THE POLITICS OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENT
IN SOUTH AFRICAN SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS:
THE PRETORIA-WITWATERSRAND-VEREENIGING REGION, 1980-1989

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Introduction

The wave of militant protest politics in the PWV's black townships in the mid-1980s has received considerable academic attention. Through a series of detailed case studies, an increasingly nuanced picture of township politics and the structural context in which they were transformed, has recently been built up. [1] However, because analysts have confined themselves to explaining the radicalization and increasingly confrontational nature of formal township politics, the experience and consciousness of smaller, but significant, sections of the black urban world outside of formal township housing estates have remained hidden in the literature. Such groups include contract migrants living in large, single-sex hostels in the heavily industrialized regions of the PWV, shack dwellers living in shanty-towns within and outside formal black townships and the hundreds of families scattered across peri-urban smallholdings and plots throughout the region. While no significant and overt resistance was evinced by these groups at the height of urban township revolt in the mid-1980s, hostel and shanty-town dwellers have been at the epicentre of the most recent violence which convulsed the region in the latter half of 1990 and early 1991 and which has bedevilled the national negotiation process from its inception.

These recent violent incidents cannot be understood outside of wider national political developments, notably the historic unbanning of political organizations such as the ANC, the SACP and the PAC in February, 1990, the inauguration of a process of political negotiation, and the party-political contestation, notably between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). [2] Nevertherless, the surprise and paralysis with which most political actors first greeted the periodic outbursts of Reef violence since July, 1990, have revealed a crucial lack of knowledge by the wider public, academics and politicians of the conditions, experience and world-views of both hostel and squatter communities and thus of the reasons for the combustibility of these areas. While most accounts of the violence note its occurrence in the wake of the opening up of political negotiations, for example, they either stress the ethnic component of the conflict [3], or posit an irreconcileable class antagonism between alienated, temporary migrants in hostels and permanently resident shack/formal households, as **sufficient** explanations for the eruptions of violence at a moment of acute political stress.

It is suggested, however, that in reality, the distinctions such as those between migrants and permanent dwellers, ANC and Inkatha-supporting communities, or Zulu-vs-Xhosa speakers, are far more blurred and historically contingent than popular and other accounts would suggest. Moreover, as new evidence comes to light, it becomes increasingly clear that an explanation for the violence must be closely rooted in an analysis of the intensification of party - political competition from mid-1990, and notably, in the hostels where conflict between pro-Inkatha and anti-Inkatha hostel dwellers first took violent form.

It is not the aim of this paper to account for the outbreak of violence in squatter areas and for the ethnic dimensions this took on. The more limited intention of this paper rather is to explore the social and political character of shanty-settlements in the region in the 1980s prior to the outbreak of violence. It indicates that the recent violence in some PWV settlements represents a sharp rupture with the recent past and marks a qualitative shift in the character of squatter and other urban struggles. Prior to this date and until the eve of

February 1990, squatter settlements were fairly well insulated from broader township and national political struggles. In addition, apart from occasional friction with neighbouring hostel dwellers, squatters lived in relative peace amidst other urban communities and, indeed, many squatters themselves were originally hostel dwellers or long settled urbanites living in backyard shacks. Moreover, in contrast to the large squatter settlements of the Durban and Cape Town regions, political violence in the PWV camps was virtually unknown. The paper also indicates that the current popular representation of squatter settlements as comprising predominantly recent Xhosa-speaking rural immigrants 'and as ANC strongholds does not square with the findings of recent research into settlements in the 1980s. This research indicates that, for most of the mid- to late 1980s, the camps were made up predominantly of long settled urban residents with a great variety of ethnic identities. [4]

The recent history of squatter politics in the 1980s is suggestive in a number of ways. It indicates that the impermanence and insecurity of most squatter setttements caused at first by repressive, and later more ambiguous, urbanization and informal settlement policies, coupled with a history of weak organization and marginalization from township politics, has created new potential political constituencies for parties who are best able to articulate squatter interests and offer security. It also indicates that, despite their media prominence, squatter settlements within townships and in close proximity to large hostels are only one of a variety of settlements which has arisen in the last decade. Repressive urbanization policies, the acute housing shortages, the effects of the recession and declining conditions in homelands and independent states and "white" farming areas have conspired to produce a wide array of informal settlements from the mid-1980s, ranging from dense settlements within townships to more dispersed settlements in the peri-urban areas of the region.

Structure and Argument of the Paper

In the first section of this paper, I describe some general characteristics of the political culture of informal settlements and offer some speculative reasons for these characteristics. Section (ii) outlines the history of informal settlement in the region and the social origins of informal settlers. Section (iii) examines the rise and fall of squatter organizations, and section (iv) covers the relationship between squatter communities and political organizations.

Although the heterogeneity of some 47 squatter camps [5] on the PWV defies simple generalizations and although they shared many features in common with formal township communities, it is argued that there is a distinctive quality to the social and political life of squatter camps. This in turn is derived from the recency of their creation and their temporary and insecure status. Informal settlements are also unique in that they exhibit a complex array of organizational forms, some of which mirror those of urban townships (such as ward and street committees) and others which resemble more transitional, migrant and farm labour social structures (such as the *"isibondo"* structures of white farms.)

For most of the 1980s, squatter politics were introverted and parochial; inhabitants were preoccupied with "bread and butter" concerns and their leaders rarely made explicit connections for them, between their conditions and wider structural deficiencies. Struggles, too, were episodic and were primarily launched in defence of illegal spaces. Intense collective activity and mobilization tended to occur at moments of pressure, such as the threat of demolitions or removals. Invariably, once the immediate danger had passed, communities tended to lose their coherence and the squatter leadership structures frequently fragmented into internecine feuds. Indeed, squatter committees rose and fell with astonishing rapidity.

In general, from the time of their appearance in substantial concentrations in the mid-1980s until the end of the decade, squatters were less overtly confrontational with the state than

either their formally-housed counterparts or the squatter movements of 1990; only rarely were the few occasions of direct confrontation expressed in explicitly political terms and the cause of squatters taken up by the major oppositional political or civic organizations and the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM.) In the leadership vacuum, it was generally "conservative" populist Community and Town Councillors in the local authority structures who could claim some following amongst shanty-town dwellers. [6] In townships such as Soweto, Daveyton and Bekkersdal, such politicians championed the homeless; through their promises to deliver the squatters' key demand - urban land and houses in the future - they garnered electoral support and ensured non-confrontational action on the part of squatter communities. It was also the church, liberal and charitable organizations, such as the Black Sash, Operation Hunger, the World Council of Churches and the Network for the Homeless, rather than the civic and other oppositional township movements, which provided much needed legal aid, blankets and food during shack demolitions and removals. [7]

By the end of the decade, the situation described above had changed substantially. Squatter struggles took on a more confrontational character and, in the closing months of the decade, a wave of land invasions swept the townships of the East Rand. By the early 1990s, these more spontaneous invasions were followed by planned land invasions, spearheaded by township-based civic organizations in townships such as Wattville on the East Rand. One of the reasons for the greater sensitivity of the MDM towards squatter issues by 1989 was the beginning of the resettlement of squatter communities in controlled site and service schemes such as Orange Farm and Zonkizizwe, on the peripheries of the metropolitan region. [8] Although hundreds of squatter families moved voluntarily to the settlements, significant numbers of informal dwellers, notably those in Soweto and Alexandra camps, were opposed to the move. These groups, sponsored by township political organizsations and the MDM, portrayed the resettlements as yet another instance of forced urban removals and their campaigns thus injected a hitherto absent politicized strain into squatter politics.

