



# Urban networks, community organising and race: an analysis of racial integration in a desegregated South African neighbourhood

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## Abstract

The paper addresses the question of racial integration in Delft South, a desegregated low-income neighbourhood in Cape Town developed through the provision of state funded housing to families previously classified coloured and African. Through a qualitative analysis, the research examines the effect relocation has had on the racial character of economic and social networks around which resident families construct their everyday activities. In light of the importance of race in shaping these networks, the paper then examines the relationship between access to housing and practices of social and spatial integration, in particular organisation of and participation in street- and neighbourhood-level organisations. I demonstrate that in Delft South legacies of segregation persist in residents' reliance on economic and social networks built on long, durable histories and geographies of racial segregation. Although physical relocation has not led to a lessening of the importance of racial identities, other identities built around issues such as neighbourhood norms, housing politics, and issues of criminality and legality manifest according to circumstances and residents' interests. Context and situation therefore are significant for whether and to what degree race and place matter in the post-apartheid context.

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## 1. Introduction

In the contemporary post-apartheid period, segregation continues to frame South African cities, delimiting racialised patterns of inequality and individual and communal access to economic opportunities and political and social networks (Christopher, 2001a,b). Some neighbourhoods in South African cities have desegregated via market mechanisms and individual homeowner choices. In some instances, the state also has played a direct role in urban desegregation, particularly in the development of new areas (Maharaj and Mpungose, 1994; Crankshaw and White, 1995; Morris, 1999; Broadbridge, 2001). The relationship between physical desegregation and racial integration in these cases remains however an empirical question. This paper thus addresses issues of racial integration through analysis of Delft South, a desegregated low-income

neighbourhood in Cape Town developed through the provision of state funded housing to families previously classified coloured and African.<sup>1</sup> This analysis explores African and coloured families relocation to this mixed-race neighbourhood, focusing in particular on the move's implications for racial integration in everyday practice, linkages to economic and social networks, and participation in community organisations.

In Delft South legacies of segregation appear to persist in residents' reliance on economic and social networks built on long, durable histories and geographies of racial segregation. But, in moving to a new

<sup>1</sup> The terms 'African' and 'Coloured' refer to apartheid categories legislated through the 1950 Population Registration Act and used to implement and maintain segregation (Maharaj, 1994). In the Cape Town context, 'African' refers most often to somebody of isiXhosa background, whereas 'Coloured' refers to somebody of mixed race. They are used throughout this paper without the qualification of quotation marks to refer to people and families classified in these categories in the apartheid era.

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place and, in the process, trying to (re)create community organisations, patterns of integration between African and coloured residents and community leaders are evident. Although physical relocation has not led automatically to a lessening of the importance of racial identities, people operate on the basis of a number of possible social categories. Other identities produced through neighbourhood norms, housing politics, and issues of criminality and legality manifest according to circumstances and residents' interests. Context and situation therefore are significant, I argue, for whether and to what degree race and place matters and for their intersection with other types of identities.

This paper addresses the question of racial integration in Delft South through an analysis of the effect relocation has had on the racial character of economic and social networks around which resident families construct their everyday activities. In light of the importance of race in shaping these networks, the second section examines the relationships between access to housing and practices of social and spatial integration between African and coloured residents in Delft South. The paper then considers the manner in which different patterns of racial integration facilitate and challenge the creation of street- and neighbourhood-level community organisations. The research thus facilitates a critical reflection on the relationship between racial integration and desegregation in post-apartheid South African urban contexts.

## 2. The South African urban context: race and segregation

Although racial segregation is neither unique nor exclusive to the South African city, it has been the distinctive feature through which communities and neighbourhoods in South African cities have been understood (Parnell and Mabin, 1995; Parnell, 1997). Patterns of racial segregation have had a formative impact on urban economic, social and political form. In the colonial period, sanitation and public health concerns legitimated the first segregation of 'native' dockworkers from other white, coloured and Indian workers and neighbourhoods (Swanson, 1995). The independent (1910) South African Union government passed the 1913 Land Act that prohibited African or 'native' residency outside of designated reserves (Beinart and Dubow, 1995). In cities, native locations, precursors to today's townships, were established after the passing of the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 (Parnell, 1998). The National Party apartheid government passed the Population Control Act of 1950 that classified urban and rural residents systematically as white, Indian, coloured and African. Spatial laws such as the Group Areas Act in 1951 were promulgated to segregate urban areas according to these classifications (Christopher, 1991; Mabin, 1991; Western, 1996).

The rural context, in particular the entrenchment of native reserves as '*bantustans*' or 'homelands' in the 1960s and 1970s, underpinned the prohibition of African residents from the city. African South Africans were denied South African citizenship on the basis of a government-generated ethnic nationality that was territorially based in a designated 'homeland'. These elements of spatial segregation shaped and were shaped by a system of migrant labour whereby African men (and men from neighbouring countries) supplied the mines and industrial areas of the large South African cities with labour. Their families—women, children, and old people—resided in impoverished, rural areas distant from amenities and economic opportunities (Hindson, 1987; Mabin, 1992). In practice, a pattern of circular migration between rural homelands and urban townships was established that persists into the present period (Lohnert, 1999). Distinctions between rural and urban, homeland and city and African, white, coloured and Indian space were enforced, often violently and with severe repercussions for the many communities at the mercy of the colonial, 'independent' and apartheid regimes (Hindson et al., 1994; Robinson, 1996).

