

This is a repository copy of *Spatial Intersectionality and Transformative Justice as Frameworks for Equitable Urban Planning in Divided and Post-Conflict Cities.* .

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/208414/>

Version: Published Version

Article:

Forde, Susan (2024) Spatial Intersectionality and Transformative Justice as Frameworks for Equitable Urban Planning in Divided and Post-Conflict Cities. *Cities*. 104796. ISSN: 0264-2751

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2024.104796>

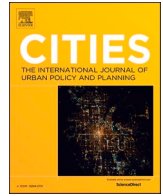
Reuse

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence. This licence allows you to distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon the work, even commercially, as long as you credit the authors for the original work. More information and the full terms of the licence here:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



Spatial intersectionality and transformative justice as frameworks for equitable urban planning in divided and post-conflict cities

Susan Forde

University of York, Derwent College, YO10 5DD, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Spatial intersectionality
Transformative justice
Urban planning
Cape Town
Divided cities

ABSTRACT

In post-conflict and divided cities where urban spatial injustice is reinforced by enduring divisions, the frameworks of spatial intersectionality and transformative justice hold significant potential to address inequity through urban planning. All cities can be considered divided in some way and these divisions often represent spatial injustice or inequitable access to resources and space. However, in post-conflict and divided cities these divisions may be entrenched and may transgenerationally maintain conditions of inequity and violence. This paper presents spatial intersectionality and transformative justice as frameworks for urban planning that have the potential to address inequity and divisions in all cities, but particularly in cities categorised as divided due to violence or conflict. I propose a set of guiding questions for transformative justice informed urban planning.

1. Introduction

In places where conflict and violence have shaped city space, restrictions to movement and divisions typically linger, for example Belfast, Cape Town, Mostar, and Jerusalem, among others. These cities are sometimes referred to as deeply divided cities and in some contexts the damage to city space may be defined as urbicide, the intentional and widespread destruction of the urban environment (for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Palestine, Ukraine) (Coward, 2008: 36). Lingering divisions and stalled reconstruction often materialise as inequitable access to space and can be more complex dependent on intersections of oppressions. At the same time, structurally marginalised people are frequently excluded from planning discourse with planning approaches often assuming homogeneity of mobility and replicating economic and social forces (Hidayati et al., 2021: 2; Martino et al., 2020; Awan et al., 2011). The result is that the movement of some is privileged over movement by others (Kristensen et al., 2023; Massey, 1991). While approaches for improving city spaces, such as the concept of 'liveability', have been widely used in an a-political manner but in practice can materialise as gentrification (Tolfo & Doucet, 2022: 8). The emergence of neoliberal governance and increased interaction and movement between the global south and global north spatialities, led to the conceptualisation of radical and insurgent planning approaches as transformative planning approaches (Huq, 2020: 371). I present the frameworks of spatial intersectionality and transformative justice as approaches which build on insurgent planning approaches with a

specific focus on cities after a conflict and deeply divided cities. The use of intersectionality for equity in planning approaches is well established (Williams et al., 2023, 167). I use intersectionality here specifically as spatial intersectionality, to encompass how structures of inequality operate and restrict spatially and how intersections of identity form our experiences in public and private space (Cho et al., 2013: 797). Spatial intersectionality as praxis allows us to identify the ways in which violence is perpetuated in everyday spaces, and the ways in which marginalised groups are often eclipsed in addressing and challenging violence and inequality. While transformative justice, as an abolitionist framework, is concerned with challenging the systemic reproduction of social and structural harms, identifying the linkages, and interactions between these, and exploring how such harms can be addressed (Mingus, 2019; Zehr, 2011). A transformative justice informed approach to urban planning therefore engages in understanding the roots of social and structural inequity to address violence and divisions. Spatial intersectionality and transformative justice are complementary frameworks for engaging in planning that is based on the needs of structurally marginalised groups and holds potential for re-envisioning public space for equitable public usage and divesting from structurally violent urban planning.

