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Critical analysis of the role played by apartheid in the present housing delivery challenges encountered in South Africa

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Background: The transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa inadvertently wrought significant changes particularly on the housing arena. The remnants of the apartheid housing system posed a daunting challenge to the present government's efforts to deliver affordable housing.

Aim: This article sought to analyse the role played by apartheid in the present housing delivery challenges encountered in South Africa.

Setting: The study was conducted in Johannesburg, South Africa and the population comprised of a variety of stakeholders throughout the country with a vested interest in housing.

Method: The study is exploratory in nature and used the qualitative methodology. In addition, literature review and documentary review – including reviews of policies pertaining to housing, particularly in South Africa – were performed to assist in providing an overview of areas in which the paper is disparate and interdisciplinary.

Results: Key findings suggest that the apartheid government played a huge role in the housing challenges being encountered in South Africa – through its laws that segregated black people and regarded them as sojourners who could not own houses in urban areas but only in Bantustans and impoverished rural areas.

Conclusion: This article confirms the widely held belief that the apartheid government largely contributed to the housing challenges experienced in South Africa from when it (the present government) assumed power up to the present period and beyond.

Keywords: challenges; contribution; housing; impoverished; policies; population growth.

Introduction

South Africa is a country on the southernmost tip of the African continent. The most developed country in Africa, its population is 57 054 837, which is equivalent to 0.75% of the world population (United Nations estimates 2017). The total land area is 1 213 090 km^2 and the population density is 47 per km^2. The percentage of urban population is 62.8% (35 633 585 people in 2017). South Africa spreads over nine provinces: Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, North West and Western Cape (Statistics South Africa 2010). Black Africans account for 79.4% (almost 39.7 million), followed by 9% each of whites and coloured (those of mixed racial or ethnic descent, and 2.6% of Indian or Asian descent. Females account for 51% of the population and nearly one-third of the population is younger than 15 (Statistics South Africa 2010). From 1948 to 1994, South African politics were dominated by Afrikaner nationalism, an oppressive system of segregation known as apartheid.

South Africa currently suffers chronic housing challenges. It is widely believed by the present government and other sectors that the apartheid government largely contributed to the housing challenges experienced in the country, from 1994 when it (the present government) assumed power up to the present period and beyond. According to current estimates, the housing backlog stands at about 2.5 million units (South Africa Population, 2017–2018), which equates to 12 million people currently without adequate housing – and the deficit continues to grow. Cloete and Mokgoro (1995:35) agree that the present government faced great difficulties and enormous backlogs because of the apartheid legacy. This was corroborated by Malpass (1990:5), in whose view the apartheid state's lack of investment in housing created an unprecedented housing shortage, which according to South Africa Survey (2017:174) is affecting many South Africans at present, particularly the majority black population. Barry (2003:10) confirms that massive overcrowding was inevitable. For instance, in

Katlehong (a township in Ekurhuleni), population density in the 1980s stood at 23 to 30 per stand, and a survey conducted in Thokoza (a township also in Ekurhuleni) in 1988 found an incredible 16 to 20 households crammed on to each stand (Bonner, Nieftagodien & Mathabatha 2012:152).

From the coming to power of the Nationalist government in 1948 until the mid-1980s, the black housing issue played a pivotal role in the implementation of apartheid policies (Beavon 1992:89). According to Brutus (2002:10), distinct housing strategies were fragmented and subsumed within policies directed at the implementation of an evolving apartheid doctrine. Comprehensive legislation aimed at controlling black urbanisation was designed at a national level and progressively set in place to prescribe the conditions and administration of black urban life, ownership of land and mobility, and to impose segregation (Heribat & Berkerley 1986:96). Housing supply was strictly controlled through state provision of public rental housing and hostel accommodation in dormitory townships.

All forms of informal settlements were eliminated from urban areas by providing in every town, and particularly in every industrial area, a potentially comprehensive location site, virtually a native group area (Hamdi 1991:36). Welch (1963:11) and Benevolo (1967:53) submit that housing provision was made near urban areas for all black urban residents who qualified in terms of certain state criteria. They were often forcibly resettled in newly developed townships with standardised housing units, sometimes with rail access to industrial sites, and separated from white urban areas by a cordon sanitaire.

Urban residents who did not qualify were repatriated to settlement areas in the homelands identified with their supposed tribal affiliation. The number of blacks who qualified as urban residents were also further reduced by extending homeland boundaries to include existing townships, such as KwaMashu near Durban (Beavon 1992:235). It is estimated that in excess of a million people were moved without consultation between 1950 and 1990 (Uduku 1998:23), and according to Mead (1997:7), the resettlement policies went hand in hand with the group areas acts.

Ironically, in ways that apartheid's planners and enforcers never imagined, one of the group areas acts' biggest legacies is one with which the current government must continue to wrestle – an urban prospect that was widely and distantly scattered across the landscape – housing delivery. It has become a costly nightmare for city planners and urban administrators, and contributes to a high-density urban sprawl that has become a defining feature of the South African cityscape today (Bonner et al. 2012:93).

