



SAPDN

SOUTHERN AFRICAN POLICY
AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS



Searching for the nexus between Spatiality and Social Policy in South Africa

Professor Ndangwa Noyoo

Director and Senior Researcher

Southern African Policy and
Development Nexus (SAPDN)

Presented at the 2024 Social Policy in
Africa Conference 15-17 April 2024

Southern Sun Hotel, City of Tshwane,
South Africa

Introduction:
Spatial
inequality/injustice
in South Africa is
easily discernible.



Introduction

- After the Dutch European colonisers landed on the shores of present-day South Africa in 1652, they set out to occupy and then carve out this territory for themselves.
- This process would ensue for close to 350 years through direct conquest and the annexation of the land of the indigenous people, via stealth means, while relying on so-called treaties which the Europeans signed with indigenous leaders of local polities, and then later through draconian policies and legislation that stripped the original inhabitants of this country of their land.

Introduction

- Land alienation became a cornerstone of colonial domination and apartheid, and its effects are still being felt by the majority African people of South Africa.
- After 1994, when South Africa became a democratic country, there were concerted efforts to respond to the inherited spatial patterns from colonialism and apartheid.
- However, Todes and Turok (2018) refer to this scenario as “much experimentation with spatial initiatives, but without any overarching vision or policy framework since the end of apartheid.”

Spatial policy instruments post-apartheid

- The White Paper on South African Land Policy (1997):
- **The government is committed to a land reform programme that will take place on a willing-seller, willing-buyer basis.**
- Rather than become directly involved in land purchase for the land redistribution programme, government will provide grants and services to assist the needy with the purchase of land.

Spatial policy instruments post-apartheid

- National Development Plan (NDP) (2011)
- **The NDP recognises that the spatial challenges faced by all areas are not the same, and as such, there is a for differentiated response.**
- It also calls for a spatial vision and framework to be developed. Spatial transformation will not materialise by itself (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2011).

Spatial policy instruments post-apartheid

- **Spatial transformation:** Through the overall Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) – anchored on job creation, housing and transport.
- **The National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF)** - restructuring and organising of settlements and economic activities from the segregated spatial patterns established during colonial and apartheid times to address/alter the inefficiencies, injustices and inequalities, in access to opportunities resulting from these patterns.

Main premise of my presentation

- The first premise of my presentation:

Spatiality should be embedded in the formulation of social policy and its implementation, and not always responding to the outcomes of mainly urban as well as rural spaces' decay or challenges, which are still being defined by colonial and apartheid imperatives.

Main premise of my presentation

- The second premise of my presentation:
 - ❖ Social policy for transforming colonial-apartheid spatiality should be underpinned by **NORMATIVE POSITIONS** and linked to the aspired or state vision of a **DEVELOPMENTAL STATE**.
 - ❖ It should not be the present **RESIDUAL** perspective: Cash transfers, social grants, social wage, indigent lists, and so forth. These merely act as 'band-aid' OR 'mopping up the ravages of capitalism'.
 - ❖ It should be social policy that seeks to create the "GOOD SOCIETY" or a "BETTER LIFE FOR ALL".

Main premise of my presentation

- *The third premise of my paper speaks to the notion and understanding that geographic space or spatiality has not been decolonised in South Africa since 1994.*
- For spatiality to be translated into developmental outcomes in South Africa, it must first be decolonised (Noyoo & Sobantu, 2018).
- For this to transpire, a process of social re-engineering (Noyoo, 2019) must be set into motion, and it must be informed, again, by social policy.
- However, it should not be any version of social policy, but it should be transformative social policy.

Colonialism of a Special Type: Genesis of Spatial Injustice in South Africa

- Many works on spatiality have indeed captured the manner in which colonialism and apartheid had shaped geographic space into bifurcated landmasses within the territory of South Africa.
- They have also discussed in varying degrees the role that colonialism played in engendering the spatial injustice that the country sits with today.
- Arguably, many of them have not qualified the nature of colonialism that begat this type of spatiality that is extremely unequal and unjust. ***In this paper, I argue that we need to seriously consider South Africa's colonialism, which was quite different to other African countries' colonial domination – to some degrees.***

Colonialism of a Special Type: Genesis of spatial injustice in South Africa

- It is therefore important to mention and not gloss over this variant of colonialism in South Africa known as *colonialism of a special type*.
- ***One key reason why post-apartheid South Africa's efforts aimed at erasing the inherited colonial-apartheid spatial patterns are not bearing fruit, it is because that they were deviously, perniciously and sadly, ingeniously designed through a deliberate and scientific process of social engineering. Colonialism of a special type, which culminated in the system of apartheid, systematically saw to this (Noyoo, 2019).***

Colonialism of a Special Type: Genesis of Spatial Injustice in South Africa

- It is not coincidental that South Africa's rural and especially urban landscapes were and continue to be somewhat distinct from the rest of the African continent.
- It is clearly discernible that most of the money from the sale of gold, diamonds and other natural resources of the country was poured back into the enclave for white South Africa, where world class facilities and services were created and availed to exclusively white people of European descent.