In contrast, the state's role in post-apartheid urban residential patterns is masked by other priorities. Desegregation is not a policy goal, but, instead, a product of service delivery and the prioritisation of market-based regulation of urban land and services (Bond, 1999). Although the majority of the urban population have not moved since the repeal of the Group Areas Act in 1991 and the eradication of any legal vestige of segregation, post-apartheid patterns of segregation have become increasingly complex. Many inner-city areas have experienced quite radical racial change (Morris, 1999; Crankshaw and White, 1995). In some instances, areas previously 'grey', racially mixed, have segregated in the post-1994 period (Houssay-Holzschuch et al., 2000). Other urban areas have desegregated racially but re-segregated around income and class (Lohnert et al., 1998; Hart, 1996). In instances where low-income squatters relocate in high-income, formerly white suburbs, squatters neither access the facilities of these areas nor integrate socially or politically with the formal neighbourhood. In other words, space, in these instances, has been deracialised, but not desegregated (Saff, 1994, 1998). In many areas, formerly segregated neighbourhoods appear to be increasingly polarised, demonstrating the growing importance of class differentiation, and, at times, a consequent reinterpretation of racial identities (Lohnert et al., 1998; Saff, 2001).

Analyses of issues of post-apartheid segregation in South African cities thus challenge conceptions of racial identities as "fixed and immobile, stable and singular" (Robinson, 1998, p. 534). Other types of identities overlap with apartheid understandings of space and race, reinforcing but also challenging racial and place-

based identities. To explore these issues in a low-income Cape Town context, I now introduce Delft South and its development by the state.

### 3. Delft South: a post-apartheid green field site

The bridge connecting Khayelitsha and Delft South provides a view of a sea of new housing. Narrow tar roads and newly curbed streets cut across the sand, punctuated by homes and exterior electricity poles. Row after row cumulates into eight sections of cement and asbestos housing, spaced evenly on flattened sand dunes (see Fig. 1).

Cement boxes painted orange, blue and turquoise are made individual through a name, a makeshift fence of branches, or even just a particular colour curtain at one of the two windows. Delft South, a development initiated in 1996, stands 30 km from the centre of Cape Town, bounded by a national highway, the Cape Town International Airport and the only south–north road connecting this section of the Cape Metropolitan Area. A literal interface or meeting point between the last area formerly classified coloured and the start of the Khayelitsha township classified African, African families and coloured families have been brought together to live in this new neighbourhood.

Organised through the Integrated Service Land Project (ISLP), the development of housing in Delft South was adopted in 1994 as a national government sponsored Nelson Mandela Presidential Lead Project. Residents in the area have had to meet certain criteria to receive housing, specifically a minimum monthly household income below R1500 (~US\$190) and a household structure that includes at least one adult and a dependent child. In this section of the city alone, over 4000 houses have been built since 1996 (ISLP, 1998), progressing from the first building in Sections 8 and 9 in 1996 to the completion of Sections 12–14 in 1998 (see Map 1).

According to policy, housing beneficiaries in Delft South were drawn from the Cape Town City's old African Group Areas and from the local council's racially integrated housing waiting list.<sup>2</sup> The latter group of residents are primarily coloured because of the chronological construction of the list. Coloured families have been on housing waiting lists longer due to apartheid residency 'rights' in the city that excluded African families (ISLP, 1996; Western, 1996). A different criterion was used to integrate African households onto the

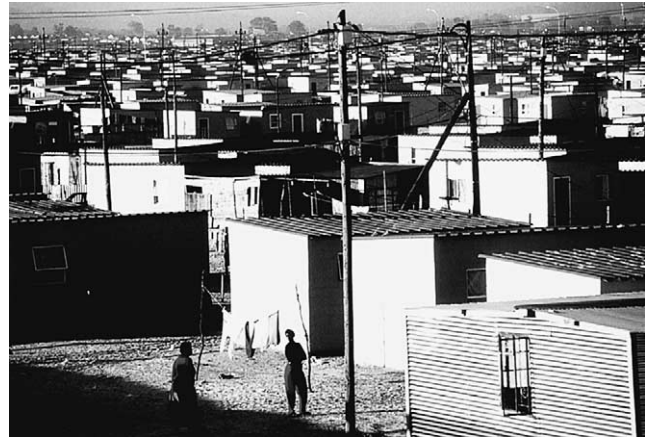
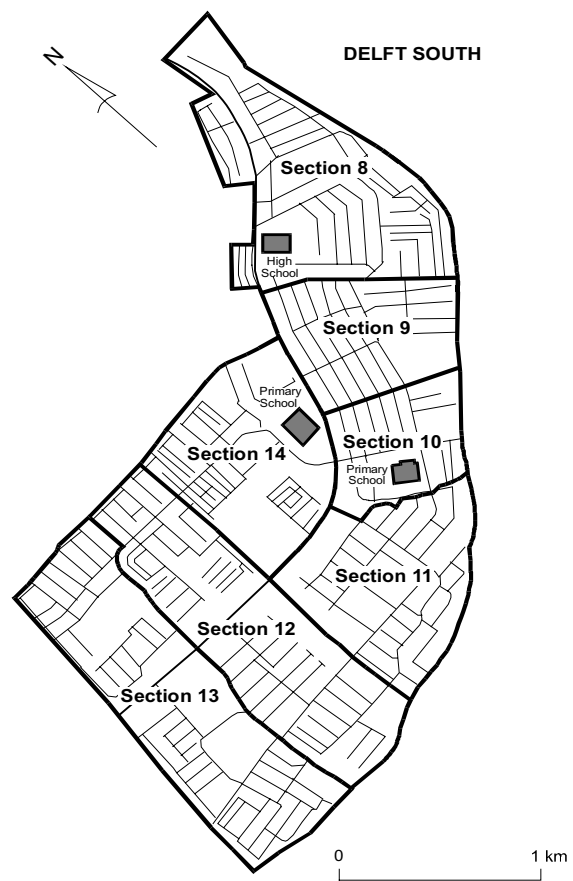


Fig. 1. Delft South (photograph by R. Crandall).



Map 1. Section Map of Delft South (Source: author).

housing waiting list. In these cases, households must have been in the Cape Metropolitan Area for at least two years and with proof of residence (letters or employee certificates, for instance), families are inserted by date in the integrated housing waiting list (City of Tygerberg, Executive Committee, 12/05/98).