Importance of the article

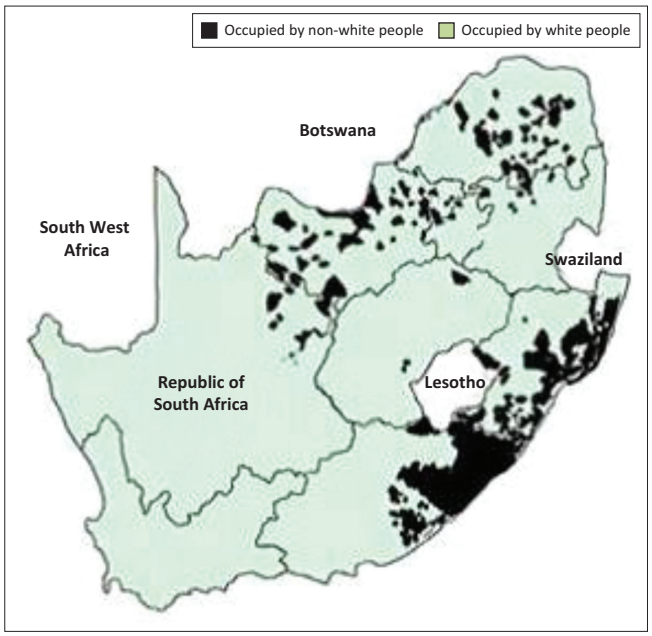
The importance of this article is that it explores challenges pertaining to a major place-based infrastructural element that is an integral part of the community fabric and has a profound impact on the social, economic and physical character of a community (Tariq 2012:1), and highlights apartheid's contribution to the challenges. This is in line with the assertion that the South African city provides a fascinating laboratory for the study of urban culture and form not being new. Furthermore, as a caricature of the social divisions that now plague cities across Africa and the world beyond, the apartheid city experience served as the worst case scenario of persistent social and economic inequality, perversely making South Africa the most interesting and illuminating places in which to be an urban scholar, with particular regard to the debilitating problem of housing, for which the end seems to be out of sight. This is in spite of the democratic government now being at the helm and its formulation of conservative and radical policies aimed at eradicating the housing problem. In this regard, the importance of this study to the housing scholar and housing community at large cannot be over-emphasised.

Background

The transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa inadvertently wrought significant changes particularly on the housing arena. The remnants of the apartheid housing system posed a daunting challenge to the present government's efforts to deliver affordable housing (Cloete & Mokgoro 1995:35). The apartheid government used housing as an instrument to achieve segregated developments through a variety of laws including the *Natives Land Act of 1913* (one of the first pieces of legislation that limited property rights of Africans in South Africa); the *Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923* (regulated the presence of Africans in the urban areas); the *Bantu Authorities Act of 1951* (objective was to keep Black people permanently away from the urban areas); *Group Areas Act of 1950* (made it 'a criminal offence for a member of one racial group to reside on or own land in an area set aside by proclamation for another race'); *Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951* (a very harsh law which was used to forcefully remove squatting communities); and *Natives Resettlement Act of 1954* (granted powers to the government to remove Africans [blacks] from any area within and next to the magisterial district of Johannesburg) (Beavon 1992:222; Lewis 1966:46).

According to Bonner et al. (2012:93), the housing problem in South Africa occurred as a result of the rapid urbanisation that took place after the gold and diamond mines were established by the apartheid regime at the end of the 19th century. The extraction of valuable minerals brought with it the construction of railroads, roads and harbours, which in turn led to the recruitment of manual workers taken from both rural and urban areas of South Africa, most of whom were black people (Smith 1992:14).

The *Land Act of 1931* gave the urbanisation process further impetus. Sone and Maharaj (1991:47) assert that through this law, 75% of the population was restricted to only 7.5% of the land in South Africa (in 1936, the proportion increased to 13%). This is depicted in Figure 1.



Source: Malpass, P., 1990, *The housing crisis*, Routledge, London.
Note: Swaziland, known as eSwatini as from 2018.

FIGURE 1: Division of land in South Africa during the apartheid years.

The major parts of the land – the most fertile rural areas and all urban centres – were allocated to the white population (Beavon 1992:223). The implementation of these laws led to forced removals of the black population and to aggravated living conditions in rural areas. Because of the difficulty to recruit cheap labour, the mine owners had a direct interest in reducing the supporting capacity of the black rural population (Smith 1992:14).

According to Uduku (1998:56), the main house type worked out for 'natives' in urban areas was a small single-storey, one-family unit built in the middle of a plot of standardised measures, where in the most famous of the black townships, Soweto, the measures were set to 12.2 metres (m) by 21.3 m (260 m^2) of yard size and the brick and mortar at 40 m^2. Standpipes were provided every 500 yards. Heribat and Berkerley (1986:12) point out that households for black people do not necessarily cater to only one generation but three generations: the parents, children and grandparents, and in some cases two generations excluding the middle generation. The provision of a 40 m^2 house with insufficient interior privacy for the household therefore implied an ineffective intervention. Household life cycles do not typically move from familism, to careerism, to consumerism; in actual sense, they may have all three developmental stages at play from inception (Uduku 1998:56). The household product needs therefore to accommodate the household cycle dynamics for the development of a sustainable settlement (Heribat & Berkerley 1986:12).

In order to save money, it was decided to apply the principle of site-and-service, which meant that only a site and some services were provided, leaving the house constructions to the residents (Uduku 1998:56). House constructions were organised by the authorities, however. This meant that house types were selected from a limited number of worked out prototypes, and that self-building was supervised and controlled by supervisors appointed by the authorities (Heribat & Berkerley 1986:12). The same standardised one-family units were used all over the country. No consideration was given to climatic differences or cultural traditions. This procedure was actually in stark contrast to the apartheid ideology, which preached that each racial group should develop according to its own cultural heritage (Uduku 1998:58).

'Native housing' and 'Bantu housing' became official terms for government and company housing for the black population of South Africa (Lewis 1966:46). The areas were called 'locations' or 'townships'. The word 'Bantu' was introduced by the apartheid ideologists as an alternative to 'African' because the white South Africans, especially the Boer settlers, considered themselves to be the righteous owners of African soil (and speaking not Dutch, but 'Afrikaans') (Heribat & Berkerley 1986:15). Not all black people in South Africa are of Bantu origin, however. With the Boer logic, the word 'Native' should have applied also to white South Africans, but because of the derogatory connotations the word was used only for the black population (Bond & Tait 1997:6).

The formation of the first black trade unions in the 1920s became another reason for using housing and town planning as an instrument to achieve control of the black urban population (Tomlinson & Adelson 1987:6). One of the first planned housing areas for black workers was the Western Native Township (later South Western Township, Soweto) built on top of a refuse dump in the outskirts of the then fairly small city of Johannesburg. As a result of that, Soweto remains one of the areas in South Africa with an acute shortage of housing. South African history online (2018) concurs in its assertion that to this date housing in Soweto continues to be a fundamental social problem that has been instrumental in the development of the resistance movement against apartheid, and, possibly, instrumental in challenging the dominance of the African National Congress (ANC) in post-1994 South Africa, which in Jeffery's (2010:39) view seems to have taken the baton from the apartheid government of failing to adequately address the housing problem of township dwellers.

