



The Erosion of Residential Segregation in South Africa: The 'Greying' of Albert Park in Durban

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Abstract: In South Africa the state plays a major role in influencing the socio-spatial structuring of society. The Group Areas Act, which emphasised racial residential segregation, was one of the key instruments used to enforce the ideology of apartheid. However, since the mid-1980s many blacks began to move into white designated group areas, which blurred race-space divisions and led to the formation of 'grey areas'. Against the background of the socio-political changes which have taken place in South Africa over the past decade, this paper examines the internal dynamics in one such grey area, Albert Park in Durban. This paper traces the arrival of blacks in Albert Park, and identifies the problems which they have experienced in the area. The nature of black protest and resistance to evictions in Albert Park is evaluated. The white reaction to the process of residential integration in Albert Park is also analysed. Finally, the response of the Durban City Council is considered. This paper concludes that blacks were moving into Albert Park because of a shortage of accommodation and a desire to escape from the strife-torn townships. However, they experienced numerous problems such as curfews, evictions without notice, and regular harassment from the police. Conservative Durban city councillors expressed concern that the desegregation process in Albert Park will threaten white working-class interests, while liberal councillors called for the whole of Durban to be declared 'open'. White fears that the influx of blacks into Albert Park would lead to an increase in crime and a decline in property values were unfounded. The abolition of the Group Areas Act in 1991 merely gave *de jure* recognition to a *de facto* situation'.

Introduction

The international focus on South Africa's oppressive and race segregated society reached its zenith in the mid-1980s as popular opposition to the apartheid state escalated to unprecedented levels. The South African Government responded with the imposition of a national state of emergency which gave draconian powers to the police, security and military appar-

atus, creating a siege situation in civil society. Yet, while the global focus on South Africa has been at the national level, the struggle for the transformation towards a post-apartheid society is being played out largely at the local level. More specifically, it has been pressure for change at the local level that have significantly influenced national events. This has been especially evident in the arena of socio-spatial desegregation.

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Residential segregation and desegregation is a phenomenon that has attracted the attention of urban social geographers for many decades [e.g. Rose

(1969), Radford (1976), Lee (1977), Jackson and Smith (1981) and Jackson (1987)]. However, until recently, this process had been neglected by South African geographers, whose focus had been almost exclusively on "white social space" (Rogerson and Browett, 1986). These studies were theoretically quiescent and failed to consider the impact of the state and the historically structured race-class inequalities which permeated the apartheid space-economy (Rogerson and Browett, 1986). The blinkered nature of South African urban research is revealed by the fact that between 1919 and 1980 only two articles published in the journal of the South African Geographical Society focused on black townships (Beavon, 1982). However, by the late 1980s there was more progressive research on the geography of apartheid, especially by historical geographers [e.g. Crush (1986), Wellings (1986) and Rogerson and Parnell (1989)].

In South Africa the state has played an important role in influencing the spatial and social organisation of society. The geographical landscape in South Africa (physical, social and economic), has been profoundly influenced by the policy of apartheid which constitutes an unparalleled example of state-directed socio-spatial structuring. Smith (1982, p. 1) observes that "it would not be too much of an exaggeration to describe apartheid as the most ambitious contemporary exercise in applied geography". Apartheid is most readily apparent in the urban arena and centred to a large extent on the control of residential location (Soussan, 1984, p. 201).

The Group Areas Act (GAA) of 1950 was one of the key instruments used to reinforce the ideology of apartheid, and emphasised separate residential areas, educational services and other amenities for the different race groups. The overall emphasis was on residential segregation (Western, 1981; Maharaj, 1992). One of the cornerstones of apartheid and one of the few areas in which the policy has been effective was in the provision of separate residential areas for the different race groups (Preston-Whyte, 1982). The goal of complete segregation eluded the apartheid state, and relics of earlier integrated areas remain (Christopher, 1990). The GAA was repealed in 1991, as part of the political transformation process which had been initiated by State President de Klerk in February 1990.

However, *de jure* white residential exclusivity was being contravened since the mid-1980s as large numbers of blacks¹ began to move into designated white group areas, and this led to the formation of so-called 'grey areas' in most major urban centres in South Africa. Rigid race-space divisions were blurred with the development of grey areas. The Government response to grey areas was to introduce the Free Settlement Areas Act (FSAA) of 1989, which was based on the recommendations of the President's Council Report in 1987 (Republic of South Africa, 1987). In terms of the FSAA a few areas open to all race groups would be established, while the GAA would be enforced more strictly in other areas.² However, with the development of grey areas the Government was merely responding to a *de facto* situation.

Well-known grey areas include Hillbrow and Mayfair in Johannesburg, Woodstock in Cape Town, and Albert Park in Durban, and these have been viewed as "symbols of a new urban future" (Urban Foundation, 1990, p. 15). While there has been a burgeoning literature on the development of grey areas [e.g. Pickard-Cambridge (1988), Hart (1989), Rule (1989), Elder (1990), Saff (1990), Schlemmer and Stack (1990), and Tomaselli and Tomaselli (1992)], little attempt has been made to examine the internal dynamics of this process. An understanding of the greying process will present a useful pointer to the problems and challenges that are likely to emanate from the repeal of the GAA. This is especially important as a major problem facing a future democratic, non-racial government in South Africa will be socio-spatial desegregation.

