Policing Development: Urban Renewal as Neo-liberal Security Strategy

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Abstract

This paper examines the evolution of policing in the townships of Cape Town in the context of a neo-liberalising city. Policing is situated in relation to the shifting meaning of security, the city's emphasis on economic growth and attempts to develop the townships through a law-enforcement-driven urban renewal process. Research conducted in the city suggests that current approaches to urban renewal risk exacerbating social instability by reproducing aggressive forms of policing associated with the *apartheid* era. Further, as crime is framed as a security threat because of the danger it is thought to pose to market-led growth, urban governance in the townships increasingly takes on the character of a containment strategy. Current security ideology and policing practice create an expanding law enforcement web in which millions of poor residents are caught annually and which appears to undermine the very developmental goals used to justify its expansion.

Introduction

In the global South, waves of urbanisation have drawn attention to deepening inequalities in cities and the massive governance challenges posed by slums. In response, a growing and diverse literature in urban studies has emerged over the years to address the pressing issues of urban security, crime and poverty (see Caldiera, 2000; Wacquant, 2002; Davis, 2004a, 2006; Lemanski, 2004; Hagedorn, 2008). Central to much of this literature is a question that speaks directly to

the significance of governance in a context of severe, and often growing, inequality: security for whom? The question is attached to the rise of urban geopolitics in the wake of the Cold War and the increasing centrality of cities to the global economy and, more specifically, the accumulation of wealth. It requires that we examine the relationship between security and development emerging in urban areas that have once again become attractive places in which to invest, reside and consume, if we are to understand new patterns of governance in the neo-liberal city, a city connected to other

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cities scattered across the globe not only by economic, political and social ties, but also by an ideology about how cities and their conflicts should be managed (Wacquant, 2001; Graham, 2004; Harvey, 2007; Samara, 2009).

To shed some light on these issues, this article presents a case study of post-*apartheid* policing in Cape Town and examines the following related dimensions of crime and urban governance: the meaning and role of security in the urban renewal process, the practice of policing emerging from this configuration of security and development, and the implications of this merger for the future of governance of the Cape Flats, the spatially peripheral townships where the majority of the city's poor live. In examining these three aspects of urban security, a detailed picture emerges of how key elements of *apartheid* policing have carried over into the democratic period, the kinds of policing practices that result and, perhaps most importantly, the implications of security-driven approaches to crime reduction for the urban development agenda in cities struggling with high rates of crime and inequality. Although Cape Town is in many ways unique, the challenges it faces and the vision for urban development being pursued by local economic and political élites are not. The often tense relationship between police and marginalised communities in a context of market-driven and defined economic growth in aspiring world class cities gives the study significance beyond the borders of South Africa.

What the study will show is that, despite efforts to reform the *apartheid*-era criminal justice system and incorporate the fight against crime both conceptually and in practice into a broader social development framework, policing and urban renewal in the city remain linked through an approach to security in which 'dangerous populations' threaten economic growth and social stability (Samara, 2008). As inequality within the city deepens, urban governance becomes increasingly, and

disproportionately, driven by security concerns, narrowly defined as protecting public order and economic growth under conditions of neo-liberalism (Hörnqvist, 2004; Joffe, 2008). Policing and urban governance are of course complex phenomena and the goal here is to point to tendencies and a general, if at times contradictory, trajectory rather than to characterise these as uniform and seamless across all city spaces at all times. It is my contention, however, that they are central to the reproduction of underdevelopment in what is perhaps the most spatially segregated and unequal city in the world (MacDonald, 2007).

The research is based on field work conducted in Cape Town between 2001 and 2007. To understand how security is being conceptualised in relation to the urban renewal process, I rely primarily on official documents, statements by city officials, police and business leaders, and research and reporting on actual policing operations over the years. To understand the practice of policing generated by this conceptualisation, I rely on media reports and interviews with development workers who work with young people in the townships and young people from the townships living on the streets of the affluent city centre. Over 30 interviews were conducted during the research and the results of these are summarised here. Finally, to draw out some of the implications of the relationship between security and the development process, I rely again on interviews with development workers. These interviews reveal the extent to which policing practices, and youth criminalisation more broadly, can reproduce insecurity and underdevelopment.

The earth's urban population is fast approaching, if it has not already reached, a global majority for the first time in human history, coinciding with the virtual collapse of formal urban economies in many regions of the Third World. In an echo of the phenomenon observed by Marx in the 19th century, Mike Davis remarks that cities appear to have become

dumping grounds for surplus populations, left to fend for themselves in the aftermath of neo-liberal structural adjustment policies (Maliq Simone and Abouhani, 2005; Davis, 2006). Urban governance, whatever forms it may take in the future, will have to address the relative permanency of today's slums and the 'surplus' people who populate them.