The objective of this article was to critically investigate the role played by apartheid in the housing challenges presently encountered in South Africa, and either confirm or disconfirm widely held beliefs by the present government and other sectors that the apartheid government largely contributed to the housing challenges experienced in the country, from when it (the present government) assumed power up to the present period and beyond.

This article is organised as follows:

- Introduction – this section sets the article in motion and gives a brief description of South Africa and also apartheid.
- Background – this section provides the background of the article.
- Methodology – this section states that the article was guided by a qualitative inquiry and provides reasons for it.

- Literature review – this section reviews relevant literature with regard to the role played by apartheid in the housing challenges presently encountered in South Africa.
- Findings – this section presents, analyses and discusses the main findings of the article and links them to the objective of the article and the literature reviewed.
- Conclusion – this section provides closure of the article by restating the main ideas and arguments and pulling everything together to help clarify the objective of the article.

Methodology

This article adopted a qualitative methodology because it is phenomenological in nature and also because it concentrates on understanding the full dimensional picture of the subject of investigation. Qualitative research is a term that denotes the type of inquiry in which the qualities, the characteristics or the properties of a phenomenon are examined for better understanding and explanation (Henning 2004:5). Moreover, the qualitative approach encouraged an open-ended dialogue between the researcher and the participants, which gave participants the opportunity to respond in their own words rather than having to choose from fixed responses, as in quantitative methods. In addition, literature review and documentary review – including reviews of policies pertaining to housing, particularly in South Africa – were performed to assist in providing an overview of areas in which the article is disparate and interdisciplinary.

Literature review

A research project does not exist in isolation but must build upon what has been performed previously (Terre-Blanche, Durrheim & Painter 2006:19). Whilst there is no housing delivery challenge theory on South Africa (White paper on Housing 1994:5), several research studies (Baloyi 2007; Brutus 2002; Cloete & Mokgoro 1995; Eddy 2010; Napier 1993; Power 1993; Setplan 2008) confirm a generally opinionated view that the housing delivery challenges under study are the result of the previous government and its attitude towards a certain group of its citizenry. A host of other research studies (Bond 2002; Bonner et al. 2012; Bradley 2003; Datt 2002; Dyantyi 2010; Habitat & ILO 1995; Harvey 2000; Khan & Thring 2003; Knight 2002) reject this view; the evidence to support this rejection leans more towards factors such as the present government's policies, construction industry, population growth, political and economic variables, unaffordability, unavailability of land and municipal administrative issues – than the role played by apartheid as a process and also apartheid as a government – as the causes of housing delivery challenges.

Whilst this article acknowledges that variables like population growth (including migration, urbanisation and demographics), municipal administrative issues and political and economic factors cause housing delivery challenges in South Africa, it confirms that the apartheid government is the most dominant contributor to housing delivery challenges presently encountered in the country.

The apartheid system

Apartheid was a racist political policy in South Africa which demanded segregation of the nation's white and non-white populations (Malpass 1990:5). It resulted in the psychological polarisation of white and black South Africans. The law of apartheid came into being with the South African election in 1948. So it makes sense that the word's history goes back to that date, from the Afrikaans word for 'separateness' (Tomlinson & Adelson 1987:6).

The apartheid system was an anti-majoritarianist legislative thicket that bound together legal and customary social practices from the years before 1948, resting upon the country's colonial past and its legacy of slavery (Malpass 1990:4). It was a vast, intricate, interlocking, authoritarian system of legal, political and economic domination by white South Africans over the country's black inhabitants, enforced by a veritable army of civil servants (Innes, Kentridge & Perold 1992:112).

Constitutionally, the apartheid system divided South Africa into 'white' and 'black' South Africa (Malpass 1990:4). Tomlinson and Adelson (1987:7) agree and submit that white South Africa consisted mainly of the urban areas, whilst black South Africa was mainly rural comprising primarily homeland areas. Under apartheid, white people were allowed to own land and houses, whereas Africans were prohibited from owning either land or property in the city. According to Malpass (1990:32), they perpetually paid rent for government-built housing, and lived in single-sex hostels or illegally built shelters with materials they could find.

In apartheid times, population statistics were recorded both inclusive and exclusive of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC) states. Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei states were made up of the four Bantustans. Other South African Bantustans were KwaZulu, Lebowa and QwaQwa. Table 1 shows mid-1993 estimates of South Africa's population, both inclusive and exclusive of TBVC in a country of an area of about 1.22 million km^2 (Uduku 1998:238).

Purposes for which housing was used

The apartheid government used housing as a tool to accomplish many of its objectives regarding black people (South African Yearbook [2011] 2012:26, [2012] 2013:9). It is

TABLE 1: Mid-1993 estimates of South Africa's population.

Race	Inclusive of TBVC		Exclusive of TBVC	
	Population	Total (%)	Population	Total (%)
White people	5 149 000	13.0	5 149 000	15.8
Mixed race people	3 402 000	8.6	3 402 000	10.4
Asian people	1 022 000	2.6	1 022 000	3.1
Black people	29 967 000	75.8	23 016 000	70.7
Total	**39 540 000**	**100.0**	**32 589 000**	**100.0**

Source: Demographic Statistics South Africa, 1993, *Central statistical service*, Government Printers, Pretoria.

TBVC, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei.

the view of several authors (Carter 1990; Duncan 1995; Malpass 1990; Uduku 1998:238) that housing was largely used by the central government to take control over black peoples' lives with a view to reinforcing their allotted role as 'temporary sojourners', welcome in 'white' South Africa solely to serve the needs of the employers of labour.

As part of its plans to establish a fully fledged apartheid state, the apartheid government introduced a number of measures affecting life in urban areas with a negative impact on black people and their well-being (Robinson 1995:29). Lewis (1966:77) concedes in his assertion that between 1948 and 1966 the Parliament passed no less than 87 laws with an effect on 'Non-European Affairs'. According to him (Lewis 1966:77), the *Group Areas Act of 1950*, for instance, provided for the division of urban areas into totally segregated districts. No less than 99.7% of white people were allocated spaces in designated white group areas, mainly inner-city and suburban areas, whilst the other groups were consigned to the urban periphery. Mackay (2007:86) concurs in his statement that the apartheid government used housing as an instrument to achieve segregated developments, including a variety of laws – amongst them, the *Native Urban Areas Act of 1923*; *Native Bill of 1936;* transfer of African housing to Department of Native Affairs; *Group Areas Act 41 of 1950; Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act 52 of 1951; Trespass Act of 1959;* and the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill of 1982.

