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„How Does a Civic Organisation Promote Social Transformation? A Case Study“

Conceptualising the Agency of the Alternative Information and Development Centre in Cape Town, South Africa

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Helena Hornung, B.A.

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CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations

AECC	Alternatives to Extractivism and Climate Change
AIDC	Alternative Information and Development Centre
ANC	African National Congress
COP 17	17th session of the Conference of the Parties (UN Climate Conference)
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCP	Dismantle Corporate Power
DENOSA	Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa
DLF	Democratic Left Front
EU	European Union
FEDUSA	The Federation of Unions of South Africa
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution Plan
GT	Grounded Theory
MEC	Minerals-Energy Complex
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NP	National Party
NPO	Not for Profit Organisation
NUMSA	National Union of Metal Workers South Africa
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OMCJ	One Million Climate Jobs
PIC	Public Investment Corporation
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RIC	Research and Information Centre
SA	South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAGRC	South African Green Revolutionary Council
SAPSN	Southern African People Solidarity Network
TNC	Transnational corporation
TNI	Transnational Institute
TUED	Trade Union for Energy Democracy
UF	United Front
WTO	World Trade Organisation
ZIMCOD	Zimbabwean Coalition of Debt and Development

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PART I - INTRODUCTION

1 SPANNING THE RESEARCH FIELD

This thesis is about the Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in South Africa with its vision and mission being to promote a socially just South Africa. The analytical focus is the role which the AIDC plays in alternative development towards a social transformation to a more equal and just society in South Africa. The thesis asks concretely what the AIDC does to fulfil its mission, which strategies and methods are used to do so, and lastly how its motivation can be understood concerning this normative vision.

This thesis aims to reflect the agency of this organisation. Agency is understood as a goal-oriented practice and strategic actions. One hypothesis is that agency is more than just the sum of one's actions. It implies normative guidelines, concrete objectives, and strategies of meeting those objectives; in simple terms: *what*, *why* and *how*. Further, agency is always related to some kind of structure – not only in the sense of restricting agency. According to critical realists, agency is a way of transforming *"the social world in ways that will eliminate such [structural] restrictions"* (Willmott 2005: 758).

The AIDC perceives this social world to be systematically unjust and restrictive in opportunities for the majority of South Africans to live a self-fulfilled and decent life. Its vision is a sustainable society without exploitation and oppression in which people can live with dignity and free to realise their capabilities (AIDC 2019b). As such, the AIDC is the agent who seeks to change the structural conditions which restrict these capabilities. Its mission is to provide knowledge of current systemic conditions, such as economic and social injustices, and to formulate alternatives to destructive development paradigms. As a self-proclaimed activist think tank, their methodology extends to working closely with social movements, lending analytical support (AIDC 2019b).

This thesis is relevant for development studies as it investigates one agent, the AIDC, which articulates a critique of dominant development paradigms, while simultaneously proposing alternatives to this notion of unequal development[1]. The idea of alternative development or more

[1] Dominant development paradigms are widely understood as linear models of economic development (e.g. Rostow (2016)) which usually imply dichotomic views of civilised versus uncivilised, modern versus traditional societies or developed versus underdeveloped countries. See Frank (2016) for a critique of dominant development paradigms that bring forth unequal developments rather than equal opportunities for all. Cardoso (2016) elaborates on the mechanisms of development as actively producing dependencies for „developing“ countries.

radically, alternatives *to* development is not new. There are representative movements all over the globe, such as *Buen Vivir*, *Happiness Index*, *De-growth*, proposing that the dominant Western development paradigm is faulty as it is evolved around economic growth as opposed to living well and being content (Schwartzman 2012; Villalba 2013; Pellegrini & Tasciotti 2014).

The study is situated at the intersection of critical development and constructive alternatives, following Venkatesan and Yarrow (2012) as well as Lewis and Mosse's (2006) approaches of development anthropology. Development anthropology does not only aim for the systemic critique of development but also the anthropological understanding of development agents. NGOs are considered as such development agents, albeit not always in favourable terms. Some would argue that NGOs are mostly offering "technical fixes diverting attention from what might be deep structural inequalities, and thus depoliticising any kind of intervention." (Caulkins & Jordan 2013: 56). Lewis and Mosse (2006) see the role of NGOs as similarly ambiguous, claiming that there is a disjuncture in development agents' claims to bring order to the world versus the actual outcomes of their interventions. This gap between ambitious objectives and the shortcomings of results is due to their implicit embeddedness in power relations (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 4). Tvedt points out that the study of NGOs can help to identify conflicts and underlying power relations within the "global arena" of international relations and development cooperation that claim to promote a morally just world (Tvedt 2002: 366)

Reflecting this criticism towards NGOs as development agents, diverting between a normative (often depoliticised) vision of a better world and the involvement in the "development machinery" (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 7), this study intends to take a closer look at one such agent, the AIDC. The goal is to understand both the normative and strategic basis of the organisation's agency.

Can this organisation make a difference – and more interestingly – how so? This interest in the potential capacity of a civic organisation to make a change is the basis for the research question:

How does the AIDC promote social transformation?

Stating from the obvious – its name – the AIDC is an alternative development agent, which makes the case even more fascinating. Maybe this is key to the question of its transformative potential. Promoting progressive politics and alternative development paradigms, the AIDC's stands for social transformation and against the status quo (AIDC 2019b).

The study follows a qualitative methodology based on ethnographic fieldwork. During a field trip from February to March 2019, I participated as a volunteer in the organisation, investigating from an inside perspective. Participating in everyday office life, events, projects and even

marches, activities that helped to get an overall picture of the organisation and the people involved. The primary method of enquiry was in the form of 13 expert interviews which I conducted with the staff throughout the stay.

The epistemological perspective is inspired by critical constructivism, meaning that agents construct knowledge in a cognitive process of abstracting the world (or rather an image of it) from lived experience (Glasersfeld 2003; Foerster et al. 2011). The mode of enquiry is inductive, explicitly following a Grounded Theory (GT) approach gathering the data. GT is itself not a theory but rather a research paradigm focusing on the analysis of data (Charmaz 2012; Strübing 2014). The mode of examination is hermeneutic, meaning that the data is proposing possible ways of reading it. The analytical contribution is to make sense of these possible interpretations and to reconstruct the meaning behind it (Kurt & Herbrik 2014).

Methods used were mainly expert interviews which followed a semi-structured guideline. Participant observation and a focus group discussion were intended to support these interviews but remained peripheral, rather acting an additional layer to the understanding of the context of the interviewees. As a case study, this thesis discusses one NGO in-depth, representing an alternative development agent seeking to influence the broader development discourse and, in concrete terms, advocating for alternative solutions to the issues marginalised communities face in their daily struggle for a decent living.

The enquiry focuses on the everyday practice of this specific organisation, more precisely, its staff and their experience in this field. This ethnographic approach aims at understanding the phenomenon from within, immersing into the worlds of the dialogue partners and seeing the world from their perspectives. This research strategy intends to take a step back from the known and taken for granted knowledge about certain phenomenon. This is done through participant observation and qualitative enquiry to openly perceive new insights (Lie 2006).

Short Introduction into the AIDC

The AIDC, short for Alternative Information and Development Centre, *"was formed in 1996 in response to the democratic transition in South Africa and the new opportunities and challenges it brought those seeking greater social justice within the democracy.*" (AIDC 2019a). It sees itself as advocate in an extended effort to end the effects of Apartheid in favour of a transition to a new democracy. On the 21st of March 1996, a book donation acted as a starting point in which activists formed a think tank (Interview 1). The AIDC's founding thought was to offer

an alternative space for analysing South Africa's issues, outside of mainstream media and discourse. The AIDC was inspired by the formulation of a critique against neoliberal tendencies[2]. Their overarching motive was to push back against this hegemonic development paradigm (labelled as globalised capitalism) by lobbying for a people-centred alternative (Interview 11).

Established as a research and activist centre, the AIDC facilitated the coming together of politically interested people who shared the same vision of a just transition to a new democratic South Africa. It was considered a place where understanding and analysing the challenges of this new agenda could take place in an environment of open discussions and progressive ideas (Interview 9). These challenges were delineated as the pressure of international development, expanding neoliberal policies, and a mainstream development paradigm based on compound growth. The AIDC was formed with the understanding of its mission to formulate a voice against this type of globalisation and the increasing power of big corporate players (Interview 9). Today, the AIDC employs 13 staff and covers three main programme areas: economic justice, climate change, anti-mining campaigns. Further, the AIDC commits to seven grassroot movements and other alliances with civil society organisations.

AIDC Profile

Founding Date 21st March 1996

Founding Context

The members of the AIDC did not see any resolution by the new government after 1994 concerning the struggles of the oppressed people of South Africa. Although the struggle against Apartheid seemed won, the fight against social inequality and injustice went on, extended beyond a national level. In contrast to an oppressive state regime, the "new" opponent was seen in a system of globalised capitalism. Here, global players stand at the top of the hierarchy, while the marginalised become further oppressed, with little chances for betterment.

Self-conception

The AIDC sees itself as an activist think tank, with its specialities being, *Alternative Information* and *Alternative Development.* The former entails critical research and analysis which is

[2] such as GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) and international trade agreements with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the European Union.

embedded in an alternative development paradigm (not growth and economy, but people and sustainability) which is fostering progressive and concrete solutions.

Vision

The AIDC's vision is built upon an equal society in which everyone has the opportunity to develop freely and has the democratic right and access to participate in political decision making.

Mission

Its credo is to inspire movements to form a counterpower to oppressive forces by doing research, translating this research into accessible information and disseminating this knowledge through campaigning. Campaigning is a tool for raising awareness and initiating activism by *doing* activism. One central principle is the ownership of campaigns in the hands of grassroot movements (Interview 9, Interview 13). The production of knowledge about injustices, and making this information accessible to the broader public, is implemented by hosting events, producing pamphlets as well as organising workshops with their partner movements. Central to the AIDC mission is the promotion of their partners' agendas.

Structure

Currently the AIDC employs 13 staff. There is functional hierarchy (directorates, management, programme directors, programme staff and administrative staff), however, it is described as a flat hierarchy in which the individuals have their space to develop according to their capabilities. In its 26 years continuity, the organisation proved to be resilient, constantly adapting its organisational structure to the political, social and historical changing contexts. At the time speaking the strategic framework entails three programme areas, with more than five ongoing projects and campaigns.

PART II – RESEARCH DESIGN

In accordance with Crotty, I will follow the logic of constructivism. As an epistemology, constructivism informs different forms of Interpretivism, such as Hermeneutics or Symbolic Interactionism; the theoretical perspectives of the world and how it is understood. This view on knowledge and the world gives implications to the methodology of the research design, which is in the form of an ethnographic research process (Crotty 2004). This study is about uncovering meanings and perceiving the world through the perspective of the dialogue partners. Therefore,

it does not follow a pre-determined approach but follows the sense-making structures of the participants. Within ethnography, methods such as interviews and forms of observation are adequate for the research purpose of describing and interpreting subjects and their handling of the world (Crotty 2004: 5). This chapter will elaborate on the research interest and the implications for the anticipated outcomes, including the research question, underlying hypotheses, questions guiding the research process and the relevance it has for development studies.

2 OUTLINING THE RESEARCH INTEREST

2.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

How does the AIDC promote social transformation?

The research question is formulated in light of the research interest to explore the agency of a non-governmental and not for profit organisation (NPO) in post-transitional South Africa.

2.2 RESEARCH PURPOSE

The outcome of this study aims at identifying the practices, strategies and ideologies framing the agency of the NGO under investigation. The study of the AIDC, born in the struggle for a just transition of South Africa is exemplary for agents of alternative development. Through the lens of their individual experiences, this thesis highlights the restrictions and possibilities in achieving a more equal and just society. The geographical, historical setting, as well as the political arena of local and global powers are what shaped the thinking and activism of this organisation. It is therefore not intended to deduct general statements about alternative development NGOs from this case but rather to understand the particularity of this case. The question in this context is not whether or not this organisation succeeds in fulfilling its mission. The foremost objectives are to understand the complexity of the organisation by observing it in its different dimensions of sense-making (of the world), motivation to change the world, as well as concrete strategies and practices to do so. More abstractly, this study inquires the conceptual world of the AIDC and how it is reflected in their work. At length, it serves to inspire one to think and reflect critically on one's position in the world.

2.3 RESEARCH OBJECT – THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main research object is the agency of this organisation. As mentioned, agency is constituted by the practices, concrete activities, conceptual as well as normative assumptions. In concrete terms, I argue that what an agent (i.e. a person, or an organisation) does is framed by an agenda,

which is based not only on rational assumptions but also on complex dynamics involving political, social, cultural and/or emotional standpoints. According to Jo Reichertz, agency itself is always contextual, depending on the situatedness in space-time as well as socio-cultural dimensions (Reichertz 2014: 71). Crucial for the understanding of agency is that – besides being an abstract concept – the actual actions are always mediated through individuals and how they process their very own environment. This perspective makes "external" forces, such as structures or materialities, only contingently determining. In other words, the effect of these externalities is not directly decisive over the agency of a person, but through becoming meaningful to the agent. The process of abstracting and constructing sense, shapes individuals' understandings of these "determinants" and, from here, decisions to act. At the same time, it does not mean that we are entirely free to act; in contrast, from our experience *with* "structures", we come to identify possibilities among restraints (i.e. we *experience* the boundaries of what is possible). Hence, our life worlds are constructed based on structural experience. It is after this cognitive process of seeing the world (as it is and as it could be), when we decide which course of action to take[3]. In this sense, I understand agency as a negotiated outcome between "externalities" and "internalities", i.e. determination and choice.

With their lived praxis people construct social order in a joint act, although some with more and some with fewer possibilities to enact their choices (Reichertz 2014: 70). This enquiry is at the intersection of reconstructing the context of the research "object's" agency and the subjective sense-making in which this agency is based (Reichertz 2014: 71). It is an attempt to link the external with the internal factors of the organisation's agency. The primary focus is the view from within the organisation, more specifically, within the reflections of the individuals involved, the organisation itself representing an inside perspective of a development agency.

Agency as abstract concept is itself a construct which describes and explains the meta-level of one's actions. Per my definition, the meta-level is the conceptual realm which anticipates and simultaneously interacts with the outcomes of the agency. This includes the knowledge of the world, which I argue is the cognitive ground for goal-directed action. Secondly, agency is motivated by the will to change the environment, which in terms of social

[3] The notion of agency here is distinct from actions or practices which are "reflexes" based on sensimotoric perceptions. Although, since constructivism is implicitly grounded in a biological evolutionary paradigm, there are certainly parallels between the cognitive functions of "reflecting" and reflexes as bodily functions. For the context of critical social studies, my focus is on agency as a more or less conscious and strategic handling of the social world. It might to an extent include practices which are, like reflexes, automatised, but originated from a conscious reflection, before the routine.

normativity is the critique of the structural social world. Lastly, what is needed for agency to be anticipated is the visualising of the expected outcome – imagining a better world.

Agency is a goal-oriented process. It includes the above stated dimensions of conceptualising the lived environment as well as the strategising of how to intervene in such a context (Campbell 2009: 408). Agency is, therefore, context-specific and concept-dependent. Consequently, it is situated between the experience of the ontic world and the constructionist process of making sense of these experience (Belfrage & Hauf 2015). The outcome of this intersection of material and meta-physical dynamics is the construction of a meaningful concept of the world. This meta-theory is the solid ground for planning and acting out an intervention, as it is the world as it appears real to the eyes of the agent experiencing and cognitively conceptualising his/her relationship to the world.

From a cybernetic standpoint, I observe not only an object but an observer of the world itself (Foerster et al. 2011). More specifically, I observe how this agent makes sense of its observations and uses these conceptual meanings to promote an agenda. Up until now, it seems like the only boundaries to agency are the mind and the ability to make sense of the world, as well as actions to strategically intervene in order to "master" the world. Experience teaches us differently, as we understand that there are certain structural restrictions to our agency – be it physical boundaries, or human-made structures such as the social order. Otherwise *imagining* a better world would be enough to make a better world. These structures are not a focus of this enquiry, yet it is worth mentioning that the agency observed is not conceptually limitless but contingent. Although the conceptual picture of the world, which we would frame as "reality", is constructed, this construction is not pre-existent to our experience with the world. We are born into an existing world, with established structures and an assigned social order, i.e. we are born into a particular temporal and spatial location:

> *"Your living conditions are much more determined by what is outside your control – the place and time that you are born into – than by your own effort, dedication, and the choices you have made in life.", and, "What gives people the chance for a good life is when the entire society and economy around them changes for the better". This is what development and economic growth are about: transforming a place so that what was previously only attainable for the luckiest few comes into reach for most."*
>
> *(Roser 2020)*

This development agenda is the ground for us on which we shape the world. These patterns are not restrictive per se, but they are the effect of underlying mechanisms which bring these phenomena to the visible foreground. To intervene in the phenomena observable on the surface, such as "poverty" or "inequality", one has to see and understand the underlying processes and

dynamics shaping these lived realities. Anything else, as many critical scholars would argue would be treating the symptoms of a social crisis rather than to cure the disease (Matthews 2004: 375).

2.4 QUESTIONS LEADING THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PROCESS

This elaboration on human agency and its theoretical implications aimed to show the reader how the different dimensions and textualities behind agency can be relevant in an in-depth analysis of one specific agent (in this case made up by a collective of agents). The following questions are the guideline which navigated the research process. The study is oriented towards the abstract realm of the structure-agency dilemma in development studies[4] and tackles concrete realities unfolding in the context of one organisation's agency.

What are the main aspects of the organisational agency?

- What is the end goal of the AIDC? Moreover, what are the intermediate aims/tactics to achieve the overall vision?
- What is the strategic thinking underlying the AIDC's practice?
- Why does the AIDC do what it does (motivation, mission, vision)?

3 METHODOLOGY – QUALITATIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH

In this thesis, I use an inductive approach of gathering the data from empirical findings, which will be analysed and interpreted according to hermeneutics. This methodology is based on radical constructivism and its focus on the constructing agent. I will start the research journey *in* the ethnographic field, which is primarily constituted by the AIDC office in Observatory, Cape Town. In this field, I note how the individuals in question conceptualise the world and how they reflect their work towards changing this world. Therefore, I attempt to reconstruct the lived reality of my interview partners. The idea is to let them reflect their practices and normative visions in context of their work at the AIDC. With the assembling of these individual perspectives, motivations and practices, this study aims at framing the overall *collective* agency of the

[4] This will be briefly pointed out in the chapter outlining the theoretical framework, which deals with the duality of *development* as both process and intervention. I consider the structure-agency complex parallel to this analogy of duality or interwovenness, as both are contingent but not individually determinant of the outcome. This follows a logic of dynamism and interdependency rather than statist and unilinear logics of being and developing.

AIDC. The object of my analysis on which grounds I reconstruct the meaning of the organisation's practices are those individual statements of staff members, as well as their unscripted and non-verbalised practices (Meyermann et al. 2014: 968–971).

The theoretical framework dealing with the development path of South Africa is concomitant. The historical and geographical contextualisation of the field of analysis prepares for the actual focus of research – the NGO under investigation. This analytical field outlines the grounds in which the AIDC staff perceive the societal arena, which they critically analyse in order to establish an agenda to change the suppressive power relations within it. Describing this field helps the reader to understand the AIDC's conceptualisations and the researcher to analytically reconstruct the organisational agency. The following paragraphs will point out the logic of enquiry before outlining the methods used.

3.1 GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

In her introduction into a medical sociology journal, Kathy Charmaz (2012) discusses the potentials that Grounded Theory holds for different disciplines in social sciences. The most crucial feature of the Grounded Theory (GT), according to Charmaz (2012), is that it is not only a dynamic enquiry process itself but a methodology; fit to investigate and explain procedures. As an inductive enquiry, GT is perceived to be open to all analytical interpretations. The terminology of this research strategy is based on the "groundedness" of theoretical production in the empirical data. Throughout a coding process in several stages, a close relation to the data is maintained by regularly checking these codes against the data to see if they hold up in their capacity to describe the meaning "found" (Charmaz 2012: 4).

The most important feature, according to Charmaz (2012), is that in contrast to other qualitative approaches, GT has the potential to ask *Why* questions instead of relying merely on descriptive *What* and *How* questions. GT has a processual logic that is not only followed by its methodology but also considers the object of enquiry: processes, actions and relations, it can make that connection of "how something is" to "why it is this way and not another" (Charmaz 2012: 4). Of course, Charmaz highlights that these "why" questions can only be answered in an interpretative way, offering possible explanations. However, due to the "relationship" the researcher has with the texts s/he studies, they are solely his/her subjective interpretations taken to another analytical level of general assumptions (Charmaz 2012: 7).

I argue that description is the first step to analysing; through understanding the structure of something before, we can go proceed to analyse the meta-structure (or "in-betweens"), the dynamics and processes, the metaphysical logic and normativity. Charmaz mentions several

times that GT is especially fit for social justice studies (Charmaz 2012: 3). The importance for social justice is tracing and understanding power relations, oppression and inequality (Charmaz 2012: 5). Furthermore, these dynamics and political relations are metaphysical themselves but not self-contained. Moreover, these meta-physical entities are rooted within materialistic structures, while simultaneously shaping these constructions. For example, oppression is nothing which is solely "felt" by the oppressed but structurally defines their "lived experience" (Hill Collins 2000: 258ff).

This *groundedness* in "lived experiences" follows the logic of the GT approach, in which the researcher tries to see the field as "new" as possible. This means that I am not guided by theoretical analysis before I go into the field and work with the data. Rather, the theoretical framework proposes lines of enquiry but the empirical "evidence" guides my results. According to Charmaz (2012), it is impossible to strip oneself of all theoretical bias. Charmaz refers to her former professor, Glaser, who "insiste[d] on delaying the literature review to avoid preconceiving data analysis." (Charmaz 2012: 3). Thus, the point is not absolute objectivity but rather to be aware of explicit or implicit considerations. The task is to be open and flexible when approaching the phenomena in order to be able to take in new imaginable ways of seeing and explaining the world and the focus in question. Following the logic of agency, the world is full of possibilities, which stands in opposition to the deterministic view that there is a path dependency structured through causal mechanisms. Understanding the world's full complexity involves seeing its potentials and possible explanations outside the reach of what seems obvious and taken as granted.

3.2 ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK

According to Hubert Knoblauch, ethnographic social research is used to investigate the behaviours and procedures of agents as well as their modes of knowing (Knoblauch 2014: 521). Within the ethnographic data gathering, there are several methods and approaches one can follow. I decided to follow the principle of "densely describing" (Lee 2012: 15) one specific case, the AIDC and its modus operandi. This ethnographic fieldwork aims to describe my dialogue partners' ways of thinking, conceptualising and acting in the process of their reflections, quasi "sui generis" (Knoblauch 2014: 522). This will help me to understand the agents' "social world". From here, I will interpret these findings of the interlocutors' perspectives on the AIDC as well as the society it aims to transform. The objective, as stated in the previous chapter, is to understand the complex meaning of organisational agency and how it is institutionalised to promote a socially just transformation.

Ethnography, a scientific procedure of describing people and their ways of acting, enables the access to the social reality of the contacts in the field. During ethnographic field work, the meaning of social relations and practices are reconstructed through the statements of the agents in the field, contrasting other procedures of social sciences, such as quantitative studies in which measurable data is gathered for analysis. Therefore, I do not see the position of the researcher as an objective observer and a discoverer of facts but rather as one part of a constellation of dialogue partners within the field. This connects to the GT approach, which works with inductive rather than a deductive logic of enquiry. The goal is not to "find" the facts which are already assumed to be there but to engage in the process of the creation of knowledge together, grounded in the experience of and interaction with the people the researcher meets during the enquiry in the research setting (Knoblauch 2014: 523).

On the other hand, ethnography has a negative reputation amongst some scholars who consider it as the search of the "essence of the other" – meaning other cultures, other nations, other societies in contrast to one's own socio-cultural group – and implicitly reproducing the dichotomic world view of the early development era. As Yarrow and Venkatesan explain, the "Western experts" coming to study the "underdevelopment" of certain regions are both caught between goodwill and its side-effects, such as hegemonic normativity. The task for development ethnographers now is, according to Yarrow and Venkatesan to "re-perceive and hence re-orient development practice as potentially positive force for good" (Venkatesan & Yarrow 2012: 2). The author also highlights that the critical deconstruction of development as the reinforcement of hegemonic ideals, considering it an immoral "development machinery", (Venkatesan & Yarrow 2012: 2–3) which cannot be the right way to deal with this problem. More appropriately, it will be helpful to understand and analyse the complexity behind it, rather than looking for discursive flaws and rejecting the whole notion of development. This complexity implies understanding the world and its development processes. Moreover, one needs to look behind technocratic development interventions or normative ideals of unilinear development paths (Venkatesan & Yarrow 2012: 2–3).

3.3 Case Study Analysis

A case study is based on the enquiry of one specific case, which is treated as a distinct entity and is analytically separated from its environment. The strategy is to understand the relations between this entity and its environment via an in-depth study of the research field/object (Hering & Schmidt 2014: 529). The purpose of choosing a case study analysis paired with a

qualitative research approach is to reflect and understand its many dimensions and reconstruct its complexity (Hering & Schmidt 2014: 530).

The choice to investigate an alternative development entity was made not due to the "novelty" of such NGOs but rather due to the complexity of *development* per se. This complexity includes many ambiguities and paradoxes, especially concerning mainstream development discourse and traditional development cooperation, such as the reproduction of Western hegemony despite its humanistic project (Willmott 2005: 769). Another dilemma in question is the prevalence of agency or structure. This dilemma refers to the intention of changing the world to the better while being part of the problem.

> *"In this age of imperial hegemony, transmitted to the peoples of the world through both state and non-state agencies, it is all the more important that we create opportunities and consciously ask ourselves fundamental questions: Are we serving the best interests of our working people? Are we contributing to the great cause of humanity, the cause of emancipation from oppression, exploitation and deprivation? 'Or are we engaged, consciously or unconsciously, in playing to the tune set by others?"*
>
> *(Shivji 2007: 53)*

Lewis and Mosse frame this gap between normative expectations of development and the messy politics of its multiple practices as disjuncture. Anyway, "development" is perceived as bringing "order" to a chaotic world (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 2). Hence, the choice of conducting a case study follows the principle of a "normatively interesting case"; engaging with an organisation which works around topics of inequality and alternative solutions, i.e. progressive alternatives (Hering & Schmidt 2014: 531).

Theoretically, the study of such an organisation is relevant to reflect on the criticisms within (post)development discourse, bringing forth phenomena like the neoliberal *NGOisation* and the gap between proclaimed imperatives and the actual outcomes of such policies (Hulme 2013: 339). Empirically it is interesting to shed some light on the actual practices with the anthropological intention of *understanding*: understanding the agency of one such agent in relation to the complex structure of the whole development apparatus (Lewis & Mosse 2006: 7–8), and the understanding of the underlying sense-making practices of the agents in question. How do they make sense of their actions? How do they logically link their visions of a better world with their work in a development agency? Firstly, the logic of enquiry follows the micro-perspective of everyday interaction and individual sense-making. Secondly, it delineates the context of a meso-dimensional analysis of the aggregated effect of these individual accounts (the organisation), and lastly it concerns the macro-dimensional environment of global development, which frames the conceptual perspective of the agent.

I follow the position advocated by the development anthropologists, Venkatesan and Yarrow and Mosse, who frame the need to have a closer look at development agents: "Instead of focusing on the analytic shortcomings of particular policies, anthropologists should seek to reveal the 'hidden transcripts' that coexist alongside the 'public transcripts' that development practitioners produce." (Venkatesan & Yarrow 2012: 8). I employ the analytical tools of anthropologists to understand how development agents can be stimulated towards their self-reflection "[…] that is to say that anthropology can offer insightful ways for policy-makers, managers, NGO workers and consultants, including anthropologists themselves, to reflect on their practice in development" (Mosse 2006: 24).

4 METHODS

Knowing that what I can observe mostly lies on the everyday interaction level, I chose to base my primary method on interviewing the people working at the organisation. The analysis of the collected material is derived from the GT approach of openness and flexibility, following an interpretive logic. In essence, when talking about agency and praxis, we are talking about concrete individuals who act according to their embeddedness in society. People experience, perceive and evaluate their social world, and from there, decide how to deal with the situation they are in.

As elaborated above, I follow the argument that social structures are coupled with the subjective dimension of agency, which is in itself based upon the meaning associated with said structures. Therefore, I begin to reconstruct the meanings which the agents themselves abstract from structures which are relevant to them in their context (Reichertz 2014: 75). This context is embedded in a temporal and spatial setting, rather than "just" imagined as a metaphysical entity. It is from this theoretical perspective that I chose to conduct expert interviews to gain insider knowledge from individual reflections on meanings and motivations to act.

4.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

I used an interview guideline which helped to conduct semi-structured interviews—combining the structured approach of defining the general course of the dialogue while being open to the dynamic of the narrative logic of the participants (Helfferich 2014: 560). The questions roughly outlined the different dimensions which seemed relevant for the individual and organisational agency: (personal) motivations, position within the organisation, the position of the organisation, procedures, strategies, visions. The interviews were designed to tease out the individuals'

conceptualisations of the world and their view on the organisation's role in the transformation of society.

