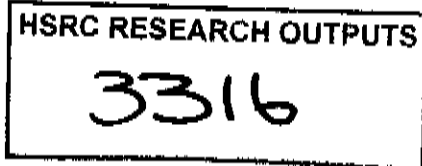FILE – 10YXRDSHSINGSBSTRACT

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HITTING THE WALL IN CROSSROADS: EVENTS AROUND HOUSING PARALYSIS AND COMMUNITY CONFLICT IN AN OLDER CAPE TOWN TOWNSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

The present township of Crossroads in Cape Town was chosen as one of the eight area case studies for government's recent Ten Year Review both because of its history of resistance to apartheid, and because of its value as a case study in housing delivery. Through the 1970s and 80s the in-migrant squatter population of what was then an informal settlement resisted repeated attempts to clear the area and force its people back to the Eastern Cape. Shattered by political rivalries, the community has remained divided and turbulent. The case study examined the progress of municipal government's work in attempting to promote a normal and decent community life in the aftermath of struggle. Housing delivery has been the key development initiative, bringing infrastructural services with it.

Crossroads today is an old and poor formal township, with 61 percent of 20 randomly chosen households reporting no regular earned income at the time of the study. The area suffers high youth unemployment and street crime, and elected local government through the ward councillors appears to be struggling to hold control of the community. Since 2001, the area appears to be moving backward, with earlier successful delivery and gains from greater civil peace coming into danger.

Challenges have come since 2001 from emergent leaders who have developed a power base in the older rural-rooted assumptions of communal governance, in which authority over housing and other delivery is held inside the community rather than by the formal city bureaucracy. Violence over control of housing delivery projects has broken out between people in a newly established municipal ward, and the residents of the older ward from which it was split off. The forward progress of government-sponsored housing delivery was stopped by these conflicts.

To start to understand these events, the history and experience of the Crossroads community needs to be related to the larger policy and admin situation for delivery and planning in Cape Town as a major metro, and in the entire Cape region where it is located. Two immediate questions arise:

- How can it happen that a major metro housing process is held to ransom by the community?

- Also, what does it mean when a major metro housing process is held up this way? What are these events telling us about housing?

Under a new ANC administration, the Cape Town Unicity is emerging from a history of fragmentation and exclusionary policies, and is grappling with what is needed to provide communities like Crossroads with the basic necessities of a decent life. The city's restructuring process is putting enormous strains on the delivery system. At the same time, residents of Crossroads who are at the bottom of the delivery chain have little direct contact with delivery initiatives now. In many ways they feel ignored. Though they give national government credit for trying hard, they are not happy with 'government' as they understand it from where they live, and they are by no means fully satisfied with what they are receiving.

Sources and methods

The results being presented here are drawn from the Crossroads/Cape Town area case study report, for which copyright rests with the Department of Social Development which oversaw the research for the Presidency. Most of the material was collected in a series of first-person interviews with administrators, service personnel, elected councillors, community members and members of the local housing CBO. Because of the short time frame intended for the case study exercise, the face-to-face interviews in Cape Town were carried out mainly over three days in mid-May of 2003 by two members of the study team, and were supplemented by a number of subsequent telephone interviews.

Most but not all of the quantitative material on which the tentative conclusions rest has therefore been supplied by staff of the Cape Town Unicity, especially in the Health, Housing, Electricity and Policing sectors. Much of the information on perceptions and on social and political processes in the area came from members of the housing NGO MaNdlovu and from street interviews and a focus group session with Crossroads area residents. In addition, documentary sources were consulted, and a very small mini-survey was conducted in each case study area so as to build up data for all the areas together: the 20 Crossroads survey interviews were too few to give statistical results, but helped to show respondents' perceptions at a qualitative level.

This data collection process was rushed in response to time pressure and was not as systematic as we would have liked, leaving the study to piece together a picture of delivery in Crossroads out of a jigsaw of different official, unofficial and popular accounts. Especially in regard to events in Crossroads around the housing stoppage, it is possible that the full story is still not accurately reflected.

CROSSROADS

Greater Crossroads is located in the complex of townships and informal settlements lying to the south of the Cape Town airport. The original Old Crossroads settlement

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is sandwiched between the N2 to the north and the Lansdowne Road to the south, on a stretch of this highway which is reportedly the most dangerous in the metro council area for hijackings and violent crime. The city centre is about 18 kilometers away to the west on the main freeway. The Crossroads community has always relied on the adjacent Nyanga formal township for many of its services.

Under the pressure of the apartheid efforts to clear the area, the squatter settlement of the 1970s and 80s has given rise to two more formal communities, New Crossroads and Lower Crossroads, both physically separated from the parent area. New Crossroads, the first daughter settlement, was settled by 1981 as a defined and planned area within Nyanga township on the east, while Lower Crossroads was laid out later and is located to the south in the Phillipi area. Both received people cleared out or crowded out from the original Crossroads settlement. In addition, the Crossroads clearances of the middle 80s also produced several new squatter settlements as infill areas within Nyanga close to Old Crossroads. These include Mbinga Square, Mpetha Square and Mkhonto Square.

Currently, most of Crossroads is occupied by formal housing, but there are still infill shack settlements, and backyard shack densification has become very widespread. It is reported from Cape Town Housing Department that there are areas in which backyard occupation appears as almost a solid sea of roofing, pressed closely together with very little room for accessways. Density is reported to be building rapidly, while housing delivery was frozen in 2002.

Little information is directly available about the population of the Crossroads area as it is historically defined, as opposed to that of the larger Gugulethu/ Nyanga administrative area into which it falls. The housing CBO MaNdlovu suggests that the maximum population on the 98-hectare site before the clearances was probably only from 50 000 to 90 000. According to the same source, the population today, after large scale expulsions and redevelopment of the site, is only about 14 000-15 000 for Old Crossroads, and perhaps 18 000-20 000 for New Crossroads. This kind of figure is not far out of line with the number of housing units known to have been delivered for Old Crossroads, assuming an average household size of 4-5. For New Crossroads, where little or no new housing delivery has taken place since 1981, it might require a very large number of backyard shacks to take up the slack, or alternately a very overcrowded household size in the region of 9 or 10. The actual population of the backyard shacks in both areas is not known at present.

Feeling the strain of the buildup of population, residents commented in interviews that there could be no solution other than to put in train new expansion areas. Due to the new conflicts over housing in Crossroads and the loss of subsidy money on a large scale, the city council was reported to be considering cancelling the scheduled attempts to deliver more formal housing for the area.

