

## **Socio-spatial dynamics in the post-apartheid city: the case of the eThekweni Municipality Area**

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### **Abstract:**

Durban, second biggest South African metropolis with 3.1 million inhabitants, has become a complex and vibrant post-apartheid city. At the end of apartheid, strong hopes were expressed to see the emergence of a new urban society which could signify both the dismantling of apartheid segregation and relevant poverty alleviation. After ten years of democracy, what are the main characteristics of the post-apartheid city? This paper aims to identify and explain the new socio-spatial dynamics experienced by the post-apartheid city with a special focus on the case of the eThekweni Municipality (Durban)<sup>1</sup>. Though it is a very specific context with a population mainly Zulu and Indian, it is quite relevant in terms of segregation-desegregation-resegregation processes. The Durban case study developed in this paper is based on a geographical analysis of the last censuses and fieldwork results. The aim is to analyse the evolution and dynamics which have occurred within the eThekweni Municipality Area during the democratic transition and the post-apartheid era. Are these changes in accordance with 1994<sup>2</sup> expectations?

### **Introduction**

This article argues that if many changes have occurred since the apartheid era and many projects have been undertaken to promote local economic development, these changes have mostly produced a strong class resegregation, by polarizing the wealthiest households in former white areas and strengthening the inertia which affects the previously disadvantaged areas.

Indeed, the residential geography of Durban has evolved since the middle of the 1980's to a more racially mixed model. Obviously, the apartheid city with its racial segregation based on different Acts such as the Group Areas Act of 1950 no longer exists. Residential Geography depends now on households' income, property market, safety and location.

The main characteristics of the urban apartheid model are relatively well-known nowadays: an intransigent spatial segregation and a total racial separation under a very rigorous legislative and legal framework. Of course, the apartheid city was not restricted to these only two criteria. Nevertheless, the rigidity of the political system allowed very few exceptions and all cities thus followed generally the same model, even though they were all different. However, during the 1980's, South-African cities started to change, to free themselves from the inherited apartheid city by reorganizing and restructuring urban areas and to become, during the second half of the 1990's, post-apartheid cities. Indeed,

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<sup>1</sup> Durban has become the eThekweni Municipality in 2000, after the last demarcation which identified new municipalities and metropolises.

<sup>2</sup> Collapse of apartheid.

ten years after the first democratic elections, the transitional stage is over now. This paper considers these fundamental phases of South-African metropolises' transformations, with a special focus on recent socio-spatial changes. The case of Durban, the second largest metropolitan area in South Africa and economic capital of the KwaZulu-Natal Province allows us to have a better understanding of complex issues and dynamics regarding the segregation, desegregation and resegregation processes.

In South Africa, racial and spatial segregations had always formed a quasi inseparable duet since the colonial era. During the 1980's, the principles of the 1950 Group Areas Act, which aimed to allocate a different living area to each community had been gradually undermined as Africans<sup>3</sup> started to settle in central and non-black areas.

In this study, racial desegregation, or deracialization (Saff, 1994) is deliberately restricted to the single dimension of the residential geography. Indeed, socio-spatial daily uses can correct or accentuate residential segregation (Brun and Rhein, 1994) and could be gathered under the term of "relational segregation" (Houssay-Holzschuch, 2001). Literally, the concept of racial desegregation refers to the action of putting an end to the separation of populations from different "races".<sup>4</sup> Thus, any residential move to an historically other "race" area can be regarded as a micro element of racial desegregation. We can say that racial desegregation at a municipal scale does not necessarily mean the end of urban fragmentation. A squatter camp in the heart of an historically white area is seldom integrated into the neighbourhood and a spatial fragmentation at a smaller scale remains. The 1996 constitution recognizes the right of every citizen to freely choose his residential area, without any racial limitations. Affordability is then the only criterion.

This paper consists of four sections. The first one draws the background of segregation in South Africa, while the second focuses on current changes in the eThekweni Municipality Area. Two case studies are described in the third section of the article to highlight concrete materializations of these evolutions. Finally, the article explores the role of local government in relation to the processes of desegregation and resegregation.

## **1. Socio-spatial Dynamics, segregation, desegregation and resegregation**

Historic background of segregation in Durban.

Founded in 1824, the city of Durban, then named Port-Natal, knew roughly the same segregationist patterns experienced by other South African cities during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the 1860's and 1870's, because of industrial development and a crucial need of for labourers, the local government decided to create, in 1874, several living room quarters for African workers close to the port, in Point and on Queen street. There were then a few Africans, mainly single males, staying in the central areas. This did not mean, however, that the city council considered the Africans as permanent urban dwellers as

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<sup>3</sup> I chose to use the term "Africans" rather than "Black Africans" in reference to the South African census which defines four groups of population: Africans, Whites, Indians and Coloureds.

<sup>4</sup> Even if the use of the term « race » is problematical from a philosophical and ethical point of view, the notion of racial groups will be used in this article with reference to South African institutions documents such as the 1996 and 2001 censuses.

their families were not allowed to settle there. Indeed, many Africans and Indians, who came first to work in sugar cane fields at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, established informal settlements on the outskirts of the city of Durban's boundaries during the 1920's (Kuper, 1958). The 1932 demarcation had incorporated these areas into the borough and some Indians began to acquire properties in white areas ten years later. This phenomenon called the "asian penetration" was perceived as a threat by a large part of the white population and the council and perhaps it had a significant influence on the implementation of the Group Areas Act in 1951.

Although racial segregation was quite common in many countries during the colonial and post-colonial eras, the apartheid system strongly reinforced it. During the 1950's, numerous acts, such as the Group Areas Act, aimed at implementing a spatially divided city through the designation of a residential area to each racial group. The plans for a racial and spatial segregation were based on the basic proposition that "*contact between the races in residential areas breeds conflicts*" (Kuper p.34). On the ground, the effects of the compulsory segregation were huge and many forced removals occurred in newly white declared areas, as Cato Manor. Thousands of Indian, African and Coloured families were re-accommodated in townships built on the periphery of the city during the 1960's. Nevertheless, in the late 1970's, the rigidity of the Group Areas Act implementation started to loosen with the increasing settlement of shacks in urban areas and the arrival of "non-white" residents in central areas. Racial segregation had thus been more and more undermined until the end of apartheid.

#### The democratic transition: expectations, successes and disappointments

After the fall of apartheid in 1994, deep hopes and expectations were expressed by millions of South Africans, even if the effects of the democratic transition could not be considered in the short term. Thus, the residential geography of the city did not change prodigiously after 1994, as this change took place within a wider process of desegregation begun during the 1980's. Changes in residential Geography and processes of spatial desegregation have always been major issues in South Africa :

*"An analysis of residential segregation and desegregation is important because race played a key structural role in the socio-spatial organization of South African society. Although the GAA<sup>5</sup> was abolished in 1991, the scars and imprints of the Act will be strongly evident on the South African urban landscape for a long time to come. Thus a crucial issue facing any post-apartheid government will be the full and total desegregation of social space, particularly the residential milieu."*

Maharaj, 1993.

Even if the scars and imprints of the Group Areas Act are still visible in the current spatial framework of South African cities, an analysis of the last censuses shows that significant residential movements took place during the last twenty years. In 1994, a deracialization was clearly identified in some areas, called "grey areas" because of the beginning of a racial "co-presence". In the current era, which is possibly more than

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<sup>5</sup> Group Areas Act.