Responses to this surplus by urban political and economic élites in many cities have taken a number of clearly identifiable forms, not bound by geography, that can be characterised as a transnational approach to neo-liberal urban governance; these include the creation or expansion of municipal by-laws targeting the urban poor and the informal economy, aggressive enforcement of these via 'broken windows' and order maintenance policing, the privatisation of security, the literal or *de facto* privatisation of public space and the emergence or re-emergence of an often racialised discourse of the poor as dangerous and criminal, all contributing to spatial fragmentation and a massive fortification of the spaces between rich and poor (Caldeira, 2000; Robins, 2002; Wacquant, 2002; Amster, 2003; Rodgers, 2004; Beckett and Herbert, 2006; Herbert and Brown, 2006). The process of neo-liberalisation (Peck and Tickell, 2002) thus has two prongs built into its disciplinary structures of governance. One prong is a process for policing of adherence to the economic logic of market-led growth by, for example, municipal bond rating agencies (Hackworth, 2007), the other for securing that growth and defending it from disorder and disruption (Foucault, 1991; Samara, 2007). For many urban areas, and certainly for Cape Town, the latter has meant addressing high rates of crime to the extent that they impede, or are believed to impede, economic growth (Leggett, 2001; Stone, 2006).

In looking at the intersection of crime, security and development in the city, particular attention must be given to policing, of both the public and private varieties. In a traditional interpretation of and approach to security in the city, the police and private security services will naturally play a prominent role in establishing order and paving the way for development (Bayley, 1995; US Department of Justice and State, 1995; Marenin, 1996). However, policing in a context of neo-liberal-oriented economic growth and stark inequalities pushes policing and governance generally in the direction of containing and controlling present and future insecurities, rather than facilitating development (Cox, 1996). Studies on policing at the level of the city have focused, for example, on the role the police play in reclaiming space, which is then held and reproduced through other social control mechanisms such as the central or business improvement district, whose officials continue to work closely with the public and private security sectors (Shearing and Stenning, 1983; Dikeç, 2002; Kohn, 2004; Abrahamsen and Williams, 2007; Miraftab, 2007). The result is a tense and occasionally violent relationship between police and poor communities and individuals, contributing to a deepening of urban divisions based on race, gender, class and ethnicity, rather than integration and development (McArdle and Erzen, 2001; Caldeira, 2002; Lemanski, 2004; Wacquant, 2005; Clement, 2007; Ramanathan, 2008). Given the global ubiquity of this approach, the study of policing in the city and its relationship to development is at once a study of a new chapter in the story of the geopolitics of the world system, and of governance at the scale of the everyday and local.

Fighting Disorder and Crime: The Securitisation of Development in Cape Town

The approach to urban renewal in the affluent centre of Cape Town is in many crucial ways modelled on the approach of cities in the US beginning in the 1970s (Smith, 1996,

2002; Gotham, 2001; MacDonald and Smith, 2002), particularly as the city intensified its pursuit of world city status (MacDonald, 2007). Important work has been done on the intersection of neo-liberalism, crime and social control in the South (Wacquant, 2002; McLeod-Roberts, 2007), particularly as it influences the social and spatial organisation of cities (Caldeira, 2000; Rodgers, 2004). What has been less examined, however, is the evolution of policing and its relationship to development in the townships and slums of these cities. To understand this, it will be useful to look at the role and meaning of security in the urban renewal and revitalisation process.

Post-1994 police reform has been organised largely around demilitarising the South African Police Service (SAPS), professionalising it in line with international standards, placing the police under democratic civilian control and subsuming the fight against crime under a broader development agenda. Central to the developmental turn in policing is the principle that security is a consequence of development, and insecurity an indication of its absence. The principle was stated most forcefully in the ANC's 1992 document, *Ready to govern*, which rejected the conventional state-centric definition of security. In it, the ANC stated that militarised approaches to security produce insecurity for the vast majority of the population. In contrast to the *apartheid* era, national and personal security

> shall be sought primarily through efforts to meet the social, political, economic and cultural needs of the people (African National Congress, 1992, Q, 2).

A more detailed and policy-oriented version of this principle appeared in the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), introduced in 1996. Despite some gains, however, progress has been constrained by stronger imperatives to reduce crime in the short term and, as importantly, to appear tough on crime in the face of a strong, if complex, public outcry. By 1999, researchers found that the social pillars of the NCPS and a focus on crimes against women and children were languishing, while the hard edges of the criminal justice system continued to sharpen (Simpson and Rauch, 1999). In the years since, the police force and the prison population have only grown, while inequality has worsened. A report by the Pretoria-based Institute for Security Studies released in December 2008 concluded that the NCPS has been a failure, due in large part to a lack of understanding of the complex relationship between security and development (Burger and Boshoff, 2008).

The most significant consequence of this failure is that the burden of confronting the multifaceted problem of crime has fallen disproportionately on the criminal justice system and, in particular, on the police. Nationally and locally, however, the record on post-*apartheid* police reform is not encouraging and the SAPS continues to face numerous internal cultural and bureaucratic obstacles/challenges to the building of a democratic police force (Marks and Fleming, 2004). More problematic, however, is the extent to which the hard-edged approach by the security forces to the war against crime is reproducing older principles of policing in a new form. The similarities should not be attributed solely or even primarily, to organisational inertia, intrainstitutional tensions or a lack of resources. Although these factors contribute to the problem, research on cities of the global North reveals that a well-equipped, well-resourced and well-trained police department does little to prevent the emergence of a war mentality and a punitive form of containment policing: in fact, they may contribute to their development (Kraska and Kappeler, 1997; McArdle and Erzen, 2001; Parenti, 2000). Rather, the similarities are best understood as particular expressions of a broader social, political and economic structural continuity in the transition, in which Cape Town is attempting to integrate itself into the

processes of neo-liberal globalisation (Bond, 2000; MacDonald, 2007). This attempt requires attention to the negative impact crime is believed to have on market-driven economic growth and includes the adoption of crime reduction and security-driven approaches associated with the US (Dixon, 2000; Samara, 2005). In practice, however, the result is to reproduce a form of policing with roots in the unresolved race and class struggles which shaped urban governance in the *apartheid* era (Western, 1996; Nahnsen, 2003).

