

# Urbanization of Rural Areas Towards Spatial Justice and Rural Development in South Africa: A Theoretical Evaluation of Selected Cases

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**Abstract:** Urbanization is one of the most essential features of spatial development, and it has historically been described using a few indicators on a somewhat coarse spatial scale also regarded as the mass movement of populations from rural to urban settings and the consequent physical changes to urban settings. However, urbanization encompasses not just land-use changes, but also socio-economic developments that may or may not emerge as physical deviations in the built environment and its land use. In South Africa, attitudes regarding urbanization are predominantly complex and vague, reflecting a history of institutionalized discrimination, urban segregation, and rural poverty. Additionally, the spatial link between population increase, employment opportunities, and availability of basic services and infrastructure as well as housing, is given special attention during urbanization. This urbanization has become excessive and unmanageable, resulting in unlawful land occupations, booming informal settlements, unparalleled housing constraints, overburdened infrastructure, and social instability. Given that rural development is mainly characterized by economic development, it has recently become appropriate for some countries to urbanize their rural areas with the hope of addressing backlogs in basic service delivery and infrastructure and most importantly the decentralization of economic activities ultimately achieving spatial justice and, South Africa is not an exception. Therefore, this paper seeks to theoretically evaluate the effectiveness of urbanization in South Africa's rural areas with the hope of achieving spatial justice and satisfactory rural development. The paper discovered that decentralization of economic services is mostly regarded as the main activity of urbanization in rural areas. Furthermore, the adopted approach is more likely implemented in townships that are more accessible to most of these rural areas rather than in these rural villages themselves. The paper concludes that urbanization of rural areas can potentially reduce poverty by enhancing economic growth, development and prosperity, permitting more effective public and private service delivery and infrastructure development in rural areas, and not just decentralizing selected economic services to nearby townships.

**Keywords:** Urbanization, Rural Areas, Spatial Justice, Rural Development, South Africa

## 1. Introduction

Traditionally, a rural area with low population concentration, minimal urban land use or density and a high level of primary production might be regarded as being farther from urban influence (Madsen, Kristensen, Fertner, Busck & Jørgensen, 2010; Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2014; Hussain & Imityaz, 2018; Kuddus, Tynan & McBryde, 2020). Additionally, these locations are classified using a variety of socio-economic characteristics. Remote rural areas are a distinct subgroup of locations with development issues, such as sustained declines in population, income levels and employment opportunities, among others. These regions frequently have poor connection to economic centres and are frequently classified as being peripheral, distant, or deeply rural. Their indirect effects of urbanization include

the possibility that they are popular tourist sites or have significant concentrations of rented houses and traditional tourist activities (Hussain & Imityaz, 2018; Lazaro, Agergaard, Larsen, Makindara & Birch-Thomsen, 2019; Kuddus *et al.*, 2020). Whereas urban areas are understood to provide a variety of purposes in all societies such as being the center for scientific advancement and economic expansion (Kuddus *et al.*, 2020). However, urban neighbourhoods are also a haven for environmental risks, communicable diseases, and poverty and inequality. (Madsen *et al.*, 2010; Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2014; Hussain & Imityaz, 2018). To address the adverse effects of urbanization, rural development is one of the development strategies adopted by various countries. Given that rural development is mainly characterized by economic development, it has recently become appropriate for some countries

to urbanize their rural areas with the hope of addressing backlogs in basic service delivery and infrastructure and most importantly the decentralization of economic activities ultimately achieving spatial justice and, South Africa is not an exception (Madsen *et al.*, 2010; Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2014; Lazaro *et al.*, 2019; Hussain & Imityaz, 2018; Kuddus *et al.*, 2020). The potential of urbanizing rural areas in South Africa and towards spatial justice relates to issues of spatial planning and rural development.