Due to the openness of the questions, it was within the agents' capabilities to choose the story they wanted to tell whilst maintaining the articulated interest. Through this, I was able to learn from their individual points of view about their work at the organisation. The strategy behind this openness was to collect various accounts of what staff would consider relevant in terms of their work in an organisation committed to social change. Rather than having the same information repeated by as many people as possible, I focused on drawing a dense picture of the heterogeneity of opinions, perspectives and beliefs within the organisation (Helfferich 2014: 563).

4.2 HERMENEUTIC DATA ANALYSIS

Ronald Kurt and Regine Hebrik describe hermeneutics as understanding social interactions and practices. The method is flexible in that its approach is to be led by the data and the discovery of new possibilities for interpretation. From single empirical cases, we creatively explore the social meaning of agency (Kurt & Herbrik 2014: 473). Central to this approach is the concept of *understanding*. Kurt and Hebrik define understanding as a fundamental principle of social relations – the orienting force of human beings to see themselves in relation to the world and other human beings. Understanding is a process of expressing subjective sense and internalising external information (Kurt & Herbrik 2014: 474). In simple terms, understanding helps us to orientate ourselves in the world in interaction with others.

However, understanding is always tentative, depending on time and context, ambiguities, perspectives and what is expressed by others will not be internalised on-by-one. Hermeneutic methods are a way of controlling this "imperfect" process of interpreting the world through scientific criteria (Kurt & Herbrik 2014: 475). In this context, the second-order interpretations aim to reconstruct the interpretations of problems, solutions and potential agency of my dialogue partners.

Social hermeneutics take the detour of understanding social relations by understanding the individuals and their subjective relations (Kurt & Herbrik 2014: 474). By working closely with the empirical data gathered, scientific interpretations are not art but follow specific guidelines. Critical reflections of taken for granted understandings enable a distanced perspective from "common sense". Nevertheless, it is possible and even requested to oscillate between the dimensions of what is explicitly expressed and what is possibly implied (Kurt & Herbrik 2014:

478). This process is bisected in the next paragraph, which deals with the coding of the empirical data as a way of organising the transcript material.

4.3 COMPUTER ASSISTED CODING

Using a computer-assisted qualitative analysis, coding was a central process of the organisation and analysis of the empirical data. I analysed every interview conducted in the same manner: by paraphrasing the statements and tagging the sequences by using the terminologies of the interviewees. This tagging helped to break down the essence of a paragraph and served as a first orientation towards the actual coding of the material. Coding is nothing more than categorising the tagged and reworded sections, assigning concepts to each section. These concepts are, based on a GT approach, framed in close relation to the literate meaning of the text. According to Muckel, coding and the continuous categorisation of codes is already a manner in which to deal with the implications of the assigned paragraphs and a means to start conceptualising a phenomena by making connections between categories and codes. (Muckel 2011: 339).

The coding process was circular, meaning that one code was never "perfect" but always in motion, changing in relation to other codes or with the progress in the analysis. In this coding process, some codes were later rejected, and some were fused with others. In a parallel process, the codes were clustered in groups where the relation between codes was relevant, either due to familiarity or a causal connection (Muckel 2011: 336, 339). After the whole material was coded like this, the codes and categories where once again reflected in terms of the research question, this included highlighting relations between the core concepts and how they make sense not in their concreteness but in their interrelations. Another selection process took place, focusing on fewer codes to deepen the understanding of the concepts around it.

In the end, only a few categories were left, which were incorporated into the findings. In this regard, I followed the method of theoretical saturation, i.e. the concepts elaborated so far are meaningful enough and need no further explanation through the data (Kuckartz & Rädiker 2014: 394). In part IV the findings will present only the most relevant categories that were needed to paint a holistic picture of the conditions for, and the structure of, the organisation, as well as its functioning, identity, strategies, and theories of change.

PART III – THEORETICAL CONTEXT

5 PAINTING THE BIGGER PICTURE – CONTEXT OF AN NGO IN SOUTH AFRICA

Now that we know what the baseline of this research is, it is time to put it into perspective. In this section, I will critically evaluate the development cooperation sector, specifically the role of NGOs, in order to show where *good* ideas of development collapse in paradoxes of double standards. This evaluation will include development agents in the form of financial institutions, donors, and multilateral organisations. However, the assessment focuses mainly on NGOs and their ambiguous role in a development context. Furthermore, I will elaborate on how my understanding of South African development comes about and where it can be situated in more recent development discourses.

South Africa is an interesting country due to its inherent ambivalence. Although being one of the biggest economies on the African continent with one of the most progressive constitutions, it is often framed as a third world and first world country at the same time. South Africa possesses political and social transitions that "have moved South Africa from the very rear to the front of international progress" (Marcuse 1995: 38). Nevertheless, South Africa is a country in crisis: social crisis, economic crisis, energy crisis (Freund 2010). According to World Bank estimations of the Gini index, South Africa remains the highest-rated country in terms of income equality, with a Gini coefficient of 63.2 in 2015 (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2020: 27–29).

> *"The triple challenge of high poverty, high inequality, and high unemployment persists. Poverty remains high for an upper middle-income country with more than half (55 percent) of the population of South Africa being poor at the national upper bound poverty line of ZAR 992 per person per month in 2015 prices. In addition, with a consumption per capita Gini coefficient of 0.63 in 2015, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world. Furthermore, unemployment reached 25.1 percent of the workforce in 2015 and was 27.7 percent in the third quarter of 2017. This makes overcoming these challenges very complex, exacerbated by an environment of low growth which has not generated sufficient jobs."*
>
> *(World Bank Group 2018: xii)*

How this came about will be reviewed in brief retrospect, before we arrive to the actual focus of this study in Part IV, the AIDC. The Ambiguous Role of NGOs in Development

In his book 'The Silences of NGO Discourse' Shivji (2007) elaborates on the role of NGOs in Africa, especially concerning their less apparent characteristics or, as he calls them *"blind spots".* He tackles common-sense understandings of development as well as the image of NGOs and the discourse around them. His critique does not aim at dismissing NGOs as an agent of

change; instead, he wants to highlight where there are discrepancies with the discourse objectives and the historical continuance of an imperial project. Even if not in an intentional act of conspiracy, NGOs play a vital role in expanding and consolidating neoliberal hegemony: "The proponents of neoliberalism saw in charitable development the possibility of enforcing the unjust social order they desired by consensual rather than coercive means." (Shivji 2007: xi). In the above quote, Shivji points to the indirect control by imperial powers through the normative power of Western discourse and values.

Within this constellation of processes and dynamics, aid is the reward for those who subordinate to this sovereignty of free markets, privatisation and liberalisation. Those who can prove good performance are granted more assistance and the complementary "strings attached" can be seen as the hurdles to win the "race to the bottom". This race to the bottom is characterised by political stipulations, which deprive African authorities of any sovereignty in decision making. Instead, their sovereignty is guided by foreign consultants that are not only in charge of new strategies but ironically being paid a substantial amount more than their local counterparts (Shivji 2007: 21). It is interesting to note that the British government's funding to NGOs went up by 400% in a single decade (1984-94) and other countries followed suit. NGOs are paid to help those people who cannot help themselves, often under the coat of participation (Shivji 2007: viii).

In light of this aforementioned entanglement in geo-politics, it seems that NGOs play the role that neoliberal ideologies leave them. Concretely, Shivji suggests that NGOs have a similar position to a double agent: stepping in for governments, delivering to their people while at the same time being part of a (neoliberal) development project which is undermining the power of the state. Another thread in the dominant narrative is the lack of capability, which is ascribed to local governments and their development efforts. It seems like an honourable act of the global community to integrate the local and regional economies (which are not doing as well as the strong economies leading the global agenda) into the global market, as examples of economic partnerships for development show. The international development community fails to recognise the fatalities that this approach implies, the authority of political decision making that is being "wrenched out of the hands of African states" (Shivji 2007: 23).

The above effectively renders the developmental role of the state obsolete, incapable and in need of mentors and monitors. A multitude of NGOs are the executing agents of development. Former imperialist countries are regarded as the leaders of developmental policy decisions, rendering African states a role as a "co-partner" in its development (Shivji 2007: 25). Therefore, the author argues that the rise of NGOs in Africa is part of the neoliberal apparatus

(Shivji 2007: 26). The solutions to developmental problems are seen as being either in the hands of private capital, considered as the engine of growth, or advocacy. The result of which sees NGOs taking over the ownership of civil society, "representing the poor" in stakeholder meetings, deciding development actions for them, and receiving aid payments for their advocacy services, which entails mediating between "the poor" and the donor community[5] (Shivji 2007: 24). As Shivji argued, the mistrust in the state led to a crisis of legitimacy, opening the space for new agents - global hegemonic players (i.e. multilateral development agencies such as the World Bank and aid donors amongst others) with a neoliberal ideological framework. This framework spread across the globe as a dominant development agenda, including NGOs who were ready to take their place of serving as "foot soldiers of imperialism", as Shivji terms it (Shivji 2007: 29).

One problem accompanying this development is the uncritical acceptance of NGOs adopting the state's role and responsibilities. Moreover, without reflecting the role that they undertake in a broader context and without investigating the potential effects they may incur in the future. The following insert emphasises the previous point:

> *"Because many NGOs do provide much needed services, because their motives are often honourable, because they employ capable and often progressive staff, there has been a reluctance amongst many to discuss critically the objective impact of their work as distinct from the subjective motives behind their work."*
>
> (Shivji 2007: ix)

After having evaluated which implicit roles NGOs play in the imperial project under the guise of neoliberalism, Shivji helps us to take a more in-depth look into the NGOs themselves and where they fail to come to terms with their goodwill intentions. Shivji defines three main types of NGOs and gives a brief insight into their motivations and positions:

1. The radical elite were part of the struggle for independence. They had a vision for change and transformation, which was suppressed by the period of statist control. Now, NGOs are viewed as a vehicle in which to express their political will, and as a place for activism for change. Although politically motivated, they are not necessarily party-political or partisan (Shivji 2007: 30).

[5] From a critical point of view the question of „*who* are the primary beneficiaries of these *services*?" could be raised to elaborate on the implicit motivations of all the agents involved.

2. Then, there are individuals who have good intentions and are backed by moral and altruist standards. These individuals perceive NGOs as the place to work towards their well-intentioned goals.
3. The third type are NGO elites who are mainly motivated through financial incentives from donors or see their possibility in the NGO sector to better their career chances. Often, they are former government bureaucrats looking for new positions after their governments went into crisis, and where the NGO job funded by international donors pays better than their former job (state or private sector "refugees") (Shivji 2007: 31).

Within the above three groups, most of the NGOs are donor-funded. They are donor-funded in the sense that they are dependent on others and framed in the interests of donors, which limits their scope for actions. Moreover, this is an interesting twist in what the NGOs represent: Representing their stakeholder, the civil society, but still being tied to their donors. Without these donors, they could not do their work at all since they get their legitimacy through their funders. How the NGOs, funded by donors, get their legitimacy is often of a rhetoric nature, such as "poverty-reduction". Furthermore, it is usually in the form of a blurry language; meaningless in the sense that their mission statements are more of a marketing tool (Shivji 2007: 32).

Additionally, Shivji remarks that NGOs often are borrowing strategies for efficiency from the corporate sector, so-called log-frames which evaluate quantifiable variables of project outcomes. This evaluation tools or other forms of measuring outcomes are an answer to funders' requirements for reporting the results, which an NGO agreed to deliver in exchange for funding. Further, convincing reports are crucial for receiving funds in the future. This trend (or is it an inevitable dynamic of a market like competition?) leads to NGOs assimilating more and more to the model of a corporate firm. Thus, NGO managers are trained to use framework analyses, input-output oriented methods and techniques to put together their vision, instead of focussing on their visions when designing strategies of how to achieve them. This results-based management as well as its practices mirror the intrinsic logic of the developed world (Shivji 2007: 33).

> *"In the NGO world, it is not at all ironical that a non-governmental body is assigned by the government to do a governmental job and is funded by a donor agency, which in turn is an outfit for foreign investment"*
>
> (Shivji 2007: 32).

The position of NGOs in the threefold spheres of society (state, market, civil society) is somewhere between the lines of fulfilling government's missed public services and being financed by and competing for private money (using corporate models and management tools), whilst

simultaneously representing civil society. The above leads us to Shivji's next blind spot in NGO discourse, the notion of misrepresentation of "society as a harmonious whole of stakeholders" (Shivji 2007: 39). His point here is the simplistic nature of understanding society as distinct entity within the three different spheres shown above. Common-sense assumptions consider society merely as the sum of all its individuals, which results in the false conclusion that social interest can be deduced from individual interests. This post-modern way of thinking, in individualist and relativist logic, makes the social the *un-knowable* due to the emphasis on individual rather than social interests. At the same time, it contradicts this logic by perceiving society as a harmonious whole. Shivji concludes that the neoliberal thought is placed within this paradigm, thereby neglecting the possibility of diverse and contradicting interests. This neglect further purports the assumption that economic well-being is at the centre of social development.

The market is regarded as the motor of socio-economic development (Shivji 2007: 39). Furthermore, this is how one can explain that the term 'development' is often interchangeably used with *economic* development. This interchangeability steers the development agenda towards neoliberalisation and enabling agents such as NGOs, the state, and the private sector to appear as if they all needed to follow the same goals. The roles which are assigned to the different agents of society are displayed as a harmonious relationship, complementing one another which supposedly plays out in favour for everyone. The private sector is the engine of growth, financing social and economic development, and the state is the neutral referee, overseeing everything and maintaining law and order. Civil society then has the role of caretaking, for those who are "naturally" left behind, providing welfare and basic needs. NGOs, as the representatives of civil society, ensure that this task is fulfilled professionally and responsibly. The state as a neutral actor thus cannot and *must not* step in actively (Shivji 2007: 40).

This "holy trinity" and the world view behind it serves to reproduce the status quo. Moreover, it maintains the "world order" though means of "[l]egitimization of exploitative capitalist system, represented as pro-poor and morally driven by NGO sector". (Shivji 2007: 41) Shivji points out how this narrative of a "harmonious whole" depoliticises the NGO discourse. At the same time, society is a highly political place where opposing interests contest with one another on highly unjust grounds of structural imbalances and unequal power relations. His view critically questions the assumptions of NGOs as being similar to that of the neutral state agents. Nevertheless, if they want to do well, how can they be impartial? Alternatively, to phrase it in Shivji's terms: "In the struggle between national liberation and imperialist domination, and between social emancipation and capitalist slavery, NGOs have to choose sides. In this there are no in-betweens" (Shivji 2007: 41).

Shivji deepens the above argument by challenging the status-quo view of non-governmental bodies as the counter-hegemonic forces in society, allegedly being non-political. This classic view stems from the perception of the state as the centre of politics being the hegemon. In contrast, the economy is a depoliticised place, where financial logic is governing the production sphere alone. This line of reason is a myth, if one considers NGOs themselves are part of decision-making processes and that they are partly funded by private money according to the logic "who pays the piper calls the tune" (Shivji 2007: 41–42). However, at this juncture, a shift has to be made to the more crucial question of *neutrality*, the question of which interest do they serve?

Shivji's final tenet illuminates the theory of change, which was left out in the discussion of the NGO discourse this far. Let us assume that the points above have been followed. Moreover, that one has decided to be active in the struggle for a better world, in opposition to the imperialist project. What does it help if one has no proper understanding of the world and no theory of what a better world would look like? Shivji posits that both the need for political activism and the critical analysis of the so-called status-quo is crucial for positive engagement in a progressive project. The relationship between African "compradorial" (Shivji 2007: 44) states and their imperial masters is central to the development crises. According to Shivji, the solution lies within the normative objective of human emancipation and social justice, as well as the real commitment of NGOs for change of the politics of development (Shivji 2007: 44).

> *"NGOs must refuse to legitimise, rationalise and provide a veneer of respectability and morality for global pillage carried out by voracious transnationals under the tag line of "creating a global village."*
>
> (Shivji 2007: 47)

Instead of the above, NGOs should instead investigate the motives and interests of their development partners. Further, NGOs need to critically review their very own philosophical understandings and political premises for their actions (Shivji 2007: 47). Shivji considers NGOs to be potential catalysts of change, that is if they support popular movements and defend popular livelihoods. An African revolution is portrayed as a means for the state to restructure in favour of self-determination and a "right to think for themselves", without the influence of foreign agents or national elitist agendas (Shivji 2007: 46). NGOs are primarily donor-funded entities; thus, they are dependent on other actors for their budgets. This dependency serves to limit their agency and scope of actions as they have to report to their donors and act according to the donor's conditions and beliefs. Although NGOs are meant to represent their stakeholders, namely civil society, they primarily get their legitimacy through their funding partners, i.e. the

donor community (Shivji 2007: 31). To briefly summarise the essence of his book, Shivji advocates three crucial facets required to find alternatives to the existing world:

I. First, the most crucial aspect seems to be that no one can be neutral. More specifically, one has to choose between those who want to maintain the existing world order and those who are struggling to change it.
II. Second, another essential aspect is knowledge about the world. Even if one wants to change the world but lacks a fundamental understanding of the real world, then, typically, visions of another different world seem far from being realised. Therefore, a grand vision or theory is needed to understand the realistic (=existing) world and elaborate on the concept of an alternative world.
III. Third, the worldview needed to change the status quo must be rooted in the working people's class. Furthermore, this worldview must vehemently oppose "sink or swim" ideologies, where working people are systematically exploited as they are the ones sinking while the elites swim above.

The quintessence of the statements above is: Know the struggle, make a choice and act accordingly (Shivji 2007: 65–67).

5.1 SOUTH AFRICA'S "DEVELOPMENT PATH"

The preceding section elaborated on the discursive and political dimension of development assistance with a geographical focus on Africa. In the following section, we narrow our emphasis and put it into the context of South Africa. Moreover, what can the past tell us about the future development path or the possible alternatives?

To elaborate on the history of South Africa, one has to go back to Africa's colonial history: to the very beginnings of the African imperialist project, and specifically with the slicing of the African cake at the Berlin conference of 1885. The devastations of the preceding slave trade did not seem big enough (estimate of 40.000.000 lives wiped out between 1450-1850). The indigenous civilisation and its social fabric were destroyed, and the European worldview was implemented by force. The collateral damage was the social status of the African people being the lowest on a global scale, putting North Americans and Europeans in a prime economic and social position (Shivji 2007: 2–3).

The above underlines Shivji's thesis of a stretched imperial project, including colonial as well as pre-colonial legacies which continue today. This continuous domination, exploitation and

humiliation have only been halted once very shortly by the period of nationalism following the independence movements of post-colonial states (Shivji 2007: 3).

5.1.1 The Legacy of Colonial Political Economy

The imperialist divisions of the African continent ignored national borders and different European powers carried out the subjugation of territories. The European's imposed their values and systems of economy, politics, and culture. This imposition produced colonial economies designed for resource extraction and exportation to European metropolitan centres. This effectively resulted in the suppression of any internal impulse of specialisation and technological innovation, as well as independence on imports of manufactured goods from Northern surplus markets. The effects of which are still visible today as the sources of uneven development within and between countries (Shivji 2007: 4); "Colonialism left by the front door and returned through the back door in the form of neo-colonialism." (Shivji 2007: 16)

This active development of the metropolitan regions in the North brought by coercion and forced labour were accompanied by the rhetoric of uncivilised indigenous people living pagan lifestyles, being lazy and incapable (Shivji 2007: 5–6). This can be seen in the case of South Africa, where Apartheid was designed as a proxy to imperialism, building on such racist ideologies (Shivji 2007: 18). Shivji elaborates in his book on the economic development of African states, wherein he frames Africa's development path as *"fatally"* determined by the export-oriented colonial policies, mentioned above. If the new African states would not be able to *"undo"* this economic pattern, based on export and exploitation, then they would be unable to build a sustainable future.

In addition to the economic history of the countries, is the present dynamic of "unleashing" the international free markets on the only shortly independent economies. This led to a situation where private investors did not contribute to the national economy but instead diverted their funds to foreign countries. Only public money was used for investing in the country and its infrastructure through buying cheap loans. The problem with these loans was that the global economic crisis of the 1970s turned these into heavy burdens, which caused multiple crises. The issue then turns into a narrative of good governance and the inability of African states to fix their problems. This further legitimised the hegemonic ideologies of the imperial order and stripped the African countries of their opportunity to rectify their mistakes (Shivji 2007: 15–16).

The above demonstrates how imperial interests shaped the current situation in African countries at an early stage. This Western influence forged persistent economic and social structures. The

result of which left the newly independent states subject to significant internal pressure to bring justice to their citizens by changing patterns of the past. At the same time, these African states were left to struggle with the external pressure of globalisation. The effect of which was a diversion of their focus to take part in this modernisation project, as it is discursively compelling and seems unavoidable. It seems worse to miss the chance of negotiating one's status in the post-colonial world order and potentially stay caught in the class of countries left behind the taillight of economic and social well-being. Furthermore, Africa was unable to ever catch up to Europe and maintained to be dependent on the vagaries of welfare as a substitution for the denied access to development. Financial development policies, as depicted above, could not be or were not designed to assist the new states in building a sustainable development path. Instead, they served to reinforce dependency and actively enforce other more unscrupulous interests. The contradictory practice of development cooperation, with big promises and little real commitment, tightened the screws and effectively denied Africa of their last bit of sovereignty.

5.1.2 The Paths Chosen in Post-colonial South Africa

How did this colonial aftermath evolve itself in the South African context? Moreover, how is it linked to the economic and social crisis currently visible? The book 'Development Dilemmas in post-Apartheid South Africa' (Freund 2010), investigates the complexity of development by taking into consideration unique contradictory processes in South Africa.

Various authors show how the political legacy of Apartheid and its early economic policies shaped not only the path dependency of South Africa but also the mentality towards development, making it a dualistic project. The neo-liberal global agenda plays a significant role in this regard. Not necessarily as the origin of mismanagement but contributing to the missed opportunities of the country in terms of tackling the development dilemmas which it presently faces. It shows how development is a process where concrete policies, and the decision-making around it, shape a country's path dependency and cannot be simply undone by the implementation of new policies. Development is a complex field of political and economic and social dimensions, which are not to be seen as the sum of their parts, but rather dynamically interacting with each other.

The editor's perception of development is, therefore, a less "sunny and essentially moral definition" (Freund 2010: 1). Freund criticises the normativity of idealised notions of development as a win-win process, which brings freedom to everyone. What this utopia of a developed world is missing is the contradictions of the development process, which he links to the "dark" history of capitalism. A thorough analysis of the history of development and its mechanisms is

crucial – such as the formation of class structures – which made an exploitive capitalist system possible to understand the future of development. Similar to Shivji (2007) Freund considers the global antagonistic class structures in the making of colonial history as a crucial part of capital accumulation in the West. Concerning a bigger picture, Freund points to the continuity of capitalism and its ways of re-creating itself in changing settings (Freund 2010: 1–2). Although he stresses the importance of capitalism to the history of development, he argues that reducing development to economic growth would be simplifying it to one specific factor. Likewise, it would be setting socialism as the logical counterpart to capitalism. The afore would be equivalent to neglecting historical path dependencies, as one cannot merely introduce one model into a complex set of interwoven processes.

In South Africa, Freund posits that it is evident that the "dark side" of development manifests itself in the dualism of its society. This dualism results in the exclusion of the majority of people from the opportunities which development brings. This exclusion effectively leaves the non-white and low-skilled population with less educational opportunities and unable to participate in the highly competitive global labour markets. Whereas, the mostly white minority is adaptive and flexible due to their quality education and enhanced skills development. This dualism leads back to a dualistic economy, where the first economy is the norm and the second the *"disease".* Even now, where formerly segregated people join the first economy, it does not change the fact that the second economy is structurally excluded and humiliated by liberal policies. Therefore, Freund rejects the simplistic idea where the mere exchange of leadership according to racial affiliations will change the general course of this journey. Freund further stresses the importance of questioning the relationship between the two spheres of the dualist South African economy; Questions of how this compartmentalisation came to be and why (Freund 2010: 3–5).

In addition to the statements above, the author claims that the capitalist division of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat[6] played a significant role in the South African version of the modernisation project. In the 1920s South Africa's industrialisation project was based on cheap rural labour along tribal lines. This cheap rural labour formed the workforce in the mining sector, which made capital accumulation possible and subsequently, the modern state. The class distinction was defined along racial lines, where the white minorities possessed the land and the black population of the Bantustans were the subjects labouring for profit maximisation.

[6] This division took place both on a global level, where slaves and colonial subjects constituted cheap labour for the wealth accumulation of the colonial domination, and also on a national level Freund (2010: 5–6).

Freund argues that these class formations were also premised for the implementation of an Apartheid system. The National Party (NP) government felt the need to implement such a system to hold the minority rule intact. This new system left the rural population in a constant struggle to sustain themselves with their minimal incomes. The core idea was to keep the rural population from the cities and move subaltern elites to keep order in the Bantustan dwellings. Along the way, the emergence of a middle class was impeded by the state. The lack of civil society in this sense, as the author argues, is crucial for the failed implementation of many development projects - especially of participation (Freund 2010: 5–6).

5.2 THE DUAL POLITICS OF TRANSITION

The passages about colonial legacy outlined the political scope for structural transformation during the time of transition to a free democracy. This transformation has been compromised by a two-sided development objective, as well as the short-sighted dealing with current problems of legitimacy. Just some years before the first free elections, the collapse of the Soviet Union held definite implications for development discourse. It effectively made it apparent that capitalism was the sole winner in achieving positive results. This capitalist victory influenced political decision-making, further urging the South African government to participate in the global market and international competitiveness was prioritised. This discursive power is not to be underestimated, as it underlines the political and economic course of the new South African government: "It is true that the Washington Consensus represented a widely available and heavily sold discourse of knowledge and we all know – since Michel Foucault, if we did not before – that knowledge, and control of knowledge, is power" (Freund 2010: 8).

Another more pressing problem was the indebtedness of South Africa, which was accumulated during the Apartheid regime. This debt made it a priority for the South African government to keep conservative donors on the line to finance the new development policies. This modus operandi of compromising the transition made a more progressive approach difficult:

> *"In particular, there was little attempt to forge economic policies directly linked to structural transformation of any sort - "growth through redistribution". Indeed, the economic policies of the Mandela government showed marked continuity with the planning paradigm proposed under F.W. de Klerk, his National Party predecessor. Eventually the RDP became an ill-defined unit in the Office of President Mandela and it was subsequently dissolved."*
>
> (Freund 2010: 9)

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was characterised by an infrastructure-based socialist approach to national development, and this became a source of much internal and external debate (Bunting 2006). The RDP, which was used in the 1994 election campaigns of the African National Congress[7] (ANC), was criticised by corporate lobbyists for its socialist take on macroeconomic policies while lacking concrete strategies. Although there was some fundamental understanding[8] of the political economy, there was no stringent or coherent grand theory of economic policy put in place after the election of the ANC. Finally, with the collapse of the South African Rand in the beginning of the year 1996, the RDP was denounced as an ill-designed economic framework. The ANC came under pressure to resolve this situation and turned their eye towards growth as primary concern of a new macro-economic framework. The Growth, Employment and redistribution plan (GEAR) flipped the coin and favoured economic growth as prerequisite for redistribution (Magubane 2002: 96). The new policy focused on reconciliation and compromise, as well as the history of a dualistic economy and leading to dualism in policymaking. Instead of integrating social issues into economic policies, a two-sided strategy was pursued: on one side was a progressive push in social policies but conservative in a neo-liberal fashion. As it shows in the inefficiency of social policies, this strategy could do nothing more than deliver half-hearted solutions to treating the symptoms rather than to promote transformation.

5.2.1 Minerals Energy Complex –South Africa's Industrialisation Path

The minerals energy complex was first mentioned by Ben Fine and Zavareh Rustomjee in their book about the 'Political Economy of South Africa' (Fine und Rustomjee 1997). Both Fine and Rustomjee advocate a critical view of the new political leadership of free South Africa. Moreover, they state that new political leadership will not automatically bring about a shift in economic power. Instead, Fine and Rustomjee highlight that the dominant opinion was that the new democratic government had to leave some of the "*old guard"* in vital economic posts to safeguard private capital in order to be (financially) able to push progressive economic policies:

[7] The ANC is a political party central to South African history. During Apartheid the ANC was banned due to its vehemently critical stance against the NP government. With the transition to democracy, the ANC became the ruling party. The party advocated redistributive policies and reconciliation. The economic plan of the new government was to promote economic growth in order to finance these redistributive policies. As many scholars argue, however, the ANC compromised its mission due to strategic failures and the interference of powerful global players and local elites. (Cheru 2001: 516). Despite growing criticism (Malila 2014) the ANC has consistently recorded the majority of votes come elections.

[8] For example, that public overspending in fashion of Keynesianism can lead to hyperinflation.

