4 740	5 316
Pinetown	8 215	9 494	9 613
Westville	3 283	3 926	5 399
New Germany	1 908	2 572	2 298
Queensburgh	2 367	3 010	2 769
Umhlanga	2 746	3 517	3 405
Hillcrest	322	781	705
Isipingo	1 490	1 997	1 339
Kingsburgh	1 568	1 623	1 685
Kloof	1 100	1 640	2 000
Verulam	1 048	1 133	1 377
Canelands	90	90	101
Everton	39	52	81
Gillits-Emberton	127	157	505
Lower Illovo	7	26	151
Mariannhill	-	(1)	1
Umbogintwini	272	276	1 783
Yellow Wood Park	253	277	588
Development & Services Board	1 044	1 163	1 322
Water Corporations	37	37	0
Natalia Development Board	607	654	174
Dept of Co-operation and Development	59	1 492	186
KwaZulu Government	7 027	9 709	1 764
TOTAL	R 146 126	R 159 083	R 153 793

(1) Amount less than R1 000

Table 5.1 The aggregate net cost structures of regionalisation of services in the DMA according to the working hypothesis of Pim Goldby Management Services. Source : Pim Goldby Report, 1984.

the proposed fourth tier of government would cost (Financial Mail, 26/10/84). As a barometer of public opinion, the editorials of the Daily News (18/10/84) and the Natal Mercury (19/10/84) are worthy of mention. The Daily News (18/10/84) editorial commented:

"The announcement of a vast METROCOM plan embracing the needs of 40 towns in the Durban region should be welcomed with enthusiasm for it promises a more efficiently run set of regional services and, more important, it will save everybody money".

The Natal Mercury (19/10/84) added:

"the report's findings may not find favour with everyone, which is hardly surprising in view of the many local authorities involved. But its proposals will undoubtedly be of great help to the Parliamentary Select Committee which is in the process of putting together the framework for the proposed RSCs intended to overhaul local government".

Both editorials expressed as extremely promising the fact that not least among the report's many virtues was the fact that, unlike many major planning moves affecting the lives of local people, the plan was not drawn up in a remote Pretoria office, but rather by local people who best understand Durban's needs and who will be able to live with the results.

5.3.2 INTRODUCTION OF THE RSC BILL AND SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS

In May 1985, the RSC Bill was introduced in Parliament. METROCOM made strong representations to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs as the Bill excluded KwaZulu areas from participating in RSCs and made no provision for established corporations to act as agents of the RSC. A memorandum criticising these and other

aspects of the Bill was also submitted to the Standing Committee by the DCC (Natal Mercury, 23/5/85). The RSC Act, as amended by the Standing Committee, was gazetted in July 1985. Amendments included clauses enabling KwaZulu to participate in RSCs, agency agreements to be undertaken and services to be provided to informal settlement areas.

A) THE 1985 METROCOM MEMORANDA

In August 1985, METROCOM submitted a further memorandum to the Provincial Administration updating the original submissions made in 1981 in accordance with the RSC Act and highlighting the financial conclusions reached as a result of the report of the consultants. It was reiterated by the then secretary of METROCOM, Gordon Haygarth, that the financing and functioning of regionalisation of services in the DMA could best be accomplished as a local initiative (METROCOM memorandum, 26/8/85; interview, 22/5/89).

The area of the region was extended beyond the 1981 proposals (Figure 5.10) in consultation with the KwaZulu Cabinet. According to METROCOM, the KwaZulu Cabinet have always accepted that the area of any regional authority established for the provision of services should include those parts of its territory which are logically and inextricably part of the metropolitan complex. In fact, the following resolution was adopted by the KwaZulu Cabinet on 30 July 1985:

"Cabinet approves in principle tentative boundaries for the Durban Metropolitan Regional Services Council as reflected in City Engineer's drawings 21836 and 35021 - sheet 1 - Northern boundary only" (METROCOM memorandum 26/8/85).

The document contained a revised schedule of regional services and the number of votes to which each of the local bodies would be entitled was to be based on electricity consumption. The steps that needed to be taken to prepare agency agreements as contemplated in section 4(3)(a) of the RSC Act were also laid down in the memorandum. It was also envisaged that the funding of the proposed RSC would be through uniform tariffs

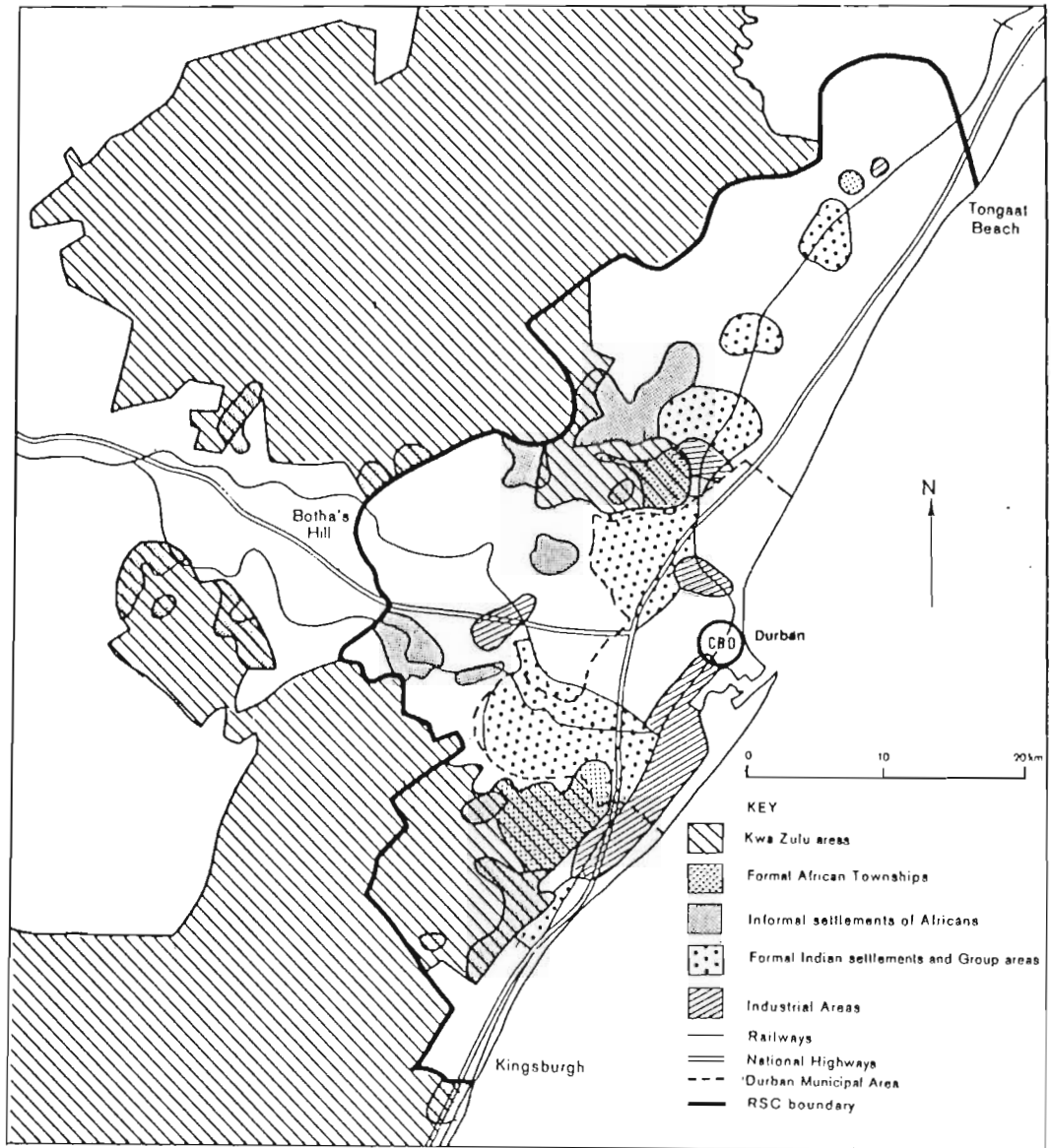


Figure 5.10

The Durban RSC area in relation to Black residential concentrations as proposed by METROCOM (1985). Source: Department of Geography, University of Natal.

fixed by the Council as well as through the regional establishment levy and the regional services levy as contemplated in section 12(1) of the Act (8).

A request was made to the Provincial Administration that in view of the in-depth research that had been already conducted on the region, an RSC should be established on 1 January 1986. The local bodies to be represented on a Greater Durban RSC were listed in the memorandum as follows:

- White and Indian local authorities in an area which includes Amanzimtoti, Isipingo, Gillits, Pinetown, Verulam, Tongaat, Umhlanga and Umhloti;
- Natalia Development Board townships;
- KwaZulu Government townships; and
- LACs.

The memorandum noted that insofar as informal areas were concerned, upon their converting to juristic persons, they would be given representation (9). Attention was also drawn to the fact that negotiations with the KwaZulu Government be undertaken as a matter of urgency given the "measure of opposition to the Act expressed from time to time on the part of KwaZulu, it would seem on political grounds linked with its manner of introduction" (METROCOM memorandum, 19/6/87).

A Natal Mercury editorial (2/9/85) under the heading "Give it a Chance" commented:

"As a blueprint for the future, few will quibble with the plan for a Greater Durban RSC outlined recently by METROCOM. It is a feather in the cap of the Province's local authorities and a credit to the Natal Provincial Administration (NPA)

which set the wheels in motion as far back as 1976".

The point was also made in the editorial (as it had been made a year earlier following the release of the Pim Goldby Report) that one of the strongest virtues in the new body (RSC) was that it was not conceived in a remote Pretoria office, but by local people who best understand Natal's needs, and who will be able to live with the results (Natal Mercury, 2/9/85).

Also at this time, a report to the Mayor's Steering Committee, City of Durban, on the proposed RSC area for the Durban Metropolitan Region (DMR) was made available. The study was undertaken by consulting Civil Engineers and Town and Regional Planners, H.B. Malan Inc. On the basis of the criteria used to determine existing and future urban development, regional services, administrative and statistical areas and regional boundaries in the DMR, the consultants recommended an "average" boundary for the RSC as illustrated in Figure 5.11 - a boundary drawn mainly along river courses in the DMR (Report of H.B. Malan Inc., 1986:11) (10).

B) LEGAL AND POLITICAL OBSTACLES

During the latter half of 1986 and the early part of 1987, certain legal and political obstacles were encountered at both provincial and local level in the implementation of the RSC Act in accordance with the memoranda of the Committee. These are dealt with in some detail in the following section. Some of these problems, particularly the politically related ones (for example, the KwaZulu Government's total opposition to the RSC Act), had emerged during 1985, but, for reasons which are elaborated shortly, they began to play a critical role only from late 1986 onwards.

According to METROCOM (METROCOM memorandum, 7/1/88), it became apparent during 1987 that a RSC could not be implemented if it included the areas of KwaZulu as defined in the Committee's memoranda. In other words, legally, it appeared to be the case that no KwaZulu areas could be

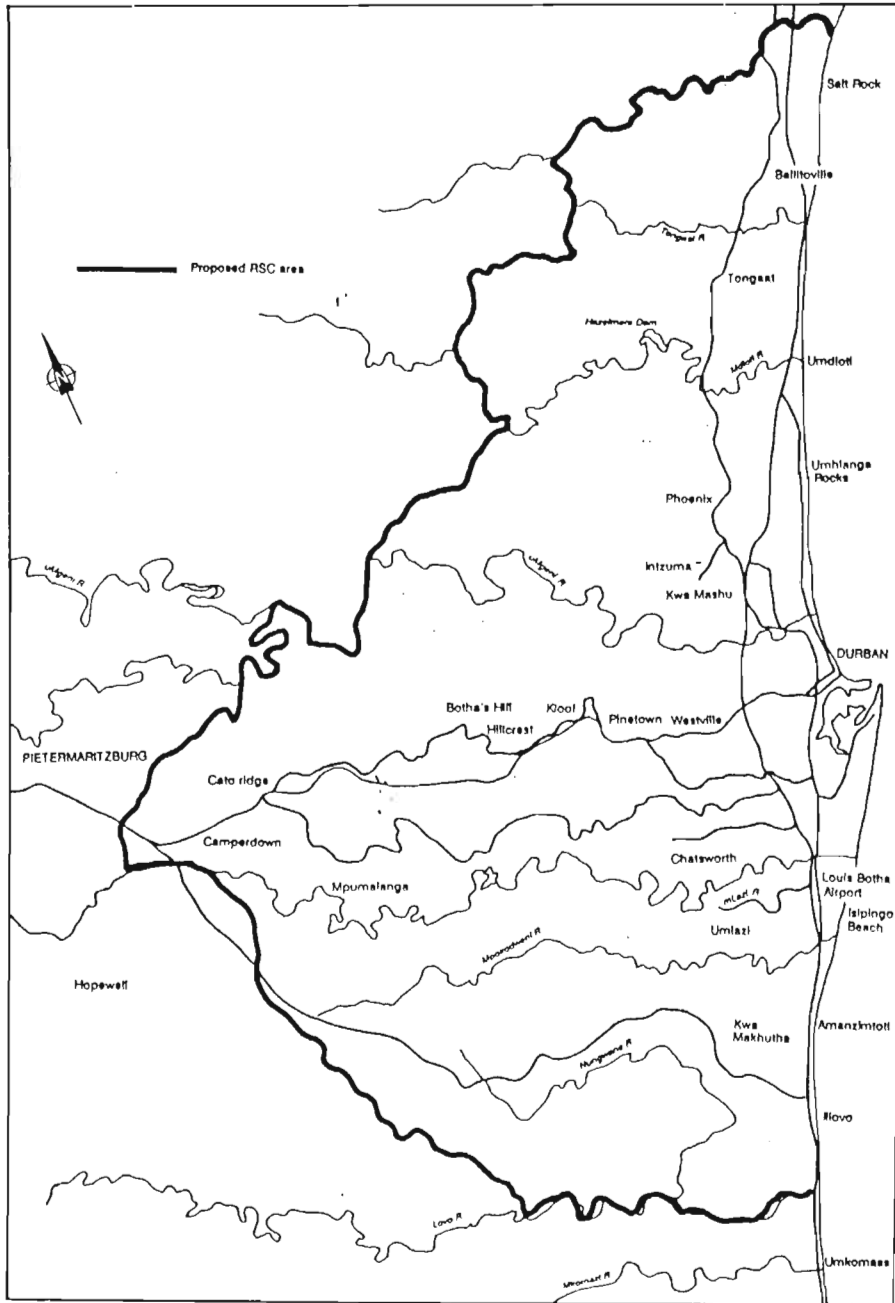


Figure 5.11

Proposed RSC boundary for the DMA in a report to the Mayor's Steering Committee (1986). Source: H.B. Malan Inc.

formally incorporated within the ambit of a Greater Durban RSC. It was a matter viewed with grave concern by METROCOM and a memorandum was submitted to the State President on 19 June 1987. In it, METROCOM pointed out that the impasse which had been created over the above matter would prevent the full implementation of the Act and the attainment of its objectives in one of the largest metropolitan areas in the Republic. A plea was made to the State President that whatever steps, legislative or otherwise, needed to be taken to remove the obstacles to such implementation, should be urgently taken (METROCOM memorandum, 19/6/87) (11).

As it became increasingly clear to METROCOM that KwaZulu areas "economically bonded to the region" (METROCOM memorandum, 19/6/87) would be excluded from the jurisdiction of a RSC, an urgent meeting of the Committee was convened on 7 August 1987 where the following resolutions were unanimously accepted:

- (i) That in view of the difficulties envisaged with the establishment of a restricted RSC in the Durban area, and until such time as the matter has been satisfactorily resolved, the Provincial Secretary be requested to delay the introduction of such a body in the Durban area.
- (ii) That in the interim, the original recommendations of the Executive Committee of the Metropolitan Committee submitted to the Provincial Secretary in November 1981 in regard to the establishment of a body for the provision of regional services, be updated in accordance with subsequent research undertaken by the Committee, and that based on such information, discussions be held between METROCOM and the KwaZulu Government with a view to emphasising the advantages of services being provided to areas within the jurisdiction of the latter body.
- (iii) That METROCOM consider the formulation of alternative proposals with regard to the establishment of a proposed Greater Durban RSC.

(METROCOM Minutes, 7/8/87).