This paper examines the 'greying' of the Albert Park area in Durban by focusing on the different actors involved. This paper attempts to trace the arrival of blacks into this area, and to identify reasons for their present residential location. Their attitudes toward their environment and the GAA will be evaluated, and patterns of social interaction will be examined. Problems experienced by blacks in this area will be identified, and the nature of protest and resistance to evictions will be discussed. The white reaction to the process of residential integration in Albert Park will also be analysed. Finally, the response of the Durban City Council (DCC) will be considered. This is important as it is evident that the Government is keen to

grant greater autonomy to local authorities to protect residential standards and maintain existing neighbourhood relations.³ The choice of Durban also has symbolic significance historically, for it was this local authority that played a principal role in the development of the GAA (Maharaj, 1991, 1992).

Albert Park

Albert Park is situated south-east of the Central Business District (CBD) of Durban (Figure 1). More specifically, the area is bounded by Russell Street in the west, Broad Street in the east, Smith Street in the north, and St Andrews Street on the south (Figure 1). Albert Park was reserved as a site for public recreation by the DCC in 1864. At the turn of this century it served as a field for international cricket matches. In 1963 the Albert Park area was described as follows:

Albert Park is the oldest existing park in Durban. Its name conjures up scenes of Victorian grandeur, horse drawn carriages and life in the calm sedate manner of almost forgotten days . . . In modern times when so many people live in flats, a park has an added function. Albert Park is the combined playground and back garden of hundreds of Durban families where children can play in safety throughout the day (*South African Women's Weekly*, 21-28/2/1963).

Historically, Albert Park was a prestigious white suburb comprised primarily of flats. More recently, it was occupied by white pensioners who were attracted by the relatively low rents and property prices. Since the mid-1980s the character of the area began to change as it began to be occupied increasingly by blacks. In 1991 Albert Park was described as "a crowded, cosmopolitan society comprising black upwardly-mobile professional people ('Buppies'), white pensioners, shopkeepers and restaurant owners, students, church workers, and vagrants who sleep in the park" (Portfolio, 1991).

In order to acquire an insight into the attitudes and problems of blacks in Albert Park an interview schedule, containing both open and close ended questions, was administered to a systematically selected sample of 30 black respondents, representing 37.5% of the black population. There were 15 blocks of flats in the area with a total of 205 apartments. It was difficult to determine the racial breakdown of occupants. However, with the assistance of officials from the Durban

Central Resident's Association (DCRA), and a few co-operative tenants, at least 80 black occupants were identified in January 1990. In addition, information was also obtained from newspaper articles and other documentary sources. Originally, it was also intended to interview white residents as well, but they refused to co-operate with black interviewers. They would have most probably responded to a white interviewer. This was not possible because of budget and time constraints.

Blacks in Albert Park

A socio-economic profile

According to Roy Ainslie, Regional Director of the Progressive Federal Party in the Natal Coastal Region, "most of the black people living in central Durban are young, bright, articulate and professional" (*Sunday Tribune*, 3/7/88). This was very evident from the Albert Park survey: Fifty-seven per cent of the respondents were females, and 43% males, and their mean age was 26 years. The majority (60%) were single. At least two-thirds of the sample had received a secondary education, with 40% having some tertiary qualification. Forty per cent were professionals, 10% were clerks, and 13% technicians. About 37% were students attending tertiary education institutions in Durban. The Natal regional sales director of the J. H. Isaacs real estate company, Andrew Foxcroft, stated that there was a significant demand for flats in Albert Park, "particularly from young professional and semi-professional people who want to save and lower the cost of travelling" (*Herald*, 24/2/91).

More than half of the respondents were employed in the Durban region. The average monthly income of the respondents was R800. However, 30% (mainly professionals) received an income which exceeded R1200 per month. Eighty per cent paid a monthly rental of between R140 and R180, respectively. The rental of 20% exceeded R180 per month. While the rents appeared to be very reasonable, the accommodation was of the most basic type, and in the main comprised of a small bedroom and kitchen. Thirty per cent had no kitchen or bathroom, and about 47% complained about inadequate space. Overall, it

