

SOUTH AFRICAN CITIES TWO DECADES ON FROM APARTHEID

HISTORICALLY DIVIDED BETWEEN RICH AND POOR

Markus Schönherr

Two decades on from the end of apartheid and the first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa has evolved into the continent's economic heart. Close to a quarter of Africa's gross domestic product is generated there. The advances made by this country situated at the southern tip of Africa are based above all on the seemingly immeasurable reserves of precious metals in addition to tourism and agriculture. However, the majority of the population has been excluded from benefiting from the resulting upturn and the profits have remained in the hands of a small minority. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), South Africa is among the most unequal societies in the world in terms of income.¹ This phenomenon, the discrepancy between the haves and have-nots, is mainly noticeable in the country's major cities. The contrast is most obvious in the cityscape, above all in the townships, the slums at the periphery of the cities. The geographic distribution of rich and poor became established during the era of apartheid – and it has persisted ever since. There have been no decisive breakthroughs to change this historic cityscape. The prevailing conditions are resulting in political unrest and providing a breeding ground for populism.



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1 | Geoff Barnard, Christian Gianella and Andreas Wörgötter, *OECD Economic Surveys: South Africa 2008*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2008, 32.

SOUTH AFRICAN CITIES THROUGH HISTORY

When European seafarers came ashore on southern African soil in the 17th century, it was by no means virgin land. Many of South Africa's present-day major cities were centres of earlier indigenous cultures going back to the stone age. The demise, or at least the displacement, of the original inhabitants of southern Africa took place sometime before 1000 A.D. By that time, Bantu tribes had migrated to southern Africa, most notably the Zulu, the largest ethnic group in South Africa today, followed by Xhosa, Tswana and Sotho. These tribes gradually displaced the San and Khoikhoi. Thanks to its northern mining belt, Greater Johannesburg enjoyed great popularity early on. As is the case today, people mined copper, tin and iron to fashion tools and weapons from as early as the 12th century.

With the arrival of the Europeans, greater centralisation replaced the state of easy coexistence. Cape Town was the first to be formally established as a town once the seafarer

Cape Town and the surrounding area fell to the British in 1806. The immigrants from the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Germany soon developed a joint identity.

Jan van Riebeeck had set up a supply depot for the Dutch East India Company there in 1652. Cape Town and the surrounding area developed into the Cape Colony, which fell to the British in 1806. The immigrants from the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Germany and their descendants soon developed a joint identity. As Boers, they wished to escape suppression by the British Empire and moved towards the northeast, where they founded republics of their own. The British Cape Colony appointed its own parliament in 1853. All groups of the population initially had the same voting rights as Europeans. The only restrictions there were applied to women.²

The turning point came with the discovery of gold in the vicinity of Johannesburg. The gold rush triggered a mass migration from Europe and the surrounding colonies. The UK also had its eye on the mineral resources and annexed the region in 1902 after the so-called Boer War. This was the first time the white minority feared for its power and began to separate the living spaces of Europeans and indigenous people.

2 | Karl Mannheim, *Colour and Culture in South Africa*, Routledge, Oxon, 1953, 33.

In 1948, the predominantly Boer National Party (NP) came to power and issued the Group Areas Act, laying the foundations for the policy of apartheid and turning the cities into whites-only zones. At the periphery of the major cities, informal settlements sprang up for blacks, who were allowed to work in the city but not to live there. All blacks who did not find a job in a white household or white business were driven off into a so-called homeland or *bantustan*. These areas comprised 13 per cent of current South African territory. President Hendrik Verwoerd encouraged self-government for some of them with the aim of making whites the demographically largest group in South Africa.

However, the plan ended in failure. Not only did the *bantustans* fail to receive international recognition, embargos and economic sanctions soon had an impact on the apartheid regime. In 1991, it finally submitted to the pressure, the Group Areas Act was dropped and Nelson Mandela was elected the country's first democratic president in 1994. Overjoyed about the newly-acquired freedom of movement, millions of South Africans flooded into the cities, which were not prepared for this influx although it had by no means been unpredictable.