Spatial injustice and rural development challenges in South Africa entrench inequalities along the lines of race, class, gender, age, and geography. There is a plethora of definitions of spatial justice. For purposes of this paper we draw from a meta-synthesis of various attempts including Pirie's (1983) use of territorial and social justice concepts, the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1996; Harvey, 2003, 2009; Marcus, 2009), the theory of justice (Rawls, 1971), social justice and the city (Harvey, 1973), and the just city theory (Fainstein, 2010) – embedded on the South African context, to define spatial justice as 'the spatial distribution and allocation of a diverse range of resources, services and opportunities by means of criteria of democracy, equity, diversity and fairness in all spaces and communities of an urban/rural region; with specific reference to socially- and culturally-valued, priorities and basic needs in terms of education, employment, transport, health and housing and a focus on the disadvantaged and impoverished communities that have previously been denied access to, and/or benefits of, such opportunities and basic needs' (Adegeye & Coetzee, 2018). It entails the fair and equitable allocation of opportunities and socially valued resources in physical space, and meant to promote systematic urbanization through rural industrialisation activities to catalyse the economic and social development in lagging village and rural areas. Notionally, spatial justice is supposed to induce the formation of other sectors of industry which mean that employment will be created at the same time keeping the industrial hub flourishing by attracting external investment that would input capital into several developmental projects and economic services.

Unjust geographies as well as instances of spatial injustice, globally and locally, can be caused by various factors such as segregation, apartheid, political organisation of space, gated communities, and inequality in the distribution of public goods

and discrimination in geographies, corruption, and general impunity for corrupt practice. While apartheid caused spatial injustice in South Africa, other factors are still contributing to it such as the actions of the government, for example, in delayed implementation of land reform; creation of toll roads and evictions for mega infrastructure developments like World Cup; inequalities in distribution such as in the public transport system in Gauteng Province where the elite few have access to the Gautrain services, while the previously disadvantaged have inefficient means of transportation. In this corollary, the provision, accessibility and opportunity to use public services and goods such as health, education, housing, employment and transport, which are also listed as basic human rights (African National Congress, 1994; National Planning Commission, 2011) are important aspects to be acknowledged in the realisation of spatial justice, and that would support progress towards SADC Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2030, AU Agenda 2063, and the universal Sustainable Development Goals (especially 3 on health; 10 on reduced inequalities; 11 on sustainable cities and communities; and 16 on access to peace and justice). In terms of the ensuing human security, failing to handle the current rates of unchecked urbanization has a substantial negative impact on the South African economy particularly on health, education, housing, economic, political, and social fronts. Therefore, this paper seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of urbanization in South Africa's rural areas with the hope of achieving spatial justice and satisfactory rural development. To achieve its purpose, the paper focuses on urbanization and rural development in South Africa; South Africa's spatial development with specific reference to reflections of the nature of urbanization; urbanizing rural areas towards spatial justice and rural development; and, the effectiveness of urbanization of South Africa's rural areas with the hope of achieving spatial justice and satisfactory rural development.

## 2. Methodology

The study design will adopt a qualitative mixed methods rapid review of the existing data on the effects of urbanization of South Africa's rural areas towards achieving spatial justice and satisfactory rural development. Current empirical literature that reflects on the urbanization of rural areas and spatial justice was reviewed. Purposive sampling was used to select Lebowakgomo, Seshego

and Mankweng Townships in Limpopo Province as cases of reference. While the data was generated from existing literature and no primary data was collected from the sample, the selected cases were used as references for drawing examples for evaluation purposes.

### 3. Urbanization and Rural Development in South Africa

According to Davis (1965), urbanization is a limited process that countries go through when they make the transition from an agrarian to an industrial civilization. Davis defines urbanization as the transition of individuals from agrarian to industrial occupation, which results in urban habitation. Therefore, the mobility of people to jobs in urban settings where they can be tallied is the focus. Since 1994, three distinct rural development programmes related to urbanization and spatial justice have been considered in South Africa, viz. the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) 1994-2000; the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) 2000-2009; and, the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) 2009-present. Whereas rural development is regarded as the process of improving rural residents' quality of life partly through economic development. Rural development is a comprehensive and multifaceted concept that entails raising the standard of living for those who reside in rural areas, e.g., through agriculture and related activities. Additionally, rural development is a phenomenon that arises from the interactions of numerous physical, political, technological, economic, sociocultural, and institutional elements (Madsen *et al.*, 2010; Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2014; Moselane, 2015; Lazaro *et al.*, 2019; Hussain & Imityiaz, 2018; Kuddus *et al.*, 2020).