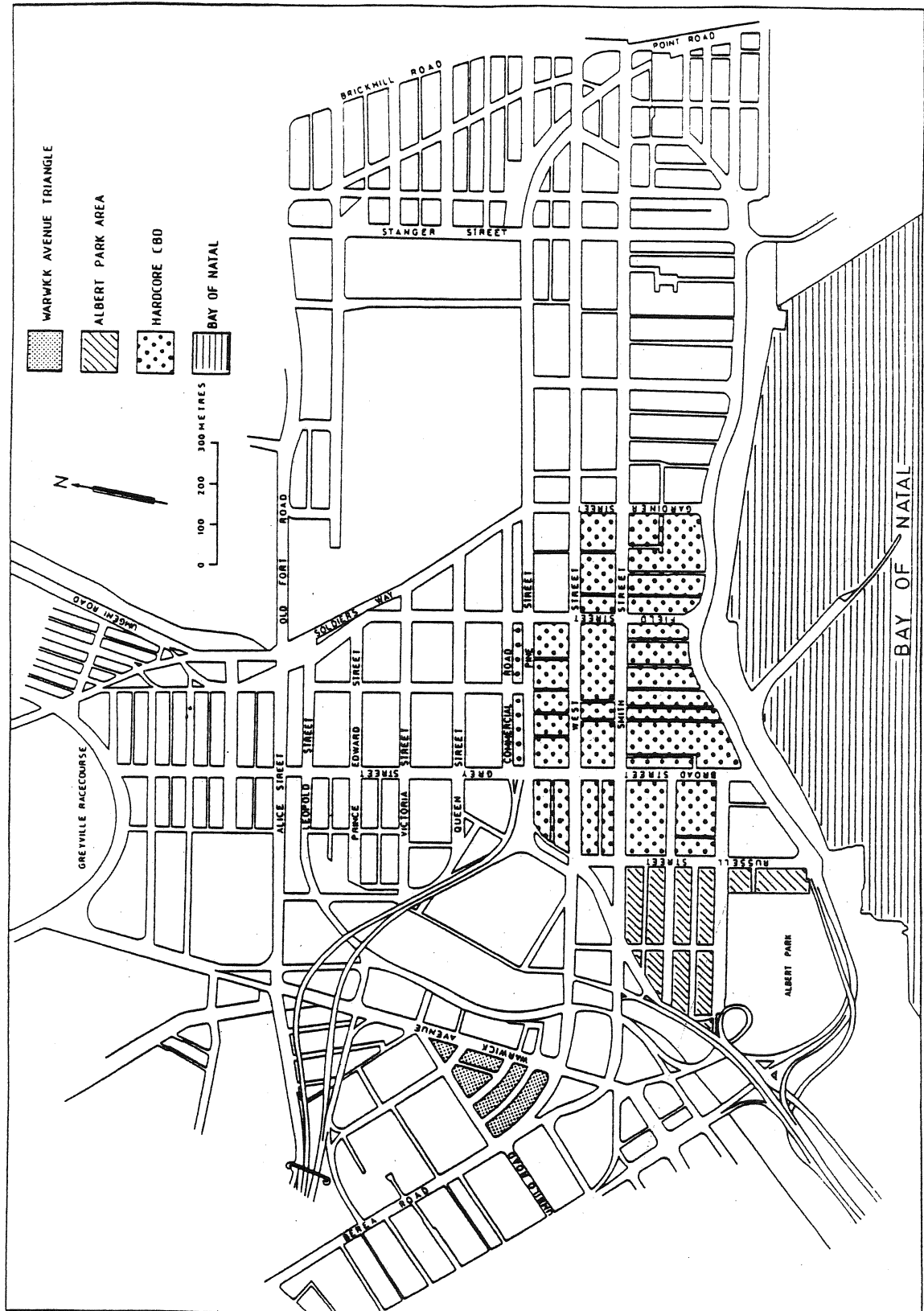


Figure 1. Location of Albert Park in relation to the Durban Central Business District.

would appear that blacks in Albert Park represent an incipient middle class.

Residential history

The average period of stay in Albert Park was 3 years. The majority of respondents (93%) had previously lived in townships around Durban [Umlazi, Lamontville, Kwa Mashu and Kwa Makhutha (Table 1)]. Only 6.7% of respondents had previously lived in rural areas (Umbumbulu and Groutville). About three-quarters of the respondents had previously lived in rented rooms in the townships.

Thirty-seven per cent of the respondents had moved because of inadequate accommodation, 20% because of the lack of educational facilities, and about 17% desired to be close to their workplaces (Table 2). One third had moved into Albert Park because of a shortage of accommodation, 23% felt that it was safer than the townships, and for about 17% the area was closer to their jobs (Table 3). The safety factor was also important, given the fact that townships in Natal have been characterised by endemic violence since the mid-1980s (Morris and Hindson, 1992). Interestingly, 17% had moved into the area to defy the GAA.

It is thus evident that the shortage of accommodation was the main factor influencing the move to Albert Park. In 1987 there was an estimated shortage of at least 1 million dwellings for blacks (de Vos, 1987, p. 6). Furthermore, in existing black urban areas there was a high level of overcrowding, with an average of 16 people occupying each dwelling, and each individual living in 3 m² of space—'not much larger than a double bed'—this figure did not include the millions

Table 1. Location of previous place of residence (%)

Previous residence	Urban		Rural	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
Kwa Mashu	3	10.0	—	—
Umlazi	13	43.3	—	—
Kwa Makhutha	3	10.0	—	—
Lamontville	3	10.0	—	—
Durban	6	20.0	—	—
Umbumbulu	—	—	1	3.3
Groutville	—	—	1	3.3
Total	28	93.3	2	6.6

Table 2. Reasons for last residential move

Reason	Frequency	Per cent
Inadequate accommodation	11	37.0
Lack of educational facilities	6	20.0
Closer to work	5	16.7
Marriage	2	6.7
Absence of entertainment facilities	4	13.3
Sold house	1	3.0
Closer to friends	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

living in informal settlements (Christie, 1987, pp. 5–6).

In contrast to the above, there was a surplus of 36,700 units for whites, comprising 17,400 dwellings which were unlet on the rental market, and 19,300 unsold houses (de Vos, 1986, p. 29). Estate agents estimated that about 21,000 units were vacant in Durban's white areas.⁴

Social interaction patterns

It is difficult to summarise or quantify social relations (Glazer, 1978, p. 147). According to Molotch (1974, p. 204) during the transition period of residential integration "geographical propinquity may lead to some degree of racial integration". During this transition period three possible forms of integration may develop:

- (i) *Demographic* integration, whereby a given setting contains both blacks and whites in some specified proportions;
- (ii) *Biracial interaction*, whereby non-antagonistic social interaction is occurring between blacks and whites to some specifiable extent;
- (iii) *Transracial solidarity*, defined as conditions in which blacks and whites interact freely and without

Table 3. Reasons for present location

Reason	Frequency	Per cent
To oppose the Group Areas Act	5	16.7
Closer to school	2	6.7
Closer to job	3	10.0
Shortage of accommodation	10	33.3
Cheaper transport	2	6.7
Safer than in townships	7	23.3
Access to facilities	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Table 4. Social interaction with whites

Social interaction	Per cent			Total
	Often	Seldom	Not at all	
Parties	16.7	33.3	50.0	100.0
Visits	33.3	26.7	40.0	100.0
Greetings	40.0	26.7	33.3	100.0

constraint, and in a manner such that race ceases to function as an important source of social change or as a criteria for friendship and primary group selection (Molotch, 1974, p. 204).

