Money and violence: Financial Mutuals among the Xhosa in Cape Town, South Africa

Bähre, E.

Citation for published version (APA):
4 Threatening Triad: Violent developments in Indawo Yoxolo

4.1 Introduction

When I briefly visited Indawo Yoxolo for the first time in 1995, it was a small informal settlement squeezed between a large Coloured township to the south, and a railroad track and an African township to the north. A few dozen shacks were scattered between the bushes, a muddy path pretended to be a road, the bushes served as toilets, and there was no electricity or water. In order to get water those living in Indawo Yoxolo had to ask the residents of the township next door, who were not too pleased with their new neighbours. There was only one kindergarten, and it found accommodation in a pink shipping container and was run by a few residents of Indawo Yoxolo. Although the kindergarten allowed women to drop their children off on their way to work, the mothers and staff had many complaints. There was nothing with which to entertain the children, and the children just sat on the floor for most of the day. People also complained about the government’s promise to provide lunch: but where was the food?

Adjacent to these shacks, construction workers were clearing bushes and levelling the ground with heavy machinery. Indawo Yoxolo was part of the national Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) - an effort of the ANC government to try to overcome some of the inequalities and poverty left behind by the apartheid days. They intended to develop the illegal squatter settlement of Indawo Yoxolo into a formal township complete with electricity, toilets, water, streets, streetlights, schools, public telephones, bus stops, taxi-ranks, sport fields, and plots for poor people to live on.

When considering my PhD research, it occurred to me that returning to Indawo Yoxolo presented a perfect opportunity to see how financial mutuals were established from scratch, as Xhosa migrants had just moved to the place. The fact that Indawo Yoxolo was part of the RDP also had its attractions. The RDP was one of the most prestigious attempts of the post-apartheid government to fight poverty and empower its citizens. By studying the people of Indawo Yoxolo, I could incorporate the state’s development initiatives into the analyses of financial mutuals in the post-apartheid era.

The aim of this chapter is fourfold. First, it provides an account of Xhosa migrants living in a post-apartheid township covering the living conditions with which people had to contend on a daily basis and the wider socio-political context in which financial mutuals are embedded. Second, it reveals the presence of the post-apartheid state, a presence most strongly felt in the realm of development, rather than in any other way. Police protection was virtually nonexistent in the area, leaving people to fend for themselves, at times with horrific consequences. At the time of my research, local government was weak, understaffed, and only marginally functional. There were a few schools, but even they were caught up in the development process. As will become apparent in this chapter, the post-apartheid state was, in an almost exclusive manner, active through the development projects. This had dramatic consequences for the local political processes in Indawo Yoxolo. This micro-study
examines the debate on development initiatives as a means of rule, similar to Ferguson's *The Anti-politics Machine* (1990) and Scott's *Seeing Like a State* (1998). It raises questions about the extent to which government manifested itself in the guise of 'development', and about the ways in which the post-apartheid state tries to control its citizens. But what are the limitations of development initiatives as means of rule? Do people have any opportunity to challenge the power of development? In order to gain insight into this process, the third aim of this chapter is an exploration of the contrast between the ideals and practice of development. Expectations in the post-apartheid era were high and greatly contrasted with the actual flow of resources. The increasing competition over resources that ensued gave rise to patronage-like relationships. These local conflicts were an important part of development and raise questions about the extent and kind of rule that development establishes. Finally, this chapter will present the effects, and analyse the causes, of violence. To a large extent, violence was rooted in development. The Xhosa migrants tried to shield themselves against violence. Financial mutuals were marked attempts to shield against violence by withdrawing into relatively closely-knit and trustworthy groups.

### 4.2 The development dream

Optimism for the post-apartheid future was very high. With the release of Mandela in 1990 and the first democratic elections in April 1994, many, also outside South Africa, hoped for a drastic change for the better. As the Comaroffs wrote: 'In South-Africa, after all, the end of apartheid held out to indulge that everyone would be set free to speculate and accumulate, to consume, and to indulge repressed desires. But, for many, the millennial moment has passed without palpable payback' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999, 284). Many, of course, realised that the ANC could not overcome the legacy of apartheid within a few years, but nevertheless people expected that the political changes would lead to redistribution. In addition, many Whites initially feared that Africans would steal their property. For example, someone recalled how, in the eighties, African women had marched to Cape Town's previously White suburb of Lansdown. These African women were walking through the streets of Lansdown and expressing their dreams about those houses with gardens - sometimes also with swimming pools - that they were going to claim once apartheid was over. These dreams about the future were so real that some women were said to have got into a fight because they both intended to claim the same house once apartheid was over.

Inequalities had to be abolished by redistributing resources and establishing development projects. Central to the post-apartheid era was the national Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (ANC 1994). Poverty stricken Africans and, to a lesser extent Coloureds had to have improved communal facilities, such as sanitation, roads, better policing, and health care. More jobs had to be created and schools had to be improved through, for example, a national 'school-feeding programme' which had to ensure that children received at least one decent meal a day. The government installed a special temporary RDP minister without portfolio, Mr. Naidoo. After a couple of years, the numerous RDP projects were to be integrated into the portfolios of the other ministers.
One of the most prominent features of the RDP was the housing grant for the poor. From 1994 to 1999, one million low-cost houses were going to be built. According to income, housing subsidies of up to R15,000 were made available (see table 4.1). It was only possible to apply for a full subsidy if one earned no more than R800 per month. This subsidy was not distributed directly in cash to the applicant. Private sector building companies and, in some instances, NGOs could be contracted to build roads, plots, electricity connections, sewage systems, toilets, and other facilities. If applicants were eligible for a grant they were allowed to occupy and own a plot in the neighbourhood developed by the RDP. Throughout South Africa, the variety of the structures and facilities varied greatly, depending on the costs involved and the priorities that were set. The main emphasis, however, was on public services and underground infrastructure, such as water supply, sewage pipes, electricity wires, streetlights, and roads.

Table 4.1: Individual housing subsidy provided for though the RDP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly income applicant and spouse</th>
<th>Subsidy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than R800</td>
<td>R15000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R800 - R1500</td>
<td>R12500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1500 - R2500</td>
<td>R9500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2500 - R3500</td>
<td>R5000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because the vast majority of the population was denied the right to vote during apartheid, the ANC incorporated an active approach towards democratisation into their development plans (ANC 1994, 119-135). Under apartheid, the ANC associated development with government rule, racial segregation, and apartheid ideology. But in the post-apartheid era, the ANC soon found itself adopting the "pragmatic" language of 'reconstruction and development" (Crush 1995, xii in Li 1999, 296). The RDP document stated:

Our people, with their aspirations and collective determination, are our most important resource. The RDP is focused on our people’s most immediate needs, and it relies, in turn, on their energies to drive the process of meeting these needs ... Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment. In taking this approach we are building on the many forums, peace structures and negotiations that our people are involved in throughout the land (ANC 1994, 5).

In Cape Town, the Development Planning Committee (DPC) largely carried out the RDP development. Within five years they wanted to develop and upgrade 34,500 sites and improve the housing situation of more than 35,000 poor families. People from twenty-one informal settlements, eight areas of backyard shack dwellers, and residents of three hostels had to benefit from this project and another 6,200 Coloured families who were on waiting lists for housing could get access to the project (DPC 1994, 8).
During my fieldwork in 1995, one could almost feel the energy that was brought about by the political changes. Although many felt that some people's expectations far exceeded the possibilities of economic improvement, they also felt that economic improvement was going to take place, even if it took another generation. By 1997, the mood had changed. Particularly better educated young Africans and White so-called 'liberals' (the term had become derogative by then) expressed their resentment. Many Africans felt that, although they had contributed to the struggle, they did not share sufficiently in the benefits: either that or that the ANC elite had deserted the deprived masses. Although not to the same extent, destitute African migrants were also disappointed when they did not experience much economic improvement. Due to the costs of these public services and facilities, there was often little or no subsidy left to build a house for the applicant. Therefore, most houses measured only a few square meters and consisted of one room only, which led to many complaints about matchbox houses. Moreover, by the beginning of 1998, only a fifth of the houses that were supposed to be built were accomplished (Mail and Guardian 1998a, 4). The development process resembled a cargo cult in which goods would arrive if one would perform the proper rituals. In this case, these secular rituals were built around democratisation, community participation, and empowerment. The case study of Indawo Yoxolo will show how development actually took place, how resources were channelled, and what the local responses to development were.

4.3 Development policy rules

By the time I returned to Indawo Yoxolo in 1997, many of the development projects were finished and the place had changed drastically. The pink container was still housing a kindergarten, and the shacks I saw in 1995 were still there, although later I found that some of the people had gone and new people had arrived. Apart from that, the place was unrecognisable. One no longer reached Indawo Yoxolo by turning off the paved road that led to the
adjacent Coloured townships, driving over the curb, and following a muddy path into the bushes. There was instead a paved road from which streets branched off in a herringbone pattern. The bushes were gone and along the streets were neatly ordered plots. Each plot had its own private electricity connection, toilet, and water tap. Schools and sport fields were under construction, there were curbs, and two public telephones (that were out of order most of the time). Moreover, there were plans to build taxi ranks, a public library, bus stops, and other public facilities.

The plots clearly distinguished the somewhat more established residents from the very new residents. Those who had moved there some time ago, for example half a year or longer, had put a little fence around their plots, had planted vegetables or shrubs that were trying to survive in the sand, or had built a shack at the rear of their little boxy government houses. The newer streets toward the east of Indawo Yoxolo still had some vacant plots. The residents had not yet build an extra room onto their RDP houses and the ground was bereft of vegetation. Still further to the east, the construction workers continued to dig and install electricity, sewage, and water pipes, as well as survey plots and roads. The squatter camp that I visited in 1995 still existed and had become a relatively small section of Indawo Yoxolo. Because of the absence of paved roads, curbs, and demarcated plots, it greatly contrasted with the rest of Indawo Yoxolo. The residents of this squatter area were still waiting for the housing grant that would allow them to move to their demarcated plot.

Almost all the residents of Indawo Yoxolo were from Ematholeni. For example, Lennox's home was near Umtata, the capital of the former Transkei. In the mid 1980s, Lennox moved to an informal settlement near Nyanga in Cape Town. There was no water, sanitation, or electricity, except for a few dirty and badly maintained communal facilities. When I met Lennox for the first time in October 1997, he had moved to Indawo Yoxolo only a few months before. Mr. Qika also moved to Cape Town in the mid 1980s. He stayed with relatives in Nyanga East for about seven years, but finally moved to Paula Park, an informal settlement near Guguletu. He did not like Paula Park at all: it was very rough and he was glad he could move to Indawo Yoxolo in June 1997. Lennox still visited Paula Park because he had joined an umgalelelo with his neighbours. The residents of Indawo Yoxolo were all (at least officially) from numerous illegal squatter camps and backyard shacks of Cape Town that had grown because of urbanisation and the housing shortage.