The use of quasi-militaristic operations, often carried out in conjunction with the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), have been prominent in the city and on the townships of the Cape Flats since the earliest days of the transition and it is here we must begin if we are to understand how the more human-centred security principles of *Ready to govern* and the National Crime Prevention Strategy morphed into the practices of a war against crime. While democratic reform of the criminal justice system is meant in principle to include an end to these kinds of operations, and to the deployment of the military domestically, both have remained relatively constant features of policing in the province throughout and beyond the transition. The post-1994 roots of this type of policing are to be found primarily in the Cape Flats war, which erupted in 1996 between the vigilante group Pagad (People against Gangsterism and Drugs), gangsters operating in predominantly Coloured communities and the state security forces.

The vigilante group's campaign against gangsters marked, in the eyes of many officials from government and law enforcement, a triple threat to the state: it threatened state security, state legitimacy in the fragile new democracy and the state's monopoly of violence (Dixon and Johns, 2001; Minnaar, 2001). The embrace of aggressive, paramilitary policing seemed, in the eyes of officials, more than warranted. The shift in the city mirrored trends at the national level, where the ANC-led government decided

in the mid 1990s that a 'temporary' reliance on the notorious Public Order Police Unit, formed in response to the 1976 urban uprisings, was justified because of high levels of crime and political violence which threatened social order and state security (Marks, 1998). Over time, however, as the war against 'urban terror' began to wind down in 2000, paramilitary operations at the local and national scales were absorbed into a more general war on crime. In Cape Town, they became integral aspects of urban renewal on the Cape Flats at the same time as local political and economic leaders were implementing neo-liberal economic and social regulation policies across the city. Although the explicit emphasis on state security dissipated somewhat as political violence declined, the approach to security of those early days seeped into thinking about crime-fighting and economic growth in the townships. The threat to the state may have waned, but securing the market, capital and post-*apartheid*'s still highly racialised affluent enclaves helped to reproduce a strikingly similar form of policing.

Police carried out four major operations against Pagad during the Cape Flats war, described in a monograph published by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in July 2001 (Boshoff *et al.*, 2001). The first, Operation Recoil, was introduced in October 1997 and, although modifications were made to subsequent operations, it contained within it the basic characteristics that would define the campaigns up to the present. These are grouped into five categories: the operations were intelligence-driven, involved high-density policing (including involvement by the army), the formation of specialist task groups, co-ordination at the provincial and national levels, and visible force levels drawn from the various agencies, including the defence forces. According to the ISS report

The concept of Operation Recoil was based on the principle of flooding flashpoint areas with high-density security force deployment by

way of mobile visible patrols as well as cordon and search operations, in order to flush out criminals at such flashpoint areas. This strategy also improved the SAPS's ability to synchronise and focus high-density deployment in flashpoint areas, as determined by weekly crime pattern analyses submitted by crime information managers at SAPS station and area levels, as well as strategic crime tendency analyses conducted by the intelligence co-ordinating structures (Boshoff *et al.*, 2001).

By the time of Operation Crackdown in April 2000, the Cape Flats war was drawing to a close and the focus of these operations shifted from urban terror to more conventional crime, which continued to rise. The methods, however, changed little and positive results remained elusive. Significantly, Crackdown, unlike previous operations, was part of the National Urban Renewal Programme (NURP), introduced by President Mbeki in his address at the opening of Parliament in June 1999. Reflecting key aspects of the NCPS, which it absorbed, the NURP is essentially a crime reduction programme, emphasising a multifaceted approach to combatting crime that would bring together all the relevant departments and agencies in implementing social crime prevention as a complement to more aggressive strategies (Rauch, 2002).

While Crackdown had a different target than its predecessors, its structure was fairly similar; it was intelligence-driven and involved high-density swarm and storm operations that targeted national crime 'hot spots' using crime data analysis and resource clustering (Burger and Boshoff, 2008). Two of the hot spots included the predominantly Coloured Cape Flats communities of Mitchells Plain and Manenberg, both of which would also become sites for the Cape Flats Renewal Strategy (CFRS). The CFRS was a law-enforcement-driven development initiative introduced in March 2001 as local government's answer to underdevelopment in the Cape Flats and the mandate of the NURP. The CFRS, into which elements of Crackdown would be folded, was conceived of as a socioeconomic development strategy that positioned gangs and gang violence as the primary obstacle to development; breaking gang structures would therefore be the focus and first priority of all three of its prongs: law enforcement, economic renewal and social renewal (Cape Town City Council, 2001). Under the CFRS, not only would establishing security be a strategic priority, but social and economic renewal would be subsumed under the anti-gangsterism umbrella: it was, in short, primarily an anti-crime programme.

