

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

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Karina Landman and Nana Ntombela
CSIR Built Environment



Content of the presentation

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- **Conclusions and way forward**

Introduction

- **Urban planning – about constructing urban spaces to create synergy among:**
 - long term economic needs of people,
 - requirements of housing and basic infrastructure and
 - preservation of natural environment
- **In SA: new patterns of segregation raises concern about impact on poor and their access to land**

Main argument

- **Aim of paper: to assess how nature and urban form influences poor's ability to achieve more sustainable livelihoods, greater sense of place and improved quality of life**
- **Core argument: transformation of current urban form through gated communities does not integrate poor – more vulnerable**
- **Number of elements influence opportunities for poor – this paper only focusses on effects of “privatisation” of urban space/”land” on poor's access to land and opportunities**

Context – changes after 1994

- **Major urban transformation in SA post-apartheid**
 - Political
 - Socio-economic
 - Spatial
- **Efforts to enhance quality of life of poor through access to housing and land (subsidy programme)**
- **Challenge: demand exceeds supply and secondary market not functioning well**
- **Poverty even more entrenched**
- **Exacerbate by decline in formal employment opportunities and high levels of crime and violence**

Definitions: urban land & poor

- **Approach to “land”:** land & housing/shelter
- **Private and public land**
- **Also public land as public space**
- **Understanding of the “poor”:**
 - Few assets to opportunities
 - Low achievement (accessibility to livelihood assets)
 - Higher vulnerability
 - Limited political influence

Urban poor: access to land and housing

- **Close relationship between land and housing**
- **Location of poor in SA:**
 - **Some in inner cities – degraded buildings**
 - **Many on urban peripheries in areas with inadequate access to infrastructure, services, housing and/or well developed public spaces**
- **Access to land hampered by:**
 - **Availability (increased urbanisation)**
 - **Functioning of land markets**

Challenge

- **Key objectives of BNG – human settlements as asset to beneficiaries – contributing to their quality of life**
- **Contributing factors to asset value of land and housing:**
 - **Location (in proximity to opportunities)**
 - **Level of infrastructure and services**
 - **Nature of house**
- **Moser (2006): vulnerability of poor due to lack of access to asset building and context of vulnerability**

Emerging SA city: 4 elements

- **Spatial system:**

- organises population according to income groups based on separated neighbourhood cells

- **Urban system of governance:**

- perforated sovereignty and multiple points of influence - HOAs – micro-governance

- **System of service provision:**

- provides land, services transport and community facilities that often disadvantage poor and benefits those that have access to “privatised” space, services & facilities

- **Housing delivery system:**

- skewed between low income housing with no secondary market value and high-income with inflated property prices

Definitions: international debate

- **These four elements contribute to a segregated approach to urban planning, design and governance through privatisation of public space, services and governance**
- **Privatisation of public space**
 - **Major international debate**
 - **Especially on privately organised and secured housing developments or so-called gated communities**
 - **Privatisation of space, services and governance**
 - **Socio-spatial exclusion of the poor**

Gated communities

- **One of most obvious spatial manifestations thereof: gated communities**
- **Refer to physical areas that are fenced or walled off from surroundings**
- **Areas where access is controlled and common space inside privatised or use restricted**
- **Two types**
 - **Enclosed neighbourhoods**
 - **Security villages**



Enclosed neighbourhoods





Security villages: secure townhouse complexes



Large security estates

Impact and implications

- **Large demand and manifestation – increase significance of the impact of these developments**
- **Gated / ‘private’ neighbourhoods significant impact**
 - **Spatial, social and institutional implications**
- **Impact in SA could be greater due to:**
 - **Nature (closing large areas of public space)**
 - **Impact on spatial fragmentation and segregation in context of move to integration**
 - **Symbolic interpretation: link to past**

Why is spatial exclusion of the poor a problem?

- **Urban transformation through fortification and privatisation of space, services and governance – number of consequences for poor:**
 1. Restricted or prohibited access
 2. Access to property or land
 3. Institutional challenges
 4. Access to well-developed land/ places

Restricted / prohibited access

Physical capital

- Reduce access to physical capital
- Privatisation of public space and facilities/amenities inside
- Traffic congestion, travelling time increased, through-movement hampered, vulnerability of pedestrians / cyclists
- Major impact on daily use patterns
- Spatial fragmentation







Restricted / prohibited access

Social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alienation, mistrust, conflict• Adverse effect on society as whole• NIMBISM and escapist mentalities• Social exclusion and stigmatisation• Violation of human rights
Financial capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Influence potential access to financial capital

Access to property or land

- **Property prices:**
 - Increase on inside
 - Decrease on outside
 - Unfair advantage
- **Can reduce opportunities for cross-subsidisation**
 - Directly: if proponents start to demand tax rebates
 - Indirectly: private investment in common facilities and amenities restricted to inside gated communities

Institutional challenges

- **Privatised governance**
 - **Privatisation of services (partial)**
 - **Micro-governments – new institutional space**
 - **Emerging tensions between HOAs and local authorities**
- **Inefficient state intervention**
 - **Driver of privatisation (indirectly)**
 - **HOAs taking over number of local services – restrict access to these places**
 - **Also in poorer areas – lack of well-developed places**

Access to quality places

- **Relevance of public space in cities**
- **Public space:**
 - **“... space that allows all people to have access to it and the activities in it, which is controlled by a public agency and managed by public interest”
(Madanipour 1996)**
- **Thus urban development needs to address tensions inherent in transformation of urban public realm and contribute to emergence of urbanism which promotes integration and tolerance**

Conclusions

- **Nature and design of urban form impact on poor's access to well-developed public space and opportunities (physical, social and financial capital)**
- **Key dimensions of privatisation for access to land and opportunities – widening gaps between rich and poor:**
 - **Physical gap**
 - **Institutional gap**
 - **Market gap**

Conclusions (cont.)

- **Emerging spatial and institutional structure therefore not addressing imbalances of the past**
- **Gated communities contributes to spatial fragmentation and separation**
- **Negates aims of integration**
- **However, major dilemma**
- **Need for safety and security in short term**

Way forward

- **Despite challenges: cannot ignore issue**
- **Government should not adopt *laissez-fair* attitude, especially in areas of high demand and growth**
- **Need stronger state intervention:**
 - **Stronger guidance (regulatory frameworks/policies)**
 - **Enforcement of policies**
 - **Alternative interventions**

Way forward (cont.)

Key focus areas	Key actions	Key stakeholders
Safer design and cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• alternative responses to crime• broader crime prevention strategy• Urban renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 spheres of government• Local communities• Developers• SAPS
Inclusive design and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mixed developments• Externalisation of facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local councils• Architects, urban designers/planners
Integrated and efficient management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulation & land use control• Longer term consideration of impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local councils• HOAs & local communities

Integrative urbanism

- **Promotion of greater access to land / well-developed spaces for all urban residents**
- **Access to land and well-developed spaces – more right than privilege**
- **If it however means need current market approach to facilitate implementation, so be it.**
- **Greater state intervention in enabling markets to work for poor as well and ensure greater access to land**

Access to land: two core issues

- **Access to land (spatial dimension)**
 - **Private: land for housing development**
 - Infill developments to enhance opportunities
 - Address fears of NIMBY'ism & market paranoia
 - **Public: land for development of adequate public places (state-owned and managed)**
 - **Three components:**
 1. Accessible and open to use of all
 2. Landscape with appropriate furniture & vegetation
 3. Pleasant sensory experience
- **Access to land markets (institutional dimension)**
 - **E.g. through mixed housing developments**