On 15 December 1987, representatives of METROCOM attended a meeting with the Chief Minister and members of the KwaZulu Cabinet. This was followed by a meeting with Peter Miller, MEC in charge of local government, NPA. Arising from these meetings, it was agreed that the recommendations of METROCOM be submitted to the Joint Executive Authority (JEA) (12) to form the basis of discussions on regionalisation of services within the Greater Durban Area. Accordingly, a memorandum outlining METROCOM'S recommendations was submitted to the JEA on 7 January 1988. In it, METROCOM stated that in terms of resolutions (ii) and (iii) adopted at its meeting on 7 August 1987, it was prepared to fully co-operate with the JEA on the basis of the proposed outline in the memorandum. In conclusion, METROCOM went on to suggest that:

- (i) the Regional Services Councils Act, insofar as it relates to the Greater Durban Area, be repealed and substituted immediately by legislation permitting the introduction of a Durban Metropolitan Services Board for such area which shall embody the principles accepted and defined by the Metropolitan Consultative Committee.
- (ii) it be recorded that the foregoing principles of the Metropolitan Committee in respect of regionalisation of services have been unanimously accepted by all local authorities, associated local government bodies and Water Corporations in the Greater Durban Area, as well as by the KwaZulu Government.
- (iii) the area of jurisdiction of the above Board include established communities in KwaZulu who shall have representation on the Board and which shall be represented by region on the Board's Executive Committee in a similar manner to that of the Executive Committee of the Metropolitan Committee.
- (iv) the financial arrangements associated with the proposed Board be in accordance with those reflected in the Regional Services Councils Act.

(METROCOM memorandum, 7/1/88)

The formation of METROCOM and the historical development of regionalisation of services initiatives in the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA) has sketched a scenario of the impasse that has arisen in the implementation of RSCs in the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA). A complete and accurate understanding of this situation requires an examination of the key actors involved in this process and their motivations, intentions and rationales. It is to this that the discussion now turns.

5.3.3 A STALEMATE - TOWARDS AN EXPLANATION

Following the introduction of the RSC Bill in Parliament, and notwithstanding the initial acceptance of the Bill in official quarters in Durban, and the fact that it was hoped that a RSC would be operational in Durban by January 1986, the implementation of a RSC in Durban was to become embroiled in controversy and much bitterness. A detailed explanation follows.

A) ORGANISED BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

One of the first opponents of the RSC Bill in the DMA, although not to regionalisation of services initiatives in general, was organised business and commerce. In fact, RSCs met their first stiff opposition throughout the country in the form of local business coalitions. At around the same time that the RSC Bill was being introduced in Parliament, business groups in Durban hit out at the tax regulation implications of the Bill, arguing then as they continue to do now, that the method of funding Regional Services Councils (RSCs) would increase inflation and put many people out of work (13).

Spokesmen for the Durban Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce (DMCC) and the Natal Chamber of Industries (NCI) argued that the taxes levied on business would further depress industry and commerce, lead to higher inflation, higher unemployment and more business going under (Natal Mercury, 10/5/85). These sentiments were shared and endorsed by other

business sectors and coalitions throughout the country. The Association of Chambers of Commerce (ASSOCOM), the Federated Chamber of Industries (FCI) and The South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA) criticised the system as "totally unworkable" (Business Day, 9/5/85).

There seems, however, to have been nothing inevitable about the rejection of RSCs by organised business and commerce. These groups were never hostile to the concept/idea of regionalisation of services. For instance, in Durban, local initiatives aimed at regionalising services (METROCOM proposals) were welcomed by local business coalitions. In fact, business coalitions in the Durban area had played a significant role in helping to shape these proposals. It is also known that the "partial, and selective redistribution of social resources towards the black majority" (Morris and Padayachee, 1988:9) element of the state's 1980 reform programme, was endorsed by significant fractions of capital. The tapping of the metropolitan business sector for tax revenue (as envisaged through RSCs) is also not new in South Africa. It is common in many South African cities to provide non-business ratepayers with a degree of relief from their burden which places a correspondingly higher burden on business taxpayers (Solomon, 1987).

Rejection of RSCs by organised business and commerce in Durban (as was the case elsewhere in the country) seems to be a direct result of the specific mechanisms governing the RSC tax regulation system. They exhibited common concern over:

- (i) a decline in profit rates;
- (ii) the fact that the tax will now be collected on a regional and not a local level, implying that all wealthy areas in a metropolis will now be taxed;
- (iii) the fact that the taxes are intended to encourage decentralisation of economic activity from the metropolitan areas (and it is known that the government's decentralisation and deconcentration policies were not favourably received by certain fractions of capital).

The rejection of RSCs by organised business and commerce in the DMA (DMCC, NCI) seems to be best explained in terms of the stand taken nationally by capital on the issue at the time. However, it must also be pointed out that Natal-based capital was integrally involved, since 1977, in attempts to establish a special 'Natal dispensation' independent of central government's regionalisation initiatives. For reasons which are elaborated below, they could well have been averse to central government plans to implement a reformed and restructured local government system in Natal (without KwaZulu's participation), given the alliances that were formed, and regional solutions proposed, by the mid-eighties.

While objections to the tax regulation implications of RSCs by business and commerce feature throughout the RSC debacle in Durban, it seems not to have been a serious contributing factor in the delay in implementing RSCs (interesting insights emerge, however, if we look at Natal-based capital's role in promoting alternative regional political forms in Natal/KwaZulu). It will be recalled that similar objections were raised by business coalitions throughout the country just prior to the establishment of RSCs.

B) THE DURBAN CITY COUNCIL (DCC) AND THE METROPOLITAN CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (METROCOM)

It was in fact a thorough reading of the RSC Bill by, amongst others, the Durban City Council (DCC) and METROCOM that marked the beginning of the problems. It will be recalled that much was expected of the RSC Bill from local bodies in Durban since it was hoped that the government legislators would take their cue from the groundwork already done by METROCOM and draft a Bill accordingly. In fact, right up until the introduction of the RSC Bill in Parliament, METROCOM was of the opinion that the Bill would not deviate substantially from its recommendations and that the regional council which evolved would closely resemble that proposed by it (Natal Mercury, 11/5/85).

One of the main objections of the DCC (and later METROCOM), was the fact that the Bill made no provision for representation of Indian, Coloured and informal black settlement areas that do not fall within the jurisdiction of Local Affairs Committees (LACs) or black local bodies. What this meant was that KwaZulu areas most in need of infrastructural upgrading would not be represented, and therefore excluded from the ambit of a RSC. It also meant that those areas that did fall within the jurisdiction of a RSC, but did not conform to either black local authority or LAC status, would not be represented on the RSC. Other objections included uncertainty on the question of representation for LACs, the functions the regional council would undertake (for instance, the DCC believed that housing should be a 'general' and not an 'own' affair), the question of whether the RSC chairman should be elected or appointed, voting allocations, and so on. Members of the DCC management committee also expressed concern as to whether the agency system would be used (Natal Mercury, 23/5/85)

At the same time, METROCOM made strong representations to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on constitutional affairs, objecting, inter alia, to the fact that the Bill made no provision for established corporations to act as agents of the RSC. Furthermore, in view of basic decisions made in 1981, METROCOM was totally opposed to the introduction of an RSC which would exclude areas in KwaZulu (Natal Mercury, 6/6/85).

It seems ironic that METROCOM should have become engaged in a confrontationist stance with central government on the issue of RSCs, given that METROCOM was instigated by the NPA, and provincial government in South Africa generally owes allegiance to central government. However, as will be elaborated shortly, Natal provincial politics, up until recently, has never fallen under the hegemony of the National Party (NP). It also appears that the central government 'put the brakes' on METROCOM in fear of its local government restructuring programme being overtaken by local initiatives (although it has been argued that METROCOM had played a significant role in actually shaping the RSC Bill). As the Financial Mail (26/10/84) has pointed out, sentiment around Pretoria during the course of these debates was that METROCOM, a

purely Natal initiative, was attempting to pre-empt its (Pretoria's) remodelling of the lower levels of government (15).

In the Durban case at least, initial government pronouncements of maximum devolution of power and minimum administrative control at the local level in its new, ostensibly democratic system of local government was therefore tainted from the very start. As Cameron (1986; 1987) has concluded, government reform (including local government reform) was to take place solely within the parameters set by itself. There would be concessions, but it would not be dictated to.

C) AMENDMENTS TO THE RSC BILL - AMBIVALENCE AND ACCEPTANCE

The Regional Services Council Act as amended by the Standing Committee, was gazetted in July, 1985. The following amendments to the Bill, of particular significance to the Natal region, were to be found:

- (i) Provision is made for a RSC to negotiate an agreement with a National State and for the community to be represented on the RSC (Section 4[3]). This allows for KwaZulu areas to be included and represented on a Greater Durban RSC.
- (ii) A council may enter into an agreement with a local body or any other person or institution which is a juristic person in terms of which that local body, person or institution undertakes to exercise or perform any regional function or part thereof on behalf of the council (Section 4[3]). Representation is also made for that juristic person on the council. In effect, agency agreements could now be undertaken.
- (iii) The redefinition of the term 'representative body' to read any body of which one or more members of its executive are elected by the members of that body and the members of which body consist of persons residing or communities established outside the area of jurisdiction of any local authority or management body in a region, and to members of which body, any regional service is provided, or may be provided (Section 1[xv]). This

amendment it would seem had in mind the provision of services to informal settlement areas.

(RSC Act no. 109 of 1985)

The RSC Act of 1985 was subsequently revised and amended. However, at the time, it sought to redress major questions and issues of contention which had arisen as a result of weaknesses in the Bill. It had implications for the establishment of RSCs countrywide.

An ambivalence about RSCs in Natal allowed an initial acceptance of the structures by late 1985, at least among white local government officials and councillors (substantive amendments to the RSC Bill had much to do with this). The more conservative Indian politicians were similarly well disposed given their generally cliental relationship under reforms sponsored by the National Party (McCarthy, 1988a). On the national front as well, as the Cape Times (10/6/85) has reported, while the Bill was meeting with resistance on a wide-front, it was likely to receive the necessary support from government's junior "coalition" partners in the House of Representatives and the House of Delegates.

It was around this time that the two major populist political groupings in Natal, the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Inkatha, expressed dissatisfaction with RSCs. Despite their political differences, both organisations rejected RSCs on the grounds that there was:

- a lack of consultation with them in the formulation of the RSC Act;
- a bias towards the wealthy in the allocation of voting powers;
- an effective entrenchment of racial segregation at the local authority level, from which RSC representatives are to be nominated.

D) INKATHA

The point must be made at the outset that Inkatha has never been hostile to the concept of regionalisation of services in the Greater Durban Area. Indeed, the KwaZulu Cabinet in fact adopted the 1985 METROCOM proposals. The fact that they were at no time party to discussions which resulted in the formulation of the RSC Act (as well as for reasons cited above) has had much to do with their rejection of RSCs. This has always been a contentious point, and has, in no uncertain manner contributed to the impasse in the region. A fuller explanation however, of why the KwaZulu Government and Inkatha have for so long rejected RSCs and delayed their implementation in the region, is necessarily more deep rooted.

The specificity (in spatial and historical terms) of the Natal/KwaZulu region has been the subject of much debate and a small, but significant, amount of scholarly work in recent years. This specificity is partly due to the closely inter-woven character of sub-regions of Natal and KwaZulu in economic and demographic terms (Figure 5.12). However, it also derives from a climate of opposition from powerful Natal-based interests for a special 'Natal dispensation'. This climate of opposition began in 1977 following Pretoria's insistence that KwaZulu take full political independence.

The first initiative to establish a 'KwaNatal option' came from within the sugar industry which commissioned the economist Professor Jan Lombard to investigate alternatives to land consolidation in KwaZulu. The South African Sugar Association was particularly worried that consolidation would cause loss of valuable sugar land, and therefore, profits to KwaZulu. In 1980, the Lombard Report proposed a 'Natal solution' based on a single, if still racially based, administrative system for the province (15).

The Buthelezi Commission (BC) was a significantly more far-reaching reformist initiative than the Lombard Report, coming as it did from a cluster of groupings - both black and white - eager to engage in "serious ideological competition with those propogating more radical

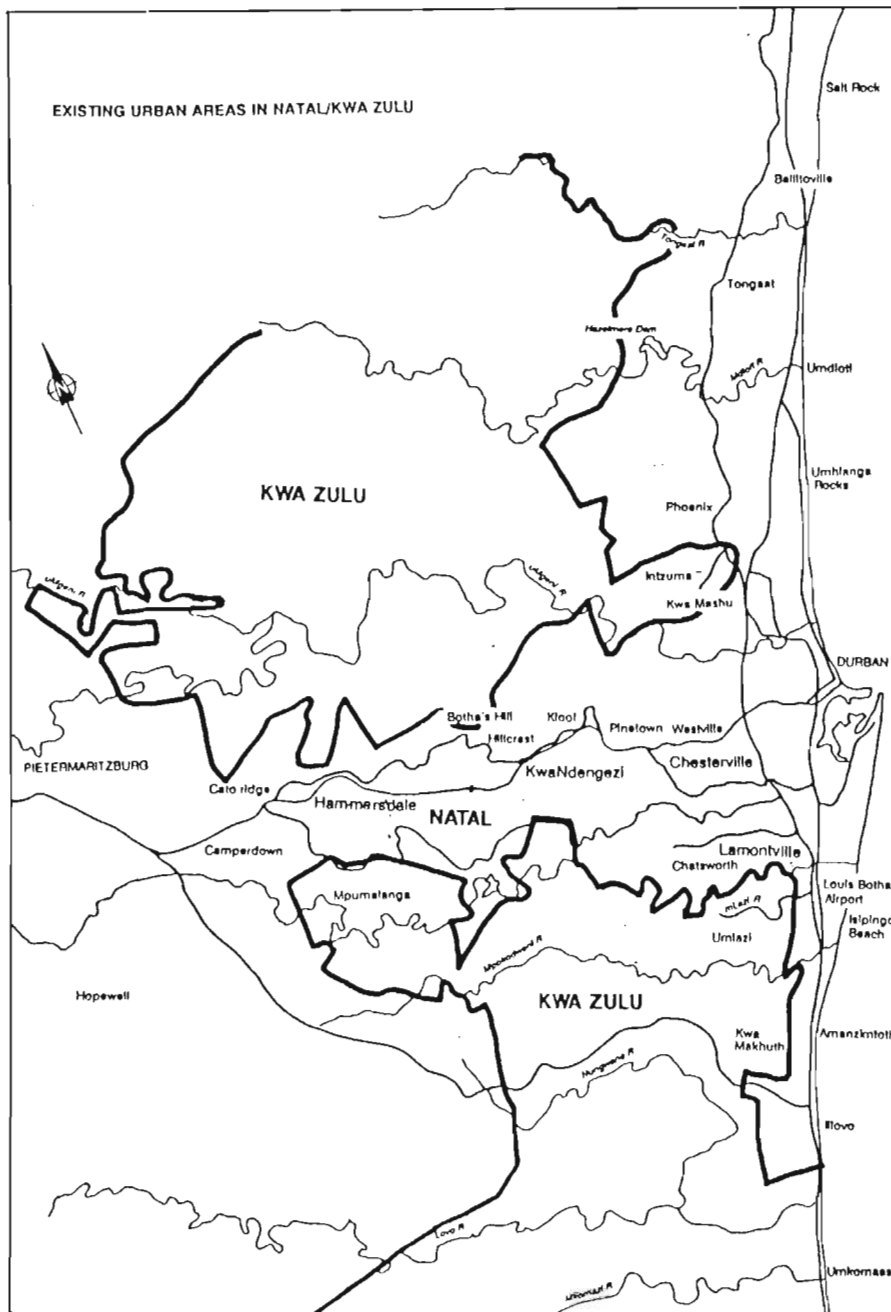


Figure 5.12

Existing urban areas in Natal/KwaZulu illustrating the demographically interwoven nature of the sub-regions.
Source: H.B. Malan Inc.

socio-political models for South Africa" (Glaser, 1986:5/6). According to Mare` (1987), the BC was essentially Buthelezi's blueprint for a Lancaster House-type solution in South Africa - a political system of cross-cutting allegiances to dull the antagonisms of racial as well as class divisions (16). The BC suggested that the DMA could serve as an interim laboratory for a region-wide political structure.

The government and the NP rejected the Buthelezi Commission Report when it was released in 1982, and they repeatedly criticised the Commission over the period 1981-1984. This, according to Glaser (1986), was partly attributable to the pressure brought to bear on the NP by the far right, who were accusing Buthelezi of preaching a type of Zulu imperialism. However, a number of 'verligtes' in the NP preferred to adopt a wait and see attitude rather than to reject the proposals in their entirety. Their feeling was that the Buthelezi Commission Report was not too far removed from government thinking on the question of the regional restructuring of politics as enunciated in the 1981 Good Hope proposals (17). Moreover, as Southall (1983:37) points out, they saw the Commission as a "safe, reliable yet daring instrument for expanding the boundaries of the ideological discourse taking place within the ruling bloc".

