

# **Exploring the Population and Economic Growth Dynamics in Former Homeland Settlements between 1996 and 2011**

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## **Abstract:**

Former homelands were established in order to create separate self-governed states for the black population of South Africa, the epitome of the Apartheid government policy of separate development and social engineering. After 1994 these areas were integrated with the rest of the administrative regions of South Africa. These largely rural areas have developed a variety of settlement types with varying levels of economic agglomeration and population concentration that are still faced with the legacy of unsustainable settlements. These areas mostly characterised with dense rural settlements and traditional land tenure have growing towns where economic activity still does not match the growth in population and are perceived to have struggling economies, high grant dependence and low urbanisation rates. This paper examines the population and economic growth, level of urbanisation and spatial agglomeration within former homelands using the three census years (1996, 2001 and 2011) as well as the proportion of social grant recipients across settlements in order to get a better understanding of the spatial development patterns in these areas. A weighted mean growth was used to determine the relative strength of spatial agglomeration and diffusion patterns and an age cohort analysis was used to indicate population movement. A simple linear regression was used to assess the relationship between population settlement patterns and economic growth on the prevalence of social grant recipients across settlements. The results indicate firstly a growth and increased concentration of population within settlements indicating that natural increase is outpacing the out migration. Secondly; increased urbanisation and spatial agglomeration within former homeland urban centres is accompanied by a marginal economic growth which conforms to theoretical predictions. However, the economic growth in former homelands is happening at a slower pace than in the rest of South Africa. Thirdly, although having a higher proportion of grant recipients compared to the rest of South Africa, there is a negative correlation between the proportions of social grant recipients and spatial agglomeration. This indicates that the proportion of grant recipients are declining as economic activity and population agglomerates within former homeland urban centres.