Rural development is an important global human security issue. A large amount of the population lives in rural areas and where millions are deprived of better education, decent housing, proper communication, adequate nutrition, employment opportunities, good health, appropriate public transport, and social justice by virtue of location. The World Bank estimates that in 2022, 32.15% of South Africa's population would live in rural areas, while 67.85% will live in urban areas. Accordingly, 11% of the 67.85% of people who reside in urban areas do so in squalid shacks and informal settlements (Urbanet, 2020; PMG, 2020; SANSA, 2019). The backwardness of the rural areas including villages and

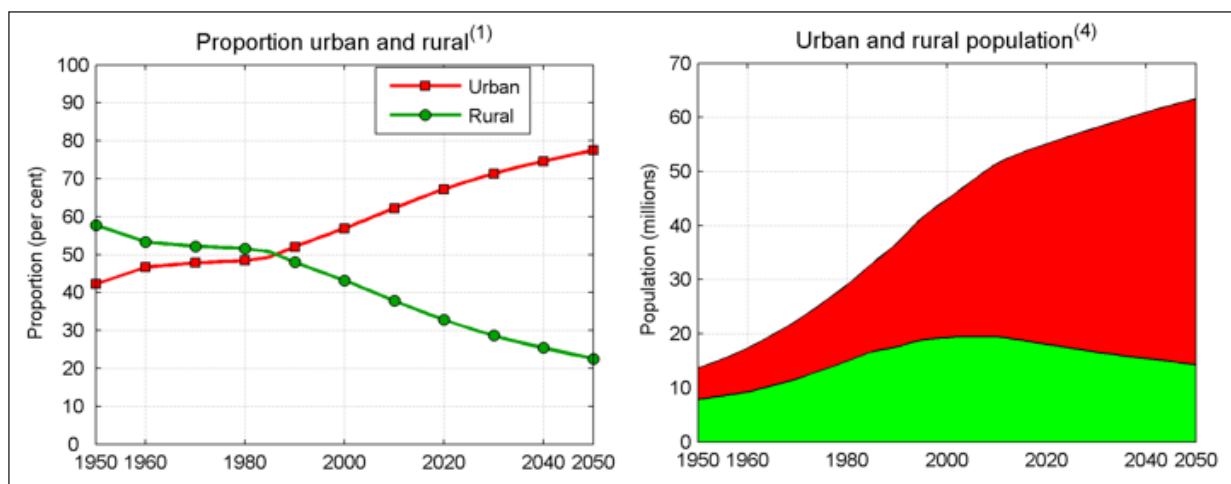
urban informal settlements is a significant obstacle to the economy's overall development. They face several challenges including meeting the needs of their mushrooming informal settlement populations and providing means of livelihood in rural areas. Furthermore, making provisions for infrastructure, transportation, housing, energy, and employment, as well as for essential services like water and sanitation, education and healthcare, is one of these challenges (Moselane, 2015). In the period of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), without meeting this enormous population's basic needs, meaningful development cannot be anticipated in villages and rural areas.

### 4. Reflections on the Nature of Urbanization

In South Africa, attitudes regarding urbanization are predominantly complex and equivocal, due to the history of institutionalized racism and discrimination, urban segregation, and rural poverty (Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2014). Additionally, the spatial link between urban population increase, employment opportunities, and availability of basic services and infrastructure is given special attention during urbanization. This urbanization has become excessive and unmanageable, resulting in unlawful land occupations, booming informal settlements, unparalleled housing limitations, overburdened infrastructure, and social instability (Madsen *et al.*, 2010; Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2014; Lazaro *et al.*, 2019; Hussain & Imityiaz, 2018; Kuddus *et al.*, 2020). As aforementioned, urbanization is usually referred to as the large movement of people from rural to urban areas, the physical built environment changes that result in urban environments, and the socio-economic changes that may or may not be reflected in those physical changes in the built environment and land usage (Lazaro *et al.*, 2019).

