

Review

# Gated-communities and the privatization of public spaces in urban South Africa: Democratic social integration or exclusion?

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Emulation of the West's privatization of urban spaces, and securitization and policing, through city settlement planning has uniformly reinvented spatial social segregation in most democratizing developing countries. Reverence of the gated-community model in democratic urban settlement planning has paradoxical sustained social segregation. Understandably, democratization of South Africa entailed the application of urban settlement planning as a democratic instrument of social integration. This article argues that gated-community urban settlement planning creates physical enclosures that transfer public spaces to private ownership, thereby perpetuating apartheid social exclusion legacies. South Africa's modern urban settlement planning epitomizes gated-communities, security villages and enclosed neighbourhoods phenomena, which sustain spatial differentiation of lifestyle, prestige, socio-economic status and security. Given apartheid city legacies, securitization of urban settlement planning reflexively maintains social exclusions through a democratic strategy. The article posits that the adoption of the gated-community model in urban settlement planning in a democratic South Africa has privatized public spaces and created secluded settlements with fragmented delivery of public services such as security, policing, emergency services (fire trucks and ambulances) and a host of other municipal services (waste removal, water and electricity meter readings). In practice, this privatization creates controlled, restricted and prohibitive access to public spaces and amenities. The article concludes that the nuance application of gated-community principles in urban settlement planning perpetuates social exclusion through the same old market ethos and economics of space. To this extent, the spatially and socially fragmentary modern urban spatial planning is inappropriate for South Africa's former apartheid cities.

**Keywords:** Urban Settlement Planning; Privatized Public Spaces; Gated-community; Apartheid Social Exclusions; Public Services; South Africa

## INTRODUCTION

Urban settlement planning has historically been used for spatial-social engineering of cities (Haughton, 1997; Low, 2001; Landman, 2002; Lemanski, 2006; Borsdorf and

Hidalgo, 2008). However, urban planning process has, more often than not, encapsulated national political-economy dictates in order to draw cue from racial/ethnic

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divisions in the determination of compatibility of uses, functions, activities, location, accessibility, visibility and suitability (Haughton, 1997). In so doing, urban planning tends to mute the potential productivity of the city's social and economic overhead capital by creating spatial-social fragmentation. This observation has become increasingly pertinent in regard to urban planning determination on public spaces, including roads, streets, walkways, parks and so on. Evidence suggest that urban planning could create the potential for the city landscapes to ensure productive performance of the social and economic overhead capital for the improvement of the quality of living (Haughton, 1997; Arefi and Meyers, 2003; Maruani and Amit-Cohen, 2007; Donovan, 2008; Fraser, 2008; Beck, 2009; Van Melik et al., 2009; Jacob and Hellström, 2010; Mandeli, 2010; El-Husseiny and Kesseiba, 2012; Francis et al., 2012; Kaźmierczak, 2013). Whereas urban public spaces were first created to provide, among other things, recreation and services related to it as well as for conservation of natural land and its values (Maruani and Amit-Cohen, 2007; Francis *et al.*, 2012), contemporary orientation is to commodify, privatize and marketize these spaces to generate municipal revenue. The most fashionable strategy has been to assign urban public spaces to private interests who would embark on financial commercial activities thereupon. In recent times, Turkey experienced enduring public protests when planning determination was made to use the Tahiri Square for business functions.

The most common function for which public spaces have been transformed is for human settlement, in the form of gated-communities. In a democratic South Africa, contemporary urban settlement planning epitomizes the gated-community phenomenon, which includes security villages and enclosed neighbourhoods (Landman, 2002, 2004; Lemanski, 2006; Donovan, 2008; Fraser, 2008; Beck, 2009; Rogers and Sukolratanamete, 2009; Jacob and Hellström, 2010). This article seeks to determine, from a theoretical perspective, if the gated-community urban planning holds the potential for spatial-social de-segregation and integration for a democratic South Africa. The article argues that in South Africa, gated-community planning deploys urban public spaces to serve financial commercial interests of a few whilst excluding the majority of poor people whose interaction with the city environment tends to be perilously altered and limited through nuance restrictions of their access to some essential public services. It asserts that gated-community urban settlement planning creates physical enclosures that transfer public spaces to private control and ownership, thereby perpetuating apartheid social exclusion legacies within South Africa's towns and cities. The article is organized into six sections, including introduction and conclusion. The second section provides a conceptual discuss of the connections between urban settlement planning and public spaces through the prisms of two broad categories of the planning models in order to

determine the potential implications on the urban landscapes and form for each. The social exclusions legacies of the segregationist and apartheid South Africa are briefly reviewed in section three in order to demonstrate that spatial-social transformation of cities in this country would not be amenable to strategies that adopt unfettered economics and market ethos. Section four examines the values attached to urban public spaces as well as the implications of contemporary models of urban settlement planning and their underlying tenets on commodification, privatization and marketization of public goods. The section also attempts to highlight the significance of contexts to the assessment of the prospects of any planning model to produce the desired social integration outcomes. The gated-community planning model is discussed in section five to argue that it merely provides a nuance democratization of social fragmentation and exclusions for South Africa. The article concludes that South Africa's segregationist and apartheid contexts render gated-communities an inappropriate urban settlement planning model for social transformation and integration

