

In *The Participation Reader*, ed. Andrea Cornwall, Zed Books, 2011.

Insurgency and spaces of active citizenship: the story of Western Cape anti-eviction campaign in South Africa

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Abridged from the original, which appeared in the *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 200-217 (2005).

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

And then myself and another member of the campaign went to the state office and ... we phoned the city of Tygerburg and the people in charge of housing just to explain to them that this was an old lady of over eighty years. We

wanted to know if we could go to the office to make an arrangement for the old lady to see how she was going to pay. Because definitely we were not going to have her be evicted and staying outside. Fortunately, they understood. The person in charge, I think it was Mr ... of the City of Tygerburg that I spoke to. Then he ordered the law enforcement and the sheriff to leave there. I told him that they have got more addresses and more people that they were going to evict, and we are saying that they are not going to evict those people. Understand? Then they left the area. ... They were forced to leave the area because then people started throwing stones at them. ... And that was how we stopped them. (Gertrude Square, interview, 2002).¹

This is one of many stories illustrating the struggles by poor people around the world to maintain adequate shelter and to access minimum services. This particular story belongs to Gertrude Square, a forty-something-year-old woman living in one of the many disadvantaged townships of Cape Town, South Africa, an area categorized as ‘colored’ under the apartheid urban planning system. During the era of apartheid, Gertrude was evicted on three separate occasions when her ZAR150 income as a single mother of three small children was not sufficient to pay the monthly ZAR80 for the council house she rented from the state. Still vivid in her memory is that experience of coming home from work and finding her children, too young to comprehend the calamity, crawling on their furniture, which had been removed from her house and piled up on the street. She and

¹ Where consent of the respondent has been acquired, real names have been used; otherwise, for reasons of confidentiality, this has been avoided.

many others in her community are members of a community-based group colloquially referred to as a civic (shorthand for community-based civic association). They also participate in the Western Cape Anti-eviction Campaign (hereafter referred to as AEC or the campaign), which resists the evictions of poor residents who are unable to meet their housing or service payments. Until due legal procedures and court hearings can take place, the AEC moves evicted families back into their homes and reconnects their water services (Western Cape Anti-eviction Campaign, 2002). This campaign approach aims to defend the constitutional right of all South African citizens to access adequate housing and sufficient food and water (see articles 26 and 27 of the 1996 constitution of the Republic of South Africa).

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

...In this article, we hope to bring to light insurgent practices of the poor in their struggle for shelter and reintroduce the conceptual notion of this act of creating spaces of inclusive and active citizenship. As the urban poor defy policies imposed on them from above, they shape their environment through resistance and insurgency. The effects of these practices on urban space and urban processes cannot go unexamined. We use insurgent urbanism and insurgent citizenship, a concept first introduced by James Holston (1995) and further articulated by Leonie Sandercock (1998a) and John Friedmann (2002), as our conceptual guide in this endeavour ...

Citizenship and insurgent movements

Cities under different conditions create varied citizenship dramas, write Holston and Appadurai (1999). The protagonists of the drama of citizenship created under the conditions of neoliberal urban policies are the urban poor, mobilized through their social movements to shape a distinct form of citizenship. As opposed to a statist citizenship that assumes the state as 'the only legitimate source of citizenship rights, meanings and practices' (Holston 1998: 39), this alternative drama of citizenship is active, engaged, and 'grounded in civil society' (Friedmann, 2002: 76). It moves beyond formal citizenship to a substantive one that concerns an array of civil, political, social, and economic rights, including the rights to shelter, clean water, sewage discharge, education, and basic health – in short, the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1996). This new drama of citizenship is performed not only in the high courts of justice and ministerial corridors of government institutions but also in the streets of the city, the squatter camps of hope and despair, and the everyday life spaces of those excluded from the state's citizenship project. Cities

are breeding grounds for these emerging citizenship practices (Isin, 1999), which aim to expand the public sphere (Rose, 2000) to generate 'new sources of laws, and new participation in decisions that bind' (Holston and Appadurai, 1999: 20). The protagonists of this citizenship drama use non-formalized channels, create new spaces of citizenship, and improvise and invent innovative practices, all of which attract a captive constituency that embraces their just demands.