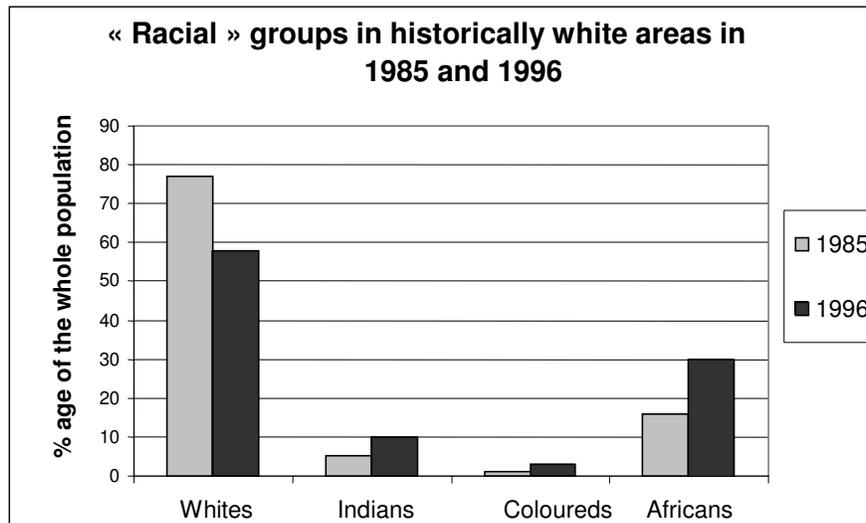
“post-apartheid” and can be described as a post-awakening or “democratic puberty” era, trends and processes are much more complex as they imply to consider the interrelations of both social, racial and spatial data which are relevant indicators of desegregation and resegregation processes.

In Durban, one of the main characteristics of the 1985-1996 period is that spatial desegregation was guided by self-inducement and the re-appropriation of lands "lost" because of the Group Areas Act. In African townships, which are also the biggest residential areas, the growth in absolute numbers is clearly the most important, with a gain of some 312 122 inhabitants<sup>6</sup>. This substantial increase, representing an annual growth rate of 3.6%, is primarily due to a high birth rate and, to a lesser extent, to the arrival of new residents from rural areas. However, it ignores the fact that a considerable number of Africans had chosen to leave the townships during this same period (1985-1996), and also the fact of a higher mortality rate, partly due to HIV and Aids, during the 1990's. Moreover, African rural areas had experienced a decrease of 91 164 people (-1,8% per year), reflecting a rural migration of the Africans (-90 130) towards African townships, informal settlements or Indian rural areas. Africans also became more numerous in Indian and white urban areas (+72 622 and +56 720 respectively). These growth rates reflect, partially, the opening of urban space. Nevertheless, many domestic workers, who were mostly African, lived in white areas and even if there is an increase of new African residents, it does not mean that they have been socially integrated into the neighbourhood.

Indeed, the first argument that we can point out to temper the assertion of a big change in residential patterns during the democratic transition, is that even during the apartheid era, racial segregation had never been total. Thus, according to Doug Hindson and Brian O'Leary, in 1985, urban white areas were already the most racially mixed with approximately 100 000 Africans (16% of the population) living there. As said before, this presence is due largely to African arrivals in central areas, formerly classified as white areas, to domestic employees and to the mushrooming of squatter camps during 1980's. Greying was then a physical proof of a new residential mobility, making racial segregation definitively obsolete.

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<sup>6</sup> Hindson, D. and O'Leary, B. (2003): Durban's changing racial geography 1985-1996, eThekweni Municipality, 56p.



Many reasons can explain the move of Africans: a lack of housing units for the Africans, inappropriate housing schemes, an increasing vacancy ratio in the central areas between 1985 and 1996 because of the degradation of these areas' image among the whites and the attraction of a strategic localization in terms of economic opportunities and accessibility.

Middle class Africans, Coloureds and Indians replaced the Whites who chose to move in suburbs. Owners consented, little by little, to rent their flats to non-white tenants at lower rates so that this process carried on for years.

During this period, all the racial groups except the Whites had increased in population within the central areas which thus became the most mixed residential areas in South Africa. According to D.Hindson, the white areas were, from a demographic point of view and not a social one, the most mixed areas and those in which evolution was the fastest. On the other hand, in the townships, a strong inertia in term of the racial ratio was still operating.

In 1996, social inequalities remained extremely strong in South Africa, reflecting the scars of a society not only divided by the racial criteria but by incomes. According to the 1996 census' data, 44% of the Durban metropolitan area population lived under the poverty line estimated in the case of monthly individual incomes lower than ZAR 412. Indeed, 93% of the poor were Africans, 1.1% Coloureds, 2.3% Indians and only 1% Whites (Casale and Thurlow, 1999). The legacy of racial discrimination and exclusion affecting the Africans precisely explains this situation. Approximately, 145 000 Indians (20% of the Indian community), 18 000 Coloureds (20% of the Coloured population) and 7 000 Whites (2% of the White population) lived under the poverty line in 1996. These social inequalities had a quite predictable spatial distribution as Townships and informal settlements had the highest concentration of poverty.

Basically, two main migratory dynamics took place within the metropolitan area during the political transition. The first one was centripetal and related mainly to the Africans as described previously, whereas the second one, centrifugal, reflected the move of middle and upper class households to residential suburbs as D.Hindson explains it:

*“More detailed analysis of the racial composition of the city enabled identification of rainbow areas – those that are the most racially mixed. This revealed that integration has taken the form of in migration of Indians, Coloureds and Blacks into the CBD and some surrounding suburbs and out ward migration of Whites.”*

Would racial desegregation thus happen only in the central areas and in middle and higher class areas? In other words, is class polarization an after-effect of racial desegregation or do the two processes take place jointly? Besides, can the local government stimulate racial and spatial desegregation and downscale the impact of class resegregation?

## **2. The eThekweni Municipality Area: study of a post-apartheid metropolis**

Ten years after the first democratic elections in South Africa, many changes have taken place in urban areas. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the socio-spatial dynamics in the post-apartheid city through the case of Durban. In 2000, local elections put an end to the demarcation process and officially gave birth to new municipalities, and therefore, new local governments. The eThekweni Municipality was created and granted a strengthened power over a larger area than the previously named Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA). The eThekweni Municipality Area (EMA) became thus the second biggest of the country with 3.1 million inhabitants, 200 000 more than the city of Cape Town. Between 1996 and 2001, the percentage of Africans, mainly Zulu, and Coloureds increased considerably, whereas the Whites, whose birth rate is also quite low, fell (-12.3%).

The overall population of the EMA increased by 12.3% (+338 932 people) during the same time. In the next few years, this evolution will likely be overturned as a strong drop is expected because of HIV and Aids. At a normal growth rate of about 12%, Durban should have 4.9 million inhabitants in 2021, but according to projections made by the eThekweni Municipality with a middle AIDS scenario, the 2020 figure will also be 3 million<sup>7</sup>. This astonishing projection shows to what extent HIV and AIDS is a crucial issue and adds much uncertainty to demographic and economic projections and urban planning for the next twenty years.

More than demographic trends, the socio-spatial dynamics are good indicators of changes in the post-apartheid era and one of the most significant sign of these changes, in a society where people had to live in racial areas for many decades, can be found in a residential geography study. Among many others, residential changes can be considered as a relevant and symbolic criterion in the analysis of recent transformations. Hence, we will expend in this chapter the spatial study of these variations because, we believe, it highlights several urban dynamics which have been redefining the South African City.