In practice, however, the allocation of housing in Delft South has not proceeded so simply. In some sections (8–11 for instance) of Delft South, families have

<sup>2</sup> The former African group areas from which Delft South residents were drawn from 1996–2000 were part of the City of Cape Town sub-council. Delft South was located in the City of Tygerberg sub-council that was responsible for the integrated waiting list used in the area. Since November 2000, all sub-councils have been integrated into a unified municipal structure, the City of Cape Town.

been allocated houses from the local government waiting list, although some then choose to rent these homes to others informally. In other sections (12–14 for example), a series of housing invasions took place where families in organised movements such as the ‘Door Kickers’ took housing by force. These different ways to access housing underpin the types of relationships and practices of racial integration that have developed between households, within new community organisations, and different sections of Delft South. These issues are thus discussed extensively in later sections of this paper.

The research methodology was constructed to understand people’s experiences of their move to Delft South in the context of these different processes to access housing. Thirty in-depth household interviews were conducted in four sections of Delft South—Sections 10–13—to cover different periods of the development of Delft South and access to housing through invasions or the local government waiting list. In each section, interviews were conducted in a small geographic area. The racial distribution of housing was mapped in each area and used to select household interviewees. As many interviews were conducted within the area as possible, but with a focus on neighbouring African and coloured resident families. Interviews were held with individuals, with families (sometimes multi-generational, sometimes nuclear), with friends, and with neighbours together. This diversity proved useful in discussing and examining relational issues around race, housing allocations and housing invasions, formal and informal organisation, and everyday practice.

The interviews with legally allocated residents and Door Kicker invader households were combined with African and Coloured community leaders. Ten community leaders from sections of Delft South were interviewed individually and in a focus group in Section 14. The leadership interviews were in part life histories, but also semi-structured, examining community organising in leaders’ old neighbourhoods and in Delft South, housing politics, and community networks in and outside of Delft South. The majority of the leaders were active in the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) and, although three were women and two coloured men, the majority were African men. SANCO and other types of community meetings were also attended.

This research methodology unpacked a complex mix of processes that demonstrate the importance of racial identities and histories in determining everyday activities, discussed in the following section. The analysis also illustrates the ways in which relocation to a mixed race neighbourhood has generated other types of identities formed through individual, household and neighbourhood interaction and through the formation of new community organisations, examined in the third part of this paper.

#### 4. Segregation and social and political networks

Legacies of apartheid segregation persist. Residents continue to build their lives around social and political networks that link to their previous homes in former African and coloured Group Areas. The physical relocation to a new neighbourhood has not led automatically to change in residents’ everyday behaviour. In this case, an examination of the relocation to Delft South and everyday practice (such as work, shopping, schooling and socializing)<sup>3</sup> illustrates the persistence of the geography of Group Areas (see Map 2). Where one lives matters, but the research demonstrates that its significance is contextual and defined in the ways in which individuals and families connect to neighbours, the community, and other parts of the city.

##### 4.1. Relocating to new homes in Delft South: an end to insecurity

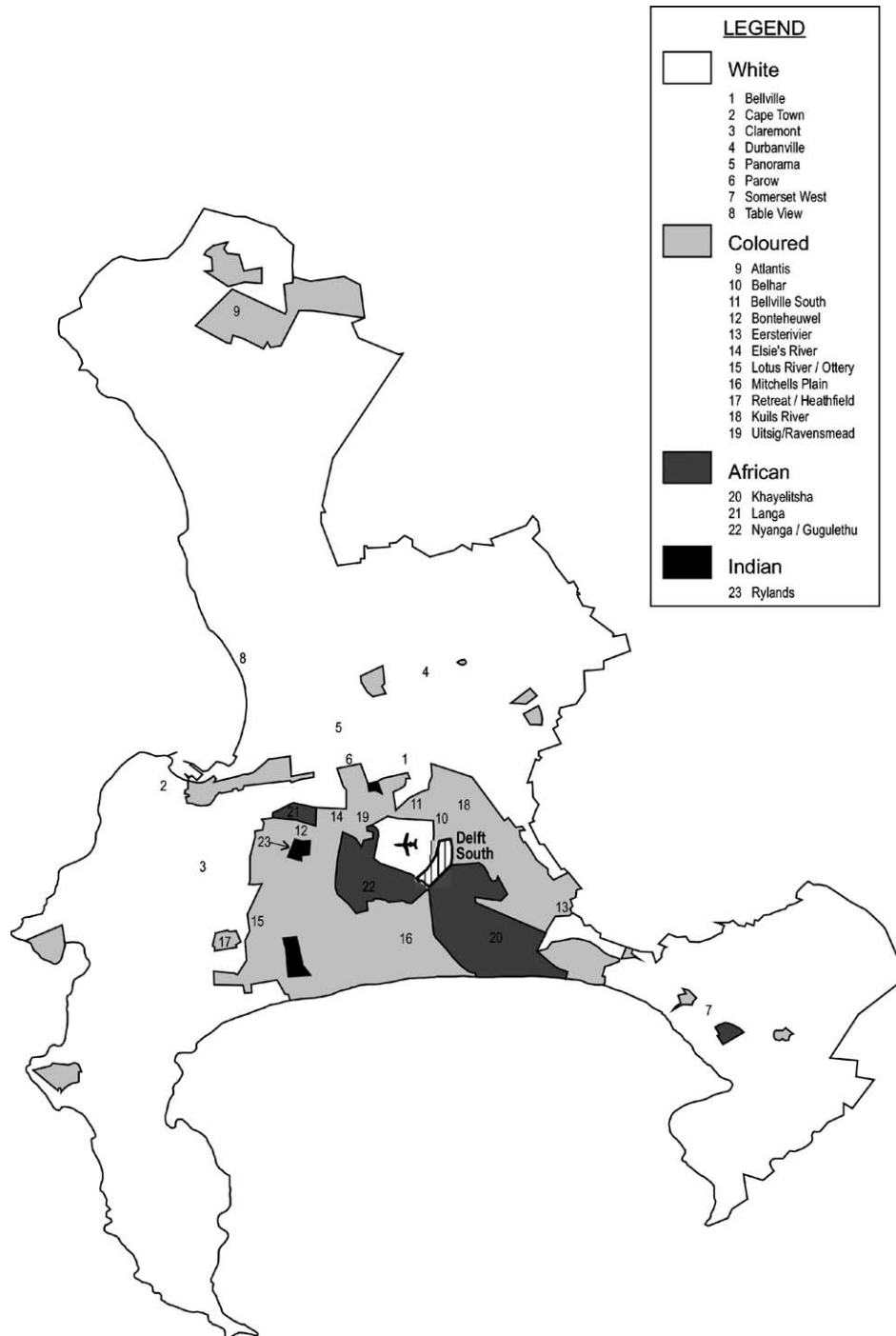
For most coloured and African families, a house in Delft South represents independence from landlords or family members and the costs of renting and lodging. For many, the new housing also provides protection from the physical and environmental hardships of squatting. But, although African and coloured residents share a common struggle for secure housing, their experiences and history in the city have been distinct because of segregation. Delft South families thus come from different areas of the city and bring with them particular histories, traditions, and practices.