### **Urban settlement planning and public spaces**

Urban settlement planning could equally be used as a source of spatial, social and economic integration or segregation (Haughton, 1997; Jabareen, 2006; Adhvaryu, 2010; Pacione, 2013). It accords the capabilities to shape transportation economics and behaviour within public spaces as well as to cause or reduce traffic congestion and pollution; additionally, it could precipitate social exclusions or inclusion, as well as loss of farmland, wetlands and open spaces (Jabareen, 2006), with deleterious socio-political consequences. To transform the apartheid urban social landscapes, the planning and designing of urban settlements and their built could be harnessed in order to promote spatial, social and economic integration (Pacione, 2013). Increasingly, South African cities have adopted the gated-community model that has exploited the security interests to privatize public spaces in ways that equally perpetuate apartheid social exclusions through a democratic logic. To situate the argument of this article theoretically, three models of urban settlement planning are discussed hereunder to determine the potential for privatization of public spaces. The traditional land-use, traditional spatial organization, and the modern urban settlement planning models are discussed hereunder to tease out their assumptions and principles in order to determine if they provide for social exclusion or integration.

### **Traditional land-use models**

The traditional focus on land-use in urban planning has

left a lacuna in the decisions about the forms of settlements to be developed. Such urban planning provided for the overall spatial and structural organization of towns and cities, based on different land-uses (Galster, 1977; McMillen, 1998; Adhvaryu, 2010), without determining the content and form of settlements. This overarching urban planning has been preferred across the world largely for the convenience of its vagueness in respect of the content and form of specific activities within the demarcated land-use zones, inclusive of settlements. Hence, the traditional land-use zoning was handy for apartheid urban settlement planning. The demarcation of urban spaces into various land-use zones became the key tenet of urban planning; hence, the discourse revolved around four land-use models of isolated state, industrial location, central place, and urban bid-rent model (Whitehand, 1972; Galster, 1977; Xie and Costa, 1993; Graham and Healey, 1999; Adhvaryu, 2010).

On the facades, it could appear that the land-use orientation in urban planning is devoid of capabilities for social exclusions, because it provides for linkages between spaces and economic activities, especially in shaping production and transportation costs to the market for agricultural land use (Xie and Costa, 1993; Graham and Healey, 1999; Adhvaryu, 2010). Rather than the type of activity, the distance discrimination should not necessarily imply social exclusions (Galster, 1977). Instead, the traditional land-use model provides for segregation of similar activities in terms of their perceived hierarchy or rating by class. This aspect, therefore, allows for social exclusion without legislating for it. That is, demarcation of settlement spaces could be differentiated in accordance with socio-economic status and class without formal discriminatory legislation. The practical manifestations of such planning could produce differentiated high and middle class residential spaces as well as shanty towns, or informal settlements in the case of South Africa. Indeed, the latter country's urbanity is conspicuous by its separation of affluent and middle income suburbs as well as the informal settlements where the conditions of living are squalid. However, the land-use focus in urban planning does not privatize public spaces through boom gates, walls or electric fences. Instead, it lends itself to the prevailing societal inequalities and, therefore, wanting in the capabilities to use urban planning for social transformation through settlement development on public space.

The determination to allocate specific public spaces for particular activities such as agriculture, industry and settlement (Whitehand, 1972; Galster, 1977; Haughton, 1997; Fernández and Ruiz, 2009; Watson, 2009; Adhvaryu, 2010; Martínez-Galarraga, 2012; Escavy and Herrero, 2013), are discussed hereunder in order to demonstrate the significance of the bi-rent approach. The competition for particular urban spaces among different activities ultimately reflects the variable economic muscles, with the result that settlement differentiation

sustains social exclusions in accordance with prevailing socio-economic disparities. The traditional urban planning has emphasized the economics of land-use above social redress and integration. The emphasis on the economics of the geographic space (Hoyt, 1964; Whitehand, 1972; Watson, 2009; Adhvaryu, 2010; Tabuchi and Thisse, 2011) has always lacked the capabilities to enforce social integration.