This alternative model of citizenship emerges from the existing disjunctions between the form and substance of citizenship. It challenges the assumption made by liberal citizenship models of a nearly linear progression of citizenship rights (Marshall, 1964) and depicts the internal contradictions of liberal and formal citizenship. For example, it highlights the experiences of those Eastern European citizens who lost much of their social and substantive rights despite their newly attained civil and political rights (Friedmann, 2002) or the experiences of the poor, black majority in post-apartheid South Africa who cannot access much of their constitutionally inscribed, basic social rights, while their newly attained political and civil rights are buried under the devastating social and economic impacts of neoliberalism (Friedmann, 2002: 70).

Feminists have been some of the most vocal critics of liberal citizenship, providing significant contributions to the construction of an alternative inclusive model (Young, 1990; Fraser and Gordon, 1994; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Lister, 1997; Sandercock, 1998b; Tripp, 1998; Wekerle, 2000; Werbner and Yuval-Davis, 1999). Their critiques expose the fallacy of the liberal model, which assumes citizens are a single, all-right-bearing entity with equal rights and obligations. This becomes particularly cogent within the framework of the current eroding state of citizens' social rights and their

fragile social safety net, whereby the state shifts its responsibilities on households, thus relying on women's increased citizenry obligations (Miraftab, 2001).

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

Reconceptualizing the notion of citizenship, shifting its center from the state to the people, and stressing a pluralist model (Young 1990) have led to a plethora of new definitions of citizenship, including participatory citizenship, inclusive citizenship (Gaventa 2002; Kabeer 2002), active citizenship (Kearns 1995; Lister 1997), and citizenship from below or 'insurgent citizenship' (Holston 1998). These definitions signify an alternative conceptualization of citizenship, in which new meanings, agencies, and practices of citizenship are articulated. In this alternative model, practices of citizenship extend beyond 'taking up invitations to participate' in what Cornwall calls 'invited' spaces of citizenship; they extend to forms of action that citizens innovate to 'create their own opportunities and terms of engagement' (Cornwall 2002, 50). Miraftab (2004), referring to these alternative spaces of participation as 'invented' spaces of citizenship, has underlined the significance of expanding the arenas of practicing

citizenship to include both invited and invented spaces of citizenship. By highlighting in this article the practices of the AEC, we hope to contribute to this recognition of insurgency as a fair and legitimate practice of citizenship by active citizens participating in the construction of inclusive citizenship from below.

As neoliberal practices privatize the city, its infrastructure, and its life spaces, and increasingly exclude urban citizens who are not deemed 'good-paying customers,' insurgent citizenship challenges the hypocrisy of neoliberalism: an ideology that claims to equalize through the promotion of formal political and civil rights yet, through its privatization of life spaces, criminalizes citizens based on their consumption abilities. Insurgent citizenship is a strategy employed by the poor to hold city officials accountable to their civil and political rights to decent housing conditions, as well as to the city itself, and to reclaim their dignity despite the hypocrisy. The accounts of the AEC members, their visions and dreams, their situated practices, and their agency and identity are presented here with hopes to influence and assist planning theory and education to cultivate a grounded understanding of the range of citizenship spaces and the insurgent urbanism that emerges as an alternative response to neoliberal urbanism.

Historical context: Struggle for shelter and basic services

In the South African context, the exclusionary concept of citizenship has been woven together with the accessibility of housing and basic urban services to urban dwellers (Mabin 1993; Parnell 1993; Maharaj 1992). Hence, in any formulation or discussion of citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa, the question of housing and basic services occupies the center stage. This recognition is reflected in both the 1994 electoral platform

proposed by the African National Congress (ANC) for the Government of National Unity and the 1996 South African Constitution, which recognize the rights of all citizens to access adequate housing and basic services (articles 26 and 27).

Insurgency and spaces of active citizenship

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

Clear indications of the government's abandonment of a redistributive agenda include the stagnated state of low-cost housing production and the dwindling budget allocation to housing, which has gradually decreased from the promised 5 percent to 3.4

percent in 1995-1996, 2.4 per cent in 1997-1998, and 1.6 percent in 1999-2000 (Khanya College 2001, 4041). Together with this idle assisted-housing delivery system and shrinking budget have come escalating housing demands owing to the influx of urban populations and a growing number of evictions. Consequently, the housing deficit has not improved, still standing at around 3 million units for the whole of South Africa compared to the 3.4-million-unit shortage estimated in 1994, and basic shelter is still beyond the reach of the impoverished majority.

