

- The mechanism emphasises the relationship between government departments and social partners, and the mediation of the integrated plan for national development with institutional, enterprise and sectoral plans. It was also recommended that the successor to the National Skills Authority plays an important quality assurance role in validating sector skills and enrolment plans and their alignment to national plans and priorities.

How does education and training impact on economic opportunities and growth?

A research paper by UCT's Development Policy Research Unit entitled *Pro-poor growth dynamics and the skills intensity of growth*, examined the impact of qualifications on the goal of pro-poor economic growth. In the period 1995–2012, employment for university degree holders outstripped that for further education and training (FET) certificate holders and school leavers. Degree holders enjoyed higher returns to education in the form of higher earnings, followed by certificate holders and then those with only school-level certification.

The possession of an FET certificate had no significant impact on economic growth... It's important to focus the skills debate on the quality of FET and schooling provision.



With regard to poverty and welfare effects, there was a pro-poor impact for degree holders that was not matched by certificate holders at lower income percentiles. Perhaps the most important and arguably novel result from the study was that of all the educational levels, only the possession of a higher education degree had a positive and significant impact on economic growth.

To put it another way: the possession of an FET certificate had no significant impact on economic growth for the period under review.

On the basis of the findings that labour market absorption rates were skewed towards university degree holders, it becomes important to focus the skills debate on the quality of FET and schooling provision, and on the nature and relevance of the curricula offered within the FET sector in particular. If expectations of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are to be achieved – known as 'massification' – it is essential DHET ensures a more optimal fiscal return on its massive investment in this part of the higher educational system. ■

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VIOLENCE IN KHAYELITSHA: FINDING A WAY OUT

Khayelitsha in the Western Cape remains a violent place, with a murder rate well above the national average. *Vanessa Barolsky* tries to make sense of how existing, dense social networks and forms of organisation can be applied to overcome violence, inequality and poverty.

The Khayelitsha study forms part of a 32-month international comparative study on the role of social cohesion (or social solidarity) in understanding the link between inequality, poverty and urban violence. It focuses on two cities in the Global South, Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro, and forms part of the Safe and Inclusive Cities programme of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada.

Over the next three years, research teams in cities across Latin America, the Caribbean, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa will work to address the knowledge gaps in our understanding of the relationship between violence, inequality and poverty, as well as analyse the effectiveness of violence reduction strategies.

High levels of fear of violence

Recent fieldwork in the township of Khayelitsha in the Western Cape revealed some of the complexities relating to violence prevention efforts in deprived urban contexts. Khayelitsha remains a violent place. The murder rate is currently well above the national average of 31 murders per 100 000, people at between 76 and 108 per 100 000 at Khayelitsha's different police stations.

There are also high levels of fear of violence in all social spheres including many public spaces. As two young schoolgirls explained of the youth gangs that have become a significant problem in the township recently:

You don't dare scream because the guys are high and they are killers. Even if it's a young boy who is just an apprentice in the game, he will either finish you to prove a point to the older group that he has a killer instinct or should you try fighting back, the old and more experienced ones will come and finish the job.



Grandmothers Against Poverty and AIDS (GAPA), Khayelitsha. Grandmother Alicia Mdaka in a role as praise singer at a symbolic ceremony. The organisation provides psycho-social and other support services to grandmothers in Khayelitsha, many of whom have to support orphaned grandchildren and great grandchildren. Photo © emiller@iafrica.com

The violence in Khayelitsha has to be understood in relation to its history as an apartheid township established in 1983 to 'consolidate' all black urban settlement in the Western Cape. Although this vision was later abandoned, like many townships in South Africa, the apartheid government deliberately did not provide adequate services and infrastructure to the township as it sought to limit the number of 'legal' black urban residents.

The township is still trying to catch up, with almost half of its population living in shack settlements with very poor services. The township is also characterised by high levels of migration. Approximately 70% of the adults living in the township have come from the Eastern Cape. On the other hand, most young people under 19 were born in the Western Cape.

Friendship and support coexist with exclusion and violence

It is in this context that an understanding of social cohesion in the township needs to be located. Social cohesion is a broad concept that is used to refer to shared values in a community, tolerance and recognition of others, economic inclusion, political participation and the legitimacy of institutions. It has been argued internationally that a lack of social cohesion or weak social cohesion is linked to a lack of social control and violence. However, it has also been asserted that social cohesion can act as a protective factor against violence. In particular it has been argued that it is when neighbours are willing to act on each other's behalf for the 'common good' that crime prevention efforts are likely to be the most effective.

Our research has revealed, however, that there is not a lack or absence of social cohesion in Khayelitsha. Instead, it is characterised by dense social networks and forms of organisation, ranking from stokvels to taxi associations and vigilante groups.

While much Western literature assumes people are highly individualised, in South Africa, as in many African countries, there is a tension between individualism and communitarianism. As one interviewee explained, 'individualism is in the head, it is not in the blood'.

In many ways social networks have been necessary for South Africans to survive both repression and poverty. However, the networks that exist are complex and can be conduits for friendship and support (stokvels) as well as exclusion and violence (vigilante violence). In this context, concepts of 'good' and 'bad' social cohesion are inadequate to understand this variety.

The networks are complex and can be conduits for friendship and support, and exclusion and violence.



Youth gangs and displays of power

Youth gangs have emerged as a significant form of social organisation in Khayelitsha. Although these gangs are not organised in the same way as the gangs on the Cape Flats, they are shaping the nature and meaning of public space in places such as parks as well as institutional spaces such as schools. They are highly territorial and shape identity, as young boys in particular areas feel obligated to join their local gang. These gangs have a particular language of violence, which is very much about a public display of power.