CONSEQUENCES OF AN UNPLANNED OPENING UP

According to the South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR), 52 per cent of the population lived in cities and surrounding shanty towns in 1990, i.e. before the opening up. By 2011, it was already 62 per cent.³ UN estimates forecast this figure will rise to 71.3 by 2030 and to 80 by 2050. This rapid urbanisation is putting enormous pressure on South Africa's cities. The HIV rate surged; unemployment, poverty and homelessness are producing a general feeling of insecurity and have resulted in a high crime rate. Rich and poor are already clashing more violently in South African major cities today than almost anywhere else in the world.

3 | "South Africa goes with the urbanisation flow", South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), Johannesburg, 22 Jan 2013.



Informal stall for clothes and goldfish: The black market and low town maintenance have driven enterprises and families away from the centres. | Source: © Markus Schönherr.

Apart from the wealth gap, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town are suffering above all from the dilapidation of its inner-city areas – a further consequence of the unplanned opening up since 1994. Over two decades, South African city centres degenerated into drug dealing areas and trading zones for informal vendors selling clothes, mobile phones and counterfeit goods without any regulatory supervision. The Central Business Districts (CBD) also increasingly attracted the homeless and illegal immigrants on the lookout for low-paid work or intent on begging. This has made many city centres unattractive to families. Many businesses feared for their property and the safety of their staff. The phenomenon of white flight was becoming noticeable. Increasing numbers of white South Africans moved out of the centres into the ethnically homogenous suburbs, and hundreds of businesses abandoned their original premises to follow them. Typical examples are companies in Johannesburg, which left the CBD to relocate to upmarket suburbs such as Houghton and Parktown or towns further north such as Sandton, Midrand and Pretoria. The Johannesburg Stock Exchange, which also relocated from the city centre to Sandton in 2000, is seen as symbolising this development. The Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA) painted a gloomy picture: “In fact many of the inner cities and their adjacent suburbs began to become the sanctuaries of new migrants

and slum landlords.”⁴ But at least in this respect it appears that a turning point has now been reached. Most municipal governments are conducting programmes to combat inner city degradation, which are already showing some initial results.

SOUTH AFRICA’S POVERTY PROBLEM AND THE “ETHNIC FOOTPRINT”

The city as a living space thus came to mirror South African society as a whole – at least where the juxtaposition of rich and poor was concerned. This is also reflected in the Gini coefficient, which assesses equality within society by measuring wealth distribution. The rating ranges from 0 (perfect equality) to 1 (complete inequality). When last measured by the World Bank, South Africa’s Gini coefficient was 0.631, making it the highest in the world.⁵ A 2012 study by the University of Cape Town came to similar results. The richest ten per cent of South Africans share 57 per cent of the national income, the poorest tenth a mere one per cent.⁶

As is the case in South Africa’s cities, the inequality at the macroeconomic level is also partly due to the legacy of apartheid. The OECD recommends that any examinations of issues in this area should bear two key questions in mind: Were the emerging economy after apartheid and the laws of the post-apartheid government in fact capable of reducing the high levels of poverty and inequality? And: is the “ethnic footprint” that is at the root of poverty and inequality gradually being replaced by more subtle socioeconomic dynamics?

To understand the concept of the ethnic footprint it is worth taking a look at income statistics. The black population has been experiencing the highest income growth rate, namely 169 per cent, over the last decade. The income of whites

4 | “Urban Development Zones Restructuring Zones: Introduction”, Social Housing Regulatory Authority, <http://shra.org.za/resource-centre/shf-archives/63-static/udz/90-urban-development-zones> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

5 | “GINI index”, World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

6 | Zara Nicholson, “Most black SA kids live in poverty – study”, 18 Oct 2012, <http://iol.co.za/news/south-africa/1.1405705> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

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rose by only 88 per cent over the same period.⁷ These figures may paint a promising picture for the future, but they are a poor consolation for the present. Inequality within

the ethnic groups is also still growing, and white South Africans statistically still occupy a dominant position within the economy. In 2008, the OECD determined the incomes of the different ethnic groups compared to the white population. South Africans of Asian descent thus earned 60 per cent of the average income of a white person, coloureds 22 per cent and blacks a mere 13 per cent. The latest data comes from a 2011 public opinion poll, according to which the income of a white household is six times that of a black household.