> *"Some might welcome these cautious developments as securing economic stability and the limited economic change compatible with it; others might regret them as enforced but pragmatic compromises. But none can doubt that the political transition, however much it may have been completed, has yet to be complemented by a corresponding economic transition."*
>
> *(Fine & Rustomjee 1997: 4)*

Here, the authors state that the problem is not as easy to solve, since the economic landscape in South Africa is deeply rooted in dualistic structures and requires a thorough analysis. Furthermore, if one is to formulate post-Apartheid progressive policies, frequent studies of the South African political economy and class structures are lacking. This includes that an in-depth analysis of political economy and class structures has been neglected, favouring technical solutions regarding economic development in South Africa, instead. In the concrete case of South Africa, the economic trajectory, which co-produced the current social structures, is found in the minerals-energy complex (MEC) (Fine & Rustomjee 1997: 4–5).

David Hallowes describes the MEC as the industrial focus on extracting minerals and the production of electricity needed for this high-energy consumption industry. Mining in the minerals sector as well as the coal sector, still are the foundations of economic growth in South Africa. The side-effects of this financial centrality around this complex are visible in South Africa's export-oriented premises, today. South Africa, as one of the biggest producers of coal, offered cheap electricity and in return neglected its domestic manufacturing sector. This meant that manufactured products had to be imported. What is interesting is how this affordable energy was made possible. Here we can connect the dots to the cheap rural labour, which was crucial for profit generation, despite low energy prices (Hallowes 2010: 70–71).

On the other hand, this implied that for the domestic labour market, low-skilled workers made the economic landscape and only very few specialised staff were needed. The inequality is already evident here, where the managers and educated experts earn much more than the low-skilled rural workers earn. Nevertheless, their international pendants are recognised as skilled experts earning a decent salary (Freund 2010: 63). This decent salary is only possible due to the Apartheid policies of segregation, which are intertwined with this industrial path, ensuring that the cheap rural labour stays away from the cities where other opportunities might await them. This underlying agenda further connects the dots to the dualism of the South African economy, as discussed earlier. It proves how the two economies: the model one vs the degenerated one; are not separable at all but highly interconnected. The second economy, in the form of uneducated labourers, is not only a result of the development path headed by the first economy but a prerequisite of it. The above reasoning critically questions the justification of the first economy

as the motor of growth and able to take care of the fallouts through the trickle-down effect (Hallowes 2010: 83).

Therefore, up until now, the miners have not had many opportunities, which is the basis for their exploitation. This exploitation still a vital driver of the economic success of this growth path, making it applicable today as a source for revenue (Freund 2010: 63). However, the issues around this exploitation are more profound than just the economic problem of a high reliance on the export industry and the negligence of domestic manufacturing. The domestic industry is highly concentrated around very few private corporations and as a result, these corporations act as powerful actors in the political economy. Their interests and needs are followed through or how could one otherwise explain their dominant status in the economic landscape of South Africa. This dominance has devastating effects on the lives of their labourers.

In contrast to general belief, these big corporations do not positively contribute to the labour market. Their workforce is divided into three zones: the core; the non-core; and the peripheral. The core workforce possesses permanent full-time contracts and therefore are protected by labour laws; thus, they are under immense pressure to perform. The tension stems from the non-core workforce, being part-time or temporary outsourced labourers, who are poorly paid but desperate for jobs and always ready to take up positions. These workers are surrounded by the peripheral zone consisting of informal or unemployed workers, being even more desperate to take any job, even if it is poorly paid. In Marxian terms, this *reserve army* is evidence of the precarious labour conditions in this sector (Hallowes 2010: 81–83). Already during Apartheid, the NP built on this system of rural cheap labour to ensure that social order was maintained and the MEC thrived in South Africa. The MEC led the country into a development path, based on profit-maximation for few big corporations, whilst compromising the opportunities of the majority of its population and simultaneously leading to environmental issues. This development path is still pursued today, involving similar issues of exploitation and exclusion (Freund 2010: 64; Hallowes 2010: 67).

Hallowes evaluates these issues, starting with the enclave status of this sector. This enclave status implies that the local population does not benefit from the developments introduced by the big corporations the economy depends on. They are delinked from the opportunities and the profits of this economy, often because the big corporations preferably employ foreign workers. So, the infamous trickle-down effect of capital investment is not valid here. This enclaved economy goes hand-in-hand with the Apartheid-based enclaved development of the city and centres of wealth accumulation, which excluded the surrounding townships and homelands of these development opportunities. Until today this “glittering shop windows” to the world are a

strategy to attract foreign investors, showing them that they are world-class cities, while the urban peripheries containing all the "undesired" are swept away from the streets: "[A]s part of "cleaning up" these visible areas, the poor are driven out to spaces on the periphery […] at the "back of the shop" (Hallowes 2010: 83).

It is here, at the "back of the shop" in industrial South Africa that the people are suffering desperately from the social, economic and environmental injustices caused by the minerals-energy complex. In favour of keeping South Africa's energy costs at the lowest in the world, driven by demands of global competitiveness, the "peripheral costs" are not considered. South Africa is, in contrast to its size, one of the greatest carbon emitters, which is not only an issue of climate change but a health hazard for the populations living in industrial areas. Furthermore, economically deprived rural households are impacted two-fold, as they do not see a chance to move out of these areas and the big corporations do not employ them due to their compromised health. This compromised health is the result of the air and water pollution caused by these corporate firms. Moreover, a general lack of health insurance makes it impossible to cover medical costs. The sickness of one family member working in the mines, who might have been a breadwinner in the household, poses a health risk at both the workplace and home. Additionally, in order for the firms to surpass health responsibilities, these employees will often be retrenched by the age of 45 (Hallowes 2010: 71ff).

Another foul practice of these corporations is evident in the movement of rural populations due to the construction of dams for their water-intensive industries. Communities not only lose their best land but are affected by the downstream flows of recycled and polluted water. It appears that the lives of the "rural poor" are considered to be of much less value than that of big business (Hallowes 2010: 77). These "foul techniques" of big corporations seem to go unpunished as they are perceived as crucial for the South African economy, especially as economic growth and development need a power supply. The dependency on the minerals energy sector for capital accumulation goes unquestioned by mainstream development policies and misses crucial considerations of its ecological sustainability. The poor are paying with their livelihoods, and this is undermined by the taken for granted narratives of an unavoidable production defect (Hallowes 2010: 67, 71).

It is necessary to question why the political leadership did not do anything to change this development path, especially as it seems that the transition from a bounded society to a free democracy would hold enough potential for change. In this regard, it is helpful to take a step back from an idealised view of the transformative power of transition, and to consider a critical

stance on the global politics of this period and the narrative of a new world order led by globalisation.

5.2.2 Multiple Issues Impeding Structural Changes

Freund identifies multiple issues in policymaking in this phase of transition. He asserts that policies are ill-designed to promote a high-quality level of service delivery and wealth redistribution (Freund 2010: 9). One of the most crucial areas for the delivery of equal opportunities is in education. The state of education in the country is one problem child of the perpetual reproduction of inequality. The problem with South African schools is that they are still remnants of a dualist system, despite now being formally deracialised. However, in practice, there is a deficiency especially regarding the former Bantustan schools. These schools were intentionally kept on a low-level of education, as they were supposed to be feeding into the low skilled labour sectors. Here the education policy appears to be based on a simplistic notion of equality.

Further, referring to the financial distribution of subsidies by the state, all South African schools are considered equal. Instead, the issue here is that the state subsidies are meagre to the extent that public schools cannot deliver high-quality education. Some schools help themselves by financing part of their expenses through private school fees. Therefore, the quality of education depends on the liquidity of the pupils' parents. Although these schools are not racially segregated any more, a minority of black children can enjoy quality education. This lack of quality education points to the state of the country, governed by legacy of the past and the limits of the future, with only a few individuals having the skills and mentality to carry the country forward (through innovation). Similar to the change in the political leadership of the country, Freund implies that the mere exchange of white privileges with black privileges will not help to undergo the direly needed structural changes (Freund 2010: 15–16).

A general global trend is rapid urbanisation which often leads to informal settlements around the big cities. In the case of South Africa, where spatial segregation kept the black population out of the cities, the opening of the cities led to a migration from rural areas to the cities as the centres of wealth creation. The hope for opportunities to improve their living conditions drove people with skills inadequate for the urban economy to the urban economy. This influx in unskilled labour eventually resulted in them ending up in the townships, which become even denser. Of course, the inclusion helps the growth of a black middle class but cannot make up for the conditions of an opaque peripheral urban realm (Freund 2010: 17–18).

At this juncture, we turn to the housing policy for the poor that mostly entails the construction of low-quality buildings on cheap land. This housing is primarily for people who cannot afford to pay for an uplift in their lifestyles. Housing policies are said to serve the interest of corporate partners, rather than the people who need employment and affordable public services. Freund concludes that there should be better policies to integrate the working class into the city life. (Freund 2010: 18).

If affected people are directly asked in polls where their priorities lie, they state that the issue of unemployment and crime is more important than solving the issue of housing. The problems of unemployment and employment go hand in hand with the economic path led by big corporations in the mining industry. As mentioned earlier, there are no labour laws put in place to promote substantial employment. Moreover, for those enjoying the luxury of being employed, labour laws are too weak to ensure fair wages, perpetuated by corporate exercise in providing outsourced employment to peripheral day labourers. Moreover, the informal economy is not confronted by labour policies. It seems as if these policies are either inadequate for their purpose, or that their implementation is wrong. Freund argues that the issues stated above go beyond half-hearted implementation. They are inefficient because of the way they are conceptualised (Freund 2010: 10).

South Africa tends to drive development on two tracks, which are meant to serve a dual purpose: (a) to promote economic growth as a prerequisite to (b) deliver social development. This dependence on a dualistic structure is entrenched like furrows in South African society, but it is not in line with a holistic notion of an equal society. The compromise between these two objectives does nothing to undo the deep gap between them, but instead reproduces these structures as if they were being cemented, making it even harder to change.

Development policies informed by a Western discourse of the dualism of social charity and economic conservatism, enforce this view and legitimise the policies built on it. This Western line of reasoning is supported by assumptions about the impracticality of the structural transformation of the economy and the ideology of social welfare and development. This support seems to be a global trend, as we can see how development cooperation is widely understood as a global social welfare agenda, which fosters the whitewashing of neoliberal policies. What is needed is a better grasp of the entire socio-economic picture to understand how the economic and social sphere interrelate. As stated earlier, a conceptualisation of development, which is not segmented and simplified by economic indicators, is crucial to assess the quality of development and the strategies to improve these programmes and policies (Freund 2010: 16).

The above articulates why people from below the poverty line need to be consulted to link up formal policies with their foundations. NGOs and local activists can help mediate the state's efforts with the people's needs (Freund 2010: 19). "For South Africa, this is inimical. This is a country that needs a sense of development that is holistic and is tied in closely to an understanding of its broader social and economic history"(Freund 2010: 12).

The authors were able to show how the political and economic spheres in South Africa are highly interconnected, and in its net effect, responsible for the growth path focused on the minerals-energy complex. Apartheid cannot be viewed as a separate process but as a pivotal contributor to this development. The problem of change now is that the effects of this development paradigm have burrowed deep into the South African soil. As such, it now represents a dualistic society, which is further defined along with a dualistic socio-economical class distinction. The problems which come up in this context are not only difficult to solve but are persistent in the sense that they reinforce the structural inequality and hegemonic domination of agents who find themselves in the lower levels of a globalised hierarchy (i.e. former colonies and their marginalised people). What is needed is an educated popular mass, with the mentality to lead a structural transformation, to counteract this hegemony and form part of civil society. Like the progressive constitution, development policies cannot achieve anything if they are not implemented.

Mirroring Shivji's (2007) position discussed in the previous section: An inner logic needs to be elaborated on in terms of change from within; the mentality of neoliberal development thinking has to be tackled at its root and local bases of marginalised communities need to be activated to promote better forms of development. It seems like South Africa is straddling the fence and needs to make more determined decisions.

The above critique seems essential for a society which "missed" its opportunity to take the right turn at the crossroads of transition after the end of the Apartheid regime[9]. Going any further on the same path will mean that too many people will be left behind without real opportunities to catch up. As the authors showed, the two economies are not only inseparable but also interrelated, effectively making them two sides of a single coin. This inseparability is a crucial aspect,

[9] The Western development model was/is not only unsuitable for the South African context but was, even more so, hindering appropriate development strategies. Deconstructionist development critique (Mignolo 2012) points out how Western notions of development as *path to modernisation* were dominating countries like South Africa. Escobar (1995) describes the common belief that the application of Western (economic) knowledge and technology would inevitably lead to the integration into the so-called first world. However, the implementation of Western models turned out to be unsuitable for the special challenges post-colonial societies had to face – leading to even bigger gaps between "first and third worlds" within a country .

which is neglected in the rhetoric of the one being the side effect or the degenerated copy. The same is valid for the entire society, both within South Africa and on a global scale. This understanding is crucial, especially when it comes to severe attempts to change these patterns of domination and level out hegemonies.

It is necessary to articulate what role an NGO can play here? How can one specific agency react within this dilemma to make things right – to bring justice to society? The answer will not be simple, but one solution is straight forward: it has to be done, so how best do we do it? I conclude this discussion about development with Shivji's quote about the importance of self-reflection:

> *"In this age of imperial hegemony, transmitted to the peoples of the world through both state and non-state agencies, it is all the more important that we create opportunities and consciously ask ourselves fundamental questions: Are we serving the best interests of our working people? Are we contributing to the great cause of humanity, the cause of emancipation from oppression, exploitation and deprivation? 'Or are we engaged, consciously or unconsciously, in playing to the tune set by others?"*
>
> (Shivji 2007: 53).

PART IV – RESEARCH FINDINGS

6 UNDERSTANDING THE AIDC'S AGENCY

This section will present the findings of the expert interviews conducted with the AIDC staff. The results are structured in three core categories regarding the work, the logical framework, and the normative considerations of the AIDC as an organisation. The conceptualisation of these three main areas of the AIDC's agency was abstracted from individual interviews with the organisational staff, therefore reflecting their subjective perception of the organisation as well as the meanings they assign to it. Furthermore, this means concretely that these three dimensions were reconstructed from plenty of data gathered, highlighting the main areas of interest:

The first dimension aims at portraying the past and current activities of the AIDC as well as the structure of its work, i.e. its programmes, projects, campaigns. This overview makes it possible to make logical connections between each of these activities and the overall mission, hence reflects the modus operandi. The second dimension explains the analytical framework, which underlines these activities and practices. It considers of mainly the strategies, the overarching theory of change as well as the template for all AIDC programmes. A third dimension reflects these findings on the ground of the individuals' motivations to work at the AIDC, and to participate as activists both inside and outside the organisation. This reflection includes the meaning of normativity and an analysis of the conceptualisation of "struggling" – this frames the lifeworld's of the AIDC's core partners, and those grassroot movements representing marginalised communities.

6.1 MODUS OPERANDI – WORK IN PROGRESS

This section elaborates on the historical development of the AIDC's work, as well as the programmatic design of its mission. The programmes structure the work of the organisation into strategic core themes that help guide and reflect on the progress of work. Programmes are procedures that incorporate a distinct outcome and employ methodologies of how to get there. As such, it is the context for a concrete agency and practices. The programmatic framework of the AIDC changes according to the three-year strategic plan, the organisation follows. This strategic plan frames all of the AIDC's concrete projects and activities; however, it can be seen as a guiding principle rather than a strict input-output calculation (Interview 1, Interview 5).

Before coming to the current projects and the design of programme areas, I will retrace the development of the AIDC's strategic focus over the years. According to the only two interviewees, which have been members of the organisation since its earliest days, the campaign history is exemplary for the organisation's structural growth. It is said that the campaigns, programmes and networks, which the AIDC co-constituted, evolved organically (Interview 11, Interview 13).

6.1.1 History of Campaigning & Networking – Spinning the Thread[10]

Throughout its existence, the AIDC got involved with networks, cooperation and campaigns that consist of local-community based struggles and protests, national alliances, campaigns, as well as regional and international networks. From its conception, the history of the AIDC presents the connections between the macro and the microlevel. The AIDC previewed that the end of Apartheid was not the end of the struggle against unequal societal conditions but rather that the transition to a socially just society needed to address alternative national and global developments (Interview 9).

Campaigning for a just transition in South Africa

Financing the new agenda, 1996

In its first campaign, the strategic framework focused on an international level; in order to finance the transition from an oppressive to democratic society, the AIDC linked the lack of resources on a national level to the payment of an international debt. (Interview 9, Interview 11, Interview 13). The *Odious Debt Campaign* started in 1996 when the South African government implemented a structural adjustment programme in order to pay back the foreign debt. In the view of the AIDC-activists, paying back Apartheid debt jeopardised the envisioned transition to an equitable South African society. Soon, AIDC researchers discovered the odious debt

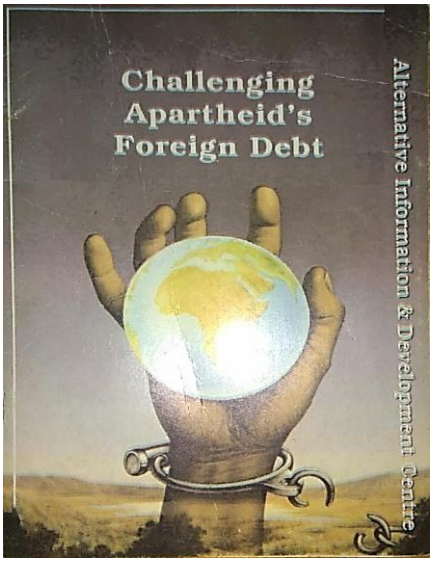

Figure 1: Photograph of AIDC's first publication (taken by the researcher)

[10] It needs to be noted that the following section does not paint a complete picture of the AIDC history, however, highlights the events and campaigns which were considered crucial by the interviewees when outlining their perspectives on the development of the organisation.

doctrine in international law, which argued that debt gathered during and from a despotic regime was illegitimate. The logic behind the campaign was not only to prove that the Apartheid debt was unlawful but to highlight that there was a way of funding the promises of redistribution and social equality. The Apartheid debt booklet was the AIDC's first publication (see figure 1). The hand holding up the globe, centring the African continent is until today the official logo of the AIDC[11]. The response to this booklet came mainly from churches, that advocated for the release of all debt owed from third world countries. This call for debt-cancellation from churches was expressed in the faith-based global campaign of *Jubilee 2000*. Through this, the AIDC made the connection with faith-based funders, churches and other civil society organisations (CSOs) and, in 1998, the national pendant to *Jubilee 2000 – Jubilee South Africa* – was born (Interview 9, Interview 3, Interview 8, Interview 11).

Building alliances on a national level, 1998

The national campaign for the cancellation of Apartheid debt is exemplary for a coherent AIDC strategy of building alliances for a progressive agenda, also today. Instead of merely joining the global campaign, it was necessary to highlight the national context of a post-Apartheid South Africa, back then challenged by financing a just transition. The reasoning behind *Jubilee 2000* was different than behind the *Odious Debt Campaign* (religiously motivated demanding the cancellation of all third world debt versus the socio-economic logic of financing a progressive agenda). The initiation of the AIDC's campaign shows that they were not merely joining whatever others have set up but that they were active in the local and concrete context. Further, the logic of argumentation was directly addressed at "[t]he standard response--, and it is not just South Africa, to any radical idea is, 'Well, it sounds wonderful, but who is going to pay for it?' I am sure you have heard that a million times over. We have had to then look at who is going to pay for it or how to pay for it." (Interview 11). The demands were similar – the cancellation of all debt – but the context was different. *Jubilee South Africa* was committed to solving the "homegrown" dilemma of the South African transition after Apartheid. However, the linkages

[11] It is interesting to regard that on the figure, the chains are already broken, yet the hand is still cuffed. It seems exemplary that this logo is still used by the AIDC today, mirroring the statements that the liberation struggle has not yet ended, even with the chains of Apartheid shattered. Another interesting observation is that Africa is at the centre of the world, implying an alternative worldview to Eurocentric paradigms. Further, the pose of the hand looks similar to the hand of a protester who is holding up a fist in a gesture of empowerment and fight against oppression. More abstractly, the pose suggests that the world is in the hands of the people and that the oppressed people can free themselves if they take the matter into their own hands (and fight?).

in demands and commitment were enough to keep connected with the early day funders throughout the years to come (Interview 11).

Local campaigns against unemployment, 2000

Another strategic campaign by the AIDC was the launch of the *Youth for Work* campaign. The organisation's methodology until today is to put campaigns directly into the hands of grass-root movements so that these movements may take ownership. The AIDC achieves this through collaboration with other groups. One of the interviewees was still in his early activist days when he joined the *Youth for Work* movement. He explained how the movement put forward demands on a political level, but also maintained a popular education centre for young people, where they could discuss and learn about youth-related issues:

> *"In the organisation, there were study groups, workshops and some of those study groups and workshops were conducted or organised by AIDC. So, I became close with the AIDC comrades that were working there, you know, because sometimes if I needed a book I would ask one of the comrades that were working with us and then say 'Comrade I need a book man, this book'. And then the comrade (would) come (and say) 'Come to AIDC I will give it to you'. So I started to develop a relationship with them and then (in terms of) 'youth for work' I was working with AIDC sometimes because, AIDC used to organise youth camps, political youth camp where we discuss politics." (Interview 3)*

Another thread becoming apparent is the AIDC's focus on employment, which until this day is the central issue of the organisation's work. (Interview 3, Interview 9).

Developing the *Right to Work*, 2006

In 2006, the AIDC initiated the *Right to Work* campaign in cooperation with the *Youth for Work* movement. The AIDC sought to shift the focus of economic policy towards the constitutional right and need of the South African people to have a productive source of income to sustain themselves. This campaign was a coalition of different groups to put pressure on the government to challenge their policies through marches and protests – focusing on issues such as mass unemployment, labour brokers, incomes, and grants. This strategy challenged the unemployment crisis and its duplicator effects on xenophobia, since people from other Southern African countries were coming to find jobs from their tumultuous labour markets, the coalition demanded state support for workers.

> *"If we had the right to work in the constitution, we could more easily challenge some of the policies that are leading to unemployment, et cetera. […] If you want to attack those things, you need a strong social movement, organised the unemployed, the precariously employed, build alliances with the trade union movements, and the organised*

workers, who are essentially the ones supporting the unemployed in terms of their salaries. […] That is the framework that we have been working with."

(Interview 9)

From the *Right to Work* to *One Million Climate Jobs*, 2011

The *One Million Climate Jobs Campaign (OMCJ)* is one example of the organic development of the AIDC programmes. The founding idea of the campaign was developed in 2011 in Durban during the *UN Climate Change Conference* (known as COP 17). Arising from a need for a more radical approach than what the conference offered, the *Climate Justice Network* was established in relation to environmental movements that tried to organise themselves. The OMCJ campaign was then launched as a coalition or a movement with a broad base of NGOs and CSOs (Interview 4). The campaign history is one of shifting focus from a broad coalition against climate change to energy democracy, renewable energy and, most recently, the Eskom crisis and its role for socially owned renewable energy. It shows that the focus has not just changed into any direction but instead got concise over the years. At the same time, the scope of activities remained quite broad, including school projects, work with local governments, movements building and popular education for general awareness about climate change (Interview 12).

Attempting for a broad popular counter-power, 2011, 2018

Part of the AIDC's modus operandi was (and is until today) to bring together social movements to form coalitions, which the AIDC considers key in the opposition of neoliberalism. This coalition strategy was also used for the formation of the *Democratic Left Front* (DLF). The AIDC had affiliations with this formation through the active involvement of some of its members. For different reasons, the DLF collapsed, and the *United Front* (UF) was established, mainly by the *National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa* (NUMSA). Although they have not yet succeeded in building a powerful social counterforce to neoliberalism and global capitalism, it shows the idea of combining forces.

Further the affiliation of the AIDC with these formations is reflective of its political agenda (Interview 3, Interview 4, Interview 7, Interview 11). Similar attempts to mobilise critical stakeholders can be seen in the AIDC-initiated *Assembly of the Unemployed* in 2018, which brings together social movements, focusing on unemployment. This assembly still meets at the AIDC headquarters, receiving training and leadership workshops (Interview 3, Interview 7). In 2018, the AIDC also participated in NUMSA's *Working Class Summit*, where about 130 small organisations and movements met (Interview 4).

These efforts are exemplary for the overarching strategy of bringing together all relevant mass-based movements – from workers to unemployed citizens, over to trade unionists – to forge an alliance strong enough to represent the popular movements effectively. It also becomes apparent that these alliances are a jointed effort, which means that the dynamics are complicated and the promise for success limited (internal quarrels and funding issues played a significant role in the collapse of the DLF or the UF). In general, the programme *New Politics* offers methodologies of producing a new way of policymaking through representation of the stakeholders who are now marginalised (more about New Politics pp. 55f).

The international organisational activities

Building alliances on a regional level, 1999

In 1999, the AIDC played a constitutive role in the initiation of the *Southern African People Solidarity Network* (SAPSN). Like the *Southern African Development Community* (SADC), SAPSN looked at regional integration. In contrast to the mainstream economic and high-level meetings of the SADC, the AIDC initiated forum is people-centred, meaning *from* the people *for* the people. Annually, when the SADC heads of states meet, the SAPSN organises a people's summit, where social movements and NGOs come together discussing alternatives and potential campaigns.

The AIDC was the secretariat in the first few years before it decided to establish a rotational secretariat, currently occupied by ZIMCOD (Zimbabwean Coalition of Debt and Development). This extension from the national to the regional level, building a network for people-centred dialogue in Southern Africa, shows how the AIDC incorporated a new strategy of regional integration for an *alternative* development plan in Sub-Saharan Africa. Further, the role of solidarity was initiated into the AIDC mindset, "the name was significant because solidarity in our minds was the alternative to capitalist globalisation. As opposed to intensifying competition between economies and peoples, we wanted to build solidarity." (Interview 13)

International protesting against global powers, 1999-2003

Apart from initiating networks and campaigns, the AIDC participated in prominent international activism. In 1999 some delegates of the AIDC took part in demonstrations against the *World Trade Organisation* (WTO) – internationally known as the "Battle of Seattle". Similarly in 2003, representatives of the AIDC were present at the protests against the WTO summit in

Cancun, Mexico (Interview 13). This representation of the AIDC further demonstrated their opposition of dominant global economic players dictating the development agenda.

> *" [O]ne of the areas of work that became quite important for AIDC was around trade agreements, particularly the World Trade organisation and the European Union Trade Agreement with South Africa. We participated in international mobilisation against these Trade Agreements."*
>
> *(Interview 13)*

Building a global network as counter-movement, 2001

In 2001, the AIDC was in the founding process of the first *World Social Forum* in Brazil, which was the counterpart to the *World Economic Forum* in Davos, held around the same time.[12] The *World Social Forum* was mainly driven by organisations from Brazil, bringing together popular movements from around the world, opposing neoliberalism.

> *"Inside the World Social Forum, we started having a discussion with some of these comrades. These Activists and we were saying, 'Do not make the same mistakes that we made in South Africa'. […]Very interesting dialogue started about looking at the transition in South Africa, what was going on in Latin America."*
>
> (Interview 13)

The interviewee is referring to the parallel experiences shared between South Africa and Brazil, especially the role of regional trade agreements and the danger of popular movements becoming *"*transmission bells for political parties*"* (Interview 13).

Building alliances in the Global South, 2004

It was during this *World Social Forum* in 2001, when the AIDC realised that a network between agents of the so-called global South could be the platform of discussing their respective roles in their respective regions.

> *"What could we learn from our respective experiences in Latin America and Southern Africa? What we wanted to do was deepen what the World Social Forum was doing at a Global level, we wanted to deepen the level of linkages, sharing of experiences between Latin America and Southern Africa"*
> *(Interview 13).*

[12] "The World Social Forum first met in 2001. Leading members of the global movement for social and economic justice organized the Forum, in response to the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland. In 2001, and the following two years, the World Social Forum was held in Porto Alegre, Brazil. The organizers of the World Social Forum make a point of convening the meeting in the global South, underscoring their view that this region should take leadership in the movement for progressive global social and economic policy." (Global Policy Organisation 2020).

In collaboration with the *Transnational Institute* (TNI), the AIDC initiated the *People's Dialogue* in 2004. The establishment of the *People's Dialogue* does not only reflect the strategy to bring together activists from the South sharing experiences and learning from each other but also how these networks and relations grow organically – meaning that one project arises in the course of another, through its relevance. Further, it suggests that there is not only the need to exchange amongst activists across the globe but also the exemplified effects of local experience (Interview 13).