In the view of city officials, the emphasis on gangs was vital if the development process was to take root in the townships. According to the City Council's Executive Committee in 2001, approximately 5 per cent of city residents were in gangs, constituting between 80 000 and 100 000 individuals in 280 gangs, by far the largest numbers circulating on the extent of the 'gang problem' (Cape Town City Council, 2001, 384 § 7.2). Evident in the CFRS and related police operations was the assertion that urban renewal and development derive from the establishment of security, defined here as the defeat of the gangs—this despite the many pronouncements by state officials that crime and gangsterism were consequences of underdevelopment. Referring to Operation Slasher, which followed Crackdown in March 2001, police argued that

> Once law enforcement, in terms of visibility, and widescale arrests has been achieved, urban renewal and social upliftment will gradually begin to show in the five demarcated zones (Damon, 2001).

Operation Crackdown foreshadowed the CFRS in that it sought to involve as integral elements social development and social crime prevention measures intended to soften the operation's hard edge and harmonise it with the principles of the new National Urban Renewal Programme. Crackdown thus

represented a crucial bridge upon which the momentum, approaches and institutional arrangements of the anti-terror operations carried over into the post-Cape-Flats-war policing and urban renewal environments, culminating with Operation Slasher. Slasher also contained a clear anti-gangsterism focus and again adopted the hot spot strategy (South African Police Service, 2002). The five areas chosen by Slasher overlapped significantly with the national crime spots in the Western Cape referred to by Mbeki in his 1999 speech and the locations identified by the CFRS, introduced that same month. The areas are Mitchells Plain, Elsies River, Manenberg, Philippi/Hanover Park and Bishop Lavis. Slasher was a direct outgrowth of the older urban terror operations and of one operation, Operation Lancer, specifically, with the team from Lancer taking charge of the new programme and being absorbed into the CFRS as the operational component of the strategy's law enforcement prong. In keeping with the priorities of the older operations and the CFRS, Slasher's primary targets are higher-level gangsters, whose arrest and successful prosecution, it is believed, will break the backs of the gangs and thus reduce violence (Damon, 2001). The operations carried out under Slasher followed virtually the same patterns seen in other operations such as Crackdown.

The roots of the operation in Lancer and the relationship between Crackdown and the CFRS are key links for understanding the post-*apartheid* evolution of paramilitary anti-terror policing into a more broad-based war and the securitisation of development policy. During the same period, however, another fundamental dynamic in the emerging security–development matrix was already observable. Police and political leaders routinely referred to the violence sweeping the Cape Flats as the primary concern driving the government's response. However, the increasingly aggressive response to gangsterism and Pagad by the state coincided with the Cape Flats war spilling out of the townships and into the city's commercial heart, most notably the bombing of Planet Hollywood at the affluent V & A Waterfront in 1998, allegedly committed by Pagad, which drew international attention to the city and its crime problem (Kinnes, 2000). The need to show that the city's core, and the tourists, business people and affluent residents who occupy it, would be protected also helps to explain why this approach to policing thrived after the conclusion of the Cape Flats war and the acceleration of neo-liberalisation after 1996. The benefits of softer and social-development-oriented approaches to crime can be somewhat intangible and slow to reveal themselves, a real problem when attempting to demonstrate seriousness and action to a crime-weary public, tourists, businesses and investors (Rauch, 2002).

While the concern that crime was impeding economic development and investment had been voiced previously, it was after the conclusion of the Cape Flats war that a discourse of crime as the obstacle to development became more prominent than urban terrorism in discussions of urban renewal in the city centre and in the townships. Security, in a narrow sense, had been re-established and revitalisation of the city centre could now proceed. In November 2000, the public–private Cape Town Partnership created the Central City Improvement District and promptly devoted half of its budget to policing the downtown (interview, Central City Improvement District Social Development Co-ordinator, June 2006). Its primary focus: quality of life, regulation of the poor and creating a favourable climate for investors and consumers, tasks which by 2008 it had carried out with remarkable success (Samara, 2008).

Policing on the Cape Flats: Securing Underdevelopment

Policing during the Cape Flats war served two important purposes that allowed it to mesh

with the demands of neo-liberal governance in the city. Symbolically and literally, it attacked the spillover of violence from the townships and lower-income areas into the affluent parts of the city, sending a powerful, if not entirely convincing, message about the capacity of the state and the sanctity of the city centre. Additionally, it provided a means through which older conceptions of security from the *apartheid* era, premised on the idea that the townships were areas to be controlled, could insinuate themselves into contemporary urban renewal discourse and practice which borrowed liberally from accepted international approaches. The previous section discussed the structure of policing operations and the ways in which an ideological emphasis on the obstacle crime poses to development contributes to a securitisation of urban renewal. Here, we look at some of the practices stemming from this approach to policing on Cape Flats communities, thereby drawing out some implications of what the regulatory aspects of neo-liberal governance can mean for the urban poor.

The policing operations continued over the next two years, in the Cape and around the country, as part of provincial and national urban renewal efforts which centred the obstructionist nature of crime and its threat to public security. Of particular note is the extent to which the familiar cordon and search and roadblock tactics of the Cape Flats war period were employed, not just in the province, but around the country as part of Operation Crackdown and the war on crime. As the SAPS annual report from 2002–03 suggests, these were in fact very common. For example, between 1 April 2002 and 31 March 2003, the SAPS set up approximately 61 000 roadblocks, averaging about 167 a day. During the same period, 63 000 cordon and search operations were carried out, averaging 172 a day. Between April 2003 and March 2004, the figures jumped to 72 443 and 76 223 respectively. In the course

of these and over 160 000 stop and search operations, police searched over 3.5 million vehicles and almost 9 million people in a nation with a population of 47 million. In 2004–05, the number of roadblocks dropped to 61 084, while cordon and search operations increased to 81 342. Dramatic increases were also evident in stop and search operations (276 538), vehicles searched (4 105 761) and people searched (9 938 366). Statistics from 2006–07 reveal significant drops in roadblocks (45 928) and vehicles searched (3 590 731) and a massive drop in cordon and search operations (52 772). Persons searched, however, topped an astounding 10 million (10 345 846), and stop and searches more than tripled (920 347) (SAPS, various years). These are national figures and do not only cover special operations, but they do give some indication of how dramatically contacts between residents and police have increased, how routine the tactics associated with those operations have become in police work and how wide the law enforcement net has been cast.