Population

Census results show the process of housing what was originally an informal population had not advanced far as of 1996, reflecting difficult conditions for housing delivery in the Crossroads area after the earlier turbulence. For the area as a whole, formal housing was only recorded for 35 percent of dwelling units (for the sequence

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of later delivery. see *Housing*, below). The present level of formal housing is much higher, probably somewhere on the order of 70 percent, reflecting continuing RDP housing delivery since 1996.

In 1996, only the New Crossroads township showed a majority of the population occupying formal housing on developed sites equipped with water, sanitation, electricity and transport access: for this area, formal housing provision was as complete as it was ever to become up to the present, and a significant 15 percent share of the population was already in backyard accommodation. Accounts from both the residents and the city departments suggest that the New Crossroads situation has mainly deteriorated rather than improved as density has increased due to new households forming.

In contrast, the main Old Crossroads settlement as a whole reflected only 44 percent formal housing delivery in 1996, ten years after the shack burnings of 1986. This low overall level partly reflects the survival of more than one informal area within the area's boundaries: in particular, the Boystown area on the northern edge of Old Crossroads had a significant population accommodated only in shacks. At the same time, the existing formal accommodation of 1996 had already given rise to backyard accommodation, pegged at 8 percent of dwelling units in Old Crossroads by the Census.

If Boystown is counted in with Old Crossroads, it can be seen that in 1996 shack occupation still dominated the main Crossroads complex of contiguous settlements. In the Old Crossroads cluster including Boystown, there were a total of 3774 shacks, against 1494 formal housing units. Likewise, to the south, the newer Lower Crossroads settlement remained almost entirely housed in owner-built shacks, accounting for another 1583. In these areas, the housing delivery process in the years since 1996 has brought considerable improvement in the quality of accommodation and in quality of lives and livelihoods, but many of these gains now appear to risk being overtaken by crowding and internal densification, along with dissatisfaction with the quality of RDP housing being built.

Unemployment and poverty

Improvements in levels of formal housing since 1996 have not been matched by improvements in levels of employment, and on the streets government is held responsible for both. As of 1996, unemployment levels reflected in Census figures were very high. Estimates of strict unemployment were highest in the Boystown shack settlement at 50 percent, ranging down through 46 percent in Lower Crossroads to 42 percent in Old Crossroads and 40 percent in New Crossroads. Comparable recent Census figures for unemployment are not yet available for the Crossroads cluster of settlements, but related city figures that pertain to the Old Crossroads area today still suggest low incomes and very high levels of unemployment in the householding, rate-paying population. According to the city sample of Crossroads rate-paying households, 45.8 percent had total household incomes of R 1000 per month or less (data from Trading Services, City of Cape Town, 28 May 2003).

By 2003, Crossroads residents reporting their views either on the citizen questionnaires or in street interviewing were angry and bitter at current levels of

joblessness. With their origins in the shacks and in rural in-migration, the 1996 Census results suggest that Crossroads residents have probably never been in an advantageous position as a group in terms of job access, though the present township population is probably better placed than the in-migrant struggle population of the 1970s. Lack of jobs and resulting poverty were cited as the single largest grievance today in relation to government delivery, slightly ahead of levels of crime.

The significant advance of housing delivery in the area since 1996 has gone along with a worsening of general employment conditions, so that any potential advantage from having a house and a base in a well-housed community is likely to have been cancelled out by the effects of increasing urban job shedding. All these factors affect ability to pay for services. In the 20 citizen interviews from Old Crossroads, over 60 percent of households were reported to be without any earned income from employment.

History

Housing delivery and control over housing allocation is the pivot around which the post-removals development history of Crossroads revolves. Government – and especially the new government after 1994 – has been relatively successful in placing formal housing in the Old Crossroads township in order to provide a platform for household accumulation and accommodate population increase. However, housing delivery in Crossroads has always faced a risk from community factionalism and fights over control of the resource. After a long and difficult period of slow housing delivery after the expulsions of 1986, delivery went ahead rapidly in the late 90s as conditions temporarily cleared, then slowed and broke off as pressure on the housing stock came together with what were seen as deteriorating public goods conditions in the community.

By 1981, Crossroads was the only one left standing of the original African squatter settlements of apartheid Cape Town (Crossroads, Unibel, Modderdam and Werkgenot). It represented a victory for the determination of the Xhosa-speaking African population to return to the Western Cape from where they had been removed in the clearances of the 1950s. However, Crossroads was not at first upgraded in the usual sense. Instead, the shacks were replaced with private housing for sale, and the original population, either evicted or left stranded unable to afford the new houses, was displaced to a great extent. So far as the Crossroads squatter population of the period of struggle in the 70s and 80s survives, its members are located largely in New Crossroads and in Khayelitsha, especially at Site B. It is reported (Cole, interview 14 April) that the first people to arrive in Khayelitsha were displaced refugees from Crossroads.

Few of the present in-migrant residents of Old Crossroads are reported to remember the battle of the squatters to remain, and of those who did remain in the Crossroads area from the 80s, many may have been former *witdoeke* government suppporters. However, local government delivery of public goods and services, in part thought of as making good the deprivations suffered under apartheid by the evicted Crossroads people, continues to be directed to the place and not to the people.

Therefore, Crossroads in practice is a grouping of related settlements, linked as noted above by their history of evictions and displacements. In 1980-81 a large number of people were moved out of the shack areas of Old Crossroads into New Crossroads, as the settlement to which it had been mutually agreed the shack settlers should go. In 1985-86, as many as 30-35 000 Crossroads squatters are believed to have moved to Khayelitsha. After 1991, with the area facing renewed conflict, Lower Crossroads was established as the newest area to accommodate Crossroads outflows.

After the shack burnings and violent clearances of 1986, which destroyed perhaps 4000 shacks and broke the back of popular resistance, many of the displaced squatters established new infill settlements in parts of Nyanga close to the southwestern parts of Crossroads which had burned. When these refugees demanded their land back in 1987, the original Crossroads site was declared a Black Local Authority, with the discredited *witdoek* leader Johnson Ngxobongwana as mayor. It is probably important to subsequent housing events in Old Crossroads that Ngxobongwana operated as a shacklord, standing in a more exploitative version of the role of a rural chief or headman, collecting rents, providing protection, settling disputes, and also reportedly demanding payoffs from NGOs operating in the area. In 1989 Ngxobongwana's former administrator broke with him and stood for mayor, and further unexplained shack burnings took place in 1990. The Old Crossroads area remained turbulent, divided and a difficult environment for delivery of housing and services. Episodes of serious conflict are said to have continued after 1991, with some references to factions fighting in the streets with automatic weapons.