Furthermore, despite the constitution's declared right for all citizens to access decent shelter and basic services, the neoliberal state's prescription of 'cost reflective pricing' for municipal services has led to extensive service cutoffs for disadvantaged households. Most important, only 1 per cent of South African land, the key issue cementing apartheid's exclusionary citizenship, has been redistributed as of today despite the RDP's land redistribution goal of 30 per cent.

It is true that service provision in South Africa has increased substantially. According to a report reviewed by the Government Communication and Information System in 2000, access to clean running water has been expanded to more than 5 million South African households, and 2.8 million households gained access to electricity since the government came into power in 1994. However, the ability for vast numbers of poor residents to actually afford services has decreased tremendously. In fact, a recent New York Times article reports water taps are often shut to South Africa's poor (May 29, 2003, front page). Installation in impoverished townships of state-of-the-art public taps requiring prepaid cards for their operation has created an unprecedented case in the developing world, whereby a growing number of the poor in informal settlements have been cut off and thus denied access to water because of their inability to afford

prepayments and their lack of alternatives once money has run out on their cards. Large numbers of township residents also require similar prepaid meter cards to access electricity. Stretches of time without lights or clean water are not uncommon for populations living 'hand to mouth,' yet these periods between earnings often brew disastrous public health consequences, such as the devastating cholera outbreak [of] 2000...

An extensive body of literature has adopted the task of analyzing the ways in which neoliberal policies lead to such devastating results for the poor... With respect to housing, several studies specifically interrogate the South African housing policy and the manner in which its neoliberal, developer-driven goals have undermined the constitutional inspiration for housing as a human right (Miraftab 2003; Jenkins 1999; Mackay 1999; Lalloo 1999; Ruiters and Bond 1996; Tomlinson 1999). A synthesis of these studies will be offered below to provide a foundation from which we can discuss the two eviction conflicts focal to this article concerning the local government (council houses in Mitchell's Plain) and the private banks (bond houses in Mandela Park).

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

Second, the state offers a range of risk-reducing mechanisms to private financial institutions in efforts to entice their participation in housing loan provisions to the poor. However, banks have not only failed to deliver on their low-cost bonds, but the

government's support schemes have been used against low-income residents through mass evictions from poorly constructed bank units, as will be seen in the case of SERVCON in Mandela Park.

Finally, local governments adopt the cost recovery principles of the market by aggressively evicting poor households from the existing stock of rental units for reasons of non-payment. This takes place despite the fact that most of those evicted are unemployed and without job prospects, as will be seen in the case of council houses in Mitchell's Plain. In short, market-led principles that place cost recovery at the center of local governments' policies and that prioritize the interests of the banks and private developers over the shelter needs of the poor have resulted in the failure of the housing policy to rectify the injustices of the past or to secure the new constitutional right to basic shelter... The anti-eviction movement has emerged within the poor townships of Cape Town in direct response to such threats against the more vulnerable populations of South Africa, creating spaces of resistance for average citizens to protect their livelihoods and claim their constitutional rights to access decent living conditions.

The birth of the AEC

The AEC is a grassroots agglomeration of organizations whose members have been victims or face the threat of evictions or service cuts. Since arrears from nonpayment of utility services frequently constitute an eviction, the AEC resists service disconnections in addition to fighting evictions. The poor families threatened by these two concerns usually work collaboratively; thus, the people mobilized to resist evictions are often the same mobilized to oppose service disconnections.

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

Most campaign activists were involved in the township struggles against apartheid and have maintained active membership in their communities' civic organizations since then. For example, Max Ntanyana and Fonky Goboza currently lead the Mandela Park AEC and participate in the Western Cape APF but have been active in their civic organization in the black township of Khayelitsha since their teenage years. Their involvement with the AEC is a natural continuation of their community development activism, which previously had been mobilized by NGOs and community-based organizations. They see their role in the prevention of evictions and service

disconnections as no different from their responsibility for ensuring the provision of shelter and services.