Thus, the post-apartheid city is not static and, although processes of desegregation and rebalancing inequalities are long-term goals, current evolution tends to partially break

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<sup>7</sup> IDP 2003

down the residential geography imposed by the apartheid. As written in the first part, many changes during the transitional period (1985-1996) had already made Group Areas Act's residential segregation somewhat obsolete.

As in Johannesburg and Cape Town, socio-spatial dynamics in Durban have been aligned on urban development patterns in the current context of globalisation and metropolisation. (Houssay-Holzschuch, 2001 ). Race does not constitute a legal barrier to residential mobility anymore as most racial laws ended in early 1990's. Thus, the residential geography of Durban is now subject to, and conditioned by, the market. In former white areas, the market operated a light class segregation but this was not the case in the townships as property ownership was prohibited. Basically, in the new South Africa, people are free to live where they want to with the noteworthy proviso that they can afford the accommodation.

So the poorest areas of the mid-1980's, such as the former townships or the informal settlements still gather the most materially poor populations, namely the Africans, and still correspond to the most underprivileged areas of the metropolitan area. Likewise, the historically white areas are still areas of prosperity, wealth and gather the richest populations. Does it mean thus that nothing has changed?

All in all, the middle class pericentral areas and the new middle and high class suburban areas are the new areas of racial co-presence and/or experience a quick change in their racial composition. Therefore, the barriers of the inherited segregation have been giving way gradually. Does this concern the poor as well?

The settling of squatter camps near central areas and former white areas, as well as the will –and policy- of the municipality of Durban to build new housing developments in situ means that they take part in this process. The examples of new housing units in North Coast Rd, Sherwood or even Cato Manor means maybe that one can't see the wood for the trees, as many municipal housing projects are located in peripheral areas or are still in a chimerical state. But these developments exist and are symbols of the new residential geography in Durban. Nevertheless, this spatial proximity - or residential adjacency- does not produce a reduction of socio-economic cleavages which happen at the scale of the neighbourhood, as in the *Favelas* of Sao Paolo or Caracas. Moreover, does a good location mean that people live in better conditions?

According to the eThekweni Municipality, the overall percentage of people satisfied with their conditions of life dropped between 1998/1999 and 2001/2002 although some differences appear between population groups. Indeed, only the Whites and the Coloureds considered themselves more satisfied in 2001/2002 than 3 years before. On one hand, only the Whites and the Indians exceed 50% satisfaction, expressing the opinion of generally wealthier groups, even if there are some inequalities within each one of these two groups. On the other hand, the Africans, have not only a low satisfaction percentage, but this figure is even lower in 2001/2002 with only 22% of people satisfied, against 29% in 1998/1999. Curiously, whereas the end of apartheid opened new hopes especially for the Africans, they do not seem to have perceived the much awaited improvements. Many efforts have been made by the three spheres of government to improve services delivery and to act for the underprivileged people. Does this survey notice their failure? Is it a sign of disillusion regarding 1994 promises or just a subjective and not necessarily relevant report as, after all, the leading political party -the ANC- had a very easy presidential re-election in April 2004? Since 1994, some policies like Affirmative Action or the RDP

have been implemented to address inequalities and after ten years of freedom, there is actually a narrow Zulu bourgeoisie in Durban. Nevertheless, the large majority of the Africans are still the poorest and the most excluded people. In June 1996, the national government decided to replace the RDP with GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution), which is a macroeconomic program inspired by neo-liberalism that intends to open South Africa to "the World-Economy" (Lootvoet-Khan, 2002). In this context, priority focuses on economic growth, new investments and public-private partnerships (PPP) more than on desegregation or spatial equity. Have these new guidelines and the intention expressed by the eThekweni municipality to reduce poverty led to concrete and significant results?

Between 1996 and 2001, both racial co-presence in the up-market areas and inertia in the former townships had increased. However, the purpose of this article is not to limit our approach to an analysis of migrations but to cross over demographic and social data.

If one pays attention to the evolution of households' annual income between 1996 and 2001, the middle class has experienced the weakest growth whereas both the richest and the poorest part of the population have increased. This means that social inequalities have increased during the post-apartheid era and this social cleavage seems to be even stronger and sharper than during apartheid. Spatially, this new kind of polarisation shows, obviously, the emergence of a new dynamic: class resegregation has taken place instead of the former racial segregation.

#### From inherited segregation to economic segregation

Which elements allow us to affirm that a spatial representation of a class polarization can be drawn in the post-apartheid city?

From a quantitative point of view, the population of the richest areas, like the rest of the metropolitan area, has a weaker and weaker proportion of Whites (loss both in percentage and in absolute values). However, these areas have a rise in the number of wealthy households (Map.1), showing the arrival of Indian and/or African households. Moreover, the only wards where the percentage of poor households dropped between 1996 and 2001 correspond to the highest concentrations of rich households and the smallest proportions of poor households. It means that a spatial dimension of class polarisation appears from the censuses analysis. How has this social resegregation taken place?

### **3. Centre and peripheries**

The case of Durban's central areas

As in Johannesburg, Durban's central areas have been areas of numerous and deep changes since the early 1980's. In the post-apartheid era, the main process observed by some researchers was the shift from a white residential area and prime business site to a "greying" area and a declining business environment.

Durban central areas residents in 2001

	Number	% of central areas residents	Variation 1996 - 2001 in %
Africans	13 102	56.1	58.0
Indians	3 694	15.8	30.4
Coloureds	1 962	8.4	19.7
Whites	4 592	19.7	-41.9

Source: 2001Census

In other words, the exodus of White residents and the arrival of African ones would have started the so-called decline of the central areas. For many Durbanites, the Inner City area has become a place of perdition and violence and usually when they have to go there, they choose very safe and well known places. In Cape Town, such a phenomenon does not exist as the central areas have now, indeed, a very positive image. In Johannesburg, the same simplistic arguments were stated to explain the decline of the central areas (P.Guillaume, 2002). The purpose of this chapter is to say that the assertion of a decline of central areas can be refuted in both cases in a similar way.

The generally accepted and common idea in people's perception is that the newcomers are poor people with a low level of education. Though their incomes and education level are clearly higher than in the former townships.

Monthly Households Income in 2001

	Inner-City	Umlazi	INK (Inanda, Ntuzuma, kwa mashu)
Less than R1600	45.6%	65.4%	73.3%
R1601 to R12800	49.3%	33.0%	25.7%
More than R12800	5.1%	1.6%	1.0%

Source: 2001Census

Highest education levels attained by central areas residents over 20 year olds

	1996	2001	variation %
Complete primary or lower	13.1%	10.1%	-11.6%
Secondary	36.7%	25.9%	-19.3%
Grade 12 and Higher	50.2%	64.1%	46.3%

Source: 2001Census

Moreover, whereas people's perceptions show the new residents rather as male, 54.5% are actually female. The Inner City resident profile is thus, rather, a young (67.3% are less than 34 years old) African female, with an education level higher than the metropolitan average. Another stereotype about the overpopulation of Inner city flats seems to be unfounded too as there are only 2.28 persons per households on average, compared to 3.93 for the whole eThekweni Municipality Area, 6.69 in Kwa Dabeka and 4.7 in Umlazi, which are two African areas.

So why are there such discordances between reality and perception?