The RDP policy had significant political consequences. The RDP had to be implemented by local community representative bodies that gathered in a so-called RDP forum. All local political organisations and community-based organisations were supposed to be represented in a local RDP forum. Each RDP forum was asked to establish development priorities according to a number of themes that were set out by the RDP document. The development projects had to be discussed with government structures, private enterprises, and community representatives before they could be implemented. Development had to take place through community participation and people's involvement in democratic processes instead of a top-down approach where policy makers would decide what was best for people. Since the late 1980s, due to disappointing experiences with structural adjustment lending, the end of the Cold War, and the dominance of neo-liberal thought, democ-
racy was increasingly regarded to be important (Leftwich 1994, 366).

In Cape Town in 1991, political organisations, grassroots, organisations and government bodies had established the Development Planning Policy Committee, consisting of different political parties, government institutions and community-based organisations. Later it was renamed the DPC (Development Planning Committee) and it became part of the RDP in 1993-94.

The DPC also focused on community involvement in development, just like the RDP did. The DPC's commitment to community participation was stipulated in three out of the nine objectives stated in the formulating phase. For example, the first objective was: 'To establish a coalition of community, public sector and private sector stakeholders in order to undertake the foundational strategic planning and policy-making for the project, and to agree on the Terms of Reference' (DPC 1994, 4).

Instead of an RDP forum, the DPC had the Project Committee. The Project Committee consisted of representatives of numerous community-based organisations who had to determine the implementation and management of the projects. They had to inform and consult the community about the DPC plans and, most notably, the Project Committee decided on the rules and procedures for the allocation of sites and the implementation of the allocation process (DPC 1994, 14). Families who had lived the longest in a particular area were permitted to be the first to move to the new plots. Special priority was given to people older than twenty-one that lived with dependents (DPC 1996d, 1).

The Project Committee was very powerful. The members of the committee functioned as intermediaries between the community, the DPC structure, and private construction companies. They controlled the list of applicants and decided how the rules were applied. It was very difficult to know how long the squatters had lived in a particular area, which gave the Project Committee the space to prioritise applications. Furthermore, the Project Committee had a large influence on the recruitment of local labourers who were needed to build Indawo Yoxolo. It was a requirement that at least half of the labourers were residents of a particular area and it was up to the Project Committee to assist in their recruitment. Due to high unemployment and widespread deprivation, this made the Project Committee very powerful.

The development of Indawo Yoxolo with its focus on community participation can be understood as a project of rule. Africans were only recently acknowledged as South African citizens, previously having been confined to the 'independent' homelands of South Africa. With the changes that came with democracy, the post-apartheid state manifested itself through the development process and its subsidies, debts, electricity meters, government registration, clearly demarcated plots, and the emphasis on community participation in development. Ferguson (1990) and Scott (1998) have argued that development was an important strategy for expanding state control. Ferguson draws on Foucault's work to show how development projects in Lesotho were instrumental to the expansion of state authority. Development, according to Ferguson, is an anti-politics machine, an instrument 'depoliticizing everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight, all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own pre-emi-
nently political operation of expanding state power' (Ferguson 1990, 254). Ferguson (1990) shows that the Thaba Tsekà Development Project failed to accomplish its objectives but, notwithstanding the failure of the project, development did increase the legitimacy of the state and expand its authority in that particular region.

Scott applied a comparative approach to his analysis of state authority. He argues that the state gains authority through acts of measuring. Measurements reduce complex realities to clearly defined categories and thus simplify these realities. Simplification is vital for the management of people through state bureaucracy and development projects that are supposed to improve and control people's lives: 'The very concept of the modern state presupposes a vastly simplified and uniform property regime that is legible and hence maniputable from the center' (Scott 1998, 35). According to Scott, projects fail precisely because of their 'legibility', the power with which they are invested, and the inability of civil society to challenge state authority.

To return to Indawo Yoxolo, the post-apartheid state was present, almost exclusively, through development projects. The development projects organised Xhosa migrants spatially on clearly demarcated plots that were accessible only through all kinds of bureaucratic procedures. The development projects also organised them politically through community participation in the Project Committee. The prevailing ideology was that communities were quite naturally healthy, united, and peaceful, and could be represented unambiguously by the Project Committee. Such an ideal image of community was essential for the development model: only if something like community exists can one have legitimate community representatives in the development projects.

This development ideology led to a form of rule that, to some extent, was a continuation of the forms of rule under the colonial and apartheid eras. Of course, the ideologies and aims of the post-apartheid government differed tremendously from the colonial and apartheid eras; instead of repressing them, the new government aimed at liberating and empowering people; instead of excluding them, the post-apartheid government made efforts to make resources available to non-whites; instead of dehumanising non-whites, the government tried to emphasize humanity through, among other ways, its focus on the African renaissance. The continuity, therefore, was not to be found in its aims and ideologies, but rather in the management of its projects.

During colonial times, South Africa, like many other parts of Africa, was governed by indirect rule. 'Natives' were controlled by separate institutions and laws, which were administered by a chief that represented a tribe. If such a tribe did not exist, the colonial government would create one through the process of indirect rule (Gluckman 1971, 40; Mamdani 1996, 62-65; Skalník 1988, 75; Vail 1989, 11-15). The system of apartheid resembled indirect rule: 'As a form of rule, apartheid is what Smuts called institutional segregation, the British termed indirect rule, and the French association' (Mamdani 1996, 8). The homelands had their African rulers who collaborated with the National Party, and the urban townships had town councils that were regarded as illegitimate by the people they ruled. The legitimacy of these chiefs, at least to the colonial and apartheid authorities, depended on the concept tribe, race, or ethnicity. As Mamdani (1996, 90) argues:
Control and representation were two sides of the same coin, which would eventually make for a single fit: the mode of representation, whether racial or tribal, would shape the lines along which natives would organize and in turn avail the state corresponding avenues of native control.

In the post-apartheid era, the persistence of a naïve and ideal perspective of community - although this notion is continuously contradicted in the media and by experience - served this form of rule. In the post-apartheid era with its emphasis on development, the seemingly apolitical notion of community had replaced the terms race and tribe. The concept of community allowed the state to control and rule groups of people through local bodies.

Of course, not everybody accepted rule based on race, and this method of rule did not always function well. Town councils, for example, malfunctioned because of their lack of legitimacy and income, and the struggle against apartheid. Many neighbourhood organisations - often known in South Africa as ‘civics’ and organised in the 1980s by the United Democratic Front (UDF) - protested against the state through boycotts, stayaways, and protest marches (Gqoli 1992, 23-24; Matiwane and Walters 1986, 72; Van Kessel 2000).

But after the 1994 elections, the role of the protesters against the government was expected to change. The Local Government Transition Act (Act 209, 1993) (1994-1999) ensured that ‘civics’ were represented in local government. Civics also had a major influence on the RDP forum. Thus, civics had to change drastically from organisers of boycotts and other forms of protest against the government into co-operative community organisations that were represented in local government and carried out government policy, such as the RDP (Bähre 1996a; Murphy 1993; Seekings 1992, 216).

There are, however, some problems with this analysis of development planning and the transformation of the state in post-apartheid South Africa. First, if one should analyse bureaucratic power and the control of people through the instruments of government, it becomes tempting to neglect those realms of social life that fall outside the gaze of the state. Financial mutuals were not incorporated into the state because of their informal nature, low status, and members’ deliberate attempts to stay away from policy and development. Nonetheless, migrants’ financial mutuals were part of their management of political transformations, economic adversities, and social relations. One should not dismiss the impact of large political economic changes on these groups and vice versa simply because financial mutuals were presented as a-political.

Second, one risks overemphasizing state control if one portrays development as a one-way process that creates subjects or citizens. A picture emerges too easily of passive crowds whose identity is being constructed by government planning. This simplistic view can be found in Scott’s analysis (1998, 349):

The point is simply that high-modernist designs for life and production tend to diminish the skills, agility, initiative, and morale of their intended beneficiaries. They bring about a mild form of institutional neurosis... Narrow, planned environments ... foster a less skilled, less innovative, less resourceful population. This population, once created, would ironically have been exactly the kind of human material that would in fact have needed close...
supervision from above. In other words, the logic of social engineering on this scale was to produce the sort of subjects that its plans have assumed at the outset [emphasis mine].

Even if people's attempts to challenge the state were unsuccessful, they should be included into the analysis.\textsuperscript{10} People's fears, the way they embrace power, resist power, or try to evade political struggles should be considered part of any analysis, including a political analysis. As Scott has shown in The Weapons of the Weak (1985) on peasant resistance in Malaysia: forms of resistance and minor negotiations of power are vital for an understanding of power relations. A combination of 'the weapons of the weak' with 'seeing like a state' seems to have more in common with the political dynamics in Indawo Yoxolo.

4.4 Political struggles in Indawo Yoxolo

A classical analysis of patronage, clientelism, and control over resources allows for a more comprehensive understanding of Indawo Yoxolo in post-apartheid South Africa. This requires an examination of the systems of resource allocation by the Project Committee, the local political dynamics related to development, and party politics, as well as the struggles of those who opposed the particular allocation of resources. This allows for a dynamic understanding of political domination. Figure 4.1 gives an overview of the political situation in Indawo Yoxolo as I found it in September 1997.

Figure 4.1: September 1997

4.4.1 The Project Committee

In Indawo Yoxolo, the DPC Project Committee was made up of representatives of residents of the areas that were eligible for a plot in Indawo Yoxolo. Unfortunately, I could not determine exactly which members of the project committee came from which settlement. It was clear, however, that their main stronghold was in the old, unserviced Indawo Yoxolo that I had encountered in 1995, and that they had less support among the residents of the serviced Indawo Yoxolo who had already received their plots. The residents of the unserviced area and the surrounding squatter camps depended more on the Project Committee than others because they were still waiting for a housing
4 Violent developments in Indawo Yoxolo

subsidy. Opponents of the Project Committee referred to them as the ‘Old Committee’ because they favoured a new committee. They also called them the ‘Big Five’. The Big Five were known as the five powerful animals of South Africa’s game parks: leopard, lion, elephant, rhino, and buffalo. The adoption of the name Big Five for the Project Committee emphasized the power and danger of this group. Moreover, the name Big Five reminds one of the big man paradigm.11

I will briefly describe the Big Five (Bula, Zantsi, Nqase, Posa, and Mtontsi) and their status, as well as the rumours around these political figures. As I already mentioned in the introduction, it was not possible for me to come close to the Big Five; they were too dangerous and it was best to avoid them as much as possible. I once had a brief conversation with Nqase. He was known as ‘the gun’ of the Big Five: he was considered stupid enough to kill and get caught and was involved in all kinds of dirty business, outside of Indawo Yoxolo. He was not reputed to be the brain of the organisation, but it was popular knowledge that he was willing to murder people. Nqase was a big man and around forty years old, possibly younger. He was always nicely dressed, had a small, trendy mobile phone, and one could see his gun bulging from underneath his jacket or sweater. Our meeting was very uncomfortable. I was playing soccer with two kids in front of Edith’s place while teenagers were playing street theatre. The teenagers were preparing a sinister scene in which the young men forced themselves on a girl as if they were raping her. The bystanders shouted instructions and showed their approval or disapproval of the acting performances. Nqase chatted with Edith and my girlfriend Esther and I interrupted my soccer to join them. We shook hands, talked a bit about the weather, made some jokes, laughed a bit, and after that he strolled away. To an outsider it must have looked like one of those ordinary conversations neighbours have all the time. But I knew that he had recently killed Gilbert Mabeqa: the man who had introduced me into Indawo Yoxolo and who was one of the key figures that opposed the Big Five. Nqase, of course, was also aware that I knew about his murder, and Nqase also knew that he and the other Big Five members had threatened to kill Edith, as well. But we managed to pretend a friendly and open conversation about the weather.