Urban bid-rent model provides for the demarcation of urban public spaces through comparative valorization of agricultural, residential and industrial functions (Galster, 1977; Whitehand, 1972; McMillen, 1998; Brown, 2005; Muto, 2006; Adhvaryu, 2010). However, this approach relies on market ethos, with the result that it lacks the necessary capabilities to be transformative of deeply unequal societies such as that of South Africa. The bid-price curve symbolizes a set of land prices that the specific use could pay at various distances; and, land uses are discriminated against one type to the other through price (Galster, 1977; Whitehand, 1972; Muto, 2006). Reliance on land price presupposes inherent discriminatory propensities that are locked into societal inequalities. To this extent, the ability to pay for consumption is the key determinant of allocation of public spaces in urban areas. This marketization of land-use has provided for discriminatory urban settlement planning. The traditional spatial organization models have, to a large extent, perpetuated reliance on price and marketization ethos to determine the overall structure of urban spaces (Hoyt, 1964; Neil and Paul, 2001; Adhvaryu, 2010; Tian et al., 2010; Bevan and Wilson, 2013). These models include the concentric, sector and multiple-nuclei, which argue for different forms of the overall development of the spatial and social structure of the city (Hoyt, 1964; Whyne-Hammond, 1993; Neil and Paul, 2001; Jabareen, 2006; Tian et al., 2010; Bevan and Wilson, 2013). These models too, do not accord the capabilities necessary for the transformation of an apartheid city structure, especially in respect of settlement desegregation. Rather than make for capabilities for the transformation of the urban structure, these models seek to explain the occurrence of particular spatial spread and use of urban space. Whilst uncovering the causes of particular structures and patterns, they do not recommend measures for redress of the spatial manifestation of segregated settlement planning. Instead, they equally capture the utility of the economics of geography in the conventional urban spatial planning. That is, based on land-use and bid-rent logic, urban spaces assume particular forms and patterns which themselves have become matters of debate by the conventional spatial organization models in the hope of drawing insights into the urban planning.

Inevitably, types of land-uses, economic benefits and agglomerative tendencies have remained central to the determination of urban planning; and, activities such as airports, industrial or shopping complexes, waterfronts, railway stations and university campuses, amongst

others, continuously refresh the price and economic discriminatory across the urban space by providing nuclei and landmarks. The common denominator of these landmarks is in their shaping and reshaping of land costs, marketability and profitability of the geographic location and economic of space. As a result, urban planning has allowed for a virtual polycentric, rather than monocentric, cities or towns (Hoyt, 1964; Whitehand, 1972; Adhvaryu, 2010). Fundamentally, the spatial structure of towns and cities is a function of the economics of space determined through affordability and profitability, which are the primary tenets of private market ethos. That is, consideration of the principles of these conventional models in urban spatial planning is a double-edged instrument that is equally usable for social exclusions more than integration.

### Modern urban spatial planning models

The modern planning of urban landscapes has apparently perpetuated the capabilities for segregation based on the economics of space and market ethos. Of the five models of urban spatial planning, which are neo-traditional development, urban containment, compact city, eco-city, and gated-community, the latter is explicit in its reassertion of the market ethos for continued social exclusions. The modern urban spatial planning has hoped to simultaneously encapsulate principles of compactness, sustainable transport density, mixed land use, diversity and greening (Haughton, 1997; Jabareen, 2006; Habibi and Asadi, 2011; Pacione, 2013). However, the overriding factor has remained the economics of space and the market ethos. Attempts to reduce urban sprawls and decay through neo-traditional urbanism development focused on design-based strategies, renewal and construction of socially connected and physical appealing urban neighbourhoods within traditional towns and cities (Bohl, 2000; Holden, 2004; Jabareen, 2006), have remained pipe dreams. The hope of establishing spatially integrated neighbourhoods and communities (Haughton, 1997; Bohl, 2000; Holden, 2004) was in vain, largely because such urban compactness entails spatial planning that is not dictated to by unfettered market logic and mechanisms. Indeed, the underlying principles for the new urbanism approach are mixed housing types which are meant to accommodate various income groups and different structures, as well as densification which encourages social cohesion, and the reduction of auto-mobility to support safe walkable neighbourhoods and to encourage the use of public transport (Haughton, 1997; Erickson and Lloyd-Jones, 1997; Bohl, 2000; Holden, 2004; Jabareen, 2006). These qualities of new urbanism approach do hold a realistic potential for social redress and spatial desegregation; however, the vogue in the modern urban spatial planning has been to emphasize geographic economic efficacies above engineering social

cohesion and integration. To this extent, the new urbanism approach has remained less realistic and scarcely practicable.

According to Jabareen (2006), mixed housing types and land uses are not a new phenomenon in urban spatial planning; however, the reverence for land-use zoning has been the major impediment that restricted the diversification of urban form and structure. Hence, the neo-traditional development model had hoped to redress some of the challenges associated with conventional land-use zoning by building pedestrian-orientated and high densities neighbourhoods that promote mixed land uses. But Beatley (2000) and Njoh (2013) argue that, in practice, the neo-traditional development model exploits space and the built environment to perpetuate social segregation through low density uses that hardly support mixed land-uses and integrated public transportation, whilst simultaneously encouraging urban sprawl.