Violence and visual materialisations and signs of a change could be the principal causes of this gap. Violence is an established fact in South-African metropolises and central areas have effectively quite high crime and violence rates, even if these rates remain still much lower than in the former townships. The sight of street traders, who were formerly prohibited, street children often under the influence of drugs, prostitutes and drug dealers in the Point Area and close to West street have without a doubt strengthened the negative perception of the Inner City. Many newspaper articles and television reports have amplified the idea of a "ghettoisation" of the Central Areas. People also associate the decline of the Inner City with the arrival of West African immigrants, more particularly Nigerians. Even if some Nigerians are actually drug lords, it is a quite simple and maybe an easier way to deal with current problems. Rather than finding solutions or trying to understand this phenomenon, it is more comfortable to point out that crime and violence can be seen as immigrant issues. In the new South Africa, it is not politically correct to say that Africans are implicated in criminality, but there is a large consensus saying that African foreigners are the cause of South African drugs dealing and prostitution problems. Even among the most progressive spheres, this speech is widespread and may obscure the real problems by focusing on this xenophobic target.

Anyway, it is not the only reason of the bad image of the Inner City. The absence of renovation and new development projects in these areas during the 1980's and the first half of the 1990's, as well as the escape of many companies to the edge city of Umhlanga in the northern suburbs, have all contributed to increase the perception of the Inner City decline. The end of the 1990's and the beginning of the 21st century started off a new era of development with flagship projects located in the central areas. After the ICC (International Conference Centre) in 1997, which is now the premier conference centre in Africa, and the Suncoast casino in North Beach, the municipality has developed, in partnership with the private sector, two monumental multimillion Rand projects in the heart of an area more famous for its violence and criminality: The Point. Thus, The Point Development, which will be the only waterfront in Durban and uShaka Marine World Park (R750 million) will deeply transform the urban landscape and the composition of the Point Area Residents as new apartments were sold up to R16m. Contrary to Johannesburg, the central areas of Durban conceal also one of its most attractive assets for tourism, namely the beach and the ocean. Thus, a massive return on investments arises now in these supposedly declining areas. There is indeed a contradiction between the negative image of the Central Areas and their capacity to attract investment and to be ones of the most vibrant areas in the country. Major developments will certainly remove the negative image of these areas by 2006 with the completion of the Durban Point Waterfront. What will happen then to their current inhabitants?

A comparison between different areas

The class polarization without any racial consideration can also be double-checked by the analysis of the demographic data showing the increase in the number of African and especially Indian households between 1996 and 2001 in the richest areas. Thus, for many reasons such as the fear of violence or to display their social success, rich African and Indian families often decided to settle in historically white areas, like Berea and Umhlanga, where services, infrastructures, housing quality and urban environment are still upmarket. We can observe a shift in the composition of different areas with generally more Africans living in former Indian townships and more Indians living in former White areas. For instance, if we select three samples, one African (INK – Inanda, Ntuzuma, KwaMashu), one Indian (Phoenix) and one White area (Durban North – Umhlanga), we can see that the proportion of Africans has increased by 151.9% in the former Indian township and that the proportion of Indians living in the former White area of Durban North-Umhlanga has increased by 30.3%. The former African areas are more and more African (99.9% in 2001), while the former white area is more and more open to all groups (-9% of Whites). The number of rich households has increased in Durban North-Umhlanga by 43.9%<sup>8</sup> and the poor that constitute 88.8% of INK's households and have increased by 39% to 67%<sup>9</sup>.

	African s	% of pop	Indians	% of pop	White s	% of pop	Coloured s	% of pop	Total
<b>Phoenix</b>									
1996	3 837	2.6	144 706	96.2	116	0.1	609	0.4	149 268
2001	9 665	6.0	148 437	92.9	125	0.1	1 629	1.0	159 856
variation %	<b>151.9</b>		<b>2.6</b>		7.8		167.5		7.1
<b>INK</b>									
1996	258 009	98.4	1 798	0.7	67	0.03	342	0.1 3	260 216
2001	286 914	<b>99.9</b>	96	0.0	57	0.02	242	0.0 8	287 309
variation %	11.2		<b>-94.7</b>		<b>-14.9</b>		<b>-29.2</b>		10.4
<b>Durban North-Umhlanga</b>									
1996	7 779	15.2	6 269	12.3	35 310	69.0	1 184	2.3	50 542
2001	8 456	16.8	8 168	16.2	32 147	63.8	1 610	3.2	50 381
variation %	8.7		<b>30.3</b>		<b>-9.0</b>		<b>36.0</b>		-0.3

These main dynamics can be observed in different parts of the eThekweni Municipality Area and allow us to assert that racial segregation has effectively been replaced by class segregation, that the co-presence of various population groups is now a reality especially in middle and upper class areas and that there is more than ever a major problem of

<sup>8</sup> 4 178 households (23.7% of the households) earned more than R132 000 in 1996, there were 6012 households (36.8%) earning more than R153 601/annum in 2001.

<sup>9</sup> If we consider that the « unspecified » category of the 1996 census referred to low income households, then the poor have increased by 39%, if not, by 67%.

poverty in African areas. Even if the municipality has undertaken many programmes to provide water and electricity to the poor, the current situation is far from ideal. Unemployment was high in these areas in 1996 (47.6%) and is even worse now with 58.4%<sup>10</sup>. During the same time, unemployment has grown in Durban North-Umhlanga too (from 4.9% to 7.7%), but remains far lower than the metropolitan average.

#### **4. Local Governance, desegregation and resegregation: actions and contradictions**

We have described the socio-spatial dynamics in the post-apartheid city of Durban and we will now see what the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in these processes are.

With huge social inequalities, even bigger than in 1996, and a high level of violence, a great paranoia has encouraged the rich to create protected safe and private spaces such as "Gated Communities" which aim thus to exclude the remaining population. Some of these Gated communities are built up on former buffer zones, on the margin of the historically white areas. The idea is to have an artificial public space within a private property. The affordability of owners is indeed a guarantee of safety. So is the private sector an active player in the resegregation processes?

There has been a substantial increase in the property market over the last few years in South Africa. At the end of the 1980's, Real Estate agencies were already criticized for their tendency to perpetuate the Group Areas Act principles and patterns (Maharaj, 1993). Like in many metropolises all around the world, the market law supports or intensifies the processes of class resegregation, based on land and properties values and thus on affordability. Real estate prices have broken records for the last few years and have reinforced a separation between the households "who can afford" and the others.

Moreover, exclusion is a complex issue, for instance, a Zulu middle or upper-class family living now in a historically white area can be socially excluded within its new neighbourhood. Hitherto, this resegregation seems to concern only the richest and the middle-class areas. But finally, isn't the inertia of the former African townships itself an element of class resegregation?

As seen before, housing is one of the most important tools to fight against poverty, exclusion and segregation. Estate agencies have benefited from the residential boom since 2000:

*"Real growth in house prices (after taking inflation into account) came to 10 percent a year over the same period. In 2003 house prices increased for the fourth consecutive year in real terms; the first time since the early 1980s that this has happened.*

*In the first quarter of 2004, nominal year-on-year growth of 22,3 percent in house prices was recorded. This was the highest nominal growth since the 24,7 percent registered in the fourth quarter of 1983."*

Saturday Argus, 29/05/2004

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<sup>10</sup> The number of unemployed persons in the INK area was 55 297 in 1996 and 76 638 in 2001 (+21 341).

In Durban, some developers such as the powerful Moreland Properties have built many new upmarket housing developments 15 to 25 Km from the CBD, along the coast or in the hinterland. In this kind of development, a three bedroom house costs from R1m to R5m. The inflation in property prices has been huge since 1999. At that time, the average price of a house in South Africa was R240 000<sup>11</sup>, five years later, it is more than twice as much as it was (R488 000). The monthly repayment on a current mortgage<sup>12</sup> tops R4 000. There is thus a gap between house prices and people's incomes as in 2001, 70.8% of eThekweni Municipality Area households earned less than R3 200 monthly. So what happens to the households who cannot afford the "average house"?