The survey revealed that, given a choice, 80% of the respondents preferred to live in a racially integrated area, rather than with their own race group. An attempt was made to determine the social interaction patterns between blacks and whites in terms of the frequency with which they greeted and visited each other, and held parties together. Forty per cent greeted each other often and one third visited each other often. About 17% often had parties mainly with younger whites (Table 4). Given the deep-rooted prejudices of an apartheid society, this suggests a satisfactory level of interracial social interaction.

Further evidence of the friendly disposition of blacks is the fact that about two thirds stated that they would assist their white neighbours if they had a problem. Moreover, only 6.7% of the respondents stated that their white neighbours displayed a negative attitude towards them. Thus, it is evident that demographic and biracial interaction is evident in Albert Park. According to the DCRA an objective examination of the reactions of whites in mixed areas compared to those in segregated areas will reveal that black-white prejudices decrease through interpersonal relationships.⁵ Human (1986, pp. 159–160) observed that the attitudes of whites towards residential desegregation tended to change from negative to positive once the integration process had commenced.

Attitudes towards the GAA and the FSAA

Ninety-three per cent of the respondents were aware that they were living in Albert Park in contravention of the GAA. Approximately half of the respondents had previously been evicted from the area, and 40% had been fined. de Coning (1986, p. 66) has argued

that one of the prerequisites for residential integration to take place was the "intentional disregarding of the Group Areas Act".

About 57% of the sample supported the FSAA mainly because it would prevent the eviction of black tenants if Albert Park was designated as such an area. However, those who opposed it stated that opening up a few areas would inevitably lead to overcrowding and its attendant problems. All the respondents supported the repeal of the group areas legislation. In a recent survey, Sutcliffe (1989) found that blacks in Durban supported the repeal of the GAA because it would increase interracial harmony and give everyone the right to choose where to live. Whites, however, generally had a negative attitude towards the integration process, and there was great resistance to the movement of blacks into Albert Park.

Evictions, Protest and Resistance

Black tenants in Albert Park encountered serious problems as they attempted to lead normal lives. Often caretakers, landlords and agents imposed rules which stretched far beyond the law. Black tenants had to keep a low profile, often being the first to leave the building, and the last to come back at night. They were warned against making needless trips out of the flats, and they were not allowed to receive any visitors. In one block of flats the race problem was solved in a distinctively South African way. The supervisor allowed all races to move in, but not on the same floor. He had a "stratified block with different floors for whites, blacks, coloureds and Indians—a kind of tricameral block" (*Sunday Tribune*, 20/5/90). The following were some of the problems reported to the Progressive Federal Party and Lawyers for Human Rights in July 1988:

- (i) Black tenants were continuously insulted and taunted by a small group of mostly elderly white residents.
- (ii) A caretaker who patrolled a block of flats with dangerous weapons, confronted and swore at tenants, and imposed curfews on blacks.
- (iii) Landlords and agents were evicting tenants without any notice. Some were also refusing to accept rents from tenants in preparation for legal evictions.

- (iv) Regular visits from police of the Group Areas Unit,⁶ who urged tenants to apply for permits to live in white areas. In 1988 eight black families and four mixed couples were investigated by the police for contravening the GAA.⁷

In June 1987 black tenants in Albert Park were served with eviction notices by landlords who were threatened by the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning that their flats could be confiscated if they did not evict illegal tenants (*Leader*, 19/6/87). In terms of Section 41 of the GAA the government could confiscate property which was "illegally occupied or owned by 'disqualified' people" (SAIRR, 1988, p. 488). The state was thus putting pressure on property owners to enforce the GAA.

Referring to the evictions and pointing out contradictions in government policies, Myra Tyler, of Women for Peaceful Change Now, stated that all families who lived in Durban's 'white' Albert Park area needed the support of all South Africans looking for a peaceful solution to the problems of the country. It was confusing that no one accepted the responsibility of perpetrating such evictions. Local government officials stated that they were upholding central state laws. The central government claimed that no one was being evicted or prosecuted. Yet, people were being forced out of their homes (*Daily News*, 26/6/87).

The state action against group area offenders exposed the impotence of junior partners of the ruling National Party, especially as a key issue in their election manifestos was the dismantling of the GAA. In the House of Delegates the opposition Solidarity Party argued that the situation should be handled by politicians and political parties at the national level. Obviously, successful intervention by the tricameral participants would increase their credibility. The Solidarity Party urged the Government to grant:

- (i) a moratorium on all evictions, direct or indirect, pending a negotiated resolution to the issue of the Group Areas Act;
- (ii) an assurance that no person shall be evicted until a constitution representative of all South Africans is implemented and when the issue of land usage in terms of race is decided upon by all South Africans.⁸

If the Government failed to meet these requests, then Solidarity suggested that parties in the Houses of

Delegates and Representatives should withdraw from Parliament during February 1988 as a sign of protest.⁹ Predictably, the Government refused to respond to this request, and the threats by Solidarity were not carried out. It was left to local civic organisations like the DCRA to oppose the evictions.

The DCRA was formed in 1984 to oppose the eviction of residents who were living in the area known as 'Warwick Avenue Triangle' in Durban (Figure 1). Since then its activities has broadened and the DCRA has taken up issues pertaining to housing, rents and living conditions in the greater Durban region. In addition, the DCRA also attempted to address the problems of residents living in burgeoning informal settlements in Durban who faced evictions and/or demolition of their dwellings. The following bodies were incorporated into DCRA: Committee Against Crime, Narcotics Anonymous, Committee Against Removals and Evictions (CARE), and Warwick Avenue Development Committee.¹⁰

The DCRA also played a pivotal role in protecting the rights of tenants in Albert Park and organising opposition to the central state initiated evictions. Referring to the eviction notices and the possibility of tenants being convicted in court, Mr Sayed Iqbal Mohamed, chairman of DCRA, stated that:

A decision to punish 'criminals' who have to contravene laws to find a home on land divided disproportionately and unjustly is to punish people for the crime of apartheid. Such a decision would be disastrous to genuine reform and the positive change we urgently need (*Sunday Tribune*, 30/10/88).