Developing a holistic world view, 2010

Based on the exchanges in the *People's Dialogue*, the AIDC developed two new threads in its conceptualisation of the unfavourable conditions in South Africa (and the world). In the context of the global crisis in 2007-2008, the vast effects of the financial crisis began to unfold. Food prices were rising all over the world; the ecological crisis became just as apparent as political and social crises. Inspired by the indigenous and environmentalist movements from Latin America, that shed light on the importance of environmental integrity at the 2009 *World Social Forum* in Brazil, the AIDC gathered a new perspective on the interconnectedness of multiple crises (Interview 9, Interview 13). Shortly after that, the AIDC organised a big international event in Johannesburg in 2010, where these aforementioned issues were labelled as the *Crisis of Civilisation*: "We were at a crossroads, and we needed to amplify the alternatives that we have been proposing and putting forth, we are going to deepen those in the context of this crisis. In that discussion, it alerted us to the depths of the ecological crisis." (Interview 13)
This quote serves to highlight that the AIDC developed its conceptual framework based on the dialogue with other activists, while being sensitive to the overall global developments unfolding. It also shows that the AIDC gathered a new perspective on the crises facing South Africa, not only created through international relations but as being an integral part of a much greater crisis, "the civilisational crisis". (Interview 13)

Focusing the holistic crisis on the thematic issue of extractivism, 2018

From one of the *People's Dialogue's* summits, the need for a *Thematic Social Forum* arose. The common experiences shared between Latin America and South Africa were issues of mines and extractivism that exploited their communities and harmed the environment they lived in. It was very successful in showing the relevance as many organisations from all over the world joined in to discuss the issues of mining and extractivism. It shows the AIDC's attempt to grasp

the overarching environmental crisis and put it into a concrete context, which is the extractive industries not only harming South Africa but in other parts of the world as well.

> *"Both for Brazil and for South Africa, we were confronted with the issue of mining as a key contributor, to both the economic and environmental and of course, the social crisis that we are facing. We came up with a formulation to understand what we are dealing with. That formulation was extractivism, a mode of accumulation, which was about digging up the natural wealth and exporting it as a means of generating revenue. If you have a progressive government, that revenue is used for social welfare, but if you have a conservative government, it is used for advancing elites, but either way, it causes massive problems and is not an answer. We made a critique of this practice of the intensification of extractivism. That is what the ANC was doing, that was what many governments in Southern Africa were doing, and that is what the progressive governments, the Left governments in Latin America were doing."*
>
> *(Interview 13)*

This "formulation of a critique" around a mechanism labelled "extractivism" shows that the AIDC differentiates its arguments. It is not merely the conservative governments posing issues with their pro-business relations but also left governments can produce harm by engaging in extractivism. It again proves that the AIDC does not comply with its partners from Latin America just for the sake of its alliance but that it is ready to critique their political practices (Interview 13). It also shows that the AIDC has a long-term perspective on issues, highlighting that extractivism might be able to finance social welfare in Latin America but *"causes massive problems and is not an answer*" (ibid). Further, it suggests that the AIDC is not looking for

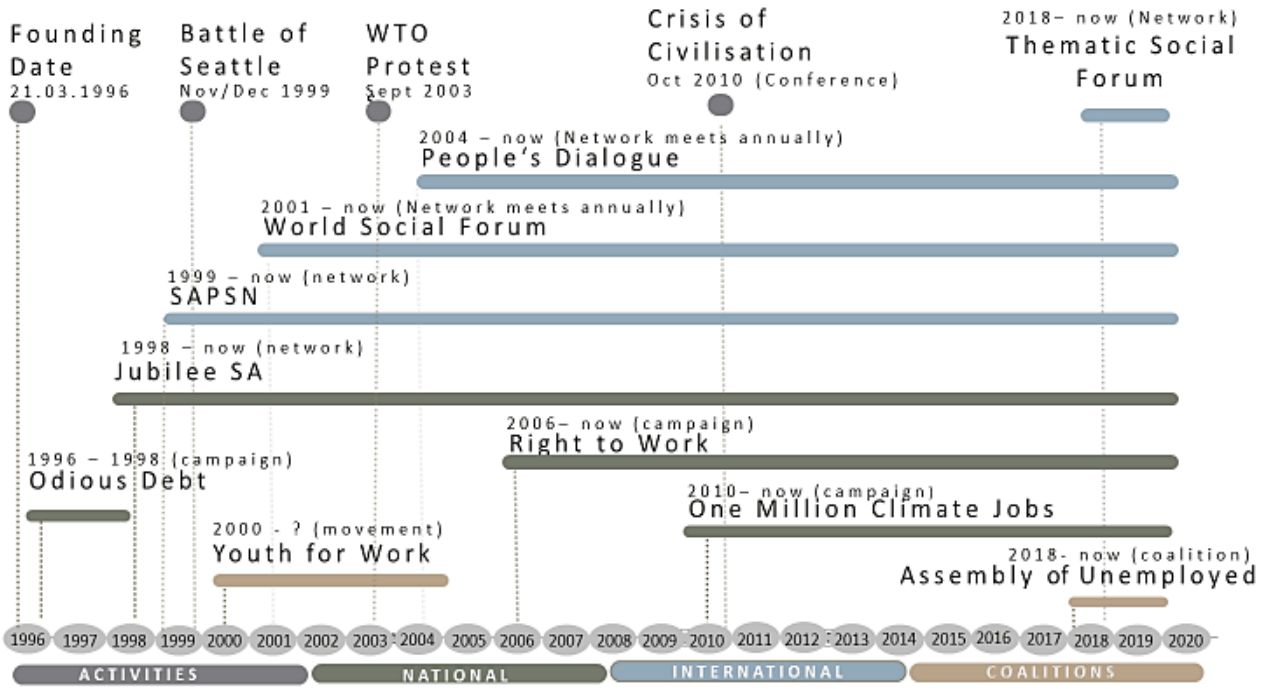

Figure 2: AIDC timeline

scapegoats such as “conservative governments” and their “advancing elites” solely responsible for any crisis. In contrast, this focus on one specific problem and its underlying mechanisms shows that the mode of critique is based on analytical considerations rather than repeating set phrases. The interviewee further notes that this critique around extractivism lays the ground for current campaigns such as the *One Million Climate Jobs Campaign* and the *Right to Say No Campaign*, both are an integral part of the AIDC programme *Alternatives to Extractivism and Climate Change* (see more in the next section) (Interview 13). More recent developments of the AIDC trajectory will be outlined in the following paragraphs which focus around the programmatic approach and current campaigning of the AIDC.

6.1.2 Programmes

There are three main programme areas:

A) Economic Justice

B) Alternatives to Extractivism and Climate Change

C) New Politics

Each of these areas integrate on a local and international level. Each Programme seeks to offer solutions formulated in an alternative development paradigm. These solutions are thought to be holistic in the sense that they must be designed to grapple with concrete issues in both the local context and on a macro dimensional scope. The local context of a problem and its solution is vital for the people directly affected to understand its relevance. Therefore, the mobilisation of people and strengthening of movements is crucial to building a broad awareness (Interview 1, Interview 4, Interview 9, Interview 11).

Although having distinct programmatic areas of concern, all the programmes follow the same overall vision and mission. The vision and mission are based on the idea of seeking alternative ways to break out of the structural crisis, produced by dominant development paradigms such as compound growth, neoliberal policies, the dominance of transnational institutions over nation-states. The holistic dimension here is that these concrete alternatives are not only solutions for concrete local issues but also, are integrated in an alternative way of thinking about development. This can be seen in the argument against extractivism as a mode of production based on unsustainable and harmful practices (Interview 9, Interview 13).

> *“We could not understand the current global process without understanding that it is a multidimensional crisis, it is economical, it is environmental, it is energy, it is food, all*

> *of these crises intersect and reinforce each other. We started a process of trying to programmatically see how we could integrate that into the work of AIDC. When I mean programmatic, it is like saying, okay, you cannot think about any solutions unless you integrate this fundamentally into what you are proposing as an alternative".*
>
> *(Interview 9)*

The programmes, therefore, propose concrete solutions for concrete problems, serving the promotion of alternatives to the overarching mechanisms behind these issues. They translate the broader context of multiple crises in actual projects. Several interviewees point out that the programme areas are all logically connected and dynamically linked (Interview 1, Interview 9, Interview 11, Interview 12). These linkages and connections will be shown in the following section.

A) Economic Justice

The *Economic Justice* programme focuses on South African policies, specifically socio-economic policies. The critique is based on the argument of the "well-known fact" that there is not enough money for social spending relevant to the wellbeing and equality of people. The counterargument, put forward by the AIDC, is that there *are* enough resources, they are just not made available to public funding of social programmes and essential services.

> *"You do not pay the debt; you are going to save all this money. You stop profit shifting, you are going to now raise- save billions and billions. You stop corruption, you going to save billions and billions. You stop the export of capital you are going to, and so it goes on and on. That is where that programme comes in."*
>
> *(Interview 11)*

By looking at the South African economy, the programme looks at forms of value creation and drivers of change, seeking to make the economic system more just (Interview 6). The programme staff does research, which tackles three working points:

1. the critique of the macroeconomic policies in South Africa;

2. the critique of tax evasion;

3. the critique of the production of unemployment.

They all share the logic that the socio-economic crises are not a result of lacking resources but a question of allocation of the available resources. This shared logic is due to those government policies allocating more resources to enclaved industries than to invest in the broader economy (Interview 6). The second group of agents, responsible for lack of funds available for social

spending, are corporations and their practice of tax evasion. The result is an economic crisis, and the production of a social crisis manifesting itself in massive unemployment (Interview 1).

In general, the mode of operation within the *Economic Justice* programme is constituted of research, analysis, and movements that endeavour to raise awareness for the socio-economic issues. The current projects of this programme revolve around these working areas. The *Budget Justice Coalition* is a joint project, in which skills and analyses are shared biannually, concerning the national budgets. In this project, other NGOs and research institutions are co-working partners (Interview 6). Regarding the ongoing investigations on wage erosion through illicit financial flows, trade unions are the primary partner in leaking information, which otherwise would be inaccessible for the researchers (Interview 6). Analysing – and publicising – how much money was exactly shifted into tax havens is supposed to put pressure on politicians to react to these illicit financial outflows (Interview 1). Regarding the workaround unemployment, the programme staff analyses unemployment statistics and economic data, making them accessible and understandable for the social movements they support through their work in this field (Interview 1). Thereby, the programme seeks to do a thorough analysis of complex processes and again breaking it down into the context of concrete lived realities of the people suffering from these economic unjust practices and dynamics. This thorough analysis is done through, training, informal talks, the publication of articles, seminars and networking.

B) Alternatives to Extractivism and Climate Change (AECC)

In 2009 the AIDC was inspired by the exchange with other organisations from the global South during the *World Social Forum*. The discussions around extractivism and alternatives to mining are the critical point for solutions "that renewable energies can offer to the problem of structural unemployment and inequality; we also see the impact that mining has on the environment. So, it is both an alternative to mining, but also an alternative to structural unemployment and inequality" (Interview 1). It is, therefore, one arm of the AIDC's conceptualisation of an alternative development paradigm, articulating an alternative with concrete solutions, tackling more than just one crisis – both local, national, regional, and global. The proposition made by the AIDC to tackle structural problems such as unemployment reads as follows:

> *"[…] and we are saying well, we need: a wage lead, which means pay people good salaries; low carbon, which is a move from fossil fuels and extractivism to renewable's, development path. A wage lead, low carbon development path and through this we will be able to create many more jobs, but also well-paying jobs that simultaneously addresses the issue of climate change."*
>
> *(Interview 1)*

The *One Million Climate Jobs* arose around the issue of massive unemployment in South Africa, proposing a concrete solution of how to create new jobs. The climate part is a new layer around the core problem of unemployment, incorporated due to its relevance for fighting the global climate crisis (Interview 1, Interview 4, Interview 13). The OMCJ campaign is almost ten years old, supplemented by a relatively new focus on energy democracy, adding to the list of demands a "socially-owned renewable energy sector" (Interview 12).

A new focus means new issues, explained by an interviewee who points towards the importance of locally produced renewable energy products.

> *"And one of the arguments that we are bringing up is to have locally produced renewable energy products. Because even the material that gets used to produce those renewables comes from South Africa through exports, I mean that is one of the issues, but again you would hear some of the unions like FEDUSA [The Federation of Unions of South Africa] saying that 'just think about some of the trade agreements that South Africa signs you cannot just..', you see."*
>
> *(Interview 4)*

The issue of trade agreements shows again, the global interconnectedness of issues and solutions proposed in the South African context.

Another focus evolves around Eskom, with the launch of a national conference in Johannesburg in cooperation with the TNI and TUED (Trade Union for Energy Democracy). Out of this conference, a research project emerged which analyses in-depth what measurements need to be taken to make Eskom a viable state entity again – with focus on renewable energy. The current developments (load shedding), however, made this a priority of the OMCJ due to its urgency. (Interview 4, Interview 12). One area of concern in this regard is that communities or even local governments have no way of participating in the locally produced renewable energy sector, as every energy transaction must be made through Eskom (Interview 4).

In total the campaign around climate jobs and its focal areas, connect various stakeholders: "trade unions, industrial workers, public service workers, municipal workers, youth, women, land access movements, fisher folks small scale fishers, environmentalists and a group of progressive researchers" (Interview 4). With the main focus being climate change and renewable energy, there are several strategies to achieve the objective. The promotion of climate jobs as an alternative, the analysis work around Eskom and its essential role for the implementation, school projects and popular education to raise awareness as well as movement building to mobilise agents of change for the cause (Interview 4, Interview 7, Interview 12).

Other than the focus on climate change and "the solution that renewable energies can offer to the problem of structural unemployment and inequality, we also see the impact that mining has

on the environment. […] That is another way of looking at the issue of extractivism. So, a lot of industries working in extractive industries are major corporations and dismantling corporate power is about addressing the role these corporations play within extractivist industries, so it is another critique of that" (Interview 1). In reference to the *Dismantle Corporate Power* (DCP)[13] campaign, addressed in this quote, the AECC reflects a critique of extractive industries producing environmental and social injustice.

A/B) Dismantle Corporate Power

The programme is an intersection between two programme areas of *Economic Justice* and *Alternatives to Extractivism* (excluding climate change) (Interview 1, Interview 2). In the centre of attention are on the macro dimensional level transnational corporations (TNCs), and at the local level communities directly affected by their practices. The core problem is that mining communities are suffering in their everyday lives due to the practices of big mining corporations, i.e. destroying the environment and polluting the area by extracting natural resources (Interview 2). Moreover, these practices cause health hazards for the people living in the affected areas in conjunction with destroying their livelihoods. The ecological consequences of the mining industry producing emissions is merely a tailpiece, as the programme directs its attention to the disbalance of power between different stakeholders. On one hand, we have people living on the land, while on the other hand, this land is taken up by corporations as *their* mining sites. The issue at hand is that these corporations decide over the fate of the people through making deals with governments, and motivated by profit-maximisation. The communities have no say in these processes whatsoever. However, it includes life-changing – and even worse, life-threatening – implications (Interview 2, Interview 13).

There are several dimensions to the above problem: the macro-economic dimension (at the end coupled with the microeconomic dimension) is about illicit financial flows and profit shifting that is practised by these corporations. By illegitimately shifting their profits to shell companies, they evade not only taxes but also fail to pay decent and fair wages. This tax evasion results in the lack of governmental resources to invest in social programmes, and at the same time, impacts the workers directly by making them subjects to exploitation earning a minimum of what they would need to live decent lives. On the side of lived realities, the micro-perspective

[13] More detail in the next paragraph.

to this problem, people lose their sovereignty and the integrity of their livelihoods (Interview 1, Interview 2).

The DCP campaign was first initiated by the TNI as a global campaign for transnational corporations to respect human rights, focusing on negotiating a binding treaty on international grounds. The AIDC agreed to take this campaign up as a regional campaign, focusing on the sovereignty of communities in Southern Africa, affected by the atrocities of mining corporations (Interview 13). Both aim at diminishing the considerable scope of corporate power, whereas the global campaign uses a top-down approach, focusing on international legislation as leverage. The regional campaign starts with the critique of the local effects of this unleashed power, seeking to win back communities' sovereignty of life decisions (Interview 13).

The central issue is the misuse of their power since big transnational corporations get to decide what they want to do and where they want to do it – depriving people in their democratic right to have a say in the development of their region. Simultaneously, these practices threaten people's health through toxic emissions. One interviewee explains how from this issue, the core project of the campaign developed:

> *"We want to have a campaign on multinationals in Southern Africa […] We said, "Okay, let us listen to the people." We set up a popular tribunal where people can come and bring cases of abuse for different multinationals, how we will hear and facilitate them coming so that it is a great accompaniment work that's going and just goes helping them to develop the cause et cetera. When we try and process all of these cases, we see this one thread that runs through all these cases. People are being dispossessed and they have no right to determine their development process. That is how we came up with the, hang on, what about this right that people have so 'no, we do not want this form of development. We do not want our land use for mining'. We came up with the Right to Say No."*
>
> *(Interview 13)*

This drastic imbalance of power and the withdrawal of their rights to be part of political decision making is what is used as the entry point of the programme to develop concrete solutions. The *Right to Say No,* as the formulation of the basic right to withdraw consent in a case where one feels threatened by violations, is considered a fundamental right:

> *"We are saying it is supposed to be a substantive right. It is supposed to be a basic human right to be able to say, 'No' […] anyone who is going to be affected by anything should be the one to make a decision on a development path or a development paradigm."*
>
> *(Interview 2)*

Interestingly, the focus of this campaign was induced by the affected communities themselves. The AIDC used the methodology of "listening" to the communities, bringing forth how they feel violated and why. Therefore, it set up a *Permanent Peoples' Tribunal* in 2016 in eSwatini

(formerly Swaziland) with an international jury, where communities could bring up cases of these violations. In this process, the AIDC abstracted from the communities' inputs a common thread of these violations. Besides the noticeable direct effects of mining, within the dimension of power relations, excluded from democratic decision making.

During the *World Social Forum* in 2018, this regional *Right to say No* campaign was decided to extend globally, uniting communities from various world regions to fight against the immense power of transnational corporations (Interview 13). This campaign shows how it evolved organically from work with communities, listening to their perspective, and using their direct input to formulate a logical argument, which then could be used in their direct interest. It also shows the campaign itself is carried by the communities, especially the Xolobeni community and the *Amadiba Crisis Committee* being iconic for the struggle against corporate power. It seems that the AIDC and the partners involved were only assisting in formulating a strategy for an intervention, based on the demands of the communities.

> *"I see AIDC working very closely with the community. It is not that AIDC is implementing AIDC's visions and beliefs. So if we work with the community in Xolobeni with the Right to Say No we will support their visions, it is not that we are going to have a campaign that this is what we want. We will go with what the community wants. If it is service delivery, then we will support them and service delivery. If it is the right to say No to mining, then that is how we will support them."*
>
> (Interview 5)

This anti-mining campaign is primarily located under the AECC programme. The macroeconomic argument of wage erosion through mining companies is the second part of the campaign, linking it to the EJ programme. One interviewee points out the issue with justice in this regard, claiming that the profits for the corporations – using workers to produce these profits in the first place – are unproportionally high in contrast to the little, the workers get.

> "I will give you this, like with wage-led right? We are saying, "Look, guys, companies are taking their profits and putting it wherever it may be." Tax haven, a mailbox, whatever. Right? That money, a portion of it can actually pay people. Literally, that is what we are saying. […] Sell the bread for 500 Rand and then pay the person who helped me make the bread two Rand. […] The 498 Rand a portion of it explicitly goes to my pocket. Let us say 98 Rand goes to my pocket, right? Then the other 400, I put it in Luxembourg. Why? It is not necessary to pay the *person two Rand. I could just pay them what they deserve."*
>
> (Interview 2)

The wage base, the resources directly available for workers, is eroded by profit shifting resulting in wages too low to cover the basic needs, where there would be enough money practically to pay fair wages. (Interview 2*)*

C) New Politics

New Politics is the third, and maybe most abstract, of AIDC's programmes, connecting aspects of *Economic Justice* and *Movement Building*. The programmatic objective is to find new ways of establishing an alternative to neoliberal globalisation or to the current world order. The programme, therefore, focuses explicitly on conceptualising a means of intervention and identifying ways of how to bring about the changes conceptualised in AIDC's vision (Interview 1, Interview 13). The actual methods to get from the problem to the solution identified by the AIDC is framed by its theory of change. The methodology within this theory of change is to forge alliances, especially in international networks: The first component is to find new ways of strategizing the problem-solution process, and the second part is more about reflecting the socio-political landscape and adjusting the balance of political agents within society (Interview 1). The goal is a new society through imagined ways of creating this modern society. Popular movements are identified as the agents of change, and therefore the strategic aim is to support and build these movements on the ground. One way of doing so is to take stock of past movements and critically assess the forms of oppression within these movements. The methodology here is, therefore, to critically engage with the past to learn for the future*:*

> *"So this here is speaking about what are the new forms of struggle today, what kinds of organisation do you need? Is it just the person who is organised in a factory who brings about change or is it more than just that kind of actor or agent for change? What about the state, how do we see the state in the future? Do we want to see the state playing a big role or starting out as a big role and being unrolled over time? These are the kinds of questions that we ask and so it is about... if you want to build a new society it is about what are the new ways of doing it that takes good from the old but also does not take everything that we do not need for today."*
>
> (Interview 1)

New Politics in both senses is centred around negotiating the social forces and their roles within society. What role does the state have? Is the state more important than the workers? How can we rethink these taken for granted preferences? In short, how does the state (re)produce oppression, and how do the political agents rearrange and reconceptualise the political landscape so that these oppressions are kept to a minimum? To answer these questions, agents need to critically assess the way how society is moving forward, and think about new ways of going forward, based on this assessment. What becomes apparent is the ambiguity around the concept of reconceptualising the landscape, i.e. "taking the good from the old" does not imply what "good" means in the concrete context. This vagueness suggests that this programme is not about bringing definitive answers but about the process of questioning itself.

In a sense it is work in progress, highlighted by one interviewee who is referring to the political vacuum of a globalised society:

> *"But there is no global state. So we are in this interregnum between the one, that is insufficient but something has not arrived yet that can be-- It is in this period that we confirmed what we can call the crisis of politics. That crisis of politics has several levels to it. It is at the level that how to organise what are the strategies that deals with the big changes that have happened in the world today and which we cannot rely on an answer that somebody gave a hundred years ago? […] We are dealing with a crisis at the level that people do not believe in emancipatory alternatives, big alternatives. That was not the case always. In fact, you had huge movements fighting for national liberation, some fighting for social democracy, fighting for communism. Real big alternative systems that were being proposed."*
>
> (Interview 13)

This notion of *New Politics* – something that still needs to be figured out – shows that the AIDC does not propose "grand solutions" but rather, aims to find answers to these overarching questions through looking into the small mundane world of people experiencing what goes wrong first-hand. Therefore, to establish new political relations in the global social world order, the AIDC turns the methodology towards the people on the ground formulating their demands for political power (Interview 1).

Figure 3: Trade unions and movements came together for the annual Budget March (20th Feb. 2019)[1]
Picture taken by researcher

Movement Building

The *Movement Building* is part of the *New Politics* programme, focusing on the objective of coalition building within the broader framework of challenging the status quo of current socio-political dynamics. The *Movement Building* programme, therefore, works directly with movements on the ground by supporting and capacitating them in their struggles (Interview 1, Interview 10, Interview 13). The kinds of movements which are considered agents of change are "movements that are fighting, not just movements. […] But these are more kind of radical. Movements, who are fighting for basic services." (Interview 10)

The above implies what was said at several occasions before: Firstly, that movements are fighting their struggles, raising their demands; and Secondly, that the AIDC has its focus on movements that need to fight for basic services, which implies that their struggle is real, at least if one supposes that *basic* services should be accessible for everyone. The fact that these movements have to put up a *fight* for their demands implies that these services are kept away from them (be it purposefully or due to systemic failure).

The logic behind this is that one organisation by itself cannot bring about the change - but it can form alliances with others to see where its most significant contribution is towards building a more potent social force (Interview 2, Interview 9). Before this can be done, the movements' members must be made conscious of their struggles, their opponents and their strategic options.

> *"So first of all, build movements and support movement building, but also how do you make them coaless (sic!) or how do you make them come together. […] you have to build the consciousness of the members of movements and organisations before you can build coalitions, but coalition building is still part of our overall, because one organisation cannot bring about the change that we need. We need it to proliferate and connect all around."*
>
> (Interview 1)

Movement Building is directly engaging with the movements on the ground, supporting them out of their particular struggle, offering the possibilities to hold workshops, having discussions or assisting with the structuring of demands and objectives within the context of their battle (Interview 1, Interview 7, Interview 10). Together, the AIDC and the movements learn from the particular struggles, bringing movements together, build new movements where strategically needed, and establishing close relationships of mutual learning:"[I]t is in the actual struggle. It is in their experiences that we can learn the answers to some of these questions. Not all of them, but some of them. That is what I think we are trying to do." (Interview 13)

Direct support is given through the availability of necessary resources that movements often lack. This support can be in the form of libraries and information centres, internet and

telephone access, money for covering basic administrative and overhead costs, training and the assistance to get the movement institutionalised. These are considered prerequisites for a strong, and independent movement (Interview 5, Interview 7).

Regarding the organisational management, there are few things which are considered by the *Movement Building* staff to make the organisational functioning more efficient. One essential for the strategic planning process is keeping up good communication, for example. The advice is to have regular meetings, monthly or three-monthly, within the organisation and once or twice per year with the *Movement Building* team. One communication strategy is also to use Video calls or Social Media for exchange and reporting, as many of the movements are situated in distant regions of the country (Interview 7).

Another aspect which seems to be necessary for the improvement of internal structures is the fact that many movements have a patriarchal hierarchy. The plan here is to actively integrate women into the leadership of movements and implement a democratic decision-making process. This leadership integration links to a communication strategy of regular exchange and meetings amongst members, in which decisions can be taken together rather than being dictated by one dedicated leader (Interview 7). A more general approach of the movement-building programme is to establish reading projects where movements are encouraged to do reading circles, a process of reading and reflecting together, shaping their analytical capacities (Interview 7).
As one of two parts of the *New Politics* programme, *Movement Building* is directly engaging with the agents of change. The programmatic objective here is the strengthening of social movements both organisationally, as well as within their capacities to analyse and understand their struggles, the mechanisms behind it and their role in levelling the playing fields. The methodology is twofold, by partnering with movements already engaging in battles relevant to the AIDC overall strategic framework, namely, to form a strong working-class formation. Assisting the movements in their concrete struggles is based on a bottom-up approach, in which projects, workshops, discussions evolve out of concrete needs grounded in the specific battle.

> *"[S]ometimes, if there are things that are coming up out of that particular struggle, for example, in the land occupation we had a discussion around what kind of community do we need, you know. If we are building shacks, what kind of shacks, how this community will look like, in a sense that we need to accommodate the environment here. We should not destroy environment, we should be conscious of that, and also we should have food gardening, we should have, for instance crèches for the kids, we should have recreational facilities on our occupation, we should have rules in our occupation."*
>
> (Interview 10)

This interviewee implies that the process of defining those considerations concerning concrete struggles is a collective discussion. These things are usually discussed in workshops or strategic

meetings where the movements raise their issues and reflect on possible solutions together (Interview 10). The other side is the advocacy and support in terms of organisational deficiencies of the movements: advising them to institutionalise, offering knowledge about strategic management and inclusive organisational structures, and building the movements from within. The second part of the movement-building is to bring the strategic partners together, connecting them and their struggles, such as in the *Assembly of the Unemployed.* Here, the main objective is to build a robust oppositional formation in order for the movements to have an organisational strength from within and strong ties to other movements. Therefore, the AIDC is building the infrastructure within as well as between movements.

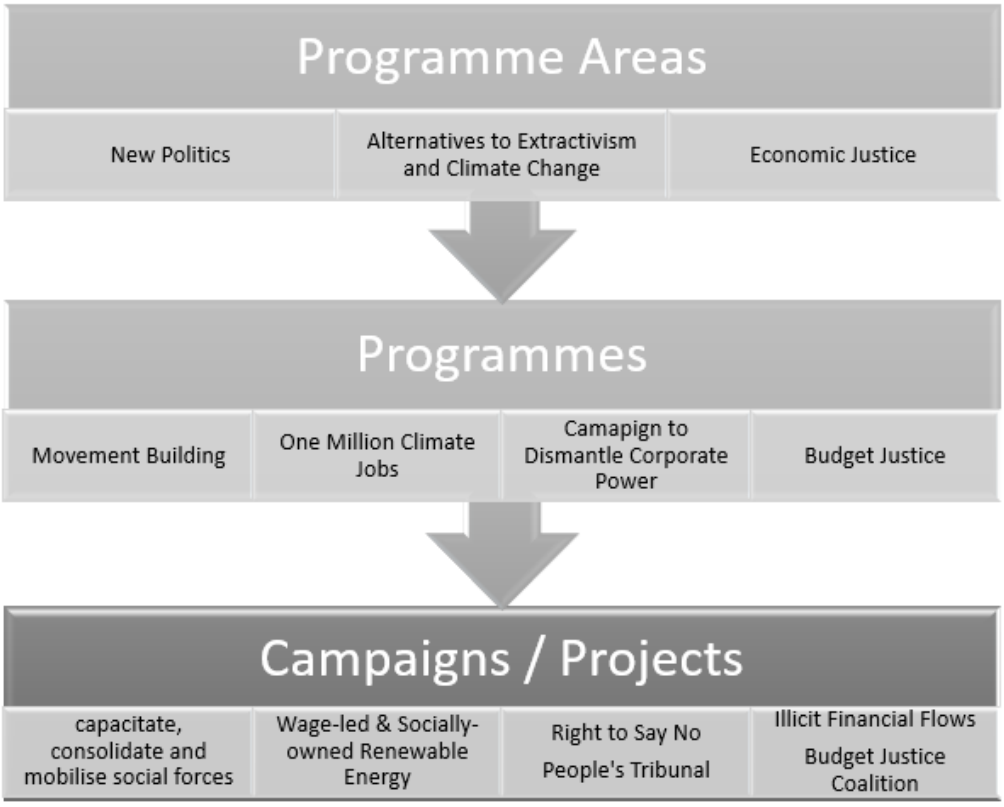

Figure 4: Programmatic framework

6.1.3 Thinking Holistically - Tackling Multiple Crises

The programmatic approach integrates the intersection of the environment and the economic crises in finding one alternative to both, as well as a methodology for tackling the political crisis. The programmatic subdivisions are:

1. *Alternatives to Extractivism and Climate Change*
2. *Economic Justice* and
3. *New Politics.*

The first programme area defines alternatives not only to climate change but also to mining and extractive industries. Number two, *Economic Justice* offers the solution to budgetary constraints, which put any progressive alternatives on hold (Interview 1, Interview 11). Number three, *New Politics* is the conceptual space, in which new ways of socio-political negotiations on a local as well as global scale can be imagined. The directionality here is starting at the grassroot level, strengthening movement's political capacities towards a negotiation of social power on a global level (Interview 13).