What we want is community development. ... We've got rich experiences and the community knows us. ... People in large numbers come here reporting their cases to us ... where they are robbing our people or criminals are shooting people. They will come to us before going to the police. They come to us when their water is cut off. They will ask us how to open the water [taps]. (Fonky Goboza and Max Ntanyana, interview, 2002)

Similarly, Valhalla Park AEC activist and local civic leader Gertrude Square builds on her past involvement in the rent boycotts and protests of the apartheid struggle. She underlines her all-encompassing activities as a member of the campaign and the civic body in her community:

I'm doing anything and everything. I'm just not only busy with evictions and all that stuff. In the civic body, I'm busy with people that are struggling to receive pensions, disability grants, [or] rent-payment grants, abandoned children, with everything. (interview, 2002)

The vision that drives the campaign can best be described as one of achieving a just city, a city in which both the political and economic rights of its people are ensured and respected and where all residents feel confident that their voices will be heard and

their basic needs will be met. Fonky Goboza of the Mandela Park AEC describes the campaign's vision as such:

We don't have supporters. We don't have followers. We have active participants. That is participatory democracy ... The statement that we are putting across is that we as a people want open transparency where everyone participates and everybody knows what is taking place ... Our struggle is genuine. We want to make justice in housing programs. (interview, 2002)

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

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

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

demonstrated support to communities outside of their own townships involve notable sacrifice and illustrate a commitment and solidarity that likely ameliorate racial divides.

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

The AEC and APF as spaces of active citizenship

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

The AEC members are disenchanted with the main formal channel allotted to them for voicing their concerns and making demands: the local government and its councillors. Much of the hope that local activists had invested in these recently

established, decentralized, formal structures to facilitate their greater participation in decision making and inclusive governance has weathered in the past few years. 'They [councillors] have forgotten where they came from. ... They don't care a damn about the people on the ground ... They just want to be in a position to fill their pockets and to empower themselves,' states a Valhalla Park resident (interview, 2001).

This sort of commentary regarding local councillors has been common among township residents with whom we interacted in Cape Town. Threatened by evictions and service cutoffs, they find their local councillors more committed to party politics than to the fellow community members who put them in power. Referring to local councilors' incompetence at addressing the urgent problems of the poor, an AEC activist and civic leader explains, '[When people need things], it's to us that they turn ... to the people who are on the ground, volunteers, who don't get paid, who are nothing and nobody. We are just people like them. When they are in a struggle and things get hot, then they run to us' (woman in Elsie's River, interview, 2002).

Undoubtedly central to the ability of excluded residents to make citizenship claims is the creation of a progressive pro-poor constitution that expands 'human rights' to include substantive 'rights to livelihood' in South Africa (Beall, Crankshaw, and Parnell 2002). But the existing spaces created from above for making these rights real are insufficient (Cousins 1997). The following extract of an interview with a member of the Cape Town APF Steering Committee is illustrative of the shortfall of legal procedures as formal, claim-making channels for the poor and the ineffectiveness of the existing 'invited spaces' for practicing citizenship. ...The legal procedures and formal channels provided by the new constitution are not entirely ignored by the poor. Instead, they are used when advantageous and defied when they are found unjust. Excluded South

Africans take advantage of these formal channels whenever possible, but in many cases, they find these invited spaces of practicing citizenship, created from above by the state, ineffective at addressing the immediacy of their needs and concerns and enforcing just laws. When formal channels fail, the poor use extremely innovative strategies, which create alternative channels and spaces to assert their rights to the city, negotiate their wants, and actively practice their citizenship.

Invented spaces of citizenship

The AEC activists describe their activities as a spontaneous response to the immediate problems and basic needs of the poor. Their strategies constitute a collection of ideas and actions, stretching from informal negotiations, capacity building, and training; to mass mobilizations in the form of peaceful protests, sit-ins, and land invasions; to defiant collective action such as illegal reconnection of services and repossession of housing (Oldfield 2003). In certain respects, they perpetuate the strategies of antiapartheid resistance and its tradition of mass mobilizations and non violent direct action, which included the boycott of rent payments for housing and services in protest against the poor quality of services and the illegitimacy of an oppressive state (Adlers and Steinberg 2000; Seekings 2000; Mayekiso 1996).

The campaign activists claim their rights to the city and to basic shelter and services by resisting the unjust exclusionary actions of the state. One of the main strategies employed is defiant collective action. For example, when they are unable to stop service disconnections, male and female members of the campaign, referred to as 'struggle plumbers' and 'electricians' in the Durban context, simply reconnect those

services (Desai 2002). The campaign also helps evicted households reoccupy their homes by breaking the new locks and returning removed furniture and belongings to the units.