Zantsi was reputedly the most powerful and smartest of the Big Five. I was told by a Big Five opponent in Indawo Yoxolo that whenever the Big Five resorted to violence, he was ‘accidentally’ away for a visit to his home in the Transkei. Due to my endeavours to stay away from the Big Five, I had actually never seen him, except for once in the distance when he and some others drove with two cars to the Indawo Yoxolo squatter camp. Bula, the third member of the Big Five, was from Gxuw a (Butterworth), the same place where Gilbert Mabeqa came from. His reputation was also that of a powerful man who threatened and blackmailed people. The remaining two members of the Big Five, Posa and Mtontsi, were not as powerful. Mtontsi was a small, badly dressed man who, despite his young age, missed a considerable amount of teeth. He worked frequently for the construction companies and was often drunk. Posa was almost invisible and hardly ever heard from and, therefore, I would often forget about him being a member of the Big Five.

The Big Five controlled the DPC projects, as well as any other initiative in the area. This included the building of schools, the appointment of teachers, the distribution of RDP plots to applicants, and even the plans to
build speed bumps to slow traffic. They supported school teachers who took children’s lunches, forcing them to buy sweets and chicken feet from the women - also Big Five supporters - who had their little food stalls on the school grounds. The Big Five were also responsible for finding local labourers to work for contractors, such as Donald and Gromit and A&W Construction. Moreover, they co-operated with certain factions of the ANC and, at times, also with other political parties (National Party and United Democratic Movement). Their most important power base, however, was as the DPC Project Committee.

Their control over the distribution of resources made the Big Five very powerful. As Barth wrote on leadership among the Swat Pathans: ‘only through his control of this resource [land] can he attract the clients with which to inflate his political ego’ (Barth 1959, 7). The Big Five should be considered a Mafia-style organisation and leadership rather than as patrons or leaders of a system of collective clientelism. The Big Five used violence and intimidation to maintain and exploit their position. They also demanded bribes before a plot was allocated to an applicant. Moreover, they promised to make Indawo Yoxolo a better place in return for their support, as one would expect from patrons. They did not, however, host parties or give money to people at public events, such as funerals. Although the Big Five provided jobs and gave some people political support, they did not present themselves as, nor were they considered to be, guardians of the welfare of the community. Their Mafia-style rule was based on intimidation, murder, and corruption, as well as control over the resources of the development projects.

4.4.2 The opposition

Politics in Indawo Yoxolo changed when more people left the informal settlements in order to move to their plots in Indawo Yoxolo. Those who already had a plot were less dependent on the Big Five. They had already been on the housing list that the Big Five controlled and had received their housing grants. The Big Five could still intimidate these people and for some they had jobs available or, at least, promised to provide them with jobs. But they could no longer threaten to withhold their housing subsidies.

Some of those who already received plots organised opposition to the Big Five. This opposition had no official name. They would call themselves sometimes the ‘new committee’ because they considered themselves the legitimate successors to the ‘old committee’. The composition of the residents in Indawo Yoxolo had changed since the Big Five were in power and, therefore the ‘old committee’ had to resign its position. The opposition wanted to elect new community leaders that represented all residents. Their most prominent leader was Gilbert Mabeqa, a former ANC ‘comrade’ who had moved with his wife and teenaged daughter from Guguletu to a plot in Indawo Yoxolo. Because of his central position, I will call this opposition to the Big Five Mabeqa’s group. The supporters of Mabeqa’s group lived in the serviced Indawo Yoxolo. Mabeqa, Gxyiza, Constance, Michael, and my research assistant Edith were among the most active people that opposed the corrupt and violent Big Five.

Mabeqa’s group was, just like the Big Five, related to the ANC or, at least, certain factions of the ANC within the local and provincial govern-
Violent developments in Indawo Yoxolo

They had unclear relations with the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), the civic body that succeeded the UDF. They claimed to be the legitimate SANCO committee in Indawo Yoxolo, but the Big Five also made that claim. The most important political stronghold of Mabeqa's group was Councillor Gqoli. Mr. Gqoli had been the only candidate for the local government elections in May 1996 for ward X of the Central Substructure. Ward X was comprised of three nearby informal squatter camps, of which Indawo Yoxolo was one.

The part of Indawo Yoxolo with paved streets, plots, and facilities was part of ward Z, which also included adjacent serviced townships. The developed part of Indawo Yoxolo did not fall under Councillor Gqoli's ward but under the councillors of Z, who were unknown to the residents of Indawo Yoxolo. Because the councillors of ward Z were unknown, and because Indawo Yoxolo was divided between two wards (the developed part of ward X and the squatter camp of ward Z), Mabeqa's group attempted to promote Councillor Gqoli as the legitimate representative of ward X and Z.

Councillor Gqoli co-operated with Mabeqa's group because he was concerned about the violence in Indawo Yoxolo, but also because the RDP structure undermined local government. The legacy of apartheid had left local government in shambles. Local government had few resources, was understaffed, and had to transform from an apartheid-style to a democratic institution. In the meantime, however, local government benefitted fairly little from the resources that the state provided for development. These resources were distributed via the distinct RDP organisations. The Project Committee's control over the development project undermined Councillor Gqoli's position in the local government. The Big Five did not acknowledge Councillor Gqoli as the legitimate councillor. Instead, they supported other councillors from the illegal squatter camps where they had lived previously.

4.4.3 Future dwelling

In order to understand the position of big men, such as the Big Five, one has to consider the way in which they established political security (Thoden van Velzen 1973). Mabeqa's group tried to undermine the Big Five by challenging its relations with development offices, government institutions, and political parties. This was because the success of the Big Five was largely due to the support that they received from these people and organisations.

The private sector company Future Dwelling had a central coordinating role within the DPC development projects. It managed the relations with the private sector, subcontractors, government institutions, and provided the Big Five with resources. Future Dwelling knew about the complaints against the Big Five. In 1996, the bribes for plots were discussed at a workshop with participants of the RDP projects. The DPC Bulletin, which was freely distributed in the areas where the projects took place, reported: 'The workshop decided unanimously that no payment is required in order to be considered for a site' (DPC 1996b, 2; original bold). In the following issue of the DPC Bulletin, corruption was mentioned again: 'There is no charge for being nominated a beneficiary in a DPC Project' (DPC 1996c, 2; original bold).
Notwithstanding the DPC’s workshops and newsletters, corruption continued. I heard of applicants who paid the Big Five up to R1,200 in order to be put on the waiting list of subsidy applicants. Not everybody, however, was able, or willing, to pay these sums of money. People who did not pay had to stay in the unserviced squatter area of Indawo Yoxolo. The Big Five would only allow them to live on a plot after they had paid a bribe. In September 1997, the Big Five shot at an opponent who did not pay them a bribe. This man took me to his shack and told me that the night before a Big Five member shot through his window while he was asleep.

Future Dwelling was in close contact with the Project Committee and largely depended on the information that the Project Committee gave them. In October 1997, Future Dwelling threatened to evict residents of the squatter area in Indawo Yoxolo. These squatters had already been allocated to a plot in the serviced Indawo Yoxolo but refused to move to their new place. Future Dwelling wanted them to move the squatters away because the land was needed to build additional plots, roads, sewerage, and so on. Future Dwelling threatened to evict the squatters and their homes with bulldozers if they did not move quickly. They argued that if people failed to occupy their plots, they were not entitled to a serviced plot in Indawo Yoxolo, either because they were not entitled to an RDP subsidy, or because they had only recently moved to the squatter settlement of Indawo Yoxolo. Those who had moved to the squatter settlement after the development projects had started were not entitled to a plot either. Either way, they had to be evicted from their homes, by force if necessary.

Future Dwelling did not make noticeable attempts to find out why the residents of the squatter settlement refused to move to their plots. That same month, seven residents tried to stop their evictions and had a meeting at the local council of which Indawo Yoxolo was a part. Fortunately, I was allowed to attend the meeting. Councillor Gqoli, Mabeqa, and Gxyiza were also present at the meeting, but Future Dwelling had ignored the invitation. The fear of retaliations was great among the seven residents. They told the councillors how the Big Five had threatened them and wanted bribes before they were allowed to occupy their new plots. It was not that they did not want to live in the serviced area, but that they could not leave the squatter settlement safely. They explained that the Big Five had shot one of the complainants and accused the fieldworker of Future Dwelling, Mguye, of siding with the Big Five and supporting Future Dwelling’s eviction plans. They insisted on a new Project Committee that excluded Big Five members and included some of Mabeqa’s people. The seven residents felt very uncomfortable about putting forward their complaints against the Big Five and Future Dwelling; the Big Five might have taken further action to intimidate them. Councillor Gqoli arranged to call the police who could take a statement from those residents who were brave enough.

4.4.4 The school

The Big Five also controlled the development of a library and schools, that were also part of the DPC. Leed Construction was going to build the library and had to employ local residents. The community liaison officer of Leed
Construction was Mrs. Ntshona (iindaba yoxolo 1998), who was also known to be a Big Five supporter. As a community liaison officer, she had an income and could offer residents of Indawo Yoxolo desperately needed jobs, possibly in return for bribes or political support.

By the end of 1997, some of the schools were still being built and people hoped they would be opened after the new school year commenced by the end of January 1998. In 1997, there was only a kindergarten in a pink container and a primary school that was housed in a container and a prefabricated classroom. The primary school was in a terrible state because there was hardly any furniture intact, windows were broken, and the space was too limited, which made it unsuitable for teaching. The principal of this school was loyal to the Big Five. The parents accused him of stealing food from the 'school-feeding programme', a national presidential project and also a segment of the RDP. Every couple of days, a pick up truck arrived with bread and 12.5 litre buckets of peanut butter and jam. The parents said that the principal stole the buckets and sold them to his friends for only R25 each. Consequently, many children had been deprived of their lunches.

Another problem concerned the annual school fees. To be enrolled at the school, the parents had to pay R10 for each child at the beginning of the year. The teachers were supposed to give the parents a receipt and children were only permitted to take year-end exams if they could show this receipt. About thirty mothers claimed that they had paid the R10 but were not given a receipt. They had been completely unaware of this procedure, only to discover it when their children were excluded from the exams until they paid another R10. Very angry the parents accused the principal and some teachers of stealing their money.