The eviction notices served to galvanise organised resistance and solidarity, and the campaign spear-headed by the DCRA received support from student and political groups, civil rights organisations as well as religious organisations.¹¹ According to Mr Sayed Iqbal Mohamed an important part of the organisation's strategy was to develop confidence in the tenants that the state and its apparatus could be successfully opposed:

We felt we had the organisation and the legal resources to at least stay the evictions for a considerable period. But we needed to get the people themselves to believe it was possible. We developed a preliminary strategy aimed at uniting the affected families. We got people to ignore the notices and we got them to refuse to apply for permits to remain in their homes. From our experience

we knew the authorities had only suggested people apply for permits so that they could more effectively pressurise individual families (Press Trust of South Africa, 16/7/87).

In a memorandum to the Government, the DCRA succinctly summarised the problems of affected families. Thousands of families were distressed by the insecurity associated with the Government's actions, which included "eviction notices, police harassment of families and individuals as well as threats of confiscation of properties or demolition".¹² Such families, which often included very young children and expectant mothers, had no alternate accommodation, and there were long waiting lists for houses in Durban. The DCRA drew attention to the urgent social problems associated with the impending evictions: disrupted schooling, alcoholism, wife and child abuse, instances of contemplated suicide, and feelings of fear, insecurity, hopelessness and despondency.¹³

The DCRA called for an urgent meeting with the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning to discuss problems experienced by black residents in Albert Park as a result of the GAA. However, the Government refused to meet with the DCRA (SAIRR, 1988, p. 499). In a reply to the DCRA memorandum, the Deputy Minister of Development Planning, P. J. Badenhorst, stated that, while he was sympathetic to the problems experienced as a result of housing shortages, the Government was committed to the principle of separate residential areas. He berated the DCRA's tactics and strategies:

I must express my disappointment at the way in which you have handled this situation, as instead of assisting people to find accommodation in their own areas, you have . . . chosen to launch a campaign rousing the feelings of people: encouraging them to contravene an Act of Parliament and to defy Government policy.¹⁴

The DCRA also initiated a mass signature campaign to petition the Government to stay all evictions in Albert Park. By the end of July 1987 about 46,000 signatures were collected by the DCRA, together with the assistance of the Natal Indian Congress, Durban Housing Action Committee, and the Progressive Federal Party (SAIRR, 1988, p. 499). The DCRA also called upon landlords to withdraw eviction notices and to stop issuing summons. Mr Iqbal Mohamed appealed to landlords not to be manipulated to do the state's dirty job. If landlords refused to

evict tenants who had violated the GAA, then a united front could be presented in opposing the legislation (*Leader*, 31/7/87). In March 1990 the DCRA convened a meeting between residents and estate agents. At this meeting estate agents agreed to accept the nominee system of renting flats (*Herald*, 15/4/90). There was a great deal of support for the DCRA's campaign, including white sympathisers.

In an ironic twist of events, tenants in Albert Park began to receive eviction notices in the first quarter of 1990—apparently initiated by landlords and estate agents. In fact, 21 eviction notices were issued in the first quarter of 1990, compared to 15 in the first half of 1989. According to DCRA some estate agents were using 'breach' of leases as an excuse to evict residents. The DCRA interpreted this as a form of racism emanating from the GAA. It urged estate agents not to represent racist landlords (*Herald*, 15/4/90).

Real-estate companies stated that they were not racist, and were merely responding to the request of owners of buildings. A spokesman for J. H. Isaacs stated that: "We act as agents for our clients. Our bread and butter comes from this." A director of RMS Syfrets maintained that although his organisation was opposed to the GAA, and had not used the legislation to evict people, it was still the law (*Herald*, 15/4/90). As a result of the campaign, Russell Marriott and Boyd announced that it would no longer be administering residential blocks (*Sunday Tribune*, 20/8/89).

Commenting on the plight of families facing eviction, the *Herald* (15/4/90) argued that they were caught in a vicious cycle, and called for the scrapping of the GAA. The GAA had forced families to seek accommodation in Albert Park, and they were being evicted from the area in terms of the provisions of the same Act. The eviction notices were largely the result of the mobilisation of conservative whites.

The White Backlash: Fears, Prejudices and Contradictions

As mentioned earlier, whites refused to participate in the survey. To compensate for this, newspaper articles were used to assess the attitudes of whites to the greying of Albert Park. In the period 1987–1990 numerous articles focusing on the problems of Albert

Park, particularly as viewed by whites appeared in Durban's two daily newspapers, the *Daily News* and *Natal Mercury*. This included editorials, news reports as well as letters to the editor. A cross-section of white responses will be discussed in this section.

Generally whites were concerned about the increase in crime rates, decline in property values and drop in standards. The 'slumlords', however, were largely responsible for lowering of standards. According to the DCRA the complaints of whites about declining standards were justified "in so far as the standards of maintenance and general upkeep of premises are concerned. It is the slumlords who have lowered standards because of their attitudes towards blacks" (*Daily News*, 16/5/91). Christie (1987, p. 11) has argued that blacks moving into white areas want to improve their quality of life, and they would not want standards in the suburbs to drop. Hence they would want to maintain the higher standards for which they were paying an even higher price.