In accounting for the largely accommodationist and a-political culture of informal settlements, it is asserted that the contradictory and changing official policy of the authorities vis-à vis informal settlement was a crucial inhibitor of militant protest. Until the abolition of influx controls in 1986, many informal dwellers were in the urban areas illegally and forced to live a clandestine existence. Engagement in overt political activity would have invited exposure to hundreds of people in these categories. Even after the permanent presence of urban informal dwellers was accepted in terms of the state's policies of "orderly urbanization" [9], punitive action was frequently taken against informal dwellers. The continued, albeit, more erratic shack demolitions and the new possibilities of gaining formal housing continued to dissuade squatters from engaging in high profile political activity.

Another characteristic of informal settlement which acted as a break on political mobilization was the very fluidity of settlement patterns. Camps were occupied by people constantly on the move in search of ever cheaper accommodation; as a departing household decamped, newcomers would erect their shacks in the vacated space. In addition, it appears that there was considerable intra-metropolitan circular migration whereby one member of a household lived in a shack settlement near work during the week and returned to a township, farm or homeland settlement at the weekends. All this meant that the composition of squatter camps was continually changing, especially in the late 1980s which saw an acceleration in the growth of settlements. This made it increasingly difficult to sustain a sense of community coherence. The constant arrival of homeless new families, combined with the manifest failure of the authorities to provide housing, induced a sense of discardedness, which constrained even neighbourly and mutual assistance. [10]

The extreme poverty and vulnerability of squatters, many of whom had been evicted from peri-urban farms or backyard shacks or who could not afford township accommodation, also meant that the drive to secure shelter and security was often more important to informal dwellers than wider political and national issues. Their poverty and precariousness kept their political horizons narrow. In these circumstances, thus, institutions such as burial societies

and the independent churches which acted as a hedge against stress and discontent were of greater significance to informal dwellers than local township and national political organizations.

The absence of sustained communal participation was also conditioned by the poor performance and unreliability of squatter committees. An explanation for the ephemerality of many squatter committees and for the endemic feuding between leaders lies to a great extent in the nature of organization and the relationships between committees and their constituencies. To a great extent, as in settlements of the urban poor throughout the world, the support-bases of several committee members were an elaborate network of patron-client relationships. [11] Most committees were self-appointed and lacked democratic checks upon their members. This allowed for considerable abuses of power. In a context in which settlements were constantly growing and increasing in social complexity, established committees were always under the threat of challenges by newcomers who did not fall within the ambit of existing patron-client ties. The potential for rupture was ever-present. In settlements within townships, it made committees vulnerable to the overtures of local authority politicians who sought fresh political resources in the township squatters. The fragility of committees also meant that at the moment of negotiation with the authorities over the future of camps, such as those between the leaders of Weilers Farm and the authorities in 1987 and 1988, committees were often too divided amongst themselves and from their constituencies to hammer out agreements on their own terms. [12]

Why did "radical" township and national political organizations fail to intervene in squatter struggles in the 1980s?

In retrospect, it has been argued that oppositional civic organizations were crippled by the state of emergency at the very moment at which squatter settlements emerged on a marked scale in 1986. More important, perhaps, was the fact these organizations rarely attracted squatter support as they simply were not in a position to offer the basic resources so desperately required by squatters. Indeed, impoverished squatter movements had little choice but to turn to groups perceived to have the means to answer their most immediate needs. These would more likely be the authorities or political actors within "the system".

It must be noted, that it is not possible to do justice to the variability and diversity of local squatter cultures on the PWV, nor to the fate of individual committees and squatter camps. Indeed, what is striking about squatter camps in the region during this period is the heterogeneity and the varying degrees of incorporation into broader township political cultures. The character of individual settlements was determined by the regional economies of the different parts of the PWV, the legal status of camps, their location within or outside of townships, the policies of the relevant authorities, and the political cultures of neighbouring communities. [13] Because of the enormous variation, the paper thus confines itself to the pressures, experiences and political expressions that were common to most squatter movements. [14]

(ii)

A Brief Overview of the History of Informal Settlements on the PWV[15]

Informal settlement or squatting has been an enduring feature of the Witwatersrand since the 1890s. In these years through to the 1910s, clusters of unregulated shanty villages arose on mining land across the length of the Rand. During the period of reconstruction after the South African War through to the end of the century's first decade, the inhabitants of these settlements were relocated in municipal locations or mine married quarters. [16] However, by the 1920s, squatting occurred on a vast scale on the peri-urban smallholdings where white smallholders allowed African tenants to erect shanties in return for rentals and/or domestic and farm labour. For the next two decades, the peri-urban regions absorbed rural immigrants,

dissatisfied location tenants and sub-tenants and those whose presence in the urban area was deemed illegal by the authorities. By the 1940s, on the outskirts of Brakpan alone on the East Rand, a population of between 9,000 and 12,000 lived on the smallholdings. [17] Most of the informal settlement up until the 1940s occurred on this basis, as a result of the gradual build-up of populations in a context of immense shortages of accommodation. It was only the mid-1940s and occasionally in the early 1950s that the search for shelter acquired an explicitly political edge and that organized land seizures became a characteristic expression of urban protest. [18] After years of vacillation in their dealings with squatters, the promulgation of the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1952, the elaboration of influx and pass controls and the construction of vast new mass housing estates (townships), the state was able to assert control over the squatter settlements and the combative political cultures they had spawned. A concerted drive to rehouse squatters was instituted, notably in Johannesburg and East Rand. By 1959, the Department of Bantu Administration and Development could announce that the resettlement of urban squatters into site and service schemes had been "practically completed". [19] With the resettlement of squatters and the provision of their most basic requirement in the form of permanent, secure shelter, the short-lived squatter militancy soon subsided.

The structural and long-term reasons for the reappearance of informal settlements in the 1980s are complex and have been well documented elsewhere. The key reasons for the appearance both of squatter settlements in the 1980s are the housing shortages, the effects of the recession which set in after 1981, and the changed policy environment. As other commentators have indicated, the influx controls had the effect of displacing urbanization to the closer settlements and vast informal settlements in the homelands and homeland-components of the metropolitan areas. [20]

The primary cause of the growth of free-standing settlements in the 1980s was the shortage of houses, itself a by-product of the freeze on township housing construction between the late 1960s and mid-1970s in accordance with the dictates of urban apartheid. The acute housing shortages and natural urban population increase conspired to produce a situation in which an ever-increasing proportion of the urban black population was compelled to provide some form of informal shelter for themselves by the early 1980s. In these years, the shortage of housing was at its most acute on the East Rand and central Witwatersrand, where the largest township-based free-standing settlements were to emerge. It was estimated in 1981 that there was a shortage of 24,000 houses on the East Rand and the cost of providing these was calculated to be well over 10 times the East Rand Administration Board's budget for 1981-1982. The shortages resulted in the proliferation of backyard shacks, the conversion of garages and outhouses into homes, and the emergence of a rentier class of registered tenants who rented space or shacks in their backyards. In Katlehong, the number of shacks grew from 3,000 in 1979 to 44,000 by mid-1983. By this date, there were nearly twice as many shacks as "legal" township houses. In the same period, there was an estimated shortage of 35,000 houses in Soweto and over 23,000 families were reported to be living in "Zozos". [21]

In some townships, small pockets of vacant land were occupied by shack-dwellers by the late 1970s and early 1980s. In Katlehong, for example, 90 shacks sprung up on land to the north of the township in 1982. Similarly, small settlements arose throughout Soweto. Many informants living in controlled settlements in Soweto in 1989, for example, recalled their nomadic existence as squatters in the late 1970s near the Chinese-owned shops, the lands adjacent to the coal and scrap yards of Klipspruit and in the empty stables and farm stalls on Levins, MacDonalds and Chicken Farms. [22] In 1982 and 1983, after successive police raids, they were herded by the municipality into the emergency camp of Fred Clark, ostensibly until permanent housing was made available. [23]

The emergence both of small informal settlement concentrations and backyard shacks in townships in the early 1980s must also be understood within the context of the generalized recession which gripped the region from 1981 and which struck the East Rand and Vaal

Triangle particularly hard. As a consequence of the recession, unemployment mounted and the proportion of households with an income level below a "Household Effective Level" rose. In Soweto, alone, according to Keenan, this almost doubled between 1978 and 1985. In these circumstances, several households could no longer afford formal rents.