The urban containment model emerged as a strategy to deal with the high costs of urban sprawl as a result of services and infrastructure development needed in the affected areas (Haughton, 1997; Jabareen, 2006; Huang, Lu Sellers, 2007; Habibi and Asadi, 2011). The measures and policies meant to enforce spatial sprawl constraints and undesirable urban growth (Holden, 2004; Huang et al., 2007; Jabareen, 2006) merely preserved natural land for farming and resources extraction purposes as the economic values of these activities could not be exposed to the fierce competition with urban development functions (Whitehand, 1972; Gordon and Richardson, 1997; Jabareen, 2006). To this extent, the predominant models of urban public spaces planning too do not provide tenets for social cohesion and integration. The cost-effective construction of infrastructure, reinvestment in existing structures, and the encouragement of high density developments that cater for mixed land-uses, all of which could ensure effective and efficient use of urban land (Gordon and Richardson, 1997; CSIR, 2002; Holden, 2004; Jabareen, 2006), have however remained elusive. Urban containment policies include the creation of urban growth boundaries, controlled pattern and density of development and travels, as well as revitalization of inner urban regions, preservation of greenbelts and agricultural lands, restriction of new residential permits issued, and tax incentives, amongst others (Hoyt, 1964; Haughton, 1997; Jabareen, 2006; Holden, 2004; Habibi and Asadi, 2011) which have encouraged social integration. With the renewal, the ethos of coverage of cost for consumption has remained unaltered.

Concerns with the sustainability of spatially and socially fragmented cities motivated of the adoption of the compact city model principles (Haughton, 1997). But modern urban spatial planning and design (Gordon and Richardson, 1997; Stead and Marshall, 2001; Holden, 2004; Jabareen, 2006) have remained fragmentary and segregated. Spatial compactness entails mixed land-uses, which could equally reduce fuel consumption and

travelling costs as different facilities for residential, work and leisure are grouped together. Also, it could potentially encourage the reuse of inner urban land while natural and agricultural land is conserved (Haughton, 1997; Stead and Marshall, 2001; CSIR, 2002; Jabareen, 2006), without negatively affecting the quality of life of urban residents that may arise due to high population density. Indeed, the compact city model prescribes for density of the built environment and the intensification of activities through effective and efficient land planning, mixed land-uses and efficient transport systems (Gordon and Richardson, 1997; Stead and Marshall, 2001; Holden, 2004).

Socially, compactness and mixed land-uses promote diversity, social cohesion and cultural development with the potential for economic viability in the provision of infrastructure and services (CSIR, 2002; Jabareen, 2006). Hence, the compactness principle is criticised for promoting fuel-efficient urban forms for the management of transportation costs and air pollution rather than engineering social cohesion and integration (Gordon and Richardson, 1997; Holden, 2004; Wheeler, 2002). In practice, though, modern urban spatial planning has adopted a reflexive approach wherein revisions incorporate the prevalent criticism in order to retain the same socially fragmented city spaces on the basis of the market ethos and economics of geography. Thus, the emergence of the eco-city principle has overtly focused on the management of environmental, social and institutional policies in order to promote sustainable development and conserve nature (Haughton, 1997; Holden, 2004; Alberti, 2005; Jabareen, 2006; Huang et al., 2007). The ecological agenda and environmental management through a set of institutional and policy frameworks which focus on passive solar and energy designs; and, concepts of greening (Holden, 2004; Jabareen, 2006) have evidently circumvented the requirements for social cohesion and integration. Notwithstanding the stated desire for sustainability, the heavy emphasis on ecology and environment has allowed for persistence of socially fragmented urban spatial planning.

The undue emphasis on the physical shape of towns and cities in modern urban spatial planning has meant that the organization and management of the urban society and the natural environment (Haughton, 1997; Holden, 2004; Alberti, 2005; Jabareen, 2006) have been relegated to the backseat. Beyond definition of the physical urban forms and features, the eco-city principle raised the notion of the natural environment for communities as one of the fundamentals of the urban spatial planning (Talen and Ellis, 2002). The eco-city model, therefore, has been associated with the call for emphasis on the social, economic and cultural well-being within the natural environment in urban areas, rather than the built environment. However, this principle has been scarcely embraced in urban spatial planning because of the challenges associated with practicability thereof.