The black tenants in Albert Park were caught in a vicious cycle. As many of the tenants were occupying the flats illegally, they were unable to pressurise the landlords to improve the buildings. Since the majority of the tenants were not voters and did not pay rates, this may have also influenced the DCC to neglect the area in terms of provision of services and general upkeep. As the demand for cheap accommodation in the city escalated, rents also increased. In order to meet rising rentals poorer tenants began to share their flats "with more than the legal number of people. This put a further strain on the services in the buildings and caused landlords to neglect the 'slums'" (Portfolio, 1991). It is important to note that in the January 1990 survey more than three-quarters of the respondents stated that the Albert Park area had neither improved nor deteriorated since their arrival.

In 1987-1988 conservative whites mounted a campaign to evict blacks living illegally in white areas in Durban. Right-wing white civic organisations such as the Civic Action League as well as political leaders were involved. It was evident that ambitious and unscrupulous politicians were exploiting racial prejudices and fears to obtain votes. Cumulatively, such attitudes resulted in increasing pressure being put on blacks living in Albert Park. As a result of complaints

from whites, police visited and took statements from blacks living in the Albert Park area. Landlords were faced with the option of evicting their black tenants or facing prosecution. Their properties could be confiscated if they did not act against 'disqualified' tenants. Referring to the large number of residents likely to be displaced, the *Daily News* argued that the 'greying' process had taken place harmoniously, and called for pragmatism and sensitivity in handling the issue. It emphasised that "humanitarian considerations alone cry out against disturbing this process" which would serve as a "bulwark against political and social upheaval" (*Daily News*, 15/12/88).

According to the *Daily News* there were various reasons for the greying of Albert Park. A major factor was the movement of whites out of the inner-city areas to the suburbs. This process of suburbanisation had commenced even before blacks began to move into the city. Landlords agreed that they consequently had many vacant flats, and blacks who were experiencing a serious housing crisis filled the vacuum. Also, with greater socio-economic mobility, blacks wanted to improve their quality of life. Furthermore, with the repeal of the Mixed Marriages Act,¹⁵ many 'mixed' couples could only obtain accommodation in grey areas (*Daily News*, 27/3/89). The *Daily News* argued that evicting black tenants will not solve problems, and called for a concerted co-ordinated planning effort, comprising all the major interest groups in Durban (the DCC, landlords, the police, property developers and residents) to ensure that conditions in Albert Park did not deteriorate (*Daily News*, 27/3/89).

A major concern of white residents was the apparent increase in crime and the decline in property values in Albert Park. However, according to Evans Mantzaris, a sociologist, the incidence of culpable homicide, robbery and rape in the area had decreased between 1984 and 1988. Evans Mantzaris questioned how local and national politicians, and residents had concluded that crime had increased in the area. He also argued that it was important to determine whether residents or outsiders were the perpetrators of crime (*Sunday Tribune*, 25/6/89).

The South African Police (SAP) agreed that the perception of a high crime rate in Albert Park was a myth. Durban was divided into five subsections by the

SAP—Beachfront, CBD, Warwick Triangle, Point and Albert Park. Albert Park had the lowest crime rate in the city, and according to the SAP most of the felonies were petty in nature. Comparative statistics provided by the SAP revealed that the crime rate in Albert Park had decreased between 1990 and 1991 (Table 5). According to the SAP "Albert Park had few of the very serious crimes found in higher-income areas and in the townships" (Portfolio, 1991).

In order to ensure that crime was not perceived as a racial issue the DCRA set up a multiracial neighbourhood watch (*Natal Mercury*, 14/6/89). The chairman of the DCRA, Sayed Iqbal Mohamed, argued that crime was not a racial problem, and that politicians were exploiting white fears and racial prejudices to obtain votes (*Daily News*, 23/3/89). According to research conducted by the South African Institute of Race Relations, there was no relationship between residential integration and crime rate. In fact the crime rate was lower in mixed than in segregated areas in South Africa (Moosa, 1987, p. 1). According to Butler-Adam (1988) crime rates are related to high unemployment rates as well as the inadequate security associated with vast expanses of undeveloped land. The opening up of residential areas would lead to increased land development projects, and reduce opportunities for crime. He referred to Mayfair, a mixed residential area in Johannesburg, which had one of the lowest crime rates in the country, while all white areas in Grahamstown had the highest crime rates. This suggests, therefore, that "crime rates will, if anything go down as property values go up and a suburban life-style is sought after and maintained" (Butler-Adam, 1988, p. 3).

According to Forman (1971, p. 56) "whenever the matter of white-black housing arrangements arises, either lurking in the background or openly expressed

Table 5. Incidence of crime in Albert Park (January/May 1990–1991)¹⁶

Crime	1990	1991
Robbery	27	18
Vehicle theft	54	42
Theft from vehicles	62	53
House breaking	51	42
Pickpocket	26	13
Murder	1	2

will be the question of effects upon property values". White fears about the decline in property values were also unjustified. Blacks moved into white areas to upgrade their accommodation and improve their living standards. Hence, it was in their interest to ensure that standards were maintained. Furthermore, because of the greater demand, prices of houses in integrated neighbourhoods would increase (Christie, 1987). The creation of a non-residential suburb in Mayfair, Johannesburg, resulted in a 160% increase in property values as against 20% for the rest of the city (*Natal Mercury*, 15/7/88). Referring to the desegregation experiences of other cities in Southern Africa, Butler-Adam (n.d.) concluded that:

Immediate increases [in property values] occurred in desirable residential areas in Harare, Windhoek and Mafikeng; longer term increases subsequently occurred in almost all residential areas in those cities, once the economy has adjusted to the new patterns of demand. In short, the situation in greater Durban, and the evidence of all cities, points equivocally to increased land prices in the face of the removal of residential restrictions.