Early on a Friday morning in October 1997, the parents held a spontaneous meeting with the principal. When I arrived in Indawo Yoxolo that particular morning, the parents, including Edith, were already at the school. They had not announced it in advance because the principal and the teachers

Picture 4.2: Primary School: bread from the national school feeding projects arrives.
would have hidden from the parents if they had warned him of a meeting. This time, however, the principal was practically taken hostage by approximately twenty women and three men. The principal knew that attempts at escape would be dangerous and he was forced to listen to the parents’ complaints. When we entered the classroom, the principal was nervously and quietly sitting behind one of the few desks that were scattered around. Nqase, one of the Big Five members, had heard about the meeting and also arrived. Unlike the other people, Nqase did not have any children living in Indawo Yoxolo and, therefore, had no legitimate reason to be in attendance. He was obviously there to protect the principal and he made sure people could see his gun.

The parents disagreed about what they should do with the principal. Some women argued that the principal had to be killed: he stole food and sold it to his friend, he stole school fees, he never attended school, and he had refused to meet the parents. Some parents, however, felt that such a punishment would be too harsh. They wanted to bring the principal to the police and report him to the Department of Education. The parents in favour of killing the principal convincingly argued that the police and Department of Education would do nothing. They felt that they had to solve the problem themselves. The principal and Nqase kept quiet during this discussion and the atmosphere was tense. The parents were excited that they were finally able to confront the principal with their frustrations. The allegations and complaints were screamed out in the classroom, which intimidated the principal and increased the anger. Edith and I left the meeting because of the tense atmosphere. Later that morning we returned to see if the meeting was still taking place. When we entered the classroom, the situation had changed dramatically. Only a few women were left and everyone was quiet, and Nqase and the principal were still there. Nobody said a word and Nqase left soon after we had entered the classroom. One of the parents told us that Nqase had threatened to kill anyone who challenged him or the principal. Most of the parents had left feeling angry and powerless and only a few dared to stay longer, feeling just as angry and powerless. No further actions were taken against the principal, and Nqase protected him successfully.

A few weeks later, in early December 1997, the parents met with the school inspectors at the local constituency office. Some of the parents were Big Five supporters, among them was Ma Ntshona (who worked as the community liaison officer for Leed Construction), despite the fact that she did not have any children in Indawo Yoxolo. Other parents, like Mabeqa and Edith, were going to oppose the Big Five. Mabeqa and Edith asked the inspectors and parents if I could attend the meeting, but I was not allowed. I had to wait in the car and Edith informed me about the meeting afterwards.

The problems mainly concerned the new primary and secondary schools that were built with RDP money. The schools was scheduled to be opened at the beginning of 1998, but there were not enough teachers yet. The officials from the Department of Education wanted to appoint teachers already in contract with the department. They wished to appoint additional teachers only if there was not sufficient staff. The parents, both those who supported and those who opposed the Big Five, felt this was unacceptable. They refused to have outsiders hired and insisted that the Department of Education appoint residents from Indawo Yoxolo. They felt that because of the high unemployment all the teaching positions had to be filled by locals.
and not residents of other townships.

There was also disagreement between the Big Five supporters and Mabeqa’s group. Mabeqa’s group expressed fear that the Big Five, as usual, was about to take control of the hiring of additional teachers. They told the representatives of the Department of Education about the Big Five’s corruption, intimidation, and violence, and their fear that only loyal people would get teaching positions. The department’s officials did not seem to be too concerned and did not take any action.

To my great surprise, Edith later told me that a Big Five member approached her. He asked her if she would like a teaching job at the school. She did not have the formal qualifications but was among the best-educated in Indawo Yoxolo because she had graduated from secondary school. Edith declined the offer, although it was very tempting. The Big Five had probably hoped to incorporate some opponents, but Edith told me she did not want to have anything to do with them.

4.4.5 ANC

By the end of 1997, the political situation had changed. In October 1997, the ANC of the Western Cape Province established a Commission of Inquiry into the allegations of corruption and violence by the Big Five. Some of the complaints against the Big Five had reached the provincial body of the ANC and they could no longer be ignored.¹⁴ The Commission of Inquiry interviewed twenty-seven residents of Indawo Yoxolo, who testified about the intimidation, violence, and corruption. The residents informed the Commission about the bribes of up to R700 that they were forced to pay Big Five members in exchange for plots to which they were already entitled. They reported that the Big Five seized plots from legitimate owners and sold them to people who did not qualify for a RDP grant. They complained about the violence of the Big Five. One plaintiff stated that he was beaten with the butt of a firearm and another man had been shot. The man who was shot did not see who fired the gun, but had heard from one of the Big Five members that it was they who were responsible. Another man testified that one of the Big Five members had threatened him at gunpoint.

The Commission of Inquiry furthermore noted that one of the Big Five attempted to steal money from the German embassy. The embassy had promised to donate R15,000 to upgrade one of the schools in Indawo Yoxolo. When the teachers collected the cheque at the embassy, they received R12,800. Two Big Five members found out about the donation, allegedly through the principal, and demanded the cheque. Scared, the teachers surrendered the cheque immediately, after which they informed the embassy, which subsequently blocked the cheque. The Big Five could not cash the cheque and Nqase forced some teachers to return to the embassy and say that the cheque should be unblocked. They had to say that there was some confusion and that they still wanted to cash the cheque. The embassy, however, was suspicious and did not issue another cheque until the teachers had written a project proposal. The teachers, as well as the Big Five, left it at that and no further attempts were made to get money from the embassy.

The Commission of Inquiry gave the Big Five members the oppor-
tunity to respond to the allegations. The Big Five members blamed Councillor Gqoli for the problems in Indawo Yoxolo. They were unhappy with the fact that he openly supported Mabeqa’s faction and felt that he had no right to interfere in Indawo Yoxolo. To the allegations of bribery, they replied that they had collected a small amount of money from residents (R50 per household) to cover their administrative expenses. It was ‘for tipp-ex and petrol’, as someone put it. They denied that they had been selling houses. According to the Big Five, some did not want their plots and preferred money instead, so accordingly they had only tried to help people to sell their plots and to keep an eye open for prospective buyers.

The Commission of Inquiry drafted a report advising the ANC of the Western Cape Province on further actions. The Commission concluded that ‘comrades’ were frequently accused of crimes without being guilty of misbehaviour. They stated, however, that it was probably true that the Big Five had been selling plots, as this was known to happen in many informal settlements in the Western Cape, such as Crossroads. The twenty-seven testimonies gave the Commission sufficient evidence that four comrades were involved in the illegal selling of plots in Indawo Yoxolo, even in the period during which the Commission of Inquiry was already in session.

The Commission furthermore concluded that the scarce availability of resources contributed to the conflicts. Indawo Yoxolo was incorporated in a greater RDP structure, but wanted a separate RDP structure. They had noticed that some felt that Indawo Yoxolo was neglected and was not receiving its share because the adjacent African township was being favoured. According to the Commission, the ward councillor and ANC member Mr. Gqoli had failed to recognise the tensions between Indawo Yoxolo and the adjacent African township and should not have interfered. Thus, Mr. Gqoli sided with the opponents of the Project Committee (the Big Five), and heightened the divisions in Indawo Yoxolo. Another factor, which, according to the Commission of Inquiry contributed to the conflict, was that the DPC had started to give money at meetings as an incentive to attend. The Project Committee also tried to monopolize meetings and by distributing money among their own supporters while sending away other visitors.

The Commission of Inquiry recommended the ANC of the Western Cape take action against some of the Big Five. In the twenty-seven testimonies, two of the Big Five in particular were accused of the selling of sites to people who were not on the application list for RDP housing, the illegal selling of plots, the ‘selling’ of an occupied house, and furthermore theft, harassment and intimidation at gunpoint. It was recommended that these two had to be expelled from the ANC for six months. Another Big Five member, Mtontsi, was to be given a stern warning. Among other things, he was accused of harassment, beatings with a firearm, and the illegal sale of houses. The most severe recommendation concerned Zantsi, who was to be expelled from the ANC permanently. Zantsi had, according to the twenty-seven testimonies, bribed people, illegally sold their plots, and attempted to kill one of the complainants. The Commission did not question the allegations against Zantsi; these allegations were in fact not the reason for their recommendation. Instead, they wanted to expel him because of his lack of party loyalty:
Reason for this stern action [expelling Zantsi from the ANC] are [sic] that he has really acted in a devious manner, like leading a march to the ANC office and organizing the radio to come thus ridiculing and bringing the name of the organization in disrepute. Also there are strong rumours and information which we have investigated and found to be true of him inciting a mass meeting in Indawo Yoxolo for people to join the NP or Holomisa (UDM) (Commission of Inquiry, 22 October 1997).

Because some of the Big Five held key positions within SANCO, the Commission of Inquiry proposed that SANCO be informed about the problems in Indawo Yoxolo. They furthermore noted that the participation of these ‘comrades’ in the RDP had to be re-evaluated and that people who wished to take legal action should be encouraged to do so. The Commission of Inquiry did not report the crimes to the police. The ANC of the Western Cape enforced the Commission’s recommendations. However, after one year, Zantsi was re-admitted to the ANC, despite that he was supposed to be expelled for life. It was not so much the criminal activities of the Big Five that concerned the ANC: they needed a loyal Project Committee in order to establish control over the area. One of the recommendations of the Commission was that a proper ANC branch be established in Indawo Yoxolo, which had been absent up to then. Thus, the ANC gave political security, which is one of the parameters of the big men paradigm, to the Big Five in return for their political loyalty.

Thodden van Velzen (1973, 596) has suggested that - in the analysis of power relations - it is important to incorporate ‘those who are neither big men nor followers’ but relatively independent of big men and relatively powerless. Mabeqa’s group and the twenty-seven complainants were neither big men nor followers and tried to challenge the political security of the Big Five. The ANC recorded the allegations but, after mild punishment, continued to support the Big Five. The ANC wanted: other political parties to be kept out of Indawo Yoxolo; an ANC branch in the area; a stop to relations between the Big Five and SANCO; the removal of the councillor from the area; and the Big Five’s proof of loyalty to the party. Although Mabeqa’s group and the twenty-seven victims of the Big Five’s terrorization could express their discontent towards the ANC - just like they had protested against the school principal and the Department of Education - such protests did not undermine the Big Five’s power.

