



Spatial (in)justice and the post-apartheid state

The Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, cordially invites you to a webinar organised by the Democracy and Civic Engagement Unit on spatial (in)justice and the post-apartheid state.

This discussion will focus on the continuation of the legacy of apartheid, focusing on how the zoning laws of apartheid gave birth to the modern-day organisation of cities in post-apartheid South Africa. The conversation will focus on the effects of spatial injustice in South Africa, its linkages to apartheid, race, and class and how it has perpetuated cyclical poverty and limited access to service delivery for some communities in South Africa. With reference to young people, the conversation will also explore the effects of spatial injustice on the South African youth and how it has affected their access to opportunities and broader socio-economic rights. This discussion forms part of a series of discussions looking at youth participation in politics and elections, the factors that influence this participation and how youth representation and participation can be improved.

WEBINAR:

Spatial (in)justice and the post-apartheid state

Wednesday 8 September 2021

11:00 – 13:00 SAST

REGISTER ON ZOOM

Background

The Constitution of South Africa provides for the right to access adequate housing and places an obligation on the state to take reasonable measures within available resources to ensure the progressive realisation of this right.¹ The South African government has taken steps to ensure that this right is progressively realised through government housing initiatives such as the Reconstruction and Development Program, a government funded housing program set to help those in need of adequate housing and similar projects that aim to provide housing.² However, the progress and success of these programs has slowed down significantly resulting in backlogs and extended waiting periods to access this housing for those in need. The need for housing and the unavailability of affordable housing in most cities with South Africa, coupled with increasing rates of urbanisation and existing socio-economic woes of the populous has led to the rise of informal settlements. As of 2018, statistics recorded that 13.6% of South Africans lived in informal settlements,³ with projections that this figure was set to increase as a result of rapid urbanisation and the impediments to access adequate housing including corruption in the national government schemes and the costs and space issues related to housing.

Spatial justice in South Africa and the results of apartheid zoning that continue to affect the South African population is central to the new democratic nation's prevailing injustices. Spatial Justice 'involves the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and opportunities to use them'.⁴ Spatial injustice entrenches inequalities along the lines of race and class in South Africa. Studies illustrate how the 'apartheid cities' still exist in post-apartheid South Africa; this is reflected in how the cities are organised where affluent and well serviced neighbourhoods are built and continue to be developed closer to the heart of the cities and opportunities. These neighbourhoods used to be the 'white only' areas of apartheid cities where black people were outlawed from living albeit working there. Twenty-seven years on from the advent of democracy and the end apartheid the only difference is that black people can now legally live in these areas, however they remain inaccessible for the black majority. Relegating a significant portion of the population, majority of whom are black to the peripheries of the cities, a significant portion of the population living in these areas live in unsuitable and informal housing. The location of this housing creates inequalities in access which affects many aspects of the lived experience of dwellers in these areas including accessing employment, the cost of commuting as well as access to good quality amenities. One such demographic disproportionately affected by these effects of spatial injustice is the youth.

South African youth have been labelled as a politically apathetic generation; this is a trend that shows up most strongly in election data where the youth make up a large percentage of the non-voting population. The 2019 general election data shows that 66% of the population did not register to vote, and the turnout among registered youth was low. This declining trend is also seen at local government level where in 2016 it is reported that only 53% of the eligible youth registered to vote and of those registered, it is estimated that less than 50% actually voted.

The trend of declining youth participation in mainstream politics and political processes is not peculiar to South Africa and is a globally prevailing trend. Youth participation in politics becomes a key discussion in context such as the South African one, where young people form a significant portion of the population and on the African continent where the demographics are moving towards more youthful populations, it is recorded that young people make up approximately 60% of the population of Africa.

Several reasons have been given as explanations for the low youth participation in elections. Research suggests that the South African youth are frustrated by formal political processes such as elections and do not believe in their ability to yield results and change the lived condition of the masses.⁵ This can be seen in situations of spatial injustice and the inability to improve the lived experience of a majority of the South African population. Issues such as corruption, poor service delivery and the age debate in mainstream political participation have also been said to influence youth voter participation in South Africa.⁶

Objectives

This webinar aims to understand the extent that spatial injustice has affected the youth in South Africa particularly relating to access to opportunities and broader socio-economic rights and other aspects of the lived experience of South African youth. The webinar also aims to facilitate a conversation that will shed light on how issues like spatial injustice affect the youth's interaction with politics in South Africa and what impact it will have on their participation in the upcoming local government elections

Specifically, the webinar discussion will attempt to answer these key questions:

- How does spatial injustice entrench inequality in South Africa?
- How has the youth as a demographic specifically been affected by spatial injustice?
- To what extent does social injustice have an effect on access to socio-economic rights, particularly for the youth?
- How does spatial injustice contribute to voter apathy among the youth?
- What strategies can be adopted to mitigate the negative effects of spatial justice on South Africa's youth?

Endnotes

- 1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 s26(1)-(2).
- 2 Ground Up 'Everything you need to know about government housing' <https://www.groundup.org.za/article/everything-you-need-know-about-government-housing/>
- 3 Stats SA <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=11241>.
- 4 E Soja 'The city and spatial justice.' (2020) *Justice spatiale/Spatial justice*, 1(1) 2.
D Tshuma and G Zvaita 'Political Fatalism and Youth Apathy in South Africa An Analysis of the 2019 General Election' <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/political-fatalism-and-youth-apathy-in-south-africa/>.
- 6 D Tshuma and G Zvaita (n5 above).
T Chauke 'Youth Apathy in an Electoral Democracy: A Critical Discourse on Civil Participation in South Africa' 2020 *African Journal of Gender, Society and Development* 48.

Speakers

Opening remarks:

Ms Bonolo Makgale

Programme Manager, Democracy and Civic Engagement Unit, Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria

Moderator:

Ms Tariro Sekeramayi

Intern, Democracy and Civic Engagement Unit, Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria

Panellists:

- **Dr Sanele Sibanda**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Jurisprudence, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria

- **Dr Isolde de Villiers**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Mercantile Law, Faculty of Law, University of the Free State

- **Mr Buhle Boo**

Head of Political Organising & Campaigns Ndifuna Ukwazi

- **Ms Ntando Mlambo**

Lecturer, Department of Historical and Constructive Theology, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of the Free State

Event details

Wednesday 8 September 2021

09:00 GMT / 10:00 WAT / 11:00 SAST / 12:00 EAT

All participants are required to [register on Zoom](#).

The event will be live streamed on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

Contacts

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