Despite legal restrictions on people classified African from residence in cities for the majority of the apartheid period and limited building of formal housing (Hindson, 1987),<sup>4</sup> many African families moved into informal settlements to meet their housing needs in Cape Town. The ISLP that managed the development of Delft South targeted these areas in former African Group Areas to address the housing crisis in these communities. In consequence, African residents, almost exclusively moved to Delft South from informal settlements in townships such as Gugulethu, Nyanga, and Khayelitsha (see Table 1).

In these areas African families rarely had access to basic services such as sanitation facilities and electricity, now available in their homes in Delft South. Relocation

<sup>3</sup> To analyse economic and social practice, a series of questions were asked of interviewees about work and shopping patterns and families, friends, and activities such as schooling and religious practice. These questions explored the type of activities of different households, the background and significance of these activities to the interviewee, and the location and spatial implication of these activities relative to the neighbourhood and the rest of the city.

<sup>4</sup> Africans employed in the city were permitted restricted residence (Hindson, 1987).



Map 2. Map of Group Area demarcation in Cape Town, including neighbourhood locations (indicated in Tables 1–4).

to Delft South therefore has made life easier physically. Comparing the conditions in her home in Delft South with her previous residence in a squatter settlement in Gugulethu, a young woman describes the differences:

We used to stay in a filthy place there [Barcelona, Gugulethu]: flies, people defecating and urinating. It was filthy. Here [in Delft South] it's quiet and

clean, and there are toilets. Where we came from, there, we used buckets as toilets. (N.M. 13/5/99)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Respondents' initials rather than full names are used to protect their anonymity.

Table 1  
Location and Group Area classification of African families former residences (see Map 2)

Locations—African previous residences	Group Area classification
Kick Hostels—Gugulethu	African
Barcelona—Nyanga	African
Old Crossroads	African
Mpheta Square, Nyanga	African
Black City—Nyanga	African
Site B—Khayelitsha	African
Site C—Khayelitsha	African
Retreat	Coloured
Bonteheuwel	Coloured

And despite small plots sizes relative to older state-built housing and to private sector developments in many parts of the city, housing densities in Delft South do not approach those found in most informal settlements.

In comparison, although coloured residents were not prohibited from residency in the city, they were restricted legally to housing in former coloured Group Areas (Western, 1996). The majority of coloured respondents in Delft South, for instance, were born and raised in coloured Group Areas exclusively, moving to Delft South from areas of overcrowded public housing and backyard shacks in northern sections of Cape Town such as Elsies Rivier, Kuils Rivier, Eerste Rivier, Uitsig and Ravensmead (see Table 2).

In these areas residents often were unable to find secure housing options. The shortage of affordable housing in coloured Group Areas forced families to rely on the state for access to over-crowded public housing or on relatives living in formal housing. A young woman with four children describes the effect of this housing insecurity on her family:

We couldn't afford the R200 rent in Atlantis [a former coloured Group Area] so we moved back to a shack in [my husband's] mother's yard. There was no work, no food, I was ill, the baby was ill. He [my husband] never found a job. I did chars for people around just to get a pot cooking... [Then] we moved to Belhar, to 'Toilet City,' the self-help scheme. God it was terrible, just a shack in a yard again. It was not for me. There was no floor, just sand, no ceiling... and so many dogs around. I needed this place [in Toilet City] so I said fine, but for a few weeks only. I ended in it for a few years instead. (L.J. 12/5/99)

Delft South coloured and African families thus share experiences of housing insecurity, but shaped by different laws and processes and in separate parts of the city. The geography that divides African and coloured residential histories also informs African and coloured

Table 2  
Location and Group Area classification of Coloured families former residences (see Map 2)

Locations—Coloured previous residences	Group Area classification
Elsies River	Coloured
Uitsig	Coloured
Mitchell's Plain	Coloured
Bishop Lavis	Coloured
Hanover Park	Coloured
Belhar	Coloured
Eersterivier	Coloured
Avonwood	Coloured
Delft	Coloured
Ottery	Coloured
Lotus River	Coloured
Bonteheuwel	Coloured
Belgravia	Coloured
Bellville South	Coloured
Clarkes Estate	Coloured
Atlantis	Coloured
Cape Town CBD	White

patterns of employment, economic activity, and social life.

#### 4.2. *Diverse geographies of work histories and social identities*

A common poverty and a constant search for stable work characterize Delft South residents' daily lives. Many families face chronic unemployment, surviving on state pensions and child maintenance and disability grants. For those families with formal employment, jobs are far from Delft South. Despite similar types of marginal, often casual, low-paying jobs, the places and the parts of the city where employed Delft South African and coloured respondents work are different.