The gated-community model is overtly socially fragmentary and easily practicable; and, it is now dominating the securitization and marketization discourse about urban public spaces through nuance emphasis on urban settlement planning. The fashionable gated-community principle emerged originally as a special form of urban spatial planning to differentiate amongst communities in terms of lifestyle, prestige and security zones (Low, 2001; Landman, 2002, 2004; Leisch, 2002; Bénit-Gbaffou, 2008; Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2008; Tanulku, 2012; Pacione, 2013). The vogue of urban neighbourhoods responding to crime and the fear thereof through the gated-community settlements, including security villages and neighbourhood enclosures (Low, 2001; Landman, 2002, 2004; Leisch, 2002; Bénit-Gbaffou, 2008; Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2008; Tanulku, 2012; Pacione, 2013), has taken hold of the modern process of urban settlement planning. Given that such security villages are defined as “walled private developments where the entire area is developed by a private developer” (Landman, 2002, pp.5), then it is tenable to argue that the modern process of urban settlement planning is goaded to privatization interests. Public amenities within these forms of settlements are rendered private; and, their maintenance and management is the responsibility of a private body which serves as a middle-person for the state (Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2008; Landman, 2004).

Enclosed neighbourhoods involve suburbs that are walled-off with a limited number of entrances or exits points (Landman, 2004; Rogers and Sukolratanamete, 2009), in the name of security and fear of crime. Hence, the gated-community model is commonly known for its securitization and policing of crime with designated parameters such as walls and fences as well as controlled entrance and exit points for the management of movement (Low, 2001; Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002; Leisch, 2002; Lemanski, 2006; Bénit-Gbaffou, 2008; Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2008; Tanulku, 2012; Pacione, 2013). The stated purpose of the modern urban settlement planning models which is to curb urban sprawl, avoid decay and ensure sustainability through the development of towns and cities (Nechyba and Walsh, 2004; Jabareen, 2006; Vigdor, 2010; Habibi and Asadi, 2011; Bevan and Wilson, 2013) is doomed to failure. Guided through this securitization and policing of crime principle, modern urban settlement planning is less concerned about urban sprawl because most of the security villages are located at the periphery of towns and cities, encouraging further outward horizontal growth. Importantly, this principle promotes privatization of public spaces with scant consideration of the logic of preservation of the natural and agricultural lands.

The hypocrisy of the modern process of urban spatial planning is vividly apparent in the general adoption and acceptance of this principle amidst loud noises of social cohesion, integration, environmental protection and resources conservation. Evidently, the gated-community

model undermines the need for social and spatial integration of cities. The predominant urban spatial planning is captivated by this securitization and crime policing principle, together with the privatization and profitability logic, which believes the traditional and neo-traditional models' emphasis on competitiveness, economics of space, compactness and sustainability of urban development. The present trend in the urban spatial planning will scarcely redress South Africa's apartheid city settlement landscapes. It provides for social fragmentation in a deeply racially unequal society. The results of the fashionable gated-communities approach will almost always be fragmentary urban settlement planning and untransformed urban social landscape for cities in South Africa due to the historic racially-inspired disparities.

### **Social exclusion legacies of segregationist and apartheid urban settlement planning**

The framing and structuring of the urban spatial landscapes with race as a decisive factor in South Africa is widely codified (Davies, 1981; Simon, 1984; Massey et al., 1987; Christopher, 1989, 1990, 1995, 1997, 2004; Bickford-Smith, 1995; Freund, 2001; Landman, 2002; Charles, 2003; Donaldson and Kotze, 2006; Lemanski, 2006); and, this article does not seek to be revisionist or present a historic design. However, a brief description is necessary to expose the key tenets of the apartheid spatial fix, which is complex and evidently intractable. Through the Group Areas Act (Act No. 41 of 1950), urban dwellers were segregated according to the colour of skin and language (RSA, 2001), thereby entrenching racial and ethnic zoning within South Africa's towns and cities. The Group Areas Act further ensured firm control of Black and Coloured populations by prescribing places of residences, movements and employment, among others (Massey et al., 1987; Christopher, 1989; Bickford-Smith, 1995). Simultaneously, this Act provided for exclusive social, economic and political favour for the White population through allocation of land (Massey et al., 1987; Christopher, 1997; Landman, 2002; Charles, 2003).

The Act supported fragmentary urban settlement planning by, among other things, shaping residential areas along racial and/or ethnic divides, thereby excluding large sections of the population from the economic, social and environmental benefits arising out of the conditions of urbanity (Massey et al., 1987; RSA, 2001). That form of urban settlement planning accentuated and sustained social inequalities through land-use designs (Christopher, 1997; Charles, 2003). In this way, Soweto, Tembisa and Soshanguve, among other settlements, found their rooting as townships for Blacks who would not be accommodated in white suburbs. This racially-inspired urban spatial fix was intricately connected and frozen into the socio-economic conditions of the different sections of the population over many years of segregation and apartheid

administrations. For this reason, the gated-community planning approach, which relies solely on the marketization logic, cannot redress South Africa's historic racially-inspired urban spatial fix.