The early 1980s also saw the growth of small settlements in peri-urban regions. While these were indirectly caused by housing shortages and the recession which affected the manufacturing industries, they also often had particular, local roots. In the southern PWV between Johannesburg south and the industrial areas of the Vaal triangle, for example, informal settlements emerged as a consequence of the expropriation of large swathes of white-owned farm land for Indian and coloured housing developments in the 1970s. In this process, displaced former farm workers and labour tenants began to gather in small clusters on vacant land in the region. [25] The well-known Weilers Farm camp emerged in these years on the farm owned by a private farmer, Max Weiler, who permitted the African families to settle on the farm and build shacks in return for monthly rentals. By 1983, there were 300 squatters living on his property. [26] Despite the periodic police raids between 1983 and 1985, the Weilers Farm community continued to expand and a mass removal scheme to Sebokeng scheduled by the Orange Vaal Administration Board for late 1984 was scuttled as a result of the outbreak of unrest in Sebokeng.

Thus, despite the erratic attempts by the authorities to contain and prevent the growth of informal settlements, in the early to mid-1980s, these foundered both on the sheer numbers of people involved and the administrative confusion resulting from the central government's reappraisal and overhauling of urban policy in the mid-1980s which culminated in the abolition of influx controls in 1986 and the publication of the White Paper on urbanization in the same year. As a result of the administrative hiatus, from 1986 onwards, informal settlements within and outside townships mushroomed. Vlakfontein, to the south of Johannesburg on Asian-designated land, made its appearance with 50 shacks in this year. Two years later there were 180 shacks, and by 1988 the camp had grown to 500 shacks. [27] Similarly, "Badsider" camp emerged in vacant land within the Indian township of Lenasia at this date. From a scattering of small shelters adjacent to a small factory (where the first inhabitants were employed), this settlement grew to 900 shacks by the end of 1989. [28] Within the townships, too, free-standing settlements grew apace; the camps of Chicken Farm and Mshenguville and Phola Park arose between 1986 and 1988. The rate of growth was staggering; during 1988, for example, the camps in Tokoza and Katlehong grew at the rate of 5 to 6 shacks a day, despite the local authorities' endeavours to police the settlement and prevent further growth. [29]

Unlike the settlements in Orlando or Benoni in the 1940s, which arose as a consequence of land invasions, the emergence of new camps within the township in the mid- to late 1980s occurred with the full knowledge and involvement of the local authorities and officials, who attempted both to contain and to control their growth. Existing settlements became transit areas where the municipalities undertook to provide minimal services. In Daveyton and Soweto, for example, the municipalities prepared site and service schemes and transit camps for the townships' homeless, who were assured that they would eventually be provided with permanent homes.

Although shack dwellers continued to experience erratic and arbitrary police raids in the latter half of the 1980s, most settlements enjoyed a stay of execution until such time as large regional, controlled, permanent site and service schemes were prepared to receive substantial numbers of informal settlers from inner-city township camps and from those in peri-urban regions. In 1987, Weilers Farm became a "transit" camp and fell under the jurisdiction of the Transvaal Provincial Administration, and in 1986 and 1987 the Soweto City Council reached a *modus vivendi* with the inhabitants of the Fred Clark and Mshenguville camps. [30] It was agreed that the squatters could remain in the camps until site and service schemes had been completed in the township - in return for an agreement by squatters that no new shacks would be erected. [31] In May 1989 the resettlement of informal dwellers in the first regional site

and service scheme, Orange Farm in the Vaal region, began, and in August 1989 squatters from the East Rand were relocated to the scheme on the Far East Rand.

In addition to limited negotiations between squatters and the authorities between 1986 and 1989, these years saw the rapid expansion of existing settlements and the appearance of new camps, such as Tamboekiesfontein which arose on a private farm at the end of 1988. The total number of free-standing shacks in the region increased from 28,513 to 49,179 in these years, and by 1990 there were approximately 47 free-standing settlements within the area. Of these, 25 were situated within proclaimed black townships and 22 were located in peri-urban areas and on land designated for white, "coloured" or Asian residence. [32] It was in these years of growth as well as negotiations with the authorities that the committees began to fragment.

Who are Free-Standing Settlement Dwellers?

The social origins, histories of urbanization and urban settlement of informal settlements vary from region to region, and indeed from township to township within the same regions. Hence, while the peri-urban settlements of the south/Vaal region were inhabited predominantly by ex-farm labourers and labour tenants from the agricultural hinterland, the camps of the "inner-city" townships, such as those in Soweto and Tokoza, were mostly occupied by the poorest urbanites of these townships, many of whom had lived all their lives as backyard shack dwellers or lodgers. Some informants from camps in large townships had lived in the "sacks" - the camps of James Mpanza and other squatter leaders in Soweto in the 1940s. Elliot Ntlakane, the leader of "Badsider" camp in Lenasia, for example, spent part of his youth in the Albertynsville squatter camp in the 1940s. [33] In the camps of the peri-urban "shack farms" of the West Rand, by contrast, many of the inhabitants were newer arrivals to the urban area; many were ex-miners living with families from the homelands, new partners, or with wives and dependents who moved to the urban areas after the abolition of influx controls.

Generalizations, however, can be made, for the oscillation of settlers between hostels, shacks, backyard shacks and camps meant that there were vast areas of shared experience amongst all informal dwellers. Even peri-urban settlements which were predominantly settled by ex-farm workers attracted township dwellers, who sought escape from expensive rents in backyards, overcrowded yards and, in several cases, the political upheavals in the townships.

The rapid growth of informal settlement after 1986 led many observers to believe that the underlying reason for their appearance was the acceleration of in-migration of new rural arrivals after the abolition of influx controls. Several studies, however, have indicated that informal dwellers are, on the contrary, long-settled inhabitants of the metropolitan region. A study in 1989 found that over half of all free-standing shack dwellers had been born within the PWV and that only 16 per cent had arrived in the region after 1987. [34] Nevertherless, there are substantial numbers of recent rural migrants or "urban peasants" from the Ciskei, Transkei, north-western Transvaal and Mozambique, and it is these people who confer the transitional, migrant quality to squatter settlements.

Although most informal settlers had resided and worked in the area for at least 10 years prior to the abolition of influx controls, most have moved incessantly within the region in search of shelter. The constant movement between backyards, hostels and white suburbs, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, was a recurrent theme in the life histories of informal dwellers interviewed.