Robinson (1995:14) explains that this type of segregation differed from that existing in other parts of the world in that it was implemented by law and that no exceptions were allowed and that the only deviation tolerated was that domestic servants were allowed to live on residential sites of their white employers. These 'back shacks' were amongst the first types of housing for black people in urban areas (Smith 1992:40). Only two servants were allowed on each plot. Usually black Africans, Asians and mixed race people were moved far away from the white areas. This procedure could, however, not be implemented for those domestic servants who were not accommodated on the plots of their employers. Therefore, a few black townships were accepted close to the white upper class areas. Alexandra in Northern Johannesburg and Walmer Township in Port Elizabeth make for good examples (Mackay 2007:87).

The apartheid government also used housing as a taming instrument. By accommodating poor workers in one-family units, and allowing them to bring their families to urban areas, Carter (1990:3) posits that it was hoped that political stability would be achieved. Vestbro (1998:18) concurs and states that at the end of the colonial period, there was a considerable interest in colonial circles to study how housing and town planning could be used to create a stable indigenous urban élite in the colonies in order to prevent 'Black Nationalism' from turning radical, and to facilitate a smooth transformation to formal independence without economic interests being threatened. This method was not used in South Africa, however. The apartheid ideology prescribed that no black person should have a higher position than the lowest amongst the white people. Thus, the formation of a black élite was not on the agenda (except in very exceptional cases when some black people were appointed from above as leaders of Bantustans or Urban Bantu Councils) (Vestbro 1998:18).

The idea to use housing as an instrument to tame rebellious urban residents is not unique to South Africa. In his classical book *The Origins of Modern Town Planning* (1967), Leonardo Benevolo provides examples of prominent European statesmen, who, in the second half of 19th century, implemented solutions with the explicit aim to promote a sense of individual ownership, and home-centeredness amongst workers, in order to take their interest away from collective political actions (Benevolo 1967:156). Another example is Ronald Frankenberg, who, in his book *Communities in Britain* (1965), criticises modernist housing in Britain for destroying socially well-functioning urban communities in poor working class areas (although in sub-standard houses) (Frankenberg 1957:50).

Housing was also used as a political tool (Mabin 1992:52). From coming to power in 1948 until the mid-1980s, the Nationalist government found that the black housing issue played a pivotal role in the implementation of apartheid policies (Vestbro 1998:18). Distinct housing strategies were fragmented and subsumed within policies directed at the implementation of an evolving apartheid doctrine. Comprehensive legislation aimed at controlling black urbanisation was designed at a national level, and progressively set in place to prescribe the conditions and administration of black urban life, ownership of land and mobility, and to impose segregation (Mackay 2007:87). Uduku (1998:238) maintains that housing supply was strictly controlled through state provision of public rental housing and hostel accommodation in dormitory townships. All forms of informal settlement were to be eliminated from urban areas by providing in every town and particularly in every industrial area, a potentially comprehensive location site, virtually a native group area (Bond 2002:18). Housing provision was to be made near urban areas for all those black urban residents who qualified in terms of certain state criteria. According to Robinson (1995:14), they were often forcibly resettled in newly developed townships of standardised housing units, sometimes with rail access to industrial sites, and separated from white urban areas by a cordon sanitaire. Those urban residents who did not qualify were repatriated to settlement areas in the homeland identified with their supposed tribal affiliation. The number of black people who qualified as urban residents was also further reduced by extending homeland boundaries to include existing townships, such as KwaMashu near Durban. It is estimated that in excess of a million people were moved without consultation between 1950 and 1990. The resettlement policies went hand in hand with the group areas acts (Uduku 1998:238).

Areas where racial groups were mixed and participated in common activities, such as Sophiatown in Johannesburg, District Six in Cape Town and South End in Port Elizabeth, were especially objectionable in the eyes of the apartheid politicians (Giliomee 2003:13). Therefore, they had to be eradicated. All three were subsequently razed to the ground and developed for white residential uses (Uduku 1998:238).

In 1950, a law was also passed against illegal squatting. It was used to bulldoze a large number of informal settlements. This was combined with 'influx control', which prohibited black people from living in cities unless they had an employment there (Uduku 1998:238).

It is often maintained that living in a one-family unit in the middle of a plot 'suits the African way of life'. This argument is based on the assumption that black people belong to the countryside and should not be urbanised, an argument which must be seen as a remnant of the apartheid ideology (Welch 1963:4). A special law, the *Native Building Workers Act of 1951*, was passed to provide a legal framework for the efficient production of cheap housing. Africans were given special training as bricklayers, carpenters and plumbers (Uduku 1998:238).

According to Giliomee (2003:13), the apartheid system's obsession with separating the citizens of South Africa on a racial basis was performed to foster white superiority and to entrench the minority white regime at the expense of the black majority furthering the ideology of anti-majoritarianism. As previously stated, this was entrenched through the passing of significant pieces of legislation enforcing the segregation of the different races to specific areas within the urban locale (Vestbro 1998:18). It also restricted ownership and the occupation of land to a specific statutory group (Christopher 1994:105). This meant that black people could not own or occupy land in white areas. Whilst the law was supposed to apply in converse, it was essentially land under black ownership that was appropriated by the government for use by white people only. It further became a criminal offence for a member of one racial group to reside on or own land in an area set aside by proclamation for another race (Mabin 1992:407).