Interestingly, the campaign does not follow a uniform blueprint. Their tactics are flexible and innovative and vary in each specific situation (also see Oldfield and Stokke 2004; Oldfield 2003). For instance, Valhalla Park civic member and AEC activist Gertrude takes pride in her community's ability to display force and demonstrate power through spontaneous, cooperative action or informal, persuasive negotiating:

If someone saw a white man or somebody just hanging around a letterbox or by the water meter, then they [would] just call the people. A lot of people are out of work here and that is what makes us so strong. If something happens during the day, then we get all of the people together and we hop in our cars and we chase them right out. And we warned them, if ever you come in here again, there is going to be trouble ... [But in one case] we talked [to them], and they said: 'No, we don't want to come here to cut people's water off, but we are the contractors. The contract is a piece of bread.' [We said to them:] 'It's a shame ... you leave me without water, you leave me thirsty with children, yet it's your piece of bread.' [Then] they made an agreement with us. [They said:] 'So, that my children can eat, we will come in here and we will issue the water cutoff papers.' So they asked us nicely, can they come in here and issue the papers to the people, but if it comes to the point when the people don't pay, then they won't cut the water off. So we said fine. (Gertrude Square, interview, 2002)

Recent negotiations between a bank representative and Mandela Park residents over a long-term dispute regarding the structurally faulty, low-cost bond houses

provide another keen example of how campaign strategies are inventing new spaces for practicing citizenship. On June 12, 2002, nearly three hundred residents of Mandela Park gathered at their community civic center to meet visitors from the Johannesburg office of Khayelethu Home Loans - senior Outsourcing Manager Henry Warden and a second bank representative - to discuss the scrapping of certain arrears. During that meeting, Warden verbally agreed to the cancellation of accumulated arrears and interests and the halting of evictions for all elderly and disabled residents. However, the campaign activists, aware of the limited credibility of verbal promises, insisted, 'We do not take anything verbally. We want it in black and white ... Please write it down now. Very simply, write it out, A, B, and C.' Because of the community's persistent demands, the two representatives departed the center only after a dictated statement on official bank letterhead was faxed to the meeting and signed by Warden.

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

But peaceful negotiations and clever, persuasive tactics are not always effective at expanding the spaces of citizenship practice. For example, in 2001, the campaign's

resistance strategies incited more violent events in Tafelsig, the township in which the AEC was first established, when community members barricaded entrances to the township with burning tires in efforts to prevent the disconnection of water supplies to more than 1,800 homes. Tires and mattresses were set afire on nearly every street, and enraged residents chanted protest slogans as firefighters and police units appeared at the scene. Police security forces further agitated Tafelsig residents by firing teargas and rubber bullets at protestors, resulting in a brutal confrontation that injured one young boy (Cape Argus, September 27, 2001).

Expanding the public sphere

... Capacity-building and training sessions organized by the AEC and participated in by campaign activists are important strategies, which not only respond to the immediate needs of their members but also serve toward the long-term campaign goal of a just society. Persistently striving to assert their rights, trained AEC activists have created their own local database of vulnerable households by conducting door-to-door surveys of residents and recording those households that have experienced or been threatened with evictions and service cuts. This information functions as an important tool, enabling the campaign to substantiate their acts of resistance, mobilize AEC members in solidarity, and challenge the officials in charge. Through participation in skill-enhancing initiatives, members take advantage of invited spaces of citizenship created from above by local and international donors and governmental interventions and participate in invented spaces of citizenship, spaces that are chosen, demanded, and seized through collective action from below.

Participation in capacity-building and leadership training workshops also helps members to overcome some of the obvious hierarchical barriers within the organization, an example of which exists in the context of gender. A campaign activist who had expressed dismay regarding the apparent male domination of the AEC admits certain levels of change have been achieved through participation in the campaign's advocacy and education workshops. Reflecting on her personal experience, she states, I always thought that I better come up with the right words and stuff. But [now] I feel that if people talk out of the dictionary with expensive words ... I must stop them and tell them, 'Listen, I don't understand you and we speak plain language here.' Because those people use words to get around. This is what I learned at the [leadership] workshop. ... I [also] learned to speak in front of people. I'm very proud of myself.