The nature of the contacts between police and residents is of central concern, given both the high numbers and the centrality of the war on crime to the development process. The view of many youth workers, community activists and researchers is that these and other related high-profile tactics do little to address the causes of crime, often victimise members of the community and demonstrate the city's lack of concern with crime as long as it remains in the townships. An incident from January 2003 illustrates some of the ways this approach to security and police can play out on the Cape Flats today. The story, reported in the *Cape Argus* on 8 January, involved a shooting war between the Americans and Dixie Boys gangs in Athlone/Kew Town, a working- and middle-class Coloured area. Shooting began on a Saturday night and continued into the next day, with violence between the

gangs continuing until Wednesday. Police responding to the scene on Saturday reported being fired at and called for back-up units. According to the *Argus*

> Other units arrived and chaos erupted. Policemen, apparently chasing runaway gangsters, allegedly kicked in residents' doors, ran into houses, threw food out of fridges and cupboards, overturned beds and assaulted law-abiding people (*Cape Argus*, 2003).

One resident who spoke to the *Argus*, 29-year-old Llewellyn Brown, says he was beaten by a group of police after he warned them they were shooting in the direction of his wife and three children. Brown was then thrown in the back of a police van, driven around for a while and eventually released. Reflecting on the incident, Brown commented that

> Most of the people living in Kew Town are decent, law-abiding people, most wanting to help police fight crime. But I have lost my respect for the police after they assaulted me (*Cape Argus*, 2003).

Brown estimates that there were approximately 200 police "running around acting crazy" and other residents reported that officers were not wearing their name tags. Residents also allege that police assaulted young and old, called protesting women "whores" and their children "bastards".

While it does not appear that extreme cases like this are widespread, their existence highlights the dangers of aggressive policing and a war mentality. The basic dynamic present in the incident, however, is more prevalent and routine in the views of youth workers, indicating the counter-productive role of aggressive policing in anti-crime and urban renewal programmes. Mike, a former prisoner who now works with at-risk youth in prison and communities, said of the police and policing culture

They're too scared to patrol two people in a car. They patrol three vans at a time, 10, 15 policemen. So whoever they stop, it's going to be an antagonistic situation. When you're 15 policemen you can't make a nice inquiry. There's too many eyes on you, you have to be hard core and that's your role as a policeman in your officer's eyes (interview, June 2006).

Commenting on police behaviour in communities, he makes an observation I often heard about individual officers who want to make a difference but are unable to do so in their professional capacity

> You get the individual policeman who really wants to make a difference. They come from the community, they see what is happening, they want to do something. You can speak to them, they're eager to assist. But once again, their hands are tied, there's nothing they can do as representatives of the SAPS. They'll do it in their personal capacity (Mike, interview, June 2006).

He contrasts this with the institution of the police and of policing

> But you as an individual in the community, you are still the victim of abuse. There's no nicety about it. It's all this raw, fucking, in your face, 'get the fuck out of my way, arrgh!' ... There's a lot of anger and fear. They're [police] so scared to be nice because, 'hey I might get shot here' (Mike, interview, June 2006).

Valda, another experienced youth worker makes a similar observation

> They're not trained properly, they have no way of dealing with communities, I've seen some of them become really angry and fairly abusive, I mean just around here alone. ... You don't get the sense that it's an institutional change. ... Now maybe there's a couple of captains, maybe one or two at *a* police station, but the general attitude is not necessarily an institutional attitude that's changed, you know, 'we now approach things differently' (interview, May 2004).

She describes how one of the boys she works with was treated after being picked up by the police on the train for not having a ticket

> They arrested him for the weekend, they kept him for 72 hours. [He] was beaten up by security police on the train. ... It affected the hearing in his ear, the way they beat him up. He went and laid a charge [filed a complaint] and they [SAPS] said to him that he should go back to the railway station where it happened and hang around there until he sees these guys, and he should follow them (Valda, interview, May 2004).

The situation is particularly bad for young people who have been to prison and who often are easily identifiable because of their tattoos

> Especially the prison boys, with their tattoos and things, they just get arrested, you know. It causes turmoil with their parole, but no cognisance is taken of that ... They've been arrested for looking suspicious, being suspicious in a place (Valda, interview, May 2004).

Kevin, from Youth Leaders Against Crime, remarks that

> I feel sorry for them [police] but they're also to blame because of how they handle the people. Even now, when it comes to crime issues, the smacking and the... and also the corruption that is going on. So from the youth, already what happened in *apartheid*, now they see still this thing is happening, it's not yet been ... there's nothing like, 'We want to come and help, we want to support. We still see you almost like we are afraid of you' (interview, May 2004).