Bond (2002:122–123) maintains that housing was needed by the apartheid operators mainly to help keep the 'reproduction of labour power' low. It was also seen as means to pacify the African populations in the cities. According to Giliomee (2003:16), these purposes were expressed in the words of South Africa's 'lead capitalist politician' in 1988 (Bond 2002):

> When people are housed – more especially when they are home owners – they are not only less likely to be troublesome, they are also likely to feel they have a stake in the society and an interest in its stability. (p. 128)

Khan and Thring (2003:32) concur with his statement that in the apartheid period, tension created by the need for housing, to help reproduction of black Africans' labour in urban areas, was responded to by offering controlled accommodation – for example, single-sex hostels, transit camps and single-room rooftop accommodation for domestic workers – that would guarantee shelter, yet discourage permanence and family settlement in the cities (Huchzermeyer 2002:96).

Urbanisation and migration

Existing knowledge about historical patterns of black urbanisation and internal migration in South Africa during the apartheid era is incomplete, primarily because of the paucity or lack of studies in that regard, as well as the apartheid government's suppression and censoring of data (Reed 2013:80).

Several authors (Bond 2002; Heribat & Berkerley 1986; Huchzermeyer 2002; Khan & Thring 2003; Weiner 1991:30) maintain that urbanisation and migration were the genesis of the housing problem. The rural lifestyles of the semi-nomadic black pastoralists and settler farmers were not conducive to urban settlement on any scale. The 18th century however anticipated the establishment of coastal and later inland settlements, which the white people regarded as their domain (Weiner 1991:30). With a relatively small white population living within a largely agrarian economy, urban development tended to be a slow process. According to Heribat and Berkerley (1986:32), the discovery of diamonds and gold in the latter half of the 19thcentury however stimulated the establishment and growth of new urban centres such as Johannesburg. The necessary importation of capital goods and minerals export also led to further development of the port cities of Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London and Cape Town. Increasing poverty in the stagnant subsistence economies of the overpopulated black reserves encouraged migration to the emerging urban economies (Duncan 1995:9). On the side-lines of the apartheid housing system, the Kimberley diamond mines introduced the compound system of temporary accommodation to ensure reservoir of labour, and this approach was soon also adopted in other areas (Heribat & Berkerley 1986:32).

The urbanisation of the primarily male migrant labour proceeded slowly however, and by the early 1920s only about 13% of the black population was urbanised (Heribat & Berkerley 1986:12). Thereafter, a combination of deteriorating conditions in the reserves and rapid growth in the urban economies contributed to a dramatic increase in migration. The influx exacerbated the already wretched conditions in the locations, which prompted the first black housing schemes near Johannesburg in the early 1920s (Benevolo 1971:89). Growing white concern regarding the perceived threat to white labour, and increasing costs and inability to control the growth of the locations, culminated in the passing of the *Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923*. Harvey (2000:9) observes that this arguably established the framework for future segregationist legislation in urban areas.

During the war, housing provision lagged badly as resources were limited (Reed 2013:80). Rapid industrial growth towards

the end of the war led to a worsening situation in the housing arena, and informal settlements proliferated around the urban areas. This was corroborated by John and Weiner (1991:30) in their assertion that South Africa's manpower and materials were concentrated on the war efforts and this in turn meant that house production was interrupted. The result was a substantial growth of squatter camps. In Johannesburg, the main industrial centre, no less than 11 illegal camps sprang up during and just after the war, which meant that 'the health and safety of the whole City was threatened' (Napier 1993:24). Reed (2013:80) concedes and maintains that the war time during the apartheid era was a period of large-scale industrial development, coupled with the recruitment of large quantities of African workers. Many more than those getting jobs moved to the industrial centres creating an overwhelming shortage of housing. By 1951, black urbanisation had quadrupled to nearly 2.4 million, comprising 28% of the black population (Demographic statistics South Africa 1993:65). Efforts to improve housing provision were largely frustrated by the growing enormity of the problem, a continuing reluctance to increase housing subsidies, and uncertainty about the permanence of migrant settlements. Harvey (2000:9) and Frankenberg (1965:87) submit that the *Native Laws Amendment Act of 1952* limited the rights to live permanently in white urban areas to those black people who were born there, those who had lived there continuously for at least 15 years, and those who had worked for the same employer continuously for at least 10 years. They were required to carry reference books as a means to control migration into the urban areas (Davenport 1978:26).

The 1976 Soweto uprising started a new period in South African political development which had an adverse effect on housing delivery (Napier 1993:24). The formation of trade unions, school boycotts, demonstrations and other forms of opposition could no longer be contained by the apartheid regime, despite its 'total strategy' for survival. According to Bond and Tait (1997:6), in the 1980s, the opposition movement under the leadership of ANC made it part of its strategy to 'make South Africa ungovernable' through encouraging inhabitants in the townships to stop paying rent, electricity and water bills. The strategy was very successful and weakened 'influx control'. Large amounts of new migrants flocked to the cities. As existing Bantu housing was far too insufficient, people again settled in shanty towns (Uduku 1998:239). Harvey (2000:9) agrees and states that for those with houses, paying rent turned out to be a cumbersome burden that caused many to default on their payments. The government often responded to defaulters very harshly. Evictions were rampant which left people without tenure security. As a result of lack of housing, evictions and continued urban influx, squatter camps became a common feature countrywide (Davenport 1978:26).

Heribat and Berkerley (1986:10) submit that migration significantly increased amongst black South Africans during the last half of the 20th century, and that this increase began before the Pass Laws were repealed in 1986, and well before the official end of apartheid in 1991 or the first free election in 1994. Reed (2013:80) argues that forced migration as a percentage of all moves declined over the four time-periods, from 28% before 1976 to 19% after 1994. Not surprisingly, the majority of this decline was because of a decline in resettlement, which dropped from 12% of total migration before 1976 to a mere 3% of the total in the post-election period (Reed 2013:80).

Circular migration

By the mid-1980s, influx control was lifted and replaced with a policy of orderly urbanisation which entailed that although Africans no longer needed books, they could only settle in urban areas when sites were available (Bond & Tait 1997:8).

The consequences of the policy were high densities in most ex-townships, as more than one household started to settle on existing areas resulting in a new phenomenon called 'circular migration' whereby black immigrant families flocked into cities but still maintained a rural base (Bond 2002:21). Initially, it was believed that the circular migration was a transition phase towards a permanent urban settlement, but years later, research showed that 'circulation was enduring rather than ephemeral' (Mabin 1992: 312). Even to this date, this phenomenon still exists. This form of mobility had implications for policy making, because the urban needs of those people, who were included in the system of circular migration, were different from the needs of the permanent urban population.