In the townships, most free-standing inhabitants had previously resided in rented shacks or garages within the township. In those located adjacent to the hostels, such as Phola Park, many early shack dwellers moved directly out of hostels. One of the reasons impelling backyard shack residents into a series of residential moves culminating in squatter camps was

the increasingly high cost of backyard rentals at a time of rising unemployment and declining real wages. These costs became intolerable for a proportion of backyard shack residents by the late 1980s. Backyard rentals in 1989 were an average of R43.00 per month, but could be as high as R60.00 or even R100.00. Those households which ended up in free-standing settlements were those whose mean monthly income was considerably lower than their counterparts in formal houses or those in backyard shacks who remained there by choice or primarily because of the lack of alternative accommodation. In 1989, the average monthly household income of formal township households was found to be R900.00 and that households in backyard shacks or occupied garages was R749.00. By contrast, the average household income in free-standing shack settlements was R449.00 per month, well below the minimum household subsistence level, calculated at R620.00 in 1989. [35] Moreover, some 20 per cent of free-standing shack households earned less than R300.00 per month. Amongst the most destitute of free-standing shack households in 1987/88 were those headed by women, where unemployment exceeded 50 per cent. [36]

Although households which ended up in squatter areas were considerably poorer than their backyard and formally-housed counterparts, male unemployment did not exceed the rates of unemployment in the formal townships and the effects were slightly mitigated by the opportunities for accumulation through petty commodity production, opening small "*spaza*" (tuck) shops and establishing coal yards in the informal settlements. Unemployment rates, however, were high, and in areas such as the West Rand, where the local mines were reaching the end of their productive lives, there was little casual or part-time work to soak up retrenched miners and workers. Here, the situation was particularly desperate.

The employed inhabitants of squatter camps tended to be concentrated in the lowest and least skilled categories of urban work. Whereas 41per cent of the employed population of squatter camps were unskilled, the proportions were 34 per cent, 33 per cent and 26 per cent in formal houses, backyard shacks and outbuildings, respectively. The characteristic employment of women was as domestic servants or cleaners; the men tended to be employed as labourers, often in the employ of municipal and provincial authorities, and workers on construction sites. [37]

Poor skills levels were often a product of lower levels of educational attainment. This was a particularly marked feature amongst peri-urban shack dwellers who had been born on farms and amongst a significant proportion of urban shack dwellers who had also been born and reared on farms in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. As one informant in "Badsider" camp noted, his standard-three education confined him to the lowest and least secure categories of work,

> I only went to school to learn the official languages but my
> standard three today is worth nothing. I can't be employed in
> properly paying jobs except casual jobs which pays very little.
> [38]

Not only were the poorly educated disdvantaged in the job and housing queues, but poorly educated workers found themselves trapped in unskilled work; for these people, particularly those in the textile and clothing industries of Johannesburg and heavy industries of the Vaal, cheap shelter became an essential survival strategy in the face of a decline in real wages from 1981.

The inability to afford backyard and formal house rentals - or to make undercover payments to council officials in order to "jump" the housing queue - was thus a major pressure impelling urban dwellers into informal settlements from the mid-1980s, and particularly affected pensioners, women and the newly unemployed. Another was simply the over-crowding of backyards, which placed increasing pressure on resources such as water and electricity, pressure which had the effect of accentuating social tensions between landlords and tenants. By 1988 half of all township sites had at least one informal dwelling, and a year

later this proportion increased to 57 per cent. Between 1987 and 1989, the average number of informal dwellings per stand grew from 0.6 to 0.7 per stand In a context of desparate housing shortages, registered tenants could afford to raise the rents in the full knowledge that there it was a seller's market. [39] High backyard rents caused considerable discontent amongst shack dwellers. Congestion also produced other tensions. Several women told stories of how their presence in backyards was resented by wives of rentiers who suspected them of seducing their husbands and sons. Others told of restrictive controls and labour demands imposed by landlords,

> If you are renting [a backyard shack], you must wake up early
> in the morning and clean the stoep of the house, clean the yard
> and toilet and you should not have many children staying with
> you who will make a noise and disturb the children of the
> landlord. The other thing is the high rents. Again you must do
> your own washing on certain days. You must not have regular
> visitors. [40]

Households also moved into squatter camps as a result of marital instability and household conflict, which often was exacerbated under conditions of overcrowding. Widows, abandoned and divorced women were often compelled to leave their homes because they could no longer afford the rents or because other relatives asserted stronger moral or legal rights to the original home. [41] The squatter camps also served as refuges for men and women who abandoned spouses and lovers and who thus relinquished their homes. One inhabitant of "Badsider", for example, moved into the settlement after leaving his girlfriend with whom he was living in her domestic-servant's quarters. [42]

Just as the inhabitants of township camps were the poorest and more marginal groups, so were their counterparts in the peri-urban areas. In the case of ex-farm workers or labour tenants, the cycle of homelessness began after family members proved unable or unwilling to work on farms, or as a result of evictions following the sale of farms or the mechanization of farm labour. [43] It is noteworthy that surveys of peri-urban settlements in the southern PWV have indicated that over half of the inhabitants were born on white-owned farms and that, of these, 52 per cent had been dismissed by farmers. Some of these dismissals were as a result of the redundancy of farm workers following the mechanization of agricultural methods and the attacks on labour tenancy and squatting in the 1960s and 1970s. [44] Many ex-farm workers had spent the ten years prior to moving into squatter camps on plots, in factories, hostels and domestic quarters in the region. Hampered by their poor education and low levels of skills, they were confined to casual and domestic work on the margins of the urban economy and thus excluded by their poverty and their unfamiliarity with townships from acquiring shacks or houses within townships.

Free-standing shack dwellers were thus amongst the poorest, most harried and least secure urban groups who would thus give allegiance to squatter leaders as long as they were able to offer shelter, freedom from harassment and hopes of betterment. They had been tucked away in the corners and crevices of the urban environment for at least ten years. It was the administrative confusion and hiatus in state policy in the mid-1980s which allowed them to emerge from the urban woodwork and to gather in large concentrations.

(iii)

The Rise and Fall of Residents Committees in Free-Standing Settlements in the PWV, 1983 - 1989

Representative or committee structures arose in virtually all settlements. [45] Although the character of committees varied greatly between camps, especially between the township-

based camps, the peri-urban self governing camps and the shack farms on privately owned farms, all had several features in common.

Initially committees emerged for the purposes of negotiating with the authorities and for acting as "messengers of the people". [46] The need usually arose as a result of punitive action on the part of the authorities soon after the appearance of the settlements. As a resident of Chicken Farm camp described it, "after we were threatened by the Boers [police], we decided to form a committee". [47] During these days of shack demolitions, which usually occurred within the full glare of media coverage, committees also forged contacts with concerned outsiders such as the Black Sash, Operation Hunger, the Red Cross, church groups and liberal lawyers who rallied to the defence of squatter communities in the early and mid-1980s. In 1983, for example, a residents' committee was established at Weilers Farm in the wake of attempts by the OrangeVaal Administration Board to resettle squatters in Sebokeng. [48] The Phola Park commmittee, similarly, was formed in 1987 in order to negotiate with the Tokoza City Council about the relocation of squatters who had been evicted from settlements within the township, while the Fred Clark Committee was elected in order to march to the Council offices in protest against the failure of the council to provide permanent housing to the shack dwellers as promised. [49]

It was usually the more prominent and forceful personalities who emerged as heads of committees. They were frequently amongst the longest settled and those who were perceived to be the most daring and outspoken. The "executives" were usually nominated by the leaders and their core of supporters and were hand-picked for their their social prominence and status. Thus Zionist Chrisitan Church priests and wealthier entrepreneurs such as taxi drivers or "*spaza*" shop owners were often committee members. In the case of Chicken Farm in 1986, delegates appointed to negotiate with lawyers were nominated from the ranks of the unemployed by virtue of their having time during the day to undertake negotiations and to keep appointments with lawyers. [50]

Although committees were not originally popularly elected, if their negotiations with the authorities succeeded in staving off removals or if their lawyers won the communities "rights" to remain in the settlements in court cases, this would ensure a moral authority for committees and entrench their images as protectors and strong leaders. Moreover, if committees were successful in gaining material resources through liberal and welfare organizations (such as water pumps, blankets, food), they would be valued as a conduit for all manner of material, legal and other support. In Vlakfontein, the local committee's enduring legitimacy has in large part been due to the successes of the committee in protecting the camp and in gaining access to much needed resources. In this camp, in recognition of the role played by the committee and its charismatic leader, the community voluntarily paid the "salary" of their "mayor" through monthly contributions.