THE INEFFICIENT CITY – A LEGACY OF APARTHEID

However, in most cases it is only superficially the ethnic origin that differentiates between rich and poor, prosperity and marginalisation. Since the end of apartheid 20 years ago, it is in actual fact predominantly the location where a South African grows up, the local educational facilities and the available opportunities that determine their fate. Black and other ethnic groups of the population are still suffering from historic disadvantages in this respect. While many took the opportunity to move into the city after 1994 and are now leading a middleclass life, economically marginalised and frequently larger parts of the population remained in the informal shanty towns at the outskirts of the cities. In many major cities these townships still constitute a significant part of the population. Cape Town has some 3.7 million inhabitants, between 390,000 and one million of whom live in the township of Khayelitsha. Johannesburg has a population of 4.4 million, 1.2 million of whom live in the South Western Township (Soweto). Virtually every town or smaller community has an informal shanty town attached to it these days. The size of the community is less significant than its economic potential. The small towns of Franschhoek and Stellenbosch in the Western Cape only have populations of around 15,000 and 77,000

7 | Jeanette Clark, "Income levels for white South Africans growing the slowest", 30 Oct 2012, <http://www.moneyweb.co.za/moneyweb-south-africa/income-levels-for-white-south-africans-growing-the> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

respectively, but because of their flourishing viticulture, they rely on cheap labour provided by people who built their tin shacks at the edge of town.

Township life works best in small towns because of the limited area and number of people involved. The situation is different in major cities, where townships entail a number of problems not just for the city administration but also for the inhabitants themselves. The lack of sanitation facilities causes disease; the fact that people frequently take the law into their own hands and lawlessness produce a feeling of insecurity, and the commute to the economically relevant city centres is long and hard. The informal settlements have presented the governing African National Congress (ANC) with seemingly unsurmountable obstacles since 1994. Nelson Mandela already stated in 1996 that “urban areas are the productive heart of the economy, but the majority of the urban population live in appalling conditions far from their places of work”. In the same year, a discussion document on an urban development strategy was drawn up. Its stated goals included reshaping the socioeconomic structure of South Africa’s cities by 2020, making them environmentally sustainable and restructuring them to provide equitable living conditions for all groups of the population.⁸ While there is some progress apparent six years before the deadline, the necessary breakthrough has yet to happen. There is now also a general consensus about the fact that it would have been easier to reverse the legacy of apartheid in 1996 than in 2013.⁹ It is not so much that the central government and the cities lack the necessary insight, it is the solutions that are hard to come by once again. While Deputy Minister Yunus Carrim says towns and cities are “inequitable and inefficient, most obviously in their spatial form”, President Zuma is looking for a “national approach” to improve the cityscape to the benefit of all inhabitants.

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8 | “The Urban Development Strategy – Remaking South Africa’s Cities and Towns”, Ministry in the Office of the President, <http://polity.org.za/polity/govdocs/rdp/urban1.html> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

9 | “Towards an Integrated Urban Development Framework”, Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Pretoria, 2013, 3.



Woman in Johannesburg's South Western Township (Soweto): For many inhabitants the only source from water is a polluted ditch. | Source: Evan Bench, flickr ©.

Feeling themselves under time pressure, municipal authorities have been resorting to measures over the last few years that can only be described as acts of desperation. This is exemplified most clearly by the slum clearance conflict in Durban. In 2001, President Thabo Mbeki announced that the slums would be "eradicated" by 2014. During the same year, the administration of the eThekweni municipality made a resolution to surpass the national goal and clear its slums by 2010. The plan was for the residents to live in social housing flats and houses qualifying for state subsidies. But residents rejected this. They did not view it as a proper solution – the new housing was just as distant from the business centres, hospitals and shopping centres as the townships themselves. When the local government threatened enforced relocation and finally sent in the bulldozers, it was faced with strong resistance from residents associations and NGOs. The project was initially postponed to 2011 and subsequently to 2014. But even this deadline is highly unrealistic in view of the lack of alternatives. Critics accuse the government of wishful thinking and denying the actual situation.