A key player in the residential desegregation process is the "local municipality with its powers to zone and to set other standards that will limit the kind of housing that may be built in it and, consequently, the kind of people that may live in it" (Glazer, 1978, p. 162). The next section analyses the response of the DCC to the greying of Albert Park.

Ambivalence and Vacillation: the DCC and Albert Park

Forman (1971, p. 93) has argued that 'officialised oppressions' depend on the "use of local governmental powers for the maintenance of residential segregation, and range from very subtle to quite obvious attempts to keep out blacks". The reaction of the DCC to the development of 'grey areas' in the city can best be described as ambivalent and contradictory. In May 1986 the DCC resolved to request the Government scrap the operation of the GAA in the city. Failing this, the DCC requested that it be granted the authority and flexibility to implement the Act in the city.

In August 1987, the DCC agreed to send a delegation to meet the Minister of Constitutional Development,

Mr Chris Heunis, to protest against the eviction of blacks from white areas in Durban (*Natal Witness*, 1/8/89). However, by 1989, the DCC's position on grey areas was unclear. This was because, for the first time in the history of this traditional liberal 'last outpost', the DCC faced a real threat of being dominated by the ruling National Party. In July 1989 the Management Committee (Manco) of the DCC rejected an application to declare Albert Park a Free Settlement Area (FSA) because it was 'too small' (*Natal Mercury*, 5/7/89). Mr Jan Venter,¹⁷ Chairman of Manco and a member of the National Party, stated that his committee would only consider recommending whole areas as FSAs, and not "bits and pieces" (*Daily News*, 5/7/89).

In March 1989 Manco recommended the following options to the DCC with regard to residential integration:

- (i) The Government be requested to declare Durban a non-racial city.
- (ii) No part of the city should be declared free settlement areas.
- (iii) Specific parts of the city should be declared free settlement areas (*Daily News*, 22/3/89).

However, the City Council debate on FSAs on 3 April 1989 ended in deadlock when none of the above options were accepted. The stalemate reflected the clear divisions in opinion held by the different power blocs on the Council. Councillors on the political left supported a motion to declare the whole of Durban an FSA. Such a move, they argued, would demonstrate to the Government that the Council supported a reform policy which would ultimately lead to the abolition of the GAA (*Daily News*, 4/4/89). Councillor Bruce Boaden maintained that "Durban should be able to show its face to the rest of the world as the city which has cast aside apartheid" (*Natal Mercury*, 4/4/89).

Councillors on the political right maintained that no existing residential areas should be opened, in accordance with the mandate they had received from the municipal elections of October 1988. The primary concern was to protect the interests of the white working class. Their views were summarised by Councillor Arthur Morris who contended that "it was all very well for the upper class of the Berea who had high walls and security systems" to call for total

residential desegregation. He expressed concern about the white working class who would be forced "to live cheek by jowl with lower class people" of other races (*Natal Mercury*, 4/4/89).

Interestingly, Mr Hernus Kriel, Minister of Planning and Public Affairs, maintained that the Government view was that "there was nothing to prevent cities applying for free settlement status", and that it "was looking at the possibility of whole cities applying for free settlement status" (*Natal Mercury*, 2/6/90). In June 1990 the DCC agreed to request the Government to consider declaring the whole city an FSA in anticipation of the scrapping of the GAA. The DCC's move was welcomed. The *Daily News* argued that, while all forms of apartheid was being 'weeded out', the onus should not be left only to the Government. Local authorities should also take the initiative (*Daily News*, 21/6/90).

Michael Sutcliffe¹⁸ interpreted the DCC's debate as the beginnings of a move for a non-racial city. The Council debate had separated those who favoured a democratic city and those who supported the status quo. However, he argued that, while whites spent a great deal of time discussing the integration of facilities, such changes would only emerge as a result of initiatives from blacks (*Sunday Tribune*, 9/4/89). The greying of Albert Park represented one such initiative.

Conclusion

The greying of Albert Park represented a spontaneous grassroots response to local contingencies and specificities since the mid-1980s. The repeal of the GAA in 1991 legitimised a *de facto* situation. It would appear that the history of the struggle for a democratic, non-racial society in South Africa "has been marked by a phenomenon whereby the apartheid government promulgates 'major' changes a few years after the masses have invalidated racist laws through their own actions" (*South*, 17-23/1/91). This applied to all the previous reform measures, and the abolition of the GAA merely gave "*de jure* recognition to a *de facto* situation" (*Sunday Tribune*, 4/12/88).

This paper has identified three main reasons for the 'greying' of Albert Park:

- (i) With the process of suburbanisation, whites were moving from the inner cities to the suburbs, even before the influx of blacks into the area.
- (ii) There was a surplus of accommodation for whites, and landlords were forced to accept black tenants, who were experiencing a tremendous shortage of housing. Hence, landlords and black tenants were responding to market forces. The GAA created an artificial shortage of land and housing for blacks.
- (iii) With improvements in socio-economic status, blacks were seeking a better quality of life, away from dormitory, strife-torn townships.

This paper has also drawn attention to the problems experienced by blacks as they attempted to lead normal lives. They were subjected to unreasonable conditions, like curfews, restrictions on the number of visitors, evictions without notice, and regular harassment from the police. The state attempted to force property owners to implement the provisions of the GAA. The DCRA, a civic organisation, played a leading role in mobilising, organising, and protecting the rights of disenfranchised black tenants in Albert Park. Detailed memorandums were submitted to the Government to prevent evictions. A massive signature petition campaign for the same purpose was also launched. The DCRA also urged estate agents not to do the state's dirty work by implementing the GAA. Civic organisations like the DCRA have played an important role in articulating the needs of the disenfranchised majority, and in many respects have been at the forefront of the struggle for a democratic non-racial society in South Africa (Botha, 1992). Saltman (1991, p. 427) has suggested that organisations like the DCRA can play an important role in actively promoting integration and maintaining stable and 'racially diverse neighbourhoods'.

