



parents and children alike. Poverty alleviation policies are therefore not only fundamental to material needs but there is a clear demand for the state to address family poverty as the basis of preserving dignity.

Key recommendations

Based on the analysis emanating from the research on family cohesion, we propose the following:

- **Child poverty:** The socially perceived necessities method, which includes determining fundamental basic needs such as food, hygiene, health care, education and clothing, should be applied in determining the extent and nature of child poverty, vulnerable groups and spatial concentrations of deprivation.
- **Poverty and material inequalities:** Government intervention should be implemented that respects and protects the dignity of citizens, which is an important indication that the state is seen as a legitimate authority in providing social protection that ensures that the needs of families are adequately met and quality life is promoted.

- **Diverse family forms:** Public support is required for the promotion of non-kin adoption alongside kinship care, which could represent a critical opening the government should build upon to encourage the adoption of children in need. Interventions should be aimed at shifting people's negative views related to same-sex family rights and at promoting the benefits of family diversity.
- **Policy support for fathers:** Policies and programmes should be pursued to promote positive male and fatherhood roles. Mechanisms and policies such as paternity and parental leave need to be put in place to ensure a greater balance between work and family responsibilities and gender equality in parenting.
- **Employment-family policies:** Coherent employment policies should strive to promote gender equity in the labour market and family policies need to recognise the significance of the male's involvement in households, for example, policy provisions for men's parental leave to promote caring by

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both parents. Likewise, although family diversity is recognised in policies, the main focus remains on 'family preservation' in line with conventional gender roles.

- **Childrearing:** Caregivers of children need to be provided with information, knowledge and skills that will enable them to accomplish positive child outcomes without delaying their own career and economic advancement. The availability of state-subsidised services such as affordable child day-care and after-school care would go a long way towards complementing parental responsibilities in terms of children's wellbeing, protection and development. Evidence-based, positive parenting programmes could also be implemented and made available to parents nationally.

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SPECULATIVE MEGA-PROJECTS: Impacts of proposed port expansions in Durban

The age of mega-projects is upon us, with the proposed expansion of the Durban harbour just one example. *Aubrey Mpungose* reviews the literature on similar projects and warns that the port project might result in permanent and irreversible negative social, economic and environmental consequences for the community of South Durban.

Cities around the world are increasingly undertaking large urban development projects (mega-projects) as a way to market and brand their cities as investment, tourism, production and consumption spaces. We are confronted on all sides with large-scale projects such as highways, railways, dams, airports, shopping malls, waterfront projects and sports stadia. This is true also of South Africa with our 2010 FIFA World Cup stadia building frenzy, Gautrain, and the proposed Airtropolis in King Shaka and OR Tambo international airports.

This study focuses on some key findings derived from a literature review of global experiences of mega-projects, particularly as they may provide valuable lessons for the rollout of the port expansion project in the eThekweni Municipality.

Scepticism about the benefits of mega-projects

Recent literature in urban studies contends that this increasing trend of cities adopting the mega-project concept is a consequence of globalisation, neoliberalism, and the shift from industrial to post-industrial economies. This is a response to the increasing demand for cities to be internationally competitive and thereby boost tourism and attract investments.

Mega-projects have not been immune to criticism. An emerging body of research examining the social, economic, environmental and spatial outcomes of mega-projects around the globe suggests that large development and investment projects are characterised by:

- Minimal commitment to socially just policies with the primary orientation towards profitability and competitiveness;
- Delivery by quasi-governmental organisations; and
- Operating within introverted business-oriented modes of governance that lack democratic accountability and exclude public participation.

A rapid scan of available literature suggests that a significantly large number of mega-projects overestimate their benefits and undermine the socio-economic and environmental costs and risks.

In a study of 258 transportation mega-projects in 20 countries across five continents, Bent Flyvbjerg from Oxford



Durban expansion.
Credit: John Hone – Africa Media Online.

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University estimated that nine out of ten projects overran their costs. He noted that promoters and planners of most mega-projects appeared to provide inaccurate information about cost-benefit analysis and forecasting.

Studies also suggest that speculative mega-projects result in significant and often unintended socio-spatial, economic and environmental consequences, such as displacement.

It is argued that the ‘economic and physical scale of today’s mega-projects is such that the whole nation may be impacted in both the medium and long term by the success or failure of just one project’. In Bangalore, for example, mega-projects resulted in displacements of rural farmers and many poor urban dwellers who were pushed out of the city.

This has policy implications, says Flyvbjerg, as lawmakers, investors and the public cannot trust information about costs, benefits, and risks of large infrastructure projects produced by promoters and planners of such projects.

Port expansion activity of the Durban harbour

The port of Durban is the major gateway for exports and imports in southern Africa and contributes significantly to the country’s GDP. Recently the port has faced issues of inefficiencies and traffic congestions which have made it unable to cope with the rising demands placed on its services.

It is against this background that the Transnet Port Authority has proposed the expansion of the port. The proposed development includes transforming the Clairwood racecourse into the Logistics Park and the development of the new dig-out port. The development is all located in the South Durban Basin of eThekweni Municipality, which has one of the highest concentrations of industries and business in the city.

Protests and objections to the development

The proposed port expansions have not been immune to criticism. The KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs initially rejected the environmental impact assessment (EIA), arguing that the Clairwood racecourse is the last major wetland area south of the city and serves as a major habitat for birds, amphibians and other fauna and flora. The EIA was rejected based on concerns that developers and consultants involved in the EIA had given low scores to the environmental value attached to the wetlands.

At a community level there have been several protests concerning the exclusion by Transnet of community stakeholders from the decision-making process. A key concern expressed by communities is the impact of this expansion on an already serious problem of traffic congestion. They argue that more trucks, (over and above the existing heavy motor vehicle traffic in the area) will enter the area, adding to the congestion.

A key issue arising from the literature review was that of potential displacement of the existing social and economic activities as a result of mega-projects. Transnet and other developers have not clearly outlined in any publicly available documentation the scale and extent of displacement that could result from the proposed expansion.

Graham Muller Associates, who were commissioned to undertake an EIA on behalf of eThekweni Municipality, found that ‘a significant area will be displaced, compensation may require remaining areas of coastal grassland such as the racecourse in addition to significant areas outside the area. The loss of habitat associated with port development may not be replaceable in the location. It may be necessary to conserve other areas within the Municipal Area’.

Another problematic issue is [and will result in] the displacement of

16 small-scale farmers currently operating out of the former Durban International Airport site, producing affordable vegetables for neighbouring communities.

Interestingly, members of the fishing community have noted with concern the impact of the expansion on their accessibility to ‘fishing spots’ and the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, a civic advocacy coalition, which has been championing environmental rights in the area for two decades, has stressed that the South Durban basin is one of the most polluted areas in South Africa, and posited the view that the proposed port expansions will serve only to exacerbate the problem.

Consequences

As shown in other international case studies on mega-projects, a preliminary scan of the literature indicates that proposed port expansions in Durban may follow what is known as ‘mega-project syndrome’. Several commentators have argued that the plans to build a new port may result in permanent and irreversible negative social, economic and environmental consequences for the community of South Durban.

It is noted that this paper has not explored the potential economic and other benefits of the expansion and whether the negative effects might be mitigated through careful planning

The author intends to pursue these questions in greater depth through both primary and secondary data collection and analysis. As Durban has set itself out to brand itself as the ‘most caring and liveable city’, mega-projects can both contribute to and undermine this vision. The study will seek to further explore the perceptions and attitudes of the local community towards the transformation of the Clairwood racecourse and the dig-out port.

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