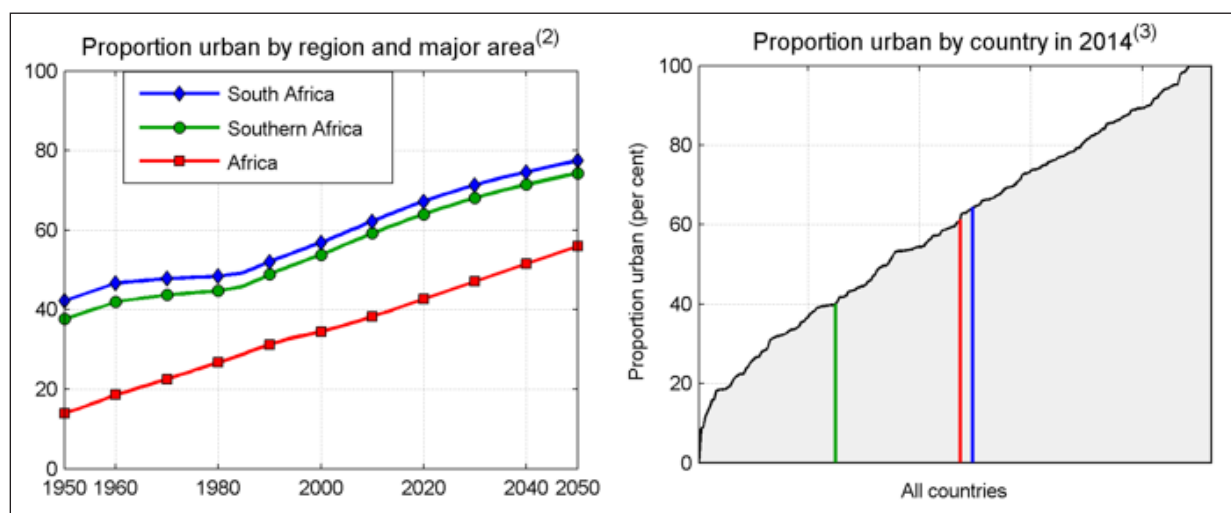
Approximately 67.85% of South Africans currently reside in urban regions, and by 2030, that number will increase to 71%. In contrast, by the middle of 2014, 35.7% (18.9 million) of South Africans were living in rural areas. From about 43% (5.8 million of 13.7 million people) in 1950, South Africa's urbanization patterns are predicted to reach 77.4% (49.1 million of a projected 63.4 million people) in 2050 (Figure 1). On the other hand, the percentage of people living in rural areas is predicted to drop from 59% (7.9 million) in 1950 to 22% (14.3 million) in 2050 (Urbanet, 2020; PMG, 2020; SANSA, 2019).

**Figure 1: Urbanization in South Africa**



Source: BusinessTech, 2014

**Figure 2: Urbanization South Africa vs Region**



Source: BusinessTech, 2014

Urbanization patterns in South Africa are significantly higher than the norm for the Southern African area and the entire African continent (Figure 2).

For inhabitants and residents in those key or nodal locations, urbanization offers substantial prospects for economic development and access to jobs as well as other development-related options. However, if it is not properly managed, it also brings with it a host of problems, such as negative effects on the environment (directly affecting wildlife and natural habitats), unemployment and urban poverty (bad living conditions), crime, the loss of the original society fabric due to changes in living

conditions, harm to heritage and culture, urban congestion, and an increase in the cost of living (utilities and basic services) (Madsen *et al.*, 2010; Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2014; Hussain & Imityaz, 2018). The urban poor bear the brunt of these. The spatial planning practices left behind by apartheid, such as Bantustans and forced relocations, created difficulties. These include the need to strengthen the state's capabilities as well as spatial injustice, instability, unsustainability, lack of quality, inefficiencies, and resilience in space. Apartheid spatial patterns were maintained by four main factors: persistently segregated metropolitan areas, unequal income distribution and access to services, unsustainable

infrastructural networks and consumption patterns, and the utilization of already existing markets and land (Lazaro *et al.*, 2019).

Against this background, the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) adopted by Cabinet in April 2016 needs to be understood and superimposed with various legislation and three rural development programmes related to urbanization and spatial justice have been considered in South Africa, viz. the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) 1994-2000; the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) 2000-2009; and, the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) 2009-present. These initiatives set out principles, policies and programmes to achieve inclusive urban and rural development improving the quality of life of all people in rural areas, informal settlements, and previously marginalized in urban settings. Fundamentally, "inclusive development" involves three distinct but related dimensions: (a) economic dimension, which entails giving poor and low-income households the ability and opportunities to benefit from economic growth; (b) social dimension, which entails promoting gender equality, women empowerment and providing social safety nets for vulnerable groups; and (c) political dimension with a focus on increasing the chances for low-income and underprivileged rural residents to actively and fairly participate in local political processes. Overlapping across includes gender mainstreaming values embedded to respond to sexual gender-based violence and femicide which is a characteristic pandemic of contexts of rapid urbanization and incidence of spatial injustices in South Africa.