Nevertheless, circular migration of the black population started slowly but then developed explosively (Heribat & Berkerley 1986:69). The process was synonymous with urbanisation and largely contributed to suburbanisation. Urbanisation flood gates opened slightly in 1985 and fully in the beginning of the 1990s, with most urban areas ill prepared (Marais 1998:12). This made it more difficult to control the suburbanisation process and to manage the conflicts on the rural–urban fringe where two worlds were now confronting each other, as the urban expansion created a demand for residences, leisure and education facilities (Mabin 1992:312).

Apartheid housing models as causes of housing problems

One of the major contributors that augmented the present housing challenges in South Africa are the housing models adopted by the apartheid government (Reed 2013:80). Heribat and Berkerley (1986:10) state that it is for this reason that the transition from apartheid to democracy was trumped by the hegemonic discursive transition in 1994 to leftist developmental models, and then in 1996 to inclusive counterhegemonic rightist neoliberalism discourses.

The apartheid government held that Africans had themselves to blame for their endemic housing crisis because they had been expanding too rapidly without acquiring the resources to satisfy their most pressing needs (Bonner et al. 2012:150). Napier (1993:24) agrees in his observation that the classic

'Apartheid view' was that the housing problems experienced by the African people were of their own making and that it was not a concern of central government, given that homelands were self-governing and that people were meant to be (by virtue of racial classification) resident in those homelands. Because of the way that the country was divided, firstly by means of reserves and then homelands, the housing problem was not seen to be an issue for the central white government to solve (Napier 1993:24).

It might seem that apartheid politicians carried out policies contradictory to the apartheid ideology (Heribat & Berkerley 1986:18). Such contradictions were in fact not exceptional. Bond and Tait (1997:9) argue that if the idea of separate development would have been taken seriously, then black people should not have been allowed into white areas at all. But as the mines and the manufacturing industries strongly needed cheap labour, black people were permitted into the urban centres. This meant that the idea of 'separate development' was practised when economic interests coincided with the ideology (Mabin 1992:312).

The analysis above shows that 'Bantu housing' was typically modernist. It was based on central government organisation, expert assessment of requirements, far-reaching standardisation, instant planning and mass production – all central components of modernist town planning (Hamdi 1991; Vestbro 1998). At the same time, apartheid did not recognise the concept of universal human needs, which is also central to modernism (Mabin 1992:222). Whilst individual differences were not exactly denied, it was the difference between races that the apartheid ideologists were concerned with. Black Africans continued to be regarded as the carriers of rural lifestyles irrespective of their educational level or length of stay in urban areas. White urban residents were never classified in the same way, despite the efforts of many of them to preserve their rural (Boer) traditions (Robinson 1995:33).

South African 'Bantu housing' was based on the idea that black people should be in urban areas only to serve the white man (May, Carter & Padayachee 2004:19). As their 'real homes' were in the rural areas, it was logical that urban housing should have a temporary character. Therefore, they could be standardised and minimised. The fact that the apartheid planners, for economic reasons, decided to go for site-and-service schemes and for self-help housing meant, however, that a non-modernist, incremental, element was introduced (Robinson 1995:35). In his article on 'Urban Bantu Townships' (1963), apartheid planner Tod Welch provides many examples of individual additions in Johannesburg planned housing areas (Welch 1963:5). This did not conceal the fact that South African 'Bantu housing' constituted an example of the most paternalist kind of modernist planning. However, Heribat and Berkerley (1986:21) question whether paternalist 'Bantu housing' influenced township dwellers to the extent that imposed lifestyles were no longer questioned but taken for granted.

When apartheid was dismantled and the democratic government took over in 1994, there was a situation of choice between the provider and the support model. According to Robinson (1995:35), the former meant centrally planned mass production of standardised units, based on expert-assessed designs, built at one point in time by technologically advanced contractors. This model is in contrast with the support model, where the state, instead of producing ready-made units, allocates resources for residents, and by them employs small-scale contractors, to locally produce houses, which provide for adaptations to changing needs in a long-term process of continuing transformations (Knight 2002:3). With reference to failures of the pure self-help model, Hamdi (1991:45) advocates a compromise between the provider and the support model by proposing that a top-down approach should have been combined with bottom-up approaches. He also shows that self-help is seldom successful if carried out in opposition to municipal authorities.

In a low-income country like South Africa, the provider model is impossible to implement because preconditions are not available (Vestbro 1998). There is usually not enough funds available for housing, no functioning state apparatus to carry out modernist planning, and no technically advanced building companies. Robinson (1995:36) argues that all these factors were present in the apartheid South Africa as well. Therefore, the modernist provider model could be an attractive option. It remains to be seen how successful the new South African housing model will be.

During the 1960s, theorists such as Charles Abrams, William Mangin and John Turner posited conceptualisation of housing supply and delivery (Heribat & Berkerley 1986:9). They maintain that informal settlements were simply a logical response by the urban poor towards solving their own accommodation needs. Furthermore, they argued that given access to available resources, and subject to government support in the provision of secure tenure and services, the poor would be able to meet their own housing needs through incremental improvements over time. May et al. (2004:19) note that these first tenets of an enabling theory signalled the beginnings of a fundamental change in perceptions of, and approaches to, housing and its attainment by the poor.

A number of deviations from the classical new liberal approach should also be noted. Giliomee (2003:254) sums up such deviations in terms of the maxim, 'Scan globally, reinvent locally'. However, despite the extensive policy proposals and the historical spatial imbalance in housing delivery, in terms of which previous homeland areas were favoured, the South African housing policy provided few guidelines with regard to 'where' housing delivery should take place. In essence, the South African housing subsidy was seen in terms of a 'rights-based approach' – all South Africans qualifying for the subsidy would access it (White paper on housing 1994:18). At the same time, various other policy documents, sometimes mutually contradictory, intentionally or unintentionally started to shape the spatial allocation

frameworks of government departments (including the framework for housing subsidies). In addition, the implementation of most policies was the responsibility of provincial governments. May et al. (2004:20) note that officials in this sphere of government developed their own guidelines.