As a female trader explained:

During the gang war days last year, boys who are 16 would walk past carrying machetes or just sharpen them... breathing would be so difficult because you don't know if they will come to you to test if it's working [use the weapons on you].

Violence is organised as a public spectacle, with young people participating as an audience.



The youth gangs also overturn generational hierarchies; most youth gang members are school children. As a young girl watching a gang fight explained, 'those teachers who don't have cars are in big trouble because they can be attacked easily, whereas even those with cars are not spared because they [gang members] throw stones at their cars.'

Violence is organised as a public spectacle, with young people, both boys and girls, participating as an audience to gang fights. Individual conflicts quickly escalate into confrontation between groups:

There in the open field were boys probably... 16-14, there were four of them. When I asked the other students who were also looking whilst cheering... they told me that it was rival gangs. A fight had broken in the boys' bathrooms and knives were drawn... so now the boys who drew knives for each other went to their gangs and now it's no longer one on one but gang versus gang. (Field report)

On the other hand, older gang members differentiate themselves from these 'uncircumcised boys', although their motivations are similar, for example, the need for protection and status. As one former gang member explained:

It is also wanting to be part of a group of guys who are cool (amajita) because it gives you two things, status and protection. Those who take the other way are seen as baru (someone who is not street wise). No girl wants to be with baru, they all want skollies because they also want access to money and protection.

Crime is seen as a short cut to 'success'. As another former gang member explained:

Everyone in the township wants to live a life that they can't afford... There are two ways to go about living this life – education or robbing to get your hands on money. Education needs patience and takes longer. Not everybody can afford it or even those who can afford it, very few want to wait that long to succeed, so we choose the short cut. This short cut is also very cool here in township.

The formal and informal co-exist in intricate relation to each other.



Success is linked to conspicuous consumption: 'If you must drink you don't want to get a Viceroy brandy but Hennes whiskey, Jameson... if you must wear clothes it must be the best and most expensive labels,' said a former gang member.

In many ways these young men's lives are an implicit critique of their structural exclusion from the economy and from society. They refuse to 'play the game' of pursuing an education and attempting to find a job.

Social control violent and collective

While Khayelitsha is subjected to gang violence, it also evidences a significant number of informal forms of social control, which are also often violent and collective. This is part of a complex historical system of informal social control that developed in townships in the absence of a legitimate state under apartheid. However, in the post-apartheid context, residents continue to have an ambiguous relation to the law, legality and the constitution.

The township, like many other African cities, is characterised by a substantial amount of informality, including informal economic relations. Informal trading is linked to forms of sociality and solidarity, and is culturally and socially embedded. It is often focused on the distribution of resources between family members rather than the 'rational' extraction of profit.

'Kayelitsha', painting by Tom Peacock



The formal and informal co-exist in intricate relation to each other. This is the result of colonialism and apartheid as well as current processes of globalisation and urbanisation. Thus the city is a complex site of creativity as well as conflict and violence. There is no doubt this poses governance challenges for the state, which seeks to create managed spaces over which it can assert its control.

The police perceived the township as an impenetrable space that they could not police.



Defying state authority

While citizens expect the state to deliver services, its authority, particularly in the form of policing, is often contested. On the one hand this may be a response to the failures of policing in the township; however, it is also related to deeper forms of contention of the authority of the state. Evidence provided at the recent Commission of Inquiry into policing in Khayelitsha indicated the police perceived the township as an impenetrable space that they could not police. As a result, they failed to intervene and appeared to police 'at the margins' of the community. Therefore, when it does intervene, the state has to engage with pre-existing forms of social organisation that may have more significant social and symbolic resonance than conventional government processes.

The collective violence residents engage in is also organised as a public spectacle, intended to enforce a moral community against an 'other'. This 'other' shifts and may be the foreigner, criminal or other category of person seen to be responsible for social disorder.

In this context, neighbours do act on each other's behalf, as this field report shows:

In the evening the neighbours gathered and looked for [young boys accused of robbery]. Guns and any object that anyone had were brought in for the search and they were found and were tortured, they were swollen beyond recognition, they had blood and observers were calling for their death.

In another instance, residents gathered to protect a shop assistant who had allegedly been hit by a Chinese shop owner:

It was roughly around lunch time when I saw people amalgamated in front of the Chinese 5 Rand store¹, carrying stones, umbrellas and brooms from the toilets in the mall... People claimed that Chinese treat their workers like that [badly] and they... were singing that they must go back to China. People were incensed by the fact that a foreigner can treat a South African woman in that manner.



Mosaic by Ziyanda Majozi of Zoliswa Nkonyana (19), victim of a hate crime incident in Khayelitsha in 2006

In both instances residents were willing to intervene on each other's behalf, demonstrating the strength of social bonds. However, is this the 'common good' that is envisaged in Western literature and that South African policy on social cohesion seeks to achieve?

Residents were willing to intervene on each other's behalf, demonstrating the strength of social bonds.



Efforts to prevent violence

Violence prevention initiatives in this context face significant challenges. It is important not to ascribe a monolithic, unchanging culture of violence to any South African community, as there are different practices, norms and responses to violence, which change over time and place. These need to be differentiated and understood. However, it is important that violence prevention efforts engage with the complexity of the social environment in many areas experiencing violence. In some contexts violence as a means to achieve social order may be condoned. It is also clear that South African citizens do have close social bonds with each other. The critical challenge then is to develop interventions that build on existing social bonds and facilitate social change while engaging, non-judgementally, with citizen's social worlds, their own values, norms and practices. ■

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¹ Everything in the store costs five rand or less