

Opening up spaces for the poor in urban form: trends, challenges and their implications for access to urban land.

Response by Alison Todes, Urban Rural and Economic Development, HSRC.

Key Points

- Rapid growth of gated communities and rise of privatised spaces
- Land markets are sharply divided – exacerbated by gated communities
- Property markets differentiated between gated communities and areas outside
- Gated communities fragment the city physically and institutionally
- Thinking about access to land by the urban poor needs to include public space
- Vision of better planning and management – ideas still not implemented.

Points for debate/exploration

- Don't lose importance of good public space, access to facilities and rights to the city in focus on urban land for the poor
- Need to pick up on what mechanisms could be used to make well located land accessible to the urban poor
- Are authors arguing that gated communities shouldn't be allowed/modified?
- How is access to land by poor affected by gated communities?
- Is one response to see these areas as sources of employment/part of polycentric city, and try to plan for low income housing in/around them? Demanding 20% low income housing? Mixing on the edges?

Points for debate/exploration

- Need to reintroduce old system of endowments?
- Do these developments open up space for the urban poor elsewhere?
- Who lives in gated communities?
 - What class/race/income range?
 - How much is it also the bottom of the formal market?
 - Should one be looking at those just above poverty as well?
 - and at land/housing/property markets generally?

Queries

- Does argument on fragmenting local government really apply?
- Does reduced cross subsidisation argument really apply with Property Rates Act?
- Does 'safe' urban design really work, and is it a real alternative?
- How to move from here to the alternative – and how does this relate to action on urban land markets?