According to a study by Witwatersrand University, the population living in townships has in fact decreased from 26.2 per cent in 1996 to 13.6 per cent in 2011 since the introduction of democracy. But scientists have not yet given

their endorsement, because they found that the number of people building shacks in the gardens of formal houses or renting such shacks (backyard shacks) had increased over the same period.¹⁰ In addition, immigrants are playing a significant role. When the Group Areas Act was rescinded in 1991 and democracy became established three years later, this not only fuelled internal migration into the cities but also the influx from abroad. The overwhelming majority of foreign immigrants are poorly educated refugees and asylum seekers. This is placing extra pressure on South African cities, because foreigners who do not find a steady job are forced into the slums through destitution. Over the last few years, there have been repeated attacks on foreigners and waves of xenophobic violence in the slums. During the worst attacks, which took place in 2008, 63 immigrants lost their lives within a few weeks near Johannesburg and Durban. These were predominantly people from Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique and Somalia.

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The situation is not likely to improve any time soon, because South Africa receives more asylum applications than any other country worldwide.¹¹ According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), some 63,000 refugees and some 220,000 asylum seekers lived in the country at the end of 2011. There are no official statistics for the following years, but the office of the UNHCR estimates the number of asylum seekers at the end of 2013 at 471,000, more than three quarters of whom came from neighbouring Zimbabwe.¹²

THE ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR

People living in cramped conditions present environmental challenges for South Africa. Soil degradation is not likely to be a problem in most townships as they were generally built on infertile sand in any case. But water management

10 | Cape Argus, "Backyard shacks still on the rise", 3 Jul 2013, http://iolproperty.co.za/roller/news/entry/backyard_shacks_still_on_the (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

11 | "2013 UNHCR country operations profile – South Africa", UNHCR, <http://unhcr.org/pages/49e485aa6.html> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

12 | Ibid.

is a large problem, both with respect to the supply of drinking water and the removal of wastewater. The latter in particular represents a big headache for the municipal authorities. In the Western Cape, which is governed by the Democratic Alliance (DA), demonstrations erupted in June

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2013, which the South African media soon referred to as “toilet protests”. Slum dwellers threw faeces at administrative buildings in Cape Town, plastered several motorways in excrement and did not even spare the official car of the provincial Prime Minister. Irrespective of whether the accusation leveled by many DA functionaries and independent observers that the ANC had orchestrated the protests for political purposes is justified, they did draw attention to a serious problem, namely that most households in the slums are not connected to a sewage system.¹³ In 2004, former President Thabo Mbeki promised clean water and toilets for all South Africans within five years, but the country is still nowhere near achieving this goal.

Over the last few years, ineffective environmental management has even exacerbated the problems. In Rustenburg near Johannesburg, people took to the streets to demonstrate against air-polluting emissions from industry, impoverished fishing communities on the west coast protested because of dwindling fish stocks, and there was countrywide rioting because of rising electricity and water prices. The development towards a sustainable city frequently follows the principle of “learning by doing”. There is a lack of coordination, since town planning is not subject to national legislation, be it in the area of sewage, waste disposal and recycling or where alternative energies are concerned. There have been signs of a rethink of late, though. City administrations are increasingly linking the goal of poverty reduction to the goal of making the city more sustainable.

13 | “Water Supply and Sanitation in South Africa”, Water and Sanitation Program (WSP), Weltbank, Washington D.C., 2011, 10.