African residents, for example, have not found formal employment in former African areas where they resided. Retail and commercial businesses were prohibited from location in African Group Areas in the apartheid period and limited opportunities exist even today in these areas (Barnes, 1998). Instead, individuals tend to work as cleaners and gardeners and in other low-skilled and low-paying jobs across the metropolitan area in many well-off former white neighbourhoods (in the south, north, and east), but also in a range of middle-income coloured group areas, and in some of the industrial areas of the city. Some families run businesses from their new homes in Delft South and a few continue to work in informal businesses in their old neighbourhoods.

In comparison, coloured residents have found jobs primarily in the northern areas of Cape Town where a common mother tongue, Afrikaans, has often proved an entry point into jobs in domestic and retail contexts. These jobs tend to locate in parts of the city that are also closer to the Group Areas where residents formerly

Table 3  
Location and Group Area classification of African and Coloured employment (GAA—Group Areas Act) (see Map 2)

Locations—African employment	Group Area classification	Locations—Coloured employment	Group Area classification
Gugulethu—New Rest	African	Elsies River	Coloured
Phillipi	African	Eersterivier	Coloured
Epping Industria	Industrial	Kew Town	Coloured
Claremont	White	Hazendal	Coloured
Wynberg	White	Uitsig	Coloured
Observatory	White	Tafelsig	Coloured
Bellville CBD	White	Delft South	Post-GAA
Cape Town CBD	White	Blackheath Industria	Industrial
Table View	White	Bellville CBD	White
Somerset West	White	Durbanville	White
Panorama	White	Maitland	White
Heathfield	Coloured	Cape Town CBD	White
Rylands	Coloured	Mowbray	White
Belgravia	Coloured		
Mitchell's Plain	Coloured		
Delft South	Post-GAA		

lived. The Coloured Labour Preference Policy that legislated that low and unskilled jobs in the Western Cape were allocated to workers classified coloured also ensured the domination of low-skilled formal manufacturing jobs in the Western Cape by the coloured labour force (Humphries, 1989).<sup>6</sup> Those respondents with formal jobs work in factories, garages, and shops, and some also are employed as cleaners. A few coloured families have begun to run businesses from their new homes in Delft South (Table 3).

The differences between African and coloured employment patterns lie in the disparate geographies that shape where residents go everyday and how and with whom they travel. These patterns and their associated daily routines such as shopping and socializing link coloured and African residents to different urban facilities and networks. There are no shops in Delft South, so residents must leave the area to buy food and other household goods. With few exceptions, families are constrained to shop in areas which link to taxi routes running north towards the core predominantly Afrikaans-speaking former coloured and white Group Areas or south and southwest into Xhosa-speaking Khayelitsha and Nyanga. Most families thus shop in areas familiar to them in or close to their old neighbourhoods.

The places and people with whom African and coloured families have constructed their social lives also reflect respondents old homes and neighbourhoods. Many African families know other families who have also moved to Delft South, but the centre of their social lives such as church worship and family visits link to the

old neighbourhood. Coloured residents know fewer families in Delft South because in most cases housing beneficiaries were not drawn from a particular area but from a consolidated coloured housing waiting list. But, in parallel with their African neighbours, their social lives take place outside of Delft South. Because there are no formal churches or mosques in Delft South, many residents travel outside of the area to attend religious functions. Most children continue to go to school in their old neighbourhoods. They do so in part because the schools built in Delft South have filled to capacity (F.M. 13/5/99; W.N. 14/5/99). In some instances, coloured children continue in their old schools in coloured group areas because schooling in Afrikaans is not available in Delft South (F.S. 19/5/99). In other cases, families send their children to school close to where they work or attempt to access schools they perceive as better equipped in other neighbourhoods (M.K. 13/5/99; Z.S. 15/5/99) (Table 4).

Not surprisingly, most families' friends and relatives remain in segregated areas, thus socializing outside of the immediate Delft South area mirrors the persistence of the city's apartheid segregation in defining the types of spaces in which residents' social lives take place.

On many levels, then, the physical proximity of coloured and African families in Delft South has not shifted households' economic, social and spatial practices. African and coloured families in Delft South have had different experiences in the city; informed by the ways in which inequalities in economic and social opportunities and the urban physical environment were constructed around race in the apartheid period. Racial, and connected linguistic and religious, identities thus persist as important social and spatial markers in residents' daily lives.

Despite the persistence of practices of apartheid segregation in defining economic and social patterns in

<sup>6</sup> Formal factory employment is less common in this contemporary period because manufacturing has been hit hard by retrenchments and factory closures in the 1990s with the liberalisation of trade tariffs and the opening of the South African economy (Marais, 1998).

Table 4  
Location and Group Area classification of African and Coloured social activities (see Map 2)

Locations—social activities	Group Area classification	Locations—social activities	Group Area classification
Kick Hostels—Gugulethu	African	Elsies River	Coloured
Barcelona—Gugulethu	African	Eersterivier	Coloured
Mpheta Square—Nyanga	African	Mitchell's Plain	Coloured
KTC—Nyanga	African	Athlone	Coloured
Site B—Khayelitsha	African	Heideveld	Coloured
Site C—Khayelitsha	African	Delft	Coloured
Section F—Khayelitsha	African	Tafelsig	Coloured
Taiwan—Khayelitsha	African	Belhar	Coloured
Langa	African	Rylands	Indian
Phillipi	African	Parow	White
Mandalay	African	Bellville	White
Claremont	White		
Bellville CBD	White		
Mitchell's Plain	Coloured		
Delft South	Post-GAA		

Delft South, some racial integration has been generated by the new experience of living in this desegregated neighbourhood. Racial identities have not been subsumed, but at times overlain by other identities generated by experiences and processes in this new neighbourhood even in the short time that residents have been in the area. Relocating to Delft South has produced new identities and forms of association. Informal connections between neighbours of different races link families together, despite their different languages and places of origin. Neighbours keep an eye on each other's houses (B.B. 12/5/99; F.D. 11/5/99). Many share cleaning the street and gardening tips, a challenge in Delft South's sandy environment (A.D. 11/5/99). Some neighbours speak together in English rather than their mother tongues, Afrikaans and Xhosa (L.J. 12/5/99; N.B. 14/5/99). Coloured women on Palm Street shop in a Xhosa-speaking woman's *spaza* (informal shop) and ask for their goods in Xhosa. Many respondents share a vision of their children speaking English, Xhosa and Afrikaans together, escaping the linguistic barriers they face (N.Mf. 13/5/99; N.Ma 13/5/99). In consequence, it is important to examine Delft South as a place in which and through which new identities have been produced and communal organisations negotiated.