Colonialism of a Special Type: Genesis of Spatial Injustice in South Africa

- White South Africa could be easily likened to any metropolis in Western Europe due to heavy investments in both physical and social infrastructure by the colonial and apartheid authorities.
- Why? It is because Europeans erroneously thought that they would be in power and exploit the majority African people in perpetuity, and thus made sure that they created enclaves of privilege, opulence and comfort for themselves.
- This was at the expense of the well-being of the African masses who were toiling in the mines, farms and factories of white people, while being exploited and earning slave wages.

Colonialism of a Special Type: Genesis of Spatial Injustice in South Africa

- Evidence from research reveals to us that South Africa was indeed and continues to be a two-state nation. This duality did not just emerge from nowhere, but it was systematically crafted and entrenched by the colonial and apartheid authorities to the letter.
- In its Human Development Report of 1994, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), after disaggregating the Human Development Index (HDI) of the same year for South Africa, revealed the following startling results:

Colonialism of a Special Type: Genesis of Spatial Injustice in South Africa

- “The overall HDI for South Africa is 0.650 – but that for whites is 0.878, while for blacks it is 0.462. If white South Africa were a separate country, it would rank 24 in the world (just after Spain).”
- “Black South Africa would rank 123 in the world (just above Congo). This is not just two different peoples, these are almost two different worlds (UNDP, 1994, p. 98).”

