ALBERT PARK, DURBAN — MIXED-RACE RESIDENTIAL AREAS DURING THE PHASE OF REFORMED APARTHEID

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SUMMARY: Since the end of the 1970s the government of South Africa has shown a decreasing interest in enforcing apartheid measures, and the social and economic practice of apartheid has been reformed. In the process, residential structures have developed in which, contrary to the provisions of the Group Areas Act, population groups of different skin colours live together. Using Albert Park, a mixed racial residential area in Durban with flatland character, as an example, this study tries to analyze the motives and processes that have led to an influx of non-whites into “white” areas.

KEY-WORDS: Mixed-racial area, South Africa.

RESUME: Depuis la fin des années soixante-dix, le gouvernement d’Afrique du Sud a montré un intérêt décroissant pour renforcer les mesures de l’apartheid, et la pratique sociale et économique de l’apartheid a été réformée. Des structures résidentielles nouvelles se sont développées, où, contrairement au Group Areas Act (Loi des aires de regroupement), des groupes ethniques de couleur différente cohabitent. Sur l’exemple d’Albert Park à Durban, où se mélangent des fonds de race différente, on essaie d’analyser les motifs et les processus ayant conduit à l’arrivée de non-blancs dans des quartiers “blancs”.

MOTS-CLES: Mixité raciale, Afrique du Sud.

1. REASONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREY AREAS

Already before laws separating the races were officially abolished in South Africa, officials had been considerably less inclined to implement some of these regulations, because of changing socio-economic and demographic realities. An example is the way the Group Areas Act has been handled during the past few years. This act, dating to 1950, specified that residential areas were to be segregated according to race. Since the middle of the 1970s, however, there has been an influx of non-white persons into inner-city areas that were originally reserved for whites (Pickard-Cambridge 1988). The
resulting mixed-race residential areas were dubbed "grey areas" by the local press. This term refers on the one hand to the multiracial composition of a neighbourhood, but it also has another aspect, namely the illegal residential status of non-whites in a white residential area, which is frequently — though not always — tolerated by the police or the law ("grey" legal situation).

The reasons for this "greying" are to be sought in a combination of several factors: in the townships housing is in short supply and there is a great deal of social unrest. As economic apartheid has been losing its force, increasing numbers of non-whites are being employed in the "white" CBDs, with the acquiescence of whites (White 1985). All of this has encouraged this group of people to seek residential space outside of their "own" residential areas. On the other hand, the demographic trend within the white population group has been quite opposite to that among non-whites, leading to an increasing number of vacant flats in the "white" city (De Vos 1986). Although the Group Areas Act designated separate housing markets for the different population groups, and there was to be no interaction between them, the uninhabited flats in the "white" CBDs and adjoining parts of the city aroused lively interest among non-whites. Because no white renters could be found, the landlords took the risk of accepting non-whites as illegal renters with the aid of white nominees, who signed the lease (Urbanization Unit 1990).

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE INVESTIGATION

The traditional residential and social racial segregation and the apartheid laws sanctioning this situation led the white population to believe that this situation would never change. Mixed-racial areas are associated in the eyes of the white public with overcrowded housing, use of residential space for non-residential purposes (e.g., commercial use) and rising crime rates. Whites see the reason for their fears in an influx of a "lower class" of non-whites, who destroy the traditional social prestige of a residential area. This was the basic question underlying our investigation, whether and to what extent whites and the non-whites who are moving in are becoming socially assimilated or whether a "lower class" is actually moving into the grey areas. From the experience gathered here we can surmise how mixed racial living could look all over the country after the Group Areas Act has been abolished and what kind of development can be projected for the post-apartheid phase (Schlemmer, Stack 1990).

3. STUDY AREA: ALBERT PARK, DURBAN

The study area, Albert Park, Durban, (for its location cf. Figs. 1 and 2) is the only city district outside of Greater Johannesburg in which large-scale greying of a residential area has been observed so far. In other large cities in
South Africa "new" grey areas have developed only on a very limited scale. In Cape Town, e.g., there are mixed-race residential areas that are older in origin (pre-apartheid) and have "survived" the implementation of Group Areas to varying degrees.