Beyond solutions to intersecting crises, these programmes play a role in the normative reformulation of a dominant development paradigm, which is based on the exclusion of the majority. The alternative development paradigm focuses on the wellbeing of the people neglected by the (unequal) globalisation of wealth and development. It is an alternate development strategy which does not adhere to profit maximation as its leading principle but rather to the just distribution of wealth and opportunities to make a good living amongst all (Interview 1, Interview 6, Interview 9).

> *"I think AIDC's mission has always been to open up possibilities and to assert quite strongly that the capitalist way is not the only way, the neoliberal way is not the only way, that there are alternatives which are actually far more profoundly progressive."*
>
> (Interview 12)

6.2 THEORY OF CHANGE - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The next section will investigate the underlying theoretical and strategic assumptions made by the AIDC staff, which define the scope of its programmes. The logical framework is seen as the thread holding all the AIDC's work together. As outlined above the mode of operation as well as the thematic focus are linked coherently. The historical evolvement of the working thread could help to reconstruct the points of action: beginning with the issue of economic policies threatening a just transition, developing unemployment as a core issue, working with youth and popular movements, economic justice concerns around national spending, issues with big corporate power and international trade agreements, extractivism and mining as the perpetrator of economic injustice and environmental degradation, learning from communities' struggles about the importance of sovereignty, the global climate issue as an overarching threat to all societies in the world, alternatives to the socio-economic and climate issues, and most of all, imagining a new world order.

The magnitude of these interventions together makes the work of the organisation complex and sometimes unclear as some interviewees admitted (Interview 2, Interview 5, Interview 7, Interview 8, Interview 12). Nevertheless, there is a strict underlying logic to it, which strategically

guides the progress of the AIDC's work. This underlying logic will be elaborated on in the following paragraphs.

The theory of change is based on the problem definition, and the means identified for changing the initial situation. It describes how the AIDC conceptualises tackling the status quo in exchange for a more just society, in which systemic oppression and marginalisation are counteracted.

> *"So AIDC then says, 'look theoretically we have an alternative to the crisis that we are facing in SA, [b]ut what is our theory of change?' […] How does AIDC see change happening in the world? […] So how do you see, what the problem is, what the solution can be. The theory of change is, how do you move from the problem to the solution."*
>
> (Interview 1)

Based on the critique of crises (e.g. unemployment crisis, environmental crisis), problem definition and formulation of alternatives, a strategy of how to reach this new destination is elaborated. From here, the AIDC designs a working template, which incorporates this strategic framework and makes it translatable into concrete activities. It is the form which defines all of its interventions. This influence of form means that if anything new is coming up, such as the focus on climate change, the AIDC staff conceptualises this new agenda in light of the overall long-term strategic goal and the template for concrete actions (Interview 1, Interview 9).

6.2.1 Problem Definition

The main concern of the AIDC is that there is a high degree of inequality, environmental destruction and disintegration of the social fabric in South Africa. The problem is linked to the economy of unemployment, which itself is related to the way society and its productive forces are organised in South Africa. The development paradigm and strategies the South African government pursued after the end of Apartheid are seen to be counter-productive in terms of a "just transition". The effects are severe for the people on the ground, particularly those who are misrepresented by their governments politically and economically. This deprivation of those most vulnerable, results in their enduring struggle for survival and better living conditions (Interview 1). Therefore, the AIDC formulates a critique of the political economy of South Africa, which is embedded in the global development of a deep crisis. The critical analysis of these real-life problems, according to one interviewee, is always linked to the study of systemic mechanisms and the different dimensions to it. Tackling one specific issue must therefore include the many dimensions of this issue (Interview 7, Interview 13).

Organisation of society

The main issue concerning systemic causes can be seen in the way society is organised. One interviewee describes that the organisation of society has to be thought of in global terms, as national or local challenges are related to global challenges. The organisation of society is seen as problematic for its way of dividing society hierarchically, and by proxy, distributing the creation of wealth. This hierarchical division points to the social question, where the contribution of people and their share in society is questioned (Interview 2, Interview 6, Interview 10).

> *"These are the two main questions, which I have: redistribution of wealth, how wealth is split in between the different components of society. And how you manage to make wealth creation last for good. (How) not (to) threaten future generations' capacity to create wealth."*
>
> (Interview 6)

One interviewee describes that producing profits for someone else is taking up the time one could use for personal development and creativity. However, in the current system of social division, classes of individuals are producing the surplus for the ones who collect these profits (Interview 13). This shows how wealth is created and distributed in a divided (global) society, along hierarchical lines. The problem with hierarchies, as implied, is that they keep individuals from contributing meaningfully in their ways. Hierarchies also go along with a division of different values for certain positions, expressed in the distribution of the wealth produced within one society. The perspective on this is that hierarchies must be dismantled for everyone to have the same opportunities to contribute to society (Interview 1).

In general, the interviewees shared similar criticisms of the Southern African state: their failed responsibility, regional power issues, political parties (such as the ANC promoting xenophobia), and on the smallest level, people mistreating each other and in an uncompassionate way (Interview 2, Interview 7, Interview 13). One can see that the critical perspective can be applied to all levels of analysis, and usually involves some state of "unfavoured" conditions.

Political Economy

From a political-economic perspective, the state should have the responsibility to cater to people's needs. The interviewees see the current role of the state as catering for growth and wealth creation, using economic indicators for the measurement of human needs. The needs of private markets for producing profits are prioritised over the needs of human beings. A socialist answer would be in contrast, needs-centred (Interview 12, Interview 13). The capitalist system is seen as the root for these systemic issues, based on economic control, which equals political control.

In this constellation, corporate power has a significant role to play. The problem with corporate power is that big businesses do hold power but lack disproportionally in terms of responsibilities (Interview 2, Interview 3).

One example is the Apartheid system, which was supported by big corporations. These corporations were associates with the state but had no accountability whatsoever in paying back the people what they owed them; profiteering through exploitation of the oppressed stimulated by the Apartheid system. This Apartheid system was based on "cheap black labour […] particularly in the mines. But supplemented with the reserves, the Bantustans." (Interview 1) The interviewee further describes how this rural workforce *"allowed for the perpetuation of very low wages"* mostly due to subsistence and reproductive labour provided by the women (ibid.). Historically and currently, extractive industries play a role in this macro-economic context, one where they are part of the oppressive apparatus yet their collaboration goes without consequences.

> *"The issue is, there are a lot of big businesses in South Africa. I think we did not speak about it. Big businesses benefited during Apartheid and they benefit now. I do not think we are doing enough in South Africa to put them under pressure. […] The point that I am trying to make is that by them doing business during Apartheid, they benefited from Apartheid. What is their responsibility now in a democratic South Africa? Let us take the education crisis. Shouldn't they be levied and say, 'Look, one area of your contribution, at least is to put money into education so that we can rebuilt the country.'"*
>
> (Interview 7)

Paradoxically, everything seems to be business as usual. Some would argue that it got even worse, with neoliberal globalisation undermining the power of the state and shifting the hegemony towards market processes (Interview 13). Still, big corporations are neglecting human rights with huge destructive impacts on ecological environments and people's lives. However, they do not have to come up for the costs of the collateral damage, produced by their destructive practices. They seem to profit without any accountability or social or environmental responsibility (Interview 2, Interview 10).

The above might be the reason for interviewees repeatedly describing capitalism as being violent and killing people with its ecological and social atrocities. This perspective also explains how the participants believe that liberation from capitalism would save people. They describe the capitalist system as being: "violent" (Interview 2) "about wars" and "destruction" (Interview 4), a system "which is killing us mentally" (Interview 13), causing "atrocities" such as "unemployment, a corrupt state, violence against women and children, housing crisis, education crisis" in conjunction with other issues (Interview 7).

This view is similarly upheld from the perspective of political ecology, whereby growth and economic wealth, again, is prioritised over the integrity of an intact ecological system.

> *"That is what capitalism does because it is a system based on compound growth. It is not a system that cannot grow. All the time GDP, GDP, GDP... but what happens when you are growing GDP? You are utilizing up resources of the planet, the non-renewable resources of the planet. You are polluting your sea and the rivers, and other waters, and the soils, and the air, because it is growth. We are crossing ecological boundaries. The planet can only sustain a finite level of resources, its not infinite, but because of competition and this is-- I am just trying to explain how, where the logic comes from."*
>
> (Interview 13)

Political Priorities

Underlying these issues of the capitalist principle of organising the productive forces of a divided society, are political issues. The lack of government's accountability to provide basic services is criticised, along with the notion that the peoples' voices are ignored. In the post-Apartheid context, some would even go that far to claim that the government "betrayed" the people by failing the promise to redistribute wealth and well-being (Interview 7).

Also framed here is the shared disappointment in the ANC, which should have been the liberator of the people's struggles but has now aligned itself with big businesses and prioritised business needs to generate profits over the needs of the people who vote for them (Interview 7). Consequently, one could say that the failed transition to a more equal South Africa is not just due to a strategic error or external circumstances but due to ethical misconduct of leadership.

The AIDC critique of the government's fiscal practices revolve around how the government raises means for the domestic budget and how the money then is spent. The central issue refers to the latter, the issue of tax evasion (or illicit financial flows); multinational corporations shifting their profits made in South Africa to low or no-tax havens. These corporations play a twin role in the economic and unemployment crisis:

> *"One it reduces the tax base, it diminishes the tax base, that is how much money government gets back from taxes and that you can use for a development strategy, but also it perpetuates a low wage regime. A regime of unequal pay, where the majority of workers get paid too little and that is because illicit financial flows is not just about tax evasion, it is about wage evasion."*
>
> (Interview 1)

Other than the problem of corporate irresponsibility is the state's investment decisions. One interviewee claims that the *Public Investment Corporation* (PIC) invests money into these corporations, such as Lonmin[14] and Sylviana – mining companies which are known for their low wage regime (Interview 2). The critique is that there are pressing issues concerning the state of the South African society, which are not addressed by domestic budget.

> *"Instead, it is a budget for the rich, there is nothing that will come out because already many budgets, for many years these things have been happening but there are no changes in our lives... the health system is deteriorating, is in crisis, education in a crisis, public service as a whole is in a crisis in South Africa, there are no jobs, there are no houses, there are no streets in communities". It is claimed that „the budget is not for us, it is for rich people".*
>
> (Interview 3)

The above is what one interviewee phrased as the democracy being "out of control" (Interview 2), emphasising the misrepresentation of the people voting for political leaders, who represent other interests than the ones of the majority. Another interviewee explains the issue of political leadership like this:

> *"If you go to Khayelitsha**,** you see people in shacks. That is the ANC base, for example. Many people vote for them. Surely you should be coming to your base and put housing in your area. It is a logical thing to do, but that does not even happen. […] Some people are just blind loyalists. Like we fought for the ANC for many years, that is why you are going to be. There is a slight improvement. Houses, for example, have been built, there is now electricity that's been expanded to people and stuff like that. If you look at the priorities of the state overall, it is still biased towards big business and capital in South Africa."*
>
> (Interview 7)

The problem with representative democracy is seen in blindly following the state merely due to its essential role of making sure that society is organised in a certain way (Interview 2). The paradox outlined in the quote above is that the people voting for a government which does not care for them, still follow it. Framed by the interviewee as "blind", these people are unable to see what more critical voices see or implied by the phrase "loyalists" follow their leaders due to a nostalgic commitment.

[14] Lonmin is especially controversial, as it was involved in the 2012 Marikana Massacre, in which over 30 mineworkers were killed by the police after they were called by Lonmin, reporting the workers due to their protests for a fair wage (Interview 8).

6.2.2 Agent of Change

Civil society actors are seen as potential agents of change. One interviewee discusses the role of CSOs:

> *"They play an important role in holding government to account. Governments in a capitalist society tend to be heavily pushed in their interest into reflecting their interests of the dominant capitalist grouping at that time. Civil society NGOs can play an important role in articulating a different position, a different perspective, and supporting organisations who are putting pressure on the state to say 'no, instead of looking to business, look to us. Represent us, make us your main constituency, not business.' That is a role that NGOs and civil society can actually play."*
>
> (Interview 12)

Civil society actors such as NGOs are therefore seen to be the agencies of alternative thinking since they take an oppositional position towards governments. NGO's tasks are questioning policies and movement's interests to demand the representation of the (broader) society. It is implied that *"business"* occupies the position of being "*looked at"* as the state's constituency. It seems that civil society here is distinguishable to organisations such as NGOs and popular social movements. The movements are the one's identified to put pressure on the government and demand to be represented while the NGOs are there for their support. Another interviewee highlights this appointment of distinct roles between NGOs like the AIDC and "*strong popular movements and organisations*" they support, claiming that *"these* [the social movements] *are the people who bring about change*." (Interview 1)

It becomes apparent that the AIDC is not seen as the agent of change itself. Its role is to raise the awareness of the people and to change the status quo. All it can do is influence the policymakers indirectly and advise the movements (Interview 4). This clarification is crucial when it comes to an understanding the work of the AIDC, as it is the principle on which all of its strategic frameworks are built. To be an *activist* think tank, they need to activate decision-makers to use their political will and power to change this system.

> *"That requires then to think about, okay, so you are a little group of 10 people opposing a state, how are you going to do that? Well, you got to build the social weight of.. whom? You ask yourself who are the agents of change who can bring about transformation? That goes back to our roots within the liberation agents of change and the poor, the marginalized, the working classes, those who have been dispossessed, and who in their everyday life experience are the victims of these processes."*
>
> (Interview 9)

The logic here is that, as a mass-based interest group, by organising the unemployed, precariously employed and other worker interest groups, enough *"social weight"* (Interview 9) will be allocated to put enough pressure on policymakers. This broad base of social movements raises

issues with trade liberalisation, which can then potentially change the macro-economic conditions (Interview 7, Interview 9).

However, people need to see what the problem is first and understand what needs to be done to change it. Seeing and understanding are not acting; therefore, they must be made conscious. This consciousness comes with a struggle:

> *"That again, means if you want to build that agency, you better raise the consciousness. You have got to have a sense of how is consciousness raised? What are the pedagogies of all of this? Do you just go and tell them like a preacher and think you are a missionary? No. There is a different way, rather that is accompaniment. AIDC has developed a relationship with several key grassroots formations around the country, and trade unions, who we give support to in their struggles and try to assist them institutionally, strategically, and accompany them as you would accompany a friend in need on that sense."*
>
> (Interview 9)

Therefore, the AIDC can contribute to changing the status quo for the betterment for both the marginalised and broader society. The AIDC mission involves preparing the ground for movements to use their activism more powerfully. Additionally, they endeavour to support their struggles and help them in making their demands heard. Nevertheless, it is important to state that the AIDC does this by adhering to one main principle: the movements themselves are the priority, their struggles define their demands which, in turn, determines their work. The AIDC avoids becoming a substitution or to take ownership of its partner's struggles and campaigns. The above shapes the work of the AIDC accordingly and is worked out in a kind of template, which reflects the mode of operation, applicable for every of the AIDC interventions (Interview 1, Interview 9, Interview 12).

How to achieve this shift in unequal power relations is the most crucial question the AIDC poses concerning its mission. The AIDC assumes that the unification of social forces, many of them scattered and disorganised, would be the right measurement to push back against the oppressive tendencies of the mainstream development paradigm and its policies (Interview 7, Interview 9).

6.3 METHODOLOGY OF CHANGE

So far, the problems defined cover several dimensions of the way how society is organised and linked to a particular political-economic system. This mode of problem-thinking is integrated into a multi-dimensional analysis of the status quo in South Africa and the world. Some mechanisms were already worked out as being repressive, such as the social division in hierarchical

terms and the oppressions following these divisions; as well as political reasons which have to do more with accountability than external mechanisms that produce the status quo.
When it comes to the actual part of working towards a better society, change is the lead topic. The view on change is here that it is always imminent, as society is continuously transforming. The crucial question regarding the social transformation is rather 'where to'? "I am a strong believer, nothing stays forever, you understand. I mean if you look at the all development of societies over the past hundred years, you could see things are changing all the time. It is just depending in which direction it is going to change? That is what we have to work on I think." (Interview 7)
The direction of change is what needs to be managed in a manner that there is an improvement for the lives of people. In this sense, the interviewees' perspective is mostly that systemic changes are needed to get closer to that *"better society"* (Interview 3, Interview 4, Interview 7, Interview 12, Interview 13).

The issue here is that within the current status quo, there is a disequilibrium of power amongst social stakeholders, and social groups. This disequilibrium facilitates a development strategy which caters for the interests of business, neglecting the needs of poorer groups (Interview 3, Interview 9, Interview 10). A shift in power relations is perceived to be an effective means to focus the government's attention on the needs of the marginalised and socio-economically excluded parts of society. Concerning the wellbeing of the people, the environment in which they live must be cared for as well. The current state looks different; ecological degradation and climate change mainly contributed by the extractive sector and energy production based on fossil fuels. This ecological degradation has led to multiple crises, endangering people's livelihoods, sovereignties, people's health, fostering environmental degradation, political misrepresentation, climate change, the disintegration of the social fabric and many more issues and side effects (Interview 2, Interview 9, Interview 13).

To identify an issue means that one must analyse not only the individual problems but the intersections, which then show the linkages between these crises traced back to particular mechanisms. The AIDC has traced these mechanisms and defined one global system of competition and profit maximisation as the leading cause for all these problems (Interview 13).
The mission is to change the current development trajectory of not only South Africa but globalised society. This mission cannot be achieved in isolation but in alliance with other stakeholders interested in changing the status quo rather than reproducing it.

> *"If I ever had to lead a government here in South Africa with the objective of trying to overcome all the social and economic and environmental and energy problems, can you do it simply within the boundaries of South Africa? No, you cannot. You need the region*

> *to give you the economy of scale. You need the region to give you the power to withstand and resist the European Union and the US and the big global players*."
>
> (Interview 13)

The above still leaves the question of who is going to fight for that, if the state is not able to do so? The same interviewee points out that the strategy to take over control of the state to bring back the power to the people is not applicable in today's globalised society (Interview 13), where nation-states are weak, and being "swallowed up in the neoliberal agenda" (Interview 7). This changed environment leads to a new agent of change beyond political departments: "Politics is not about getting into office. Politics is about power. How do we construct social power that is able to effect the change that we require to save our species and the planet, and so on and so forth?" (Interview 13) By saying that politics is about power, and politics are not only a matter of official authorities, the interviewee refers to ordinary power, meaning power from the people.

6.3.1 Core Partners

The AIDC has established many links and connections throughout its existence but what stands out is their partnership with seven grass-root movements from all over South Africa. These partners are mass-based organisations, which are struggling against injustices in their communities. The AIDC sees these movements as a foundation for their overall vision for a just transition because it considers their potential to form a social counterforce to the oppressing forces of globalisation (Interview 9, Interview 13). Therefore, they form and shape the AIDC's work since they are the missing link in the AIDC's objective to advocate radical changes for a transformation of society. Whilst the AIDC considers itself a think tank for activism, the actual activism and mobilisation for these radical changes must be done by popular power, by people on the ground, grounded in lived experience and concrete realities (Interview 1, Interview 9). The above is why the movements are seen crucial in the accomplishment of the AIDC vision, the core of which being their struggles and demands. The existence of the AIDC is secondary to the movements: a catalyst and means to an end.

> *"I think that is an important thing to understand it was not, as if we were putting forward -- If you look at all the materials that we created in that period, it was done in the name of Jubilee South Africa, not AIDC. There was no attempt to blazon and make propaganda and say, "Oh, this great organisation, AIDC," no. […] We do not have great desires to see the reproduction of a NGO, but rather to subordinate that to the building of popular movements. That is a guide for a lot of the political work that we do at AIDC."*
>
> (Interview 9)

Table 1: List of AIDC's core partners

CORE PARTNERS
Abahlali baseMjondolo, Durban, Kwazulu Natal Their name translates into Shack Dwellers' Movement. They have 56,000 members. They are a fairly new partner and approached the AIDC for assistance in training and organisational development.
Amadiba Crisis Committee, Xolobeni, Pondoland Situated on the border between Kwazulu Natal and the North Eastern Cape, they are central to the *right to say no campaign*. In this sense, their local struggle is part of the broader regional and global campaign to *dismantle corporate power*.
Amandla RIC, Port Elisabeth, Eastern Cape The Amandla branch situated in the Kwazakhele Township is organised around a resource and information centre, supported by the AIDC. The movement was engaged in local solutions for the energy problem, by designing a project which was based on community-owned solar panels (Interview 4).
Botshabelo Unemployment Movement, Free State The movement is relatively old with 10-15 years in existence. One of their projects offers job training for people in the area, especially training women how to do mechanics (Interview 7).
Progressive Youth Movement, Cape Town, Western Cape This movement is very active in the Khayelitsha Township. It has a resume of many struggles fought in that area, such as the housing occupations, toilet wars, land occupations, campaigns for basic services and decent jobs (Interview 3).
SAGRC, Mpumalanga, Eastern Province The SAGRC, South African Green Revolutionary Council, is with its founding year 1986 the oldest movement amongst the AIDC's partners, even older than the organisation itself. They have a fluctuating membership base between 30-500 active members. They work around water for pollutions through mining (Interview 7).
Unemployed People's Movement, Grahamstown, Eastern Cape They were founded in 2009 by Ayanda Kota in solidarity with the shack dweller's movement Abahlali baseMjondolo. The movement has around 1000 members, following the philosophy that people have to have sovereignty over their lives.
Unemployed Assembly All of the AIDC partners allied together as the Unemployed Assembly. Together, their main agenda is to create jobs, apart from the extractivist sector. They are exploring climate jobs and environmentally friendly farms, where solar panels help produce renewable energy (Interview 7).

One common issue tackled by the movements is unemployment. This shared aspect of unemployment is where the AIDC deepens its analytical focus, critically analysing the conditions and possible solutions for this socio-economic crisis (Interview 9). Whatever the AIDC does circles back to the movements and their struggles, not equivalent to their formulations and visions but emerging from it. The core mission is, therefore understanding the bigger picture and the interconnectedness of their struggles. This is the ground for the AIDCs strategic framework This holistic view frames a strategy of taking these locally fought struggles to the next level: a struggle for political participation and inclusion in democratic decision making (Interview 13):

Democracy plays a crucial role in the AIDC vision and mission because their concept of democracy defines their political work and their relationship with their partners. The AIDC believes in a radical democratic representation meaning that people speak for themselves. Hence, in a state which continuously undermines this principle by not adhering to accountability, misrepresenting the people and their demands, one way to deal with this issue is to use popular power as the most immediate principle of democracy – no middlemen, only people represented by themselves (Interview 2, Interview 6, Interview 13).

In this regard, the AIDC work to make visible the linkages between the locally fought struggles and the socio-political and socio-economic context of these struggles, as well as to establish strategic plans of how to make use of these linkages. Concretely, this would mean that if the communities are demanding houses, the AIDC then asks what kind of homes would not only cater to their immediate needs but would also be satisfying the fight against climate change? (Interview 10) The AIDC uses a methodology of oscillating between concrete issues and abstract concepts to find new approaches and solutions. They do not invent solutions from scratch, nor do they find them along the way, but they create them in the process of bridging the micro-lived realities to the macro-superstructure and finding ways how the one can affect the other (Interview 13).

> *"From a strategic point of view, it was to link the local to the global, the micro to the macro within a context of economic globalization, and capitalist globalization however you may call it. To unfold that process of campaigning, because we said, 'It is not enough to educate people. People do not learn abstractly, people learns from doing,' so it is in their resistance, in their taking up of struggles, that people's consciousness would be raised. We try to create possibilities for raising consciousness. As I said earlier, raising consciousness entails linking the local to the global. In other words, expanding the understanding of the broader context, which is shaping the development process in South Africa."*
>
> (Interview 9)

By taking a step back – in a metaphorical sense –from the immediate reality, towards a more abstract analytical level, they can create a holistic picture of, and to find (or create knowledge) of patterns and mechanisms which they can use for strategic interventions. This knowledge created by the AIDC is a means to an end. Due to its political positionality, this knowledge is not neutral but an instrument for the people's liberation *from* struggling.

Challenges

Common challenges for the movements are generally their lack of capacities to meet and organise due to their members being mostly unemployed and meetings being costly. Some of the movements are small in size and therefore marginal, while others are threatened with political killings (Interview 10). Apart from the lack of infrastructural means and geographical disadvantages of movements making it hard to meet regularly, the question of leadership is another aspect of internal issues within the movements, especially regarding democratic decision-making processes. Most of the movements' leadership is male-dominated, and most of the decision made is unilateral (Interview 7).

In terms of organisational independence, their low formalisation is another primary concern. In order to generate funds through their fundraising, specific prerequisites have to be in place, such as an organisational constitution, or something simple as a bank account. For some of the movements, this poses an issue as they need the administrative capabilities to manage these bureaucratic processes (Interview 7, Interview 12).

6.3.2 Work Template

The working template is directed at the point of origin for change: agents of change fighting on behalf of the local communities' struggles.

> *"So if we want to see movements, social movements and trade unions taking up the issue for a just transition to a socially owned renewable energy development path or wage lead development path, based on where we are now in the country, where are social movements, what are their capacities, how do we get from where we are now to where we need to be? That is what..."*
>
> (Interview 1)

Based on the struggle of these movements, the AIDC elaborates a way of how to support their struggles.

> *"So very simply you have unemployed people right, so we would like unemployed people to recognise why they are unemployed in SA, like how do you move or how do you find a possible solution to the crisis of unemployment. So having that capacity to analyse where we are in SA politically, economically, socially and then also think about...*

> *so it is about giving the leadership or the many members of the strategic partners the capacity to have and implement their own tools of analysis so that they are not dependent on an NGO to say this is what you must do and then you just blindly follow, no. We trying to show, based on their struggles why they have this issue, how they can think about different reasons and apply themselves, in their thinking."*
>
> (Interview 1)

The above is what constitutes the AIDC's work: 1. Do research and analysis of underlying causes of issues, 2. Disseminate this information and translate it into popular education, 3. support movements institutionally, and 4. Strengthen movements through campaigning. These pillars of work are interlinked and integrated into any of the AIDC's work.

Research and Analysis

Taking unemployment issues as an example, the AIDC identifies the underlying mechanisms creating the unemployment crisis – the macroeconomic framework of South Africa in the context of neoliberal globalisation – through research and analysis. This research currently includes unemployment statistics, economic policies, fiscal restraints, and global trade agreements (Interview 7).

Popular Education

The main objective of popular education is to raise awareness for the conditions determining their struggle and to foster ways of understanding their embeddedness in socio-political dynamics. The AIDC approach is to simplify statistics, information and to prepare workshops in which the movements are trained to understand government policies, the root causes of their struggles within South African political economy, and how to play a role in this game. There are annual workshops held by the AIDC covering three major topics: evolving around activist training, rights education, and updating popular masses and partner organisations on government politics (Interview 7).

Another branch of popular education is learning in self-initiatives in the format of reading groups, where the partners are encouraged to engage in literature and to discuss what they have found together. This is done in order to nurture an environment of analytical critique and arguing in a dialogical manner (Interview 7). The overarching objective here is to establish means of analysis, which make the linkages between the direct lived experience of a day-to-day struggle and the more abstract mechanisms of the socio-political context apparent. The aforementioned analysis is supposed to prepare the ground for the strugglers' agency and emancipation from these oppressive mechanisms (Interview 7, Interview 13).

Movement Building

The other part of the movement-building is to become strategically relevant as movements. This strategic relevance includes the mobilisation for strategic events and issues, bringing them together with strategic partners and working-class formations (Interview 6, Interview 7). The AIDC assists with its political knowledge and analytical eye to help movements strategize where they want to move and how to get there. Developing a strategic framework means to have a clear objective and a sound methodology of how to achieve it, it means to see the bigger picture to be able to anticipate and plan.