2. Divided cities and spatial injustice

In South Africa, urban planning and design has historically been weaponised to divide and separate communities through colonialism,

E-mail address: susan.forde@york.ac.uk.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2024.104796>

Received 28 October 2023; Received in revised form 5 December 2023; Accepted 10 January 2024

Available online 22 January 2024

0264-2751/© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

racialisation, and white supremacy. The racialised system of apartheid, meaning separateness in Afrikaans, resulted in the systematic displacement of people racialised as Black or ‘Coloured’,¹ to townships and Bantustans or “homelands,” and has an enduring spatial legacy which shapes health, mortality, access to public spaces, education, and basic resources. Following the end of apartheid, a restorative-based approach to transitional justice approach was adopted, with social and economic projects promised, including housing projects and financial reparations. However, many of the measures were not fully implemented (Huchzermeyer, 2006; Yates, 2018). Neo-liberalism and gentrification have also reinforced these enduring and racialised spatial divides and over thirty years since the end of apartheid spatial inequality remains a consistent issue in South Africa (Webb, 2021; McFarlane, 2018; Forde, 2022). Townships and informal settlements often have poor infrastructure which exacerbates the vulnerabilities of individuals with intersecting social categorisations, for example, younger people, older people, people with disabilities, and intersections therein. As of 2016, 62.2 % of young people aged 15–24 lived in income poverty in South Africa, 33.1 % live with multidimensional poverty facing wellbeing and health issues (De Lannoy et al., 2018: 2) and poor access to basic utilities (Ndifuna Ukwazi, 2014). One result of this is high levels of survival crime and high levels of gangsterism with young people in communities’ which are predominately racialised as Black or ‘Coloured’, often vulnerable to gang or poacher recruitment and at higher risk of violence, gender-based violence, exploitation, and substance misuse (Anciano & Piper, 2019; Forde, 2022; Harvey et al., 2021: 2; Thando, Interview, 2022; Nate, Interview, 2022; Wandile, Interview, 2020). Such physical and structural violence (Galtung, 1969) can be understood as an injustice which restricts movement and use of space (Ducure, 2018).

3. Planning, intersectionality, and transformative justice in post-conflict and divided cities

The application of spatial intersectionality and transformative justice in urban planning offers a framework to extend the work and approach of radical and insurgent planning and conceptualisations of the ‘just city’ with a necessary focus on the intersections of oppression (Fainstein, 2009; Song, 2015: 155; Thomas, 2008). Spatial intersectionality and transformative justice are complementary frameworks that retain a politicisation of engagement with space and are informed by historical consciousness with a focus on transgressing hegemonic state centric processes, similar to the aims of insurgent planning (Miraftab, 2009: 44; Morris, 2000). Spatial intersectionality can be used to identify how overlapping social categorisations such as racialisation, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, class, and ‘colour’ (Crenshaw, 1991: 1245) interact with, and are impacted by spatial planning (Morrell & Blackwell, 2022: 3; Irazábal & Huerta, 2016) and influence access to geographical spaces or resources (Jang & Kim, 2018). Intersectionality can be argued as integral for exploring what Massey refers to as the ‘power-geometry of space-time compression’ and ‘the politics of mobility and access’ (Massey, 1991: 25–26) which is intricately tied to ‘space/power/identity’ (Massey, 1995: 285). Transformative justice further supports this focus, due to its intersectional ‘kitchen table’ origins led by ‘Queer, Black, Brown, and Indigenous womxn’ (Brazzell, 2020). As a process, transformative justice focuses on the social circumstances that has led to or promoted harmful behaviour (Zehr, 2011) this can be applied to questions of urban planning in dismantling obstacles to peace and justice (Protonentis et al., 2021). Kaba (2021: 149) frames transformative justice as a way of ‘trying to figure out how we respond to violence and harm in a way that doesn’t cause more violence and harm’. This framing also provides an important direction in approaching post-conflict reconstruction and in addressing divisions,

¹ ‘Coloured’ was used by the apartheid government in South Africa and is used in acknowledgement of this classification.