As the last vestiges of white supremacy began to fall apart, whites felt threatened. Blacks had to face the conservative white response to the 'greying' of Albert Park, which revealed racial prejudices and bigotry, and which were often exploited by political opportunists. As Simon (1986, p. 294) observes, social and political change "inevitably generates conservative opposition from within existing structures since it implies change to prevailing power relations". A major concern of whites was the decline in standards, drop in property values and increased crime rates.

However, this paper suggests that such fears are unfounded. Standards had declined as landlords had refused to maintain their properties because the principal occupants were blacks. Also, given the shortage of accommodation and the increased demand, the movement of blacks into white areas led to increased property values. Statistics presented by the SAP revealed that Albert Park had the lowest crime rate in the city, and that there had also been a decline in the crime rate in the area.

Although space has been structured and patterned by historical and material forces, an overriding factor has been the political influence. Any realistic analysis of urban structure must recognise that the city is an embodiment of the political, economic and social structure of society. In this paper the influence of urban politics on the residential restructuring process was emphasised. The response of the local state in Durban to the greying process was ambivalent. The DCC refused to support the zoning of Albert Park as an FSA largely because this would alienate white voters in the area. Conservative councillors were against residential desegregation as this would threaten white working-class interests. Liberal councillors argued that the whole city should be declared open. However, in view of the events of post-February 1990, and particularly the central state intimation that whole cities could be declared open, the DCC agreed that Durban should be declared an FSA.

This study has revealed that relatively harmonious residential integration was possible in urban areas in South Africa, and that the repeal of the GAA would not produce the consequences which whites feared. In Albert Park residential integration was not accompanied by any marked increase in racial friction. Blacks had a friendly disposition towards whites. In fact there was positive interaction between blacks and young whites. Blacks in Albert Park represented a nascent middle-class group. Thus, with the phasing out of institutional measures, class and prejudice will continue to influence residential segregation. A similar trend was observed in Namibia (Simon, 1986).

White 'fears' about residential integration need to be addressed through a process of education and constructive debate. In this regard, the media has an important role in influencing people's perceptions.

There is a need for responsible reporting, and avoidance of stereotyping integrated areas as 'problematic'. Local authorities like the DCC can play a positive role in facilitating integrated areas. The DCC, for example, needs to incorporate in its mission statement that it actively supports and promotes integrated residential neighbourhoods. It could also improve the quality of amenities in integrated areas.

This paper has drawn attention to some of the problems that will be experienced in the transition towards more racially integrated residential neighbourhoods in a post-apartheid South Africa. Decades of institutionalised segregation will not be eliminated overnight. However, the study also suggests that these problems are not insurmountable. From a planning perspective the problem of inner-city decay needs to be addressed. It would appear that grey areas have been neglected by landlords and local authorities in terms of provision of services and amenities. A concerted effort is required from the private and public sectors to halt the physical decay in such areas and to facilitate general upgrading. This will contribute towards positive perceptions of such areas, and help promote residential integration.

Progressive social scientists and policy makers have played an important role in highlighting the inequities of apartheid and actively opposing this system. In an era of socio-political transformation and urban reconstruction there is an especially urgent need to consider how greater levels of residential integration can be achieved. This will make a critical contribution to greater levels of racial integration and tolerance in all sectors of society. Perhaps there is a need to reflect on whether legislation should be promulgated to promote greater levels of residential integration.

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Notes

1. Racial terminology in South Africa is a veritable minefield. In this paper official race categories that are socially constructed, historically specific and actively contested are used.
2. 'Live and Let Live', in information pamphlet issued by the Department of Development Planning, June 1988.
3. In terms of the FSA local authorities could make their own choices with regard to residential integration. Also, in terms of the Residential Environment Bill of 1991, local authorities will be empowered to maintain

- norms and standards in residential areas, and by-laws pertaining to health and overcrowding could be used for this purpose (Republic of South Africa, 1991).
4. Memorandum on Group Areas submitted to the Government by the DCRA, August 1987, p. 16.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
6. In June 1987, the Minister of Law and Order, Mr Adrian Vlok stated in Parliament that the police had a five-member task force called the Group Areas Branch which investigated violations of the provisions of the GAA (SAIRR, 1988, p. 489).
7. This figure could be much higher as it does not include those who did report police harassment to the DCRA [see DCRA Memorandum entitled "Urban Forced Removals in the DFR (1988)", p. 3].
8. Letter from Ismail Omar, national Chairman of Solidarity, to A. Rajbansi, Leader of the National People's Party, 7 August 1987.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Memorandum on Group Areas submitted to the Government by the DCRA, August 1987.
11. These included the Black Sash, the Natal Indian Congress, the Muslim Youth Movement, the Natal Organisation of Women, the Health Workers Organisation and the Phoenix Working Committee (*Leader*, 18/11/88).
12. Memorandum on Group Areas submitted to the Government by the DCRA, August 1987, pp. 6-7.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.
14. Letter from the Deputy Minister of Development Planning to the DCRA, 20 August 1987.
15. In terms of this Act interracial marriages were illegal. The Act was abolished in June 1985.
16. Source: Portfolio (1991).
17. In 1990 Jan Venter became the Mayor of Durban.
18. Lecturer in Town and Regional Planning, University of Natal, Durban.

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