Movement Support

Regarding movement support, the AIDC encourages partners to campaign, for example helping to put their demands into a form which is applicable in the context of intervention.

> *"We are more playing that facilitation role as an organisation […]I remember for the recent public hearings on Eskom electricity tariff increases our members, communities and partner organisations also made submissions, we assisted them with putting up arguments and submit those to the national energy regulator for instance, why we do not support a tariff increase from Eskom, given the current electricity crisis in South Africa and the impact that it has on the unemployed, even on the workers and on everyone."*
>
> (Interview 4)

Lastly, most of the AIDC partner movements struggle with resources and capacities. Therefore, the AIDC supports them with resources such as office grants, money for telecommunication or transportation. Other than this infrastructural support, there is advocacy in terms of organisational issues, for example, how to get registered and the importance of a bank account for NGO-independent funding. The AIDC also advises on how to get organisationally independent from other NGOs. The above also speaks to movement building, which is primarily about capacities:

> *"Speaking to the issue of capacity, I think that is lacking in most partner organisations because if we add-- well, let us take a normal thing like a media person. They communicate but the level of communication is not very effective. You cannot influence broader discourse in your country because you do not have the capacity to do that. It is only when you march or you demonstrate the media will come and it is the publicity that you get. It is on a very limited basis."*
>
> (Interview 7)

This work template is used around the work with and for partners, adapting to their experience of struggle. The role the AIDC plays is *not* to substitute for popular grass-root movements but

rather to assist wherever the movements reach their capacities for them to use their full potential as agents of change. This relationship is a two-way process, as one interviewee points out:

> *"We draw lessons from them, and we learn from them. It is a mutually development process because we could not have done all the things that we have done without a massive learning process and gaining insight. Again, we do not do it from researching you coming from outside. Rather, we try to put ourselves in your reality and learn from your reality together with you. That means a great sensitivity to the nature of these formations."*
>
> (Interview 9)

The above highlights the AIDC's approach of advocating and assisting but never dictating what is right and what needs to be implemented. They work directly with the communities and based on their experience on the ground they shape their programmatic work around it, so that the people's needs are at the centre of every action at a community or policy level. This direct relationship means that everything is conditional to what it does for the people on the ground (Interview 12).

6.3.3 Trade Unions

The AIDC considers trade unions as an important ally concerning working-class issues and deconstructing neoliberalism as undefeated. However, in contrast to grass-root movements, they play a peripheral role in the AIDC's framework. The work with unions can get convoluted as they are already part of a highly political arena. Besides, their capacity to revolt and mobilise is limited due to legal restrictions and binding contracts (Interview 3, Interview 4, Interview 7).

The relationship between the AIDC and the trade unions is based on mutual support within specific contexts. The contribution to this relationship from the side of the trade unions is characterized by sharing information, leaking insider knowledge, supporting campaigns with their resources and capacities (which social movements often lack). The AIDC contributes with capacity building assistance, as well as their expertise in practicing thorough research of the political economy or when specifically requested by the trade unions. Other than the work with its core partners, the working relationship with trade unions is more or less issue-based, and the connections are sometimes closer, and sometimes there is no communication over an extended period. Nevertheless, this is acceptable since the work with the trade unions is just one arm of the AIDC mission; political support for the core-commitment to build a strong case against neoliberal globalisation (Interview 6).

The strategic perspective to work with trade unions is to use their insights as whistle-blowers, sharing information of their workplace such as DENOSA (Democratic Nursing Organisation

of South Africa) did for the local campaign against labour brokers at Khayelitsha hospital, or leaking insider information about the tax evasion practices of mining corporations (Interview 3, Interview 6). Another aspect, which does the work with trade unions beneficiary to the AIDC agenda, is their workers' interest opposed to the corporate interests. At the same time, they bring in resources and capacities which the social movements do not have. As self-standing institutionalised organisations, trade unions are social movements which developed a political weight, having the potential to influence policymaking when they mobilise their members for political campaigning, especially during election periods. They are, therefore, a potential asset in negotiations with government officials (Interview 7).

The above is why the AIDC considers it important to side with unions. The AIDC strategy with the trade unions is to make them understand the AIDC perspective on social issues, make them see the linkages between their agenda of representing workers' interests and progressive alternatives as proposed by the AIDC (Interview 9).

The fight against unemployment, for example, is interesting with reference to a "reserve army", ready to fill in for workers unsatisfied with their working conditions. The increase of casual labour leads to precarious working conditions and the exchangeability of workers undermining their position with their employers. Another example would be the unapproved strikes of My-Citibus drivers, who then had repercussions and lost their jobs or had to sign new contracts, which put them in a worse condition than before (Interview 10). The above undermines the very position of trade unions and reveals one of their weaknesses: the inability to protest in an uncoordinated manner outside the legal framework – binding their workers to their jobs. Grass-root formations in contrast, work on their own terms, making their actions immediate and vital (Interview 7). "So those are the differences between us and the unionists, they play obeying the rules of the system you know. (Whereas) we as the movement we do not obey that, you know, if there is something wrong now, we call the community - or the community will act without the movement and the movement would be called to lead."(Interview 10)

6.3.4 Policy Intervention

In the endeavour to change economic policies or certain aspects, it seems productive to merge the political power of individual agents to one movement, which is more significant than the individual parts. This logic applies to the AIDC's strategy to build networks around the globe, linking up different agents to form an international movement that is strong enough to keep up with the power of global players (Interview 7, Interview 13).

More implicitly, one strategic thought is that this "power" is not only a direct asset in protesting but also is a discursive manner of influencing the conversation. Furthermore, bringing together key stakeholders that are beneficial to the cause, such as trade unions with their political weight and connectedness to political parties, can be seen as a strategy to get policy-makers on their side; to raise awareness for the cause and prove its relevance. The overall objective of protests is either way to shape the future policies. Therefore, not only *hard* power of protesting masses but also *soft* power by influencing the discourse and allying with strategic partners are a way of influencing political decision-makers.

The above reflects the dual strategy the AIDC follows regarding its work of policy intervention on two levels. One level concerns the political and advocacy work towards decision-makers. The AIDC is an institution which formulates alternatives. It advocates the state in changing their current policies towards these alternatives if they want to see the crisis disappear: "What would a better alternative to doing electricity look like that keeps electricity as a public good, that is more conducive to meeting people's needs." (Interview 12)
The level of policy intervention concerns the groundwork with their partners – the communities which are in a day to day struggle for better living conditions. By proposing well researched and elaborated solutions to their struggles, the AIDC strengthens the negotiation power of the movements. In contrast, the movements have the social power to use pressure *from below*. These solutions are always part of the bigger alternative, ultimately pushing concrete demands for one issue and potentially bringing the overarching agenda to the fore (Interview 12, Interview 13). The level of policy intervention on a more technical level seeks not only to change small policies but to tackle the paradigm that currently influences policies.

> *"So these are all [our] efforts in trying to conscientize people in trying to engage government from an advocacy point of view and policy formulation or influencing government policies and shift towards the just transition which includes shift in all economic activities in South Africa."*
>
> (Interview 4)

6.3.5 Linking Agendas

The issue with connecting different dimensions, and the complexity of intersections pose a difficulty for the AIDC to simultaneously address these issues *and* make them relatable for the people. The answer is the programmatical connection of the climate crisis with the main thread of the AIDC's work the mass unemployment. Addressing people in their immediate conditions and offering them concrete solutions to their situation whilst at the same time raising awareness for the climate crisis. In this regard, showing these linkages is the main task for the AIDC so

that people can relate to the broader scope of the issue by seeing its relevance to their lives. Another tactical approach is not to overwhelm people with a catastrophic view but to offer concrete alternatives instead, which encourage people to fight. One interviewee pointed out that abstract interconnections of issues are too complex for the people to understand while they are preoccupied with their every-day struggles. The strategic approach thus entails to make these interconnections visible and comprehensible through linking the abstract realm with these every-day struggles. This rooting of the macro-dimension in the local context happens best through campaigning in which the people can experience the connections first-hand to derive their own understandings of it (Interview 9).

Regarding policy and decision-makers, the AIDC drives a similar approach to make the matter relatable to them. Proposing alternatives to the development paradigm offering hands-on solutions close the circle of argumentation.

> *"By addressing the climate crisis, we can create so many millions of jobs which would making inroads into unemployment crisis and put us on at a different development trajectory. It is like this, we said we are basically facing economic and an ecological crisis at the same time. We need solutions to both. Those solutions lie in developing a renewable energy industry, which can help to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and at the same time create lots of jobs, more jobs than are present in coal."*
>
> (Interview 9)

Connecting the argument of both issues strategically makes the same agenda more relevant to more people. The economic dimension is interesting for the South African economy as well as the people on the ground affected by these macroeconomic policies. In contrast, the environmental crisis is of concern for the whole world. Thus, the goal of promoting a new world order is abstract and very broad,

> *"We try to cover a lot of it, but it is so difficult. […]I mean, this system is an international system, it oppresses people worldwide. There is no way that we can liberate South Africa and think that we will be okay on our own, it is not going to work. We got to find ways of building internationally and that is even a bigger challenge."*
>
> (Interview 7)

The AIDC links this overarching objective or end goal with concrete issues by addressing the core cause of both these concrete issues, as well as clarifying the reproduction of this unbalanced global hegemonic playing field:

> *"So if we tackle big corporations its about how money is used in our country for our people, that is the big thing for us. At the end of the day its about the people being employed, how you and also ways of how people could be employed."*
>
> (Interview 8)

6.4 CONCEPTUAL DIMENSION

The cognitive dimension describes the logical framework of the AIDC. Here we find normative, conceptual as well as strategic frameworks which shape the work of the organisation. In simple terms, this section is about *what* the AIDC thinks about community struggle and what a better society should look like. In terms of agency, the conceptual realm is considered crucial because it is here where the motivation to act is formulated. The way how we perceive the world and how we imagine it to be guiding our actions and objectives.

6.4.1 The Role of Normativity

One of the interviewees reflects about the meaning of normativity during the interview, describing normativity as something which is co-determined by the historical context. As exemplified by the right for women to vote, which was not the norm a hundred years ago. Moreover, such as norms develop over the course of time, the normative definition of "right" and "wrong" is nothing absolute but might change in the future. “This might seem messy what I am saying, but I have a belief that general consensus is fluid. What is wrong right now might not be wrong ten years or fifty years from now.” (Interview 2)

The interviewee could imagine that equal pay could be such a norm in the future. In this regard, the interviewee’s standpoint is that the consensus is the guideline to follow. This perception of the consensus as a guide implies that if something is generally agreed to be wrong and that hence, rules are defining such wrongdoing and the reaction to it. “If committing a crime means this, then you are wrong, you go to jail, whatever. If theft means this and that is what theft is, then you are wrong. Right now, theft is taking from others, therefore it is wrong.” (Interview 2)

It is interesting that although it seems to be clear what wrong is once it is defined, especially by the juridical system, it is not always followed through consequently as one interviewee points out concerning corruption by government officials:

> *“[…]crazy...if you steal you must get arrested, if you steal money you must get arrested, whereas they are stealing money, they are stealing money from the poor, but they are not arrested because at the moment they are the principals of the.. the rulers of society at the moment, so they have the power of the state, military, police, everything is in their hands at this moment.”*
>
> (Interview 3)

This quote points out that normativity is not just a matter of moral awareness but power. Just because something is legally wrong does not mean that the system of persecution follows

through with it. This partial commitment highlighted norms and rules are constructed and negotiated, rather than universally given. The history of women suffrage shows that consensus develops over time. Still, it also implies that the process of negotiating this consensus is a matter of who has the power over society. In a patriarchal system, women suffrage was erroneous because women had little to say about what is right and wrong. Claiming their rights also meant contesting the very conditions of (gender) power relations. Similarly, corrupt officials are in a position of power, misusing it for illicit practices.

Norms being shaped and transformable means that it is a continuous process of either conservation of norms or the transformation of these. The example of the women's suffrage shows what was considered wrong was turned around as something unquestionably right today. Further, norms cannot protect from corruption. As such, moral judgements and consensus are not neutral or universal but contextual to the overall power relations within societies.

What is "Wrong"?

The question therefore is – if the moral judgment cannot adhere to timeless laws – how do people come to perceive something as wrong? One interviewee's account of housing evictions,[15] and how they appeared to be wrong, helps to understand the logic of normativity. The observation of the circumstances in which these evictions occurred, led to the judgement that these practices where unethical. In many cases, older women could not pay off the houses after they lost their husbands, who were the breadwinner. Now due to a payment scheme which did not care for their protection, they lost their homes as well. "So, mostly it targeted […] widows to pensioners […] While, whereas maybe the husband, the late husband, died [and] it was paid off by the employee or the pensioners, now they are no longer paying." (Interview 3)

Although not being unlawful or illegal, the actions of the government agency to evict people are considered wrongful due to the effects they have on the individuals. The perception of it being unjust might also come from the fact that these evictions happened to a broad section of society, marginalised individuals who have no other means are thus "target[ed]" and evicted from their homes. This often resulted in many individuals being left on the streets. Seeing the

[15] These housing evictions in the townships took place when people couldn't pay off their bond-houses. Bond housing is a scheme where people pay off their houses like it is rent but, in the end, only own the house once it is *completely* paid off. Often the payments stop because of the loss of the bread winning income, through death (of a family member) or unemployment. Evictions can be the result.

context of their insolvency in that they are vulnerable and hence unable to pay, is the basis for the criticism and protest:

> *"And then, as a result, it went further. The municipality decide to increase the rates, […] cannot afford to pay, people were owing plus-minus 100 000, in some of the families. So we said okay this debt must be scrapped off and then they must start new because some of this debt was Apartheid debt and we said everything that happened under Apartheid must be scrapped off. And then people supposed to start a new way of paying the municipality but the government, they refused. […] And then we said no if you are refusing and then we will show you. We showed the government who we are. Then we did a lot of protests. As a result, we held a government official hostage in Mandela Park, I remember those days – holding the hostage and then we made her to sign a R10 flat rate for the municipal services."*
>
> (Interview 3)

In this case, the community, or at least some people from that community, play according to their own rules and have their sense of normativity. The bond-housing-system is perceived to be unjust, which is apparent by the word "targeted" implying that it is a scheme. Further, the increase of municipal rates is seen problematic because it is evident that they are unaffordable for highly indebted families. From an economic and legal point of view, the municipalities decline the demands for affordable services, and activists deduct from it the legitimacy to prove that they are "right" by using forceful measures (Interview 3).

In other instances, privatisation is considered to be wrong, as it is harmful to the marginalised who suffer from the retrenchment of government's responsibility to protect the poor.

> *"At school when we were taught about economics […] So, there are many things they were teaching us to accept it. And I say no this is wrong because privatisation is based on this business taking over from the government and then what they will do, they will not provide service, they will provide service for profit. So, it is wrong, privatisation is wrong, all those things."*
>
> (Interview 3)

Here, the profit-motive is "wrong" because essential services underly the free-market-logic and not the needs-based logic of the activists. Another interviewee explains:

> *"I would argue strongly that the state needs to plan a key role in delivering services that meet people's basic needs […] a belief that the private sector with the profit motive is not going to be able to deliver those basic needs."*
>
> (Interview 12)

The above two quotes show how the grounds for normativity are to be found in the paradigmatic positioning of the interviewees. "I would regard myself as socialist. It is a political motivation around struggling around people's basic needs" (Interview 12). The socialist notion of needs-

centred policies stands against the neo-liberal idea of economics. Another interviewee uses arguments which follow the logic of economics, based on the model of state investment for redistribution and in opposition to cutbacks:

> *"Again, it is important to understand what the government did was in June 1996, they implemented what one could call a home-grown structure adjustment programme and that entailed privatisation. It entailed fiscal discipline, cutting budgets, all of these types of things. At a very moment when you would imagine that you would need to expand the budget, increase taxation of the rich, et cetera, in order to facilitate re-distribution programme."*
>
> (Interview 9)

Following this argument, privatisation is first of all wrong because it does not lead to the outcome which would be normatively wished for and promised by the new government: redistribution. Another presumption of what is wrong can be given by religious teachings, such as the Muslim faith which demands believers to fight for equality and against injustices and wrongdoings (Interview 8).

Even, amongst the activists of the same organisation normativity is based on different logics and standpoints. What is the underlying meaning to it? Normativity is not perfect, it is ambiguous and far from being objective and universally true. Still, we need some sort of agreement of what is determined right and wrong. One interviewee elaborates on that indirectly, describing the motivation in the fight for social justice. The premises of doing no harm to others and the belief that people should not suffer are central topics here. Progress cannot be right if constituted on the suffering of others; suffering must be prevented, respectively, as it is wrong to induce suffering (Interview 2). Someone's gain cannot be due to the profit of someone else's suffering. Freedom to execute one's rights to flourish is not straight-forward but might be in conflict with other people's rights as is outlined here using the example of freedom of choice: "We are not saying it should be an absolute right. No right is absolute. I have the right to freedom of speech as long as it does not infringe on your human dignity" (Interview 2). The interviewee is conscious about these conflicting social norms and highlights that there is no "absolute right" but that the right is relational to other human beings' rights. Anti-suffering and the equality of opportunities seem to be something which is more relative to the context than a mere absolute assertion of freedom.

Mining is considered by most of the participants to be morally problematic (at least in the South African context) because they see "mining as another form of exploitation of environment, another form of exploitation of workers, another form of exploitation […] those who are making profit will be making profit at their [communities] expense, right" (Interview 10).

Mining is not only considered an issue due to its exploitation of workers but also the destructiveness of the impacts induced by careless mining companies:

> *"They are destroying freshwater resources, mining. All of the Gauteng natural water, underground water is threatened by acid mine drainage. It will cost billions and billions of Rands to stop the-- and we have got limited time to stop the entire water table being ruined. Who created that? […] It is big corporations coming, drilling three kilometres underground."*
>
> (Interview 13)

Concerning the immoral practices of mining companies, one interviewee criticises the state's investment in mining being ethically problematic since mining is hazardous to people's health and taking away communities' right to decide over their fate, in the worst case it even "killing" people such as seen in the Marikana Massacre or the work-related deaths of miners. The wrongfulness of this kind of investment is highlighted when put against basic needs, which are not worth spending money on. "[T]ake the money and let us say make a public transport system that works. Take that surplus and build toilets. Why are you investing it in Lonmin which killed workers? Why are you investing it in Sylvania which is not going to give workers any money?" (Interview 2)

In the examples around mining, it becomes clear that normative decisions are based on concrete practices and contexts. It is not mining per se that is wrong, but the decisions which are made in its practice by corporations and by the government. It highlights the role agents play in the evaluation of "right" and "wrong": Ignorant and careless behaviour that induces destructive impacts for the people and environment and the state's investment in these agents. The main issue seems to be that the mining companies use their right to make profits while exploiting people economically and endangering them by destroying their environment. The government seems to prioritise this "bad" behaviour, investing in mining rather than in protecting the people from its disastrous social and environmental effects. The government siding with and investing in the corporations with ethical misconduct is acting itself unethically.

Now, defining what is wrong and what is (a) right is setting the frame for enacting this normativity. The concept of justice can be seen as the framework of "setting straight" agents in their actions – by punishment, or less severely, by making them aware of their wrongful actions. As one interviewee was quoted earlier, acting against the consensus must have consequences, making sure that the consensus is met is "maintaining justice" (Interview 2).

6.4.2 What Does it Mean to Struggle?

During the research, especially in the research field, the terminology of "struggle" seemed to have a central role in the AIDC's work with community organisations, as well as the individual histories of the staff. It soon turned out to have various connotations with it and ambiguous meanings. It might have appeared at first that the inflationary use of "struggle" to explain everything which has to do with the "activist" experience makes the word less meaningful. After a thorough investigation and interpretation of the data gathered, the conceptualisation around this terminology turned out to be very broad in its scope but with distinct connotations, making the term meaningful according to its context. It seems to be one of those "in-betweens" - namely in between meanings - which are worth a closer look.

I reconstructed four major definitions of the terminology “struggle”, which are a) regarding the mode of struggle and b) the dimensions of the durability of struggles. Within a) the two modes of struggle, I found that either struggle would be understood as something one is exposed to or as a (re)action taken up to resist or push back against these circumstances. Within b) the scope of struggle, people would refer to acute situations or conditions on the one hand, and a long-term definition of a continuous battle, such as the working-class struggle. The following paragraphs will show how these different dimensions of struggle unfold.

Struggle = Condition

One example is concerning material conditions; as they struggle to come up with resources many grass-root movements are facing: “A lot of the community-based organisations struggle with resources, they are often quite small, the struggle with resources is a major issue.” (Interview 12). In the context of people’s life-worlds struggle can refer to the “conditions people [in the townships] are living in” (Interview 7), which another interviewee described as the “*unfavourable micro or local conditions that they face.”* (Interview 9).

Struggle = Activism

A second way how the concept of struggle was used was the actions against these unfavourable conditions. While the first notion describes the circumstances of the struggle, here struggle refers to the efforts of withstanding these conditions and further fight these conditions.

> *“Yes, because of the conditions in our communities, there was unemployment, the councillors were doing corruption you know…[…] and also the poor basic services, that was wrong, I think. So, we fought for... […]. So, we organised ourselves we did a lot of paperwork and strikes and so on because we were angry.”*

(Interview 3)

The concept of a struggle as a form of protest or activism is at the intersection finding oneself in unfavourable conditions and doing something against it: "Because we are still struggling against neoliberal policies, AIDC's strategy of being an activist think tank has not changed. In that sense, that is the reason why we continue because the same material challenges, material conditions exist only in a heightened form." (Interview 11) Struggling *with* the above conditions is, therefore, the motivation to struggle *against* these challenges. Hence both the cause and the reaction are interrelated.

This meaning of the word struggle is expressed as something someone actively induces in order to overcome these odds or unfavourable conditions, "[Y]ou can put viable alternatives that give confidence to people that in other world is possible and they will continue to struggle against the challenging odds." (Interview 13). In this quote it is apparent that the "challenging odds" are something one struggles with, but also the struggle, in this case, is something which "they will continue", implying that *they* actively challenge these odds. It is also highlighted that some sort of motivation or "confidence" is needed to keep up struggling for overcoming the unfavourable conditions. In this case, the interviewee mentions "viable alternatives" as the motivation to keep confident.

Once the motivation is there, advocating a reason to fight for something, the question is how this struggle is unfolded. The interviewees advocate that the term *struggle* is often synonymous with the notion of a fight or a protest*:* "So we organised [...] we started a struggle in fact" (Interview 3) or "launching a struggle […] to fight injustice" (Interview 13) as a synonym for starting a fight. Hence, for some interviewees, the struggle has a connotation of a quarrel or radical activism:

> *"So I come out of that era where my high school years was years of struggle, I never sat in the classroom studying[…], because we were on the road throwing stones and that was the consciousness that we got." (Interview 8) Another interviewee connects smoke with a struggle: "So if I see smoke out there, I know there is a struggle, something is happening."*
>
> (Interview 3)

<u>The temporal dimension of struggle: acute versus chronic</u>

Let me elaborate on these two dimensions. The concept of the class struggle can best be explained as the dimension of a struggle in its continuity. Here the notion of social classes being in a constant fight over the control of productive sources in society evolves over a long period as well as it is entrenched in the organisation of society. The second dimension of struggle

would be best understood as an acute fight: A protest, demonstration or radical action with a clear winner and loser dynamic – meaning the fight is over once the winner could be determined. It is important to note that these dimensions are not necessarily exclusive, as one specific struggle (i.e. protest) can be situated in the broader framework of a long-term struggle, such as the class struggle.

Struggle = acute conflict

In this sense, the struggle can take the form of an acute conflict, such as the struggle against the "bucket system" in the 2011 toilet wars,[16] which refers to the burning of toilets and barricading of streets as an expression of this protest, "[s]o, we organised, we said let us take this bucket system, you know, and put them on the road and burn them, you know. We did that the police came they wanted to shoot us, and we started a struggle in fact." (Interview 3)

The struggle for decent sanitary infrastructure unfolded in an aggressive contest with the police, who fired rubber bullets and resorted to other forms of violence in order to tame the unrest. The use of force by both activists using fire and the police ready to open fire, highlights the connotation of a war-like conflict. Another interviewee explains that through "the struggle for basic services […] they have managed to attain a victory there" (Interview 10). It implies that these kinds of struggles have a winning and a losing side. The acute struggle is, therefore won once the demands are met.

> *"So it is one of the victories that we managed to attain in the area, streets were built as well. You know, because remember there were no toilets, there were no streets, and then the movement arrived, and then all those things changed."*
>
> (Interview 10)

Struggle = chronical contest

More silently is the struggle emphasised as a chronicle contest: The struggle as a never-ending negotiation of power and hegemony between the social classes. In this case, the working class and the capitalist class, as described by the following quote:

> *"So I think that it is just a fight against global capitalism and that is what we are all about and it is a struggle, and our whole notion is that we want people to have jobs,*

[16] Bucket System refers to mobile toilets used in the townships of South Africa, where no sanitary infrastructure is in place. This chemical toilet system was highly combatted by activists in 2011, also known as "toilet wars" (see Robins 2014).

however, and this is our organisation, but we want people to have decent jobs, we want people to […] So that is our whole thing is that we want people in our country to earn a good salary and have good work and the profits that are generated in our country should stay in our country so that the people could be paid right, that is the basic wage lead the struggle that we are struggling for, in the simplest terms."

(Interview 8)

Another interviewee points out that this struggle for decent jobs and fair wages is a matter of how wealth is distributed amongst society:

"Well, I guess that the two main drivers are the capacity for society to share wealth fairly, to distribute wealth and how you organise this wealth distribution. So, some frame it in the class struggles; some frame it in the redistribution and access to essential human rights. So different ways to frame it, but I think it is a major consensus."

(Interview 6)

One crucial aspect which distinguishes the working-class struggle is that it is antithetical to the capitalist interests. Some of the interviewees highlight that some people involved in the Apartheid struggle were not fighting against injustice due to its normative issues. Instead, they were interested in fighting poverty and exclusion from the ruling classes. Therefore, many of the people struggling against the oppression of Apartheid aligned themselves with the capital's interests. This capitalist alignment, in the view of the interviewees, means that they became the oppressive class themselves.

One interviewee explained how the people struggling against Apartheid for social transformation are now the ones who are on the other side of the struggle:

"I think the ANC have shifted far to the right in terms of economic policy in South Africa, and that is part of the reason why we [are] sitting with this huge social crisis at the moment. Then, of course, they added things like the corruption and stuff. They have changed. Like I said, I worked with about 20 of them in '93. COSATU people that went to parliament. When you are in a Labour Movement, you have a totally different perspective. You want to see that the needs of everyone is seen to, not your personal pockets. The moment they were there, they just changed like that [snaps fingers] like individual interests reign supreme and the masses were no longer important. It is almost like they got swallowed up in this neoliberal agenda."

(Interview 7)

Whereas this quote expresses some sort of compliance with the neoliberal agenda as in "it is nothing that they can do." (ibid.), another interviewee finds more critical words in explaining this development:

"It was very much their class interests. Again, a quote you might want, the then official ANC spokesperson went down in infamy or history or whatever. He was accused of corruption and his response, 'We did not struggle to be poor.' […] That is it. Okay, you did not struggle to be poor, how do you become rich? Well. […] You align yourself with

capital, you see your interests as capital interests. You, therefore, do not do anything that's going to make life difficult for capital. It has an awful logic of its own."
(Interview 11)

This quote emphasises that people who struggle do not always follow the same logic. Those who regard a struggle as a means to change the power structures within society are distinct from the ones who use the struggle for their own benefit. The former group of people truly commited to change, observes a perversion of positions in former "strugglers" who finally "align" themselves to the system of oppression, which they used to fight against (because they are expecting some sort of reward out of this alliance with the former opponent).. However, this is not to say that these people did not struggle in the sense of enduring and fighting back unfavourable circumstances. Yet, their struggle ended here, with their liberation from poverty. For the people fighting for real transformation, the end of Apartheid did not end the emancipative battle for a just society.

Apartheid is just seen as the starting point, but with the legacy of Apartheid, the legacy of the struggle continues, with a new player: the globalisation of neoliberal capitalism, "because we are still struggling against neoliberal policies, AIDC's strategy of being an activist think tank has not changed. In that sense, that is the reason why we continue because the same material challenges, material conditions exist only in heightened form." (Interview 11)

6.4.3 Challenging a Never-Ending Struggle

Now this fits the picture of a never-ending struggle, as described by some of the participants. Winning something one was fighting for does not mean the end of "the struggle", as new things unfold. It could be new challenges or a new form of struggle, such as the alteration of an Apartheid struggle. This was aimed at the system of segregation and racism as a defining mechanism for inequalities. Currently, it is a system of inequality based on the socio-economic status and material conditions, framing one's belonging to a particular class in society and the unequal distribution of wealth along these class lines. Or it could be in more mundane contexts, the coming up of another scandal or another challenge oppressing the capabilities of people to live a decent life "you know government, we say if you win something, they come up with something again" (Interview 3). In some instances, it is highlighted that:

"People would have campaigned maybe or marched or stood with placards to demonstrate, 'look we are unhappy about this!' but it does not mean that we have reached our outcome that they have built so many houses already for people. It does not work like that, but it is an ongoing campaign until we reach where we want to be, people struggle their whole lives."