Notwithstanding government rejection of the BC report, a reformist consensus in favour of the report emerged embracing the PFP, conservative coloured and Indian parties, Inkatha and prominent businessmen. In 1984, the PFP called for a 'united front' to pressure Pretoria into responding more favourably. A process of direct negotiation and co-operation between Natal politicians and KwaZulu began with the setting up of joint committees in 1980 (Mare`, 1987). In late 1984, these initiatives assumed a more explicit character with the signing of the 'Ulundi Accord' between the KwaZulu Government and the New Republic Party (NRP)-dominated Natal Provincial Council (NPC), whom earlier had rejected the BC Report. It would seem that with the impending abolition of the Provincial Councils, which in effect would see the sole national power base of an otherwise moribund political party threatened, the NPC Executive decided to initiate contact with KwaZulu again. Working groups formed on the basis of the Accord and

immediately set about making concrete administrative and constitutional proposals for Natal/KwaZulu. These proposals, subsequently submitted to Constitutional Development and Planning Minister Heunis, were designed to force the government's hand and formed part of the context for, and informed subsequent deliberations of, a 'KwaNatal Indaba' (Glaser, 1986).

The initial three fold explanation for KwaZulu's rejection of RSCs is a fairly accurate one but, as the preceding discussion indicates, the situation would also seem to be more complex. To reiterate, the government-drafted RSC Bill was introduced in Parliament in May 1985 in the wake of initiatives by a growing reformist consensus in favour of the BC Report (PFP, conservative Indian parties, Inkatha, prominent businessmen). This consensus ultimately found expression in the 'KwaZulu/Natal Indaba'.

The term 'KwaZulu/Natal Indaba' was coined by erstwhile PFP-leader Van Zyl Slabbert at the very same time as the RSC Bill was being introduced in Parliament (Cameron, 1987) (18). It would appear that Inkatha (one of the major promoters of the Indaba) felt that its initiatives at consolidating the region administratively and politically, which involved years of hard work and co-operation, and which were finally to find expression in April 1986 as the 'Kwa/Natal Indaba', were now being pre-empted and superseded by government-created RSCs (over which it had not even been consulted). Moreover, these RSCs were scheduled to begin at around the same time as the 'Indaba'. As KwaZulu Minister of Education, Culture and Local Government, Oscar Dhlomo has pointed out:

"We have co-existed in this region to a far greater degree than all the other provinces. One needs to look at the political developments in the region since the early 1980's. If you study the political developments, you would see conditions for closer co-operation between the regions and even in fact unity in the region. So it would not have been possible for the government to forcibly introduce any regional

structure without direct consultation because that would be working against the tradition of co-operation in the region"

He went on to add:

"...apart from attempting to pre-empt (our initiatives), the government was trying to stifle and kill off any trend towards co-operation by bringing in the whole thing (RSCs) using methods that we were totally opposed to in the region. Perhaps if it was only pre-empting, we would have tolerated it because we don't mind pre-empting if it is in line with what we ourselves are interested in. I think it was more the problem that the government was trying to override and destroy any initiatives that came from the people themselves and, in other words, trying to discourage consultation and co-operation across the political boundaries" (Interview, 24/11/89).

There is a sense therefore, implicitly at least, that Inkatha (as well as other major sponsors of the 'Indaba') viewed the government's insistence on going ahead with RSCs as insensitive and ill-timed. In consequence, Buthelezi was loath to sit back and succumb to government pressure to participate in the establishment of these bodies.

While not attempting to reduce the 'Indaba' initiative to a straightforward competition with RSCs, it must be pointed out that both initiatives address similar concerns. As McCarthy (1988a:47) contends, "both the timing of the Indaba (beginning at much the same time as the anticipated formation of the Durban RSC) and the alliance of the major promoters (PFP/NRP/Inkatha) appear to be more than coincidentally related to the RSC initiative in Natal". With hindsight, it will be recalled that it was in the period following Inkatha's initial rejection of RSCs that the 'KwaNatal Indaba' emerged as an alternative concept of

regional government contra-RSCs, but not necessarily in direct competition with it.

Another interesting insight, in the context of KwaZulu's rejection of RSCs, emerges through an examination of the change and the shift in relations between, and developments around, the different levels of government following the abolition of the Provincial Councils in 1987. Natal provincial politics has never, up until 1987, fallen under the hegemony of the NP. The Provincial Council has always been a NRP, and before it, a UP-dominated and controlled council. Fearing the consequences of central government plans for the Natal/KwaZulu region in the wake of the government's 1980 regionalisation proposals as "menacing", the NPC stressed the need to rationalise the region's management, arguing that regional government could take over most physical planning, infrastructural provision, local government co-ordination and education (Glaser, 1986:11). It was in this context that the NRP participated in the deliberations of the BC and set the scene for what at best could be described as the start of 'cordial' relations between the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) and the Provincial Council. Future rounds in this process would include the signing of the 'Ulundi Accord' between the KwaZulu Government and the Natal Executive, as well as the NRP's participation in the deliberations of the Indaba.

Significantly however, it must be recalled that the NRP's provincial politicians, though eager to push for administrative co-operation, were initially reluctant to see Natal and KwaZulu fused politically. They therefore refused to sign the BC's main report on the grounds that a single legislature for Natal/KwaZulu elected by universal adult franchise on a proportional basis would lead to "confrontation, chaos and conflict" (R.B. Miller cited in the Buthelezi Commission Report, vol. 1:121-123). However, given the central government's plans for abolishing the Provincial Councils and its insistence on going ahead with RSCs (both of which implied the diminution and later abolition of the powers of the NRP-controlled NPC), the NRP began moving in late 1984/early 1985 towards the idea of a joint elected legislature and common executive for the region.

The NPC now, for the first time, formally voiced its objection to RSCs for Natal on the grounds that these proposals would pre-empt and prejudice any wider negotiations between Natal and KwaZulu for the recognition of the interdependence of the two regions, with the aim of them being administered as one unit. The NRP now became a key participant, and indeed a major promoter (side by side with Inkatha, the PFP, and other backers) of the Indaba initiative. For the time being at least, Provincial government and the Inkatha-controlled KLA had their minds set on the same thing.

It was the abolition of the NPC and its replacement with a NP-appointed Provincial Executive which marked a major change and shift in relations between KwaZulu and the Province of Natal. It was, implicitly at least, to delay the implementation of RSCs in the region. Ironical though it may seem, in the sense that one of the implicit aims of the abolition of Provincial Councils and their replacement with strong Executive Committees was to harness in RSCs, the move simply frustrated central government attempts to set up RSCs. For what the above move undermined, was a relationship of mutual co-operation and understanding that was beginning to develop between Provincial government and the KLA. And without KwaZulu's co-operation with the Province, it was not likely that RSCs would be implemented.

In mid-1987, the government announced its firm rejection of the Indaba proposals (after hardly considering them) on the grounds that it made insufficient provision for the protection of group rights: a curious avenue of criticism given that RSCs themselves make no explicit provision for group right protection. This set the scene for a scathing attack of the RSC system by Buthelezi. The fact that Inkatha was one of the major sponsors of the Indaba, coupled with the manner in which the proposals were summarily dismissed, and the way in which the new Provincial Executive constantly berated dissident groups - business, the KLA and town councils - for their perceived reluctance in implementing RSCs (McCarthy, 1988), has had much to do with this. With nothing to lose, but still guarding the credibility of the Indaba proposals cautiously, Inkatha was to adopt a totally uncompromising stand on the RSC issue.

RSCs were deemed part of a prescriptive politics that the government was trying to "ram down peoples throats" (Natal Mercury, 29/7/87) and were "introduced into legislation by a white Parliament that totally excludes us and they were being applied elsewhere by the hideous politics of prescription" (Natal Mercury, 3/3/87). These were sentiments expressed by Buthelezi throughout addresses and press releases in the 1986/1987 period.

E) THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT (UDF)

The UDF, the other major populist group in Natal, for similar reasons as Inkatha (see three-fold objection cited above), also reject RSCs.

According to Bekker et al (1986), UDF-affiliates in the Durban region seem to have more specific criticisms of RSCs than their counterparts in other parts of the country. For instance, the Joint Rent Action Committee (JORAC) argued that RSCs would not result in real revenue sharing, but rather in increased costs, especially for African residents given that white representatives would dominate RSCs (Reintges, 1986). This view was shared by the Durban Housing Action Committee (DHAC) - another UDF affiliate - which argued that the RSC strategy was drawn up by Pretoria and was an "organic outgrowth" of the 1983 constitution (DHAC information document, 1985:17).

The particular historical conjuncture in which the UDF (and its affiliates) first rejected RSCs, had little to do with their dissatisfaction with RSCs per se. Rather, its position must be seen as an extension of a stance shared by groups who generally refuse to participate in state structures of government. They are fundamentally opposed to the constitutional principle of 'own' and 'general' affairs, which they perceive as racist in principle and white supremacist in design (19).

The rejection of RSCs by the UDF and its affiliates in the Durban region, especially in the light of its failure to provide alternative proposals to the RSC concept (the UDF's and DHAC's demands for an open

and non-racial city were not seen by state reformers tied to the concept of 'own' affairs as a viable alternative to the RSC concept) was therefore not a major contributing factor in the delay in the implementation of RSCs. RSCs had been established in other parts of the country despite UDF opposition, since state strategy during the mid-1980's was to ignore the protests of organisations such as the UDF.

F) LEGAL OBSTACLES

Towards late 1986/early 1987, certain legal obstacles were encountered (in addition to the political problems alluded to) at both provincial and local level in the implementation of the RSC Act in accordance with the 1985 METROCOM memoranda. These obstacles arose from the fact that integral portions of the area that was to be administered by a RSC (as embodied in the METROCOM proposals) fall within the jurisdiction for which the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly was declared a self-governing territory in 1977 in terms of the National States Constitution Act of 1971 (Act 21 of 1971).

In early 1987, a legal opinion furnished to the Provincial Secretary by the Senior State Law adviser attached to the NPA was made available to METROCOM (METROCOM Memorandum to the State President, 19/6/87). The conclusions set forth in that opinion were two fold:

- (i) By virtue of the provisions of Section 30(3) of the National States Constitution Act of 1971, the RSC Act of 1985 does not apply in KwaZulu in that it relates to matters on which the Legislative Assembly of KwaZulu is competent to legislate, and was enacted subsequent to the date on which KwaZulu became a self-governing territory. It is therefore not competent for the Administrator to include in a region delimited in terms of the Act, any part of the Province of Natal which is within the area of jurisdiction of KwaZulu.
- (ii) The Government of KwaZulu is not a person or institution within the meaning of Section 4(3) of the RSC Act and therefore, it would not be competent for the RSC established for the Greater

Durban Area to enter into an agreement with such a government for the purpose of performing regional functions within KwaZulu.

Furthermore, in terms of a separate legal opinion that METROCOM obtained from Senior Counsel, it did not seem possible as the Act read, for a RSC to enter into an agreement in terms of Section 4(3) of the Act with the existing township councils in the areas concerned, as such councils are not 'local bodies' as defined in the Act, nor are they juristic persons. Even if it was legally competent for a RSC to conclude such an agreement, legal opinion held that the existing township councils do not have the power in law to enter into such an agreement, nor would local government bodies established to replace them have that power unless it were especially conferred by the KwaZulu government.

It therefore became abundantly clear towards the latter half of 1987 that no KwaZulu areas could formally be incorporated within the ambit of a Greater Durban RSC, prompting concern by METROCOM that the authorities involved may proceed with steps for the establishment of a RSC in respect of a region which will exclude any portion of KwaZulu. This was a development viewed with grave concern by METROCOM.

5.3.4 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

A) THE JOINT EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY (JEA)

The failure to implement RSCs in the region by late 1987, and the establishment of a Joint Executive Authority (JEA) for Natal and KwaZulu at around the same time, appear to be more than coincidentally related. The JEA Bill was introduced in central Parliament to allow for services and planning to be undertaken by a joint body of KwaZulu and the now-appointed Provincial government. While the JEA may be seen as the government's attempted compromise with the Indaba initiative, another interpretation holds that the National Party hopes to use the JEA to get KwaZulu to co-operate with RSCs (McCarthy, 1988a).

Both these interpretations are dismissed by former KwaZulu Minister of Education, Culture and Local Government, Dr Oscar Dhlomo and retired Director of Local Government, NPA, Mr Ron Pistorious (Interviews, 30/11/89 and 18/10/89). Both argue that the JEA must be seen as the second phase of a three phase process that had started with the signing of the 'Ulundi Accord' in late 1987 - its task was simply to allow for statutory co-operation between the NPA and the KLA in the areas of service delivery and planning. However, very recent developments seem to suggest that the JEA has played a significant role in resolving the RSC impasse in the region.

B) THE NATAL PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION (NPA) SPECIAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

In early 1988, the NPA Special Committee, established for the purpose of formulating boundary proposals (urban regions), identified four regions as a basis for considering the establishment of RSCs in Natal: the Durban Metropolitan region, the Pietermaritzburg region, the Upper South Coast region and the Lower South Coast region (NPA Special Committee Report, 1988). All KwaZulu areas were excluded from suggested boundaries (Figure 5.13a/b). Both METROCOM and the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) rejected the recommendations.