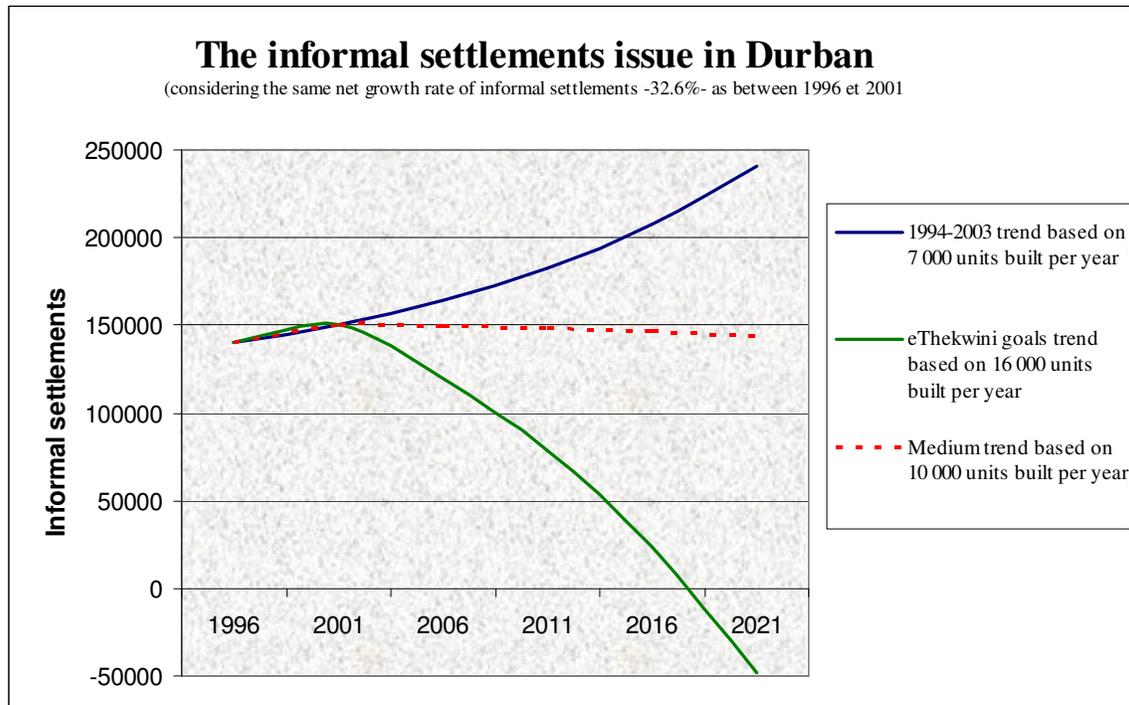
Low-cost housing delivery has been one of government's main commitments for ten years. It is also a very sensitive and political issue. At a local scale, the eThekweni Municipality have provided water and electricity to thousands of households living in the former townships. Moreover, the first 6 Kilolitres of water and the first 50 Kilowatts of electricity are free because of the policy of « free basic services ». Households living in a house valued less than R30 000 can qualify for the city's lifeline tariffs and thus do not pay taxes.

Some 150 000 households live currently in informal settlements in the eThekweni Municipality Area. Housing units delivery is indeed a crucial issue for the local government which gives preference to developments in situ when topography, ground conditions and land value make it possible. Thus, the households applying for a 27 to 30m<sup>2</sup> house must in many cases resign themselves to move to another area which is not without consequences on social relations and organisation. Between 1994 and 2004, 132 000 subsidies were approved in Durban. However, only half were built by 2004, about 6500 to 7000 units a year, far from the ambitions displayed by the municipality to deliver 16 000 new units per year during the next fifteen years. According to the backlog and if we consider that the growth rate of informal settlements will stay the same, a minimum of 15 000 units must be delivered each year to turn current informal settlements to formal by 2020.

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<sup>11</sup> ABSA Bank property report 2004

<sup>12</sup> 80 percent over a repayment period of 20 years. Source: Saturday Argus, 29/05/2004



Anyway, delivery must not be the only focus of housing policy as not only people's needs and way of life, but also the informal economy and social interactions should be more understood and taken into account. In South America, the informal issue is even more important than it is in South Africa. The city of Rio de Janeiro has implemented an innovative policy to create a more integrated city and rather than eradicating the informal settlements, its purpose is to clear the opposition between a formal and an informal city. The idea is that the municipality must have two plans: one ideal and long term and a second one more strategic and short term to define concrete actions to undertake. The council has a special interest for people's needs and perceptions and intends to maximize nodes of economic activities in disadvantaged areas, to correct the territorial distribution of excellence and great scope infrastructures (Jorge Mario Jãuregui). During the 1960's and 1970's, the housing policy of the city of Rio de Janeiro was to demolish slums and to build units in peripheral areas. This policy had catastrophic consequences with an uprooting phenomenon and a huge increase in criminality. In 1994, the municipality decided to completely change its policy and to develop a unique approach to the informal settlements issue. The programme aimed at integrating the *Favelas* by removing the frontier between formal and informal. The creation of new centralities, new economic and cultural poles capable of having a propagation effect aimed at making the *Favelas* part of the neighboring areas. This avant-garde programme and the whole Brazilian experience could be used by the South African metropolises to improve both their conceptual approach and their practical implementations.

The purpose of the eThekweni Municipality's policy is to provide decent housing to populations living precariously while hoping that once owners, they will take to heart to maintain and to improve it.

*"It is important to stress that the government's contribution is a kick start and households are expected to add to this amount, where possible, through savings or accessing loans from lending institutions, or through sweat equity contributions. Households are also expected to improve on their starter house over time"*.

Metro Housing Department, eThekweni, 2003.

Nevertheless, the perverse side this process is the impossibility of the new owners, who have often used all their savings to build the house, to leave now their new area. In many cases, people cannot afford services in their new house and decide to sell it for a few thousands Rands or to rent it out and go back to the informal settlement to build another shack. When new housing deliveries are located far from the strategic areas, new tenants have to pay more in transport and struggle to accede to informal or formal job opportunities. The issue of finding a well located area for low cost housing is thus a very important issue but due to growing land prices, many new housing programmes take place in peripheral areas, far from economic opportunities and out of spatial nodes and corridors. Only a sudden enrichment of the household would enable them to choose their dwelling place in the future. Accordingly, the racial desegregation of the poorest areas appears quite jeopardized.

