

AN ANALYSIS OF MICROSCALE SEGREGATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SORTING IN GAUTENG

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ABSTRACT

Apartheid was the way in which the white minority government in South Africa controlled access to urban opportunities. Racially differentiated access to urban opportunities led to a strong association between race and socio-economic status. Once statutory segregation regulations were removed in 1991, an important question in urban planning was to what extent, and at what scale, racial desegregation would reshape the post-apartheid urban landscape.

This research on the microscale patterns of segregation and socio-economic sorting in Gauteng includes three points of inquiry. The first considers the relationship between racial diversity and residential expansion, and shows that residential expansion tends to reproduce the racial composition of the areas from which they expanded. The second inquiry analyses the extent to which racial mixing contributes to class mixing and income equality in desegregated neighbourhoods to reveal that racially-inflected income inequality remains discernible even in the context of racial desegregation. In racially mixed wards, the mean household income difference between white and black African residents remains significant. The third inquiry is concerned with patterns of microscale socio-economic sorting in desegregated neighbourhoods, and shows how the affordability of housing and the social character of neighbourhoods influence segregation and socio-economic sorting.

Together, the three inquiries highlight continued segregation in some suburbs, and nuances in the nature of desegregation in others. Although significant racial desegregation has taken place in former whites-only neighbourhoods, the association between space and class in Gauteng has not changed significantly since apartheid ended, and spatial transformation is slow. However, public housing programmes and inclusionary housing policies hold significant potential for desegregation at multiple scales. Residential expansion, whether by the public or private sectors, should be strategically driven with diversified housing at different affordability levels, while neighbourhood-level developments should foster socio-economic inclusion.