## 5. Urbanizing Rural Areas: Towards Spatial Justice and Rural Development

To understand 'what works' in urbanizing rural areas towards spatial justice development in South Africa, this section outlines the legislative framework in relation to spatial planning and rural development.

### 5.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (108 of 1996)

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (108 of 1996), with reference to the principle of development in South Africa, plays a vital role in the manner in which development planning and management are conducted. It can be described as a transformation action because it is dedicated to

making up for past wrongs and creating a society based on democratic principles, social justice, and human rights (Olivier, 2013:254). Section 25(5) of the Constitution declares that, in addition to other substantive articles requiring land reform, enhancing and insuring secure tenure rights, redressing other inequities caused by previous land disposessions, and preserving property rights:

*"The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to foster conditions which enable citizens to gain access to land on an equitable basis."*

In terms of spatial planning the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) section 24(a) (b), and states that everyone has the right "to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being; and, to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that: prevent pollution and ecological degradation; promote conservation; and secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development" in order to "heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights; lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the local communities and every citizen is equally protected by law; improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations".

### 5.2 Land Use and Management Legislation

To enable South Africa to deal with these post-apartheid transformations, new legislation with regard to spatial planning and management had to be developed (Cilliers, 2010:51). The following outlines the principal legislation related to spatial planning and rural planning that contributed to the development of land use and spatial planning in the country until the Development Facilitation Act (DFA) constitutional court judgment in 2010.

#### 5.2.1 Physical Planning Act 125 of 1991

The Act encourages the Republic's orderly physical development and makes provisions for the Republic's regionalization, the creation of national and regional development plans, regional structure

plans, and urban structure plans by the various physical planning authorities, as well as matters related thereto. The division did not restrict the rural areas, but the development of the policy plan thereof. This Act and its development principles are focused on the urban areas, thus the influence in rural areas is indirectly included in the division of regions.

### **5.2.2 Development Facilitation Act 67 of 1995**

The Act's goals were to promote security of tenure, establish measures to facilitate and hasten the implementation of land-related reconstruction and development projects and provide for the establishment of development tribunals in each province with the authority to decide disputes involving such projects. The DFA encouraged that all policy, administrative practice and laws should provide for "urban and rural land development and also facilitate the development of formal and informal, existing and new settlements and the discouragement of the illegal occupation of land, with due recognition of informal land development processes".

### **5.2.3 The National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998**

By establishing institutions that will support cooperative governance, procedures for coordinating environmental functions performed by state organs, and principles for decision-making on matters affecting the environment, the Act promotes cooperative environmental governance. It also addresses matters related thereto. The National Environmental Management Act (107 of 1998) promotes the South African Constitutional right of everyone to an environment that is not damaging to their health or well-being. In that situation, the distribution of the environmental impacts must not be done in a way that unfairly discriminates against anyone, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people (mostly found in rural areas). It is clear that NEMA (67 of 1998) complies with Agenda 21's sustainable development goals and objectives. It is vital that the NEMA (67 of 1998) be consulted when decisions are made in terms of spatial planning, to ensure sustainable development of the environment.

### **5.2.4 Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998**

The Act aims to provide criteria for deciding the category of municipality to be founded in a region, to allow for a proper division of tasks and powers amongst categories of municipalities, and to build a framework for establishing municipalities. In

accordance with the regulations relating to categories and types of municipalities, the Act also provides for the establishment of municipalities. The municipal council's long-term development vision, an evaluation of the current state of development, development priorities and targets for its elected term, and a framework for spatial development are all encouraged to be included in the integrated development plan's components. Within the municipal authority, the integrated development plan promotes development in both urban and rural areas.