The extent of popular legitimacy enjoyed by committees varied from camp to camp. Until 1988, the committee in Crossroads in Katlehong township, for example, was regarded as a legitimate representative structure, not least because until this date members were elected annually. [51] At the other extreme, on shack farms such as Tamboekiesfontein or Rheeders farrn, the owners would appoint "*isibondas*" to carry out routine administrative tasks. Because these appointed "officials" were responsible for rent collection on the farmers' behalf, they were often the focus of communal resentment.

The primary functions of committees was the daily administration of the camps. For greater ease of administration, most camps were divided into wards or, in the case of Fred Clark in the early days, into street committees. The administrative functions of committees included the screening of newcomers, the allocation of sites, rent collection and the control of trading. Through these functions, committee leaders accrued considerable power within squatter communities and were thus in a position to distribute largesse to supporters.

Committees were also responsible for performing social, adjudicatory and policing roles. In most camps, the men's sections of committees were responsible for crime protection. In Chicken Farm, for example, there were night patrols to protect shack dwellers against housebreakings, to see that shebeens were closed, and to protect residents who were returning home late at night. [52] In addition, in several camps, informal court cases for minor offences were held on a weekly basis by committee members and the fines levied were generally used for expenses such as the purchase of chemical toilets and the payment of lawyers' fees. However, miscreants were as often punished by beatings. Typical misdemeanours were theft and wife-battery. As one Chicken Farm committee member noted, extreme actions such as expulsions from the camp were regarded as necessary in the case of habitual wife-beaters, for their presence raised the possibility of police intervention. [53] One of the motives behind the social policing was to protect the community from the intrusions of the municipal police.

Committees were generally divided into separate women's and men's sections, with their own distinct functions. Although the committees commanded greater support amongst women than men, invariably, the structures themselves were dominated by men; the Weilers Farm instance, in which the pre-eminent squatter leader was a woman, was an exception to the rule. While the men's roles were primarily concerned with crime-prevention and social policing, women's committee sections were responsible for arbitrating in marital and other domestic disputes. In Chicken Farm, the women advised and counselled young women and ensured that women kept their shacks clean. Despite their secondary roles and status in camps, it was the women who most frequently sought the help of and who forged close ties with squatter leaders. [54] It was also the women's commitees who were most involved in self-help intiatives and who set up creches, literacy classes, needlework co-operatives, through their contacts with the churches and other welfare institutions. They, too, ran the *stokvels* and burial societies, which played a more crucial social welfare role than the committees. Both the need to and willingness of women to take on these roles was determined by the higher levels of unemployment amongst women and the fact that the poorest families in settlements were those in which women were household heads. [55]

In the early months of a camp's existence, committees could count on fairly widespread support. Nevertherless, by the late 1980s, in several instances, a mere two years after the establishment of camps, splits emerged within leadership and discontent simmered amongst constituents. By 1989, for example, a small section of "Badsider" camp in Lenasia refused to pay "rentals" and to attend public meetings. While regular public meetings were held to communicate decisions and the outcome of negotiations and meetings with the authorities in the early days of the camps' existence, as the popular legitimacy of committees eroded attendance levels at meetings dropped. This, in turn, accentuated the divide between leaders and their constituencies.

At the heart of the problem of retaining a popular and moral authority was the total absence of structures of accountability. The growing weaknesses of orgamizsation and increasingly strained relationships betwen leaders and constituents in turn rendered communities vulnerable to the changed conditions of the late 1980s.

Committees were generally self-appointed and, through their contacts with outside service and charitable organizations, leaders had access to funds and resources. In the absence of democratic checks, the potential for self-enrichment was ever-present. In addition, in a context in which poor people were regularly asked to "pop up" contributions for lawyers' fees, chemical toilets and rentals, squatter communities were highly suspicious when long-promised benefits failed to materialize. In Chicken Farm, for example, the original committee leader was accused by his colleagues on the committee of stealing money collected for the payment of lawyers' fees, as was the leader of "Kwa Green" near Alexandra. Discontent over the unexplained disappearance of monies resulted in the collapse of both structures. [56] Similarly, the original leader of the Phola Park committee was accused by followers of enriching himself by selling blankets donated for the community's

use by the Roman Catholic Church. [57] Committee members were also accused of monopolizing trading in the camps and of permitting only themselves and their supporters to open "*spaza*" shops. Other areas which were open to abuse were the informal courts. While these were originally viewed as legitimate institutions for social adjudication, increasingly committee leaders arrogated greater rights as far as meting out punishments was concerned. Suspicions were rife that committee members pocketed fines, and discontent was often expressed at the excessive punishments and beatings. One Mshunguville squatter observed that the public humiliations of adults had corrosive effects on parental authority. [58]

Resentments against leaders were exacerbated after periods of growth in camps and conflicts tended to flare up between newcomers and original inhabitants. Even the popular Vlakfontein committee experienced strains under the impact of expansion. The inherent weaknesses in squatter structures were laid bare under pressures of new arrivals, a constant feature of most camps by the late 1980s. In certain areas, the conflicts between original settlers and their committees, on the one hand, and new incoming groups, on the other, expressed itself in terms of ethnic tensions. In Chicken Farm, for example, longer-settled residents explained the division of their committee into two factions as a consequence of an influx of a predominantly Xhosa-speaking group in 1989, which became the nucleus of Chicken Farm II.They claimed that the newcomers wished to take over the running of the settlement. As one original Chicken Farm resident viewed it,

> "The Xhosas want to govern this place. They arrived here
> recently but they are power-hungry ... How can we allow
> people who just arrived yesterday? [59]

The leadership conflicts which this comment reflects were described by several informants as a "tribal war'. However, the situation was considerably more complex. The divisions in the committee and in the community certainly predated the establishment of Chicken Farm II and seem to have occurred primarily over the question of the committee's alleged "theft" of funds and over the relationship of the committee to the governing party in the Soweto City Council, the Sofasonke Party. [60]

It was at the moment when several committees were crumbling in early 1989 that the provincial and local authorities began to negotiate with squatter leaders over the relocation of shack dwellers in the site and service settlements. The fact that the new settlements offered both improvements for some squatters (security of tenure for example) and disadvantages to others (long distances from places of work and community networks) meant that whole communities were divided in their responses to the authorities' overtures. While opponents of the schemes portrayed the relocation of squatters from Alexandra and Soweto as forced removals, hundreds of squatters moved voluntarily to Orange Farm and Rietfontein.