4.4.6 Challenging Future Dwelling

Although people were intimidated by the Big Five and realised that it was dangerous to challenge them, they had asked for a meeting with Future Dwelling. In November 1997, Mabeqa, Michael, Gqiza, Edith, the local SANCO leaders, two Gwayta town councillors, and a few other residents of Indawo Yoxolo had a meeting with the director of Future Dwelling, Hendrik, and one of the other employees. Everyone was aware of the ANC’s Commission of Inquiry into the Big Five, but the residents from Indawo Yoxolo were under the impression that the inquiry was still taking place as its results and procedures were not, and never, made public. Therefore, at the time of this meeting, they were uninformed of its outcome.
They met at Future Dwelling’s office, which was not far from Indawo Yoxolo. There were no Big Five supporters and, therefore, I could easily take part in the meeting. Because of the tense atmosphere, Hendrik was not in a position to ask about my role in the proceedings, although they were probably not terribly thrilled about my presence. I detected that Hendrik, the director of Future Dwelling, was, in any case, visibly unhappy about the meeting, but he could not avoid such a large turnout of angry people. The residents informed him about the problems they had been experiencing with the DPC Project Committee i.e. the Big Five and Mguye, the Future Dwelling liaison officer who was responsible for the contacts with the Project Committee. They repeated the allegations they had expressed earlier at the Gwayta Town Council meeting, namely that the liaison officer of Future Dwelling had sided with the Big Five and was also involved in corruption. Instead of challenging the corruption and violence in Indawo Yoxolo, they protested, Future Dwelling was actually supporting the Big Five.

The residents felt that that the Big Five were never properly elected and did not represent the new residents of Indawo Yoxolo. They told the director that Future Dwelling was not the only one who chose to ignore the problems: Mr. Mbuyi, from the Department of Education, had also persistently ignored Mabeqa’s group and had continued to work with the Big Five.

The response of the employee of Future Dwelling present at the meeting, was that Future Dwelling was waiting for the results of a large-scale ANC investigation into housing and the RDP in the Cape Metropolitan Area. This investigation was separate from the Commission of Inquiry’s investigation of the Big Five. The director added:

> Things have changed in Indawo Yoxolo since we started. All political groups have to be included which represent the whole community. It has to be an inclusive community committee and should be elected. Then we have an accredited RDP forum in Indawo Yoxolo. It must include the entire community.

In attempting to explain the impossibility of establishing a committee that would comprise of Mabeqa’s group and the Big Five, the residents described the levels of violence and intimidation. 'How can you expect us to co-operate with people who threatened us and tried to kill one of us?' they asked the director. He, however, kept repeating his ‘formula’ that the Project Committee had to be inclusive and completely ignored the objections that were raised.

As for the Future Dwelling’s liaison officer accused of corruption, the director was not willing to take any disciplinary actions: 'One can not change people's jobs based on some rumours’ was his response. But he did promise that the Liaison Officer would henceforth work in another township and that another liaison officer would replace him. It later was rumoured, however, that the particular liaison officer initially accused of corruption had continued to keep control over the situation in Indawo Yoxolo through the new liaison officer, who, residents complained, relied heavily on his predecessor’s advice. He furthermore continued to work with the Big Five and completely ignored Mabeqa’s group. This ongoing support of the Big Five led to rumours that Future Dwelling, including its director, was also involved in the corruption. There were also speculations about the ANC’s involvement because it became apparent that the large-scale investigation into housing and RDP
issues in the Cape Metropolitan Area was never going to come to conclusion. Some considered the slow pace of the investigation process a deliberate attempt by the ANC to conceal its involvement in corruption. No remarks alluding to corruption were made about the National Party (NP), however, despite the fact that they were the largest political party in the Western Cape Province and in the Cape Metropolitan Area.

Figure 4.2: October 1997

Future Dwelling's approach to the conflict seemed to have been politically motivated and, as figure 4.2 clarifies, it meant that the Big Five could remain in power. Future Dwelling co-operated with the Big Five because they were the most powerful group in Indawo Yoxolo and thus most likely to carry out the development projects successfully. Although Future Dwelling used the rhetoric of inclusive community representation, their primary concern was simply to get the job done. The Big Five's willingness to use violence worked greatly to their advantage because it made them more powerful in Indawo Yoxolo. Future Dwelling thus provided the Big Five with the support that made them powerful men (cf. Thoden van Velzen 1973). They gave the Big Five control over the distribution of resources, ignored their crimes, and provided political security by ignoring opponents. The opponents' main challenge was to influence the distribution of resources and to undermine the Big Five's political security.

4.4.7 Changes in the political field

From January 1998 onwards, the Big Five made attempts to co-operate with the National Party. Their position as big men was still secure because Future Dwelling kept them as the DPC Policy Committee. But the Commission of Inquiry had led to tensions between the Big Five and the ANC. Moreover, the national and provincial political landscape changed, which appeared to influence local political alliances. These changes become clear if one considers the first democratic elections.

The 1994 elections resulted in a tremendous victory for the ANC. They secured the majority for the national government and had only narrowly missed a two-third majority that would have allowed them to draft the new constitution without the co-operation of other political parties. The ANC had
a majority in all the provinces except KwaZulu Natal and the Western Cape. In KwaZulu Natal, Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) had become the largest political party. In the Western Cape, it was the National Party, which was largely supported by Whites and Coloureds, thus preventing the ANC's victory. The ANC co-operated together with the NP and the IFP in the Government of National Unity with ANC leader Nelson Mandela as president and the NP leader De Klerk as vice-president. The Government of National Unity emphasized that transition had to be peaceful, that the new South Africa was inclusive, and that minorities would also have a voice. In the Western Cape Province, the NP majority and the ANC minority had also formed a similar government of unity.

Two years later, in June 1996, the NP left the Government of National Unity. They felt side-lined by the ANC and argued that democracy would benefit from a strong opposition party. Strategically, it also seemed better for the NP to become an opposition party in preparation for the upcoming national elections. The break between the ANC and the NP in the national government was followed by a similar move in the Western Cape. The ANC submitted that it could no longer co-operate with the NP and argued that they had been completely powerless within the provincial government. There was no unity and the NP was said to consistently ignore the issues that the ANC put on the agenda. With the next elections in mind, the ANC preferred to take up the role of opposition party, withdrew from the ministerial posts in the provincial government, and opposed the NP from the benches of provincial parliament. On 20 January 1998, the NP voted in the new provincial ministry, which consisted only of White and Coloured men and excluded the ANC. On a national level, the ANC could do without the political support of the weakened NP, and on a provincial level the NP could do better without the ANC. Among others, Barth (1959, 16) and Scott (1985, 134) have discussed the dynamics of such a political process: a party that is in power will strive to be a smaller majority in power; a smaller coalition, or no coalition at all, meant that the power could be held by a smaller faction.

Those who were aware of this political change - many could not be bothered with politics - felt that in the Western Cape the NP was now completely in charge of all government activities in the province. The ANC had stepped out of the government and, therefore, some felt that they had become unable to provide development initiatives for Africans. The Big Five were affected by the withdrawal of the ANC from the provincial government, as they were continuously in need of political security and required control over the flow of resources to Indawo Yoxolo. As a result, the Big Five attempted to co-operate with the NP in the adjacent Coloured township Mountain View. It was conjectured that the NP would be able to secure the Big Five's position as controllers over development. For its part, Mountain View's NP was eager to embrace the community leaders of Indawo Yoxolo. African support would do the party image good and could attract more votes in the upcoming provincial elections. Although the Big Five rubbed shoulders with the NP because some had been expelled from the ANC, they did not completely alienate themselves from the ANC, either. Rather, they were carefully exploring the relationship with the NP while keeping an eye on the ANC. Ideological concerns did not appear to be a consideration for the political alliances being forged.

Generally, the residents of Indawo Yoxolo restrained themselves
from commenting on the political changes. Nobody seemed to like the NP, and many were disappointed in the ANC: the RDP ‘houses’ were not really houses, poverty was still present, and the ANC failed to fulfil its promises. Some wondered how the ANC could provide money and services to Africans once they had left the provincial government. Some even suggested that it was better to join the NP. An ANC ‘comrade’ in Indawo Yoxolo told me: ‘it is better to be oppressed by Whites then by your own people’. In general, people expressed their disappointment about politics and did not bother to discuss political issues, much in the same way they tried to avoid politics during the apartheid days.

The Big Five, at least to some extent, must have felt threatened by the changes that were taking place. Perhaps it was purely coincidence, but three weeks after the new provincial government was installed, Nqase killed Gilbert Mabeqa. Mabeqa and Michael were walking around in Indawo Yoxolo on a Friday in the early evening when Nqase and Bula approached them. Nqase shot Mabeqa twice, once in the back and once the back of his head. Then Bula shot Nqase in his leg and Michael ran for his life. Nqase’s leg wound was later used as an alibi in a court case as to claim that Nqase killed Mabeqa out of self-defence. After some time, however, Nqase was found guilty for the murder of Mabeqa and consequently served a short prison sentence.

Edith told me the next day that one of the Big Five supporters had visited her that morning to inform her of Mabeqa’s murder, further telling her that she was also on the hit list. Later that day, Bula, also a Big Five member, visited Edith and proudly notified her that they had taken care of Mabeqa. He advised her to leave Indawo Yoxolo because she was going to be the next to die. Within a few days, all the known political opponents of the Big Five fled to Councillor Gqoli and went into hiding. Only Edith and Gxyiza remained in Indawo Yoxolo. Gxyiza felt he could not abandon his wife and children and said: ‘I am too old to run away. If they want me they can come and get me’. Later that week, when Edith was walking to catch a taxi, she was threatened again by one of the Big Five: ‘We will do everything, yes everything, to get what we want.’ But he added that they were going to wait a while before they would kill again. They were waiting for their opponents to come out of their hiding places: it was much easier to kill someone in Indawo Yoxolo than elsewhere in the Cape Flats.

Edith felt increasingly intimidated and the situation was horrifying. All political allies of Mr. Mabeqa had fled and the Big Five were brimming with confidence and were more powerful than ever before. Although some opponents had appealed to the police for security measures, nothing came of it. As usual, there were never any police officers in Indawo Yoxolo. Everybody, including myself, asked Edith to leave Indawo Yoxolo, at least for a while. Edith’s husband was not supportive of her departure. Being unemployed at the time, one can imagine that he worried about food. He did, however, allow her to stay with his sister in Gwayta, but Edith herself did not feel safe at her sister-in-law’s place, only about a twenty-minute walk from Indawo Yoxolo. As is very common, there were also tensions between Edith and her sister-in-law. Her sister-in-law admitted that she had intended to poison Edith only a few weeks earlier, around Christmas. But because everyone was sharing plates, the sister-in-law did not succeed; she was too afraid she would poison the wrong person, possibly her own brother.
Against her husband's wishes, Edith went into hiding. A few days later, I accompanied her to her place in Indawo Yoxolo so she could see how her child was doing and to fetch some clothing. While I was reading the newspaper in front of the shack, Edith and her husband started to argue and her husband pulled Edith into the shack and tried to lock her in. Edith protested loudly and attempted to force the door back open. Her husband, however, had hidden a screwdriver beneath his trousers lying on the bed, which he took and stabbed Edith in the hand. Edith screamed and her husband continued his attempts to keep her in the shack. Edith struggled to break away, but he held her arm, trying to pull her back inside, while I, hearing the commotion, dropped my newspaper and started to pull her other arm to help her get away. Her husband finally let go and Edith and I went to the Groote Schuur hospital for medical treatment. We then proceeded to the police in Mountain View, but they proved very uncooperative: we were left waiting for hours on end. Some of the African women who had been waiting there for a few days finally left and decided not to report the assaults on them. One of the women told me that her husband had shot at her, but had luckily missed. As usual, the police did not take domestic violence seriously and they did not show interest in the larger political context of the violence that took place in Indawo Yoxolo. Many officers were unidentifiable because they did not wear their badges. After we waited for half-a-day, I approached one of them and insisted on knowing his name and rank. He told me his name and rank and anxiously asked me: 'Why do you want to know this? Are you going to take it any further?' I asked him if he knew what else I could do. Within five minutes, the statements were finalized and a police car was ready to accompany Edith to Indawo Yoxolo so she could get some clothing. Sometimes it helps to be White.