In accordance with the Group Areas Act, urban lands were regulated through zoning racially/ethnically-sensitive mechanisms that were incorporated into the general town planning schemes (Mabin, 1992; Christopher, 1997). In the spirit of such town planning schemes, municipalities executed racial/ethnic zoning with buffers between white and non-white groups (Mabin, 1992; Bickford-Smith, 1995; Freund, 2001; Landman, 2002), in order to ensure segregation and exclusions along racial, ethnic, social, economic and political divides. To sustain such urban segregation, urban peripheries were exclusively zoned and reserved for black ethnic groups (Christopher, 1995, 1997; Charles, 2003). For example, Soshanguve near Pretoria was reserved exclusively to house the Sotho, Shangaan and Venda speaking people at a distance of about 30km from the city centre. Around Polokwane City, Seshego and Lebowakgomo Townships, which are respectively about 15km and 60km away from the city centre, were reserved for the Sotho speaking population.

This form of settlement planning guaranteed the exclusion of black ethnic groups from access of urban amenities, infrastructure and services (Massey et al., 1987; Christopher, 1989; Freund, 2001; Lemanski, 2006). Contrary to townships on the urban periphery, urban centres and suburbs were zoned and designed to accommodate the needs of the white population. This exclusive racially/ethnically-inspired urban land zoning involved expropriation of land property and alienation of Blacks and Coloureds from their lands (Christopher, 1989, 1997; Landman, 2002; Charles, 2003; Lemanski, 2006), thereby simultaneously deepening deprivation of these groups. Inevitably, apartheid urban settlement planning disrupted social cohesion and sense of shared common nationality amongst the different population groups in and around South African cities (Bickford-Smith, 1995; Christopher, 1995, 1997; Lemanski, 2006). The resultant deleterious spatial effects of this racially/ethnically-inspired urban settlement planning have persisted enduringly, rendering the democratic urban settlement planning inherently paradoxical and complex.

Formerly black townships have continued to be a fusion of urbanity and rurality (Lemon and Clifford, 2005; Donaldson and Kotze, 2006). As a consequence, this spatial organization of urban settlement bore significant long-term costs for township dwellers through, among other factors, incessant commuting and affirmation of deleterious inequalities in access to economic and social overhead capital of the cities (Christopher, 1990, 2004). The same segregationist and apartheid urban settlement planning logic has persisted through a nuance approach that relies on gated-community tenets. This article argues, therefore, that privatization of public spaces in a democratic South Africa's modern urban settlement planning

does not hold capabilities necessary and/or sufficient for the transformation of the apartheid social exclusion.

### **Modern urban settlement planning: Privatization and marketization of public spaces**

Public spaces in urban areas do not necessarily encapsulate a sense of belonging or of being owned by the citizenry; instead, they appear to reflect the socio-economic status of the community (Arefi and Meyers, 2003; Maruani and Amit-Cohen, 2007; Donovan, 2008; Fraser, 2008; Beck, 2009; Van Melik et al., 2009; Jacob and Hellström, 2010; Mandeli, 2010; El-Husseiny and Kesseiba, 2012; Francis et al., 2012; Kaźmierczak, 2013). Whereas public by definition, these spaces represent a face of individualism through cost recovery for consumption of the aesthetic values and amenities associated with urbanity. The public spaces that are not subjected to the marketization logic are also allowed to decay through heavy congestion, crowding and infested with dirt, litter and crime. In a democratic South Africa, such non-marketized public spaces have continued to be preserves for black populations. The promotion of individualism and fragmentation rather than social cohesion, collectivism in economic development, shared safety and security, full democratic participation in community affairs and environmental values (Carr et al., 1992; Lemanski, 2006; Beck, 2009; Mandeli, 2010; Francis *et al.*, 2012) has persisted in a democratic South Africa. According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), high profile public spaces are used in ways that do not support a sense of community or feeling of belonging or shared faith in collectivism (cited in Francis *et al.*, 2012). Such public spaces do not promote social cohesion through regular encounter and interaction among different population groups, thereby simultaneously detracting from the economic success and environmental well-being of urbanity.

According to Francis et al., (2012, p.402) public spaces are “meeting or gathering places outside the home and workplace that are generally accessible by members of the public, and which foster resident interaction and opportunities for contact and proximity”. These spaces include parks, plazas, sidewalks, community centres, schoolyards, open and green spaces, amongst others. That is, freedom of access and accessibility of public spaces to all groups of the population as well as the freedom of action and the temporal nature of the citizenry’s claim and ownership of the spaces (Carr et al., 1992) are the fundamental tenets of publicness. These tenets render public spaces the qualities that define their character as “generic destinations for variety of places that host regular, voluntary, informal and happy anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work” (Oldenburg (1989, p.16). Contestations of public spaces range from those over roads, sidewalks and parks, which are prevalent in most cities in