Nevertheless, a first structure plan was developed by 1990, and housing delivery went ahead haltingly in the face of intermittent conflict. By the time of the democratic elections in 1994, about 1285 housing units had been delivered under Phase 1 and 2 of the structure planning. Direct administration of the township and its RDP housing process was not taken over by the Cape Town municipality until 1996.

The Phase 1 area in the southwest, largely representing the area that burned by the witdoeke and security forces, was developed first, apparently from around 1987. It contains the only high school and clinic, as well as the day hospital. Phase 2 on the northwest of the Crossroads area followed, completing in 1990, and Phase 3, which kicked off in 1998, is in principle still under construction (see also below, *Housing)*.

It would appear that as these houses were sold, for the most part new occupants arrived to take up the properties. Not much is known about the parallel informal process that brought dense areas of backyard shack development into the Crossroads area, but very high informal densification is reported to have taken hold in areas along the highway, and perhaps in some other sections.

While this building was taking place, conditions in Crossroads slowly became more calm, though not tranquil or fully safe for residents. Municipal officials report that once the ANC had taken power in national government after the democracy elections, many of the individuals involved in the earlier fighting had been pushed out of Crossroads itself. Whether these residents ever had links to the former *witdoeke* is not clear. These people are thought to have crossed the Klipfontein Road and taken up residence in the area of bush known as Boystown, to the north of what was then Crossroads. In hindsight, it appears that this displacement may have laid down

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ground conditions for the later shutdown of housing delivery and loss of subsidies in the planned final construction phases.

Although the development climate was difficult with shifting power relations and there were a number of unresolved problems at New Crossroads especially in relation to tenure and housing title (see below, *Housing*), by 1998-99 the area had become more calm, and the delivery process was no longer seriously obstructed. Boystown remained a shack area, but for Old Crossroads itself a window for delivery seemed to have appeared. Housing and other infrastructure delivery speeded up from 1999. Both the city and the province were involved in planning, construction and funding for different Crossroads projects.

The process of providing housing and physical infrastructure since 1994 has delivered about 2560 RDP housing units, in addition to the reported 1285 units before 1994. The approximate value of this housing stock completed since 1994 is about R 40 million. A total of 3989 units was planned for further housing phases after 1994, representing about R 70 million in subsidy funding altogether.

However, the conflict over control of the 1691 housing units to be built in the last two planned phases has paralyzed the housing provision process and all associated infrastructural development indefinitely. Since shooting broke out only after contracts had been signed and the most recent housing phases had already started, some R 25 million appears to have been lost through subsidies paid out to contractors in the northern phase, and perhaps five million in the southern phase. It appears that most of the affected area – just under a third of the settlement – remains under informal shack settlement, without services.

EVENTS: WHAT HAPPENED TO CROSSROADS HOUSING DELIVERY?

By 2001 a reappearance of shacklordism roughly coincided with a decline in effective policing at the Nyanga police station responsible for the Old Crossroads area. Comments during the current study from residents, health workers, police and administrators indicate some breakdown in public order, leading to a rise in the level of crime and to knock-on problems with delivery and service provision.

In Phase 5, beyond the original northern edge of the settlement, as well as in what seem to be the outside southern section of Phase 3, new problems with shacklord rule in Crossroads and a new struggle over control of housing allocation emerged again. Insofar as events can be reconstructed from available accounts, serious conflicts flared up in Old Crossroads over access to the housing which was being delivered, breaking into the fragile cohesion of the residents which had prevailed since about 1999.

On the south of the Old Crossroads area, along the Lansdowne Road, a small completed strip of Phase 3.1 housing has experienced conflict over who was to take occupation, and new informal power figures are said to have emerged among local youth contesting the area. On the northern edge of the area, the Phase 5 development in Boystown was scheduled to start housing construction in 2002. It is described as formerly bush, and invaded by squatters, including those displaced from the main Old Crossroads settlement after 1994. People living there were to be resettled in the Phase

2 area while the Riven construction firm got building under way. New infill areas seem to have developed in Old Crossroads to accommodate this shift of occupation, intended as temporary.

Building on Phase 5 stopped in October 2002, and was scheduled to resume in May 2003: this resumption did not take place, and apparently had not done so by late in the year. The subsequent status of the area in 2004 is not clear as yet.

Interpretations of what happened at Phase 5 differ. According to one of the administrators in the housing delivery operation who carried significant responsibility, a man from the general area of Crossroads had been attempting for some time to operate as a shack leader, trying to establish ground-level support and looking unsuccessfully for a political movement to support and protect him. By this account, his apparent purpose was to take over control of the building and allocation of new houses, in part at least so as to profit in the same ways as Ngxobongwana had done in the 1970s and 80s.

By October 2002 this individual is said to have made a connection with the Democratic Alliance which brought him some kind of standing or perceived claim to protection. He then made threats against the construction operations, demanding that they accept his intercession. This shacklord-type process seems to have coincided with a descent into factionalism that followed once the Old Crossroads area was split into two municipal wards.

From these two flashpoints in the Crossroads developmental area, conflict and dissatisfaction have spread into the larger community. A split has developed between the two local government ward populations, and touched off contestation between residents of the two main local government wards over who should have access to housing delivered by local government.

Where previously the entire area had been under the present councillor for Ward 36, the eastern section was now divided off to form Ward 33, with a new councillor. Ward 36 is reported to have remained within the administrative area of responsibility of Greater Nyanga, while Ward 33 was for unclear reasons assigned to the admininstrative area of Phillippi, along with Lower Crossroads. It is not entirely clear whether this split was part of the change from the 16 sub-councils originally planned by the new ANC/ NNP municipal administration to a second dispensation based on 20, which is said to have involved extensive redistricting: nor is it clear why specifically Ward 33 was divided, or if it was intended to accommodate political claims within the new administration.

The effects of this split introduced a social and political faultline into the existing Old Crossroads settlement. Either a sense of territorial identity developed, or otherwise residents saw the new administrative dispensation as an opportunity to make claims. Linked in unclear ways to the shacklord situation taking shape on the north, a dispute rapidly developed between the two wards over controlling access to the Phase 3 housing about to be built in Old Crossroads.