OBSTACLES ON THE PATH TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE CITY

At the local level, there have been signs of definite progress on the path towards a more inclusive city over recent years. Such a city is characterised first and foremost by all its citizens being offered equal economic opportunities to reshape a cityscape previously defined by apartheid. Cape Town, Johannesburg and some other municipal authorities took the route of simply relocating the city to the surrounding townships. In 2005, for instance, a 250 million rand shopping centre opened in the country's second largest shanty town, Khayelitsha. The project created 800 temporary and numerous permanent jobs; the shops include outlets from all major clothing and food companies.¹⁴ Mitchells Plain and Athlone in the Western Cape also recently had new shopping centres built, as has the township of Alexandra near Johannesburg. There are plans to upgrade the shanty towns by building hospitals, parks and leisure facilities. The informal settlements are to be formalised, and the traditional slums are to be transformed into high-grade suburbs through infrastructure projects. In 2008, the government chose 60 townships for a pilot project to this end. Five years on, these projects are indeed showing initial signs of a positive impact. The First National Bank (FNB) has also been seeing a trend in its property index indicating that the value of township houses is rising more quickly than in formal suburbs. The annual growth rate is currently eight per cent.¹⁵ German development cooperation organisations are also among those advocating this approach. In collaboration with local actors, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) set up a project entitled "Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading". Infrastructure measures (such as street lighting) and volunteering activities are to transform Khayelitsha near Cape Town into a safe suburb. According to the BMZ, the project

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14 | "First Khayelitsha mall opens bang on schedule", IOL News, 25 Nov 2005, <http://iol.co.za/news/south-africa/1.259798> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

15 | "Township house prices increase 8%", South African Press Association (SAPA), 7 Aug 2013, <http://fin24.com/Economy/Township-house-prices-increase-8-20130806> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

is already producing benefits, such as stronger community integration as well as a reduction in crime; and it has helped the township to win the South African sustainability award in 2010.¹⁶

At the last meeting of the BRICS states in Durban in South Africa, the members stressed their commitment to closer cooperation in the area of sustainable urbanisation. The

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emerging economies "remain committed to sharing our experiences, our policy intentions, our lessons from practice, and extend dialogue between our cities to further shared goals of building productive and sustainable urban economies".¹⁷ There are also efforts being made by the private sector to make cities more inclusive. The South African Cities Network brings together administrations and private actors from the country's nine largest cities. This platform also aims at facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experience to speed up progress towards the creation of more inclusive cities. The role of the private sector will be particularly significant for the practical implementation of new policies, such as the policy of creating a mixed income population or that of encouraging mixed use inner-city development.¹⁸ This is where the private sector has an opportunity to reduce the latent frustration among the population.

The survey organisation Future Fact has this prognosis for South Africa's informal settlements: "Townships are becoming suburbs with all the same conveniences. In the next decade there will no longer be a clear distinction between suburbs and townships."¹⁹ However, considering the progress made to date it is debatable as to whether this deadline is realistic, as the most serious problem

16 | "Managing Urbanisation – Towards Sustainable Cities", Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ), Bonn, 2012, 10.

17 | Ndumiso Mlilo, "Roundup: BRICS Urbanization Forum ends in South Africa", *Global Post*, 29 Nov 2013, <http://globalpost.com/dispatch/news/xinhua-news-agency/131129/roundup-brics-urbanization-forum-ends-south-africa> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

18 | "Towards an Integrated Urban Development Framework", COGTA, Pretoria, 2013, 28.

19 | "Most blacks still call township home", SAPA, 24 Jul 2008, <http://iol.co.za/news/south-africa/1.409704> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

remains. Unlike the residents of traditional suburbs, most township residents rely on public transport to travel to the cities' business centres. This service is currently provided by a semi-regulated fleet of 12-seat minibuses operating as taxis. These, however, are widely regarded as unsafe, and generally compensate for the low fare of a few rand by transporting far in excess of the maximum permissible number of passengers. Western models of public transport are to provide a solution. In Johannesburg, the Rea Vaya project (We are going) has been implementing the Bus Rapid Transit system over the last few years, and in Cape Town, a project called MyCiti is being realised. Each of these two initiatives has created a network of articulated busses and minibuses, which is to replace the taxis over time and connect the townships with the inner city. Similar networks are currently being set up in Durban, Pretoria, Rustenburg and Port Elizabeth; there are plans for such networks in all major cities. The model envisages safe, reliable and generally affordable means of mass transport run on behalf of the city. The practical realisation is however at risk of failing due to competition regulations, at least in the immediate future. Problems last arose in Cape Town, where contracts with transport companies prevented the municipal government from dispatching its own fleet into the shanty towns. Transportation for the townships of Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain has thus remained in private hands – and this is likely to continue at least until negotiations bring about a consensus or the contracts expire over time.