### **5.2.5 Municipal System Act 32 of 2000**

To establish a clear and supportive framework for the fundamental planning, performance management, resource mobilization, and organizational change processes that support municipalities' progress toward the social and economic uplift of local communities, to guarantee universal access to basic services that are affordable for everyone, to enable community involvement, and to provide the fundamental principles, mechanisms, and processes that are required. The Municipal System Act 32 of 2000 does not specially make reference to rural areas and its development, but the fact that rural areas are also part of the municipal areas that the municipalities should maintain, is addressed by the Act, although decisions made in municipalities in terms of development may in most cases focus on developing the urban areas rather than rural areas.

### **5.2.6 The Local Government Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, 2001**

It offers guidance in relation to Local Government Municipal System Act 32 of 2000. With relation to the necessity of spatial development frameworks, a more thorough explanation is provided in section 2, where the emphasis is on the specifics of IDPs. A key component of the establishment of the IDP and SDF is the Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, which give local governments the required parameters for developing and implementing the IDP. The IDP is a powerfully documented that describes the local municipalities and its plans and performances. It is clear that rural areas are mostly influenced by urbanization and the migration process, nevertheless most municipalities result in 80% of their projects focusing on urban or even more rather than rural areas. This regulation directs the municipalities with spatial planning and integrated development planning, with no specification to either urban or rural areas.

### **5.2.7 White Paper on Spatial Planning & Land Use Management (2001)**

The White Paper focuses on the development of policies that will lead to the most "effective use and sustainable management of land; improvement and strengthening of planning, management, monitoring, and evaluation; strengthening of institutions and coordinating mechanisms; development of mechanisms to make it easier to meet the needs and objectives of local communities and communities at large on a local level". The general guidelines for land use are against low-density, segregated, fragmented, and mono-functional development and favour compact, integrated, and mixed-use settlements. The principles thus try to impose a general policy orientation on the numerous decisions made in light of numerous laws. Their application has thus far been sporadic. According to the White Paper on Spatial Planning and Land Use Management (2001), it will be important to deal with issues related to natural resource management, land rights and tenure arrangements, land capability, farm consolidation and subdivision, and the protection of prime agricultural land in the context of rural areas.

### **5.2.8 Spatial Data Infrastructure Act 54 of 2003**

The Act hopes to create the South African Spatial Data Infrastructure, the Committee for Spatial Information, and an electronic metadata catalogue; to determine standards and guidelines for the sharing of spatial information; to capture and publish metadata; to prevent duplication of such capture; and to address issues related thereto. Both users and governmental agencies with access to spatial information are covered by this Act. The South African Spatial Data Infrastructure was created as the country's technical, institutional, and policy framework to simplify the collection, management, upkeep, integration, dissemination, and use of spatial data. This Act responds to the consideration of spatial data in general, and in support of capturing spatial data as a development tool, notwithstanding urban or rural areas in its considerations.

### **5.2.9 Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) 16 of 2013**

After the Constitutional judgment of 2010, the DFA that was intended to be an interim measure was repealed by the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Bill in 2012. In 2013 the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform adopted the bill as an Act called the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) 16 of 2013.

Section 2(2) of the SPLUMA stipulates that "except as provided for in the Act, no legislation not repealed by this Act may prescribe an alternative or parallel mechanism, measure, institution or system of spatial planning, land use management and land development in a manner inconsistent with the provisions of this Act" (George, 2014:1). The SPLUMA's primary goal is to "correct historical inequities in the implementation of spatial development planning and land use management systems while ensuring that the system of spatial planning and land use management promotes social and economic inclusion" (Ogunronbi, 2012:1). The principles of the SPLUMA encourages that urbanization and rural development should provide for both rural and urban areas in terms of the repair of spatial settlement patterns that have historically been distorted by an integrated land-use and development approach.

They include the principles of spatial justice, spatial sustainability, efficiency, resilience and good administration (RSA, 2013). For the purpose of this paper, the focus will be on the principle of social justice which states that:

"Past spatial and other development imbalances must be redressed through improved access to and use of land; Spatial development frameworks and policies in all spheres of government must address the inclusion of persons and areas that were previously excluded, with an emphasis on informal settlements, former homeland areas and areas characterized by widespread poverty and deprivation; Spatial planning mechanisms, including land use schemes, must incorporate provisions that enable redress in access to land by disadvantaged communities and persons; Land use management systems must include all areas of a municipality and specifically include provisions that are flexible and appropriate for the management of disadvantaged areas, informal settlements and former homeland areas; Land development procedures must include provisions that accommodate access to secure tenure and the incremental upgrading of informal areas; and A municipal planning tribunal considering an application before it, may not be impeded or restricted in the exercise of its discretion solely on the ground that the value of land or property is affected by the outcome of the application" (RSA, 2013:18). Therefore, SPLUMA encourages the sustainability of the environment and the provision of adequate basic human services including housing,

water and sanitation in relation to spatial planning and land use management.