By some accounts, the new Ward 33 councillor promised the new houses in the southern area to his new constituents, forcing the Housing Department to make

changes in their agreed arrangements. These changes were not accepted by the remaining Ward 36 people, who had also been promised houses by their long-standing councillor before the division of the area. As a result, a youth grouping is said to have taken an aggressive stand and claimed control of the housing already built on the south side of the area. Relations between the new shacklord, the youth and the councillors are unclear. Shooting incidents are reliably reported to have taken place, but details are uncertain. At the time of the interviews, the 40 houses which had been completed in Phase 3.1 were standing empty and being vandalized, since it was impossible for anyone to take occupation without being harassed by the other side.

When the development process responded to the Phase 5 situation by getting a court interdict and bringing in a powerful police presence, with representation from the SAPS, the municipal police and the riot police, construction was able to go ahead for a few days. However, by this account it was not possible to maintain this level of police intervention for more than a day or two. The number of police on site declined steeply after the first day of work.

On the third day, shots were reportedly fired from behind one of the buildings. There was no effective response from the police. The housing administrators and the construction managers had no immediate answer to this kind of intimidation, and building work stopped on the site.

A complicated and frustrating period of renegotiation followed. The DA is said to have demanded a more transparent housing list process, which stretched out the negotiations. The resulting housing list was divided 50/50 between the rival wards, but no lasting settlement could be reached. According to one of the city employees involved, the city 'bled to death on this project' as negotiations went on for three years while payments had to be made to the contractor and to others for construction which never took place.

Both local and larger political processes were involved. Interviews with officials involved with the housing process included statements that councillors can be former shacklords who have used that position to get elected, and that such elected officials do learn and develop capacity and often serve effectively – however, others may then appear to take over their local shacklord role, so that the process of bringing people in this position inside the structures of governance has to begin again. These observations followed the comment that the radical community youth who have paralyzed the allocation of the unoccupied Phase 3 RDP housing are now reportedly untouchable, because they have succeeded in becoming coopted into the ANC and SANCO, and are now part of the power structure. The Phase 5 shacklord has linked up with the DA and is now also thought to be politically protected.

At the time of the interviews, and for months afterward, construction was not able to start again, though the local councillor reported it was to start again as of May 2003. Against this view, which was also held by a local African building contractor, one of the planners from the municipal Housing Department was adamant that no resumption of construction was scheduled. Instead, the city's executive council was said to be actively considering the future of the project, with complete cancellation a very possible option due to the exhaustion of housing subsidy funds.

It appears that from around the time of this housing-directed conflict that public order and the crime situation have become worse than they formerly were, with petty crime perhaps encouraged by the new flareup of disorder. Health care has seemingly been affected, and maintenance work on infrastructure already delivered may have become more difficult in an already difficult situation.

What is unclear in relation to this brief study is how the community and residents relate to what has happened. The administrator's account seems to chime with the version given by the local councillor and and shared to an extent by one of the NGO workers in the area: they generally agree in seeing the intervention that stopped housing and services delivery as coming from an aspiring shacklord and his supporters, who were outsiders to the Crossroads community operating in an opportunistic context, and who used a DA linkage to establish a position. The councillor described the situation as one of old-style apartheid-era tactics, involving money changing hands. Asked about the possible grievances of those in the community opposing the continuation of housing delivery, he noted that they rejected the very small houses being provided, and also that they alleged corruption in the area, but had no proof. However, the accounts from other planners and administrations involved with housing delivery emphasized the split between the wards in the case of the abandoned houses in the south, and also in relation to the housing list in Phase 5.

There were also rumours of police complicity in the incident. The commanding officer at the Nyanga police station said this kind of action was not the proper responsibility of the police because it was not crime-related, though the police were always willing to help. He felt distressed and bothered about what happened about the stopping of construction.

Together with the fighting over the 40 RDP housing in the south, the incident that stopped Phase 5 housing construction at Crossroads perhaps represents the tipping point for the decay of public order in the settlement. Both these incidents play a role in the further deterioration of housing delivery and public services maintenance, as well as for health delivery and policing itself. In addition, the continuing state of threat against the education delivery system is likely to be linked to the dynamics of shacklordism where it puts up local informal enforcement processes driven by community awareness – but also by individuals' self-interest – and excludes normal civil order and justice as they come from the city authorities.

CONDITIONS FOR HOUSING PARALYSIS: COMMUNAL GOVERNANCE?

A number of conditions in the area fed the dissatisfaction which contributed to breaking off housing delivery in Old Crossroads, and lent support to the attempt by interests in the community to wrest control over housing delivery and allocation away from the city bureaucracy. The major public complaints reflected in the mini-survey and street interviews were poverty and lack of jobs, along with street crime, poor public safety and poor policing. But as part of perceived increasing disorder on the ground, health services in the community – rated as good in the Cape Town townships generally – were on the edge of collapse, and education services were under some threat from crime. Maintenance of basic infrastructural services was holding up, but

may have been suffering some delays due to procedures necessary to deflect crime risks to maintenance crews. The elected local councillors perceived themselves as marginal to these processes, and the police argued that they were powerless due to shortage of resources.

However, perhaps the most compelling issue affecting the community environment for housing delivery is perceptions of housing itself. Space is now felt to be extremely short throughout the Crossroads area, with crowding partly due to running out of room for more housing development to take place. At an informal focus group in the New Crossroads area, participants remarked, 'Housing? It is not available', and 'Government did build houses, but it is a drop in the ocean.' A woman remarked, "I am forty years old, and I still live in a room with my parents, and I have two children'. One youth who appeared to be aged about 22 said, 'I am not so young any more. I live with my parents. It shouldn't be like that. I should be independent, and have privacy for my own family'.

Although the residents noted that they did prefer to remain with their families and communities, they insisted that they would move if necessary but that there was no good access to suitable housing anywhere in the Cape Town area. One participant commented, 'A new area for development must be found'. All the others nodded agreement.

However, there was also concurrence that formal housing should not be overrated. Comments from this focus group included,

> 'Shacks are better than housing in some respects'
> 'Shacks are better than backyard structures'
> 'There is more space in shacks'
> 'Shacks look bad on the outside but good on the inside. Houses may look good on the outside, but are really bad, and too small inside'.

