



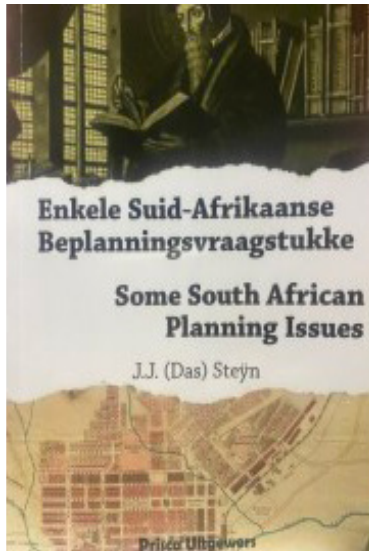
Published by the UFS

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**How to cite:** Mocwagae, K. 2023. Book review: Enkele Suid-Afrikaanse Beplanningsvraagstukke / Some South African Planning Issues. *Town and Regional Planning*, no. 83, pp. 70-71.

## Enkele Suid-Afrikaanse beplanningsvraagstukke / Some South African planning issues



**Author:** J.J. (Das) Steyn

**Publisher:** Orania –  
Prisca Uitgewers

**ISBN:** 9781998953004

**Date:** 2022

about planning dates to South Africa's colonial history from 6 April 1652 upon the arrival of the Dutch East India Company at the Cape of Good Hope. Steyn dates the arrival of his family in South Africa in 1668 and mentions the political events that took place in the establishment of the Afrikaner people.

The 'value of thinking' analysed and explained through Goudappel's Urbanistics concept is used as a methodology for systematic inventory and classification through physical planning and an understanding of how man interacts with his environment. The Urbanistics concept is centred around three values, namely: ideo-structure that values ideas of direct human activities; superstructure that organises and theorises thinking, and infrastructure as the physical appearance of things and related perceptions. It is through these three values of the Urbanistics concept that the book analyses and explains some South African planning issues. The book suggests that two Western thoughts of an intellectual revolution occurred prior to 1700 and in roughly 1900. Prior to 1700, people accepted the supreme ruler and mode of government. Between 1700 and 1900, people started using natural science to justify existence and relied on parliamentary democracy. In 1900, post-modernism was central, where those with the loudest voices had an opportunity to rule in a democratic system. In closing, the chapter discusses four philosophical anthropological approaches as the role of values such as Christian, Rationalistic, Naturalistic, and Marxist views. The author's work inclines to the Christian view whose primary purpose is to represent the culture of the community of people (*volk*).

In the discussion about planning issues, 'Sound planning: Wealth and poverty focuses' on capitalism and communism as the main economic models in the developed world.

### Book review by Kgosi Mocwagae, July 2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38140/xxx>

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

South African planning issues are always a point of discussion considering the colonial and apartheid history of the country. There are different viewpoints on such planning issues, about which Steyn writes from the position of an Afrikaner. The book is bilingual and consists of eight chapters (including introduction and reflection) on issues such as the influence of values of thinking; sound planning: wealth and poverty; confronting power to stop corruption; mercantilism and colonialism that have a grip on state capture; lessons from Afrikaners' urbanisation and acquisition of political power, and different values to alternative approaches to the land debate in South Africa.

#### 2. PLANNING ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THE BOOK

Planning and its history has generally been viewed as a technical exercise, despite its sociocultural, environmental, and economic impact on society. South Africa's current planning challenges require a historic reflection of events that led to some undesired outcomes. Most of what has been written

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The first focus of the chapter is on how external factors contributed to monopolisation by global oligarchs who have become billionaires and defied the boundaries of the intentions of capitalism and communism. An illustration of this is how, in 2010, some 388 dollar billionaires owned half of the global wealth. This figure decreased to only 62 individuals, demonstrating how capitalism results in fewer people owning more through monopolisation and impacting on sound planning.