Table 1
Extending questions of transformative justice for urban planning.

Transformative justice guiding questions (Mingus, 2019)	Transformative justice informed urban planning questions
“What kinds of community infrastructure can we create to support more safety, transparency, sustainability, care and connection (e. g., a network of community safe houses that those in danger can use, an abundance of community members who are skilled at leading interventions to violence)?	Are there community and public spaces that are safe, inclusive, easy to access via public transport, and allow for access and use of space without spending money? Is there adequate affordable housing? Is the community served by sufficient amenities such as water, electricity, internet, refuse collection? Are there local schools and accessible leisure spaces?
What are the skills we need to be able to prevent, respond to, heal from, and take accountability for harmful, violent, and abusive behaviors?	Does the current infrastructure support the local environment? What spaces are available for community work and support?
What do survivors and people who have caused harm need?	What barriers are there for involvement in planning processes, how can different ways of engagement in such processes be better facilitated?
Why do survivors and people who have caused harm have so few options in our community?	How may current urban planning processes perpetuate violence and structural inequalities?
What are some of the harmful ways that we treat each other that help set the stage for violence and abuse, and how can we change this?”	How may the current infrastructure create the conditions for violence and divisions? What types of infrastructure are prioritised over others, does this serve the needs of the community?

violence, and harm, especially when post-conflict urban governance can be co-opted and may reinforce divisions and inequalities (Bollens, 2006: 111). Transformative justice as a process of addressing harms, is not something that can be applied, but rather a process that involves challenging ‘violent reactions and ideologies’ (Mingus, 2019) and ‘meaningful praxis’ alongside new approaches and new values (Hooks, 1994; Daly, 2001–2002: 83). The frameworks of spatial intersectionality and transformative justice can be used by a range of potential planners working between invited and invented spaces (Miraftab, 2009: 39–41; Sandercock, 1998: 204) to address issues of material redistribution and spatial reparations (Forde et al., 2021). Moving beyond neoliberal framed modes of participation is essential for re-imagining future spaces and for the acknowledgement of the spatial agency of a wide range of actors (Miraftab, 2009; McGill, 2019). This is particularly true for deeply divided cities such as Cape Town as detailed above. For urban planning to address inequity in divided cities and post-conflict spaces there is a necessity to adopt frameworks that acknowledge and work to deconstruct the systems that increase the risk of violence for structurally marginalised people (van der Heijden et al., 2019). In Table 1, I present a set of guiding questions of transformative justice in urban planning as an extension of Mingus (2019) guiding questions of transformative justice. These questions have been formed around research reflections from interviews with people working and living in Cape Town, South Africa.

4. Spatial intersectionality and transformative justice for equitable cities

Spatial intersectionality and transformative justice are potential frameworks for addressing spatial injustice and inequity, across the full spectrum of potential planners and through numerous insurgent spaces (Miraftab, 2009: 39–41; Sandercock, 1998: 204). In some suggested forms of usage, spatial intersectionality can evidence barriers to

participation in planning and urban activism. This is of relevance in post-conflict and divided cities; where infrastructure or cultural heritage spaces may be destroyed through uricide, or where there is long-standing unequitable access to city space and resources. Applying the framework of transformative justice to urban planning prompts spatial activists to consider the socio-spatial context of planning and explore alternative place making processes that address violence and divisions. These complementary frameworks have the potential to broaden the scope of urban planning to address inequity, violence, and division, and can support alternative modes of engagement with planning and reconstruction.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Susan Forde: Conceptualization, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The author declares that they have no competing interests.

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to research participants for their time and sharing their experiences without which the research would not be possible. Sincere thanks are also extended to the editor and reviewers for their comments and to The Leverhulme Trust who funded this research (ECF-2020-486).