At Old Crossroads, which has received more housing delivery than New Crossroads and currently may have a smaller population, perceptions of overcrowding did not seem to be as acute. However, the area still registered numerous complaints about the small size of available houses, and the difficulty of accessing housing stock. The recent violent conflicts over control of the Old Crossroads housing delivery process as the most critical public resource being contested in the township give an indication of the forces ranged around the housing provision issue.

It would appear that from the standpoint of the present Crossroads area residents, their RDP housing is at the lower limit of acceptability in terms of crowding, and that some families may already be contemplating unplanned, do-it-yourself new options in the way of shack occupation which may conflict with intended structure planning. That is, at current delivery standards, RDP housing may be only barely competitive with do-it-yourself alternatives. In this light, and in the light of perceived overcrowding, community commitment to formal bureaucratic housing delivery may be relatively weak even before other factors in the broader housing environment begin to affect perceptions of delivery and the possibilities for violent conflict to emerge.

In this volatile situation the city administration inadvertently created a new faultline by splitting the main electoral ward of Old Crossroads in two parts. Conflicting claims and broken promises around ward-based housing allocation spun out of control, and factions with new informal leaders emerged to carry forward a new round of violence for which details are still shadowy.

At the same time, the city's political environment has been ambiguous in relation to community housing delivery in the older townships. The rivalry between the DA and the ANC/NNP has been a continuing factor in the delivery picture. The new ANC/NNP city administration has been trying hard to reprioritize city spending, directing more resources toward the needs of the poor and the marginalized shacks and townships. This large-scale shift of the city's attention has gone along with the effects of some six years of prior administrative restructuring before the elections, and the associated history of political control of Cape Town passing back and forth between the DA and the ANC/NNP alliance. During this period 32 original administrative areas as of 1997 were reduced to six municipalities with one umbrella structure, and were then combined again into one unicity with 16 (later to be 20) sub-councils. The change from 16 to 20 sub-councils involved major redistricting.

One result has been severe exhaustion of administrative capacity, and loss of many key personnel. At the time of the interviews, the city was reported to have few staff members left who knew the history and needs of the various service departments well, and the level of frustration among municipal civil servants was advanced.

At a wider community planning level, there were signs that the compact city approach was seen to be failing in the face of problems obtaining high-value land for low-income settlement, and the city was turning more toward providing the outlying marginalized townships and settlements with high-speed transport to help overcome their isolation from core areas of economic activity. LED efforts to bring economic activity to the townships appeared scattered and uncertain, and had met little if any success in terms of self-sustaining earning.

In relation to housing specifically, the Mayor's Office reported their administrative approach was based on a pride in decent quality delivery for all, a principled rejection of permanent shack settlements, and a specific insistence that built housing is the right of everyone no matter how poor. There appeared to be potential tension between the new city administration's emphasis on continuing public housing delivery for all and the willingness of some city planners to accept the permanence of a shack-housed element in the population.

From the ground level, the govermental view was very different. In the eyes of Crossroads residents, "government" was represented not by the city administration located in the CBD, but by the elected councillors with whom they were in contact. In street interviews, the Crossroads people expressed suspicion of their councillors, anger about unaccountability, and fears of corruption. The Nyanga-area councillors in their group interview expressed feelings of unease and marginalization in relation to the delivery processes they were expected to oversee, and felt that they were kept out of the information loop by both national and municipal tiers of government.

Their perceptions of their role and about how they were expected to deliver on their constituents' expectations of development delivery were not clear-cut: they noted fears of continuing rapid in-migration as a destabilizing factor at community level, and noted the importance of keeping control over crime. Their specific solutions for how to provide jobs and housing focussed on a local land claim they were putting forward, in the hope of obtaining opportunities to develop housing and jobs by supervising a housing development on what was at the time Defense Force land.

That is, the councillors' preferred approach to meeting expectations and promoting development revolved around obtaining greater control of land and housing opportunities. Residents themselves also demanded the opening up of new housing development areas as the only effective solution for the tensions and conflict associated in the community with overcrowding and inadequate housing delivery.

At the same time, the emergent informal leaders, both shacklord followers and youth formations, were also basing their actions on a community claim to take over control of housing construction and allocation. However, the disjuncture in social and bureaucratic process here was wide: the empirical outcome of these demands to take ownership of the housing process and do it better at local level was the events that actually paralyzed housing delivery instead of speeding it up, and closed down existing housing phases rather than opening up new areas.

What appears clear is that there is a strong disjuncture here between the community-level, popular understanding of housing development, and the bureaucratic model aimed at rapid delivery which is being used by Cape Town municipality. This understanding seems to be shared between the local-level formal administrators, the people on the ground and also the emergent informal leaderships which have built constituencies around the housing issue.

Housing in this sense has become the central arena of contestation for social forces within the Crossroads settlement, which is now an older township facing the consequences of fifteen years of natural increase and continuing in-migration. However, under this focus on housing as the current key issue there is probably a wider conflict, which deals with forms of governance and identifies land and housing as the basis of governance processes at community level.

The issue here is probably not limited to housing, though it inevitably takes shape around housing and has potential to tear apart the housing delivery process. The underlying issue is governance. Some of the councillors' remarks bring in principles of the older settlement systems of classical African type, which have rural and traditional origins and prevail today in urban shack areas as well as in rural communities. In effect, they are referring to a more community-based system of governance, which is more accessible to people having problems in dealing with the impersonal, bureaucratic systems of delivery and allocation that characterize developed urban areas. This kind of system is built around community administration of land rights and housing provision, rather than around individual or family rights in the usual sense. Efforts to delivery housing by the numbers, on a bureaucratic system do not address these issues.

The concern of the councillors and the community members that first-arriving occupiers were not receiving precedence for benefits ahead of new people arriving is a well-accepted principle of informal governance, as is the practice of screening new arrivals to keep out criminals, though shack areas often have difficulty in enforcing screening in practice. Validation of authority relations through control of land assets, social allocation of resources and local-level policing of public order are other aspects of community-level systems. This kind of governance is often at variance with the approach of planners and city administrators, stressing fast mass delivery and quick, impersonal accommodation of arriving in-migration through bureaucratic processes.

These social assumptions around allocation are also the principles on which shacklord interventions are based. They tend to run counter to the key demand on the city administration to accommodate arriving in-migration with a smooth urban transition, which is seen as process in which individual households join the city and advance themselves. For communities, the housing process that accommodates in-migration is the gate through which new individual households are introduced into the social community and join its governmental institutions. There may be a fundamental question here about the meaning of housing in its social context in township communities today.