## 5. Experiences of integration in Delft South

The following section explores two processes that have catalysed social and spatial integration between African and coloured residents in Delft South. The first discussion outlines the bonds built through the illegal invasion of housing in some areas of Sections 12 and 13, while the second considers the greater difficulties encountered by community activists in their attempts to form integrated communal organisations in Sections 8–11. The two cases illustrate the ways in which successes

and obstacles to integration weave into the racialised social and economic networks that sustain households.

### 5.1. Integration as a by-product of Door Kicking

All of 13 [a section of Delft South] is very strong because we kicked together. If you're white, green, black, red, it doesn't matter (D.N. 24/5/99).

A series of illegal housing invasions took place in Delft South, organised by a group called the Door Kickers. In 1998, approximately 1800 Door Kicker families claimed and then invaded homes built in Delft South Sections 12 and 13 (see Oldfield, 2000a,b). Participation in 'door kicking', the illegal invasion of housing, created significant bonds between residents that override the broader patterns of differentiation between African and coloured residents described in the previous section. Housing invasions in Delft South were initiated when many families lost faith in the housing allocation process: they doubted that they would ever be allocated housing and they found irregularities in the allocation process itself (A.N. 18/5/99; A.S. 10/5/99; M.R. 18/5/99). In consequence, families took the process of housing allocation into their own hands.

The housing invasion included not only finding and claiming a house, but also watching it all day, sleeping in it and protecting it each night while it was built. The process also demanded Kicker families defend the house from the legal recipient. When the building inspector signed off on the house—a requirement for the builder to get paid—the Kickers kicked in the doors and replaced the locks. When the legal recipient arrived to find another family in the new home, Kickers called out: 'if this is your home, as you say, use the key the office gave you and open the door'. The legal recipients did so and failed, of course, to open the door. When confronted with legal recipients, families blew a whistle and the rest of the Kickers in their



area gathered to help the family defend the property.<sup>7</sup> One Kicker recalls the intensity of the struggle:

In the night we couldn't sleep. The owners [those legally allocated the house] and the people from the office, they came. We chased them away, but they came with guns. We had to fight; we had to stay awake to fight. One time there were twenty-four females with children sleeping here in this house—it was a safe house. The fighters would flee into the bush. Nobody got shot, nobody got killed, but it was very scary. It was very dark, very cold, and very rainy. It went on all night till six a.m. There was chaos and the police came and hassled us too. The police looked down on us because we were Kickers. They were also shooting on us, against us. (L.R. 18/5/99)

The fight to claim, defend, and keep the housing facilitated many material and meaningful patterns of social integration.

Despite Xhosa and Afrikaans language boundaries, a geographic spread across previous 'African' and 'coloured' areas of the city, and a marginal location in Delft South itself, the Kickers organised and protected their claim. Race, political affiliation, and individual and group politics were put aside explicitly in order to prioritise and organise the invasion of housing in Delft South. The struggle to obtain a house illegally required commitment from each family, the systematisation of response to threats, and an acceptance of a particular leadership, the 'committee of 12'. Under threat of physical violence and the force of the state against the Kickers' actions, families persevered and worked together (see Oldfield, 2000b). Later, they consolidated their housing legally by winning a class action suit laid against them by the Western Cape Provincial Housing Department. They won on the grounds that they qualified for state-provided subsidy housing and their right to administrative justice through proper allocation of the housing waiting list was violated (Case No. 12411/98, *Boy Boy Sokuda vs. the Provincial Housing Development Board: Western Cape*).

The struggle to keep the houses that families invaded created a high degree of trust between coloured and African families. Families spoke about the significance of their relationships with their neighbours, despite their different backgrounds. A coloured woman, for instance,

commented when her African neighbour walked by that 'his house is my house' (W.M. 18/5/99). Kickers might still work, shop and visit families and friends in different parts of the city, but their experience as Kickers forced them to work together. In the process, new relationships and a network were formed that linked families in their immediate areas and across a number of sections of Delft South. This network acted as a foundation on which neighbourhood organisations were built.

After the Kicker residents were legally granted their homes, the committee of 12, the Kicker leaders, actively focused on securing their families and properties through the construction of effective community structures. Families continued to work together, but rather than protect their housing, they focused on the penetration of crime into their sections. A leader discussed the strategy for establishing neighbourhood-level organisations:

We made sure that each street must select a street committee of its own. . . . After that was done, the original committee of 12, we took a back seat and the community decided [what to do] in each area. We told the community that we must work hand-in-hand because since we organised there was never a murder, theft, gun shooting, no robbery, no rape, [and] no fight. There are shebeens [taverns] but they close at 8, no buttons [mandrax, a derivative of heroin], or drug dealers. That's what we told those street committees when starting. That was the gospel that they had to spread all over their streets. That's how we had to solve problems and that's how it is at the moment. (A.N. 18/5/99)

The committee of 12 thus established a system of street committees and a night watch in their areas.

Kicker efforts towards community consolidation and security have had to expand beyond their own members to Coloured and African families in their areas who accessed housing through the state's housing system. Kicker leaders articulated this challenge as one of bridging the differences between themselves, 'illegals' who invaded their homes, and others, 'legals' that received their housing through the Housing Office in the area. A Kicker leader makes a case for the difference between 'illegals' and 'legals':

We had to talk with legal and illegal occupants. They are different from us because we kicked houses and they didn't. There are criminals who come with them and they didn't know who we were living in this community. (A.N. 18/5/99)

Legal residents were presumed as lawless and 'disobedient' and as a threat to community unity and the fight against crime.