References

- Anciano, F., & Piper, L. (2019). *Democracy disconnected. Participation and governance in a city of the South*. Routledge (E-Book).
- Awan, N., Schneider, T., & Till, J. (2011). *Spatial agency: Other ways of doing architecture*. Routledge.
- Bollens, S. A. (2006). Urban planning and peace building. *Progress in Planning*, 66(2), 67–139.
- Brazzell, M. (2020). We keep us safe: The transformative justice movement. May 28th. Roar Magazine. Available from: <https://roarmag.org/essays/transformative-justice-movement/>. (Accessed December 2022).
- Cho, S., Crenshaw, K.W., and McCall L. (2013) Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis, *Signs* Vol. 38, No. 4, Intersectionality: Theorizing power, empowering theory (summer 2013).
- Coward, M. (2008). *Uricide: The politics of urban destruction* (Vol. 66). Routledge.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Identity politics, intersectionality, and violence against women. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299.
- Daly, E. (2001–2002). Transformative Justice: Charting Path to Reconciliation. *International Legal Perspectives*, 12, 73–184. Available from: <https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/intlegp12&id=77&collection=journals&index=#> (Accessed June 2022).
- De Lannoy, A., Storme, E., Mudiriza, G., & Smith, C. (2018). *The state of youth wellbeing in South Africa*. Cape Town: Poverty & Inequality Initiative, Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town. Available from: [http://www.povertyandinequality.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/95/2018/Publications/Youth_Explorer-Policy_Brief_2018.pdf#:~:text=More%20than%20two%20decades%20after%20South%20Africa%E2%80%99s%20transition,as%20educational%20attainment%2C%20employment%2C%20and%20health%20remain%20low](http://www.povertyandinequality.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/95/2018/Publications/Youth_Explorer-Policy_Brief_2018.pdf#:~:text=More%20than%20two%20decades%20after%20South%20Africa%E2%80%99s%20transition,as%20educational%20attainment%2C%20employment%2C%20and%20health%20remain%20low.). (Accessed December 2022) (policy brief).
- Ducre, K. A. (2018). The Black feminist spatial imagination and an intersectional environmental justice. *Environmental Sociology*, 4(1), 22–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23251042.2018.1426089>
- Fainstein, S. S. (2009). Planning and the Just City. In P. Marcuse, et al. (Eds.), *Searching for the Just City: Debates in urban theory and practice* (pp. 19–39). London: Routledge.
- Forde, S. (2022). The violence of space and spaces of violence: Peace as violence in unequal and divided spaces. *Political Geography*, 93, 102529. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102529>
- Forde, S., Kappler, S., & Björkdahl, A. (2021). Peacebuilding, structural violence & spatial reparations in post-colonial South Africa. *The Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 15(3), 327–346. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2021.1909297>
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191.
- Harvey, L., Cooke, P., & The Bishop Simeon Trust. (2021). Reimagining voice for transnational peace education through participatory arts with South African youth. *Journal of Peace Education*, 18(1), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17400201.2020.1819217>
- van der Heijden, I., Abrahams, N., & Harries, J. (2019). Additional layers of violence: The intersections of gender and disability in the violence experiences of women with physical disabilities in South Africa. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 34(4), 826–847. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516645818>
- Hidayati, I., Tan, W., & Yamu, C. (2021). Conceptualizing mobility inequality: Mobility and accessibility for the marginalized. *Journal of Planning Literature*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08854122211012898>
- Hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching To Transgress* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Huchzermeyer, M. (2006). The new instrument for upgrading informal settlements in South Africa: Contributions and constraints. *Informal settlements: A perpetual challenge*, 41, 61.
- Huq, E. (2020). Seeing the insurgent in transformative planning practices. *Planning Theory*, 19(4), 371–391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095219901290>