### 5.3 Relevancy of SPLUMA to Urbanization and Rural Development

With the inauguration of the Zuma presidency in April 2009, rural development was elevated to a top-priority program for the ensuing five years (2009-2014) (Olivier *et al.*, 2010:101). One of the main pillars of South Africa's status as a developing state is that the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution establishes the following as a legally obligatory framework for the planning, coordination, and execution of development (including rural development):

- The SPLUMA promotes better access to and use of land in order to address historical spatial and other development inequities.
- The inclusion of people and areas that were previously excluded must be addressed by the spatial development frameworks and policies in all realms of government, with a focus on informal settlements, former homeland territories, and areas marked by pervasive poverty and suffering.
- Land use plans and other spatial planning tools must include clauses that permit disadvantaged communities and individuals to get access to land.
- All areas of a municipality must be included in land use management systems, and they must have measures that are adaptable and suitable for the management of disadvantaged areas, informal settlements, and former homeland areas.
- Land development practices must have clauses that provide for access to stable tenancy and the gradual improvement of informal areas.
- The state must work to satisfy the basic needs of formerly underserved communities and respect, defend, promote, and carry out the social, economic, and environmental rights of everyone.
- To address the lack of formal integration of informal and traditional land use development processes into systems of spatial planning and land use management;
- Ensure that prime and distinctive agricultural land is protected with special regard.
- The concept of spatial resilience, which calls for accommodating flexibility in spatial planning, policies, and land use management systems to enable sustainable livelihoods in populations most likely to be affected by economic and environmental crises.

In order to ensure that land development benefits both current and future generations, the SPLUMA promotes social inclusion, spatial equity, desired settlement patterns, rural revitalization, urban regeneration, and sustainable land use for urban and rural areas (SPLUMA, 2013). In addition, theories of justice and concepts related to justice (such as diversity, equity, democracy, just distribution, benefit of the least disadvantaged, and resources needed to meet basic needs like housing, education, employment, health, and public transportation) advocate for specific standards in urbanization and spatial development to foster opportunity and access to resources, particularly for the least advantaged. Accordingly, the processes leading to unjust geographies reveal that a lack of these necessary resources, among other things, leads to injustice in our geographies. The incidence of spatial injustice indicates sources of spatial injustice, which include discrimination, lack of necessary resources and neglecting the least advantaged members of society.

### 6. The Effectiveness of Urbanization of South Africa's Rural Areas: Towards Spatial Justice and Satisfactory Rural Development

While the necessary resources required to meet the basic needs in urbanization and rural development vary, and can also be classified into various categories, for the purpose of this paper, and within the context of spatial justice, the most important resources or spatial-related components identified include housing, education, public transport, health, employment and income. Indeed, to achieve spatially just urban development means meeting the needs of the citizens by providing access to housing, employment, health, transportation and education. This does not mean that other sector areas are not important, but rather that these five areas are the key areas that should be explored in understanding the application of spatial justice in this study. Further, it is evident from this foregoing discussion that

spatial planning legislation forms the most important element in South Africa with regard to spatial development. In fact, since 2009, one of South Africa's top priority programs has been rural development. By promoting sustainable land use in both urban and rural areas and considering both long-term planning and ongoing land use management, the SPLUMA set a roadmap that will benefit both current and future generations (Olivier *et al.*, 2010:101).

Yet, given the speed at which urbanization is occurring, for example, around villages, peri-urban areas of Capricorn District Municipality like Lebowakgomo, Seshego and Mankweng Townships in Limpopo Province the local authorities in these areas face several challenges which include:

- Providing services and infrastructure to an increasing number of homes while also addressing service backlogs and sustaining current infrastructure.
- Difficulty in restructuring the urban spatial form with the hope of increasing urban effectiveness and promoting more sustainable use of resources, including land.
- Constraints in bringing marginalized populations closer to basic services and employment opportunities to achieve social integration and inclusion and improve household health and well-being.