(Interview 8)

At this juncture it becomes apparent that all the notions of struggling have a political dimension (e.g. class struggle, political activism) but ultimately, they are all grounded in "day-to-day struggles of people for better living and working conditions." (Interview 12)

The Lived Reality of a Struggle

The day-to-day battles highlight the *realness* of the lived struggle experienced first-hand on a continuous basis. The struggle is nothing which will *go away* if one stops struggling – it is an immediate condition shaping the lives of people. It becomes *normality* in the sense that people "struggle their whole lives", continuously being oppressed and deprived the opportunities of a better living. The more it seems to make sense that some people challenge this notion of taking for granted fate with all their force, even risking their lives for it.

One example of such a deadly struggle is the Marikana Massacre in 2012, where police killed 34 mine workers after they protested for a decent living wage of R12 500 (Interview 8). Another example of deadly struggles is the assassination of political activists. One interviewee states that "the work that we are doing is kind of dangerous. […] They shoot us, at times arrest us, at times been killed, we have plus-minus two comrades that were killed in 2017." (Interview 10)

The above implies that there is a thin line which separates the struggle for a better life and the cost of one's life trying. These killings, either in an acute battle by the police using deadly force or by political killings in which activists get murdered on demand, show that the struggle for better lives is highly political. The same interviewee's explanation for the massacre is based on the logic that the ones in power defend their status quo by all means:

> *"Because you know when we are challenging capitalism you also challenge people who are managing capitalism, which is political parties, businesses and all these places and those people are willing to defend capitalism" (Interview 10). Another interviewee supports this position by saying that "they do not want to surrender easily, yes, because they control society, yes"*
>
> (Interview 3)

The excerpt implies that a struggle is not only the lived reality, in the sense that the conditions are adverse, but a matter of social camps competing against each other for the control of society. Struggling for the transformation of society is, therefore, severely warded by the ones wanting to maintain the status quo (Interview 3). Even is not always so violent and deadly, struggling for political power can mean that one struggles for years without "affect[ing] change in the communities and every time you get banged against a brick wall off local government" (Interview 7). The interviewee here is referring to the difficulties in partaking in political decision

making if the own political decision and demands are in opposition with the mainstream parliamentary discourse. This shows how the struggle for survival, for basic needs, and for a decent living, is linked to the political battle against injustice, envisioning just conditions for everyone. Every battle is political.

6.4.4 AIDC's Role for Change

At this point we turn to the AIDC's logic of *intervention* starting point: The AIDC supports communities in their struggles by helping them to fulfil their needs for their struggles (Interview 5). They do this by directly cooperating with the social movements already engaged in the struggle offering to capacitate, inform and support with resources relevant to their fights for better living and working conditions, "We are trying to show, based on their struggles why they have this issue, how they can think about different reasons and apply themselves, in their thinking." (Interview 1)

Part of the AIDC's contribution is to analyse the root causes leading to the conditions that communities are struggling with. The AIDC's approach is to inform and thereby raise the consciousness about underlying mechanisms producing the injustices and inequalities directly experienced by the communities. And here again, the community struggle is not only the starting point but the mode for raising awareness itself:

> *"I think that must be formed in struggle as people go along and develop their consciousness and so on. It is going to take up a while. I do not think it is going to be just overnight when people come up with these things, but every action and this is what I like about South Africa, we are very active in actions. We march, we demonstrate, and I think all of these events is building consciousness all the time."*
>
> (Interview 7)

The next step is to give perspective by proposing alternatives and solutions of how to get out of this oppressive machinery, and finally provide the blueprint to strategize the movements potential actions:

> *"It is definitely about trying to work out how to give some -- AIDC does the research, but then also looking at very practical solutions. What will it mean to give effect to some of that research to really change things, and how can we support organisations who are struggling for change? It is that doable focus."*
>
> (Interview 12)

This focus on "practical" solutions gives the communities perspective to where their struggle can lead to. As outlined earlier, people struggle their whole lives, and "people are nowhere […] you can see that there are more and more people putting up shacks and it is just getting worse.

[…] people are there 20 years during democracy and more even before that. So some people are born in a shack, and some people die in a shack, it's that." (Interview 8). In this sense, the AIDC's mission in supporting the community struggle is not merely technical assistance on *how to effect change through activism,* but motivational guidance. One interviewee points out the role of hope of a struggle, stating that "[t]o be effective in resistance, you need to be able to put forward alternatives. If you just resist, you are going to run out of steam. You can put viable alternatives that give confidence to people that in other world is possible, and they will continue to struggle against the challenging odds." *(*Interview 13)

The manifold role of the AIDC to support communities in their struggle for a better life is shown by another quote:

> *"AIDC has developed a relationship with several key grassroots formations around the country, and trade unions, who we give support to in their struggles and try to assist them institutionally, strategically, and accompany them as you would accompany a friend in need on that sense."*
>
> (Interview 9)

By "layering" the concept of a struggle, one can see the far-reaching dimensions and meanings of it: (a) One connotation of "struggle" is that it is something passively endured. This notion discursively revokes someone's agency by implying that "struggling" equals "being a victim of circumstance", with no potency to safe oneself. Then (b) the second mode of struggling on the other hand combats this impotence. The conceptualisation of "resisting" or "fighting back" shows the aspects of agents to resist, even if the struggle endures – the resistance endures with it. One can say that even if people "struggle their whole lives" and "conditions stay the same" (Interview 8), they are not powerless victims. Still, their resilience proves that they were successful in withstanding the pressure which severe circumstances put upon them. It also expresses an agenda to change the circumstances, an active will to get back the control over these circumstances, which are the lives of people.

"Struggle" is ambiguous, as it is neither the one nor the other but always both. The one comes with the other, the fight comes with the hostile conditions, and the hostile conditions can be worsened by showing resistance, such as the opponent fights back, and vice versa. It seems like there is a circular relation between passive and active, abstract and concrete, which is the actual determining factor of a struggle. The end of a struggle does not mean the end of the suffering. The example of former Apartheid fighters who adhere to the neoliberalist doctrine can be seen as giving up the fight for the cause, "being swallowed up by neoliberalism" (Interview 7).

Putting up a fight and not giving up is regarded as taking back control over the own living conditions in a mundane manner and an overarching political battle of social camps. The example of the toilet protests show that every single "struggle", such as the acute fight with the police, is part of a broader struggle, i.e. the battle for essential services. These demands regarding the basic services are based on a needs-based approach, which itself can be seen as part of the class struggle. The class struggle can also be extended to the Apartheid struggle, which divided the society into classes: the white capitalist bourgeoisie versus the black proletariat. In the post-Apartheid era these class distinctions are still prevalent. Additionally, if the boundaries are permeable it implies that there is now a black elite amongst the bourgeoisie. The exploitation of one class by another is still there.

So, the distinction into the four dimensions or modes of struggle, made at the beginning of this section, do not show what separated these definitions but helps to understand their connectedness. It further, helps to reflect the meaning "struggle" has not only conceptually but in terms of real-life experience. This four-dimensional distinction thus gives us an in-depth understanding of what it means to struggle: a) being put in adverse conditions, b) resisting the oppressive circumstances, c) fighting back, d) change the overall structural conditions.
Therefore, we might understand the AIDC's role in all of this a bit better. The organisation has such a holistic understanding of people's struggle. Their strategy to assist in these struggles is to a) make them understand the context of their unfavourable conditions, b) motivate them to keep resisting by giving them an alternative, c) using activism and campaigning as the mode of d) raising awareness of the overall picture (or the political dimension of their struggle).

PART V – Synthesis & Conclusion

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 SUMMARISING THE KEY FINDINGS

This case study about an NGO in South Africa asked about the agency of an alternative development organisation towards social transformation. Alternative development in this regard was defined as questioning the mainstream development paradigm, namely a growth-led neoliberal globalisation. The interviewees perceived this dominant development path as harmful and contra-productive to the progress of societies because the majority suffers while only a few can profit from it (Interview 2, Interview 3, Interview 10, interview 13). They also highlighted that this development is neither neutral nor natural, but that the organisation of (global) society produces a hegemonic relation between the profiters and the excluded (Interview 1, Interview 6). This relationship is maintained actively by agents, such as government officials or corporate entities, seeking their advancement and turning a blind eye to the accountability for their actions. At the same time, these practices are legitimised by a paradigm which defines a state of competition and growth as the norm, rejecting whatever seems financially unproductive (Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 7, Interview 11).

The AIDC offers an alternative paradigmatic perspective, arguing that collaboration and empathy should be at the centre of progressive development. The objective of this alternative ideology is to actively intervene in the mainstream development course, which itself produced the multiple crises in which societies all over the world find (Interview 2, Interview 12, Interview 13). Therefore, the AIDC proposes an *alternative* development path, substituting for this destructive and mainly economic development agenda. Concretely, the AIDC's proposition is a people-centred development trajectory, sensitive towards environmental integrity. This ideological perspective entails that the future of humanity needs to be preserved by acting in accordance with the planet, as well as the principles of putting the sovereignty and wellbeing of people first. Like other alternative development paradigms proposed in Latin American countries, the AIDC proposes a holistic approach to development instead of a simplistic linear growth model (Interview 2, Interview 9, interview 13).

The AIDC further, envisions a transformation from the social system of organising society according to capitalist logic to a system in which people-centred democracy sets the tune for societal development (Interview 2, Interview 3, Interview 6, Interview 10, Interview 9).

Over its 26-year history, this people-centred and radical democratic approach got complemented with a vision of a holistic ecosystem, in which both people and environment are ought to be protected from the extractivist and destructive processes of growth-led development paradigms (Interview 9, Interview 11, Interview 12, Interview 13).

Mode of critical analysis

Consequently, the proposal of alternative perspectives on development strategies and possible solutions aims to tackle this rather discursive and ideological realm of development paradigms. Retracing the AIDC's campaign history showed how the organisation developed its strategic framework over the years.

The first campaign for the cancellation of Apartheid debt worked out a way to allocate resources for the transition to an equal society. This anti-debt movement, initiated by the AIDC, tackled the question of the affordability of social restructuring after the end of an oppressive system and proposed a possible answer. More recently, this question of coming up with the resources for investing in social policies is tackled by *one million climate jobs*, offering a new way of producing electricity and opportunities for people to make a living by creating new jobs in the renewable energy sector (Interview 9, Interview 11, Interview 12). Further, the investigations against illicit financial flows highlight where money is evading the country, and otherwise could be spent on social policies. Since day one, this crucial issue of economic justice reflects that high ideals need to be grounded in material reality (Interview 1, Interview 6).

At this point of argumentation, the AIDC circles back to the broader economic context in which South Africa is embedded. It makes the connection between the socio-economic issues and the industrial development path of South Africa. Further, the organisation looks at the environmental effects of this development path, concentrated around cheap energy production and high carbon emissions. The mining sector is the main perpetrator in this regard. Transnational mining corporations are both shifting profits and destructing environments of local communities. Based on the critique of socio-economic policies and corporate practices, the AIDC formulates a strategy of tackling these corporate agents and their seemingly limitless power to decide over the lives of local people (Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 4, Interview 9).

Here, enters the current campaign of dismantling corporate power. The AIDC tackles this issue of an imbalance of power. Powerful multinational corporations and vulnerable local communities have unequal power positions. Most strikingly, there is no process of negotiating the different positions and needs, as the South African government gives tenders to the mining companies without asking the consent of affected communities. The consequences for the land and

the people are severe (such as the relocations of communities due to new mining contracts or the destruction of groundwater, toxic emissions and many more). This fate is decided above people's heads. The strategy is to fight back against corporate power and simultaneously regain the sovereignty of the people to participate in crucial decision-making regarding their livelihoods (Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 13).

AIDC connectivity – coalitions and alliances

This line of work also shows the strategic connections made by the AIDC over the years. Beyond the thematic connection of economic and environmental issues, bringing together stakeholders from all over the world in solidarity is one of the AIDC's main strategies to tackle issues on a global scale. These alliances and strategic partnerships are held on the global, regional and national level. Regional networks were established, like the *Southern African Solidarity Network* – which expands regional integration to a level beyond economic growth – and the *People's Dialogue* – a learning and exchange platform for progressive movements from the global South, especially Latin America and South Africa. Further, the *World Social Forum is* a global counter-movement to the *World Economic Forum*, offering a people-centred perspective in contrast to the mainstream perspective of high-level economists. All these networking efforts initiated by the AIDC have local issues in mind as well as economic policies, and counter-narratives to the mainstream development discourse. In a strategic sense, by offering an alternative space for discussing and analysing international developments, they serve as consolidating this narrative through networks of a (global) social counter-power (Interview 1, Interview 13).

Several attempts were made to form a broad political counterforce on the national level by bringing together social movements. While these attempts often resulted in premature alliances (Interview 3, Interview 12, Interview 13) that the AIDC revolves to strategic partnerships in all its campaigns. Their first national campaign *Jubilee South Africa* brought together church-based and other civil society organisations around the illegitimate debt issue. More recently, the AIDC hosts the *climate jobs forum.* In monthly meetings, various organisations discuss the issue of climate change and renewable energy in South Africa. Progressive movements and environmental movements, but also trade unions take up the climate job issues in their agendas (Interview 4, Interview 11, Interview 12).

The climate jobs campaign is exemplary for one pillar of the AIDC mission: the issue of unemployment. The AIDC, as mentioned earlier, attempts to connect people's struggles to the broader macro-dimensional context of their struggles. In this case, the organisation identified

mass unemployment as being part of the macro-economic crisis in South Africa, but in an immediate context fostering the country's social crisis: masses of people without jobs struggle to bring up the material resources for living a decent life. This results in other issues, such as xenophobia or criminality. The *mass* unemployment shows that it is not an individual's choice but a systemic issue. Furthermore, the solutions the AIDC proposes tackle both this individual level as well as the systemic issue beneath it, the macro-economic development strategy (Interview 1, Interview 6, Interview 7, Interview 8, Interview 9, Interview 11).

The role of the AIDC for community struggles

Apart from policy recommendations, a strand of the AIDC work is campaigning. The strategy of campaigning is a way of bringing this abstract level of policymaking and macro-economic analysis or international relations to the people affected by these (Interview 7, Interview 9). Working together with their core partners – the seven grassroot formations – the AIDC's role is to advocate, support and accompany these movements in their efforts to emancipate communities in their struggles. Campaigning does not only give them the possibility to understand these issues relevant to their struggles but allows them to respond to it. The AIDC promotes the tools popular movements can use to influence policymaking, understanding and analysing the context of their struggle, as well as identifying effective political methods of intervention (Interview 1, Interview 7, Interview 9).

A crucial aspect in this regard is that the AIDC does not claim any ownership over these campaigns and considers itself as a facilitator rather than the agent of change itself. As a think tank, the AIDC strategises and analyses; being an *activist* think tank, mobilising against these issues and the underlying policies. However, the movements themselves are the ones who carry out the campaigns. This is due to the AIDC's credo that radical democracy means that people represent themselves (Interview 6, Interview 7, Interview 9, Interview 11).

The theory of change, therefore, is strongly inspired by an emancipatory ideology, meaning that the oppressed people can only free themselves in order to gain back their sovereignty. Consequently, the agents of change are the social movements forming popular counterforces. The AIDC sees its role in supporting this emancipatory agenda through analysis and strategic thinking, sharing its tools and resources with relevant stakeholders. Their critical eye allows for the dismantling of oppressive mechanisms beyond the surface of the phenomenon of struggle and unfavourable living conditions.

Strategic thinking

The AIDC starts from the smallest part, the people on the ground, the immediate struggles of these people and the concrete issues causing people to struggle in the first place. From here, its analytical direction is worked upwards, considering the way society is organised as the context in which these issues arise. Concretely, the interviewees criticised the societal division by the capitalist framework arguing that it is producing dire conditions for people on the ground of this social order. These are the unemployed, those who are impeded from contributing to the productive system, and further, the low-skilled and low-paid workers who are considered exchangeable and exploitable (Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 9, Interview 12).

From this perspective on national political economy, the analytical lens once again broadens its scope to the next level, regional and international relations – specifically trade relations and political hegemony. Here, the AIDC sees the issue rooted in a power imbalance between different stakeholders, such as countries from the global South and big global players, such as the WTO or TNCs. On a regional basis, it is the South African state itself which deserves their criticism, being an (economic) hegemon in the Southern African region and profiting from unequal trade relations (Interview 7). On the global level actors, misusing their power are big corporations, extracting resources from countries in the global South, contributing significantly to environmental degradation and exploiting local communities. Their destructive reach goes beyond these direct effects and affects the whole macro-economic context of respective countries. By shifting profits to tax havens, these corporate agents circumvent paying their *fair share*, by both conducting tax and wage erosion. Government is seen as a partner in crime, making these practices possible (Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 6, Interview 7, Interview 9, Interview 11). On the one hand, the macroeconomic policies are focused on the extractive industries, elaborated in chapter 5 as the minerals and energy complex (MEC) and less on redistribution of wealth. The political promise right after the end of Apartheid could not be kept, even more than 20 years after the new democracy was initiated (Interview 8).

The AIDC has assessed the political and economic situation in South Africa from the beginning of its new democracy and concluded that joining in on the neoliberal paradigm dominant in global discourse was counter-productive to the agenda of levelling the playing field for a dual society. Bridging the divide between the marginalised majority and the elites profiting from their exploitation failed and as the struggles of Apartheid commenced with a new face (Interview 3, Interview 11, Interview 12, Interview 13).

One line of criticism is directed towards the people in power, allying with corporate and international interests rather than with the people they democratically ought to represent. The interviewees express an ambiguous stance towards these leaders, either portraying them as traitors to the liberation agenda or as being powerless against the force of neoliberal globalisation (Interview 3, Interview 7, Interview 11). Anyhow, another line of criticism is directed against the argument of unaffordability – or in the words of one interviewee "who is going to pay for that [social programmes]" making progressive policies unaffordable (Interview 11).

This line of argumentation seeks to restore the imbalance of power between these mining corporations and the people directly affected by its practices, but without any say in the decisions leading to the destruction of their homes. This is how the AIDC work does not only tackle the macro-analytical dimensions but works directly at the grassroot level of issues as well. The people's tribunal conjointly established by the AIDC and other organisations, let the people affected by mining come to the foreground and presented their cases of corporate misconduct, giving them a chance to be heard in front of an international jury. This tribunal was not only successful in the outcome that the people won a court case against mining corporations but led to a new campaign, the *Right to Say No*. This concept arose from the contribution of the communities, stating that a big issue is that they do not have a veto right in decisions affecting them directly. Both governments and corporations decide over their fates without paying any attention to their lives. The concept of the *Right to Say No* directs to winning back people's sovereignty over their lives, simultaneously pushing back against corporate power.

This example of AIDC's work shows the complexity and interwovenness of arguments and campaigns. First, the DCP campaign is part of global efforts to diminish the power of transnational corporations. The global DCP campaign tackles this corporate power from a top-down international policy dimension, trying to bring up strict trade agreements, restricting the boundaryless potency of these corporations. The regional DCP campaign which the AIDC is the secretary of, acts on a grassroot level, outlined in the people's tribunal and now the *Right to Say No* campaign. In one of the AIDC's networks, the *People's Dialogue* and the *Thematic Social Forum on Mining and Extractivism*, this *Right to Say No* campaign was brought up and it was decided to integrate it on a global level.

This refers to the conceptual picture of the struggles the AIDC has, seeing it located in concrete contexts but interconnected on a much broader base. Tackling these struggles in many dimensions and on different levels is the main AIDC strategy, which can be found – compartmentalised – on all levels of its work. It might seem that the organisation simply diversified its portfolio for the sake of generating donor interest. However, it turns out that every newly added

layer of the organisational programmes is part of organic growth. Every project is rooted in the main thread of the organisation's mission, like a mycelium or a ribosome, growing in new directions and forming new threads which are all part of this one bigger entity.

The organisation's speciality

Another fact about this connectedness of strategic directions, different analytical levels and different agents is that there is one common knot in this network: the executive director and co-founder of the AIDC who carries the knowledge of the organisation's vision, the experience of its whole history and the strategic thinking in his mind. He is portrayed as a distinct individual within the AIDC, not merely due to his seniority or authority. In contrast, he is considered by his fellow staff as an extraordinary character, thinking on his feet, coming up with all these new developments and ideas, always being a step ahead of everyone else (Interview 5, Interview 8, Interview 11, Interview 12). He makes the impression of always having a clear mind, level-headed but never in the foreground, never seeking attention, acknowledgement, or a way to present his authority. However, there seems to be much respect towards him, as interviewees state, they admire him for being a brilliant mind and the AIDC's greatest strength.

He is the one leading the *New Politics* programme, which seeks to find new ways of societal organisation and decision making. This entails the vision of a strong popular counter-power, considering current developments where the nation-state gets weakened and the corporate and global economic actors stronger, without having an effective democratic global principle of political decision making. This programme shows once again the complexity of AIDC thought and the scope of strategic interventions, tackling this issue of global power relations in concrete local contexts on the grassroot level. Movement building attacks here, in strengthening popular grassroot movements, capacitating them to use the tools of analysis and critique and allying with other social forces to one movement strong enough to withstand hegemonic power from above (Interview 1, Interview 3, Interview 7, Interview 9, Interview 13).

7.2 Synthesis of Theory with Empirical Findings

From a theoretical perspective, however, there are particular concerns regarding the agency to change the overall development course. As highlighted in chapter 5, there is a general critique of the paradoxes within the NGO sector. Further, critical scholars describe the gap between the proclaimed development objective and the actual outcome as deficient due to the embeddedness in power relations within global development (Opoku-Mensah 2007; Bebbington et al. 2013;

Bolnick 2013; Lewis 2019). The dominance of hegemonic players, as well as structural conditions, can be seen as an obstacle for a humanistic development agenda, such as the agenda 2030 aiming at the "eradication of poverty" (UNDP: iv).

The role NGOs play in the global development agenda which is dominated by powerful actors such as the World Bank, international donors or the United Nations (UN) is generally limited (Opoku-Mensah 2007: 317),

> *"Within a few number of years, thousands of NGOs have been established in many European, American, Asian, African, and Latin American countries—in urban centers and in the remote countryside. These NGOs share the same development language that has been adopted by donors. Discussions and research on the role of NGOs that miss this aspect will underplay the aid channels role as a transmission belt of a dominant discourse tied to Western notions of development, and downplay the fact that this arena is actually a site of struggle between different development paradigms, ideologies, and NGOs."*
>
> (Tvedt 2002: 370)

The fact that NGOs are *"born from"* neoliberalism (Shivji 2007) speaks for the argument that the existence and explosive boom of NGOs parallel to the expansion of neoliberal dominance, is, in fact, part of the neoliberal transformation to adapt to the progressive development agenda, respectively "transforming alternative development to fit its system" (Bebbington et al. 2013: 20). If development is understood as a material order of resources, extractivism and dispossessions are part of capitalist development, *taking care* of the ones who are *unlucky* and *cannot* take part in the positive effects of development, can then be seen as a mechanism to preserve this capitalist world order in the legitimation of both the taken for the granted fact that there are "under-utilised poor (sic!)" (Mosse 2013: 239) and the notion that there are mechanisms put in place to deal with this issue. However, dismantling this self-reproducing adaptiveness of neoliberal capitalism would be to realise that this development is not a natural process but a matter of political forces executing their power on a global scale (Mosse 2013: 229, 239; Lewis 2019: 1962). According to Bebbington the failure to recognise the hegemonic playing field of development and its key actors comes with the lack of reflecting the NGOs' own roles in this web of power relations (Bebbington et al. 2013: 30). Regarding their own practices, Bebbington concludes:

> *"[W]hile NGOs may need to accept that their room for manoeuvre is now more limited, he suggests that if they are able to innovate their relationships, reformulate their self-understanding and purpose, and develop a strategic awareness of the long-term game being played, then they may still be able to operate within this agenda while aligning themselves with ‚a messy transformatory-reformism '"*
>
> (Bebbington et al. 2013: 22)

This quote points towards alternatives leading out of this "development impasse", described by Yarrow and Venkatesan (2012). Instead of only challenging political and social relations dominating the global as well as national development, NGOs can play a role in challenging the economic order as well. Bebbington argues that while the relation between the state and society is by the time speaking already mostly transformed, the relation between the state and market remained mostly unchanged, while the society becomes more and more swallowed up by market mechanisms (Bebbington et al. 2013: 14).

The AIDC seems to integrate the factor of economic policies very well, as one major pillars of their work is based on in-depth analysis of the South African economic framework, especially in regard to inter-and transnational trade relations and money flows (Interview 1, Interview 9, Interview 11, Interview 13). Another critique regarding the practices of NGOs is that it is very common for these organisations to engage in development interventions which are "too close for comfort" to the post-world war development agenda,[17] neglecting interventions into the general development course currently unfolding as the globalisation of capitalism (Lewis 2019) Here, the AIDC seems to be aware of the underlying processes of this development process, arguing that the system linked to the many crises within the South African society (and within the world),is capitalism and that alternative ways to development have to be found which are not based on this system (Interview 13). Most of the critical scholars describing the paradoxes *of* and contested fields *within* development, seem to have hope for an alternative to this cul-de-sac.

NGOs can still be a *"catalyst of change"* (Shivji 2007: 47) if they focus on finding alternatives replacing the current order criticised. This includes withstanding the pressures by the development world to deliver certain outcomes by building their own partnerships and alliances (Bolnick 2013: 326); taking into consideration economic as well as political issues underlying the phenomenon of development inefficiency (Bebbington et al. 2013; Lewis 2019); and critically reflecting their own roles and practices (Shivji 2007; Bebbington et al. 2013).

> *"If the struggle for democratic reform were thus conceived, then the strategy itself of the NGOs would change. There would be protracted public debates instead of stakeholder conferences, the development of alternative ways of doing things instead of so-called inputs into consultants' policy drafts. There would be demonstrations, protest marches and teach-ins in streets and community centres to expose serious abuses of power and bad policies, instead of the so-called policy dialogues in five-star hotels. Democratic governance would be an arena where power is contested, not some moral*

[17] The post-world war development agenda is described as targeting the “third world“ in a time of decolonisation to expand and reproduce the power of the big global players in a geo-strategic manner in light of the Cold war as well as the context of decolonisation (Lewis (2019).

> *dialogue or crusade for good against evil, as the meaningless term "good governance" implies. You cannot dialogue with power."*
>
> (Shivji 2007: 58)

The AIDC seems to be one of these critical NGOs "carving out [its] space" in a neoliberal world order and mainstream development discourse (Bebbington et al. 2013: 20), analysing both economic relations and the invisible underlying political processes, penetrating dimensions of structural mechanisms, which need to be addressed is structural change is to happen (Lewis 2019: 1962). Already by looking at their 3-year strategic programme areas, one can recognise that the *Economic Justice* and the *New Politics* program tackle these realms of structural intervention simultaneously. Additionally, the third program area *Alternatives to Extractivism and Climate Change* creates concrete solutions for finding alternative ways of designing development strategies, fit to tackle social as well as ecological issues, *and* proposing an alternative to take the stead of the current development trajectory. Looking into this third programme area, we find the *Dismantle Corporate Power* and the *One Million Climate Jobs* campaigns, which both tackle the lived experience of structural unemployment and the role of hegemonic economic players impeding the South African "under-utilised poor (sic!)" to actually experience their (human) rights to equality and self-determination. Regarding the ongoing efforts of Movement Building, which include popular education and campaigning, the AIDC also fulfils the criteria for NGO-efficiency proclaimed by Caulkins:

> *"Awareness raising serves to enhance capabilities by contributing to the free flow of information and helping people to see the unfreedoms that exist in their lives so that these can be addressed. This kind of education can range from making people aware of threats to health from natural causes and pollutants, to helping raise their consciousness about political, economic, or social circumstances that serve to maintain systems of inequality and oppression. This latter approach reflects that taken in liberation theology and Paulo Freire's (1970) teachings in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and can serve to remove constraints on political participation.*
>
> (Caulkins & Jordan 2013: 462)

This last emphasis on the impediments to political participation is interesting regarding the AIDC's role as a provider for civil society. Mosse describes radical post-development critique as a *"political economy of truth"*, meaning that alternative development agents, such as the AIDC, engage in their criticism as a way of uncovering the real mechanisms of development and thereby, contribute to community-driven self-empowerment (Mosse 2013: 229). The AIDC staff describing the organisation as a facilitator and supporter of grassroot movements and their struggles, reflects this role of being a watchdog: observing the current political and economic environment, raising the alarm over illegitimate practices and accompanying their partners in a

long term relationship for advice and support. In the end, the AIDC is not elected by people to represent them and therefore, cannot act in leadership (Interview 7).

