

## Safe and Inclusive Cities

### People, places and infrastructure: Countering urban violence and promoting justice: The Durban Experience

#### Introduction

In Durban the impacts of neoliberal economic approaches and the violence associated with such market-orientated strategies cannot be assessed without considering the relationship between human rights violations, vulnerabilities and large scale urban developments, which are often associated with different forms of violence and inherent inequalities. The four case studies undertaken in the Metropolitan Area of Durban highlighted how neoliberal machineries of development perpetuate poverty and breed a culture of violence against vulnerable populations. Whatever the form of violence, there is an inextricable link between the lack of resources and services. These include people's access to health care services, the 'liveability' of their residential environments, their quality of life and their accessibility to power, capital and political representation.

#### 1. Service Delivery Violence in Cato Manor

Cato Manor is an inner city human settlement project which has fallen victim to many forms of violence throughout its history. In the late 1950s the residents of Cato Manor were forcibly removed and relocated in apartheid created townships defined for separate race groups. In the post-apartheid South Africa, Cato Manor is once again challenged with different forms of violence such as crime, gender-based violence and service delivery protests. Violence in Cato Manor takes many forms and is showing no signs of not abating. In recent years forced evictions, housing shortages, conflicts over access to land, municipal corruption, police brutality, poor service delivery, repression, xenophobia, poverty and inequality have sparked many acts of violence in Cato Manor. The violence resulted in many injuries and a number of deaths, as well as destruction of property. In addition to the overt expression of violence, there is much violence that is invisible such as domestic, gender-based conflict in homes. Cato Manor is not immune to structurally perpetrated violence by the state through non-delivery of basic services and the inability of the vulnerable groups in the community to meet their basic needs.



Service Delivery Protest in Cato Manor in the Post-Apartheid Era

## **2. Development Induced Displacement and the Dugout Port**

Durban is a port city and as the economic isolation waned in the democratic era, it has become a height of activity in container trade. It is estimated some 2.9 million containers pass through the Durban harbour annually on road transport to and from the city. The proponents of the expanded dug out port under the aegis of the para-statal Transnet assert that it is designed as a project for the people, that it will provide abundant jobs for the unemployed, and sustain their livelihood. In addition, it is perceived to be strategically placed to promote economic growth and development for the region and the country as a whole. It is estimated some twenty million containers will pass through this port annually once the dugout port is established.



The dug out port is not without controversy. The neighbouring communities who are opposing the development of the port assert that there will be widespread displacement of people from the area resulting in a loss of livelihood and security. Considering that the harbour will be established on a highly mechanised infrastructure, the prospect for a number of jobs that will be created is exaggerated. The community is not convinced that some 20 000 direct and 47 000 indirect jobs will be created in the construction phase of the port. In so far as the environmental impact is concerned, the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, is concerned about the impact that this development will have on displacing neighbouring communities and the impact on their physical and social well-being.

### **3. The Warwick Avenue Triangle (WAT) Development and Displacement of Traders**

In November 1995 the Physical Environment Service Unit of the metropolis announced an impressive plan to upgrade the Warwick Avenue Triangle (WAT) and the Grey Street area in 'terms of safety, security, cleanliness, functionality and the promotion of economic opportunities'. In supporting the plan the Durban Metro acknowledged that the WAT had been 'politically marginalised in the past in terms of physical, social and economic development and investment'. In particular, the market which is a national heritage site accommodating some 8000 market and curb-side traders were threatened with displacement to make way for an upmarket mall in the area. This in a way contradicted the initial claim by the city bureaucrats that the Warwick triangle upgrade will become a South African example for the inclusion of the poor into an urban economy and it can be a model

for developing a strong, practical vision for blighted areas elsewhere in the country. The intention was to 'clean-up' the Warwick Avenue area before the Fifa 2010 World Cup.



An Injured Trader Falls victim to police brutality in a protest

A positive outcome in opposing relocation was the emergence of non-racial solidarity. Various trader, civic, community and trade union organisations were galvanised into action to challenge the Durban Metropolitan government on its plans to pursue private sector development interests at the expense of poor traders losing their livelihoods. The traders association held several public meetings, networked with other CBOS and NGOs to challenge the municipality's development plans for the area, including the formation of a human chain to prevent demolition of the building in which they traded. This was met with brutal force where elderly men and women were attacked by the city's law enforcement officers which was reminiscent of the apartheid era state-initiated violence against non-violent protests. The traders resorted to legal action, supported by the Legal Resources Centre, with several interdicts against the municipality, and the mall developers subsequently withdrew from the project because of the ensuing delays. It took the occasion of the International Union of Architects Conference in Durban in August 2014 to get a confession from a senior Durban Municipality bureaucrat that the Warwick Mall project was a mistake.

#### **4. Social Cohesion, Inclusivity and Livelihood in the Resettled Community of Mt Moriah**

Mt Moriah is a low income human settlement which was established in 1994 in different phases to cater for the housing needs of residents from various informal settlements in and around the city. It was an experimental project by the National Department of Housing (NDoH) to promote livable and sustainable human settlements. It is founded on a comprehensive plan for the development of sustainable human settlements for low income earners, and was considered as a more updated version of the Reconstruction and

Development Programme, or what is commonly known as RDP housing which the South African government committed to at the dawn of democracy in 1994.



Housing with backyard shack development

In Mt Moriah, single parents, the aged, disabled and persons dependent on different types of social development grants, originating from 41 localities in the metropolis were given housing priority. Given the diverse background of residents, it comes as little surprise that social cohesion in this human settlement is lacking. Residents in the locality have been stripped of their socio-economic networks that they have formed in the area of origin and are faced now living in a sterile residential context that has very little to offer them. After 10 years of moving into the area, the residents do not have schools, recreational facilities, health care centres, postal and police services. Basically the area is sterile, dormitory like and mono-functional, no different to what was reminiscent in apartheid created townships. Over ten years the population in the area has increased. Hence, the need for more accommodation which is the cause of widespread backyard shacks emerging, no different to the localities that the residents have originated from.

### **Policy Recommendations**

- In all four case studies what comes out clearly is the lack of consultation and participation of local people in development related projects and programmes.
- There is a greater need for the municipality to engage with people on the ground when formulating development plans.
- There is a tendency for the state to use violence as a mechanism to curb dissenting voices on development related projects.
- This can be circumvented by creating opportunities for dialogue with the different stakeholders engaged with development.

- In the case of Cato Manor, the port development project and Warwick Avenue Triangle violence in the form of militant protests appears as the only mechanism to attract the attention of the city bureaucrats. It appears that contestations serve as a means to attract the attention of policy makers when all other mechanisms fail.
- The case study in Mt Moriah illustrates an example of structural violence where for the past ten years there has been no investment in services in the area. A need exists for investment in services so that post-apartheid development of human settlements are not replicas of what was prevalent in the apartheid era, whereby settlements were left sterile indefinitely compounding a myriad number of social issues.