The two main spatial issues identified by the eThekweni Municipality in its IDP (Integrated Development Programme) are to prevent urban sprawl and to make a more integrated and compact city with a higher density of population. We will highlight briefly a few contradictions between this ambition and current developments. To prevent urban sprawl, a municipality should avoid the development of peripheral areas and stress the redensification of the urban core. In terms of transport or services delivery, a high density city means less expense for the local government and more citizens connected to water and electricity networks. The local government is now in charge of low-cost housing delivery and, as we said, many housing programmes are set up in peripheral areas, sometimes almost 20 to 30 Km from the CBD. This highlights the opposition between the political vision and the market restrictions and raises the question of the regulation. Can the local government overcome these restrictions for the public interest and the common good because poverty alleviation is everybody's concern? Their dilemma is in fact to find a way to act both for a wider socio-spatial equity and for local economic development by attracting investment and creating growth. One case study can describe this difficult political issue. To enable one of the most important developments in South Africa (The Point Development) in the Point area, close to Durban's CBD, the eviction of the Ark Church Ministries which offered shelter to the homeless and disadvantaged of the city was pronounced at the beginning of 2004. As poverty alleviation is one key target of the local government, the municipality argued that all the residents would be re-accommodated. Of the 700 to 900 residents, about 100 handicapped, ill and frail residents were taken to the Cato Manor Clinic, while 300 others were transported to the Welbedacht housing development, some 20 Km from the CBD, but about 45 minutes to 1 hour by public transports. In Welbedacht, *"they have been allocated their own homes. While the relocated residents expressed concern about how they were going to travel from the area in search of employment, they were very thankful to have their own homes"* (Daily News, 17/05/2004). Many residents refused to move from the Point area which was a very convenient location and the fight between the Ark shelter on one hand, and the

eThekwini Municipality and the Point Development Company on the other hand was taken to the High Court in May 2004. Finally, the eviction was confirmed and the eThekwini Municipality "*posted a strong security presence at the entrance and around the perimeter of the building to enforce the court order*" (Daily News, 17/05/04). Since then, both the handicapped, transported to Cato Manor, and the others in Welbedacht have had many troubles as the surrounding communities had not accepted them. They have been attacked and the local government had to introduce very tight security and erect fencing around the shelters: "*a group of Cato Manor residents, some armed with hammers, sticks and pipes, forced 107 Ark residents to flee their new, albeit temporary, shelter in Bellair Road, Cato Manor*" (Daily News, 01/06/04).

There had been no consultation and dialogue with local communities who complained about the nuisance the new residents created. The former Ark residents are now indeed living in a hostile environment, far from jobs opportunities and have high transport cost to leave their new area. But this is not the end of the story as local government did not find a solution for all of them even if a costly special consultant has been hired to do so. The solution found had been to provide them a bus to go to Cape Town. Two busloads arrived in the Mother City in June without the eThekwini Municipality warning the City of Cape Town. "*A number of them have ended up on the streets of Cape Town, swelling the city's homeless population*" (Cape Argus, 21/08/04). It seems that, obviously, public private partnerships can be very strong in Durban when regarding flagship projects. This case highlights the political choice that new local government has to make between a go-ahead economic policy and a social solicitude.

In an economic context marked with a strong and growing unemployment rate (32.4% in 1996 to 43% in 2001), when the previous underprivileged areas are still "behind" the rest of the metropolitan area (Map 4) and when the poorest populations are more numerous, this new kind of segregation shows itself to be much tougher than the former racial segregation. The barriers of the inherited segregation thus have been broken gradually to become an economic –or class- segregation. In fact, precariousness and exclusion affect a small minority of the whites too as poor whites are no longer rare in the streets, having unskilled jobs (car guards for instance) or begging at the crossroads. It reflects thus the magnitude of the poverty which now transcends the former racial cleavages.

## Conclusion

Strong trends have been drawn since the mid 1980's within the eThekweni Municipality Area that reveal socio-spatial dynamics. These dynamics tend to enhance the two processes of racial desegregation and class resegregation which are, at the same time, closely linked and contradictory. They are indeed closely linked because without deracialisation, there would not have been any sign of spatial class polarisation, and contradictory, as the result of a de-segregative process should not be another segregation. Nevertheless, some questions can legitimately be raised after ten years of democracy. A residential inertia affects the poorest areas, while the rich areas have an increasing density of wealthy households.

Deep transformations took place during the last twenty years in the eThekweni Municipality Area. The central areas have had a specific evolution as, after a racial desegregation process started during the 1980's, the Inner City became perceived more and more as a new ghetto and a declining area during the 1990's. A third phase in less than twenty years began in 1997 with the implementation of several major projects like the ICC<sup>13</sup> and a massive wave of investment. It has already had some effects on the price of properties and a gentrification has slowly started to emerge, in particular near South Beach and the Point area because of the influence of the uShaka Marine Park and the waterfront project.

After 1994, residential changes were more targeted as the market imposed its own regulation of desegregation. On the whole, the socio spatial inequalities increased within the metropolitan area between 1996 and 2001. According to many researchers, the middle class is the most favourable in which to implement a racial co-presence, but in Durban, there tends to be a widening gap between the rich and the poor. The policy of the local government is to not directly influence the real estate market to preserve investments and to help the disadvantaged people in situ with a geographic approach of development called ABM (Area Based Management). These programmes are based on the heterogeneity of these areas and the presence of skilled and educated people who can be used and seen as examples (Kitchin, 2002). Nevertheless, the residents of townships and squatters camps are still and tend to remain the poorest among the poor.

This means that only the middle and upper class areas can in the future have a residential co-presence. Will this residential co-presence be able to shift and produce a real mode of transcommunity or transethnic sociability or will it remains in respectful but distant neighbourhood relations with each community keeping its own socio-spatial references? Places like shopping centres are now attended by all the groups of population but not necessarily by all the classes.

This class resegregation could even accentuate the existing socio-spatial gap between the marginalised areas in the inland and the coastal and rich areas where new projects and developments are taking place. Even in the central areas, a class resegregation could happen as the price of real estate has begun an exponential rise following the development of various projects.

This new type of segregation highlights the difficulties, stakes and contradictions facing the local government of the post-apartheid city. The local government has to deal with

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<sup>13</sup> International Conference Centre

***'African Renewal, African Renaissance': New Perspectives on Africa's Past and Africa's Present.***  
*The African Studies Association of Australia and the Pacific (AFSAAP)*  
*Annual Conference 26-28 November 2004, University of Western Australia*

very difficult challenges and issues: on one hand, building an attractive city for tourists and investors, creating jobs and economic growth; and on the other hand, rebalancing the inequalities, reducing poverty and building a sustainable and integrated city. As a matter of fact, the post-apartheid city must face challenges inherent to all the metropolises concerned with "World-Economy": having an adequate social policy vis-a-vis the increase in inequalities, without any consideration of race. Finally, isn't the post-apartheid city becoming a metropolis like the others?

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## Appendix

Photo 1: The Palmiet squatter camp (Nora Vermeulin, April 2004)