Leadership structures themselves split over the question of resisting resettlement or co-operating with the authorities. Moreover, it appears, too, that these divisions were explicitly manipulated by the authorities. The provincial authorities responsible for the site and service schemes, for example, frequently met only with community representatives who were supportive of the resettlement schemes. The presentation of new choices and options to residents and the explicit manipulation of leadership cleavages by the authorities had the effect of splitting the community at Weilers Farm into two factions: one opposing the relocation, and the other conditionally supporting it. By the end of May 1989, after years of battling for the right to remain at Weilers Farm, 309 families were resettled at Orange Farm. [61]

The imminent removals to Orange Farms also provided momentary discontent with local leaders and leadership divisions began to emerge within Mshenguville, which, until 1989, had been a virtual fiefdom of the Sofasonke Party, the ruling party within the Soweto City Council. By December, 1989, when the residents were scheduled to move to Orange Farm, the shanty town was seething with discontent over the deterioration of the area and over the

failure of the Sofasonke Party to provide permanent houses on land within Soweto for permanent settlement. Thus, in opposition to the pro-Sofasonke Party "blockmen" who were promoting the resettlement at Orange Farm, a group of malcontents formed the "Masakhane" faction. They began to oppose the resettlement schemes and to court wider political support. They met with factions in other squatter areas who were resisting the move to Orange Farm and sought the support of the MDM. [62]

Squatter Organizations and Political Struggle.

Although squatter struggles in the 1980s were not characterised by overt confrontation with the state, there was a latent militancy and discontent which potentially could have been directed into more coherent directions. The remainder of this paper speculates on some of the reasons why a socially more radical and confrontational political culture failed to emerge amongst squatters. Some of the depoliticizing influences have already been alluded to.

One of the crucial features appears to be the failure of township civic and other oppositional structures to mobilize squatters in consistent campaigns. [63]

One of the reasons for this omission is that at the very moment when substantial settlements burgeoned after 1986, many civic organizations were reeling from the blows dealt by state repression during the state of emergency. Indeed, this was the reason given by the Alexandra Action Comminee for the emergence of apolitical squatter committees in Alexandra at this time. [64] In addition, on occasions when squatter committees did co-operate with township "comrades", as was the case in Crossroads during 1986 and 1987, camps were subjected to regular police raids. [65]

The social geography of informal settlement partially accounts for the failure of township-based oppositional movements to join forces with squatter communities. Peri-urban squatter camps were isolated and far-flung. Some of the "shack farms" on the property of shack farmers, moreover, were tightly controlled and virtually impenetrable to outsiders. The owners of Tamboekiesfontein farm, for example, refused to allow access to the Isilomizi People's Union, a short-lived organization which aimed to organize squatters of the PWV. [66]

In the township camps, the situation was considerably more complex. From the early 1980s, prior to the political mobilization of the townships and thc radicalization of township politics, the squatters had already found champions in the form of populist opposition politicians in the Black Local Authorities. In the early 1980s, for example, waves of shack demolitions by the city councils of Daveytown and Soweto were opposed by populist opposition politicians of the Sinaba and Sofasonke Parties, respectively, who projected themselves as protectors of the homeless. The Sofasonke Party explicitly harked back to its past history as the party of the squatter leader, James Mpanza, which had formed around the struggles of squatters in the 1940s.

This strategy soon delivered the political advantages the politicians had sought. In the Soweto elections of 1983, for example, the poll was higher than it had been in 1979 and Sofasonke swept the board, although on a very low poll. [67] This was in large part due to the populist stand taken by the Sofasonke Party and its promises of permanent housing. The council's wave of squatter demolitions in 1982 and 1983 also served to enhance Sofasonke's old appeal in the elections. Similarly, in Daveyton, in 1979, the populist Shadrack Sinaba earned popular support when he was detained as a result of the stand he took against the persecution of squatters. [68]

In 1986, the Sofasonke Party coffers and membership were boosted when the Sofasonke Party Chief and Sowetan entrepreneur "E.T." Tshabalala allowed the homeless to erect shacks on vacant land behind his shops in return for membership fees and "donations".

Within months, this settlement expanded from this nucleus across the Mofolo golf course. From a small settlement, it had well over 3,000 shacks housing approximately 17,000 people by 1989. Tshabalala's resignation from the Council in November 1986, ostensibly in opposition to shack demolitions, can only but have confirmed his and Sofasonke's popular image as Mpanza's natural heir. The fact that Mshenguville's name is derived from Tshabalala's clan name - Mshengu - is a further illustration of the intimate ties which developed between squatter settlements and their populist politicians [69]

Similar practices were followed in the later waves of settlement into other Soweto camps; in exchange for membership fees, settlement fees and "donations", backyard shacks were shepherded into the camps of Fred Clark and Chicken Farm in these years. The council elections of 1988 saw the redoubling of the Sofasonke's efforts to gain squatter support. Exhaustive campaigning was undertaken in the squatter camps and proved to be one of the pressures which aggravated the divisions in the squatter committees.

In the post-election period, elected Sofasonke politicians intervened in internal squatter struggles and supported their own followers in these disputes. By this date, Sowetan camps were divided between those disillusioned with the party and its promises of housing and those newer arrivals whose settlement in the camps had been facilitated by the Sofasonke Party. By the late 1980s, genuine popular support for the Sofasonke Party had been eroded. As one squatter remarked, membership or voting was a pragmatic and necessary step to obtain access to urban land and not a meaningful statement of political allegiance,

> We had to join Sofasonke. You would not get a shack without
> a membership card. [70]

The growing disillusionment with the Sofasonke Party by the end of of the 1980s centred largely on the evident failure of its politicians to make good their electoral promises, and increasingly, by 1989, many squatters felt that they had been duped into paying fees without any visible improvements in their circumstances. As one squatter expressed this disenchantment,

> I thought Tshabalala and Sofasonke a true party, but as time
> goes on, we realise that people are losing their money. You pay
> R5.00 for a toilet which is not even in your yard. [71]

The widespread disenchantment was acknowledged by Sofasonke Party members, who were increasingly discomforted by suspicion and derision from squatters. [72] The tendency for squatters to become increasingly disillusioned with their councillor champions was replicated in other large townships, where politicians had sought electoral support from squatters. In Tokoza, for example, one resident noted how, after the councillors had been installed, "they forget the cries of shack dwellers". It is possible that the failure of elected councillors to deliver homes and sites as promised during the 1988 elections was one of the pre-conditions for squatter's greater receptivity to alternative political actors, such as the UDF and ANC, by late 1989.

Another factor which inhibited an oppositional political culture from developing in the township camps was the controls which councils exercised over municipal camps and the ever-present threat of demolitions or expulsions of recalcitrant squatters. Moreover, squatters were initially informed that their presence in the camps was temporary, pending the construction of permanent houses or the resettlement in site and service schemes within the townships. Combative political activity or protest against poor services in temporary camps would certainly have jeopardized their (illusory) chances of obtaining these ends. Thus, even when oppositional township movements did attempt to mobilize squatters in controlled municipal camps, as did the Alexandra Action Committee, they met with the suspicion of the camp's residents. [73]

It has been argued that the ability of the authorities to deliver land and a measure of protection was one reason for squatters' reluctance to engage in confrontational politics, a course of action which would not, in the context, have been a rational political calculation. Squatters had more to gain from co-operation with local authorities than pledging loyalties to the progressive movements which could not deliver the material resources they required. Neither could the oppositional movements provide short-term relief or aid during the successive waves of shack demolitions. It was in this sphere that liberal, welfare groups, church organizations and progressive lawyers played a key role. Operation Hunger, Black Sash, the Network for the Homeless, all earned the trust of many threatened communities in the 1980s. [74]

Within the township camps, there were also tensions between shack dwellers and perrnanent residents. As an Alexandra Action Committee spokesperson noted, one of the reasons for the organisation's commitment to organizing squatters and incorporating their struggles into broader township politics was tension between squatters in Alexandra and their formally housed neighbours. [75] Squatters in Mshenguville, for example, complained that the Civic Association ""looked down"" on squatters. One Mshenguville resident remarked that it was only the churches who had been interested in their plight during shack demolitions of 1986. In an interview with a young Sowetan researcher, he said:

> You people, you gave us nothing, we got nothing from our
> people, only the Romans [Roman Catholic Church] gave
> us. [76]

Another source of friction between informal settlement residents and formal dwellers is the fact that, during the rent boycotts in some of the PWV townships, backyard shack households were often required to continue paying their landlords their monthly rentals.