The first indications of the greying of residential areas in Durban go back to the beginning of the 1980s. Particularly affected was the Albert Park area, which comprises the westernmost "city zone" of Durban's CBD according to the definition of the City Engineer's Dept. Named after the park of the same name, the region does not belong to the oldest core of Durban. Because it is relatively low in elevation and swampy (Malherbe 1965), its development did not begin until after suitable drainage measures had been carried out and Albert Park was laid out, i.e., in the 1880s. At first this central area with a view across Durban Bay was one of the city's better residential locations (Vines 1984). As the upper class began to leave for new suburbs situated in higher areas in the western part of the city (Berea), however, the Albert Park
region developed into a residential area for the white middle class. Since the 1930s, this has been the first place where many migrants from other parts of South Africa and from abroad have lived. The main demand was for rental housing, because many of the new arrivals could not (yet) afford to own houses (Durban Housing Survey 1952). The heavy demand for residential space and the consequent rise in real estate prices led to increasing density and vertical expansion. Most of the buildings today have 8 to 16 stories, primarily with one- and two-room rental apartments. Only a few prestigious houses with a view of the park consist primarily of sectional titles. In addition, there are a number of boarding houses and residential hotels, which are used mostly by retired persons and students. Interspersed throughout the area are individual shops, often run by Indians, manu-facturers and warehouses ("zone in transition").

Like the entire CBD, the Albert Park region was a residential area reserved for the white population (until the repeal of the Group Areas Act in June 1991), in which occasional non-white persons also lived before the implementation of the Group Areas Act (Daily News, 4.07.1989). Greying of a new type began around 1980. It was caused by a decrease in the number of white renters and the simultaneous housing shortage in non-white areas. In March, 1989, the number of non-white persons was estimated at around 1,000 (in a total population of 5,700). In contrast to the tacit toleration of grey areas in Johannesburg, in the Albert Park region eviction notices, police controls and even compulsory eviction of non-whites were relatively frequent up to the very recent past.
4. DESIGNING THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

Using a standardized questionnaire, we interviewed the residential population, looking for information on the socio-economic and demographic structure of both the white population and the illegal non-white residents, on residential conditions and on acceptance of persons with other skin colours as neighbours. To determine the number of households and thus the total number of units on which to base our interviews, we traversed the entire area to be investigated and visited all buildings. We were able to estimate the number of households fairly exactly on the basis of the nameplates in the entrance halls of large apartment houses and the number of doorbells or separate front doors. Out of this total number of households we used a strictly random sample. Between the middle of August and the beginning of September, 1989, we interviewed a total of 185 households (9.4% of all households). The sample error is 6.9%. Because the danger that they will receive eviction notices or be visited by the police is quite high for non-whites, we had to expect difficulties with the interviews in Albert Park. To prepare, especially, the non-white population for the survey, we took advantage of a meeting of the Durban Central Residents’ Association (DCRA) to explain the time, extent and intent of the project. In this way we were able to limit the proportion of refusals to 20-25%. The DCRA is a lobby that champions the interests of illegal renters, provides legal assistance and carries out highly publicized actions against compulsory evictions. Its leadership structure is highly influenced by Indians.

5. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

To test the hypothesis that the socio-economic structure of the white and non-white population is becoming similar, we included questions about education, employment and income structure, with which suitably “assimilated” social behaviour is associated. We interviewed 352 persons in 143 white households (average household size: 1.8) and 42 non-white and mixed-race households (household size: 2.4). In the latter white and non-white persons lived together. The proportion of non-whites in the total population thus lay between 25 and 30% (compare Mayfair, Jhb. approx. 50%; Joubert Park approx. 70%; Yeoville less than 5%). The age pyramid calculated on the basis of the interviews (Fig. 2) shows that among the white population typical family structures are hardly existent. The region is characterized by bipolarity, with a relatively young and an old population. The former often live in small flats and boarding houses, whereas the latter take advantage of centrally located old-age homes and of low rent accommodations in rent-controlled buildings.

In comparison, the non-white population is on the average younger. It is
these people who, now that economic apartheid has been abolished, have found a chance to realize their social ambitions, which are associated with skilled jobs in the "white" city. To be able to live closer to their work (or schools), they live, like their white counterparts, in residential hotels and small flats in the CBD.