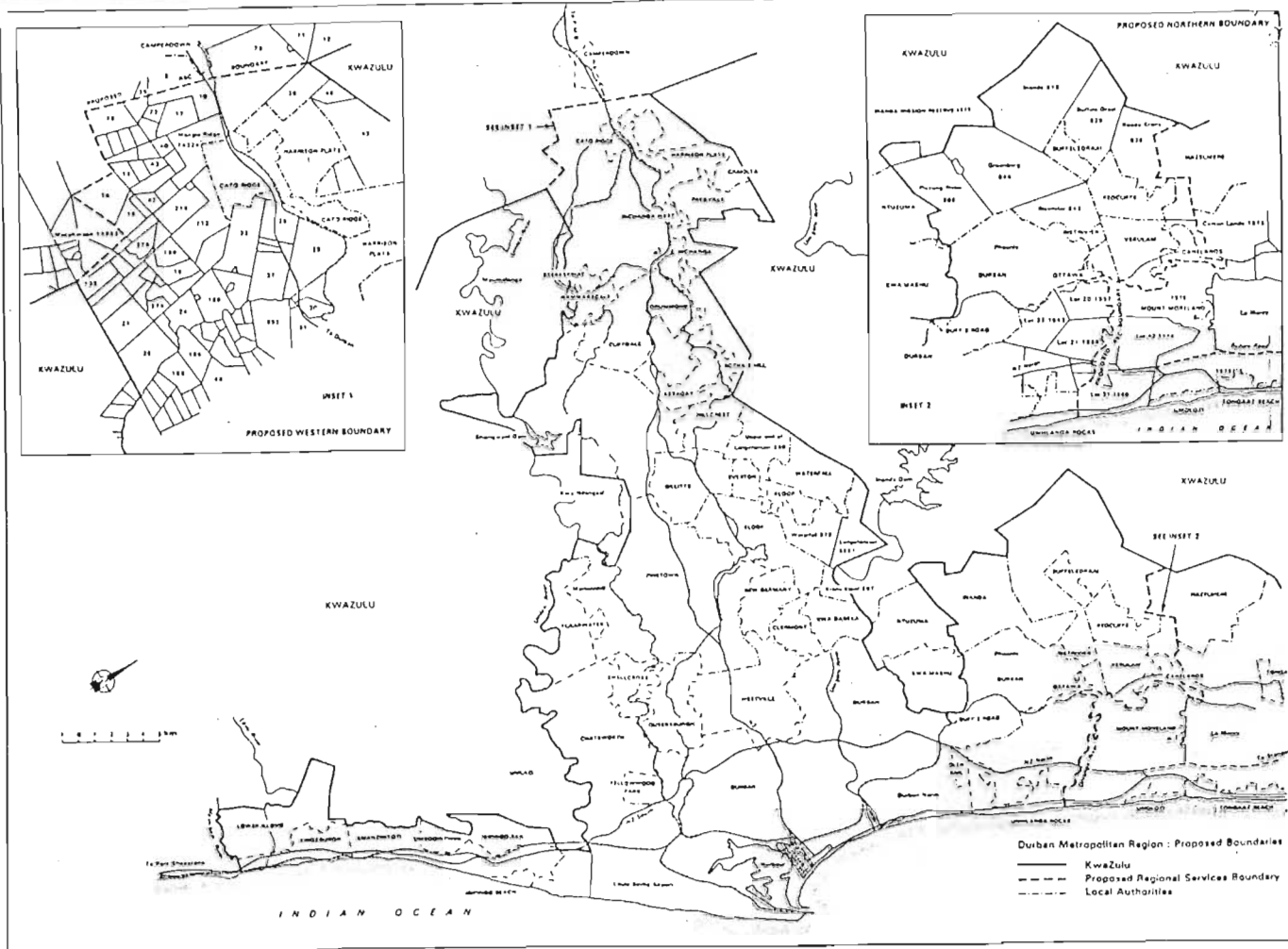
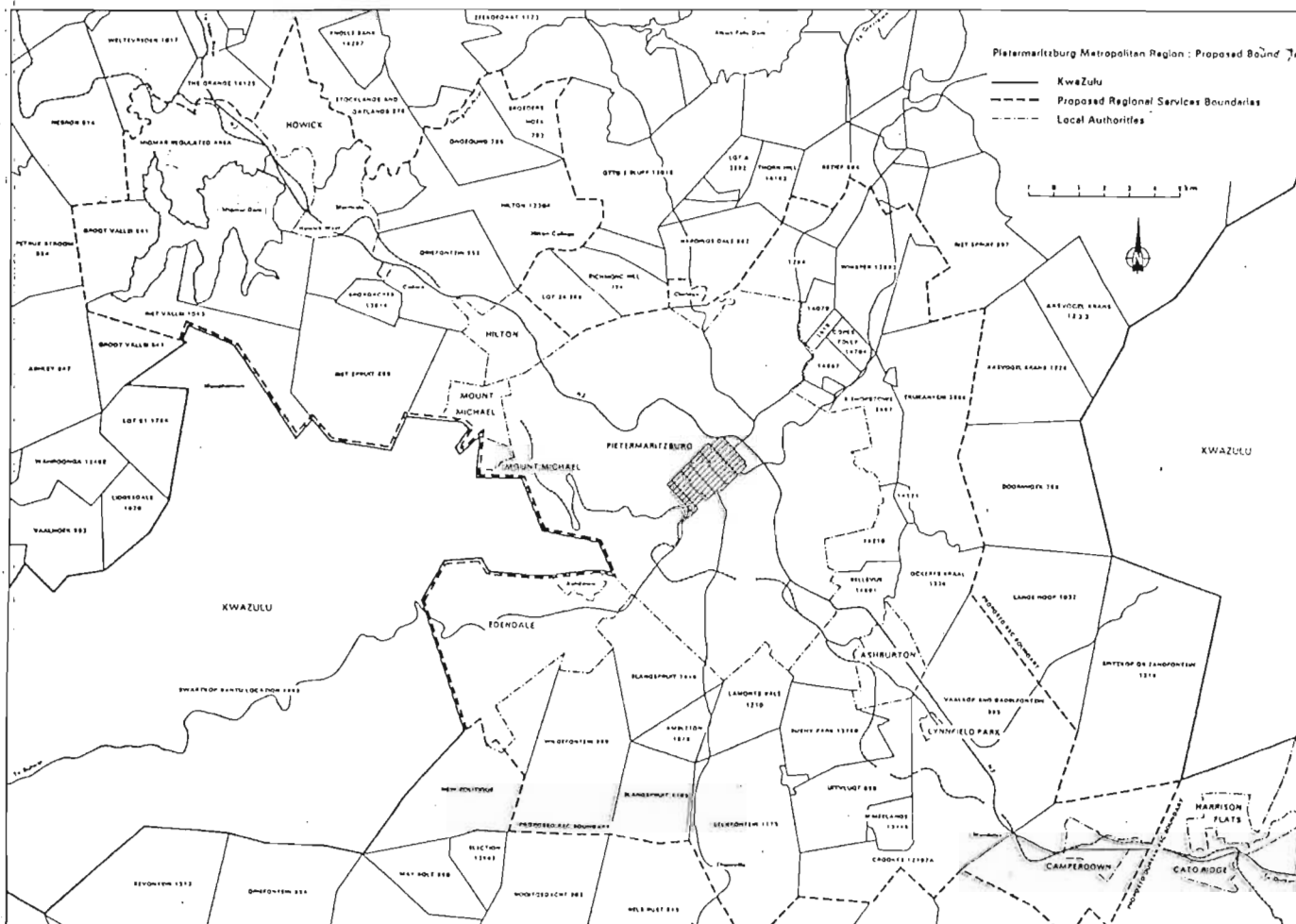


Figure 5.13a Proposed boundaries for RSCs in Natal (urban regions) as recommended by the NPA Special Committee. Source: NPA Special Committee Report, January 1988.



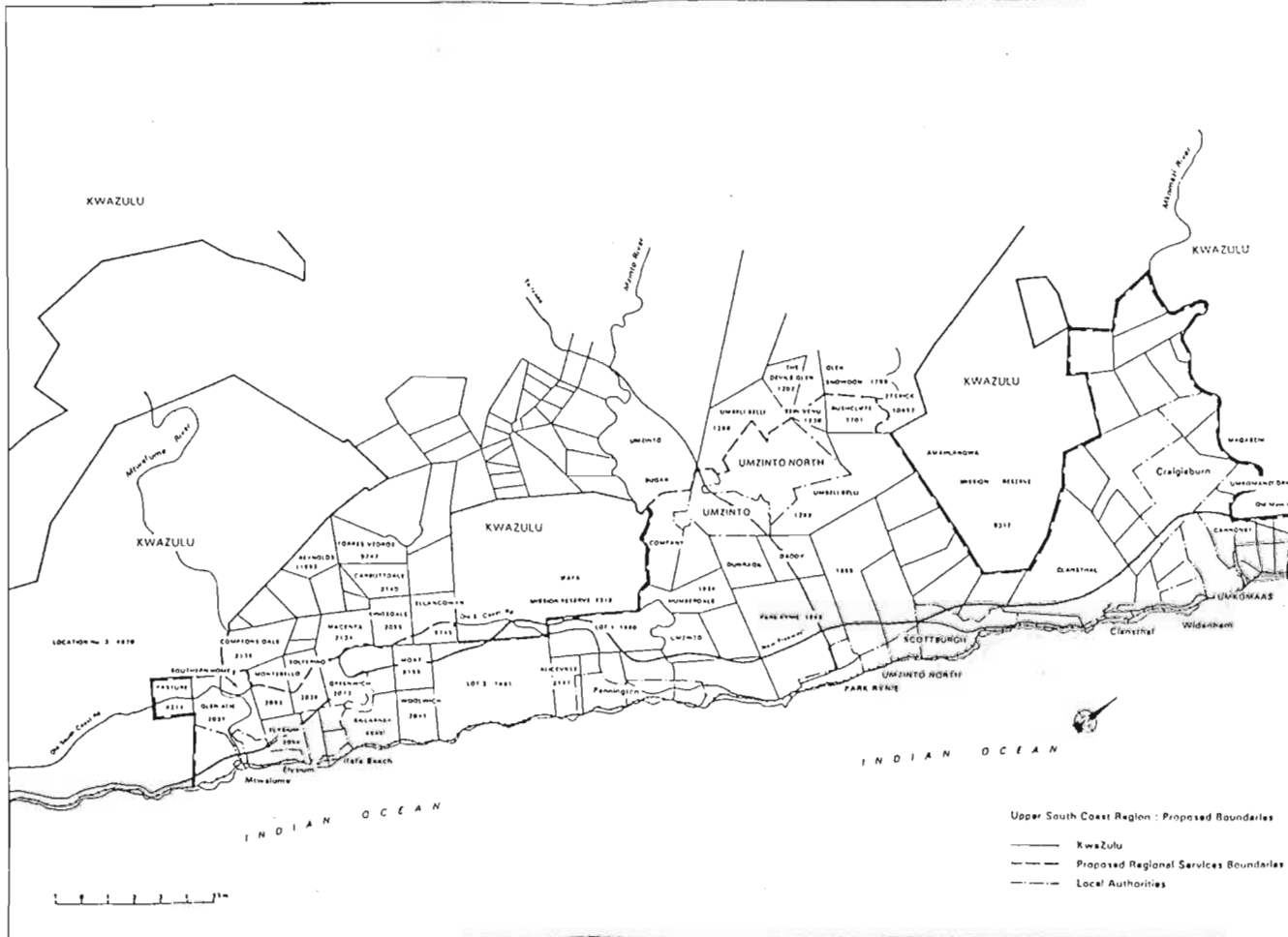
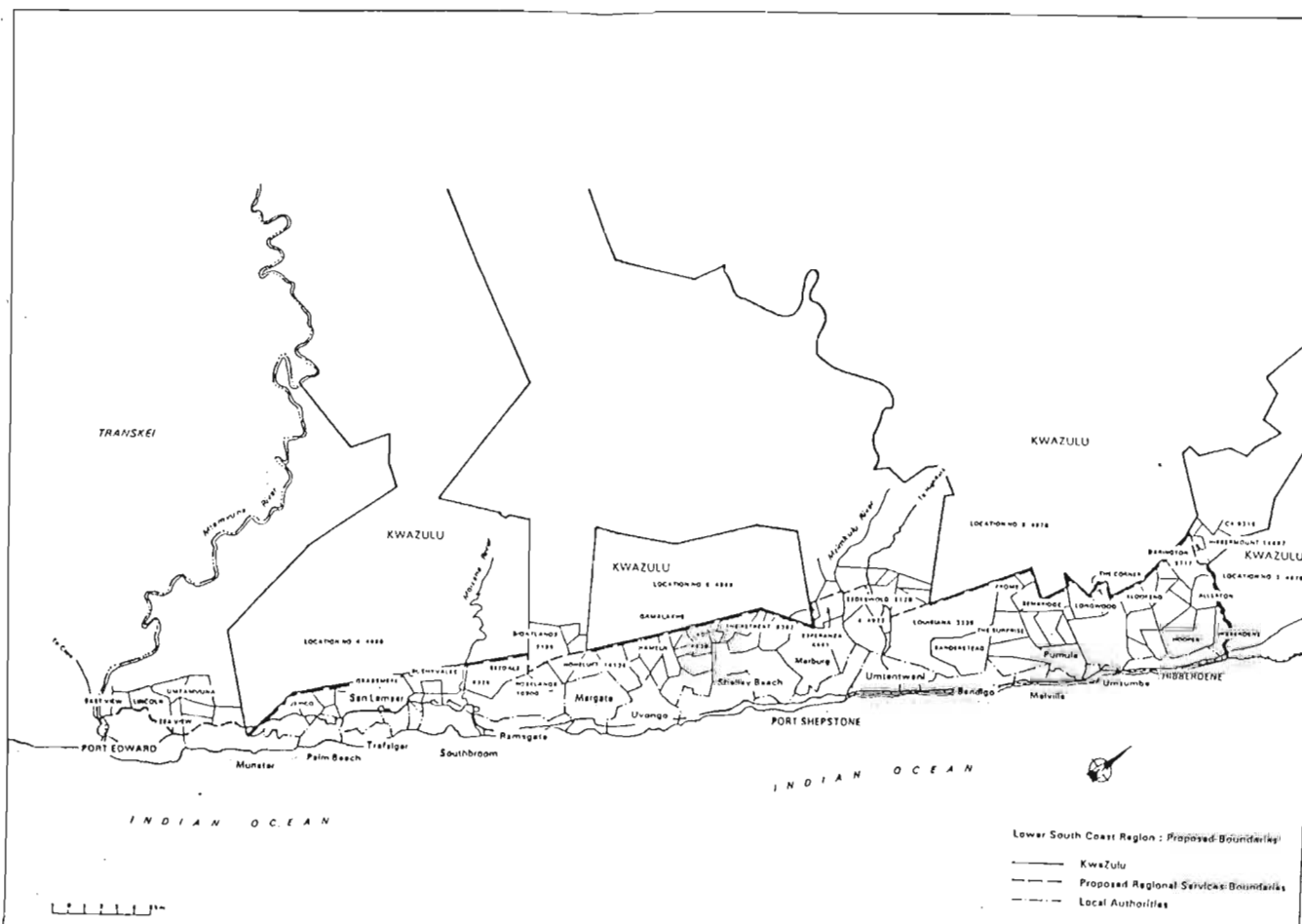


Figure 5.13b Proposed boundaries for RSCs in Natal (urban regions) as recommended by the NPA Special Committee. Source: NPA Special Committee Report, January 1988.



METROCOM reiterated and endorsed earlier sentiments that the exclusion of those portions of KwaZulu which are inextricably part of what is a cohesive and integrated economic community, will have serious implications for the provision of services on a regional basis in terms of the Act. This would defeat long-term objectives. Buthelezi urged blacks to have nothing to do with RSCs, warning them that "RSCs will burn all the fingers that touch them..." (Daily News, 12/1/89).

The Durban City Council (DCC) and the Durban Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce (DMCC) also expressed concern at KwaZulu's exclusion. The DMCC argued that RSCs in Natal should be deferred until KwaZulu participated as it was immoral that KwaZulu's citizens should contribute financially, yet receive no benefits (Daily News, 21/11/88).

The NPA received the recommendations of the Demarcation Board (20) in May 1989 (the Demarcation Board sat to hear recommendations by numerous bodies on proposed RSCs in Durban in late 1988). Peter Miller, MEC for local government, NPA, subsequently announced that RSCs would begin operating in Natal by October (Natal Mercury, 9/5/89). The final boundaries for the RSCs were very similar to the NPA Special Committee recommendations. All KwaZulu areas were excluded. Miller's announcement, especially in the light of the formation of the Joint Committee of the South African and KwaZulu governments in late 1988, took many by surprise. According to then NP Natal leader Stoffel Botha, this Committee was set up to "identify and address obstacles impeding the process of negotiation between South Africa and KwaZulu" (Daily News, 27/2/89). The sudden urgency to go ahead with RSCs therefore seemed anomalous at the time.

The announcement did not meet with much enthusiasm. Even the NP chairman of the DCC Management Committee voiced disapproval (he favoured a JEA system for the region). Buthelezi attacked Miller on the grounds that the JEA was at the time finalising an alternative constitutional structure for the regionalisation of services. If acceptable to central government, it would enable KwaZulu to co-operate. Notwithstanding the disapproval voiced at the prospect of having RSCs operational in Natal by October, the NPA remained adamant. Four years after the RSC Act had

been passed, three and a half years after a RSC should have become operational in Durban (if METROCOM had anything to do with it), and two years after their implementation in the rest of the country, it seemed as if RSCs were finally to become operational in the Natal region. Even the chairmen were appointed and the consultants commissioned.

However, events took yet another turn in early June 1989. The Provincial Executive announced the likely scrapping of RSCs in favour of a system that would include KwaZulu. In what was reported as a major breakthrough, "an ad hoc committee of the JEA has reached agreement on a draft Bill which would make it possible for municipal services to be provided on a joint, co-ordinated and regionalised basis in Natal and KwaZulu" (Natal Mercury, 3/6/89). Importantly, this announcement came shortly after a meeting between Chief Minister Buthelezi and leader of the NP (although not yet State President) F.W. de Klerk, under the auspices of the Joint Committee. It was subsequently learnt that the RSC issue was extensively debated at that meeting (Interview with Dr. O. Dhlomo, 30/11/89). The draft Bill was approved by Inkatha's Central Committee.

C) JOINT SERVICES BOARDS (JSBs)

Joint Services Boards (JSBs) are to be set up in the Natal/KwaZulu region in terms of the KwaZulu and Natal Joint Services Bill published in Parliament in April 1990. The provision of all essential services in this region - such as water, electricity, roads and ambulances - will now fall under joint Natal and KwaZulu control (Daily News, 19/4/90). The authorities envisage that Natal and KwaZulu will be delimited into five JSBs. They will be superimposed on existing boundaries between the two authorities as the provision of services will be carried out on a regional basis. Their brief would be, as a matter of priority, to establish, improve and maintain infrastructural services in areas of greatest need. The Bill brings the NPA and the KwaZulu Government closer together administratively, as members of the JSBs will be drawn from local government bodies in both areas (Daily News, 19/4/90). It also gives an increased importance to the Natal/Kwazulu JEA which will be

responsible for defining the regions, establishing the JSBs and administering them (Natal Mercury, 19/4/90).

Political leaders have hailed the Bill a breakthrough for negotiation politics. DCC Management Committee chairman Jan Venter commented that Natal's proposed metropolitan services boards could set an example of racial co-operation for the rest of the country to follow (Daily News, 3/6/89).

(i) Functions and financing

In terms of the Bill, the JSBs can eventually take control of providing bulk water, bulk electricity, sewerage systems, land usage and transport planning, roads and stormwater drainage and all the other functions identified in the RSC Act as regional. Employers and people carrying out enterprises within a region will pay levies (21) to finance the JSBs, the size of which will be determined by the JSBs, the Minister of Finance, the Administrator of Natal and the KwaZulu Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance has powers to exempt people from paying the levy while the Commissioner for Inland Revenue will collect the levies (Daily News, 19/4/90). Minister of Planning and Provincial Affairs, Hernus Kriel, estimates the boards will raise R150 million a year this way (Daily News, 15/5/90).