- Irazábal, C., & Huerta, C. (2016). Intersectionality and planning at the margins: LGBTQ youth of color in New York. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 23(5), 714–732. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2015.1058755>
- Jang, S., & Kim, J. (2018). Remediating food policy invisibility with spatial intersectionality: A case study in the Detroit Metropolitan Area. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 37(1), 167–187. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.16.194>
- Kaba, M. (2021). Moving past punishment, interview with Ayana Young, 2019. In M. Kaba (Ed.), *We do this 'til we free us. Abolitionist organising and transforming justice*. Haymarket Books (2021).
- Kristensen, N. G., Lindberg, M. R., & Freudendal-Pedersen, M. (2023). Urban mobility injustice and imagined sociospatial differences in cities. *Cities*, 137, Article 104320.
- Martino, E., Yon, A., & Whitzman, C. (2020). Planning with care: Violence prevention policy at the intersection of invisibilities. *Cities*, 103, 102764.
- Massey, D. (1991). *A global sense of place*. Marxism Today. June.
- Massey, D. (1995). Thinking radical democracy spatially. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 13(3), 283–288. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d130283>
- McFarlane, C. (2018). Fragment urbanism: Politics at the margins of the city. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 36(6), 1007–1025. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775818777496>
- McGill, D. (2019) Tackling structural violence through the transformative justice framework. Pp. 36–53, In ed. Evans, M (2019) *Transitional and transformative justice, critical and international perspectives*. Routledge, Oxon.
- Mingus, M. (2019). Transformative Justice. *Transform Harm*. Available from: <https://transformharm.org/transformative-justice-a-brief-description/> (Accessed June 2022).
- Mirafab, F. (2009). Insurgent planning: Situating radical planning in the global south. *Planning Theory*, 8(1), 32–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095208099297>
- Morrell, E., & Blackwell, D. (2022). Spatialized intersectionality: Gendered and racialized residential segregation and the Milwaukee lead crisis. *Environmental Justice*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.1089/env.2021.0015> (2022, Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.).
- Morris, R. (2000). *Stories of transformative justice*. Canadian Scholars Press.
- Ndifuna Ukwazi. (2014). Our toilets are dirty. Report of the social audit into the Janitorial Service for communal flush toilets in Khayelitsha. Available from: https://nu.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NU_SJC_social-audit-report-final.pdf. (Accessed December 2022) (Cape Town. July).
- Protonentis, A., Chordiya, R., Tiana, C., & Sumner, O. (2021). Centering the margins: Restorative and transformative justice as our path to social equity. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 43(3), 333–354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10841806.2020.1868159>
- Sandercock, L. (1998). *Towards cosmopolis: Planning for multicultural cities*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Song, L. K. (2015). Race, transformative planning, and the just city. *Planning Theory*, 14(2), 152–173. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095213517883>
- Thomas, J. M. (2008). The minority-race planner in the quest for a just city. *Planning Theory*, 7(3), 227–247.
- Tolfo, G., & Doucet, B. (2022). Livability for whom? Planning for livability and the gentrification of memory in Vancouver. *Cities*, 123, Article 103564.
- Webb, C. (2021). Liberating the family: Debt, education and racial capitalism in South Africa. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 39(1), 85–102. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775820942522>
- Williams, P. C., Binet, A., Alhasan, D. M., Riley, N. M., & Jackson, C. L. (2023). Urban planning for health equity must employ an intersectionality framework. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 89(2), 167–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2022.2079550>
- Yates, A. (2018). Justice delayed: The TRC recommendations 20 years late. Available from: Daily Maverick <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-09-05-justice-delayed-the-trc-recommendations-20-years-later/>. (Accessed June 2021).
- Zehr, H. (2011). Restorative or transformative justice? Eastern Mennonite University. Institute for Restorative Justice. <https://emu.edu/now/restorative-justice/2011/03/10/restorative-or-transformative-justice/> (blog).