According to Llewellyn Jordaan, a social worker in the Flats' community of Lavender Hill

> The kind of mentality of the approach is to have a complete zero tolerance—towards crime, fine, that's good—but in terms of how they are going to behave towards finding youngsters on the road, they are very aggressive. And if the youngsters are very well built and all that, they will not be pushed around by the police. In that sense, it can

become quite contentious. And I've seen a lot of conflict between the youth and the police (interview, July 2006).

Pam Jackson, a youth worker in the city centre whose organisation addresses the needs of street children, most of whom come from the city's townships, offers insight into the institutional and ideological nature of the problem. She is discussing what she had been told by a police officer working on a social development project in the downtown, who had recently attended a national government conference on policing

> Officer Jansen said that whole section [the city police's social development section] was going to be completely disbanded ... They've been told the police's work is to combat crime. And that basically that whole way of working, that has been completely ... refocused on crime. The social crime thing was very much focused on running their own thing for street children and that's been completely reorganised and we don't understand exactly how, but there's a new boss, it's been pulled (interview, June 2006).

Many of the interviews reveal the counter-productive outcomes of 'get tough' policing and police culture as they play out in daily interactions between police and township residents or youth in the city centre, and of the related sidelining of developmental concerns. Common to most of them are themes of violence and intimidation, suggesting that, on an experiential level, interactions between police and township residents, especially young people, look and feel very similar under democracy to how they did under *apartheid*.

Available statistics support the qualitative data from the interviews suggesting that police abuse constitutes a serious problem. Indeed, they indicate that police misconduct was increasing at the same time that South Africa's police web widened as part of the war against crime. Data collected by the Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD), a government body, for the period

in question show dramatic increases in reports of police misconduct and criminal offences in the Western Cape. Complaints of police criminality increased from 192 in 2002–03 to 306 in 2003–04, constituting almost 21 per cent of the national total, while complaints of misconduct rose from 523 to 910, almost one-quarter of the national total (Independent Complaints Directorate, 2004). In the report from 2004–05, the Western Cape registered the highest number of complaints, constituting 22 per cent of the national total in a province which contains approximately 10 per cent of the entire population (Independent Complaints Directorate, 2005). The report for 2005/06 is unavailable on the ICD website, but statistics from the following year, 2006/07, show a 34 per cent drop in total complaints from that period. Complaints of criminal offences, however, showed a 2 per cent increase and constituted 19 per cent of the national total (Independent Complaints Directorate, 2007).

The daily interactions behind the figures contribute to a trust gap between those tasked with protecting the public and the public itself. This lack of trust cannot be reduced to the war on crime alone (corruption and incompetence are other reasons often mentioned). However, as the interviews in the previous sections reveal, the emphasis on aggressive policing is contributing to a distance between communities and police that undermines the city's urban renewal strategy. Surveys conducted nationally by the Human Sciences Research Council since 1998 consistently show the police to be the least-trusted institution in the country after political parties (HSRC, 2008). For an urban renewal strategy in which anti-gangsterism and the police play a central role, this is not an encouraging situation. In the last section of the article, I turn to the broader implications of this security-driven urban renewal strategy for the development process.

Poor Relief and Riot Control? The Reproduction of Underdevelopment

Commenting on the possible logic of an approach to security that leads with the hard edge of the criminal justice system, Renee, another youth worker in the street-child sector, links crime to the broader market-driven development agenda

> All they [the city government] can do is to keep [crime] from spilling into the [central] city and making the city as nice as possible. That's the thing, isn't it? Because even if they invested hugely the problem is so big, they're not going to get what they want (interview, June 2006).

Her comments speak directly to the contradictions and limitations of an approach to urban renewal which centres the war on crime. Over the course of years of field work in the city, it is clear to me that development on the Cape Flats is simply not moving forward. The police cannot be held accountable for the lack of service delivery by the state in the socioeconomic sphere. However, if the guiding theory behind current approaches to urban renewal on the Cape Flats is that socioeconomic development can only come once crime and gangsterism have been brought under control, then it is fair to ask to what extent policing strategies are preparing the ground for future development rather than continued underdevelopment. Policing operations that involve saturating high-crime areas with security forces, including joint operations with the military, may indicate to various publics and business communities that government is taking the offensive in fighting crime, especially in the wake of particularly violent periods of gang conflict, but their actual impact is debatable, even among the police (Watson, 2003). As Dr Bernie Fanaroff, formerly the advisor to the Minister of Safety and Security and

head of the National Crime Prevention Strategy, puts it

> The public and politicians like to see cordon and search operations, roadblocks, and lots of arrests—military style stabilisation (Goedgedacht Forum, 2000, p.4).

Yet the value of these operations in reducing crime inside the townships, much less in paving the way for development, is far from clear.

One concern with these operations and their ability to reduce crime is their fleeting nature. In one interview, a youth worker on the Cape Flats noted that cordon and search operations may shut down the drug trade for a few days, but once they are over the trade returns, increasing cynicism among community members. Further, the operations disrupt the income generated by the trade, on which some in the community depend. Since the trade simply returns anyway, he pointed out, the police end up bearing most of the community's resentment for what appears to be a pointless exercise (interview, March 2002). In addition to the physical insecurity aggressive policing can cause, it may, in fact, also contribute in a direct way to economic and social insecurity. At the same time, the operations may also simply displace crime. Gaynor Wasser, chair of the Western Cape Anti-crime Forum, relayed to me in 2004 that a crackdown on crime in Manenberg, as part of the CFRS, caused a crime spike in the adjacent community of Heideveld. This community, which houses the Forum's offices, was not included in the renewal strategy despite being part of the same policing area (interview, June 2004).