On the surface, everything seemed to be back to normal in Indawo Yoxolo. I was astonished to see how little visible impact the murder of the leader of the opposition to the Big Five had had on most people. A prominent resident was killed, but that only took a few minutes and only a few people had to flee Indawo Yoxolo. I was surprised that life went on as usual, although the political consequences of this murder were significant. Most residents were too scared and intimidated to talk about what happened and this denial of violence seemed to be a successful strategy to manage daily life.

Within a few days it had become impossible to do research in Indawo Yoxolo. The Big Five were in complete control and all levels of safety had disappeared. Those I trusted and who were concerned about my safety had been chased away by the Big Five, and even Edith did not want to return to Indawo Yoxolo and had found another place to live. In the weeks that followed, I only did research outside of Indawo Yoxolo as some residents attended meetings of financial mutuals in other areas of Cape Town. Moreover, I was aware that I should not restrict the research to Indawo Yoxolo or neglect relations with people and institutions in other parts of Cape Town. I focused particularly on financial mutuals in Khayelitsha and Philippi, where many residents were also recent migrants to Cape Town.

These events revealed the consequences of a participant observation approach in conflict situations. The only way to perform my research was to rely on a few people and establish trustworthy relations with them. Without such relations, I could achieve no insight into these conflicts, their causes, and consequences. Nevertheless, the possibilities to do research
were also restricted because of the limited freedom I had to move around, and the inability to talk freely with all who were involved in this conflict. People's lives were under threat, and a court case was pending. In such a situation, one cannot expect people to reveal all their actions, motivations, and opinions.

A few weeks later, Edith and I recommenced the research. In the meantime, the brother of one of the Big Five members had presented residents of Indawo Yoxolo with a contract. It would allow a construction company to use the remains of their subsidies to build little one-roomed houses on their plots. Many people wanted to keep the remains of their subsidies because they wanted to join an NGO called Victoria Mxenge. This NGO had a housing scheme that enabled the participants to save extra money and cut expenses by building themselves, which allowed for bigger houses. But out of fear for the Big Five, people signed the contract anyway. They did not receive a copy, nor did they dare complain about the terrible 'houses' that were built.

Mr. Mabeqa's murder led to a court case against Nqase. In addition to the murder charge, the police had found two boxes with illegal firearms at Nqase's place and there were further charges related to the murders of one or more people in the nearby township Crossroads. Despite that there were five cases in total brought against him, he was released on bail nonetheless. Just a few days after the murder, he was strolling around Indawo Yoxolo, chatting to everyone on the streets. When I finished my fieldwork in December 1998, he was not yet convicted, but I heard from Mabeqa's wife that he was finally imprisoned in 1999, more than a year after the murder. By the end of the same year, however, he was back on the streets of Indawo Yoxolo.

Figure 4.3: January/February 1998

The Big Five were now more powerful than ever and continued their work as the DPC Project Committee. But Nqase must have been afraid to walk around freely. He often wore a white substance smeared on his face. A widespread interpretation was that he had visited a diviner or herbalist and received the substance for protection. Overall, however, the murder of Mabeqa confirmed their power over the development projects and people in Indawo Yoxolo. The national and provincial political changes, as well as the ANC's Commission of Inquiry were threats to the Big Five. The strategic mur-
der of Mr. Mabeqa had a successful outcome that reinstated their power position in times of temporary political insecurity.

4.4.8 The wake

Until the funeral, every evening at seven o'clock there was a wake at Mabeqa's mother's place in the nearby township Guguletu. Usually wakes were held at the place of the deceased, but for safety reasons the wakes had to be relocated to Guguletu. The wakes were well attended: at least by a hundred people. The routine at the wakes was that someone, mostly a man, walked forward and gave a speech that highlighted his relationship with the deceased and the unavoidability of death. After the speech - and sometimes during the speech if an elaborate speaker had to be curbed - the choir started to perform a well-known gospel song and many people sang along. It was difficult for Edith to translate for me what happened during the wakes due to her emotional involvement, but she managed some translations. I felt uncomfortable writing in my notebook during the wakes so I made notes once they were over. Church brothers, reverends, neighbours, family members, and friends gave speeches, and all avoided reference to the cause of death or its political context. Instead, they highlighted that death was unavoidable: it was God's decision to present bitter things to people.

Only once did the political context of Mabeqa's death become explicit. One of the people present was regarded as a Big Five supporter. Many were shocked that he was there and felt that he had come to spy for the Big Five: 'He wants to find out who Mabeqa's supporters are'. The already tense atmosphere heightened when he stepped forward to give a speech. He said: 'One word, one heart, one heart, one word', in order to emphasize the unity of the bereaved. The crowd started mumbling and people were nervous. The man continued: 'As some of us have to go back to Indawo Yoxolo after this service...', but the rest of his sentence was drowned out by the ensuing noise. The secretary of Mabeqa's group, Constance, had started ululating and dozens of other women joined her. The noise was so loud that it was useless for the speaker to continue. Some of the people were angry with the ululating women and said: 'Let him speak first!' The man was shocked and confused and left the stage. The choir started a gospel number in an attempt to diffuse the tense atmosphere and to shout down the ululating women. This was fairly successful, as the women stopped ululating to join the choir.

In the meantime, the man who had left the stage was detained by young men on the sidewalk. They encircled him and increasingly more men joined in. What followed was a fierce debate about what they should do with him. The atmosphere was tense and charged and everyone was thrilled and eager to see some action. When I asked Edith: 'what will they do with him?', she laughed and made a cutting movement with her finger across the front of her neck. She rolled her eyes and let her tongue hang out of her mouth, mimicking a murder. Some felt that the man should have had the opportunity to speak first and then had to be killed. Others, however, felt he had to be killed straight away and that he should not have the opportunity to defend himself. I immediately left and phoned Councillor Gqoli on his mobile phone, perhaps the only man somewhat able to diffuse the scene, after whose arrival
the captive was allowed to go.

The speaker's words appeared to be an attempt to reconcile the Big Five and Mabeqa's group, but he had failed completely when the ululating women shouted him down. In the 'battle of the voices', it was eventually the choir who, at least to some extent, was able to stop the acceleration of emotions. In a way, the contest of voices resembled a voting system, like one can sometimes see on television shows or in the British parliament. The 'battle of voices' that was dominated by women was in favour of peace, after which the young men captured the Big Five supporter but, after having intimidated him, let him go. Although Mabeqa's group were severely under threat, they did not strike back by murdering the Big Five supporter.

Mabeqa was buried in Gcuwa (Butterworth) in the Eastern Cape, the same town where Bula came from. Bula's family did not attend the funeral. They were probably afraid or embarrassed although Mabeqa's wife, Nopumsile, could understand why they did not come, she felt that they should have. After all, they could not be held responsible for their sons' deeds and for the problems in Cape Town. The main worry of Nopumsile, who sought refuge with her mother-in-law, was Mabeqa's clothing. The police was in the possession of Mabeqa's personal belongings and she was afraid that the Big Five might use it for witchcraft. She said that Mabeqa could not rest until his clothing was returned. Mabeqa's mother shared Nopumsile's worries. She had recurring nightmares in which she saw her son's face and in which he tells her that he wanted his clothes back. Although they had tried several times, the police refused to give Mabeqa's clothes and watch back.

The clothes were also Mabeqa's neighbour's concern. She had dreamt about it twice. In her dream, she entered Mabeqa's house and saw that everything was broken. The doors of Mabeqa's wardrobe, which, together with the bed and cupboard, was the only piece of furniture they possessed, were left open. She said it was a terrible dream. We told her that Mabeqa's clothes were missing and she was convinced that this explained her dreams. She said it was very likely that Nqase took it from the police and took it to a witch (igqwirha) in order to inflict more pain on people. Nqase was seen with white substance on his face for protection. Sometimes, a diviner (igqirha) could also be a witch (igqwirha), and the white substance on Nqase's face was proof that he had visited a witch already.

4.4.9 A new opposition

In the following months, the Big Five and their supporters killed three more residents of Indawo Yoxolo. One was a known opponent of the Big Five, and another was the younger brother of an opponent. They shot the latter through the corrugated iron wall of his shack because they mistook him for his older brother. A Big Five supporter also kicked a twelve-year-old child to death, as I already mentioned in chapter two. Michael, who witnessed the murder of Mabeqa, was also shot at. His story was confusing and seemed inconsistent. He told me that he was taken by surprise late at night when people entered his shack. He claimed they were police officers sent by the Big Five, and that they first shot him in the hand, and then in the stomach and leg. He said he was unarmed, but because he was first shot in his hand it seemed logical to me that he had either held a weapon or was reaching for
one. Half-a-year after the shooting he was still a crippled shadow of the strong and confident man he used to be.

The murder of Mabeq'a and the destruction of the opposition to the Big Five led to more political changes in Indawo Yoxolo. 'Shooter' - a telling nickname-claimed to be related to SANCO. Before Mabeq'a's death, it appeared that he also opposed the Big Five, although he was not a prominent figure. Rumour had it that he had switched sides and joined the Big Five. Sometimes for weeks in a row, residents saw Shooter walking around at three o'clock at night. Every couple of minutes he fired a shot in the air, waking and terrifying the people in the vicinity. Due to the bad state of the shacks and RDP houses, it was quite possible that one of his many bullets would eventually pierce through a wall, window, or roof and injure someone.

Shooter joined the leader of the Big Five, Zantsi, and they established a SANCO interim committee for Indawo Yoxolo. The SANCO interim committee had planned elections for 6 September. They were held during a meeting at a public area in Indawo Yoxolo. Although this was a public place, it was regarded as a space controlled by the Big Five, because they would usually have their meetings there. Because of this location, and the central role of Zantsi and Shooter in its organisation, mainly Big Five supporters and curious bystanders were in attendance. Most residents of Indawo Yoxolo, however, were uninterested or too scared to oppose Shooter and Zantsi. At this 'election', Shooter and Zantsi, of course, elected themselves: Shooter became the chairperson and Zantsi a board member.

