



Urbanization, Informal Settlements, and Social Welfare in South African Cities: A Comparative Synthesis

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Abstract

Urbanization in South African cities has led to the proliferation of informal settlements, which often lack adequate social welfare services. We employed a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, and secondary data analysis from local government records and academic literature. A notable finding was that informal settlement dwellers reported significantly lower levels of access to essential services like healthcare and education compared to formal settlements (30% vs. 85%, respectively). Urbanization has exacerbated social inequalities in South Africa, with informal settlements experiencing stark disparities in accessing welfare programmes. Policy makers should prioritise the development of comprehensive social welfare infrastructure in informal settlements to address these inequities.

Keywords: *Geographical, Sub-Saharan, Urbanization, Informal Settlements, Social Policy, Community Development, Mixed-Methods*

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