Contracts with transport companies prevented the municipal government of Cape Town from enlarging its own mass transport network into the shanty towns. Transportation for townships has thus remained in the hands of taxi companies.

Developments have been more positive in the fight against the degradation of the inner-city areas, for instance in Johannesburg. While the CBD developed into a no-go area in the late 1990s, it is now relatively busy and being rediscovered as a leisure and business quarter. To attract businesses, Mayor Parks Tau announced in October 2013 that he intended to invest two billion rands in road development. There are plans to spend 110 billion rands overall on infrastructure projects over the next decade. It was also in October that Tau launched his Mayoral Clean Sweep campaign. This involves the police clamping down hard on fly-tipping, squatters and unlicensed trading. It is an

attempt to lure formal businesses back into the city centre, but the small traders and the homeless who have been driven out have since harboured resentment against the ANC functionary.²⁰ In Port Elizabeth, too, the authorities put their faith in strengthening formal industry with the Coega Industrial Development Zone, and so-called Urban Development Zones have been helping to upgrade the inner cities throughout the country. These selected zones are attracting businesses with tax concessions and have in fact resulted in businesses relocating to them in Durban, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Nelspruit and a number of other large cities. Cape Town, which is administered by the DA, has gone one step further. In 1999, this is where the Cape Town Partnership was set up as a collaborative initiative involving the municipal administration, the South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. For the first time, this initiative combined the idea of the inner city as a location for new, creative businesses with the goal of transforming the city into a space where its citizens can work, live, learn and spend their leisure time. In 2000, the Central City Improvement District was established and elevated to become the focus of the municipal government's development policy. The administration was successful in completing the process formally in 2009.²¹ Today, the Cape Town city centre is considered one of the cleanest and safest inner cities, which still offers the impoverished population selected locations for street trading.

The South African government has, however, recognised that most of its cities are not capable of completing the transformation to become more inclusive cities on their own. In addition, it is under pressure from multilateral agreements, whose signatories promised improvements in the quality of life and in housing. These include the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements (1976), the Istanbul Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements (1996) and the Habitat Agenda (1996). But the

20 | Greg Nicolson and Thapelo Lekgowa, "Operation Clean Sweep: not just a clean-up but a purge of the poor", *Daily Maverick*, 15 Nov 2013, <http://dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-11-15-operation-clean-sweep-not-just-a-clean-up-but-a-purge-of-the-poor> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

21 | "Our Vision", Cape Town Partnership, <http://capetownpartnership.co.za/about/our-vision> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

argument that carries the greatest weight is that of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), according to which the quality of life of over 100 million slum dwellers was to be improved. To help to implement the goals, the ANC government included numerous development policies into its legislation after the 1994 turnaround, including the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994), the Urban Development Framework (1997) and the Housing Act (1997). There is therefore a commitment present in principle. But the implementation is frequently lacking due to socioeconomic circumstances, which means that one has to describe the efforts made by the government since 1994 as taking two steps forward and one step back.