(ii) Representation and decision-making

Local government bodies within the region will be represented on the JSBs. Voting power will be determined by what they and people in the area pay the JSBs for the services, although it has been pointed out that the JEA can change the voting strengths on the JSBs to allow for a fairer distribution of the voting power (Natal Mercury, 19/4/90). Further, staff of any local government body, regional water service corporation, Development and Services Board, the State or KwaZulu can be seconded or transferred to work for the JSBs. The JEA will appoint the chairmen and other members of the boards, besides members selected by local government bodies. All decisions on the JSBs need a two-thirds

majority and local authorities may appeal to the JEA against decisions of the JSBs (Natal Mercury, 19/4/90).

(iii) JSBs vs RSCs

The JSBs therefore seem to have powers very similar to those of RSCs. They also seem to operate in much the same way. As Ron Pistorious, former Director of Local Government, NPA, has remarked:

"In the JSBs, I cannot see anything that is fundamentally different from the RSCs in the sense that the source of funds, the levies, will still be the same. The basic representation on these bodies is also the same, it is local authorities jointly carrying out the functions - it seems to me this is entrenched in the name of the thing, Joint Services Boards. Joint services between local bodies. In other words, we will not have a directly elected kind of super local authority but a services board which is carrying out the functions on behalf of the local authorities. So in that sense, it would be the same..."

(Interview, 18/10/89).

Sentiments endorsed by former KwaZulu Minister of Education, Culture and Local Government, Oscar Dhlomo:

"Well, there will only be differences in structure, not in purpose. ... So, what will come out will still be an attempt to regionalise services. That was not our objection. There will be this change as to who would supervise this regionalisation. There will be the concept of joint responsibility because it is the JEA that will supervise the regionalisation of services. ... But you are not going to see a totally

different animal. The principle will be there, services will still be regionalised, supervised by this body doing more or less the same thing and, of course, the change is that our people in KwaZulu areas will now be included and they will participate fully in deciding on how the services will be utilised" (Interview, 24/11/89).

The KwaZulu/Natal Joint Services Bill came before the Joint Committee of Home Affairs, Planning and Provincial Affairs on 2 May 1990 (Daily News, 1/5/90). Both the KwaZulu Government and the NPA hope that the Bill will be passed through Parliament in the coming session (1991).

5.4 CONCLUSION

The trend throughout this chapter has been to look at the past and emerging political geography of the local state in Durban and to reflect on how and why boundaries have come to be defined in the way that they have. Since the mid-1980s, local state structures in Durban should have begun to reflect a central state redefinition of the perimeter of local state powers, in both political and geographical terms, but this has not been the case. This led to a discussion at some length and detail as to why this has come about. It can be concluded that due largely to the considerable amount of power and influence locality-based structures in the DMA wield in defining and re-defining concepts of the metropolitan region, and the KwaZulu Government's firm rejection of a centrally imposed system of restructured local government, that an impasse over the establishment of RSCs has developed in Natal.

NOTES

- (1) Here, Indian and African settlements flourished. Often intermingled with market gardening activity, and a wide range of petty commodity production activities, Durban's peripheral "black belt" settlements were typical of their equivalents in colonial port cities throughout Africa (Cooper, 1983 cited in McCarthy, 1988b:4).
- (2) A Special Committee to enquire into the prevailing scale of house rents within the Borough was appointed in 1913. In early 1919, following a submission by the Borough Town Clerk on the subject of the 'Durban Land Problem' to the Administrator of Natal, the Durban Borough Boundaries Extension Committee was appointed.
- (3) The arguments which have been given for this programme include (i) racial groups have reached different cultural stages, (ii) racial conflict must be avoided, (iii) it is in the general interests of all groups (Durban Housing Survey, 1952:409).
- (4) It must be pointed out that the Technical Sub-Committees zoning proposals were not accepted in their entirety by the Durban City Council, who then appointed the the General Purposes Committee of the Council to draw up a revised zoning plan. Subsequently, further alternative plans were drawn up by the General Purposes Committee. These proposals, while not suggesting in themselves a definite plan for Group areas, made suggestions as to what in their view was the most desirable ultimate distribution of races in the residential areas.
- (5) For example, in 1980, representatives from the Committee, the Durban City Council (DCC) and the NPA travelled to Canada and the United Kingdom to study the various forms of metropolitan authorities.
- (6) Two local authorities (Amanzimtoti and Kingsburgh) withdrew their membership and one (Queensburgh) abstained from voting.
- (7) These were listed in the memorandum as follows: Health, Valuations, Ambulance and Fire, Traffic Police, Civil Defence, Cemeteries, Electricity, Water, Metropolitan Planning, Transportation, Sewage Purification and Reticulation, Solid and Toxic Waste Disposal, Computer Services and Loan Financing.
- (8) The memorandum also pointed out that all assets, movable and immovable, held by local and other bodies, and which are necessary for the exercise and performance by the Council of the functions entrusted to it, be transferred to the Council in terms of section 4(2) of the Act (METROCOM memorandum, 26/8/85).
- (9) However, it was only in January 1987, in view of the need to ensure representation of all consumers within the metropolitan area, METROCOM amended its constitution to ensure that all consumers from all regions within the metropolitan area would in fact be represented on the Executive Committee and therefore be part of the decision-making process. This was considered necessary in view of the fact that the RSC Act stipulates voting rights as a percentage of regional services used (METROCOM memorandum, 7/1/88).
- (10) The other criteria followed fairly closely were boundaries in terms of magisterial districts and watersheds. According to the report, unlike the flatter parts of the country, where rivers tend to serve as a combining, rather than a dividing factor for communities, in the vicinity of the DMR, communities generally do not settle along river courses. Therefore, the possible disadvantages for certain services will to a large degree not be applicable if a 'rural' boundary is drawn.
- (11) In the memorandum, METROCOM also outlined its history and attempts over a ten year period to regionalise services in the Greater Durban Area. The obstacles encountered in the

implementation of a RSC in the Durban area, particularly those of a legal nature, were emphasised.

- (12) The JEA was formed in late 1987 to allow for services and planning to be undertaken by a joint body of KwaZulu and the NPA.
- (13) RSCs are entitled to levy two taxes upon business within their boundaries - a regional establishment levy, which is a tax on the total amount of turnover recorded by a business, and the regional services levy, which is based on the amount paid in salaries and wages.
- (14) To extend this thesis, a DCC initiative in mid-1986 aimed at investigating the possibility of a multi-racial council as well as alternatives to the Local Affairs Committee (LAC) system, met with a similar response from central government planners (Atkinson, 1989).
- (15) The DMA is identified by the Lombard plan as a 'cross-cutting regional coherence' capable of serving a distinctive geopolitical sub-division in a future Natal dispensation (Mare`, 1987).
- (16) Mare` (1987) makes the point that the BC's proposed structures kept political planning separate from popular participation and placed decision-making in consensus sessions between leaders representing various constituencies.
- (17) The Good Hope Development Plan involved the creation of new units of planning and administration which cut across ethnically defined territorial units like bantustans and black municipalities. The 'development regions' and Regional Services Councils (RSCs) are examples. The Good Hope proposals were followed by the President's Council reports of 1982 which laid down a number of procedures to restructure second and third tier levels of government. Both sets of proposals were generally a response to the creation of new, metropolitan-centered urban regions, or regional space economies, radiating outward from metropolitan cores in 'white' areas and enmeshing a substantial part of neighboring bantustans - a result of urbanisation processes beginning in the 1960's as well as the dispersal (in part through state inducement) to the metropolitan peripheries of productive activities.
- (18) He used the term to describe the process of working towards a joint legislature for the Natal/Kwazulu area as the last phase of initiatives that had started with the signing of the Ulundi Accord in November, 1984.
- (19) According to Bekker et al (1986:60), "they therefore argue that any reform at third tier will necessarily be forced into the strait-jacket of white supremacy unless it is linked in word and deed to concomitant national reform. They call for resistance to piece-meal change and support alternative structures premised on the principles which they believe should underpin all tiers of government (not only the local)".
- (20) The Demarcation Board (DB) was established under the Local Government Affairs Amendment Act of 1985. At the request of the Administrator, the DB can hold an enquiry and advise him by means of a written report on the desirability or otherwise of demarcating, altering or withdrawing the demarcation of the area of jurisdiction of a local authority. At the request of the Minister, the Minister appointed to administer local government affairs in respect of Black communities, the Ministers appointed to administer local government affairs in the three houses of Parliament or an Administrator, the DB can hold an enquiry and advise the said persons by means of a written report on any other particular demarcation of any area pertaining to local government affairs.
- (21) A regional services levy will be paid by every employer in the region. The size of the levy will depend on the wages paid to staff, and what kind of work is carried out. A regional establishment levy will be paid by every business owner in the region, and will be based on what the owners take out of the enterprise for their own use.

CHAPTER SIX

NATAL - REGIONALLY DISTINCT OR AN ARBITRARY SPATIAL DIVISION OF LABOUR?

6.1 INTRODUCTION

It is clear from Chapter Four that Natal's experience in attempting to establish RSCs has been very different from elsewhere in the country. A number of reasons for the delay in the implementation of RSCs have been advanced. It has been established that the regional level (the different state forms, the changing and shifting relations between different levels of government, political developments and the accompanying changing political dynamic) has played an important role by 'inserting itself' between the local and national state levels, in a way which has not been the case elsewhere in the country. This raises two important questions.

Firstly, is it just Natal's spatial characteristics that have made things turn out differently? In other words, is it simply the particular configuration of apartheid boundaries in this region that has yielded this debacle, leading to the obvious and logical deduction that if spatial boundaries in other parts of the country approximated those of Natal, would not a similar problem have arisen? Or is it a debate which hinges around the relevance of the regional level in general in theorising the restructuring of state forms? That is to say, is there something other than a particular set of spatial co-ordinates, for instance, a distinct political culture (or amalgam of cultures) and/or a distinct process of production and accumulation, in the Natal region which has made a restructuring of the local state problematic?

The present chapter specifically examines the latter question, and in that sense is confined to a discussion which attempts to define Natal as a regionally distinct spatial and political entity. It concludes by offering two insights which suggest that it is precisely because of the

particularity of the region (and the way in which this been ignored) that an impasse over the establishment of RSCs has developed. The reason for confining this discussion is because it has already been indicated, through Chapter Four's comparative review of the implementation of RSCs in the two major metropolitan centres (the Western Cape and the Central Witwatersrand), that there is no evidence to suggest that if Natal's particular spatial configuration of 'homeland'/'South Africa' existed in these regions, a similar debacle would have ensued. It is fairly clear that in both these regions (including surrounding 'homelands') there are: no distinct political culture/s, no secessionist tendencies against the ruling national mainstream, little potential to forge political class alliances between homeland governments and provincial politicians through the formation of regional hegemonic projects, and provincial government in these regions are generally *ad idem* with central government.

It is clear therefore that even if the spatial boundaries of 'homeland'/'non-homeland' administration in these regions did approximate those of Natal, there is very little to suggest that a protracted stalemate would have developed over the establishment of RSCs. A distinctive regional politics and culture is absent in these regions (at least of the kind which, as we will discover from the following discussion, exists in the Natal/KwaZulu region) and spatial particularity in itself would not necessarily have presented insurmountable problems in relation to the restructuring of the local state.

6.2 DEFINING NATAL

6.2.1 AN OVERVIEW

It is necessary to probe why Natal should be regarded as regionally distinct, and as such offered as a possible starting point for national restructuring along federal lines. Here it is useful to take note of Massey's (1978) definition of 'regionalism' and 'regions', and criticisms of Massey's position. While most regions of the country can,

of course, lay claims to unique features, it is more important to unravel the political, social and economic implications of these, as well as their appropriation by various political interests.

From the discussion on regions, regionalism and regional specificity in Chapter Two, which draws partly on Massey (1978), the point was made that in order to define what constitutes a region, the object of analysis should not be seen as an 'arbitrary' spatial division of labour. That is, the object of analysis should not merely be seen as a geographical or spatial 'summary' without sufficient evidence to suggest that the defined unit represents a coherent spatial entity. Rather, it is necessary to seek an understanding of the social and political relations at both the national level, and at the level of its constituent regions. This must involve an examination of whether specific class relations or cultural distinctiveness, for example, outweigh or overshadow national cohesion. This may or may not allow for an acceptance of pre-given boundaries. The important point, from Massey's (1978) point of view, is that an uncritical acceptance of regional boundaries should not form the starting point of analysis but, rather, this should come from an understanding of the process of production and accumulation and the relations that accompany it, as they have developed historically. This will facilitate an understanding of how boundaries come to be drawn in response to these imperatives (1).

If the Natal region is defined and identified in the above way, ie. not as an 'arbitrary' spatial division of labour or a pre-defined region, but as an effect of analysis, it may be possible to understand why Natal should be presented as regionally distinct (2). On the other hand, as has also been indicated in Chapter Two, Massey's (1978) approach is inclined towards economism. It is therefore also necessary to consider not only the economic distinctiveness of Natal, but also its political character. The following discussion argues that Natal's provincial boundaries do indeed contain distinctive regional features defined both spatially and historically - for example: population distribution, land settlement patterns, urbanisation, accumulation of capital, class formation, class struggle and the development of a particular political

culture. What appears to be most exceptional about Natal, however, is the last point.

6.2.2 ELEMENTS OF DISTINCTIVENESS

A) SPATIAL DISTINCTIVENESS

For the sake of convenience, I refer to Natal, together with Grest et al (1988), as the area within the provincial borders as set out by Union (Figure 6.1). The spatial distinctiveness of the Natal region can be considered in relation to a number of factors, including subdivisions within the political entity, breakdown of population, distribution of population, urbanisation, economy and political culture. Each of these factors can be examined in turn.

(i) Subdivisions and population characteristics in the Natal region

The most important subdivision, and the one of greatest consequence within the political entity of the Natal region, is the division of authority between the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) and the Natal Provincial Administration (NPA). At the more local level, divisions include magisterial boundaries and areas demarcated for local administration such as municipalities and Tribal or Regional Authorities, as well as the racial and ethnic patterning brought about via apartheid.

As far as the population of the region is concerned, approximately 20% (or 6 301 000) of the total population of South Africa live in Natal. Some 5 409 900 are classified as African (with more than 90% being Zulu-speaking or about 75% of all Zulu speakers in South Africa); 496 560 are classified as white, 664 360 as Indian and 90 180 as Coloured people (3). The geographical distribution of the population in the province also merits attention.

Grest et al (1988) point out that the 'heartland' of African occupied territory is not all of Natal, as it might have been. The best that could be achieved by state planners in their 'consolidation' blueprints

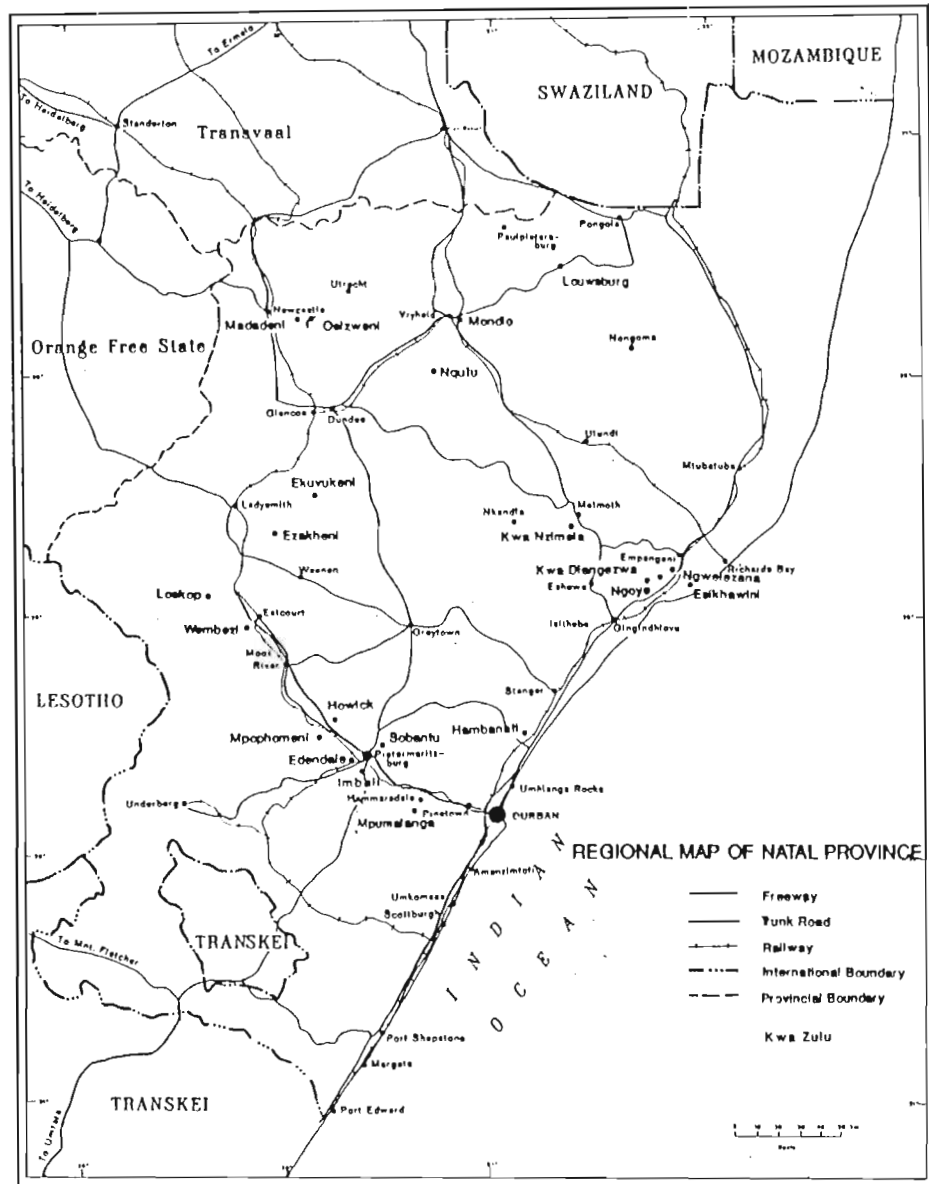


Figure 6.1 Regional boundaries of the Province of Natal. Source: Department of Geography, University of Natal.

over the years, was to reduce the bits and pieces of KwaZulu (48 reserves and many 'black spots') to ten major chunks (and that only on paper) (4). As the Surplus Peoples Project (1983) indicates, Kwazulu is the most fragmented of all the 'national and self-governing states' - comprising 48 major and 158 small pieces in 1978.