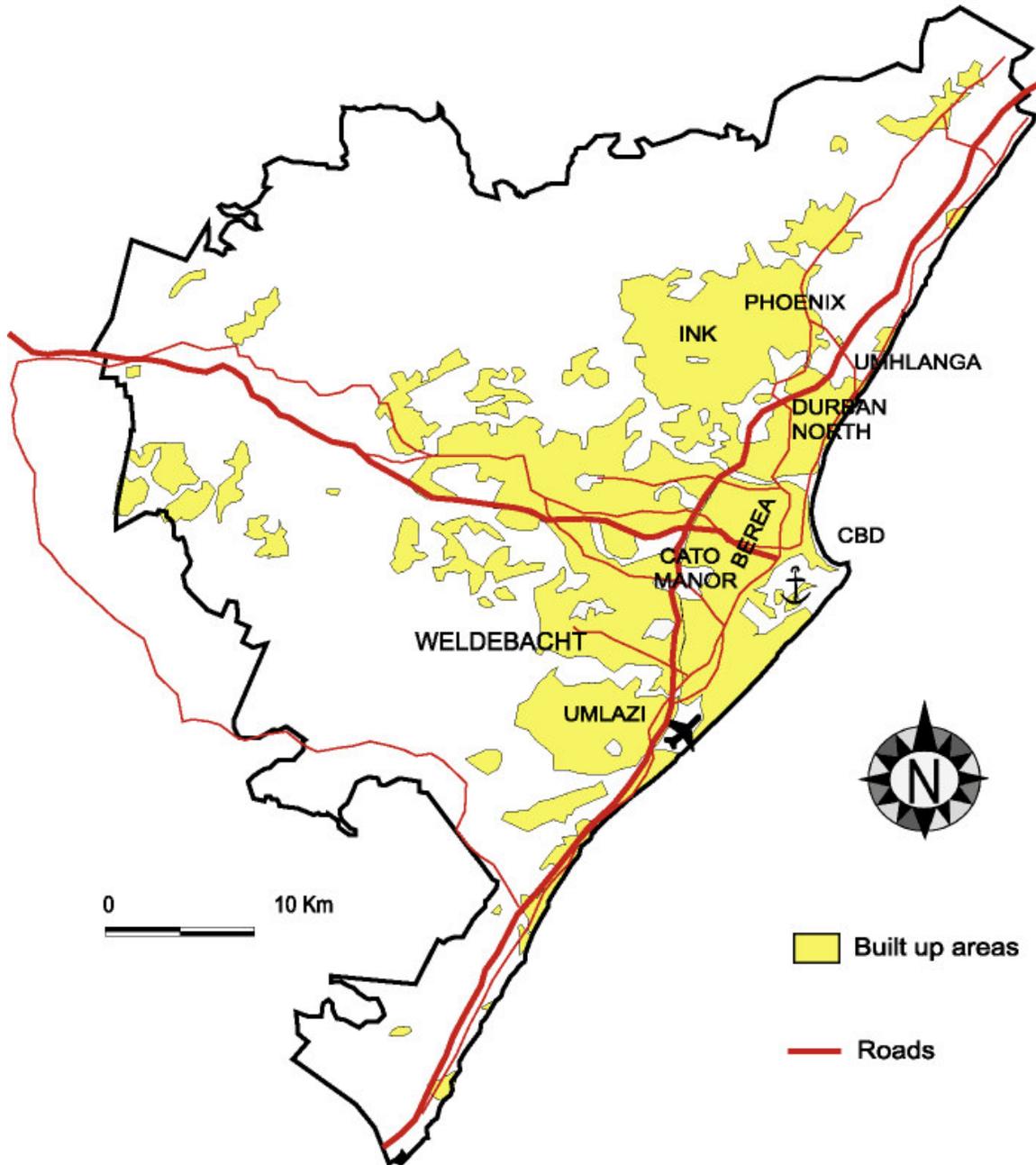


Photo 2: The construction of the Durban Point Waterfront (viewed from uShaka Marine Park (Stéphane Vermeulin, April 2004)



**Map 1**

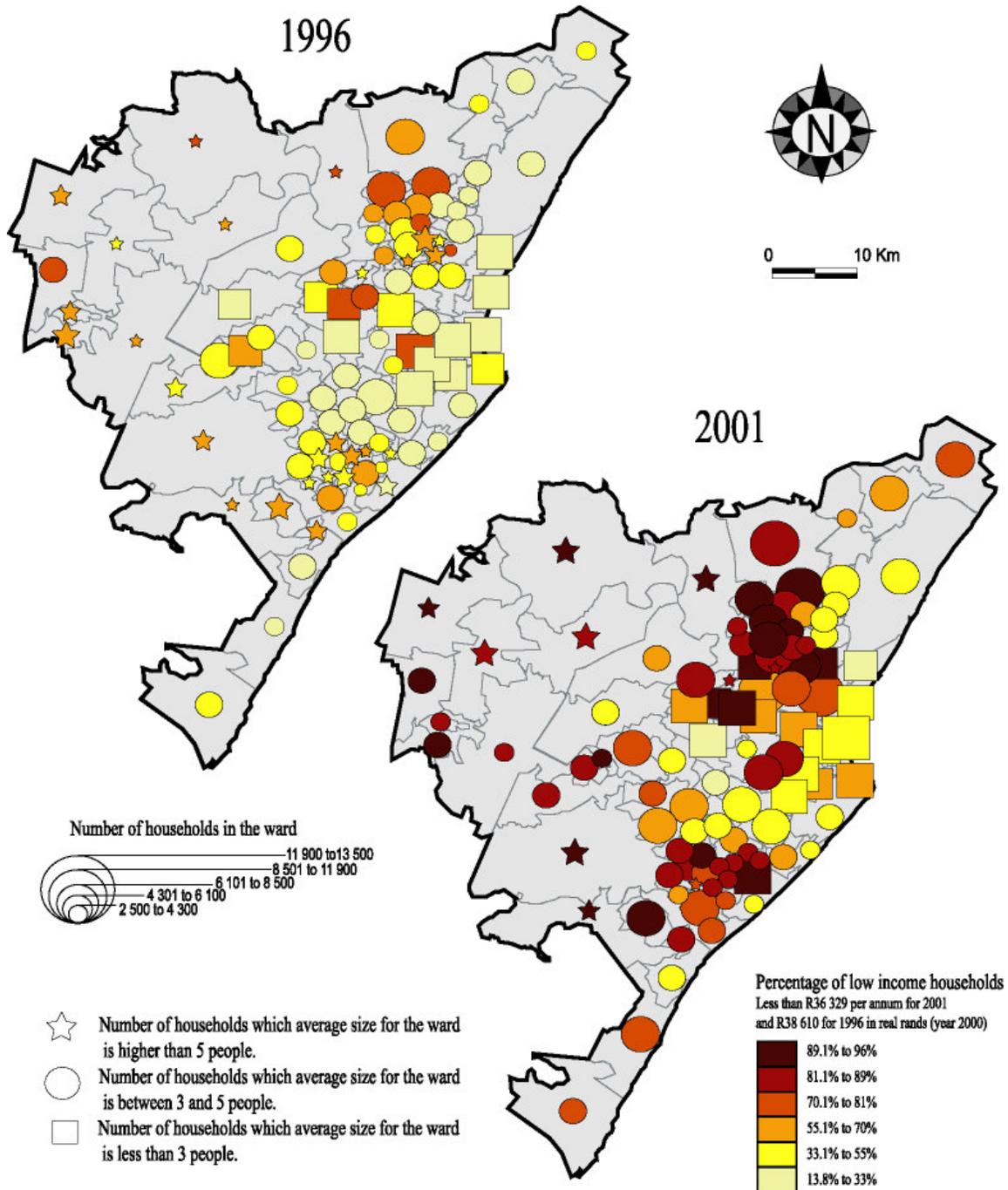
## The eThekweni Municipality Area and study case areas



S.Vermeulin, IRD, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Université Paris X Nanterre, 2004  
Sources: Censuses 2001 and 1996.