'Confronting power to stop corruption' has five aspects that need to be considered in this regard. First, confronting power to eliminate poverty because it is a challenge that has led to many undesirable uprisings that can cause fatalities such as the Arab Spring. Secondly, exposing power to work because South Africa has three types of power, namely political, financial, and traditional, which all have their conflicting interests. Examples given in this regard are how political power under the former National Party and the current ANC regimes favour those in proximity; financial power has systems put in place by colonialism that generate wealth through minerals mostly by the British, and traditional power has an interest in indefinitely ruling over land, despite the lack of development. Thirdly, achieving desired goals that the government put in place in post-apartheid South Africa through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) that focused on the temporary solution of providing houses. This RDP model negatively affected the quality of education and did not create employment opportunities. Steyn suggests that increased economic growth or a lower birth rate can reduce poverty as it currently is. Fourthly, politicising by informing action, namely that change in South Africa can only be brought about by the thinking of the majority African population. In addition, it is suggested that the nationalisation of mines, as proposed by most to solve poverty, is not a practical solution because the price of the commodities will not be determined by them and will make them vulnerable in the greater

scheme of things. Lastly, the focus is on how to stop corruption, suggesting that the community engage in radical action by increasing access to education, developing infrastructure, and reducing the birth rate.

'Mercantilism and colonialism's grip on the South African state' experienced from 1652 had a planning impact. According to Steyn, there are four streams of blame regarding the impact of capitalism on South Africa. First, the conservative view that the British were to blame. Secondly, the English liberal view that the Afrikaners are to blame. Thirdly, the socialist view that blames capitalism. Lastly, Black people who blame White people. Therefore, resolving the blame of these streams mainly requires equality as a practice of treating people equally rather than making everything or everyone equal, according to Steyn. It is, however, unfortunate that, even if equality was concerned with treating people equally, South Africa would be wanting in the current democratic dispensation because wealth is still distinguishable along racial lines.

Lessons from 'Afrikaner urbanisation and political power in South Africa' highlight how Afrikaners were 50 years ahead of Blacks in terms of politics and urbanisation. In as much as the highlight is made, the primary focus is on the urbanisation and politicisation of Afrikaners over three eras. The first era was the founding and spreading across South Africa of the Afrikaner people from the mid-seventeenth century to the 1770s. This resulted in three groups: the Cape Afrikaans, spoken by the Coloureds and the colonists; the Orange River Afrikaans of the deculturalised Khoikhoi, and the Eastern Border Afrikaans, spoken in the Transvaal and the Free State. In the second era, urbanisation was driven by Rhode's British drive to take over all farms, and Afrikaners then had to subdivide their farms into smaller portions that were not viable. The Afrikaner urbanisation and political power have the following impact: in 1896, approximately 3% of Afrikaners were urbanised, 41% in 1926, and 80% by the 1970s. It should be noted that this represents

a period of colonial and apartheid rule that prioritised the wealth of the minority White population of South Africa. The third era is that of the Volk which established a strong Afrikaner culture, community, and economy. The Volk is defined as a cultural entity of the Afrikaners.

There are 'different values leading to alternative approaches to the land debate' in South Africa because of the African common history from Central Africa in roughly 1000 BC, while Western culture was introduced in the seventeenth century. The book raises five land debates. The first is based on Goudappel's Urbanistics concept as a methodological approach, emphasising that no theory, action, or viewpoint is value-free. Secondly, there are some thoughts on traditionalism, when people base their viewpoints on traditional ideas. Thirdly, there are levels of thinking where the Bantu people believe that land is sacred and belongs to both the ancestors and the living, while the Western viewpoint regards landownership as being classified as private or public. Fourthly, there are other post-apartheid debates on land such as poverty; governance; land reform and restitution; economy and growth, as well as land that is more than simply land.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The book has made great strides in creating a discussion about how pockets of society in South Africa view and value land. There is a detailed account of how historical values of African and Western cultures have developed over time, leading to different priorities attached to planning for land. Planning still has a long way to go in South Africa, but it will all have to start with understanding such issues so that the goal is more representative of the whole and not of political pockets that have their own interests.

I would, therefore, recommend the book because it opens the discussion about South African planning issues that can also be presented from various backgrounds and values to take the country forward.