(ii) Natal's changing spatial economy

By the late 1970's, it became evident to a growing number of technocrats in state departments - assembled in an array of panels, committees and executive planning organs - that the original bantustan policy was a failure. The bantustans were seen as incapable of becoming autonomous or self-sustaining, and ultimately integrated into, and dependent upon, 'white' South Africa. Bantustans, despite a substantial body of thought and literature to the contrary, did not constitute highly distinctive socio-economic zones conducive to autonomous political development, and, even with central state assistance, they were incapable of acquiring sufficient economic autonomy to give real meaning to their formal political independence (Glaser, 1986).

As has already been indicated in a previous section, a number of factors at work, especially in the 1960's, substantially altered the space-economy underlying the abovementioned political imagery. On the one hand, an urbanisation process enmeshed and integrated growing sections of the bantustan populations into the metropolitan industrial working classes. On the other, there has been the dispersal of productive activities (in part through state inducement) to the metropolitan peripheries (on both sides of the 'border') (5). The outcome was the creation of new, metropolitan-centered urban regions, or regional space economies, radiating outward from metropolitan cores in 'white' areas and encompassing a substantial part of neighbouring bantustans. One further result has been the rapid expansion in the number of cross-border commuters, located on the fringe of the permanently settled urban proletariat.

The Natal region is perhaps the clearest expression of the above process (6) and partly served as the impetus, at central state level, in

experiments at developmental 'regionalisation' (for instance, the 1982 Good Hope proposals). It is precisely these patterns of settlement and incorporation that have generated a massive increase in cross-border commuting in the region. Together with a simultaneous expansion in migrant labour recruitment during the 1970's, they contributed to the growth in KwaZulu's dependence on outside sources of income (see Schlemmer, 1985; Van den Berg, 1985; Morris, 1981). This combination - ie. massive bantustan urbanisation (over two and a half million people) within the geographical and economic orbit of the 'white' metropolitan core, coupled with the increased integration and meshing of Natal and KwaZulu's respective spatial economies - appeared to provide a compelling case for greater administrative integration between the two sub-regions.

It was due to the economically and demographically interwoven sub-regions of Natal and KwaZulu (see Figure 5.12), coupled with a climate of opposition from powerful Natal-based interests at Pretoria's insistence on KwaZulu taking independence, that certain calls were heard, from 1977 onwards, for a special Natal dispensation.

B) POLITICAL DISTINCTIVENESS

As both Grest et al (1988) and Glaser (1986) point out, the notion of a 'region' is that it is not only a spatial concept, but also an historical one which has been forged over a long period. Therefore, if anything conclusive is to be said about the specificity of the Natal region, we need to say something about the historical development of class forces (or the balance of political forces as Glaser (1986) contends) and political culture in the region, out of which contemporary political and economic struggles evolve. After all, it is the case that, notwithstanding the steady erosion in the twentieth century of the regions' internal coherence due to aggressive centralisation by the South African state, enough remains for some interests to make strong appeals to regional particularity in their political programmes.

In Natal, during both the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods, political expression and organisation exhibited a degree of political

and cultural distinctiveness. The legacy of the colonial past (7) has provided Natal with a tradition which various interests at different stages have not hesitated to evoke, and despite political and economic integration over the last seven decades, it has been possible to draw on some historical resonance of regional consciousness.

(ii) White politics in Natal

Grest et al (1988) point out that in cultural and political terms, white, English-speaking Natal was only gradually, and with considerable reluctance, integrated into the national framework. Having failed to win a federal constitution at the time of Union, regional distinctiveness was manifested in a fear of Dutch political domination at the national level in a fiercely expressed loyalty to the British Crown.

Since the 1930's, Natal's whites have often responded in a regionally distinct manner whenever provincial autonomy came under attack, for example, in the particularly jealously guarded sphere of (white) education. The fiercely resisted attempt by the Pact government to abolish the Provincial Council system and centralise local administration is also a case in point (8). A distinctive Natal politics re-emerged in the 1950's following the National Party's accession to power. A Natal Convention representing both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary white opposition to the Nationalists met in 1952 and clearly illustrated the unity of action on a 'Natal front' (9).

The 1930's and the 1950's were therefore periods which saw Natal's white voters in opposition to a Nationalist-dominated government. In both instances, a specifically Natalian consciousness was invoked by local politicians. In both cases, a secessionist tendency asserted itself against a mainstream ruling option in Natal by strengthening its position within the existing national political framework. However, as Natal's integration into the national economy deepened, so the patent impossibility of secession became apparent, leading to a decline in serious separatist sentiment. As Stanwix (1983) points out, by the time of Republic, despite these various separatist or regional responses, Natal had become firmly integrated into the national political economy.

Nevertheless, as Grest et al (1988) point out, it was still possible in the 1970's and the 1980's to address English-speaking whites in Natal within a discourse of regional distinctiveness despite increasing integration into the national polity and the more or less total failure of 'Natal politics' (10).

(ii) African politics in Natal

In the case of African politics, there is also a regionally distinct political history which has formed the basis of a particular political culture. This came into being in the 1920's around the establishment of the first Inkatha movement (11). Inkatha brought together traditionalism, an aspiring African petty bourgeoisie and support from commercial agriculture (especially sugar, by far the largest economic sector at the time, producing by 1908, more than double the income from maize in Natal). An African petty bourgeoisie hoped to benefit from the political power that a Zulu nationalism under the Zulu monarchy (and Inkatha) would give them. Inkatha was also used by business interests during this period to counter the gains made by the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) in Natal, thereby countering (rather than advancing) certain class interests. Traditionalists therefore hoped to restore the central position to the king and also to counter the threat of loss of power to the chiefs which would accompany the mooted Transkeian Council system. There seemed, in short, to be 'something for most' in the alliance through Inkatha (see Cope, 1986; Marks, 1986). What must be stressed, however, is that it was a specifically regional movement, serving regional political and economic interests.

During this period of African politics, not only was the position of the traditional authority entrenched at the administrative level. It also served capitalist and aspiring capitalist interests to bolster the ideological position of, and ensure an official centrality for, the Zulu king and chiefs.

While a number of attempts at indirect representation of Africans at central state level were made from 1930 to 1950 (12), following the

passing of the Promotion of Bantu Self Government Act in 1959, indirect representation was abolished, and eight 'national units' for Africans were recognised and granted limited powers of self-administration. The power of the central authority over these decentralised bodies was maintained. Despite the initial opposition to the establishment of authorities at the various levels envisaged by the architects of apartheid, "...by 1968, the back of such opposition had been broken - Chief Buthelezi himself had become head of the newly established Mashonangashani Regional Authority during that year. In April, 1970, it was unveiled that a meeting of chiefs had decided upon the establishment of a Territorial Authority" (Cope, 1986:118).

The legacy of indirect rule and the subsequent policy of 'retribalisation' under Union (which had begun during the colonial era), as well as the conscious use made of the Zulu monarchy by certain Natal interests go a long way towards explaining why there still is, in the 1980's, a Zulu king who can be used politically, and a tradition of chieftainship which has served geographic fragmentation and political separation in the past, and might well serve some form of reintegration today.

In 1975, a move was made by the KwaZulu bantustan-linked leadership that has had important repercussions in the political sphere in South Africa ever since. A National Cultural Liberation Movement (Inkatha) was formed, initially presented as a revival of the Inkatha movement of the 1920's and the 1930's, but soon with obvious and stated national political aspirations as well.

One of the motivations for forming the organisation was that it provided a power base for the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) leadership outside the directly government-created structures (ostensibly to prevent 'independence' being thrust upon KwaZulu). It was created as a vehicle for the expression of the national aspirations of an otherwise regionally-bound leadership. It also captured the political arena and symbols that might otherwise have been readily available to interests that opposed the leadership and the political stance of Chief Buthelezi within the bantustan. Further, it has increasingly come to

represent the linking of the regional representatives of an African middle class and the interests of monopoly capital that perceived a base for reform residing in such an alliance (13). Indeed, this alliance, coming as it did in the mid to late 1970's, and the calls that were heard from 1977 onwards for a special Natal dispensation, are more than coincidentally related.

Inkatha closely reflects the concern of an elite which, like others in Natal's black political history, is defined by what Marks (1986) has called the politics of ambiguity. It is suspended uncomfortably between pan-South African and Zulu nationalism (a tension therefore between its ethnic origins and national aspirations); between liberal modernism and patriarchal traditionalism; and between assertive criticism of, and collaborative dependence on, the white dominated state (14). In its early years especially, the movement placed itself firmly within the tradition of the first Inkatha. For instance, the 1975 Constitution was an exclusive Zulu document in terms of restrictions on leadership, the role of chiefs within the region, and the relationship that was envisaged with the KLA. The first general conference of the movement in 1975 accepted Buthelezi as the "unchallenged leader of 4,5 million Zulus in their struggle for their cultural, economic and political liberation" (Langer, 1983, cited in Grest et al, 1988:25) (15).

That such an organisation was being built in Natal, and that it was amenable to a close relationship with capital, was not lost on locally-based interests for long. As it has been pointed out, since the late 1970's there have been at least two commissions and other less formal calls for a separate Natal/Kwazulu Option. Interestingly, the first formal suggestion arose out of the direct initiative of capital, primarily the sugar industry in Natal. These calls that were heard since the late 1970's for a special Natal dispensation essentially concerned two recurrent demands. Firstly, it was demanded that Pretoria devolve a measure of authority to Natal, giving 'moderate' forces in the region licence to pursue their own regional political solutions. Secondly, it was demanded that 'white' Natal and KwaZulu be allowed to collaborate, and set up joint political and administrative structures, in the search

for a politically credible, economically viable alternative to Pretoria's apartheid programme for Natal (Glaser, 1986).

6.3 FURTHER INSIGHTS INTO THE DELAY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RSCs IN NATAL

Having defined and identified what constitutes the Natal region in political terms, it can be concluded that Natal's boundaries contain distinctive 'regional' features defined both spatially and historically. The ideas presented below derive from this definition. It is argued that, given the distinctiveness and specificity of the Natal region, it would not be possible to successfully implement RSCs (or any other hegemonic project) in Natal that did not include KwaZulu. Stated somewhat differently, denying the particularity of the region would inevitably present problems in the restructuring of local government.

6.3.1 REGIONAL IDIOSYNCRASIES

The failure to implement RSCs in the Natal region has essentially been ascribed to KwaZulu's rejection of them on the grounds that they had not been consulted. On the other hand, the success of the Indaba initiative, while ostensibly due to the fact that it addressed the need for the increased meshing and integration of Natal and KwaZulu's respective spatial economies, has also been ascribed to its ability to forge new, non-racial political class alliances (McCarthy and Wellings, 1988).

What is clear is that, for its success, the Natal Option or the special Natal dispensation relies heavily, and in some instances almost totally, on elements of regional distinctiveness defined politically in both spatial and historical terms (discussed in the previous section). In fact, it has been argued that it is possible to regard the reformulation of a 'Natal distinctiveness' as a deliberate measure to solve the fiscal and political crisis of South Africa in the mid-1970's, or aspects thereof, at a regional level. In this sense, the Natal Option can be seen to derive from a long history which has been used before and can be used again. As Grest et al (1988) observe, 'Natal traditions' and

regional idiosyncrasies can be made to have some resonance and cannot be wished away. In this sense, the Natal/KwaZulu area appears ready for a specifically regional transformation.

A) WISHING AWAY REGIONAL IDIOSYNCRASIES

A number of reasons have already been advanced as to why the delay in the implementation of RSCs has come about in the Natal region. What is clear is that right from the start the government did in fact wish away regional idiosyncrasies in Natal/KwaZulu in its determined attempt to establish RSCs. Had the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) been more amenable to the initial RSC Bill that was introduced in 1984 (and this may have been the case had the Bill taken cognisance of 'Natal traditions'), however, it may have worried less about the fact that it had not been consulted. In a sense, it appears to be the case that having not liked what it saw in the Bill, not least of which was the exclusion of any homeland area from falling within, and being administered by, a RSC (which translated into KwaZulu's exclusion from the ambit of a RSC), the KLA argued that it had not been consulted in the formulation of these bodies. As Ron Pistorious, retired Director of Local Government, Natal Provincial Administration (NPA), has pointed out:

"(KwaZulu's objections) ... are make-weight arguments. ... they were not consulted and they felt hurt about that, which is quite true. And therefore, the whole idea was imposed on them, but had the basic idea been acceptable to them, I think that they might have been less worried about not having been consulted - the fact is that they were not consulted and what came out in the end was not acceptable to them. And it was the fact that it was not acceptable that made them complain about not being consulted" (Interview, 18/10/89)

Bearing in mind some of the specific geographical and political concerns of RSCs (with which there are points in common with the Indaba)(16), it might be hypothesised that the drafters of the original RSC Bill will, with hindsight, feel that they were remiss not to include homeland areas in the original draft proposals. By doing so, elements of regional distinctiveness were ignored giving rise to problems in the implementation of these bodies. And this was especially the case in regions which lay claim to a high degree of economic inefficiency associated with regional apartheid, for example, Natal/KwaZulu, the Eastern Cape and the Northern Transvaal (McCarthy and Wellings, 1988). Hence the amendments to the RSC Bill, gazetted as the RSC Act in July 1985

In Natal/KwaZulu therefore, the failure on the part of the government (whether deliberately or not) to recognise the distinctiveness of the spatial economy of the region (the functional integration of Natal/KwaZulu in physical planning and economic terms) as well as its distinct political culture was, at the outset, to limit the extent to which some of the concerns of RSCs, especially the idea of functional and political interdependence between the racial-geographic 'compartments' in South Africa, were to be realised. In the end, it delayed realisation of any of these objectives - RSCs were simply not established. It may well be argued that RSCs address concerns at a metropolitan scale and therefore cannot always pay attention to elements of regional distinctiveness. Yet, the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA) - the functional region - embraces the larger and densely populated KwaZulu townships. Hence the folly of trying to establish a RSC (or RSCs) for Natal that did not include economically and demographically linked KwaZulu.