Bantustans and townships

The Bantustans (also known as 'homelands' or 'black states') were a cornerstone of the 'grand apartheid' policy of the 1960s and 1970s, justified by the apartheid government as benevolent 'separate development' (Knight 2002:3). They were a major administrative device for the exclusion of blacks (classified by the government during the mid- to late 20th century as pseudo-nationals or Bantu) and were organised on the basis of ethnic and linguistic groupings defined by white ethnographers; for example, KwaZulu was the designated homeland of the Zulu people (May et al. 2004:19). The Bantustans were created by the *Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959*, which abolished indirect representation of black people in Pretoria and divided Africans into 10 ethnically discrete groups, each assigned a traditional 'homeland'. Established on the territorial foundations imposed by the *Land Act of 1913* (amended in 1936), the homelands constituted only 13% of the land – for approximately 75% of the population (Weeks 2012:29).

The *Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970* declared that all Africans were citizens of 'homelands', rather than of South Africa itself – a step toward the government's ultimate goal of having no African citizens of South Africa (Knight 2002:5).

Under apartheid, black people could not live in 'white' areas but had to live in townships or in impoverished rural areas known as Bantustans (Barry 2003:2). The creation of 'modern' townships emerged as a pivotal plank of apartheid policies, the primary objectives of which were to stabilise and control those Africans residing in the towns and to impose effective urban 'racial' segregation (Bonner et al. 2012:135). Very little housing was built for Africans and as a result, when the ANC government came to power, there was only one formal brick house for every 43 Africans compared to 3.5 whites (Knight 2002:1). Living conditions in all Ekurhuleni townships began to decline rapidly as state resources began to be routed to the development of Bantustan administrations (Bonner et al. 2012:135). Townships were built in a grid-like structure with monotonously designed houses which aimed to exercise maximum control over Africans at the lowest cost. As state resources were diverted to pop up Bantustan bureaucracies from the late 1960s, even less money was spent in urban areas causing already bad conditions to deteriorate further (Power 1993:171). Life in these areas was undoubtedly hard (Bonner et al. 2012:133).

One of the most important developments of the 'golden age' of apartheid, which was strongly hinged on its conventional philosophy of anti-majoritarianism, was undoubtedly the rapid expansion of white suburbia (Power 1993:171). Official attitudes to urban Africans were framed by influx control policies resulting in the state's refusal to invest heavily in urban townships in case it encouraged permanent settlement there (Bonner et al. 2012:153). Apartheid spatial planning created unique land occupation patterns in many South African towns. Power (1993:171) posits that black populations were placed in areas some distance from urban cores. Racially based ideology, rather than economic rationale, was the basis for locating people in these areas (Barry 2003:2).

The often cruel demolition of shacks that left scores of families homeless and exposed to adverse weather conditions became one of the most notorious displays of the harsh realities of apartheid rule (Bonner et al. 2012:153). Contrary to assertions that the apartheid government did nothing to try and alleviate housing conditions for the black populace, Power (1993:171) and Bonner et al. (2012:155) argue that in early 1985, several residents were ordered to vacate their shacks and occupy the two-roomed stands provided by the authorities. Hundreds of residents marched to the offices of the administration board to voice their opposition and to demand four-roomed houses (Bonner et al. 2012:155). The state responded to the rapid increase in the region's population by turning a blind eye to the growing demand for housing, which resulted in a drastic reduction in the provision of state housing in African townships (Bonner et al. 2012:151).

Lack of decent housing and overcrowding became the most visible signs of deteriorating conditions in the townships (Power 1993:171). Added to this was a host of other issues that reflected the state's neglect of these areas including dilapidated or non-existent sewage systems, lack of electricity, poor transport and a general lack of social facilities (Bonner et al. 2012:153). Barry (2003:5) explains that all the aforementioned challenges became a burden that was taken over by the present democratic government.

Several authors (Bonner et al. 2012:151; Knight 2002; Marais 1998:13; Power 1993; Robinson 1995:29) allude to the submission that very little housing was built for Africans by the apartheid regime. As a result, when the ANC-led government came to power there was only one formal brick house for every 43 Africans compared to one for every 3.5 white people. The urban backlog alone was estimated as at least 1.3 million units in 1994 (Weeks 2012:29) with between 7.5 and 10 million people living in informal housing, such as shanties in squatter camps and backyards of black township houses (Statistics South Africa 1996). However, Lindsell (2007:13) argues that the continuous use of the term backlog gives the impression that a quantifiable shortfall in the delivery of housing is known. In the housing arena, the backlog has been a spillover from the past apartheid era, when housing started out as an attempt to fix the substandard housing of the past (Robinson 1995:37). With much the same approach, the democratic government continued to deliver housing. The old continued in the new dispensation (Knight 2002:3).

Major attributes to housing in the apartheid era

The main attributes of housing during the apartheid era which caused problems that trickled down to the present era as maintained by Harrison (2013) and Parnell (1989) are as follows:

- Cities were not accessible to black people because of influx control and homeland development policies which tried to channel black urbanisation away from the white cities. Therefore, housing opportunities were created in the homeland areas.
- The location for settlements of black people was determined in advance. In certain cases, these locations did not offer adequate access to employment opportunities and resulted in high transport costs, especially in the case of ethnic cities (e.g. Botshabelo near Bloemfontein).
- The situation also made it possible for white authorities to control the provision of housing, the type of housing and tenure arrangements. For example, during the 1960s, black people were not allowed to own land or their own dwelling.
- In the process, a number of so-called squatter areas were resettled or the shacks demolished by bulldozers as informal settlements were not legal.
- In order to control areas of black settlement, the apartheid government embarked on a large-scale public sector housing programme between 1950 and 1970. This was followed by closing the opportunities for black people in cities as the expansion of most townships was frozen.
- Housing finance for black people was rolled over to institutions within the homelands, which meant that less money was invested in housing than in the so-called 'white South Africa'.