<sup>7</sup> Five families who lost their homes to the Kickers but who were allocated houses in other parts of Delft South were interviewed. In their interviews many described: how angry and scared they were when they found the Kickers in their home; a number worried that they would not get a house of their own; and, some families did state that, in retrospect, they understood the Kickers' frustrations and that Kickers also needed houses (M.P. 22/5/99; R.J. 11/5/99).

Although Kickers themselves were labelled ‘illegal’ by the State, Kickers did not perceive themselves as illegal. Rather, they argued that residents allocated housing through the state’s process were unknown and therefore potentially criminal and unwilling to work within the mores and norms established between Kickers in their struggle to invade housing and their fight to keep the properties thereafter. The same leader explains how this divide was addressed:

[W]e tried to consult with legals and to inform them about the community. [We told them that] we want unity and we are against competition in this community. They accepted this because if you want to get along with us and you come with gangsterism and disobedience of the law from where you come from, we will lock that home and we will kick you out. You either leave that house or you reform—we warn you in advance that if you continue we’ll kick you . . . We have not kicked anybody yet, everybody understood. (A.N. 18/5/99)

By ‘reform,’ the Kicker leader means that non-Kickers must follow the norms established between Kickers in the neighbourhoods such as respecting the street committees, and implicitly, the leadership of the committee of 12 that underpins community authority in Kicker-dominated areas of Delft South (M.R. 18/5/99).

Street committees appear to work better in Kicker areas, seemingly because they had a base to build on. Kicker neighbours knew each other well and they trusted each other. Their association through their struggle for housing allowed them to move beyond the divides of language and racial stereotype that have undermined efforts to build community structures in other parts of Delft South.

### 5.2. *Building community organisations across racial divides*

In part, because the existence of such organisations was normal practice in the areas from which they had moved (F.K. 23/5/99; K.M. 3/7/99; D.N. 24/5/99; A.S. 22/5/99), African residents in particular have played a central role in developing community structures in non-Kicker areas of Delft South. Organisations also were started, however, as a response to a feeling that the area was ‘getting out of hand’: People were hanging out at night, taverns were opening, and residents were fearful of gangs establishing themselves (M.M. 12/5/99; N.J. 1/5/99; Y.N. 14/5/99). African community activists and leaders of new Delft South organisations have attempted to import street committees to establish a system of crime prevention.

If a resident causes problems, street committees deal with the resident, with methods ranging from a con-

sensual chat or communal censure, to, in extreme cases, a physical beating or expulsion from the neighbourhood. A couple that are very involved in their street committee explains how the system works:

If there’s trouble in a house, we go and speak to him. We want to live in peace. A man broke into a mobile [an informal shop] in Section 11. People gave him a good solid hiding. We didn’t kill him. From that day, there’s no guns used on another person. There was attempted rape and a rape case—both men got a good hiding and they were put out of this place. We put you out if you can’t behave yourself. If you hit your wife we chase you out of this place. We make an example of you. We are all new to this Delft area, we only learn from one another. We want to live like people, not dogs . . . There are no gangsters. There are no gangsters here. It can’t happen here because it is controlled. (M.R. 18/5/99)

Although often controversial (see Mayekiso, 1996; Scharf, 1998), street committee methods are known and accepted ways of regulating individuals and, collectively, the neighbourhood in former African Group Areas. These practices are not common in former coloured Group Areas so the majority of coloured families have had no prior experience of street committees.

Some coloured respondents reported that they found street committees useful although intimidating at first. A coloured woman in her late thirties spoke positively about her experiences with African street committee leaders in her area.

I like these Xhosa people. If you steal, they catch you. They *donder* [beat] you. If gangsters gather, ooh, the people are on you. You can’t just build gangs. They won’t let gangsters come at you. If there’s a problem, I go to the street committee guys . . . If it’s [a problem] with a neighbour, he comes with me. If you don’t listen, they watch you and if you do something they *donder* you . . . The coloured people are so damn *bang* [scared] they *sommer* [just] run when Xhosa people come and they come with lots of people. Uh oh, *balela* [run]—it’s a losing battle. (F.S. 19/5/99)

This woman feels safe in Section 10 in Delft South. Her three daughters visit their friends and hang out in the neighbourhood and she does not worry about drug dealers approaching them or about rape. In Tafelsig, her previous residence in Mitchell’s Plain, this freedom was not possible. Her children remained indoors or closely regulated while outside the home. The street committee network for crime prevention and regulation of local issues has helped build up social relationships more quickly in her area, relationships crucial to security.

But in other instances there has been mixed acceptance and sometimes rejection of these methods. An African community activist who is the Chairman of his area of Delft South analysed the difficulties he has met in trying to get coloured neighbours involved. He reflects that:

Coloured people are used to going to the police station [to solve crime problems]. They are not used to committees, not for sorting out something with a neighbour; you're not supposed to get involved with my personal problems. People are not willing to learn the culture of the other one [your neighbour, for instance]. But now we are trying to make people understand each other. You can't expect people to understand your culture and language if you don't want to understand his (A.S. 17/5/99).

Individual African street committee leaders thus have tried different tactics to get new community members involved. Some create personal relationships; they speak to coloured families and explain how the system works and its benefits. They concentrate explicitly on building personal relationships and trust (A.S. 17/5/99). Others have tried direct co-optation by recruiting coloured individuals onto committee structures (N.G. 20/5/99).<sup>8</sup>

In the sections of Delft South that were built first—Sections 8 and 9—community integration has been particularly difficult to build. A frustrated but persistent African community leader thinks that the root of the problem lies in people's different origins.

The problems are because people are from different places. They didn't know each other. Sometimes disputes between kids become disputes between families. These problems become a big issue. Some families took the cases to the police [rather than to the community structures first]. We needed to create some sort of community group because otherwise crime would increase between people. People didn't stop kids breaking in because they said 'no, that is my enemy's place, I don't care.' (A.S. 2/5/99).