Map 2

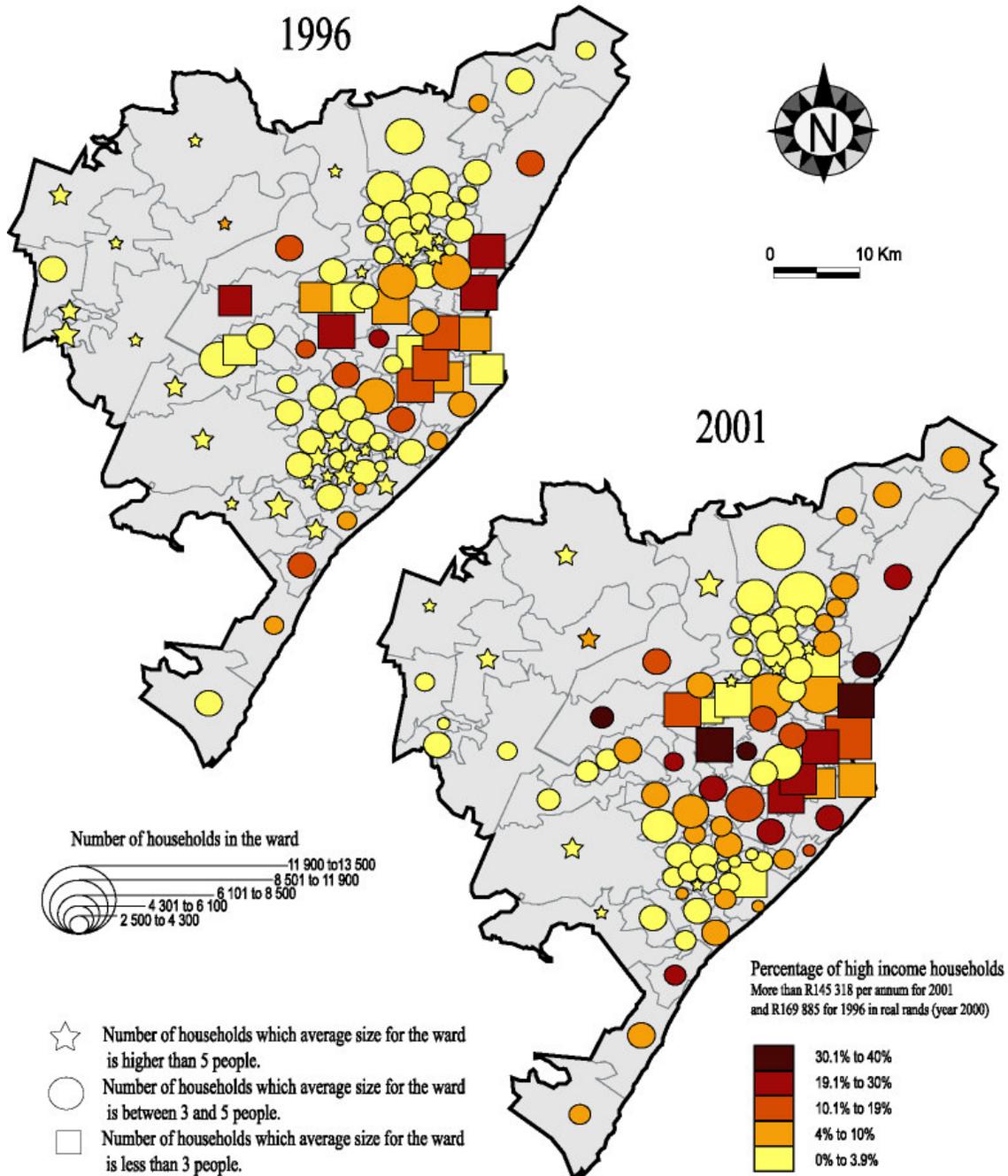
## Spatial distribution of low income households in the eThekweni Municipality Area



S.Vermeulin, IRD, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Université Paris X Nanterre, 2004  
 Sources: Censuses 1996 and 2001.

**Map 3**

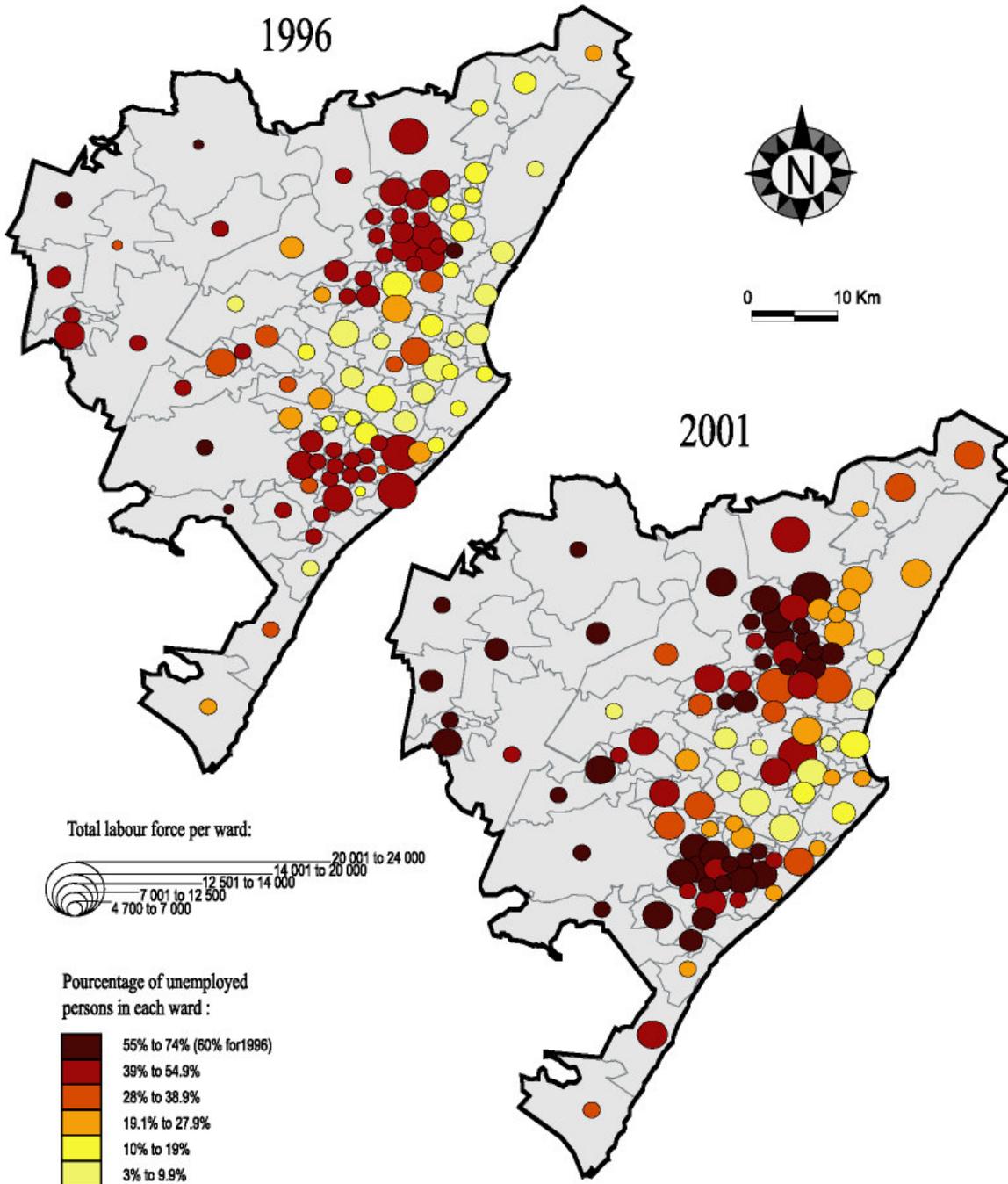
## Spatial distribution of high income households in the eThekweni Municipality Area



S.Vermeulin, IRD, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Université Paris X Nanterre, 2004  
 Sources: Censuses 1996 and 2001.

Map 4

## Unemployment in the eThekweni Municipality Area



S.Vermeulin, IRD, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Université Paris X Nanterre, 2004  
 Sources: Censuses 1996 and 2001.