Issues come up here around which kind of governance and allocation system is going to underpin development in the Cape Town townships. At present, the system is one of bureaucratic delivery, but the councillors' remarks and the overall history of delivery at Crossroads provide evidence that the community-based system of social allocation and access still enjoys considerable support in this urban context, and is capable of contesting control. Specifically, the recent history of conflict over housing at Crossroads reflects a willingness on the part of many residents, and particularly the youth, to give active or passive support to efforts on the part of individuals or groups from within the community to exert some form of what is seen as community control over delivery and allocation: and, in effect, to reject outside administrative control of delivery processes, or at least try to force a compromise.

The implications for leadership processes and for delivery costs and delays seem to be unfavourable. Leadership on this route comes to be validated by capacity to choke off delivery, sometimes by violence. On the side of the city, successful delivery is sometimes seen as including the ability to maintain momentum, and hold the process on schedule in the face of threatening turbulence (interview, Adlard, 16 May). This interface of contestation is partly recognized, in that it has become part of the normal process thoughout the country to hold delivery negotiations with community interests. However, Crossroads helps to demonstrate that negotiations are not foolproof.

At the same time, it may not be widely seen that contesting this interface can be one of the fastest routes to political recognition for ambitious community members. Likewise, it may not be fully clear that community members may be passively willing to allow the possibility of having to make irregular payments, in return for obtaining a more understandable, personal and accessible delivery process in which local power figures play a prominent role. These factors fuel further housing conflict.

Such outbreaks of conflict over delivery may become increasingly likely as occupation density rises in old settlements and control over housing becomes

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corresponding more valuable. An ordinary consultative delivery process which may have been viable at lower levels of crowding may become unviable as the area becomes more crowded. The councillors' insistence that the older townships are being excluded, and their references to three generation families living in backyard shacks without the city taking the problem on board, may be a pointer to increasing risk in the Cape Town metro.

Against this possible threat to the housing process, the city administration's new campaign to increase both consultation and funding for delivery to the poor may be coming at an apt time. However, the point of highest risk in any given area would not arrive until new housing delivery actually starts and contracts are signed, which greatly raises the risk for the city. Under the city's new priorities, there will be many such occasions.

In this light it may be important to give full attention to a better understanding of the local level political dynamics which tend to gather around the housing delivery process. The Crossroads results seem to suggest that conflict over housing delivery is not random or unpredictable. Crowding is an important enabling condition. But at a deeper level these conflicts appear to be rooted in older community-based governance systems perceived as a potential alternative to bureaucratic delivery, creating a path for communities to try to take over and restructure the housing process according to different principles.

These community-based principles also offer a contemporary platform for achieving local positions of power, allowing a kind of end-run against the formal political system which ends in cooptation if successful. The people involved in leading the Crossroads housing disturbances are described as having affiliated to the DA and the ANC and SANGOCO immediately this became possible.

A question then arises, about whether it needs to be asked if this process of emerging into a public leadership role may not have evolved in some instances into a process of intevening to tie up development – one which uses the reasoning of improving delivery when authorities aren't listening, but actually puts the intervenor/ aspiring leader into a gatekeeping position, which he can use to get political recognition. That is, if an emergent leader can gatekeep and hold up delivery, the system will recognize him and he can get inside it, in a process by which both sides coopt each other.

If the angry actors discussing delivery and non-delivery in the area of Crossroads and Greater Nyanga are correct, this can be one effective route to political office, but one loaded with negative consequences for the city and for national government. When and if this sequence occurs, it involves confrontational action against the city development process in order to work, with very large public costs in funding and delays, and with friction and accusations of bad faith that can cripple development prospects for the area for an extended period of time. In the Crossroads area, the Phase 5 development of 1500 houses appears to be in danger of being cancelled, and the Phase 3 housing process has also been halted and diverted. The actors thought responsible are said to have successfully obtained places in the city's political process which they can look to for protection and advancement. The cost to the fiscus of their successful job search seems to have been as much as R 30 million in housing subsidies.

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TOWARDS CONCLUSIONS

Such a process of personalized micropoliticization may be able coalesce around the development process precisely because development is now the critical factor around which processes of access and power are taking place. If so, then it would not be surprising if emergent leaders seeking access to political positions may be able to find a route through intervening in development, as the most important process where city and community are actively engaging each other, and one which is relatively easy to interrupt.

It remains to consider how this can happen in one of South Africa's major cities. The bottom line is, it is likely that a major city housing process could not be held to ransom if all actors on the community side were not drawing on a common perception of what housing means, that is fundamentally not bureaucratic, and that is not addressed by the existing bureaucratic housing process. This is a dimension of the housing process that is not being catered for by existing housing models – housing is perceived as a social matter, one which affects all community members and not only those contesting a particular house or housing scheme. This communal governance issue concerns the way communities govern themselves, and why in order to do it they tend to think they need to administer housing – it represents housing as a principle of organization, not just housing as a physical resource.

Accordingly, whenever bureaucratic delivery is seen not to be coping with demand, space opens up for informal leaders to emerge and try to claim control over housing in the name of the community, and against bureaucratic delivery. This attempt will probably short-circuit in most cases, and can end as here with the political cooptation of the emergent leaders along with the collapse of the housing delivery process. Crossroads' housing stoppage is likely to be only a serious case of something that has not been uncommon in shack upgrading situations in South Africa, but one which hasn't managed to fully put across its major lesson. This lesson is probably about the incompatibility of bureaucratic delivery processes and community institutional needs at the grass roots.

This is not to say that the kind of event that occurred at Crossroads has been entirely a dialogue of the deaf. The People's Housing Process has emerged in South Africa as a partial response to community issues and the risk of bottlenecks and stoppages in bureaucratic housing delivery, though it stops short of relating housing to governance. There is also an international movement in urban discourse, illustrated in the recent UN Habitat Conference, to look again at how traditional or neo-customary systems of land and housing allocation in Africa's cities can be brought to line up and function with formal city bureaucratic structures: to date, many of the continent's large cities have not been able to develop the kind of bureaucratic capacity for land release and housing development which operates in metros like Cape Town, while traditional structures still survive and operate little changed in many urban African neighbourhoods.

In contrast, South Africa seems to have few if any surviving customary admin systems operating in urban land or housing. Instead, as in many parts of the world,

post-traditional, partly transformed and modernized local leaderships operate in shacks and townships using partly rural governance models.