Another unintended consequence of aggressive and high-profile policing operations is a result of its stated aim of focusing on gang leaders, the so-called high flyers. As the Cape witnessed in the wake of gang leader assassinations by Pagad, eliminating the older, upper levels of gang leadership opened up a space for increased competition between younger members for power within and between the gangs, leading to renewed and increasingly violent clashes between them in a scramble to fill the vacuum. The gangs became more decentralised, which added to the problems the eradication of the leadership caused (Dixon and Johns, 2001). Jean Redpath refers to this problem as a hydra phenomenon and points to examples from Athlone, Grassy Park and Philippi—all areas of the Cape Flats—in the late 1990s, when the arrest or death of gang leaders in these areas often led to the emergence of several smaller leaders and failed to result in reduced levels of crime (Redpath, 2001b). Gaynor Wasser also critiques the suppression approach

> They [police] should have learned from the previous years, 1996, '97, '98, they took out all the top guys. And what they [gangsters] did was, everybody went underground. They just became stronger. Gangs which had never spoken to each other then started speaking to each other, working with each other. And now they've merged, even stronger (Gaynor Wasser, interview, June 2004).

She adds that one result of the crackdown on male gang leaders was the emergence of more female leaders

> Now, the role that the women are playing in the gangs is just unbelievable. Before they used to just carry guns and go to court and visit them [male members] and things like that. But no more. They have a more proactive role, they also make decisions (interview, June 2004).

What these interviews suggest is that, instead of increasing security, police operations designed to hammer the gangs are in some instances perpetuating conflict and proliferation, pushing gangs to adapt and survive.

The interviews also revealed interesting perspectives on the kinds of policing not happening. A number of gang members

from the Cape Flats I interviewed in mid 2002 remarked on the lack of real crime prevention in their neighbourhoods despite the turn to hard policing, a common theme. One group I spoke with said they thought crime reduction was just talk by police and politicians. Referring to the saturation of communities with security forces, they said that, when media attention or high-profile crimes created enough pressure, the police would "do something", but eventually the efforts would fade. In their opinion, there is little consistent action by police actually to make communities safer. Regarding the newly formed municipal police, in part billed as an attempt to remedy the lack of regular visible policing in high-crime areas, one gangster said that they often set up roadblocks at the borders of townships, but did little real patrolling to make the streets safer. Echoing a view expressed by a number of interviewees working on the Cape Flats, he offered the opinion that this was because the townships "were too dangerous for them" (interviews, August, 2002). I also spoke to a leader of the Americans gang in Athlone, one of the larger gangs on the Flats, who agreed that police are too scared to do regular patrols. He said they end up driving around a lot "doing nothing", scamming [running protection rackets], shopping and eating lunch. When I asked him about the new municipal police, he said they spend most of their time in the downtown central business district and are there every day, whereas they only come to the townships once or twice a week. For the most part, he added, all they do is hand out citations for by-law and traffic violations. Speaking to the politics of policing a divided city, he claimed that, "[A]s long as Cape Town [city centre and suburbs] is safe they don't care about the townships" (interview, August 2002).

When I asked Renee about the strategy for crime reduction in the townships, she echoed this view

I don't think there is much of a strategy. And that same phenomenon applies where you have more police for richer areas and fewer police for poorer areas. The police attitude does seem to be pretty apathetic ... people report crimes and no one does anything, they [police] don't even bother to write it down, they often send them [people] away (e-mail communication, January 2004).

Commenting on the kinds of community-oriented policing that could make people secure, but that are not happening, Valda observed that

They don't put their lives at risk ... Like in the morning when old people draw their pensions there's a lot of robbing that happens. There are very defined days. ... But you don't see, 'OK, they're [police] very visible today to make people safer'. They don't do very community kind of stuff, like a more helping kind of approach (interview, May 2004).

Attempts to capture the impact of current police approaches on the incidence of crime reveal a complex picture. Although officials and the police defend their 'zero tolerance' approach and its achievements, there are many who challenge these claims and the accuracy of South Africa's crime statistics continue to generate controversy. Until 2003–04, the overall crime picture for the Cape shows that, between 1997 and 2003, non-terror-related crime had in fact increased yearly in the province, including a jump in the murder rate of over 30 per cent. City statistics for 2003–04, however, generally show impressive drops in the murder and attempted murder rates and small decreases in the incidence of rape. At the same time, assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, common assault and car-jacking each increased. These patterns, with some exceptions, hold for the province, the city and the Cape Flats specifically. In 2004–05 the overall incidence of crime decreased again (SAPS statistics). The government understandably holds up these figures as

proof that the country has turned a corner on crime and that its 'get tough' approach is bearing fruit. People interviewed for this project, however, were uniformly, and often strongly, sceptical of the official statistics, pointing to political manipulation of the figures, a decreasing likelihood of people reporting many crimes and police discouraging people from reporting crimes (particularly an issue with rape and domestic violence claims), as some of the reasons for the apparent drop. Even if the statistics are accurate, however, crime remains at alarmingly high levels.