B) THE POPULAR APPEAL OF THE INDABA

To reiterate, the motivation for and concomitant success of the Indaba proposals, whilst they addressed co-ordination problems at a broader geographical scale, considered a wider range of services, and implied a more democratic form of representation than RSCs (McCarthy, 1988a), was largely a result of the Indaba's ability to manipulate the elements of

'distinctiveness' that the Natal/KwaZulu region lays claim too. Some argue that it is the distinctiveness of the spatial economy of the region that motivated the Indaba (Glaser, 1986; Grest et al, 1988), whereas others argue that the Indaba provided the appropriate spaces for the forging of new, non-racial political class alliances (McCarthy and Wellings, 1988). Yet, the important point is that the architects of the Indaba-type solutions for the region were able to recognise the distinctiveness of Natal/Kwazulu in spatial and historical terms, and were able to use this to good effect at a time when there was much talk of the regional restructuring of politics in South Africa. The sugar industry did this some time ago, and so did the Buthelezi Commission. Even METROCOM's comprehensive 1984 report on the regionalisation of services in the DMA (and the financial implications of such a move) recognised the interdependence of the Natal/KwaZulu region and acknowledged that there can be no artificial boundaries in the supply of essential services. This, together with the fact that METROCOM consulted with the KwaZulu Cabinet, contributed to the report's success.

C) SOME REFLECTIONS

It is surely the architects of apartheid who, with hindsight, will realise that it was imperative to have done one of two things in Natal/KwaZulu if its reformed and restructured local government system was to meet with any success in the region. First, it might have consulted with the KwaZulu government to ascertain which type of regional (or metropolitan) political transformation best suited its needs. This could then have been altered and modified, after consultation with other actors, at a later stage. Alternatively, the government could have presented KwaZulu with an option that it would have been more amenable to. This could, for example, have taken the form of a special clause in the RSC Bill proclaiming the interdependence of the Natal/KwaZulu region (in economic and demographic terms) and the necessity of them being administered as one geographic and political entity. This may have provided the government with the opportunity to forge new political class alliances. It would indeed have been a matter for some debate and deliberation. If the government had done this, KwaZulu may have worried less about not having been consulted.

In both instances, the specificity of the Natal/KwaZulu region would, however implicitly, have been acknowledged. The notion that the Natal/KwaZulu area could become a logical 'laboratory' for national experiments with new political forms (Glaser, 1986) has been popular for some time, however obscure these ideas may be, given the difficulty of exporting these solutions to other parts of the country. It was therefore imperative for the government to have asked what actually is it about the Natal/KwaZulu region that have made participants in a special Natal dispensation self-consciously turn Natal into a 'laboratory' for devising and testing systems of representation, administration and planning suited to the second tier of government in a future constitution. Had they done this, the folly of trying to implement its reformed and restructured local government system in the region without taking cognisance of 'Natal traditions', in other words, trying to impose a centrally contrived solution on a region with distinct spatial and political characteristics, would have become self-evident. Having not, a protracted stalemate has developed over the implementation of RSCs in Natal.

6.3.2 LOCAL DEPENDENCE

It has been pointed out that the contradiction of the 'homeland'/'South Africa' divide and a distinctive political culture (or amalgam of cultures) are the essential elements which explain Natal's 'regional' distinctiveness. The preceding discussion has alluded to the fact that this distinctiveness would have had to have been acknowledged if the implementation of RSCs was to meet with any success in the Natal region. Failure to do so, as we have come to see, in large part resulted in the ensuing debacle.

The section that follows examines the converse of, and is a logical extension to, the above argument. That is, the argument that a hegemonic project (defined as the manner in which different particular interests and concerns are coerced and/or hegemonized into conformity with a viable national-popular outlook and programme) in Natal, like a RSC (or RSCs), would work best if it took the entire Natal/KwaZulu region as its

spatial co-ordinates. This of course, is precisely because of the elements of political distinctiveness that the region lays claim too. It is to be suggested here, however, that there are other reasons that reinforce the perception that the regional level is deemed to be the approximate spatial scale at which new hegemonic projects can be formed in Natal. These derive from the notion of the 'local dependence' of firms and the popular classes in the Natal/KwaZulu region and the spatial scale at which these reside. These propositions are discussed below.

It emerged from a detailed discussion on the notion of 'local dependence' in Chapter Two that the idea of a series of locally dependent accumulation strategies (societally projected policies aimed at economic restructuring, or economic 'growth' models), and the concept of hegemonic projects, together provide useful approaches towards accounting for the great diversity of experiments with new regional political forms in South Africa. Of more immediate concern, certain of the concepts derived from this analytic framework raise important questions, of considerable practical import, in relation to the research problem of this study. Seeking answers to these questions, it will be argued, has important implications for advancing an understanding and explanation of the research problem at the level of spatial scale. Moreover, such an exercise provides insights into the kinds of dependencies (and linkages) firms and the popular classes have in the Natal/KwaZulu region. This, in turn, provides fertile ground for the guidance of future, and much required, research on the distinctiveness of the region.

It is the following questions which merit particular attention:

- (a) Given the fact the firms in the Natal/KwaZulu region are locally dependent (Glaser, 1986; Grest et al, 1988), and that as a result of this local dependence they confront this collectively through the formation of business coalitions, is it at a metropolitan or regional scale that these dependencies and linkages exist most strongly?

- (b) Given that the popular classes in the Natal/KwaZulu region are themselves locally dependent, (i) does this local dependence reside at a metropolitan and/or regional scale? and, (ii) do these popular classes provide business coalitions (and state structures) in the region with the potential to forge political class alliances and hegemonic projects?

Conclusions are derived from the summary that follows.

A) THE LOCAL DEPENDENCE OF FIRMS

On the question of the local dependence of firms, there is evidence to suggest that firms in the Natal/KwaZulu region have dependencies and linkages that exist not only at the metropolitan scale, but across the entire region. Why, it must be asked, have representatives of Natal-based capital played a prominent role in the Natal/KwaZulu initiative from the outset? Why is it also that capitalist forays into constitutional engineering had their roots in the Natal/KwaZulu region? At a base level, it may be hypothesised that it has been because political stability in the region would ensure a secure climate for investment. Whereas central government plans for Natal/KwaZulu appear to be a recipe for regional instability, KwaNatal appeared to offer at least some prospect for regional accommodation (Mare, 1987). An integrated Natal/KwaZulu would ensure the benefits of a regional labour market free of impediments to labour mobility. Finally, all capitalists stand to gain from infrastructural rationalisation and the elimination of unnecessary apartheid-rooted fiscal expenditure (Glaser, 1986).

What can be said, therefore, is that there is an acknowledgement, however implicit, from capital that their linkages and forms of dependencies in Natal/KwaZulu reside across the entire region, and it would be in their interest, for reasons already outlined, to move with the political gap opened up by KwaNatal.

Organised agriculture and sugar present interesting cases here. While some farmers have stood to gain from the central state's land consolidation plans, others have seen the value of their land

deteriorate under the threat of a state buy-out. As Glaser (1986) points out, the acquisition of white land for consolidation purposes poses a long-term threat to the interests of capitalist agriculture as a whole, since it threatens to lower the productivity of newly acquired land, causing black KwaZulu farmers to demand still more redistribution in their favour. He points out that capitalist opposition to land consolidation (and their support for a KwaNatal initiative) therefore looks like an attempt to freeze the existing (highly unequal) distribution of land. The sugar industry also has a special interest in avoiding the artificial separation of a consolidated KwaZulu from white areas given that sugar is tied to the entire Natal/KwaZulu (climatic) region and that sugar mills require a more or less continuous supply of sugar cane from farms that stretch over a wide area (Grest et al, 1988). Therefore, anything threatening the supply of sugar cane - whether new administrative boundaries, declining productivity in sugar cane producing areas as mills become more dependent on part-time black farmers, instability in agricultural areas, and so on - would threaten the profitability of the milling industry (Glaser, 1986)(17).

What has emerged from the preceding discussion and the examples cited above, is a recognition on the part of significant fractions of capital that their dependencies and linkages in Natal/KwaZulu, while they may be concentrated at a metropolitan level, are spread across the entire region and that any attempts to destabilise these would be undesirable. The fact that the regionally-specific Indaba project did not interfere with these linkages and dependencies is surely one of the main reasons why capital in general has so enthusiastically backed the campaign. As Rudy Heine, president of the Durban Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce (DMCC) has commented:

"The DMCC has linkages across the region (emphasis added) and it is for this reason that a recent ASSOCOM conference on Natal moved in the direction of a regional chamber of commerce for the Province, as the Natal Chamber of Industries (NCI) is a corporate body looking after only industries needs in Natal. This is

also why, over the last two years or so, a Natal/KwaZulu Business Forum has been meeting monthly with representatives from industry, commerce, sugar and the Indaba. After all, these bodies have common problems that cut across the entire region" (Interview, 7/2/90).

Referring to the Indaba, Mr Heine pointed out that one of the main reasons organised business and commerce got involved with the initiative was because of the uncertainty in the wake of the government's consolidation plans for the region, again pointing to the dependence of business and commerce on the entire region as a secure climate for investment (Interview, 7/2/90).

B) THE LOCAL DEPENDENCE OF THE POPULAR CLASSES

Turning to the question of the dependencies of the popular classes in Natal/KwaZulu, I refer, as do Cox and Mair (1988), only to those popular classes who provide business coalitions (and state structures) with the potential to forge political class alliances and hegemonic projects, since it is the explicit intention of this discussion to focus on the potential for such a project, and the approximate (and most appropriate) spatial scale at which this may reside within the region. In other words, it is the 'co-optable' popular classes in Natal/KwaZulu who would provide some of the appropriate 'spaces' for forging new, non-racial class alliances within the South African power bloc which are relevant here (McCarthy and Wellings, 1988).

The popular classes referred to above have historically been the conservative black supporters of Inkatha, who claim a support base spread across the entire region (Grest et al, 1988; Mare and Hamilton, 1988). The various elements of the pro-Inkatha elite (and their supporters) are indeed dependent on the entire KwaZulu bantustan and their horizons, the rhetoric of their national political aspirations notwithstanding, rarely extend beyond it. More importantly however, Inkatha supporters rely heavily on traditional forms of dependence (especially ethnicity) across the entire Natal/KwaZulu region. As Grest

et al (1988) point out, this is why Buthelezi often draws on the existence of a coherent Zulu identity (however much it might be idealised) and a personal Zulu history to achieve a specifically regional mobilisation. At the organisational level as well, the movement is firmly rooted in the Natal region. On the other hand, the historically 'antagonistic' popular class alliances - the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the African National Congress (ANC) - have been strongest in the urban and metropolitan areas, whereas this is where Inkatha has been the weakest (Mare and Hamilton, 1988).

All this evidence therefore points to the various forms of dependence Inkatha and its supporters have on the entire Natal/KwaZulu region, and their relative weakness in the metropolitan areas. It also tends to suggest that the conservative popular classes do provide local business coalitions (whom it has been established have dependencies and linkages across Natal/KwaZulu) and state structures with the potential to forge political class alliances and hegemonic projects, but only if such alliances are forged at the level of the entire Natal/KwaZulu region.

C) THE APPROXIMATE SPATIAL SCALE AT WHICH TO FORGE NEW POLITICAL ALLIANCES IN NATAL/KWAZULU

A number of observations in relation to the Natal/KwaZulu area have emerged from the preceding discussion on local dependence:

- (i) Evidence to suggest that firms have dependencies and linkages which exist at the level of the entire region and not only at a metropolitan scale.
- (ii) The 'co-optable' popular classes have various forms of dependence that reside at the level of the broader region, and thus provide business coalitions (and state structures) with the potential to forge political class alliances and hegemonic projects at that scale.

It is suggested therefore, that apart from the political and spatial elements of Natal/KwaZulu's distinctiveness that pre-suppose the

regional level as the approximate spatial scale at which to forge political class alliances and hegemonic projects, the various forms of local dependence of firms and the popular classes on the region as a whole (and not only the metropolitan scale) also provide appropriate 'spaces' for the successful implementation of these kinds of projects, and the forging of political class alliances.

Cox and Mair (1988) point out that one important way a hegemonic project can be constituted is through the promotion of a localist ideology that is congruent with (i) the local accumulation strategy of the business coalition, and (ii) the support of the traditional or modern form of dependence of the popular classes. While it is not clear which types of accumulation strategies are being propagated by business coalitions in the Natal/KwaZulu region, given the dependencies and linkages they are perceived to have on the entire region, it is not improbable to suggest that these accumulation strategies would define their spatial parameters accordingly. The spatial co-ordinates of the local dependence (mainly traditional) of the hitherto 'co-optable' popular classes in the Natal/KwaZulu region, as it has already been pointed out, also seem to reside at the level of the broader region. Therefore, any localist ideology being propagated towards the formation of a hegemonic project (either by capital or the state) would do well to take cognizance of the spatial scale at which the dependence of firms and popular classes lie. After all, hegemonic projects involve a coercion or homogenization of different particular interests into conformity with a viable national-popular outlook. If these are found to reside at a particular spatial scale, surely then a hegemonic project should be forged at the same (or at a similar) scale.

It must be pointed out that while only a moderate (and perhaps inconclusive) amount of evidence has been marshalled for a special level of dependence of firms in the Natal/KwaZulu region, it is not insignificant, and enough remains for certain hypotheses to be proposed. It must also be pointed out that neither the regional dependence of firms, nor the regional dependence of the 'co-optable' popular classes, should be construed as claims of further elements of 'distinctiveness' that exist in Natal/KwaZulu. All that has been attempted here is to

illustrate that the spatial scale at which the dependencies of firms and the popular classes reside in the Natal/KwaZulu region, provides further evidence to suggest that a hegemonic project would work best at the level of the broader region.

In the end, for a variety of reasons, it is the broader regional level in Natal/KwaZulu which is seen as providing the most appropriate spatial scale for the forging of new political class alliances and hegemonic projects. Any such project that operates (or is to operate) only at a metropolitan scale in the region (as had been envisaged through RSCs) was therefore bound to run into problems. An eventual (though implicit) acknowledgement of this fact on the part of the government is that the proposed Joint Services Boards (JSBs) for the region - the government's and the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly's (KLA) attempted compromise with the RSC system for Natal - due to begin operating in 1991 under the auspices of the Joint Executive Authority (JEA), will straddle the entire Natal/KwaZulu region.

6.4 CONCLUSION

It has been argued that if the Natal/KwaZulu area is constituted as an effect of analysis, and not as an 'arbitrary' spatial division of labour, it can be identified as regionally distinctive. It was pointed out that an uncritical acceptance of regional boundaries should not form the starting point of analysis, but that the definition of a region is something that has to be worked for. Two insights emerged from the definition of the Natal region as a distinct spatial unit of analysis - both throwing a considerable amount of light on the empirical concern of this study. The one argued that an inevitable consequence of the failure on the part of central state planners (in particular) to recognise the distinctiveness of the Natal/KwaZulu region was a delay in the implementation of their own 'regionalisation' process. The other, essentially the converse of the above, pointed to the fact that the exclusion of the surrounding area of KwaZulu would preclude the successful implementation and operation of a new and reformed local government system in Natal.

NOTES

- (1) It also provides an understanding of how new investment in economic activity (accumulation), out of which evolves a new spatial division of labour, will produce a new distribution of economic activity. This in turn will be overlaid on, and combined with, the pattern produced in previous rounds by different forms of spatial division, and the combination of successive layers will produce effects which themselves vary over space. In other words, any new spatial division of labour (a new use of space) it is argued, when combined with the geographical pattern of previous uses, has as an effect both the production of the distinctive characteristics of local areas, and the overall pattern of regional variation in a social formation.
- (2) To take 'regions' as objects that are pre-given to the study of intra-national spatial differentiation, and therefore by implication treat the issue of regionalism as the subject of an externally imposed regionalisation (see Cobbett et al, 1985;1986), opens one up to serious errors of spatial fetishism, economic determinism and functionalism (see Soja, 1980; McCarthy and Wellings, 1988).
- (3) The breakdown of population in Natal is quite different from South Africa as a whole. Whereas whites constitute 15,3% of the South African population, they are only 7,8% of the total in Natal. Indians form 2,8% of the total South African population, but 10,5% of Natal's, while the figures for coloured people are 8,9% and 1,4% respectively. Africans account for 73% of the South African population and 80,1% of Natal's (Buthelezi Commission, 1980; Surplus Peoples Project, 1983; Platzky and Walker, 1985).
- (4) Similar historical patterns of land settlement have had drastic effects on the relocation of especially African people since 1948. With the policy of separate ethnically-divided political, and hence spatial, units (the bantustan policy) came the need for massive removal and relocation of parts of the population deemed to be outside the area set aside for them.
- (5) These productive activities are closely tied to the central metropolitan economy through specialisation, the industrial division of labour and monopolistic relationships of ownership and control (Cobbett et al, 1986).
- (6) Almost all Natal's black urban population resides in KwaZulu. Boundary crossing urban centres in the province include Ladysmith/Ezakeni, Pietermaritzburg/Edendale, Newcastle/Madhadeni and the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA). It is the DMA which constitutes the classic case of a large metropolitan region enveloping a sizeable proportion of a neighbouring bantustan. The core area of the DMA is located in 'white' South Africa, together with the still unincorporated black townships like Lamontville and Chesterville. The 'white' component of the DMA has expanded west along a corridor between two sections of KwaZulu, into Pinetown and Hammarsdale, as suburbanised concentrations of industrial capital. However, most DMA townships, including Umlazi, KwaMakuta, KwaMashu and KwaDengezi, are located in KwaZulu. In addition, there is a large cluster of informal settlements which has sprung up in nearby KwaZulu.
- (7) In the colonial period, the relative weakness and insecurity of the white settler population, which in turn gave rise to a strong sense of protectiveness about 'local particularity', can be ascribed directly to the rise of the Zulu state during the pre-colonial era. This, according to Grest et al (1988), enabled it to resist intrusion and withstand the exertions of external pressure until late in the nineteenth century. However, with the final granting of Responsible Government in 1893, came the passing of control over all affairs to the settler population. On a political level, the Zulu state's independence had to be eroded by independent means and it was the ensuing civil war which finally tore the kingdom apart and paved the way towards its incorporation in 1897.
- (8) Out of the provincial council question evolved a Natal Home Rule movement - the Devolution League - which aimed at secession from Union and the creation of a federation in the 1930's.

