

A Omenya - A Networks Approach To Understanding The Role Of The Market And The State In Housing

The Cases Of Nairobi, Kenya And Johannesburg, South Africa

ajol.info This paper presents an outline case for use of 'housing networks concept' to unpack housing problems in the context of Johannesburg, South Africa and Nairobi, Kenya.

It begins by defining housing networks and outlining areas of knowledge where the 'networks concept' has been used. The paper then develops a case for application of 'networks' in understanding urban housing problems, focusing on the roles of the state, the market and civil society.

It explores resource origins, allocation, flows and destination in low-income housing in Nairobi, Kenya and Johannesburg, South Africa. The paper argues that the networks for land delivery make land inaccessible for the low-income in both cities. The means of accessing finance for housing available to the poor tend to be exploitative despite government regulation in the case of Johannesburg. Provision of infrastructure, services and social amenities ignore the collective resources of the low-income. Labour and sweat equity concepts are misplaced in light of cheap labour and unemployment, particularly in Nairobi. Building standards, materials and technology favour the upper- income despite allowance in both cities for lower building standards.

Key lessons and conclusions are drawn at the end.

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