However, planners in Cape Town are not alone in rejecting any possibility of coming to terms with grass-roots models of governance and housing allocation that contest control with the formal city. What emerges may be further repetitions of the Crossroads social drama, with new leaderships forcing their way between the formal city and popular level in the name of community governance, only to have the political process cut off their initiative by pulling them inside formal politics and leaving the community adrift and empty-handed. Whenever this sequence plays out, it may be not be an unusual outcome for housing delivery – the desired outcome for all actors – to be crippled for an unknown period, and/ or for government development funding to be put at risk in significant amounts.

Hsing demand → hsing as single crit and central delivery modality
Prevd quality of RDP housing

Unemployment, yth income nsffx
Weak LED – no jobs, no alt income
Weak policing, climate of impunity
Decl public services
Unresponsv cops
Unresponsv cncllrs, elex government held responsible but feels marginalized
Unemployment, poverty, crime. st crime undermining essential social services, all
    raising community temperature

EVENTS
Into this, politics provides DA/ANC rivalry, and municipal government intro new
    faultline
For housing this generates broken and conflicting promises
In anger, community via yth tries to take over – confrontation vs bureaucratic admin
    not delivering
Shooting starts, cops retreat, delivery hits the wall
Cnsultts' interest to keep delivery moving rapidly, vs perceived tries by emergent ldrs
    to validate position by taking control and stopping delivery
Informal leaders interest to interrupt seq to show own support
Informal leaders focus popular anger vs bureaucratic and cncllrs, get traction and
    block delivery
Social drama of attacks on formal bureaucratic admin, seen as good in itself because
    of poor perceived delivery
Leaders showing power, therefore getting coopted into high-quality political jobs
Without visible improvemt in delivery, instead major loss of development funds and
    long-term paralysis of housing provision
Claims that this cycle repeats, to produce lot of local cncllrs themsfs
Again, question of water temperature – anger is expressed with passive acquiesence of
    large share of c/, probably doesn't objx help

IMPLICATIONS
C/ governance and incompatibility
ANC municipal government new pgms for municipal reprrz spend, turn toward poor,
    Mayor listening, city government committed to full formal housing for
    informal population
This cool community temperature?
Issues that create climate of disgust and anger which paralyzes housing don't mostly
    come out of housing, though a lot do
Most are personal safety and bad regular services, along with housing quality and
    housing shortages, plus creation of new faultline
Leads to larger issues around getting to terms with community governance
Cape Town and the other major South African metros are really far along toward
    getting bureaucratic admin to work
There isn't any real traditional or customary leadership allocating residential sites or
    housing in Cape Town, or hardly anywhere in South Africa

Instead there are local informal leaders drawing on rural principles of direct community-based admin of housing resources but also on demox aspirations — these are post-traditional, partly transformed and modernized leaderships. But as potential delivery systems they remain in flux and aren't effective in their own terms, they don't connect to or interact effectively with existing housing admin

This is natural, since they're trying to take over from existing bureaucratic housing and services administration, but it's doubtful if they can deliver much housing to constituents

The constituencies seem to wind up settling for sending a message to bureaucratic admin that they're not happy with results

And broadly speaking both political parties and city planners reject the idea of dealing with localist non-bureaucratic structures when they start to emerge — instead, they cut them off by pulling their leaders inside parties or similar

Elsewhere in Africa, there are major cities admins that haven't been able to get bureaucratic structures organized to deliver either residential sites or actl housing at all effectively — often much further from getting bureaucratic delivery to work than the big South African metros

Movement to look at how to get surviving traditional admin structures, which are often still strong in the urban sector and do deliver land, to line up with city bureaucratic structures — widespread interest, see UN Habitat cnf, also recent Wits seminar, else

In this country, dealing with urban housing, do we try to strictly enforce bureaucratic delivery or do we study ways to reach accommodation with new unstable but persistent communalist structures based on old assumptions? What do we do about the destabilizing delivery factors that don't fall under housing? And in the rural sector, where do we go?

SOURCES (not all the story has emerged, assmb from fragmentary and cntrdx versions from different actors)

SOCIAL ORIGINS OF CONFLICT, ACTORS (people not all the way x the urban transition, still mntn rural versions of how governance shd work at community level, have unmet expectations for personal contact and being known to admin people,
elex cnllrs still working in, placed uneasily both cen and marginal, often lack skills but not given powers, feel like held responsible for things they have no control over, can't fully control and deliver on housing, want to control land – circuit process of bringing in informal leaders who demonstrate their cred by paralyzing process, training them then hitting the next lot trying the same strategy, which works –
then there's the cops, the dvlprs and the consultants, who want momentum and no delays,
describe constant fight over attempts from ground to stop the process so as to get leverage and renegot)

STATE OF DELIVERY (poor – started marginal, gradually went in, bringing infrastructural services, went OK cple y ago, then went dnhill as mntnce problems piled up – also worsening personal safety)

DYNX OF CONFLICT (fragn of community on real and intro faultlines, delivery of housing cen and seen as poor, marginal position of elex cnllrs, leakage of resources at pt of contact and generally poor contact,
incompatibility of standard urban bureaucracy and personalized rural-origin governance systems that place each individual, community governance as kind of mode of admin or mode of politicization instead of mode of production, struggle to use delivery of key benefits to build polit positions, process of political cooptation and recruitment of cnllrs along this rte,
loss of subsidies as delivery process becomes football for individual advancement and conflicting cncs of delivery and governance)

OUTCOMES (apparent loss of R 30 m in subsidies, shooting conflict, entrenchment of split in community, question over arrest of dnhill slide in services thru municipal reprrz under ANC –
the conditions that open up space for this come when delivery process which revolves around housing stumbles or goes bkwd, bulging demand but little new delivery and existing delivery not mntnd, creating anger with bureaucratic city admin and urge to take over and do it better)

POLICIES? How often does ths stuff happen?
Have had lots of cases of attempts at c/ governance – tend to hit housing because it's the successor issue to rural focus on land for settlement, only more valuable and usually scarcer –