Finally, hard policing has another consequence that may be its most troubling legacy and starkest contribution to long-term insecurity and underdevelopment. Recent years have seen more and more youth brought into contact with the criminal justice system, particularly at the point of arrest and contact with the police. Data complied by the National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Rehabilitation of Offenders, a national NGO, show that in 1999 police arrested 36 700 children, defined as aged 19 and under, in the province. The number dropped slightly the next year, but in 2001 climbed again to reach 32 900. Halfway through 2002, the number of children arrested stood at 20 000, with estimates predicting it would hit 41 000 by the end of that year (Ruiters, 2003). Although the proportion of children from the Cape who were arrested dropped from 32 per cent of the national total in 1999, to 24 per cent in 2001 and 2002, more children are arrested in the province than anywhere else in the country. Unfortunately, youth workers I interviewed in 2006 told me that more recent numbers are not available, as police had yet to release updated data on youth arrests.

Valda provides some important insights on the dynamics of youth arrests in the context of an anti-gangsterism-driven urban renewal process. She is speaking here about the dramatic increase in numbers in Pollsmoor prison in 2004, in the 18–21-year-old section

> There's a concerted effort to remove gangsters from communities. I think that's why we're seeing the big swell in the 18–21 numbers. They just keep them awaiting trial longer. We have a number of boys from Manenberg who were involved with gangs, who awaited trial for four years and then were just released [after being found not guilty]. And they're going in [age] 14 and coming out 18 or 19. Or they go in 17 and they come out being 22. And what it means is that they're moved from awaiting trial 14–17 [section] to awaiting trial 18–21 to maximum [adult section]. Without being sentenced. So that children now are making themselves older or requesting to be held in maximum because it's intolerable in the 18–21 section. [TRS: Because of violence?] Violence and gang activity. They're so overcrowded, all they do all day is practise gang activity, robbing each other, raping each other, and it's not making it any better. And if there was a different policing approach … For me it can be directly linked to the attempt to clean the streets, where they arrest and then try to link the crime afterwards. I think more and more that is happening. And I think that is what is happening with suspected gangsters. They're just keeping them for longer and drawing out those trials. I don't know if it solves the community gang problem, but it certainly exacerbates the one inside. Whether there's been a reduction in gang activity in the communities, I don't think so (interview, May 2004).

While many aspects of criminal justice reform and the anti-crime strategies are hotly debated by concerned parties, there is little disagreement that youth contact with the criminal justice system constitutes a troubling trend. Not only does it tend to have a negative affect on young men, but in a situation where youth marginalisation and neglect are recognised as an integral part of the gang challenge, channelling youth through what is acknowledged as a violent and brutal institution run by gangs can only exacerbate the problem upon their

eventual release. Given the lack of development, and of youth development in particular—in what is a very young country—it is fair to question the extent to which a police-driven urban renewal can reverse underdevelopment rather than simply contain its most egregious and public manifestations.

Conclusion: Development and Insecurity

Rather than being transformed, the meaning and practice of security, as well as its relationship to development, are being reproduced in Cape Town in traditional, if somewhat modified, forms. During *apartheid*, state security played a central role in shaping policing and approaches to urban security. The Cape Flats war, with its emphasis on crushing Pagad's challenge to state security, acted as a means through which important elements of *apartheid* policing could survive the transition to democracy. Soon, however, as urban terrorism waned, crime reduction and market-led economic growth provided a new skin for old practices. What emerged from the 1990s was an approach to urban renewal in which security, policing and gangsterism took centre stage in the development process. Policing and security practice in Cape Town are shaped more by a vision of entrepreneurial urbanism that has spread throughout much of the global network of cities than by the needs of the majority population of Cape Town. Central to this practice is an ideological formation in which security, here in the form of crime reduction and market protection, precedes development. In Cape Town, this was and is expressed as a concern that crime frightens away investment and hobbles the city's participation in the international trade in tourists, conventioneers and others with disposable income. For the townships of the Cape Flats, the convergence of neo-liberal urbanism, high crime and a criminal justice system that, in key respects, remains unreformed has translated into an urban renewal programme in which the challenge of development is reduced to crime, and crime reduced to gangsterism. In this formulation, the complexities of underdevelopment are treated largely as one-dimensional: gangsters become the problem, police and prisons the solution.

The result of conflating crime reduction with development has been a widening of the police net, in which millions of poor South Africans are caught up every year, with insufficient change in what happens to those caught in it. The practice of policing under this new neo-liberal governance, in which security, its understanding and practice, are closely linked to the growth requirements of the market, raises troubling questions about the possibilities of even sustained crime reduction, much less genuine development, in the townships that most residents of the city call home. Quantitative and qualitative evidence shows a serious problem in the interactions between communities and police, trust of the police as an institution and the treatment of townships residents by those charged with their protection. In a cruel, if well known, irony, the very strategy that, nominally, is meant to provide security, contributes to further insecurity. Even more troubling, however, is the belief voiced by many that development of the township is less of a priority for city officials than is preventing the violence and disorder its absence generates from seeping into the affluent urban core, and what this suggests about the social regulation prong of neo-liberal urban governance. Policing on the Cape Flats today is perhaps best understood not an example of bad policing or misdirected policing but, rather, from the point of view of the neo-liberal city, necessary policing.

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