

Spatial economic attributes in South African urban areas: Complexities of transforming cities towards a pro-poor

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Abstract

The layout of most African cities that are entrenched within the colonial spatial planning approaches have placed black people in townships, which are outside the city centre. This colonial spatial planning imprint has relegated many black people into informality and the inability of municipalities to implement integrated transport systems in urban areas. The incapacity to implement integrated transport systems made it difficult for the previously disadvantaged population to access the city. This type of planning approach has burdened the poor and affected their quality of life. The poor people continue to be unable to access different kinds of transport such as the integrated transport systems and effectively use such systems to access networks and connections for their livelihoods such as car guarding, informal trading and other sources of income. Therefore, many poor black people endure transport fees to access the livelihood activities in the cities. Therefore, the current spatial layout of cities constrains the ability of most black people to improve their lives. Complexity theory states cities are complex systems. Complexity theory demonstrates that planning for the cities is non-linear. This means that planning for a city might have unintended and pernicious consequences for many people. Therefore, an integrated transport system has the potential to reduce the burden and challenges towards accessing their livelihood activities in the cities. The establishment of a variety of road infrastructure can potentially lead to development corridors wherein local people place all sorts of businesses including SMME's closer to the road, thereby addressing their financial difficulties. The purpose of this paper is to examine how the current spatial planning in South African cities continue to be discriminatory and sustain the impoverished status of most poor black people.

Keywords: Spatial planning; Integrated Transport systems; SPLUMA; Complexity theory.

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