

Sharad Chari. 2024. *Apartheid Remains*. Durham: Duke University Press. 460 pp.

Apartheid Remains presents a discerning study of the lasting legacies of racism and pinpoints the percolation of racism in the land and housing systems in South Africa. This work breaks new grounds in the study of postcoloniality from the lens of spatial hegemony, and it helps develop the perspective that freedom struggles are very much inherent in the existing South African social order. This book could easily be considered as a kaleidoscope of human geography and urban planning with the heavy infestation of apartheid in South Africa.

Apartheid Remains is a critique of 'apartheid statecraft' (p. 191). Chari pinpoints the way in which the South African government has put hollow market-based solutions for housing and land, including encouragement of homeownership and private investment in urban expansion, at the center stage in policy initiatives. In many urban areas, he argues, housing projects intended to alleviate the housing crisis often reproduce the spatial segregation of apartheid. Through his ethnographic work in Johannesburg, Chari demonstrates how these developments, instead of fostering integration, tend to segregate communities based on class and race. This spatial inequality, Chari posits, is a direct consequence of the apartheid-era practice of zoning based on race, and despite legal reforms, the impact of those policies continues to shape urban landscapes in the present (p. 54).

The book consists of two parts: "Racial Palimpsest" and "Remains of Revolution." In the first section, Chari evaluates the state's attempts to entail racial segregation and industrial development in South Durban. He highlights how these efforts often lacked a genuine understanding of the area's spatial realities, leading to persistent "spatial contradictions and struggles" due to the forced "determinative racial space" (p. 190).

The second part shifts focus to the resistance and resilience of South Durban's residents. Chari delves into various forms of resistance, from labor strikes in the 1970s to community-led environmental activism against industrial pollution. These movements are portrayed as part of a broader "genealogy of revolution" that challenges enduring structures of racial capitalism. Chari talks about the post-apartheid era (though it seems that apartheid never left the social and cultural psyche of South Africa), and what appears as a transformation of the racist society actually resonates with the apartheid regime. His book focuses on the continuous social inequality and lets the readers come to terms with the fact that spatial segregation foils every narrative that the apartheid era has passed in South Africa.

Chari begins by examining the persistent material and social divides that characterize post-apartheid South Africa. He argues that while the political system has undergone a significant shift, the dynamics of economy and social hierarchies built during apartheid have largely remained intact. These elements form the backbone of Chari's argument that the "remains" of apartheid are not just historical but continue to shape the lived realities of marginalized communities.

Furthermore, the book delves into the ways in which housing struggles are gendered. Chari takes note of the disproportionate impact that inadequate housing and land rights have on women (both Black and Indian), who are often excluded from decision-making processes regarding land use and property rights. He highlights the role of women in community organizing and resistance movements, showing how they have become central to the fight for

land justice in South Africa. Chari's analysis extends to the intersectionality of race, class, and gender, making it clear that the legacy of apartheid remains a multifaceted issue that cannot be reduced to a singular narrative.

Another significant contribution of Chari's work is his examination of the cultural dimensions of land and housing struggles. He argues that for many South Africans, land is not just a material asset but also a symbol of identity and belonging. Chari's focus on the symbolic importance of land provides a nuanced understanding of the persistence of apartheid's remains, as it underscores the emotional and psychological toll of continued marginalization (p. 72).

In the concluding chapters, the author throws a spotlight on grassroots activism and community initiatives that persist in contesting the post-apartheid framework in South Africa. He contends that these movements are essential in resisting the state's neoliberal policies and in promoting more just and inclusive governance. The book culminates in a plea for a more transformative approach to land reform, emphasizing the importance of social justice over economic liberalization and advocating for the involvement of marginalized groups in the decision-making processes that impact their lives.

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