Post-apartheid housing

When the first post-apartheid government took over in 1994, the previous government had been spending only 1.3% of the budget on housing (Marais 1998:12). The dawn of a democratic order in 1994 promised not only to finally end the discriminatory policies of apartheid but equally importantly to transform the lives of millions of oppressed South Africans (Bonner et al. 2012:198). This included the abrupt ending of housing peripheralisation of the black people. The democratic government showed the importance of housing and the urgency with which it needed to address the problem by affording housing an important space in the constitution and also enacting the housing act. Section 26(1) of the constitution provides that everyone shall have the right of access to adequate housing (Mhone & Edigheji 2003:30; Weeks 2012:29:8). Accessibility means that the state must create conducive conditions for all its citizens, irrespective of their economic status, to access affordable housing.

According to Marais (1998:12), under apartheid, housing policy and practice had a direct spatial intent. In essence, housing in the so-called white South Africa was frozen by the late 1960s. The housing investment was then redirected to former homeland areas. By the end of the apartheid era, less than 1.5% of the South African housing budget was being spent in the so-called white South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2010). In contrast, huge amounts of housing and infrastructure were established in the former homeland areas or dormitory towns. Maryanski and Turner (1992:106) suggest that housing policy should focus on social justice, peaceful and sustainable development and proper matching of human relations and organisations with housing needs – which was contrary to approaches and policies formulated and implemented by the apartheid government. The South African housing policy as developed in a post-1994 phase, comprehensively addressed issues such as housing, funding and finance, the nature of the policy, subsidy systems, ownership issues, and specifications about developers (Bradley 2003:85). In essence, the South African housing policy was based on and is influenced by neo-liberal policy principles, with a one-off housing subsidy as a central component of the policy.

The South African housing policy of the democratic era is no longer developed in isolation and is now overtly influenced by international trends in the delivery of low-income shelter (Lindsell 2007:13). Notwithstanding the impact of international players such as the World Bank, local factors remain critical in determining the success of housing delivery. The housing policy adopted in 1994 has evolved over the years into a complex, multifaceted entity with many components which satisfy the need for an inclusive approach that considers community participation and stakeholder engagement, whilst considering the wide scale of impact related to housing development (May et al. 2004:20).

In the new dispensation, 'House' is defined in terms of 'household'. The Statistics South Africa manual for October Household Survey (OHS) 1996 defines a household as consisting of a person or a group of persons who eat together and share resources; and who normally reside at least four nights a week at the specific visiting point. The survey however did not include live-in domestic workers as part of the households (Statistics South Africa 1996).

After the downfall of the apartheid regime, the more neutral concept 'informal settlement' replaced terms such as 'slums' and 'shanty towns' (Hamdi 1991). The term 'informal' implied that the settlement was unauthorised, either because it was not (yet) legalised, or because it was not provided with enough services or built with durable building materials. In 1990, it was estimated that 7 million people were living in urban informal settlements (Beavon 1992:234). That figure has increased substantially since then.

Cloete and Mokgoro (1995:35) and Lindsell (2007:15) state that the present government faced great difficulties and enormous backlogs because of the apartheid legacy. The ANC (1994:23) concedes and maintains that the housing problems created by apartheid have been aggravated by the absence of a coherent national housing policy. As Eddy (2010:3) posits, historical circumstances

affect service delivery. However, Brutus (2002:1) argues that the problems confronting many citizens in South Africa today are not simply the result of historical factors but have in fact been aggravated by the present government. This assertion was countenanced by May et al. (2004:18), Marks (1989:63) and Mhone and Edigheji (2003:23) who alluded that the present government's policies resulted in reductions in the budget deficit and inflation against the backdrop of diminished expenditure allocations to social votes including housing. Moreover, in the period just before the end of apartheid rule, home ownership was regarded as something of a capitalist trap by many black unions who feared that it might engender more conservative ideologies amongst union membership (Innes et al. 1992:117).

In addressing the housing problem, the democratic government took advantage of advocating for unitary wholeness and a typical plural society which landed itself to compromises which were institutionalised into consociational political structures (Giliomee 2003:254). South Africans were to be free to choose the cultural identity which would constitute their decisive political difference.

Marais (1998:12) argues that although the post-apartheid era has a well-developed housing policy that addresses a variety of aspects, very little has been said on how to deal with the previous homeland areas or dormitory towns. For example, how important are they in terms of housing delivery, considering the fact that the apartheid policy actually favoured these areas? At the same time, it should also be acknowledged that they are the areas in South Africa that were worst hit by poverty and a desperate need for housing.

Findings

The findings of this article suggest that the apartheid government played a huge role in the housing challenges being encountered in South Africa – through its laws that segregated black people and regarded them as sojourners who could not own houses in urban areas but only in Bantustans and impoverished rural areas – and that the present government faced great difficulties and enormous backlogs in its quest to solve the housing problems because of the apartheid legacy. The findings further suggest that it would be unfair to expect a speedy eradication and turnaround of the housing challenges by the present government, given the huge magnitude of the problem caused by the apartheid government, despite putting in place much effort, resources, policies and legal frameworks towards the eradication of the housing problem.

Conclusion

The foregoing facts are indicative that the extent of the present housing delivery challenges not only derives from the enormity of the housing backlog presently experienced and the desperation and impatience of the homeless, but also stems largely from the extremely complicated bureaucratic, administrative, financial and institutional framework inherited from the apartheid government. Distinct housing strategies were fragmented and subsumed within policies directed at the implementation of an evolving apartheid doctrine. Comprehensive legislation aimed at controlling black urbanisation was designed at a national level and progressively set in place to prescribe the conditions and administration of black urban life, ownership of land and mobility, and to impose segregation. Housing supply was strictly controlled through state provision of public rental housing and hostel accommodation in dormitory townships. Housing policy should focus on social justice, peaceful and sustainable development and proper matching of human relations and organisations with housing needs. This is contrary to approaches and policies formulated and implemented by the apartheid government. It further suggests that the housing problem was created by the apartheid government in 1948 and it kept being exacerbated until 1994. This article confirms the widely held belief that the apartheid government largely contributed to the housing challenges experienced in South Africa from when it (the present government) assumed power up to the present period and beyond. It would therefore be unfair to expect an immediate repair and turnaround by the present government which has put in place so much effort, resources, policies and legal frameworks towards the eradication of the housing problem.

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