

URBAN SOCIO-SPATIAL STRUCTURE IN WEST AFRICA

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Urban related studies in the Spatial Sciences are often concerned with the spatial structure of urban centres. There is very little known in the literature about socio-spatial segregation in urban centres.

That is there is a spatial dimension to social differentiation and segregation observable in urban centres. It is imperative to appreciate the fact that the spatial structure of an urban centre is a reflection over time of the socio-economic pulse of that community. As available studies show, there is increasing socio-spatial segregation in urban centres along income lines for example. The knowledge of social difference and segregation within a spatial context in urban centres is very much needed.

It is useful for the design and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes, provision of social services and infrastructure, slum upgrading schemes and the formulation and implementation of regulatory and compliance policies. When the urban socio-spatial structure is not taken into cognizance, then urban planning and policy implementation becomes problematic. With the use of Geographic Information Technology in urban management, there is the increasing need to integrate socio-economic data in GIS databases. However, the non-availability of socio-economic data at such disaggregated scales as neighbourhood and household levels is a major factor inhibiting the socio-spatial study of urban centres in West Africa. This paper examines the socio-spatial structure of Ibadan Metropolis (the erstwhile largest urban centre in West Africa). Knowing what factors helped to shape its socio-spatial structure is also very important. Findings could also help to furnish some clue to the puzzle of rising poverty and social segregation in West Africa in particular and Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.