Identity and agency

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

The media plays an important role in the construction of the movements' identities. The mainstream media's portrayals of the AEC and APF as 'ultraleft' and 'freeriders' embedded in a culture of nonpayment' discredit them as relevant voices of civil society and delegitimize their actions. Presented as 'outcasts of civil society,'

movement members are stripped of the celebratory status that other organizations within civil society are granted. While NGOs and community-based organizations that take part in the invited spaces of citizenship are presented as 'rightful' or 'authentic' voices of the poor, the grassroots movements that create the innovative and invented spaces of citizenship are presented as 'inauthentic,' and their agency is often criminalized.

State... responses to AEC and APF actions vary depending on its existing internal power dynamics and political context, and they range from direct oppression of the movements, to appropriation of their discourse, to accommodation of their demands.

The mass mobilizations organized by the AEC and APF have in some cases faced the state's repressive machinery. Those who courageously voice their dissent have been routinely beaten, shot at, arrested and charged, and banned from associating with the two movements... But such criminalization of the poor's declaration of its inability to afford service and shelter costs ultimately criminalizes poverty and amalgamates with the dehumanization of the poor. From the perspective of APF activists, the state's policies of privatization and cost recovery should be understood as policies that in and of themselves dehumanize the poor.

Privatization ...is the commercialization of human rights. You are not entitled to things as a human being. It depends on your ability to pay. If you can't pay, you virtually become a criminal. The poor are being criminalized for being poor. That is the case in Mandela Park now. And that [is what] we believe must be resisted. (Robert Wilcox, interview, 2002).

The state's response, however, is not always through direct oppression. It also retaliates through the appropriation of the opposition's discourse in efforts to diffuse the effects of their defiance.

The significance of the AEC exists precisely in its ability to disseminate knowledge about these rights among the poor and to hold the state accountable for its constitutional promises and policy provisions. For that, its strategies promote governing through citizenship, contributing to a notion of inclusive governance. But the immediate actions of the present are not risk free. As Nikolas Rose (2000,100) poses, they 'may connect up and destabilize larger circuits of power. [But they may also] be refused, or reversed and redirected as a demand from citizens for modification of the games that govern them, and through which they are supposed to govern themselves.'

... [D]espite the uncertainties that the future holds, the processes of their resistance create spaces of active citizenship that need to be valued as legitimate voices within the civil society. This recognition, consequently, raises critical questions for planners about the ways in which they define their roles and their arenas for action. These questions require careful consideration and are addressed below.

Conceptual implications for planning education and research

The global neoliberal policies of privatization and state withdrawal in provision of basic services discussed in this article have launched simultaneous and contradictory processes of exclusion and inclusion for the poor. On one hand, it has brought about the erosion of their livelihood, in which they are excluded from access to the most essential

of the services, and on the other, it has opened up certain public realms of decision making that they were previously excluded from. This simultaneous opening of certain spaces and closing of others have important implications and deceptions for the planning practice that need careful attention.

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

Within this heightened attention to and interest in participatory planning, some have challenged the possibility of achieving meaningful change, warning against co-option of processes that need to stay within the community and independent of the state and its power brokers, referring to the planning professionals (Piven 1970; Krumholz 1994). Others, problematizing the notion of 'public' and the contradictory interests within it, warned against conflating the community and deceptively using the notion of participation. They have underlined the role of planners in the present era as facilitators who enable the inclusion of diverse and often conflicting interests in the planning practice (Sandercock 1998b; Marris 1998; Friedmann 1998; Forester 1988).

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

Echoing with them, this article stresses the need to rethink how the planning profession possibly engages certain community-based groups that are celebrated as civil

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

The insurgent grassroots actions by the poor to protect the roofs above their heads and their access to basic services, as described in this article, are as important as officially sanctioned grassroots actions to produce shelter. Should the planning profession hope to improve its relevance to those grass-roots processes that shape and reshape the urban reality, it will need to include in its recognition of the poor's self-help strategies those insurgent practices they employ to achieve their right to the neoliberal cities. The elimination of the latter from planners' scopes of investigation and education will only defeat their effectiveness in situations of this kind, which they are bound to face. Tension undoubtedly exists between these arenas but can certainly be productive, and as Holston (1998, 54) advises, 'planning needs to encourage a complementary antagonism between these two engagements.'

The story of the AEC aims to contribute to this recent opening in the planning inquiry by overcoming the selective definition of what constitutes people's organizations and civil society and underlining the significance of both invited and invented spaces of citizen participation in the formation of inclusive cities and citizenship.

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