developing countries. Informal traders, taxis, homeless people and job seekers are, among others, the most visible participants in the contestations of these public spaces. Often, walkways are blocked and streets are taken over by hawkers, causing traffic congestion. These public space contestations are exacerbated by the limitations created through privatization and marketization of dedicated residential infrastructure and services for securitized urban communities. Development of gated-communities, for example, imposes limitations on public access and accessibility of streets, walkways and such other public spaces (Lemanski, 2006; Donovan, 2008; Fraser, 2008; Beck, 2009; Jacob and Hellström, 2010). Modern urban settlement planning, which is vested with gated-communities designs of security villages and neighbourhood enclosures, privatizes most of the urban public spaces. In this way, public spaces are virtually withdrawn from communities’ access and their contributions to economic, social and environmental value is compromised. Evidence suggests that access to public spaces involves enhancement of quality of life (Donovan, 2008; Fraser, 2008; Beck, 2009). Their privatization and marketization, therefore, withhold this potential from other population groups which are prevented from exploiting their quality of life enhancing value under the guise of securitization of urban spaces (Fraser, 2008).

Generally, modern urban settlement planning has seen public spaces being converted into private gated-communities, golf-courses, parks, clinics and schools (El-Husseiny & Kesseiba, 2012). The rationale for such privatization of public spaces is often framed around the notion of de-densifying the city centre as a mechanism for the management of traffic congestion and for curbing pollution. Whereas these private developments may play a role in the de-densification of the city centre, their newly-found controlled access fosters physical, economic and social exclusions through urban spatial planning. Simultaneously, the non-privatized and non-marketized public spaces are poorly maintained and are left to deteriorate into dilapidated crime-fested environments (El-Husseiny and Kesseiba, 2012). In most developing countries including South Africa, urban-based municipalities are required to operate through market ethos, with the result that most of them have already assigned private interests the responsibility to develop, maintain and manage most public spaces within cities (Van Melik et al., 2009). Given the economic and market ethos driving private sector operators, assignment of responsibility and control of public spaces has unequivocally allowed a free right in the unwavering application of the cost for consumption principle as the key determinant of access and accessibility (Van Melik et al., 2009). The assumption is that the involvement of private sector interests in the management of public spaces would improve coherence between these spaces and nearby private properties, thereby supporting the economies of scale (Van Melik et al., 2009). That is, market efficacies and economics are prioritized above social cohesion.

Additionally, the privatized and marketized regulation of what is supposed to be public spaces introduced unprecedented urban complexity which eroded the possibility for societal engineering and political deliberations that could enforce social cohesion and integration.

Public spaces are supposed to bring people together through opportunities for informal meetings and organic establishment of social ties (Oldenburg, 1989; Mandeli, 2010; Francis et al., 2012), and their privatization and marketization thwart their potential to support these qualities and societal values (Fraser, 2008; Beck, 2009; Van Melik et al., 2009; Kaźmierczak, 2013). Management of public spaces on the bases of unfettered market ethos introduces homogeneity of suffrage in regard to the socio-economic status of the users, thereby promoting inherent social exclusions (Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002; Donovan, 2008; Van Melik et al., 2009), especially for countries such as South Africa where inequalities were previously engineered and sustained along racial/ethnic divides. Private sector interests strive for profit maximization, meaning that their control and management of public spaces is tantamount to conversion of public good for deployment as a pure, divisible and exclusive private commodity. In this context, a perfectly public good is operationalized on the erroneous assumption that consumption by some reduces the value and diminishes its accessibility to others. For South Africa, such commodification ethos would not support social integration of the urban settlements. The gated-community planning would inevitably perpetuate South Africa's social fragmentation within cities.

### **Gated-community planning: Democratization of social fragmentation and exclusions**

As already stated, gated-communities are established through privatization and marketization of public spaces; and, they subsequently impose limitations on access and accessibility along race/ethnic and, perhaps, gender divides. But the justification of these types of urban settlement planning is that they provide solutions to crime and that they create the necessary environment for the improvement of the quality of life for the resident population. In this way, the underlying conception of crime prevention is framed through race-based urban securitization, social exclusions and alienation that brand others as potential criminals. By their act of privatization and marketization of public spaces in a democratic South Africa where there are stark inequalities that are racially/ethnically evident, gated-community planning democratizes social fragmentation in ways that adversely affect public services delivery and quality of life for the majority of the poor urban dwellers. This gated-community planning social fragmentation of the urban landscapes erodes the potential for integrated development, social cohesion, popular participation and democracy (Landman, 2004). Consequently, the mushrooming of gated-communities in

urban South Africa is associated with persistent social alienation and inequalities, which are also manifested in racially variable access to public services (Landman, 2002, 2004; Bénit-Gbaffou, 2008; Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2008; Rogers and Sukolatanamete, 2009). In the endeavour to serve the interests of private capital, the state ceded all power of determination and control over the dynamics and effects of privatized, commodified and marketized public spaces (Jessop, 2002; Bénit-Gbaffou, 2008).

