

**Historical development and control of
informal township settlements in
Johannesburg since 1886**

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Historical development and control of informal township settlements in Johannesburg since 1886

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Introduction to informal settlement development and control.

- From an economic development perspective, but dominated by politics
- The diamond fields at Kimberley and gold mines of the Witwatersrand
- Insecure land tenure, poverty and dislocation from the formal labour market
- Products of failed policies, ineffective governance.....
- Combating poverty, inequality and discrimination can prevent informal settlements

Historical development and control of IS in Johannesburg from 1886 - 1947

- Gold production grew from 0.16% of world output in 1886 to 27% in 1889 and 40% by 1913
- The original camp population grew from 3000 in 1886 to 100 000 in 1896
- First in tents then in crude corrugated iron structures
- Many mining compounds and towns developed from Springs to Krugersdorp
- All settlements of an informal nature – uncertain lifespan of the gold industry and lack of management and control
Anglo-Boer War of 1899 – 1902 → British administration
- 10 000 poor white Afrikaners and many poor blacks
→ Johannesburg



Historical development and control of IS in Johannesburg from 1886 – 1947 (Continued)

- Population growth led to increasingly crowded and squalid inner city slums
- Following the plague in 1904 → Klipspruit in Soweto, later forced removals to Soweto
- Johannesburg's early growth marked by significant uneven development
- Freehold black property ownership in Sophiatown → Urban Areas Act of 1923
- Forced removal only legal with alternative accommodation e.g. Brakpan in 1927. Sophiatown only in 1955
- 3 locations for Africans, Indians and Muslims near the city centre

The interwar years and the case study of Sophiatown

- Western Native Township and Sophiatown as non-white suburb
- During the war years construction of new houses for Africans stopped
- New white-suburbs developed west of Ferreiras town → encircled the non-European areas
- In 1944 the City Council approved the removal of all non-whites from areas surrounded by white suburbs



Informal township settlements from 1948 -1993

- The Malan government virtually crushed the squatter movement by 1950
- Pushed them into large housing estates now known as Soweto
- Clearing 'black spots' and not informal settlements and slums received priority
- Illegal squatters in the city were moved to 'serviced' sites
- The Natives Resettlement Act of 1954 → forcibly removed Africans to separate townships
- One of the first casualties was Sophiatown in 1955
- Informal settlements were strictly controlled from 1948-1993
- Surplus black people were resettled to the former independent states.



Informal settlements in Johannesburg from 1994 to the present

- The Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme + definition of 'slums'
- Property title holds the key to making capitalism accessible to the poor → access of title
- More than 130 informal settlements in JHB by 2005, between 150 000 and 220 000 households
- Provincial housing survey – 30% of informal houses have no occupants
- The BNG policy upgrades the existing IS within the IDP
- The City aims to create sustainable settlements within the mayors term of office → large cross-subsidisation
- Social inclusion and tenure security cannot be achieved without affordability

Summary of main findings and conclusions

- IS has been poorly managed and influenced by politics and non-economic measures since 1886
- Only the Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme, BNG has an economic development objective
- Initially all settlements were of an informal nature
- Total failure of City to build enough houses + racial policies
- Strict control destroyed development in informal settlements
- Mobility and migration is a natural process that cannot be controlled through restrictions