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pic we get is this conflict over housing is mediated by repeat social drama scenario of v't flareup, stoppage, political absorption, yes or no re-start with potential expensive delays   worst if work has started and subsidies dn tubes – sparked by conflicts along community faultlines over control of access to new and exsiting hsing --

this repeating sequence cyclically builds, expresses and temporarily deflates the conflict, but resolves none of the underlying disjunctures in delivery & governance and can cost unsustainable amounts of government housing funds -- once it happens, high probability it will repeat unless the underlying conditions are cleaned up, and these don't all dep on action by hsing department itself –

but if delivery gets on track and speeds up, or if antagonistic faction chased out, repeating cycle can be derailed? Crossroads seems to have had this kind of experience on start-stop basis, with ambitious leaders trying to line up the necessary conditions and consultants trying to continue delivery

how common is this seq? experienced consultants recognize description immediate, need to investigate –
these episodes are like a building hurricane, when the water is warm and the energy is there, the storm system forms and revolves faster and faster, wind speed builds till it can tear apart whole communities –
but these actual stoppage and cooptation episodes are probably jst the visible end, where the social energy that's been collecting around dsstsfx comes into the open, has no useful channel and also becomes destructive..
talking here around storm system that builds in the community, using the heat coming off those baking streets...

part of bigger issue around bringing traditional or customary governance and admin systems into urban tenure –
this country has only considered this at all in rural, debate over and long hist of using traditional leadership as indirect rule –
but recent Habitat cnf, Wits housing seminars, show how crit it is to consider this on a wider scale thru Africa and use the lens of African experience –
shows up how big a governance gap there is around hsing and land in ms major cities
and how little chance of filling it with formal process –

compared to ms African cities, Cape Town metro is far down the track toward adequate and responsive formal delivery, but across the continent few other cities can say that formal delivery of housing and services is working –

there may be a lesson? rather than trying to expunge c/ governance from the urban side, maybe even consider working with it? –
Fr work with customary /traditional urban alloc, but here we don't have that, got instead transformed and modernized urban alloc and control systems that sit on the bedrock of rural governance principles –
not dealing with traditional authorities in urban, but are dealing with communities that want the benefits of those systems --

in South Africa major metros are dead vs this. strongly want bureaucratic admin right down to ground. but still don't have it now in most places – if don't bring c/ governance into the bureaucratic system may still have to come to terms with it, or stay on the roller coaster ride indef

getting worse as more old townships reach simmering point with weak hsing delivery. weak infrastructure mntnce, high crime, poor policing and admin gap)

The present township of Crossroads in Cape Town was chosen as one of the eight area case studies for government's recent Ten Year Review both because of its history of resistance to apartheid, and because of its value as a case study in housing delivery. Through the 1970s and 80s the in-migrant squatter population of what was then an informal settlement resisted repeated attempts to clear the area and force its people back to the Eastern Cape. Shattered by political rivalries, the community has remained divided and turbulent. The case study examined the progress of municipal government's work in attempting to promote a normal and decent community life in the aftermath of struggle. Housing delivery has been the key development initiative, bringing infrastructural services with it.

Crossroads today is an old and poor formal township, with 61 percent of 20 randomly chosen households reporting no regular earned income at the time of the study. The area suffers high youth unemployment and street crime, and elected local government through the ward councillors appears to be struggling to hold control of the community. Since 2001, the area appears to be moving backward, with earlier successful delivery and gains from greater civil peace coming into danger.

Challenges have come since 2001 from emergent leaders who have developed a power base in the older rural-rooted assumptions of communal governance, in which authority over housing and other delivery is held inside the community rather than by the formal city bureaucracy. Violence over control of housing delivery projects has broken out between people in a newly established municipal ward, and the residents of the older ward from which it was split off. The forward progress of government-sponsored housing delivery was stopped by these conflicts.

The process of providing housing and physical infrastructure since 1994 has delivered about 2560 RDP housing units, in addition to about 1285 units before 1994. The approximate value of this housing stock completed since 1994 is about R 40 million. A total of 3989 units was planned for further housing phases after 1994, representing about R 70 million in subsidy funding altogether. However, the conflict over control of the 1691 housing units to be built in the last two planned phases has paralyzed the housing provision process and all associated infrastructural development indefinitely. Since shooting broke out only after contracts had been signed and the most recent housing phases had already started, some R 25 million appears to have been lost through subsidies paid out to contractors in the northern phase, and perhaps five million in the southern phase. It appears that most of the affected area remains under informal shack settlement, without services.

It was reported that the city administration may intend pulling the plug on this housing development since there is no source of further funding. The institutional incompatibility between communal and bureaucratic governance systems may also be creating potential for other funding leaks around the housing process, at critical points where the city administration interacts with the community in the delivery process. Generally, funds committed to development objectives may be vulnerable to being taken hostage to the conflicts that arise when unemployment comes together with contestation for scarce resources.

After an initial period of slow and difficult delivery due to community conflict, conditions in Crossroads improved during the late 90s as conflict abated, and new housing provision was able to move ahead. The area appeared to have developed successfully, and was accommodating its in-migrant population with housing, education and health services.

The extremely high levels of unemployment and particularly youth unemployment reported in the Crossroads area appear to be the underlying problem. It is important that social security delivery funding has been able to hold back destitution in cases of job loss, but cannot reestablish income levels above poverty or create decent living standards. Local economic development initiatives are intended to fill this gap with alternative income sources, but LED is not yet effectively conceptualized and delivered. Particularly, there is little if any direct support to informal small business development in Crossroads.

Joblessness among the local youth is encouraging armed gangs to commit 'shakedown' street robberies of community schoolchildren and women. While these street robberies are not usually violent, violent crime has also risen very sharply in the area, along with property crimes suggestive of social anger. The community reaction is anger and despair with government's seeming inability to interrupt this cycle.

Both the two sets of emergent leaders involved in the housing projects stoppage are reported to have been able to use their leverage in putting municipal development into abeyance so to be coopted into formal politics themselves, and obtain 'untouchable' positions with the DA and ANC respectively. The apparent price of their successful cooptation has been loss of R 30 million in government housing subsidies.

This slide toward societal breakdown seems to have encouraged quasi-political leaders to come forward to challenge the councillors and city administration for control over development delivery. , paid out by terms of contract in the two aborted housing delivery projects.

It appears that in old townships like Crossroads, where the development process itself is often the central arena for engagement and trade-offs between citizens and government, that government development spending can sometimes become one of the victims of power struggles.
If policing is weak in protecting the fragile civil order, internal divisions easily descend into open criminality, opening the way for individuals claiming to represent the community's interest to try to wrest control of development allocation from the city so as to informalize it. In such circumstances, it may become a challenge to government how the developmental state and its municipal proxies can reliably protect government development spending.