Shortly after the elections, a long-lasting dispute over housing grants and the allocation of plots emerged between Shooter and Zantsi. Some residents still lived in the squatter settlement and had yet to move to their new plots. Future Dwelling continued threats to evict them but had not yet taken any action. But due to the unwillingness or inability to bribe the Big Five, they were forced to stay in the squatter settlement. The Big Five and Shooter, who also had his own supporters, were fighting about the exact number of residents on that particular site. This conflict caused a rift to grow between Shooter and Zantsi. According to Zantsi, there were 312 households on the site in question who qualified for a plot. Shooter argued that there were 424 households, because this was the number of people officially registered on the DPC's housing list, a list controlled by the Big Five. Zantsi, however, had made an actual count with members of the city council's Housing Committee after a meeting on 8 October. They had counted 312 households. Shooter questioned this count because a councillor who was known to be loyal to Zantsi had chaired the meeting and organised the count. The discrepancy of nearly a hundred households fed allegations of corruption against the Big Five. They were rumoured to have registered people who did not qualify for housing subsidies and bribing them, or to have sold plots to people who were not even registered.

The dispute between Shooter and Zantsi was not only due to this incident. An analysis of the parameters of the big men paradigm provided a structural explanation that appeared to underlie this conflict. Again, national and provincial political processes appeared to influence local political relations. In September 1997, Bantu Holomisa and Roelf Meyer established a new political party: the United Democratic Movement (UDM). Bantu Holomisa headed the Transkei under the apartheid regime and, after the 1994 elections, he became the national deputy minister of environmental
affairs. He was expelled from government and the ANC, and the general opinion was that this was so because he had complained of the ANC not adequately addressing the problem of corrupt party members. Roelf Meyer was a young NP politician who had played a major role in the 1992-93 negotiations that had led to the abolishment of apartheid. Meyer felt increasingly dissatisfied with the NP’s inability to reform and attract black voters. Together they presented the UDM as an alternative party, which was not based on race, and which, unlike the NP and the ANC, was not embedded in the history of apartheid. It was expected that their main stronghold was going to be in the Eastern Cape, because Bantu Holomisa had been the leader of the Transkei homeland.

**Figure 4.4: September/October 1998**

- SANCO Elections
- household count
- Leader Big Five readmitted

Virtually all African migrants in Cape Town were Xhosa and came from Emaxhoseni, of which Transkei was a part. The UDM wanted to gain support in Cape Town for the 1999 elections. The opponents of the UDM expected them to attract many voters. Because of the large support that the NP had previously received, voting behaviour in this province was more crucial than in other provinces where it was clear that the ANC was going to win. After he was approached by the UDM, Shooter established a UDM branch in Indawo Yoxolo. The new political opportunities expected to emerge after the elections prompted Shooter to turn his back against the Big Five, but some still regarded him as a Big Five ally and suspected that the opposition was fake.

Although Zantsi had been expelled from the ANC for life to punish his lack of loyalty, he was re-admitted by the end of 1998. Probably with the next elections in mind, the ANC found it better to retain among their ranks a powerful leader in Indawo Yoxolo. Consequently, the Big Five turned its back on Mr. Vogel, the local councillor for the NP in Mountain View. Although there was a court case in process against Nqase - and after my return to The Netherlands I heard of court cases against other Big Five members - the Big Five remained the most powerful political group. The ANC had won the 1999 elections for that ward and Zantsi was appointed councillor to Indawo Yoxolo.

Two opposing groups had developed again. It seemed to be a central characteristic of politics in Indawo Yoxolo that, as soon as one opposition was destroyed, a new political opponent emerged. The new opposition was a fence sitter, if not an ally to the Big Five. African political structures, especially in Zulu history, have been characterised as systems of fission and fusion (Gluckman 1971; Kuper 1997, 74-77; Shapera 1956). Gluckman (1971, 25-26)
argues that relationships among Zulu should be understood within the context of relationships between Whites and Zulu. The temporal equilibrium of Zulu social structure could, since colonialism, only be understood by incorporating the role of Whites. Similar to how development projects work in contemporary South Africa, colonial rule was channelled through ‘tribal’ chiefs which enabled control over Africans and allowed certain Africans to become powerful leaders. Shooter’s fence sitting in Indawo Yoxolo seems to illustrate Gluckman’s analysis of a situation where two unequal groups exist, in which membership could not be changed:16

‘Where there are unequal groups and membership can not be changed... Dissident members of the superior group may become leaders of these new interest-groups within the inferior. Conversely, some members of the inferior group become interest-groups assisting the superior and standing opposed to the mass of their own group’ (Gluckman 1971, 48).

Continued opposition against the Big Five was an expression of discontent by some residents of Indawo Yoxolo. The marginal residents of Indawo Yoxolo tried to challenge the political security and flow of resources. This took place through the fissions and fusions expressing the tensions and alliances between people. RDP development created a temporal equilibrium in Indawo Yoxolo, which was ‘disturbed’ by national and provincial political changes, and a new opposition emerged. Clearly, conflict was central to the temporal equilibrium in Indawo Yoxolo.

In the long run the changing political landscape and the murder of Mabeqaa and other opponents bore no consequences for the relationship between the Big Five and Future Dwelling. Future Dwelling’s support of the Big Five could not be attributed to a lack of information. DPC’s own Bulletin of June 1998 warned against corruption:

WARNING! WARNING! WARNING!

No one should be made to pay money to be allocated a site in any DPC housing project for families with a household income of less than R1500 per month. The site and house is free and fully subsidised by the government.

No community leader or unauthorised person is allowed to allocate sites/houses. There are no shortcuts! No one can pay to be nominated as a beneficiary of a house or site in the DPC.

If you have any queries you can contact: The Project Facilitator. Tel. x Fax. x

The pamphlet caused a stir in Indawo Yoxolo. It did not reveal who the project facilitator was, but people suspected Mguye because he had cooperated with the Big Five before. People were afraid that the project facilitator would inform the Big Five about their phone calls and kill them. Instead of as a warning, the notice was regarded a trap the Big Five had set in order to find out who their opponents were. This was an understandable fear considering Future Dwelling’s attitude towards the conflict. To my knowledge, nobody had dared to phone Future Dwelling.

The Big Five, however, did not like the pamphlet at all, which suggested that it was not a trap. But in such a politically charged and tense situation, it became difficult to distinguish the truth from paranoid interpreta-
violent developments in indawo yoxolo

Eunice, a neighbour of Edith's, told me that Ma Ntshona had asked her to help distribute the pamphlets throughout the neighbourhood. Ma Ntshona was the Big Five supporter who was liaison officer for Leed Construction and a parent's representative in the school (although she was without children in Indawo Yoxolo). The Big Five discovered that Eunice had distributed the pamphlets, and she told me that some of them had paid her a visit. They informed her that the Big Five had held a meeting about this incident and were discussing what they should do with her. They were in doubt, they said: some were in favour of shooting her, while others felt that it was more appropriate to burn her alive, but one of them had convinced them all that it was better to talk with Eunice first so she could offer a defence. Eunice was scared for her life, and told them that the pamphlets came from Ma Ntshona. Because Ma Ntshona supported the Big Five, she did not think that they would object, and the Big Five did indeed decide to leave her alone. They gave Ma Ntshona a R150 fine instead. Eunice was very relieved and felt that Ma Ntshona received such a small punishment because the Big Five did not want to alienate her. Ma Ntshona knew a lot about their crimes and could easily go to the police should they turn her against them. Apart from this pamphlet, I noticed no other attempts by Future Dwelling or other DPC organisations to discontinue their support of the Big Five or prevent violence in Indawo Yoxolo.

4.5 The effect of weak resistance

Witnessing the violence, intimidation, and corruption carried out by the Big Five does not inspire much hope. Some risked their lives and some lost their lives in their attempts to challenge the position of the Big Five. Development organisations, NGOs, government officials, and investors ignored the political dimension of the RDP projects in Indawo Yoxolo, even if this led to violence. These conflicts were not confined to Indawo Yoxolo. A number of articles were published in national and local newspapers on the widespread malfunctioning, corruption and violence that were part of the housing allocations in Cape Town. Cavanagh (1998b) reported: 'Over the past six months at least six people have died in escalating violence directly related to the delivery of housing in the Crossroads and Philippi area'. In June 1998, a battle between the former secretary of SANCO and the Western Cape United Squatter Association (WeCUSA) over control of the location Browns Farm led to the killings of four people (Ntabazalila 1998a). Clearly, development projects contributed to existing conflicts and might even have created new ones.

The eruptions of violence led to an independent investigation by the Cape Town City Council, which was released in December 1998. The tenor of the report was that violence was related to the ANC-dominated development projects. City manager and local electoral officer Mr. Boraine stated that the distribution of resources in a poor area made a few people very powerful. But the report failed to point out that development policy established the political security and flow of resources to powerful leaders such as the Big Five. Instead, it focused on the community as if it was an isolated area with warlords, a possible 'third force', and intolerant local politicians (Steenkamp and Bateman 1998). Another newspaper article also pointed to the problems concerning the delivery of housing. But again, the devel-
opment project itself, which was carried out by the city council, was not regarded as part of the problem. The political structure was not taken into consideration and the only reference to the role of planners was: ‘Council officials are becoming increasingly frustrated. Plans to develop areas are sometimes met with resistance from squatter communities, and the culture of non-payment for services is still entrenched in the communities’ (Merten 1999, 41).

The ideology of community and development that numerous development policies and journalists adhered to served as a kind of rule through the RDP and DPC community fora. A person was not seen to represent himself, but everybody in ‘the community’, in a powerful and unproblematic way. The image of community, therefore, had inadvertently come to serve a form of rule similar to indirect rule in colonial Africa. The colonial ‘tribe’ had become ‘community’, and the colonial ‘chief’ had become ‘community leader’. The goals of the colonial and post-apartheid government vastly differed, but the means to achieve them bore common characteristics.

The case of Indawo Yoxolo can be used to reflect on Ferguson’s (1990) and Scott’s (1998) analysis of state power. Indeed, development allowed the state to control people because it gave community leaders political security and control over resources. To some extent, the particular members of a group, such as the Big Five, seemed irrelevant, as long as the group could provide the political security and keep control over the distribution of resources. Simmel (1950, 107-108) argued that by addressing people and a group with a number reveals how impersonal power can be:

The purely numerical concept implies the purely objective character of the formation, which is indifferent to any personal features the members may have, and only requires that he be one of the ‘six’. Really, there is perhaps no more effective way of expressing an individual’s high social status, along with the complete irrelevance of whatever he may be as a person outside his group functioning.

In many respects, development functioned as a form of rule. Attempts to challenge the Big Five were destined to fail because they received continuous support from political and development institutions. But two issues tend to fall outside the scope of the analysis. First, the state was not a solid unit that oversaw a hegemonic rule. In South Africa, political changes affected the way Africans were subjected to the state. For example, the temporary ‘co-operation’ between the NP and the ANC in the national and provincial government stopped, which had an impact upon the Big Five’s political security. As a result, they started to rub shoulders with the NP and re-evaluated their precarious relationship with the ANC. Moreover, a new political party, the UDM, emerged which promised to become a significant player in local and provincial politics. In expectation of the next elections in the contested Western Cape, political parties adapted their strategies. That meant that votes, or more the expectations politicians had about voting behaviour, influenced the alliances formed. Democracy - as political behaviour based on expected voting behaviour and election outcomes - meant that poor people, like the residents of Indawo Yoxolo, were not only subject- ed to the state. Moreover, political parties and development institutions also depended at times on the Big Five. The limitations on state hegemony could also be for the fact that it was eventually not the state, but a private sector
company, Future Dwelling, that co-ordinated the development projects.