In practice, coloured families, according to this community leader, 'do not have the patience' and are not willing to participate.

Coloured respondents who chose not to participate in street committees had diverse reasons for not doing so. Some families had no personal contact with the structures so they were unsure about them and the people involved in them. Nobody had come and knocked on their door to tell them about the organisation and to invite them to attend, actions they thought should occur (W.H. 19/5/99). In one family's case, privacy and the privilege to not have to engage with neighbours and community organisations was part of moving to their own home (L.J. 12/5/99). They consciously chose to keep to themselves. Many families were busy juggling daily demands that left no time for community-level work (M.K. 13/5/99; N.B. 14/5/99). Coloured respondents who had not integrated had most often maintained the networks that tied them closely to the areas where they previously lived.

Where Delft South families shop, where people work, and where families socialize continue to reflect the segregated boundaries built and sustained in the apartheid period. Some families stay in this new place, but their lives continue in the areas where they previously lived. Their children attend their old schools and social and familial networks link with explicitly racialised parts of the city. Thus the physical proximity of coloured and African families in Delft South has not, in all cases, shifted households' social and spatial practices and residents fall back on the formal and informal networks on which they historically have relied.

Such deeper, more durable, racialised residential histories and economic and social networks, however, co-exist with new relationships and practices. Racial identities in Delft South have been overlain at times by experiences and processes generated in this new neighbourhood. Membership in movements such as the Door Kickers, and in some instances, in formal social and political organisations, illustrate that racial identities can be put aside to achieve particular objectives, such as accessing housing in the Kicker case. African and coloured residents of Delft South have attempted to unify, to a large extent, around their common concerns about security. This work is incomplete, but demonstrated in leaders efforts in organising street committees and night watches and in many African and coloured residents commitment to such structures and to a particular set of norms for neighbourhood behaviour.

Through shared slang, friendships with a new neighbour, or attending school with African and coloured students, everyday activities in Delft South also offer the potential for the generation of new Delft South-based identities. New identities built around tags such as legality, criminality, Kicker and homeowner consequently overlay racial, lingual and cultural practices imported into the area. Residents' networks and community organisations therefore do not simply split along

<sup>8</sup> This concern is not solely a 'coloured' issue. Some people from former African townships continue to go to the street committees in their former residences. They go to these organisations in their former neighbourhoods because in some cases they did not know leaders in Delft South (W.N. 14/5/99). Or, they didn't know that organisations were active in Delft South (N.M. 13/5/99; N.M. 13/5/99). Some respondents were waiting to see actions by the Delft South structures before they planned on using or belonging to such organisations (F.N. 15/5/99).

lines of language (Afrikaans and Xhosa), racial (coloured and African), and cultural difference.

## 6. Conclusion

The particularity of racial integration in the Delft South case proves useful to reflect on three conceptual points on desegregation and racial integration in the post-apartheid South African context. First, the Delft South case illustrates that social categories such as race are embedded in and made material through everyday practice. Social categories form through particular social, economic, and political practices. Racial identities, for instance, are defined and substantiated through the relationships formed by individuals and families with neighbours, community organisations, and with various institutions of the state. They organise around local dynamics rooted in the histories and geographies that tie individuals and families into communities and broader economic and social networks inside and outside of the city. The significance and nature of race and its interpenetration with place-based and urban identities therefore cannot be assumed. Instead, context and situation shape whether and to what degree race and place matter.

Second, attentiveness to scale in the construction of race, racial integration and desegregation is important (Cross and Keith, 1993). At the micro- and intra-neighbourhood scale, processes of racial integration have been generated through Delft South's desegregated development. At this scale, then, the building of identities around axes other than race through relocation to Delft South could be read as a beacon of hope for the city's racial politics. At an urban scale, however, Delft South's desegregated location does not challenge the city's racial geography. Because the state's policies for housing prohibit cross-subsidization and demand that land, servicing, and building costs are covered by a paltry R18 000 (~US \$2000), low-income housing developments tend to only occur in poorer areas of South African cities. Thus, in class and poverty terms Delft South represents a continuation of African and coloured families' residence in areas that are badly serviced and peripheral to jobs and facilities.<sup>9</sup> In consequence, Delft South blends into the buffer area between economically marginalised coloured communities and still poorer African communities. The fabric of the apartheid city endures in segregation, uneven access, peripheral locations, and marginal environments in African and coloured neighbourhoods.

<sup>9</sup> The state's role in building housing in areas such as District Six in inner-city Cape Town stand as exceptions, but land restitution and housing project such as this case are unusual rather than the general rule.

Third, conceptually, the Delft South case challenges narratives of race in the post-apartheid context. The formation of racial identities is "an interactive combination of cultural and structural relationships, inherently unstable and contested politically throughout society" (Winant, 1993, p. 109). Racial identities are simultaneously permanent and fixed through the concreteness of social practice, but at the same time, unstable and malleable. Both shifts in identity and space are crucial conceptual frames because:

The type of spatial thinking which attempts to fix social processes and communities in space, and to hegemonise the meaning of particular spaces instead of acknowledging their radical contestability and intrinsically incomplete and unstable character, is also a type of politics which attempts to close off the possibilities for democracy and for change—a form of politics with which South Africans are all too familiar. (Robinson, 1998, p. 536)

Although race persists as a social marker in the post-apartheid city, its meaning and residents' identities shift. Such patterns and processes are forged through experience in the city (and elsewhere), through interaction with the state for resources (such as housing), and through participation in community organisations (such as street committees and social movements like the Door Kickers).

Racial integration in the post-apartheid urban context is thus a complex process. It cannot be assumed or uniformly replicated, but stems from the intricate synthesis of diverse urban experiences and traditions. Integration occurs at different scales building from particular networks and spatial practices, filtered through and tied to configurations of race, class, and place specific to the South African city and its transition.

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