When resolving backlogs in housing, education, healthcare, student housing, and access to a steady supply of energy and water, infrastructure design and delivery should take the effects of urbanization into account. In order to meet the demands of all inhabitants, local governments work to offer excellent services in urban, peri-urban, village, and rural regions, such as housing, water, sanitation, and social amenities, in a timely way. This is the main cause of the protests against service delivery, which have sharply increased in recent years. There were 237 documented service delivery demonstrations in 2018, which is a 24% rise from 2014, a general election year. For the period 2005-2018, that year saw the nation's second-highest number of service delivery protests (Brown-Luthango, 2019). As the ANC elective and policy conference approaches in November/December 2022 and national elections in 2023 more violent service delivery protests are likely to occur; and especially, in informal settlements in metros like Cape Town and Ekurhuleni.

Dealing with the problems of fast urbanization and spatial injustice requires land and the reform of unfair, exclusive, and unsustainable land use management policies (Brown-Luthango, 2019). Despite the fact that these problems are complicated and frequently appear insurmountable, local governments have a variety of tools at their disposal to start tackling some of the issues. Basic human rights and the general good are at stake when it comes to land reform and equal access to natural resources. In fact, the goal of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA), No. 16 of 2013, is to ensure that those who were previously denied these rights have "more access to and use of land" in order to advance "spatial justice, social and economic inclusion, and a more equitable distribution of land." Retaining unoccupied property that is privately owned for speculative purposes is one of these unfair land use practices. Local governments have the authority and instruments needed to address it through legislation. Land is kept off the market by speculation, which raises its price. There are additional societal expenses associated with vacant property since these areas frequently turn into hotspots for crime and violence. In order to deter the ownership of land for speculative purposes, municipalities have the option under the Property Rates Act of 2004 to charge a higher rate on vacant land. Additionally, as stated by Brown-Luthango (2019), there is a chance in the ongoing discussion of expropriation, which is typically focused on rural land reform, to carefully consider the urban environment and how this tool might be applied to ensure that underutilized, unproductive unoccupied land in cities can be expropriated for the purpose of housing the urban poor and providing them with other services. Therefore, the paper discovered that decentralization of economic services is mostly regarded as the main activity of urbanization of rural areas. Furthermore, the adopted approach is more likely implemented in townships that are more accessible to most of these rural areas rather than in these rural villages themselves, which does not address the current spatial injustices.

## 7. Conclusion and Recommendations

In order to promote settlements' equity, resilience, and sustainability and mostly achieve spatial justice, the paper's conclusion is that there has been a long-standing need to improve planning, infrastructure, and services in villages and rural regions. Elevating rural areas boosts local village economies

and offers opportunities in construction, waste management, and other fields, in addition to improving living conditions and general public health. Residents may have more financial security and better access to job possibilities and formal work structures if their property tenure and title are recognized and they have access to reasonably priced mass transit. Enhancing rural and village areas also aids in putting lagging settlements on the path to sustainable development that concentrates on reducing poverty, improving livelihood chances, and providing basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes that support :1) life-sustenance (i.e. in order for people to survive with basic necessities of food, shelter, clothing, health care facilities and security as vital importance for economic growth and prerequisite for development); 2) self-respect (i.e. some basic form of self-respect, dignity, honour and self-esteem); and 3) freedom (i.e. freedom from all suppressions to live in harmony with nature). SPLUMA's approach towards social injustices especially in rural areas is clear and hopes to address the associated challenges in a fair and just manner which includes poverty reduction and improved economic development. Given the apartheid history, there is also a need for models that address inequalities through human rights-based approaches as well as the realisation of the NDP vision 2030. The paper concludes that urbanization of rural areas can potentially reduce poverty by enhancing economic growth and prosperity and enabling more efficient delivery of public and private services and infrastructure in rural areas and not just decentralizing selected economic services to nearby townships. Therefore, this paper recommends that rural development approaches must take into consideration the socio-economic characteristics and context of the rural people as well as the areas in question. The advancement of national development cannot be realised if rural areas continue to be regarded as secondary wherein development is concerned. Therefore, the decentralization of economic activities, services and infrastructure including other development initiatives must be directly implemented in rural areas, informed by their socio-economic characteristics.

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