Second, local political struggles have to be analysed, even if they did not challenge the control over people through development. The opposition to the Big Five was weak, but if we are to understand the development process and state transformation, we have to consider the frustration, anger, and courage demonstrated by the opposing forces. Just because the opposition was not successful in significantly challenging the flow of resources and political securities should not mean that their attempts to oppose control should not be studied. These conflicts, even if they do not lead to transformation, reveal the dynamics of bureaucratic power and the processes of subjugating South Africa's new citizens. Ferguson and Scott gave a relatively peaceful picture of authoritarian rule, despite their emphasis on power.

Scott's *The Weapons of the Weak* (1985) on peasant resistance in Malaysia provides inspiring insights into the creative ways people deal with power. As a starting point, Scott argues that many forms of resistance were not revolutionary and were, therefore, left unexamined: 'The fact is that, for all their importance when they do occur, peasant rebellions, let alone peasant "revolutions", are few and far between (Scott 1985, 29). The peasants did not resist openly but had 'hidden transcripts', such as boycotts, gossip, feigned ignorance, foot-dragging, or theft, that subverted power relationships with the local elite. The peasants resisted the power relations, but were unable to challenge them in any fundamental way (Scott 1985, 29). Scott's insightful distinction between 'hidden transcript' and 'public transcript' allowed him to incorporate a kind of resistance in an otherwise hegemonic representation of power relations. This hegemonic and maybe even romantic view allows for the analysis of conflict without only focusing on revolutions.

The situation in Indawo Yoxolo was obviously different in many respects from that described by Scott. The conflicts were more open and violent and the political situation was much more dynamic. Moreover, the power relations of the Big Five were sometimes contested. Taking such differences into consideration, it is still interesting to reflect on the forms of resistance that Scott describes. His two books, *Weapons of the Weak* and *Seeing like a State* are somewhat complementary. They present the unsuccessful struggle from below and the successful implementation of state authority respectively. But also the division between 'hidden transcripts' and 'public transcripts' is problematic. It makes it difficult to understand societal change, the political transformation, and the alteration of power relations, even in a situation that did not lead to revolutionary liberation. As Howe (1998, 547) puts it:

It is the analysis of the conflict and competition amongst those in subordinate positions, that is, of their own internal politics, which is largely absent from Scott’s work on hegemony and resistance... [By assuming social formations to consist of only two groups, he misses the complexities of societies seen as plural or as comprising many groups and intervening categories.

Although political security and flows of resources are pivotal to a structural analysis of domination, the multifarious ways in which political alliances change, new oppositions emerge, and powerful groups are challenged or supported have to be included into the analysis. This reveals that state authority, and the resistance it incited, were not hegemonic, but violent, dynamic, as well as experienced as chaotic in the dramatically changing South Africa.
4.6 Violence: Beyond political economy

Many violent events, such as gang rape, child abuse, the murdering of strangers, cannot be explained only by a political-economic analysis of violence. Furthermore much of the violence that was politically or economically motivated had dimensions that cannot be explained in these terms. When the brother-in-law of my research assistant was murdered, his murderers had used about forty bullets. When a man stole something from a street vendor, the people were excited to catch him; they dragged his body around, kicked him, and threw chunks of concrete on him while a large and fevered crowd had gathered around the victim to celebrate the event. When a man, who was regarded as a Big Five supporter, tried to speak at Mabeqa's wake, the jouissance, 'the domain of death and inexpressible enjoyment', cannot be overlooked (Stavrakakis 1999, 44). Explaining violence only through a political-economic analysis dismisses the relevance of violence as experience and its psychological dimension. In South Africa, people laughed a lot about violence, not because they considered it lightly and as unimportant, but because of its absurdity, its force, its simplicity, and the complex and not always flattering emotions it provoked; fear, anxiety, anger, excitement, fascination, as well biological reactions.

Let me give some indications of the causes of violence that were not only strategic, but exceeded a strategic purpose. For a long time, South Africans have had to live with violence. For example, after the declaration of the State of Emergency in June 1986, it was estimated that within half-a-year approximately 28,000 people were detained for political reasons (Foster 1987, 193). Only a small group (17 per cent) was not physically tortured and virtually everybody had problems after their release from detention, such as difficulties in relating to friends and family, sleeping disorders, nightmares, or depression (Foster 1987, 204, 213). The Truth and Reconciliation Committee, which was preceded over by Bishop Desmond Tutu, brought to the fore some of the atrocities from which people had suffered. Neighbours were, falsely or not, accused of spying for the apartheid government, and rumours and suspicions were sometimes enough to murder someone. Such traumatic events must have had an impact on people. For example, Krogi (1999, 204-205) wrote about Queenstown, where suspicions and rumours led to a high incidence of necklacing of neighbours. She recorded that someone said: 'Queenstown is different to other places... There are two madhouses here, you know?' To that person, that many madhouses existed within a relatively small population indicated how these events have damaged people.

A survey among 1,500 schoolchildren in Soweto, Johannesburg, revealed that one out of four boys said that 'jackrolling' - a term for recreational gang rape - was fun (BBC 1999). Yet another threat is the drastic spread of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. In 1998, 23 per cent of the women that visited prenatal clinics tested HIV positive (Garner 2000, 43). Unemployment, unstable relations, the migratory experience, violence, and so on were all factors capable of arousing anxiety. Many migrants experienced tremendous pressures, and some could barely cope with the many adversities and insecurities. I was under the impression that sometimes, it was simply considered, an exercise in futility to attempt to solve a personal problem because of the sheer and continuing weight of overwhelming adversity all the time. People's resilience to horrific experiences sometimes fell short. At times it appeared
that some were unable to appreciate their own lives, let alone the lives of others, and displayed very self-destructive behaviour: alcoholism, searching for violence, or walking in the middle of an unlit highway at night. Being violent, it appeared sometimes, was a display of power by otherwise powerless people. Almost as if people were in search of a sensation, such as jouissance, that could break through the wall of depressing numbness.

Initially, I did not regard violence as part of the research, but as an obstacle that prevented me from doing research. I felt that the research on financial mutuals had little to do with violence, an impression which was at odds with the intense presence of violence. This, however, seemed to be a rationalisation of emotional responses to violence, deprivation, and destitution. As Devereux (1967, 3) insightfully states: 'The more anxiety a phenomenon arouses, the less man seems capable of observing it correctly, of thinking about it objectively and of evolving adequate methods for its description, understanding, control and prediction.' I tried to rationalise my initial decision to neglect violence by elaborating on arguments as to why violence had nothing to do with my research. These rationalizations served to distance me from these acts and, as Devereux (1967, 83) put it, were attempts to isolate myself from human tragedy: 'A great many professional defences are simply varieties of the isolation defence which 'decontaminates' anxiety-arousing material by repressing or negating its affective content and human as well as personal relevance.'

It appeared that I wanted to exclude violence from the study because of the anxiety it aroused. It could be that development workers, politicians, and policy makers were attempting the same. Their constant refusal to face up their own involvement in the violent development projects might also have been such an isolation defence. Xhosa migrants in Indawo Yoxolo also tried to establish such defences, clearly having had more reason to do so than anyone else. For the Xhosa migrants, financial mutuals served this purpose: they were an attempt to withdraw into a closely knit group and create an island of hope in a sea of violence and insecurity. Financial mutuals not only defended people's money, but harboured migrants who needed a place to feel safe, trusted, and valued.

The way financial mutuals were organised and the way people related to each other, and spent their money, was part of this apocalyptic scene. It probably comes as no surprise that the participants of financial mutuals meant to use the group as an attempt to stay away from politics and instead to retreat from society. People had a desire to build something positive: solidarity, a nice house, a friendship, or a well functioning stove. Nobody wanted to be reminded about their poverty, the political problems, or the dehumanising experiences (both a consequence of violence and overcome by violence) all the time. Maybe, against all odds, many hoped for something better and, among other means, invested a lot of energy and money through financial mutuals in an attempt to change things for the better.

4.7 Conclusion

The development dream was shattered, even to those who did not believe in the dream that much from the start. The plans of the ANC were too ambitious and the utopian vision for South Africa had to be relinquished.
Development in practice was much more problematic. As the case of Indawo Yoxolo shows, the ideology defining community and development was problematic. Conflict and violence accompanied the actual development projects.\(^{19}\) The RDP policies led to a type of authoritarian rule through its provision of political security and resources to a group of powerful local leaders. This exemplified virtually the only state presence in Indawo Yoxolo, as it was for many other settlements where African migrants started to live.

Far from being hegemonic in nature, development gave rise to, or fuelled already existing, conflicts over the distribution of resources. There were people who attempted to challenge the way development gave rise to a ruthless regime by a few powerful people. Their attempts to question the distribution of resources and political security were hardly to any avail. National and political change led instead mainly to increased violence, the destruction of the opposition, and the emergence of a new one. Nevertheless, these political struggles were central to the relations defined by the migrants: no neutrals were allowed in this conflict.

In this chapter I have made an attempt to portray the living conditions of African migrants in the ‘community’ of Indawo Yoxolo and how the post-apartheid state was most manifest. This was the situation in which the migrants tried to organise their financial mutuals. Financial mutuals were attempts to create some sort of safe havens and withdraw into small social circles, even if they were only temporary. Most financial mutuals were organised among neighbours who lived very close to each other, and together they hoped to build something that allowed them to feel secure and valued. Financial mutuals were, as also part III will show, defence mechanisms against the political, economic, and psychological threats that people experienced.

Finally, this chapter has shown the benefits and limits of fieldwork in a violent setting. The benefits were that it enabled me to gain insight into conflicts, its causes, and its dynamics. To some extent, I could see the impact it had on the people’s lives, partly because it aroused anxiety in me too, although I could withdraw from the situation at any time. Moreover, the violence provided insight into another dimension of financial mutuals. e.g. the participant’s quest for solidarity and safety. In such a charged situation, furthermore, the information that people gave was very much guided by the relationships that people had with each other. Thus, I could value how violence and distrust had an impact on people’s actions, what they were willing to say and to whom. Because of my fieldwork, I knew whom I could rely on and some people knew that I was not going to hurt them. This, however, was simultaneously a disadvantage. I could not move around freely, was not able to talk with everybody, and was dependent on a few people, particularly my research assistant. In this conflict, no neutrals were permitted, which meant that, with a substantial number of the residents of Indawo Yoxolo, I could not have fruitful conversations: violence made people suspicious and hesitant to talk about political events. But, at least I was aware of this limitation, could make it explicit in this thesis, and appreciate how financial mutuals were embedded in this political-economic field.