Bénit-Gbaffou (2008) describes social fragmentation as the increasing spatial separation of sections of the society based on factors such as race and socio-economic standing. Inevitably, the privatization and marketization of public spaces through gated-communities in South Africa is destined to perpetuate the past segregation and apartheid legacies through nuance democratic urban settlement planning. That is, gated-community approach to urban settlement planning in South Africa merely presents a nuance democratically rationale strategy for sustaining the status quo of racially/ethnically-inspired social fragmentation and exclusions which were historically created through segregationist and apartheid planning. Hence, a democratic South Africa's urban majority has continued to experience the same old inequities, inefficiencies, seclusions and exclusions along race/ethnic divides (Low, 2001; Landman, 2002; Lemanski, 2006; Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2008). Shared economic development entails socio-spatial integration and a significant degree of access and accessibility of public amenities and services to the most (Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002; Landman, 2002; Lemanski, 2006; Bénit-Gbaffou, 2008; Rogers and Sukolatanamete, 2009). Gated-community planning also affects the efficacy of state performance, functioning and management of public services (Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002; Landman, 2002), such as policing, emergency services (fire trucks and ambulances) and a host of municipal functions (waste removal, water and electricity meter readings). Gated-communities transform the existing urban form, spatiality and road networks in ways that alter the state's capacity to perform public and municipal services within the city. One of the most disruptive elements of the gated-community urban settlement planning model commonly cited is the large number of road closures that complicate traffic patterns (Low, 2001; Landman, 2002), creating potential congestion on alternative routes. Overall, the public's resident outside the gated-communities is excluded, through physical interventions such as walls, fences, gates and booms, from the benefits associated with commodification, privatization and marketization of public spaces (Landman, 2002, 2004). Thus, the spatial interventions and land-use controls which democratise social fragmentation through gated-communities thwart the opportunity for social land spatial integration. In this way, gated-community planning is inconsistent with the founding principles for the democratization of South Africa.

The gated-communities assumption of homogeneity of their residents by class and cultural background (Tanulku, 2012) is disconcerting because the attendant physical spatial segregation inherently characterizes the socially excluded against the secluded through crime and such other social ills. Given that gated-communities are virtually private holdings, their use of private security together with the state policing of crime, imply that the security of the majority of the urban poor is neglected. Further, the range of strict by-laws that are enforced in and around the premises of gated-communities is in direct contrast with the apparent toleration of crime, illegality and environmental destruction in the urban spaces dominated by the poor majority. However, the effects of the gated-community settlement planning are not universally uniform, they always depend upon the variable contexts, especially the socio-economic, historical and political, of the city and country in question. Indeed, Salcedo and Torres (2004) confirm that gated-community planning reduced segregation in Santiago, Chile, by catering for the population across the economic, social and cultural spectrum. Similar constructive outcomes were reported for Beijing, albeit gated-communities there were established through public and private partnerships (Tanulku, 2012). In such circumstances, gated-community planning is deliberately deployed as conduit for delivery of access of facilities such as schools, golf courses, horse-riding clubs and shopping complexes, amongst others (Tanulku, 2012), to the poorest sections of the population that may not afford the cost of consumption. Conversely, a democratic South Africa did not deliberately adopt the gated-community model as a vehicle for improving access of service for the majority of the poor people or as a means for social integration. Instead, gated-communities are established in south Africa under the guise of securitization; and, evidence suggests that they are purely mechanisms for financial commercial objectives of developers rather than for the state's constitutionally-defined social transformation goals. To a large extent, gated-communities' adoption in a democratic South Africa was justified through securitization and crime rationale, which now appears to underline a deep sense of social exclusion and segregation through a nuance democratized urban settlement planning strategy. The excuse has always been around the protection of the image, investments and property value. This article asserts that the gated-community logic could for South Africa be a medium-term convenience with long-lasting deleterious connotations.

## CONCLUSION

This article has argued that the application of gated-community planning in a former apartheid city supports commodification, privatization and marketization of public spaces in ways that sustains the historic legacies of social fragmentation, seclusion and exclusion along

race/ethnic divides. For South Africa, and given the apartheid legacies, gated-community planning would perpetuate social and spatial fragmentation, displacement, distortion, incoherence and inefficiencies and sustain inequality in urban areas. Whereas the reverence for private profit guarantees a portion of the municipal revenue, the majority of the poor have not drawn benefits from this form of commodification, privatization and marketization of their rightful property, state land. In the exclusive service of private capital, the mushrooming of gated-communities in South Africa precipitated enforcement of security, by-laws and crime containment in urban pockets defined through the spatial-socio-economic distribution within cities. South Africa's apartheid contexts render gated-communities an inappropriate urban settlement planning model for social transformation and integration.

## Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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