In the last months of 1989, however, the spontaneous grassroots militancy in squatter areas manifested in a series of land invasions on the East Rand and widespread discontent over resettlement at Orange Farm and Rietfontein was tapped by the MDM. The squatter marches, housing campaigns and a UDF call upon the homeless to invade public and private urban land heralded a new chapter of squatter politics in the 1990s which has included both direct action (land invasions) and the negotiation of more favourable terms for squatter communities in their wake. These developments, the politicization of squatter communities in the wake of the recent violence and the likelihood of informal settlement growing, rather than diminishing in the future, will ensure that the questions of housing and informal settlement will remain high on the national political agenda for years to come.

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Notes

1   See for example A Borraine, "Mamelodi: from parks to people's power", BA (honours) dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1987; M Chaskalson, K Jochelson and J Seekings, "Rent Boycotts and Urban Political Economy" in *South African Review 4* (Johannesburg, 1987), pp 53-74; K Jochelson, "Reform, Repression and Resistance in South Africa: a case study of Alexandra Township, 1979-1989" in *Journal of Southern African Studies,* Vol 16, No 1, March, 1990; J Seekings, "The Origins of Political Mobilisation in the PWV Townships, 1980-1984" in W Cobbett and R Cohen (eds),

Popular Struggles in South Africa (London, 1988); J Seekings, "Quiescence and the Transition to Confrontation: South African townships, 1978-1984", (PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1990); M Swilling, "Urban Social Movements Under Apartheid" in *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines,* 99, December 1985; M Swilling, "The United Democratic Front and Township Revolt in South Africa" in Cobbett and Cohen (eds) *Popular Struggles*

2   See J Seekings, "Hostel Hostilities: township wars on the Reef", in *Indicator SA,* Vol 8, no 3, Winter 1991, for a discussion of the political context in which the violence erupted on the Reef and Vaal Triangle.

3   The violent conflicts in Phola Park squatter camp on the East Rand since August 1990, for example, have frequently been characterized as the inevitable outcome of a primordial ethnic antagonism between allegedly predominantly Zulu-speaking, Inkatha-supporting hostel migrants and predominantly Xhosa-speaking, ANC- supporting squatters.

4   Surveys of one of the camps most affected by the violence, Phola Park in 1987/88 and 1988/89, for example, did not indicate a preponderance of Xhosa-speakers in the settlement. They indicated, however, that the Ciskei and Transkei and Kwa-Zulu are the most significant source areas of that small proportion of the settlements who are recent arrivals from homelands. They also suggest that the Ciskei and Transkei were marginally more significant than Natal as source areas. Impressionistic studies of the changing composition of Reef hostels suggest that, amongst migrants, those from Natal are more likely to prefer migrancy to settling more permanently in the urban areas. However, it is also important to note that many inhabitants of the Phola Park squatter camp originally lived in the adjacent hostel and that these include both Zulu- and Xhosa-speakers. Since the writing of this paper, it has also emerged that the violence in Phola Park spilled over from conflict within the nearby hostels between pro-Inkatha Freedom Party hostel dwellers and their opponents in mid- to late 1990. The latter fed into the nearby camps; in this way, the camp became both the target for continued attacks and a base for reprisals. See J Seekings, "Hostel Hostilities: township wars on the Reef" in *Indicator South Africa,* Vol. 8, No 3, Winter, 1991.

5   This was the case in mid-1990. See H Sapire, "Informal Housing in the PWV: a case study", report prepared for the Urban Foundation, October, 1990.

6   See Seekings's discussion of what he calls "popular conservatism", which characterized council-oriented civic organization between 1978 and 1983. See Seekings, "Quiescence and the Transition to Confrontation", chapter 4.

7   With the exception of the churches, most welfare organizations which involved themselves in squatter struggles were based in "white" towns.

8   Using the provisions of section 6A of the amended *Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act,* minimally serviced areas have been opened to settlement to informal dwellers previously resident in temporary or "transit" squatter areas.

9   The policy of "orderly urbanization" adopted in 1986 represented a fresh policy overture in response to township "ungovernability", the political and fiscal collapse of Black Local Authorities, the persistence of the housing crisis and the growth of squatter settlements. The new strategy received its clearest expression in the President's Council Report (*An Urbanisation Strategy for the Republic of South Africa*) of 1985 which was presented as a White Paper in 1986. In addition to acknowledging the permanence of Africans in the urban areas and the inevitability and desirability of further black urbanization, the state recognized that "large parts of the population cannot afford formal housing" and that various forms of informal housing delivery would be required.

It also recognized that the existing anti-squatter legislation had failed to prevent the growth of informal settlement and that future amendments should not only introduce additional punitive measures but also contain provision for permanent informal settlement. The *Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act* (104 of 1988), promulgated in February 1989, thus included both tighter punitive measures as well as sections intended to allow for the establishment of informal settlements which could evolve into formal towns over time. In this period of policy-overhaul, local authorities responded in *ad hoc* and piecemeal fashion to squatter issues. This unpredictability of official action in a context of immense fluidity in policy in turn contributed to the conditions of uncertainty and insecurity experienced by informal settlement dweller.

10   See P Frankel, "Urbanisation and Informal Settlement on the PWV Complex", (unpublished manuscript, April, 1988).

11   See, for example, C J D Powell, "Peasant Societies and Clientilist Politics" in *American Political Science Review*, LXIV, No 2, June 1970, and D Collier, *Squatters and Oligarchs: authoritarian rule and policy change in Peru* (Baltimore, 1986)

12   See P Hendler, *Urban Policy and Housing* (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1988), p.30.

13   For a chilling account of the attitudes of neighbouring white smallholders in the vicinity of Weilers Farm towards squatters, see Rian Malan's *My Traitor's Heart* (London, 1990)

14   The account which follows is drawn from research conducted in 1989 for the "Urbanisation Monitoring Project" by the Centre for Policy Studies, University of the Witwatersrand. The quantitative data is taken from a survey of over 3,000 black households in the PWV. The qualitiative material is drawn from life histories taken from shack dwellers in free-standing settlements between March and August 1989, group discussions with residents and squatter committee members. The interviewers were Patrick Mathebane, Hilary Sapire, Elliot Mayisela, Victor Ngubane, Lefuma Mokethi, Kevin French and Heather Jacklin. I am also grateful to Jose Adler of the Community Resources Information Network for her insights derived from years of working with squatter communities.

15   This account refers only to the free-standing/open-field settlements within and outside of the black townships of the PWV. These include privatel-owned shack farms, transit camps, and site and service schemes. The paper does not refer to the vast settlements of the Winterveld and those in Kwa Ndebele to the north of Pretoria, because the social and political dynamics in these settlements have been shaped by their location behind the homeland "fences", within Bophuthatswana.

16   A Potgieter, "Die Swartes aan die Witwatersrand, 1900-1933", PhD thesis, Rand Afrikaans University, 1978, pp 58 - 153.

17   See H Sapire, "African Urbanisation and Struggles and Municipal Controls in Brakpan, 1920-1958", PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1988; P Bonner, "The Politics of Black Squatter Movements on the Rand", *Radical History Review*, 46, 7, (1990).