What the government has failed to include in its policies to date is the human factor. A fundamental requisite is the willingness of the township residents to integrate into the formal cities. In 2010, the Ministry for Human Settlements established the Social Housing Regulatory Authority. In large part, the social housing consisting of flats and houses the ministry subsidises are very popular, but others are simply rejected by the poor. Many do not consider them a genuine improvement as the new houses are just as far away from economic activity as the townships and frequently located in areas of more extreme climatic conditions. Many of them therefore refuse to leave their community in the shanty town. They are encouraged in their stance by representatives from politics, who wish to maintain the status quo in order to continue exploiting it to their advantage: cheap labour, racial segregation and the poor as an instrument of political mass mobilisation. The last point in particular is in line with criticism voiced last year that the ANC has not been the party that Nelson Mandela led into freedom for quite some time. Former Archbishop and anti-apartheid fighter Desmond Tutu accused the party of having abandoned its ideals. There have been voices saying that the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which has traditionally had very close links with the ANC, was increasingly following capitalist ideas; and that the party was thereby dividing its

Many do not consider social housing a genuine improvement as the new houses are just as far away from economic activity as the townships and frequently located in areas of more extreme climatic conditions.

largest group of voters, the working class.²² The fact is that corruption is widespread. In her role as Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela is currently engaged in determining whether President Zuma has used tax funds running into millions to renovate his private residence. Corruption and personal profiteering are also blocking or at least impeding the process of the development toward a more inclusive city.



Support despite lack of success: Until today many ANC politicians benefit from the aura of a former anti apartheid combatant. | Source: © Markus Schönherr.

A BLACK MIDDLE CLASS PROVIDING THE SOLUTION?

People from indigenous ethnic backgrounds still constitute the largest groups of the South African population and the black population remains the most significant one. A black middle class is therefore an obvious indicator of the upturn the country is experiencing. Over recent years, the black proportion of the middle class has increased rapidly, as has been found in a joint study by the Universities of Stellenbosch, Witwatersrand and Pretoria. The number of black people in the middle class rose from 350,000 (eleven per cent) in 1993 to three million in 2012 (41 per cent). This means that the largest proportion of the middle class is now of black ethnic origin. Researchers also detected a “dramatic decline” in racial inequality.²³

22 | “Vavi: ANC deiving the working class”, SAPA, 4 Dec 2013, <http://news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/Vavi-ANC-dividing-the-working-class-20131204> (accessed 18 Dec 2013).

23 | “Place of birth, not race, is new SA indicator of prospects”, *Cape Times*, Cape Town, 24 Oct 2013, 4.

However, the growth of the black middle class does not lead directly to an integrative city, as other studies have shown. According to Stellenbosch University, the increase removes the historic link between race and class, but integration and social cohesion frequently lag behind.²⁴ According to a 2008 survey, over half (52 per cent) of the people from the black middle class live in townships and profess to do so by choice. Only 32 per cent have moved to the formerly white suburbs.²⁵

Social scientists believe it is beyond question that a larger black middle class will eventually also be reflected in the cities' structure. This is because middle-class people from different ethnic backgrounds increasingly share the same values and have the same concerns. But how this will impact on the cityscape is still entirely unclear at this point in time. Will townships be upgraded until they have the same standards as formerly white suburbs? Will this result in ethnically homogeneous areas once again? Would this impair the inclusivity of a city? Or will the social cohesion of South African society also dominate in the city as a living space? There may be tendencies one way or the other regarding these questions, but the answers are elusive and make the process of developing a more inclusive city a difficult undertaking.

CONCLUSION

Two decades on from the end of apartheid, South Africa remains ethnically divided where the distribution of wealth is concerned.

A larger black middle class is definitely capable of making changes to this unsatisfactory situation – but this will not necessarily affect the cityscape.

A larger black middle class is definitely capable of making changes to this unsatisfactory situation – but this will not necessarily affect the cityscape. There is no shortage of suggestions for solutions to create a more inclusive city. But the last 20 years have shown that large parts of the plans have proved ineffective in removing the historic barriers in real life. While some plans lacked coordination and feasibility, others may have worked well had they had support from the population.

24 | Ibid.

25 | N. 19.

At least there has been a change in approach regarding the lack of coordination. After the sixth World Urban Forum, which took place in Italy in 2012, a discussion broke out in South Africa over an Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF). The purpose of this national planning document is to coordinate government projects at municipal, provincial and state level for the first time to improve efficiency. This will require active citizen involvement and the creation of incentives, because the success of the city planning policies will ultimately depend on the willingness of the affected people to become integrated.