Fig. 3. Age structure of population in Albert Park, 1989
Source: Central Statistical Service 1985 and survey Jürgens

A very high proportion of persons with only elementary school or lower education (Standard VIII/IX and less: 46%) demonstrates that many white persons hold blue collar jobs (Table 1). The proportion of persons with low degrees of education is higher among non-whites than among whites (approx. 49% in the group mentioned), but non-whites predominate in higher and highly qualified categories. In the category of those with school diplomas qualifying for technical occupations, the percentages for all non-white population groups are higher than for the white population. Particularly remarkable is the high qualification structure of blacks, many of whom are students (54.2%) and over 8% of whom have academic degrees (whites only 2.6%), whereas "coloureds" and Indians lag behind. This fact does not fit in with the normal reality of apartheid. This may be connected with the fact that unless they work in the area themselves or have a shop here, Indians prefer more prestigious Indian areas or "grey" areas with better housing. Because Indians and "coloureds" are more readily accepted by the white population, the choice of possible residential locations is greater for them than for blacks.

When we look at the employment structure in Albert Park, we see that whites predominantly occupy the "middle ranks" in service and production industries (Fig. 4). Many are employed in the nearby shops and offices of the CBD. Figure 4 shows the categories of sales, clerical and service jobs, which are overrepresented in Albert Park compared with the situation in the city as a whole (e.g., 21.8% in clerical and sales jobs compared with 15.7% in Durban as a whole, according to data for 1985). The lower proportion of the
economically non-active population again reflects the lack of developed family structures (children, housewives).

TABLE 1. Level of education in Albert Park, 1989 (in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Less than st. VIII/IX</th>
<th>Matric</th>
<th>Diploma</th>
<th>Matric/Student</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-whites</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Coloureds</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Asians</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Blacks</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey Jürgens 1989

A surprisingly high proportion of non-whites are (highly) qualified career persons who hold university degrees (the category "professional" in Fig. 4). A significant proportion of the non-whites are persons who can be classified as lower middle class on the basis of their work as salespersons, bank or other office employees, and who wish to live in a central location close to their jobs in the CBD (category "clerical, sales" in Fig. 4). Blue collar jobs are barely represented. How atypical this population is, considering the educational structure in the townships, is also shown by Fig. 4. The non-whites in the grey areas would belong to the educated elite in the townships. The high proportion of non-economically active population among the blacks is a result of the large number of students in this group. A large proportion of

![Fig. 4. Occupation in Albert Park 1985/89](http://rcin.org.pl)
"coloureds" who cannot be classified by occupation (6.3% unemployed and/or unqualified) shows, however, that "problem groups" have also moved into the grey area. They are concentrated in a few buildings, which are overcrowded, as their residents try to divide the rent among as many persons as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Less than/equal 1,000 R</th>
<th>1,001 - 2,000 R</th>
<th>2,001 - 3,000 R</th>
<th>More than 3,000 R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-whites</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Coloureds</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Asians</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Blacks</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey Jürgens 1989

In terms of income, it is also evident that there are no great differences between white and non-white/mixed-race households (Table 2). Nevertheless, it should be noted that the household incomes of non-whites have a smaller range than those of whites (52.4% of all non-white households are found in the category R 1001-2000). Non-whites scarcely appear at all in the upper income groups. The non-white households are additionally differentiated according to population groups. The monthly income available to black households is clearly lower than that available to Asians, "coloureds" and mixed-race households. The reason for this is, of course, related to the large proportion of students among the blacks. This, as well as the significant percentage of retired persons among the white population, explains the very low average income in the two population groups. That there is considerable poverty in Albert Park is shown by a few striking examples, in which the household income has to be divided up among a large number of persons. In one case 7 persons who made up a household and lived in a single-room flat had less than R 1000 (US$ 400) available to them per month.

These findings confirm the "assimilation hypothesis" we advanced at the beginning to a high degree. Nevertheless, the white population finds it difficult to accept and to integrate non-whites, partly because fringe groups (defined by financial capacity and life-style) influence the opinion and tolerance of whites toward the entire non-white population. More than half of the interviewed white persons (54.5%) were against a legalization of grey areas in September 1989. The low degree of residential integration is reflected in the selective opening of residential buildings to non-white renters. They therefore concentrate in a few buildings only (Fig. 5). Where attempts have been made to help non-whites find apartments in prestigious buildings occupied by whites only, e.g., with the help of white nominees, there have been repeated evictions on the part of the landlords. Already before the abolition of the Group Areas Act in June 1991 the city council of
Durban attempted to introduce new municipal bylaws to have legal means of dealing with "indecent, violent and noisy behaviour at some establishments" (Daily News 1.09.1990). Critics of these bylaws interpret this as a euphemism for new racially discriminatory regulations.

Fig. 5. Distribution of households in Albert Park, 1989
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