18   A Stadler, "Birds in the Cornfield: squatter movements in Johannesburg, 1944-1947", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 6, No 1, October, 1979; K French, "James Mpanza and the Sofasonke Party", MA dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984; D van Tonder, "Gangs, Councillors and the Apartheid State: the Newlands Squatter Movement of 1952", *South African Historical Journal*, 22 (1990), pp 82-87.

19   *Annual Report of Departrnent of Bantu Administration and Development. 1958-1959*, UG 51, Pretoria, 1960.

20   For a critique of existing literature of contemporary African urbanization and an account of the growth in informal settlement, see A Mabin, "Struggle for the City: urbanisation and political strategies of the South African State" in *Social Dynamics*, 15 (1), 1989.

21   Seekings, "The Origins of Political Mobilisation ...", *op. cit.*

22   Interview with M Zulu, Fred Clark, Soweto, July 1989.

23   The vast informal settlements of "Sonderwater" and "Spooktown" emerged in Khutsong and Bekkersdal in 1982 and 1983, respectively. These, however, were established with official sanction in the face of the shortage of houses in the case of Bekkersdal, and because of the emergence of sink-holes which displaced hundreds of residents in the case of Khutsong.

24   J. Keenan, "Reforming Poverty: a socio-economic profile of Soweto households during the reform era", *African Studies*, 47, 1 (1988), and Seekings, "Quiescence and Transition", chapter 2.

25   J Adler, M Beetge, S Sher, "Efflux in the Grip of Influx Controls: the informal settlement of Grasmere", *Indicator SA*, 3, 1985; O Crankshaw, T Hart and K McNamara, "Tshepo: a socio-economic profile of a shack settlement in the southern Witwatersrand region", unpublished memorandum (National Institute for Personnel Research, Human Sciences Research Council, Braamfontein, 1988).

26   M Phillips and M Swilling, "Local Authority Formation in Urbanising Communities: Review of Developments in St Wendolins, Western Cape and Weilers Farm", (unpublished manuscript, Centre for Policy Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, 1988).

27   O Crankshaw and T Hart, "The Roots of Homelessness: causes of squatting in the Vlakfontein settlement south of Johannesburg" in *South African Geographical Journal* (1990), 72.

28   Interview with Elliot Ntlakane, "Badsider", August 1989. See also Transvaal Provincial Administration monthly squatter count, December, 1989.

29   Frankel, "Urbanisation and Informal Settlement", p 27.

30   As Hendler has observed, the agreements between squatter delegations and the authorities represented a limited advance for squatters, but a significant one for the council which was able to assert a degree of control over the settlements. Moreover, the terms of the agreements, weighted in the council's favour, reflected weak organization within the settlements.

31   See *The Star*, 28 August 1986; *Sunday Times*, 11 January 1987; *The Star*, 3 April 1987. Interview with "Keith", Fred Clark, June 1989.

32   Sapire and Schlemmer, "Results of Survey of 3,071 Black Households on the PWV".

33   Interview with Elliot Ntlakane, "Badsider", Lenasia, 1989. Mrs Mokwana of Mshenguville similarly was a young girl in the Orlando "shelters" in the 1940s. See interview with Mrs Mokwana, Mshenguville, May 1989.

34 The most significant source areas for newer in-migrants are the Transkei and Ciskei, followed by the Natal urban areas. While the bulk of Transkeian in-migrants are currently located in the East and West Rand settlements, those from Natal are mainly concentrated within the central Witwatersrand.

35 See "The Household Subsistence Level in the Major Urban Centres of the Republic of South Africa" (Institute for Planning Research, University of Port Elizabeth, March 1990).

3S Sapire, "Informal Housing on the PWV: a case study".

37 Many shack settlements arose in close proximity to construction sites, notably in the Johannesburg south region and in Midrand. The construction workers were amongst those who tended to move from camp to camp in order to be close to their places of employment.

38 Interview with Koos Xaba, "Badsider", Lenasia, August 1989.

39 In the late 1980s, the backyard rent increases represented an attempt by rentiers to recoup the losses which increased lodgers and site permits entailed. See P Gill, "New Formulas: black local authorities and anti-squatting legislation" in *Indicator South Africa*, Vol 17, No 3, Winter 1990.

40 Interview with Miss Mapoma, Chicken Farm, Soweto, May 1989.

41 Interview with Mrs Ngwenya, Mshenguville, May 1989.

42 Interview with Mr P Thabethe, "Badsider", Lenasia, August 1989.

43 Interview with Mrs Dingane, Tamboekiesfontein, July 1989, and Interview with Mrs Ngobese, Tamboekiesfontein, July 1989.

44 O Crankshaw and T Hart, "The Roots of Homelesness", *op. cit.*

45 For case studies, see H Mashabela, *Mekhukhu: urban African cities of the future* (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990), and H Sapire, "The Social and Political Dynamics of Selected Free-Standing Settlements on the PWV", Research Report, Centre for Policy Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, 1990.

46 Interview with W Ziswana, Chicken Farm, 19 August 1989.

47 Interview with Mr Moutlong, Chicken Farm, August 1989

48 P Hendler, *Urban Policy and Housing* (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1988), p 29.

49 M Phillips and M Swilling, "Local Authority Formation in Urbanising Communities: a review of developments in St Wendolins, Western Cape and Weilers Farm", Research Report, Centre for Policy Studies, 1988. See Mashabela, *Mehkhukhu*. See also interview with "Keith", Fred Clark, Soweto, June, 1989

50 Interview with Mr Ziswana, Chicken Farm, Soweto, August 1989.

51 Makhabela, *Mekhukhu*, p 20.

52 Interview with Mrs Gare, Chicken Farm, Soweto, August 1989.

53   Interview with W Ziswana, Chicken Farm, Soweto, August 1989.

54   Interview with Mr Moutlong, Chicken Farm, August 1989.

55   See appendices of L Schlemmer, L Stack and M Woolley, "Urbanisation and Informal Settlement in the PWV Complex: Patterns and Policies", Centre for Policy Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, 1988.

56   Interview with R Mdakane, Alexandra Housing Committee, Johannesburg, January 1990.

57   Mashabela, *Mekhukhu.*

58   Interview with M Mashigo, Mshenguville, Soweto, December 1989.

59   Interview, M Moutlong, Chicken Farm, August 1989.

60   Interview with W Ziswana, Chicken Farm, 19 August 1990.

61   *Weekly Mail,* 14-20 April 1989.

62   Interview with M Mashigo, Mshenguville, December 1989, and Group discussion with Masakahane committee, December 1980.

63   In the larger townships, however, some political and civic organizations did enjoy support from squatters. The Tokoza Squatter Committee, for example, strongly identified with the Freedom Charter and the United Democratic Front (UDF). Similarly, youth organizations were active in Fred Clark and "Crossroads".

64   Interview with . Mdakane, Alexandra Housing Committee.

65   Mashabela, *Mekhukhu,* p 21.

66   Interview with Davis Shayi, Tamboekiesfontein, May 1989.

67   Only 10.7 per cent of voters participated, however.

68   Seekings, "Quiescence and the Transition".

69   See Mashabela, *Mekhukhu*, p 27.

70   Interview with M Mkhwanazi, Mshenguville, 1989, cited in S Mokwena, P Moloi and L Duma, "Sofasonke: case for urban populism?", third-year Sociology Research Report, University of the Witwatersrand, 1989.

71   Interview, Mr Moutlong, Chicken Farm, August 1989.

72   Group discussion with Sofasonke Party officials, Soweto, July 1989.

73   Interview with R Mdakane, Alexander Housing Committee, January 1990.

74   Discussions with Jose Adler, Community Research Information Network.

75   Interview with R Mdakane.

76   Interview with G Khumalo, Fred Clark, Soweto, July, 1989