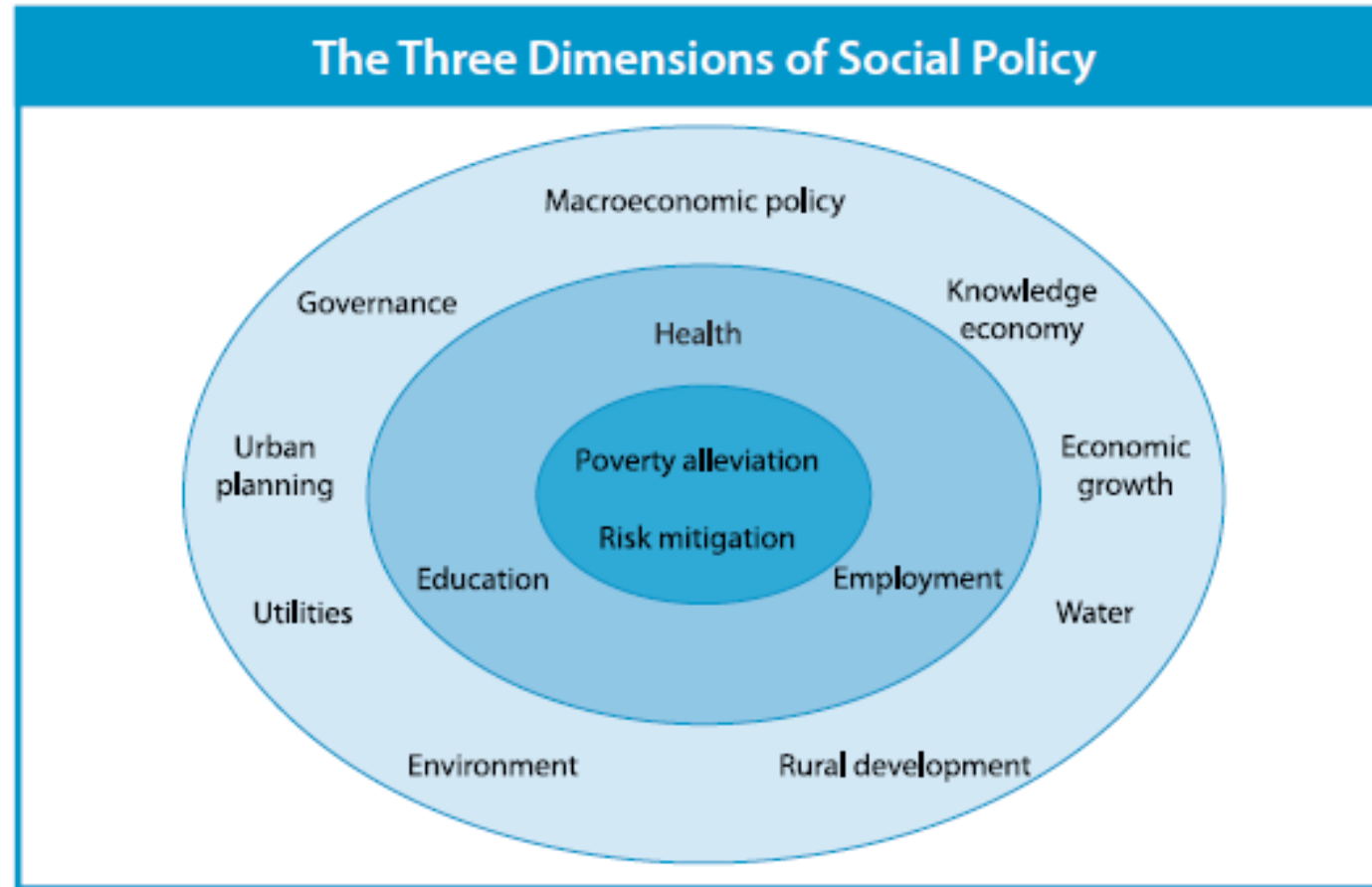


- Alexandra Township and Sandton City



Sandton
juxtaposed
against
Alexandra
Township

Bringing in Comprehensive Social Policy Perspectives into Spatiality in South Africa



Comprehensive Social Policy Perspectives for Spatiality in South Africa

1. *Social protection – the inner core*

Historically, social protection has formed the core of social policy. In the diagram, it is represented by the inner circle - it comprises ***social insurance, social assistance*** and the central element of ***family care and solidarity***.

2. Investing in people – the second outer ring.

3. *Supporting social development – the third outer ring.*

Comprehensive Social Perspectives for Analysing Spatiality in South Africa

- ✓ *There must be an integration of social concerns into all aspects of public policy, which aim to remove barriers and create a 'level playing field' for all geographical regions and social groups to participate equally in the development process (ESCWA, 2009).*
- ✓ **THIS IS WHERE THE NEXUS BETWEEN SOCIAL POLICY AND SPATIALITY LIES!**
- ✓ *It calls upon **policy-makers** to design policies in such a way as to ensure equal access across social groups, not only to education and health-care, but also to water, land, transportation, communication, information and knowledge.*

Transformative Social Policy

- Transformative social policy innovations bode well for transformative change and in this case, spatiality that includes:
 - ✓ ***increasing trend toward universalisation*** (leaving no one behind);
 - ✓ ***better integration of policy instruments*** (or policy coherence) ***across the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development;***
 - ✓ ***more inclusive forms of participation in policy design and implementation;***
 - ✓ ***new forms of partnership; and new directions in global and regional social policy*** (UNRISD, 2016).

Which way forward?

- Social policy can only be able to transform urban and rural spaces and help to delink them from colonial and apartheid imperatives, while working in tandem with other public policies, ***if it is transformative and not residual as in the present case.***
- Social policy should be underpinned by philosophical positions – normative position.
- It must be ideologically nuanced with the objective of creating the “Good Society” or better life for all.

Which way forward?

- Social policy must deal with four major concerns of national development:
 - ✓ *distribution,*
 - ✓ *protection,*
 - ✓ *production and Reproduction* (UNRISD, 2016).
- *The quest for a capable and interventionist state - A Developmental State - in South Africa, needs to be linked to spatiality.*

References

- Department of Land Affairs (1997). *White Paper on South African Land Policy*. Department of Land Affairs.
- National Planning Commission (NPC), (2011). *National Development Plan*. Pretoria: NPC.
- Noyoo, N., & Sobantu, M. (2018). Deconstructing and Decolonising Spatiality: Voluntary and affordable housing for a transforming Johannesburg. In M. T. Miyambo (Ed.), *Reversing Urban Inequality in Johannesburg* (pp. 35-42). London: Routledge.
- Todes, A., & Turok, I. (2018). Spatial Inequalities and Policies in South Africa: Place-based or People-centred? *Progress in Planning*, 123, 1-32.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1994). *Human Development Report*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) (2006). *Transformative Social Policy: Lessons from UNRISD Research*. Geneva: UNRISD.
- United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) (nd). *Transformative Social Policy: Research Programme*. Geneva: UNRISD.