- (9) The anti-Nationalist United Democratic Front (the United Party, Labour Party and Torch Commando) that collapsed following the 1953 election, was succeeded by the United Federal Party (UFP) - again an attempt to project the Natal stand onto a national level and to mobilise support for a federal alternative to National Party rule. The UFP never recovered from a defeat in the Natal Provincial elections in 1954 and became moribund.
- (10) The last remnants of the former United Party (UP) regrouped in the New Republic Party (NRP) as a Natal party, and clung on to power at the provincial level with tenacity. Control over the province brought only limited political power, but access to the state apparatus at the provincial level allowed for the politics of patronage with a Natal flavour to flourish. The 'Natal Stay Free' slogan of the late 1970's was but a dim echo of the the 1930's and the 1950's. The point must be made though that Natal Provincial politics has, up until recently, never fallen under the hegemony of the NP.
- (11) While after Union, the national framework for the administration of Africans determined the regional/provincial parameters, patterns of administration which had evolved in Natal also made their mark at the national level, the most notable example of this being the Natal Administration Act of 1927. This Act was one of the earliest breakthroughs towards a national policy of African Administration. It rejected an 'assimilationist' tradition developed in the Cape, and the embracing of the 'Natal tradition' of indirect rule, being "the first link in a range of measures leading to the refurbishment of African traditionalism with the emphasis on ethnic and cultural separatism" (Lacey, 1981:85). While official recognition of the Zulu monarchy was held back for some time (for obvious fear of repercussions - lest it not be forgotten that the Zulu military defeat of 1879 was still fresh in the memory of the Zulu nation), for some (capitalist) interests in Natal, the position of the king in African society was less that of a threat than that of a political and ideological ally. This is how the first Inkatha movement came into being in the 1920's.
- (12) For example, the passing of the Representation of Natives Act which established the Natives Representative Council (NRC), and, following the uselessness of the NRC in placating Arican demands for representation, the passing of the Bantu Authorities Act in 1951 which both did away with the the NRC and made provision for tribal and regional authorities.
- (13) Around the time of the formation of Inkatha, alliances within Natal itself began changing. Now it must be recalled that in the early 1970's, there was much dissension between the KwaZulu government and the central government over the bantustan policy, manifest in the subsequent forging of close relations between the trade union movement and bantustan leaders in Natal. The 1973 strikes, for instance, brought politicians like Buthelezi into labour relations. This resulted for a while in a particular relationship not repeated elsewhere between the trade unions and the bantustan. It was not only the unions which had a working relationship with the bantustan leader but some of the popular organisations as well, including the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) when it was revived in 1971 and the South African Students Organisation (SASO). However, a certain cautiousness persisted in relation to Inkatha after the movement was formed in 1975. Relations between Inkatha and the popular organisations became increasingly strained and in 1979, ongoing political contact between Inkatha and the ANC was severed. Buthelezi by this time was making it increasingly clear that the regional base which had been carved out would serve alternative political ambitions, not least of all, his own. The Buthelezi Commission Report under the guise of a significant reformist initiative, was a statement of such intentions.
- (14) Glaser (1986) points out that, whether ensconced in the apparatus of chiefs and headmen, immersed in KwaZulu's one-party parliamentary politics, dependent on the homeland bureaucracy for employment, successfully growing sugar and other crops in an otherwise impoverished land, or seeking as traders to keep out white competition, the various elements of the pro-Inkatha elite are dependent on the KwaZulu bantustan and their horizons, the rhetoric of its national political aspirations notwithstanding, rarely extend beyond it. These powerful

contradictions have lent the movement an ambiguity which its leaders have exploited carefully. Inkatha claims at present to have a membership in excess of one million. With very large majority of this membership found in Natal, and even more so among Zulu-speakers, it means that Inkatha claims for itself the allegiance of all but a small proportion of the African population of the region.

- (15) Buthelezi himself, the charismatic and strong figure in the the movement, also draws on the existence of a coherent Zulu identity (however much it might be idealised) and a personal Zulu history to achieve a specifically regional mobilisation. At the organisational level, the movement is firmly rooted in the Natal region. More than that, as Grest et al (1988:25) point out, "it is unlikely that the particular combination of factors giving rise to Inkatha was present elsewhere in South Africa in the 1970's - especially the symbols and structures available for the task of mobilisation and the relatively culturally cohesive population".
- (16) For instance, the idea of functional and political interdependence between the racial-geographic 'compartments' inherited from Verwoerdian apartheid, the idea of multi-racial decision-making in respect of service delivery and the possibility of enhanced efficiency and some welfare distribution in the financing of such services (McCarthy, 1988).
- (17) The sugar industry therefore deemed it necessary to investigate alternatives to the central government's proposals for land consolidation in KwaZulu which they regarded as a recipe for regional instability (Glaser, 1986).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

A variety of contradictions and conflicts within capital and between the state and the popular classes coalesced in the late 1970's and early 1980's causing an economic and political crisis within South African society. It soon became clear to all that the narrow strictures of apartheid policies could no longer provide the social basis for political stability and sustained further accumulation. Faced with a shrinking material basis for concessionary economic reform and growing mobilisation behind the extension of political rights, the country's ruling groups began the search for political solutions to the crisis. A reform initiative therefore emerged as state planners took cognisance of the structural and conjunctural tendencies occurring in the society. This strategy abandoned the old underlying premises of territorial segregation and accepted the interdependent, and interconnected, nature of South Africa's political economy. Its premises were that South Africa be administered via interlocking functional regional units which included or cut across bantustan borders. The purpose of state planning was to form functional, economic, social and political administrative units.

It is in this context that what became known, from 1984 onwards, as the state's 'regional strategy' can be understood. One of the central components of this strategy was the reform and restructuring of local government institutions - the main aim here being to institute a partial, and selective, redistribution of social resources towards the black majority as part of a comprehensive constitutional initiative supposedly aimed at broadening democracy. The envisaged mechanism for the achievement of this objective was RSCs, introduced in Parliament in 1985 as a horizontal extension of local government. RSCs, as it will be recalled, in broad concept, amount to mechanisms for the co-ordination of physical planning and service delivery in metropolitan areas.

These bodies have been established in all the major metropolitan regions in South Africa, except those in Natal. While it was confidently expected, for a variety of reasons, that the Durban area was to host South Africa's first RSC (or RSCs), they have yet to be formally constituted in Natal. Friedman (1988:15), summing up the Natal situation in the context of a broader discussion of the early experiences of RSCs in the major metropolitan regions in South Africa, points to why this has come about:

" ... (RSCs) have not been introduced in Natal because Inkatha is opposed to them and it controls African local authorities in the area - there seems little prospect that the councils will be launched in the province at all."

For anyone not familiar with the RSC issue in Natal, the above comments may appear illuminating. They point to the fact that RSCs have not been implemented in Natal; to Inkatha being the main protagonist in delaying this process; and finally, to the probability that RSCs will not be established in the province at all. To move beyond an explanation of the RSC impasse in the region such as the above, however, invites an examination of a complex set of relations and developments, political and economic, within and beyond the Natal/KwaZulu region.

Two main reasons have been advanced in this thesis for the delay in the establishment of RSCs in Natal, and why this process has turned out differently from the rest of the country, particularly the major metropolitan regions of the Western Cape and the Central Witwatersrand.

Firstly, it was pointed out that there was a great deal of innovation from key actors in the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA), particularly local state agents and organised business and commerce, spanning almost ten years from the late 1970's, to regionalise services. These initiatives, which had pre-empted government thinking on the matter, were eventually superseded by government-created RSCs. This situation gave rise to a profound change in central-local relations which was to impact considerably

on the process of establishing RSCs in Natal.

Secondly, the regional level (the different state forms, the distinctiveness of Natal/KwaZulu, political developments and the accompanying changing political dynamic) inserted itself between the local and national state levels (during attempts to implement RSCs in the DMA) in a way which had not been the case in either the Cape Town or Johannesburg metropolitan regions. It was a significant development and the ensuing debacle bears testimony to this.

This brings us to the practical import and significance of these conclusions. From a discussion of the attempts by key actors in the DMA to regionalise services, comes an awareness and a recognition of the considerable amount of power and influence locality-based structures in the DMA wield in defining and re-defining concepts of the metropolitan region. This has in fact been the case from the early part of this century, and while this may have waned with time (McCarthy, 1988b), particular historical conjunctures have provided opportunities and spaces for the re-emergence of this phenomenon.

The Durban local state, it has been argued, has been dominated by local landed and industrial capital from the 1930's. Since then, the amount of influence organised business and commerce in the DMA has commanded in defining the metropolitan region has been considerable, seeing for themselves in the Greater Durban area a secure climate for investment and a labour market free of the impediments to labour mobility. It was noted that from the 1950's onwards (see Durban Borough Boundaries Commission, 1932), the Durban local state also began, given the potential they saw residing in an alliance with significant fractions of capital and regional state structures, to define concepts of the metropolitan region (although these definitions did not always find resonance on the ground). This points to the 'relatively autonomous' nature of the local state and its various agents in the DMA in defining metropolitan political forms.

From a discussion of how the regional level inserted itself between the central and local state levels (during attempts to implement RSCs in the DMA) comes an enhanced understanding of the Natal/KwaZulu region, its proclaimed specificity and the way in which this specificity has impacted on political developments here. The impetus for various forms of regional-federal solutions for the Natal/KwaZulu region over recent years, at the imperative of powerful Natal-based interests, has come from an explicit recognition of the economically and demographically interwoven sub-regions of Natal and KwaZulu, coupled with an awareness of a distinct political culture (or amalgam of cultures) in the region. This is a reality which, according to proponents of these proffered solutions, has got to be acknowledged in a variety of contexts.

The influence of key actors in the DMA and the way in which the specificity of the Natal/KwaZulu region has been used by certain interests has had major implications for a variety of groups. This study has constantly alluded to the opportunities the above has created for significant fractions of capital and regional and local state structures in the region. It has, however, also had important repercussions for those groups engaged in forms of popular/opposition politics.

Firstly, the initiatives that had emerged from powerful Natal-based interests for a special Natal dispensation, apart from stated reasons, were an attempt to engage those propogating more radical socio-political models in South Africa in serious ideological competition (Glaser, 1986). The danger this presented for popular/opposition politics is that these alternative regional options for Natal/KwaZulu began to compete with proposed national solutions for the country. In fact, there was a considerable (although not overwhelming) loss of support for the various forms of national solutions during the 1986/87 period in the wake of the popular appeal of 'Indaba-type' solutions for the country. At one point in time, the Natal/KwaZulu region was seen as a laboratory for devising and testing systems of representation, administration and planning suited to the second tier of government in a future constitutional set-up (Glaser, 1986).

Secondly, in light of what has been termed the "political survival of capitalism" (McCarthy and Wellings, 1988:17), 'co-option' politics in South Africa has taken on a new meaning. As the above authors point out, South African capital is determinedly searching for a new class alliance: one in which a reactionary white working class is possibly bypassed as an ally in favour of more conservative blacks. The South African political landscape, post-1976 in particular, has increasingly come to reflect this. And nowhere is this more evident than in the Natal/KwaZulu region given that Inkatha, one of the major populist groups in the region, has been 'co-opted' into participating in, and supporting, regionally based-solutions. Inkatha would, of course, disagree with this and argue that it was they who were the instigators of such initiatives. The point is that the black body politic in Natal/KwaZulu has historically been a divided force. A united form of popular/opposition politics has never really emerged in the region.

The opportunities and spaces that exist for popular/opposition politics in the Natal/KwaZulu region given the above scenario, together with the fact that organisations of the dominant or popular classes attempting to influence, redirect or take advantage of spaces created by a restructuring process are known to be constrained by their own historical policies and strategies (Morris and Padayachee, 1988), do not look promising. The fact that the African National Congress (ANC), United Democratic Front (UDF), Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) alliance has not been able to make the kind of political inroads in this region, the kind which they have made in others, is an important statement of this. It may be added that somewhere in between the history of conflict between the central and local state, and the central and regional state in this region, lie possible gains to be made by this popular/opposition politics. These would be of the kind where one conveniently and deliberately plays one group against the other to maximum effect. The outcome of this hypothesis, however, remains uncertain.

Forms of popular/opposition politics in South Africa would do well to take a lesson from their experiences in Natal/KwaZulu, and that is, given the divided nature of our society (politically, economically,

spatially), it is imperative to the 'struggle' that there should be an increasing consciousness of the exploitative nature of the combined social and spatial structure of society - the 'struggle' must therefore be aimed at a simultaneous transformation of both (Soja, 1980). After all, as Lefebvre (1974) points out, no social revolution can succeed without being at the same time a conscious spatial revolution.

Some concluding remarks are relevant on the theoretical import of this study. Reflecting on the movement of geographers in the 1960's and 1970's into the social sciences to learn about the processes behind spatial forms, which eventually brought about a new realisation that these processes were not only historically specific but geographically specific too, Sayer (1989:255) makes the point that:

"At first this took the form of how 'general' processes and structures are modified in particular contexts, but more recently it has been recognised that the general structures do not float above particular contexts but are always (re) produced within them. This, coupled with the diversity of conclusions from empirical studies of different countries, regions, and localities, in turn raised the possibility that what we had formally considered to be general structures, were themselves geographically specific, context-dependent phenomena that had mistakenly been treated as general. ... Such problems raise the fundamental question of how far, or at what depth, are social structures and processes context-dependent? Are they only modified in minor ways by differences in context, or are they so deeply influenced (by context) that social theory cannot usefully abstract from any geohistorical context?"

The above passage has served to exemplify the problems encountered in trying to situate the empirical concern of this study in a conceptual

and theoretical framework. Given that interpretations of the highly complex nature of contemporary struggles over the spatial redelimitation of state powers in South Africa have yet to emerge, inadequate theorization of this research problematic is prevalent. Together with the context-dependent, geographically specific social structures and processes that the empirical problem embodies, abstracting social theory from any particular geohistorical context in order to explain this problem has not been possible. Rather, a range of theories and interpretations have been grappled with - an adequate conceptualization of the research problem was eventually found to lie at the interface of the concepts of local state restructuring and questions on the nature of the region.

A theoretical research frontier has therefore been opened up in Natal/KwaZulu, particularly, but not exclusively, in the context of the regional restructuring of politics. Future works, informed by some of the theoretical and methodological innovations of this research, should build on this if practical solutions to the region's vexed problems are to be found. Human geographers especially - for whom the concept of the 'region' has been important, the connections between social relations and spatial structures fundamental, and the necessary role/s locational relationships play in social relationships critical - have a vital and indispensable role to play in this process.

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INTERVIEWS AND PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

- Interview with Dr Oscar Dhlomo, former KwaZulu Minister of Education, Culture and Local Government and former General Secretary of Inkatha. The interview was conducted at the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) headquarters, Ulundi, KwaZulu, on the 24 November 1989.
- Interview with Mr Gordon Haygarth, former Durban City Council (DCC) Town Clerk, former METROCOM secretary and likely chairman of Durban's first regional services body. The interview was conducted at Mr Haygarth's home in Durban on the 25 May 1989.
- Interview with Mr Rudy Heine, President of the Durban Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce (DMCC). The interview was conducted at the regional offices of SANLAM South Africa in Durban on the 28 February 1990.
- Interview with Mr Ron Pistorious, retired Director of Local Government, NPA and former member of the Natal KwaZulu Joint Executive

Authority (JEA). The interview was conducted at Mr Pistorious' farm near Pietermaritzburg on the 11 October, 1989.

Personal Communication with Dr Donald Craythorne of the City Administration Department, City of Cape Town at the University of Natal, Durban on the 14 September 1989.