The role of the AIDC for the actual agents of change, the grassroot movements, can be understood as a scaffold, which is used to facilitate the actual process of building a counter-power to hegemonic and dominant-oppressive forces; and as a scaffold, the AIDC helps to elevate the transformative agency on the ground to other strategic levels of interventions such as influencing the political discourse or the coalition-building with other stakeholders across geographical dimensions (Interview 4, Interview 12). In this sense, the AIDC is not a cause in itself but rather an infrastructure for the actual cause, which is socially transformative. This fact is a counter-argument to the common criticism of the ineffectiveness of many NGOs, which according to Edwards reproduce out of self-interest instead of a sense of mission and which *use* their mission as a claim for legitimacy (Edwards 2013: 39).

However, the AIDC can still not be seen as independent of any necessity to be considered legitimate and relevant by funders. Interviewees explain that there is a strategic adaption to funder interests and the general development discourse (Interview 5, Interview 6). There are certain things which are more relevant than others as well as the general development discourse is rather depoliticised. Anyhow, the AIDC will never leave its course and manages to discreetly close the gap between the unpolitical causes for the development community and its progressive political agenda of shifting power relations as a way to initiate social transformation and an outcome of this transformative process. This bridging of different interests and accountabilities is described as difficult because the AIDC now has to deliver to what they agreed with their various funders – some of them are only funding single projects, others the overhead costs – and at the same time, use these projects efficiently towards their overall mission of building a broad popular movement (Interview 13). This strategy of keeping ownership over its agency and mission is interesting in regard to the overall criticism of NGOs being the *partners in crime* with neoliberalism which uses the NGOs as a form of *social workers* to solve the issues of global poverty which in fact is created by the integration of vulnerable groups on the capitalist system as a source of cheap labour (Mosse 2008: 119).

Apart from these global conditions and the contradictions regarding the NGO-agency, the national dimension awaits with complications regarding the political promise of socio-economic reconciliation in the case of South Africa. The legacy of exploitative systems of colonialism and Apartheid, as well as the extractivist development path, impedes most efforts of social transformation from a dualistic society, i.e. a society of exclusion in an economic, social and political sense. In chapter 5, the political-economic system in South Africa was elaborated, and

especially how during and after the Apartheid-period, cheap rural labour and enclaved economic growth did not only co-exist but conditioned each other (Fine & Rustomjee 1997; Shivji 2007; Freund 2010).

In this context, how can the AIDC promote this social transformation, how can they use their agency to circumvent these obstacles and respectively dismantle these hindrances? Freund points out that the majority of people in South Africa are born in poverty and experience development as something only others know the true promise of (Freund 2010: 3). Furthermore, this seems to be the essential tackling point for the AIDC's whole mission: promoting an alternative to this exclusionary development, which in fact does not only exclude but actively exploits. This alternative then has to actively incorporate these excluded and exploited in order to progress towards an inclusive society, with minimal structural and social barriers. This is reflected in the AIDC's vision of a society in which everyone has the opportunity to contribute meaningfully and whose lives are not directed by others (Interview 1). The alternative development strategy proposes by the AIDC is a wage-led socially owned renewable energy path, within which more people will have chances to participate in the economy through the creation of jobs and receive decent wages.

Thereby, the issue of the South African enclaved economy, elaborated by Freund, goes hand in hand with an enclaved society (Freund 2010). Mosse highlights in regard to general mechanisms of capitalism that the "under-utilised poor" and the durability of their poverty are not an exception from the norm but the very product of capitalism (Mosse 2013: 239).

Similarly, the AIDC sees capitalist frameworks, specifically the neoliberal globalisation of capitalism, as a source of mechanisms which produce the crisis of South African society. In this sense, the solution to the crisis must ultimately be seen in the dismantling of the capitalist principle. However, the interviewees highlight that they do not see that there will be a system change in the nearer future. Until then, the AIDC works towards making solutions which can work within this system (Interview 4, Interview 9, Interview 12).

The starting point for solutions are real-life problems, and from there, strategies are elaborated of how to resolve these issues. On a deeper level, the AIDC connects these local issues with the structural mechanism behind it and strategically link the concrete solutions to the overarching alternative to the mechanical problems. Thereby, it made sure that each of the single solutions is part of the bigger agenda for social transformation. Each project and each concrete practice works not only to resolve immediate and acute struggles but to tackle the ongoing chronic struggle for fairer social relations and. According to Shivji, the struggle for a better world is continuous and nothing which can be resolved by a once-off procurement (Shivji 2007: 58). In

Matthews words, any "real" development has to aim at treating the core problems and not just the symptoms (Matthews 2004: 375). The AIDC does both, treating the acute symptoms of directly experienced struggles and the underlying struggle of which these immediate issues arise. This overarching struggle is a struggle for emancipation; the immediate issues are rather concerning material conditions. Integrated into either of both are the principle of direct ownership and unconditionally, meaning that any intervention belongs to grassroots movements and that the AIDC accompanies their struggles unconditionally "as a friend" (Interview 2, Interview 9). However, the AIDC cannot escape all of the "NGO dilemmas", because itself is dependent on external funding and is, therefore, itself entangled in the neoliberal framework of competing for funding as well as legitimise the use of funds by showing certain results. Most NGOs might fall in the trap of focusing more on donor satisfaction than on the satisfaction of communities they work with. The AIDC, too, feels this double accountability but decides to prioritise their partners' interests over chasing the funding (Interview 5).

Moreover, the AIDC dedicates its whole existence to their partners, seeking to reproduce itself as a means of supporting their struggles, yet its own survival is not an objective in itself. The AIDC chooses the side of the activist struggle, which is in contrast to the depoliticised development discourse and practices. The critical development scholar and former NGO activist for 15 years, Shivji has a rational amount of hope for change as long NGOs are not only dedicated for a better future but engage in a critical understanding of the current world in order to develop ideas of what a better world will look like. Moreover, the consent of the cited scholars is that development needs to be political if it wants to go beyond mere commitment, leading to results (Matthews 2004; Opoku-Mensah 2007; Shivji 2007; Mosse 2008; Venkatesan & Yarrow 2012; Bebbington et al. 2013).

All in all the AIDC can be seen as a critical, political, analytical, strategic and alternative development centre, committed to the transformation of society in national and global contexts, continuously self-reflecting and innovating for change. They seem to do their best to think ahead, take into considerations their *"blind spots"* (Shivji 2007) and carve out their niche in the development and social system described as *"neoliberal box"* (Bebbington et al. 2013: 15). Their role for social transformation is therefore not simply constituted by their work, their actions so to say, but their identity which is a product of the agency of committed people, rethinking not only the world but their relationship to the world.

7.3 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

My main argument was that the AIDC could promote social transformation. This argument is based on the considerations of "agency ", which involves a negotiation of structural constraints and a determination to change these structural conditions towards an envisioned outcome. In this case, the structural constraints in the form of economic issues, such as the macroeconomic context of South Africa in general and the dire situation of people struggling for daily survival considering a massive unemployment crisis. The vision is that every individual gets the opportunity to contribute to society meaningfully (Interview1, Interview 3, Interview 9). Bridging the gap in between those two, the actual and the potential conditions, is the crucial question of arriving at a transformed society. In other words, how to get there, this is the underlying question of how one organisation can promote this transformation from the status quo to the normative outcome.

In line with this argument, the hypothesis was that agency involves exactly this, the problem definition, the normative guideline, which is showing where one wants to be and the strategic concepts, which show how these objectives can be achieved. Whereas the current situation and the future vision portray a state of things, the process of how to get there is dynamic, unforeseeable, like a black box (Mosse 2013: 232). The research focus was not on the content of this black box but on the observer of this black box, the AIDC, assessing both the current status quo and the potential future outcome. Therefore, the AIDC was considered an alternative development agent, seeking to transform the course of development in the face of a "better" future, i.e., an emancipated society where inequality is marginal and broad political participation the norm. The self-proclaimed mission of the AIDC is to find a way to an alternative future, respectively alternative development path (AIDC 2019a).

The findings suggest that these efforts of transforming society are highly complex and almost utopian, at least regarding a nearer future. Interviewees stated that they highly criticise the current South African or even global crisis, namely capitalism and its destructive tendencies. However, some point out that they do not believe in a solution to this status quo outside of this system, but that transformation has to start from within, tackling the rules of the system (Interview 3, Interview 4, Interview 10). This shows that a system change is not straightforwardly decided but entails constant pressure from within this system. In this sense, my findings suggest that the AIDC approaches this by doing two things: 1. Strengthen the grassroot level, which is currently oppressed by this system; 2. influence the political discourse, transforming the political will. In other words, the dual strategy is to use pressure from below to "remind" (Interview

3) decision-makers of their responsibilities towards their people and on the other hand propose decision-makers valid solutions of how to best represent their people (Interview 12).
Further, deducting from the findings, the AIDC cannot change the system all by itself – hence, the emphasis on "promoting "a systemic transformation. *Promoting* can mean in this context, the discursive "recommendation" of systemic alternatives, and the direct assistance or encouragement of progressive social forces to enact these. It also implies that social transformation is an ongoing process, but the promotion refers to moving it forward, contributing to its timely unfolding. The opposite would be to *obstruct* social transformation, considering the conservation of the status quo.

One interviewee framed the organisation as a "small cog in a system […] trying to move"(Interview 2), expressing the relations of the AIDC vision and mission to promote this agenda, *pushing* for a change in the system. Although being framed as *small* and *insignificant*, its efforts are not irrelevant (Interview 2). As another interviewee points out, one cannot change anything alone, but seeking alliances and gathering of likeminded actors can eventually, bring up enough momentum to change the direction of this system from within (Interview 13). The small cog unable to move [anything] by itself, connects with other small and insignificant cogs, joining forces, connecting struggles against the power of the huge system disabling them to move in their direction, which they consider as right. In contrast, they consider the mainstream direction as wrong. By turning the wheels together, they might be able to bring about change.

Furthermore, this is how not only the AIDC network is connected through this consensus of normative directionality and common agendas but also thematically, joining singular issues to one overarching issue, tackling it from several sides. Like cogs, one works with the other, complementing each other. This is expressed by one interviewee regarding the programmatic approach of the AIDC, explaining that one programme is the solution to the issue another programme raises (Interview 1). In this regard, the outcomes of the AIDC's work are not the systemic changes itself, as interviewees point out, even if there are changes in this regard, they are not the sole contribution of the AIDC, but many agents working together and simultaneously (Interview 5, Interview 6, Interview 8).

The outcome of the AIDC's work is not always visible, because it is not capable of creating the change needed but to provide the infrastructure, the scaffolding for this transformative agenda (Interview 9, Interview 13). However, it is contributing by taking a step back and analyse the situation, strategise the potential movements which bring them closer to their mission goals and sharing this information amongst the relevant stakeholders. The AIDC contrib-

utes to the conceptual frameworks and relational connections. By leaving the ownership of anything which the AIDC initiated together with the movements, there is nothing the AIDC "owns "to prove what they contributed (Interview 5, Interview 8). Anyhow, their relevance for these movements shows the importance of their work, and that there are ways to contribute to social transformation – be it by stimulating, urging, advancing for, or committing to social transformation.

The characteristic mode of analysis for the AIDC is to go in two directions: 1. Analyse the macro-economic context and its effects of the micro-dimensional lived experience; and 2. define from this lived experience of oppression alternative mechanisms, with the potential to change the macro-dimensional context in a way that the root causes of people's struggles can be tackled. This two-way process translates in a critique of the broader context and the mechanisms, agents, policies and practices involved in restraining people from developing freely in accordance with their capabilities. On the other hand, the AIDC proposes opportunities to change this oppressive system, situated in the contexts of people struggling on a daily basis. Understanding the system, critiquing its mechanisms and proposing opportunities for change both to people on the ground and to decision-makers, is how the AIDC promotes social transformation.

A holistic worldview, an eye for complexities, strategic thinking and building connections to other stakeholders as well as a normative vision are characteristic for the modus operandi in this regard. The AIDC does not only analyse employment statistics, or does not simply demand cutting down the emissions, but connects the dots and visualises solutions able to tackle the crises in all its dimensions.

As one interviewee puts it, in times of globalisation, it is not the nation-state anymore, which is the determinant variable impeding social transformation to an equal society. Global interconnectedness and new global hegemons govern the organisation of society (i.e. TNCs, IFOs, political unions). It is a general problem of sovereignty, deciding for others without their consent, exploiting their labour, exploiting the "nature". Here, the perpetrator is the (hu)man, and the paradigm is the Anthropocene, the ideology is the superiority of humankind – the man dominating nature, the man dominating man, the man dominating women – the dominance of the strongest as the legitimation for hegemony (Interview 13). The counter ideology could be seen in feminism, which dismantles all sorts of oppression and power relations, or in a holistic paradigm in which the human is part of the world and not "above" it, and the relation between human beings to their surroundings is considered reciprocal and symbiotic rather than parasitical (Solón R. 2018).

This struggle for social transformation is the promotion of this holistic world view as an alternative to the anthropocentric paradigm, which legitimises neoliberal globalisation, destructive capitalism, exploitive social relations and any other mechanisms connected to the crisis of civilisation. This new world view legitimises in contrast, collaborative ways of co-existence with nature and other human beings, freedom to develop one's capabilities and contribute to society meaningfully (Interview 13). And again, it is not the AIDC's invention, nor is the AIDC the sole contributor to this alternative strategy. The organisation's impact is to analyse the development of South African and global society, identifying and defining significant problems, formulate a critique which identifies the core mechanisms producing issues and lastly contribute to a vision of an alternative way of being in the world, supported by concrete solutions of how to get there.

Some of the interviewees highlighted that there are already many agents on this path of *alternatives.* One interviewee specifically referred to the *Fridays for Future* movements, that are questioning the status quo of the global climate crisis, as well as to Latin American indigenous movements, which critique the exploitation and degradation of the human environment. Indirectly the interviewees pointed out that there are many partnerships, alliances and joint efforts of any sorts between other NGOs and civil society movements engaged in the issue of economic justice and climate justice. The greatest potential, nevertheless, is seen in grassroot movements constantly struggling against the system of dominant and oppressive development paradigms. This system designates their position at the fringe of societal advancements, compelled to watch the wealth being accumulated in its centre while being excluded and marginalised. This discrimination of the periphery while the centre claims all the riches for itself is at the core of the AIDC agenda for change. Their vision is to change this dualistic system based on exclusionary mechanisms towards a system in which every person has the right and the opportunity to contribute meaningfully. Hence, the way society is organised has to change from being system-oriented, i.e. meaning that the system determines the social order, to be people-oriented. Not the needs of the system, but the needs and the capabilities of the people are the determinants for the organisation of society. Therefore, the rules defining the system have to change. According to the organisation, it is fundamental that this people-centred approach is not based on another top-down implemented order but that the people themselves define the rules in a radical democratic manner.

The role normativity plays in this regard is that it can be seen as a guideline set by human agents, idealising a desirable state of affairs, such as social justice. This normative proposition is negotiated amongst society. Avoiding personal emotional or physical suffering would be at

the individual level. In contrast, social justice as a mechanism of avoidance of people suffering would be on a socio-political level, concerning human agents and their relations to another.
This normative position stands in opposition to the modernistic development paradigm in which the normative ideal is the modern industrialised society creating endless growth. This growth paradigm stands in conflict to the ideal state of humanity in which poverty is eradicated, and social equality is the norm because this very system which is capable of producing endless growth is founded on the premises of exploitation and inequality. Secondly, this logic neglects the material conditions, i.e. the natural resources are limited. To deplete these resources again is contradicting the narrative of growth as the indicator for development, as more growth sooner or later will mean environmental degradation, which in turn affects the people to live up to the idea of a "better" world.

The AIDC does not lead any of these struggles and movements but is a part of all of the above mentioned. The organisation sees its contribution in accompanying the emancipation and empowerment process of these hegemonic ideologies and concrete forms of oppression, offering its expertise and analytical lens as well as its ability to strategise not only concrete projects but the societal project for transformation.
In the words of Shivji, representing an activist and scholar, NGOs need to choose sides. And the AIDC seems to have its biggest contribution in choosing the side of the opposition to hegemonic development, devoting its entire existence to the cause of emancipation from oppression. This commitment is what distinguishes it may be from other development agents who simply offer technical fixes and depoliticised agendas of helping the poor. These NGOs surely have their role to play for the relief of humanitarian crises but do not have an impact beyond the acute symptom. The AIDC seeks to cure the disease rather than to conceal the phenomenon. By choosing sides and committing its agenda to a broader agenda for a global liberation struggle, the AIDC stands up for social transformation, delivers analytical tools for social transformation, advocates for social transformation, accompanies agents struggling for social transformation and lastly mobilises and inspires others to come together for social transformation.

In any case, in the heart of this study, interest lies the question of the ability and capability to change the mechanisms and structures, which is based on a critical assessment of society. This critical lens is crucial for the progress of science and the progress of society likewise. As Demirovic points out, critical reflection is a catalyst for social change (Demirovic 2008). This highlights the objective of critical analysis, to dismantle the taken for granted knowledge and the normative rules and values in the world. For critical scholars (Archer 1991; Sayer 2009), feminist post-colonial authors (Mohanty 2003) or according to feminist black epistemologies

(Hill Collins 2000) science is not neutral and therefore, always normative. The knowledge we produce is always within power relations, so to produce alternative knowledge could be the position one takes in this field of social power relations, uncovering dogmatic positions of truth, of moral right or wrong or good and bad development.

This study was an attempt to focus on one agent dismantling these hegemonic relations, claiming the monopoly over what is *good* development. In light of Mohanty's essays *Under Western Eyes* and *Under Western Eyes – revisited* (Mohanty 2003), the attempt will always be embedded in these "Western Eyes" but aware of this condition, complement it from insights apart from hegemonic western dominated development paradigms, allowing for alternative perspectives. The *Western eyes* being part of the socialisation and identity of the researcher, and further reaching, even part of the dominant world view across the globe cannot simply be discarded. However, by putting on alternative lenses, a change of perspective is still possible. This is not only crucial to how we see the world but consequently, how we act in the world.

Therefore, the AIDC is like an organism, guided by a vision of an equilibrium (or at least an optimal level of equity), perceiving and critically analysing the obstacles in its way and adapting to these obstacles by finding ways around it. Additionally, the AIDC is part of a bigger organism in a system. It being only one small cog connecting and mobilising other cogs, it seeks to promote one direction within this system (Interview 2). This it does by using its experience to feel the struggle, its eyes to recognise the world, its brain to analyse the problems, its voice to disseminate this information, its creativity to articulate alternatives and its body to metabolise everything in order to give effect to its extremities, its hands tying together loose ends and developing tools for a programmatic approach, its feet to stay grounded in the real world and be able to accompany its partners by foot at their pace and on their course. At its heart lies the commitment and motivation to do all this, campaigning being the lifeblood keeping the organisation alive (Interview 7).

Apart from being an operating system, the AIDC is a learning organism, an open system, sensitive for its context and changing environment, adapting flexibly but never losing sight of its course and overall mission. It goes with the flow, never standing still, using the momentum strategically and growing not in itself but for and with its partners. The AIDC seems to be, apart from being a facilitator and think tank or advocate, tying many loose ends together, analytically and strategically, in order to pay tribute to the holisticness of crisis, and offering an overarching holistic strategic framework, in which all these individual struggles are fought. What does this mean?

The AIDC is an organisation which provides support, strategic analysis and tactical guidance. They understand that they themselves cannot change the dominant development paradigm but that they can contribute their intellectual capacities to analyse current phenomenon and their underlying mechanism, identify key issues and design potential alternatives. This is reflected in the AIDC being a think tank. From a broader macro perspective, the organisation is like the head of the transformative body. The body consists of the social movements providing the power and the leverage to shift the mainstream political playing field. The head of the operation to shift these power dynamics is the part which strategises and analyses the possibilities within the current status quo. It not only communicates to the body what actions are strategically worthwhile but communicates to the outside forces which.

However, also highlighted by the AIDC staff is that one organisation alone cannot change anything. It is the effort of each agent that works towards the same goal, which in the end brings the results. These results themselves are not always direct, but especially due to the overarching focus of sustainable solutions, the immediate effects are not visible. The world is a black box, the AIDC is a black box, and the operation to transform society is a black box as well. This means that there is no straight forwards input-output relation. The dynamic interrelationship between agents and their agendas is unforeseeable and hardly retractable.

7.4 OUTLOOK

The answer to the question how an organisation promotes social transformation is only to answer in retrospective, retracing the AIDC's activities and strategic decisions over the past time, attempting to see the logical framework behind these operations. An interesting but implicit finding was among the younger generation in the AIDC – one could say the "born-free-generation"; they did not refer to *their* struggle, when talking about the Apartheid era. This can suggest that they do not identify with the Apartheid struggle, which they did not experience first-hand like the older generations. Hence, what is the starting point for some is the continuation of a struggle for others, with a new face but with the same underlying mechanisms of exploitation, oppression and social hierarchies. One could argue that the issues perceived by younger generations are framed as a given of the unequal system of production and profit generation, linking it to a history of a specific development path but less to their own experience of struggling. In contrast, most of the Apartheid generation express their experience of being on the streets protesting having the first-hand experience of the oppression.

This would be an interesting thread to follow when analysing the organisational identity, to be sensitive to generational differences and how different the world and its social order is perceived due to these demographics. Maybe, this is the reason why the board of the AIDC decided to shift its identity towards being a feminist young organisation, representing the contemporary struggles for emancipation from patriarchy and any form of power relations. Moreover, it would be interesting to engage in the partners, and the affiliated social agents do complement this inside view from the perspective of one organisation with the external view of related agents.
It was proposed by interviewees where other directions of investigating the AIDC. One example was to compare the AIDC with other NGOs to highlight the differences in approaches. According to most interview partners, the AIDC was described as a special NGOs distinct from other NGOs in their special way of thinking in complexities and devoting its existence to the cause rather than to chase funding or prestige projects. Further, it was suggested to retrace the AIDC history by entangling its past projects or by investigating in its publications over its course of existence to get to the very core of AIDC logical and strategic thinking.

Development anthropology proposes to investigate development from within (Venkatesan & Yarrow 2012; Mosse 2013), whereas development scholars point towards the duality of development, both being an assemblage of processes and dynamics and concrete interventions into this course of developments (Hulme 2013; Lewis 2019). Beyond this setting of a case study, a study of alternative development as a paradigm and movement becoming more and more relevant across the globe could determine if there is a general shift in international development and if so on which ideological basis. A metatheoretical elaboration could complement this the dynamics of structure and agency – i.e. ***d***evelopment as a process of structuration of society versus ***D***evelopment as a strategic intervention to change the conditions imposed by this structure (Lewis 2019).

I see the AIDC as an agent who acts as a hinge between the abstract-analytical and interventionist sides of development. Seeking to understand the AIDC's agency, therefore, was more than just retracing its steps. The endeavours to grasp the meaning of alternative ways of doing D/development, strived for bridging the gap between theoretical considerations of Development as discursive power and practical implications of development as practice. Neither, macro-dimensional critique nor crude interventions alone can tackle the challenge of really transforming the world to the better (Staudt 2016: 417).
I end this thesis on Escobar's note that "theoretically informed alternatives should be practice-oriented". Hence, development scholars need to rethink the role of practice when investigating structural constraints. Shivji (2007: 65ff) and Venkatesan and Yarrow amongst others remind

both academics and activists of the fruitful potential of exchanging their respective notions of (alternative) development, for bringing together understanding *and* acting (Venkatesan & Yarrow 2012: 13). Following from my observations during my fieldwork, I conclude that the AIDC is both a critical development thinker and an activist for alternatives – the net-effect is an agent who thinks analytically, strategically, critically and creatively. Further, the AIDC is a learning system (or organism) which is sensitive to its environment and self-reflective, continuously remodelling its agency for the transformation of the political, economic and structural conditions preventing society from transforming itself. With this abstract understanding of the AIDC I point towards the basic fact that behind all of this are ordinary people committed in promoting alternatives. In the end it boils all down to the smallest parts, the individual and the personal will to change the status quo, be it in an organisation or in the even greater realm of a global society.

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ANNEX

A: ABSTRACT

The Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC) is a non-profit organisation in Cape Town, South Africa. It was founded in 1996 in face of the transition from the Apartheid regime to a free democracy. Since then, the ongoing motivation is to tackle systemic inequality, which after more than 20 years post Apartheid still constitutes the daily struggles of the majority of South Africans. As in most post-colonial states, government seems to be unable to change the trajectory of progressing injustice and the so-called third sector or development agencies step in to fill this gap. The question is, nevertheless, *how* can they help? This case study investigates one civic agent, retracing its practices and strategies to promote this social transformation. A fieldtrip to South Africa included the participant observation as a volunteer at the organisation and 13 interviews with the AIDC staff. The results show how the organisation envisions social change and what its concrete tackling points are.

B: KURZFASSUNG

Das *Alternative Information and Development Centre* (AIDC) ist eine Non-Profit-Organisation in Kapstadt, Südafrika, die nach Ende der südafrikanischen Apartheid entstanden ist. Die Organisation wurde im Jahre 1996 gegründet, als Reaktion auf die bevorstehenden Herausforderungen, die der Übergang vom Apartheidregime zur freien Demokratie mit sich brachte. Seither bestimmen bestehende Ungleichheitsverhältnisse die Arbeit der Organisation. Denn selbst mehr als 20 Jahre nach dem Ende der Apartheid ist die Lebenswelt der Mehrheitsbevölkerung Südafrikas von struktureller Ungleichheit bestimmt. Wie in vielen post-kolonialen Staaten, scheint auch hier die Regierung diesen Entwicklungsverlauf nicht nachhaltig beeinflussen zu können. Sogenannte Entwicklungsakteure greifen ein, um die fortschreitenden Ungleichheiten zu vermindern, jedoch stellt sich die Frage, *wie* sie dies bewerkstelligen können.
Das Erkenntnisinteresse dieser Arbeit ergibt sich bezüglich der Rolle, die eine solche zivilgesellschaftliche Entwicklungsakteurin für sozialen Wandel spielt. Teilnehmende Beobachtung sowie dreizehn Interviews mit den Beschäftigten des AIDCs bestimmten die ethnographische Feldforschung in Südafrika. Ziel war es den Modus Operandi der Organisation nach zu zeichnen. Das Ergebnis zeigt, wie die Beteiligten gesellschaftliche Transformation konzipieren und welche konkreten Angriffspunkte sie hierfür ins Auge fassen.

C: Overview of Activities

Table 2: Participation in AIDC-activities and events

Date	Activity	Type
07.02.2019	Protest against Mining Indaba	Support partner's protesting
12.02.2019	Book Launch: "The Hadji Alidja Esau Story"	Public event
19.02.2019	Staff Meeting	Internal meeting
20.02.2019	Budget March to Parliament	Support partner's protesting
21.02.2019	Teach in: Investment in Renewables	Internal event
21.02.2019	Conversation with affiliated researcher	Informal dialogue
26.02.2019	Climate Justice Meeting	Internal meeting
28.02.2019	Follow Up Climate Justice Meeting	Internal meeting
05.03.2019	Amandla! Forum: "Class. Race & Gender"	Public event
06.03.2019	Management Meeting Momentum Health	Internal meeting
08.03.2019	Lunch Talk: "Is Marxism still relevant?"	Internal event
13.03.2019	Strategy Meeting "Public Debate"	Internal meeting
~~14.03.2019~~	~~Meeting with partner movement (~~cancelled)	Informal dialogue
15.03.2019	International Climate Strike	Public event

D: Overview of the Interviews

All interviewees were anonymised, as it was carefully reflected whether or not the names and/or positions of the interviewee partners should be published. In terms of theoretical considerations, there were arguments for the presentation of individual particularities (i.e. stating the names and identities) as well as there were arguments for generating a more general picture of the organisation (i.e. presenting the statements as assemblage of individual views). After the consideration of ethical concerns, the decision was made to anonymise the interviewees. I also decided against choosing pseudonyms as in a close and familial setting of a small-scale organ-

isation any information on the person would make it likely that his/her identity could be retraced. Finally, the highest priority was to prevent any harm due to unintended consequences (e.g. controversial statements might have been a cause for tensions between staff etc.). Another reason was that as I became part of the daily office life, although as some sort of "double agent" – simultaneously being close and distant to be able to observe "objectively/critically". I decided to answer to this trust and openness to let me be part *of* and investigate *in* their world with the most possible discretion. However, I want to point out that this decision was made by the researcher alone, and that none of the staff interviewed raised concerns about stating their views and opinions openly.

Table 3: Expert interviews with AIDC staff

Date	Interview	Type
14.02.2019	Interview 1	Management / programme director
15.02.2019	Interview 2	Management / campaign director
18.02.2019	Interview 3	Programme staff
19.02.2019	Interview 4	Campaign director
21.02.2019	Interview 5	Management / directorate
04.03.2019	Interview 6	Programme staff
05.03.2019	Interview 7	Programme director
07.03.2019	Interview 8	Management / directorate
08.03.2019	Interview 9	Management / directorate
08.03.2019	Interview 10	Programme staff
12.03.2019	Interview 11	Programme staff
12.03.2019	Interview 12	Programme staff
12.03.2019	Interview 13	Management / directorate
12.03.2019	Group discussion "Social Justice"	Focus group interview
~~13.03.2019~~	~~Interview 14~~ *(cancelled)*	Management / directorate