

Practicing Citizenship in a Post-Truth World

Bracken, Gregory

Publication date

2023

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

Symposium Spatial Justice in Practice

Citation (APA)

Bracken, G. (2023). Practicing Citizenship in a Post-Truth World. In R. Rocco, C. Newton, J. Gonçalves, H. Lopez, A. Maglione, R. Smith, & S. Ershad Sarabi (Eds.), *Symposium Spatial Justice in Practice: Book of Abstracts November-December 2023* (pp. 93). Zenodo.

Important note

To cite this publication, please use the final published version (if applicable).
Please check the document version above.

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download, forward or distribute the text or part of it, without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license such as Creative Commons.

Takedown policy

Please contact us and provide details if you believe this document breaches copyrights.
We will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

SYMPORIUM

SPATIAL JUSTICE IN PRACTICE

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER
2023



Procedural

Distributive

frameworks

pedagogies

comparisons

tools

case-studies

indicators

methodologies

Recognition

COLOPHON

Spatial Justice in Practice Symposium

Faculty of Architecture & the Built Environment (BK)
Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Julianalaan 134, 2628 BL, Delft. Berlagezaal, West Wing.

Organising committee

Roberto Rocco (TUD)
Caroline Newton (TUD)
Juliana Gonçalves (TUD)
Marcin Dabrowski (TUD)
Hugo Lopez (TUD)
Andres Maglione (University of Napoli)
Russell Smith (Winston-Salem State University)
Shahryar Sarabi (University of Utrecht)

Booklet designed by Hugo Lopez & Roberto Rocco

Published in 2023 by TU Delft OPEN Publishing, a TU Delft platform for open science dissemination.

Keywords: Spatial Justice Benchmarking, Policy-making, Sustainability Transitions, Equity, Governance.

The authors' moral rights have been asserted.

Published under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license by the Evolving Scholar.

Please cite as:

Rocco, R., Newton, C., Gonçalves, J., Lopez, H., Maglione, A., Smith, R., Ershad Sarabi, S. (2023). Symposium Spatial Justice in Practice, 30 November, 1 & 5 December, Centre for the Just City, TU Delft.

All images in this publication are used in accordance with the principles of fair use for educational and scholarly purposes. This booklet is published under the fair use licensing terms of use.

ISBN/EAN: 978-94-6366-775-3



The book of abstracts compiles a total of 126 abstracts presented during a three-day event held in November and December 2023 at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of the Delft University of Technology.

Practicing Citizenship in a Post-Truth World

AUTHOR: GREGORY BRACKEN

AFFILIATION: BOUWKUNDE, TU DELFT

E-MAIL: G.BRACKEN@TUDELFT.NL

Practices of spatial (and social) justice depend on our rights as citizens, and those rights are under threat in an increasingly polarised and authoritarian world. Authoritarianism may be easy to spot in a non-Western, non-democratic context but it exists, too, in the West in the form of Surveillance Capitalism, where wealthy, powerful corporations operating with little regulatory oversight are making decisions that affect our lives, work, and well-being.

This paper will discuss contemporary conceptualisations of spatial justice, beginning with an exploration of the damage being done to procedural justice when our rights are eroded by 'black-box' algorithms which replace human relationships so that certainty can replace trust. The paper will specifically address points 4 and 6: 'evaluation of policy interventions and their impact on spatial justice' and 'challenges and opportunities in implementing spatial justice benchmarks' in order to relate them to distributive justice to show how fair and equitable distribution of the burdens and benefits of human association are being tilted in favour of social media companies through the unprecedented asymmetries in knowledge and power that accrues through their knowledge of us. As Shoshana Zuboff says in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (2019), 'surveillance capitalists know everything about us, whereas their operations are designed to be unknowable to us. They accumulate vast domains of new knowledge from us, but not for us' (italics in original). By examining social media's business model we can see how it sacrifices truth to profit, leading to the 'post-truth' world we now

inhabit, where 'alternative facts' or 'lived experience' make truth in public discourse seem, not just relative, but up for grabs; where strength of conviction seems to count more than any objective assessment of reality.

Using Michel Foucault's theories of power relations to explain the mechanisms of surveillance capitalism, I show how we, as consumers, eagerly insert ourselves into the apparatuses of social media and, as a result, render up our information for others' use and profit. This latest incarnation of Foucault's concept of 'bio-power' revives Karl Marx's nineteenth-century image of capitalism as a vampire feeding on labour, only in the twenty-first century, 'instead of labour, it is feeding on every aspect of every human's experience' (Zuboff 2019).

The paper ends, however, with a note of hope because it argues that we will always be able to have agency as citizens, provided we use that agency and not allow ourselves fritter it away simply because we want to be entertained. We need to practice our citizenship; it is an active thing. The theoretical explorations in this paper will help inform us about the spatial and social practices of justice. By helping us understand what is going on, and the dangers we currently face (as well as highlighting the effects these dangers are already having on our lives) we will be better able to prepare ourselves to deal with them in the future.

Spatial Justice, Surveillance Capitalism
Procedural Justice, Social Media, Agency



ISBN: 978-94-6366-775-3

UP2030



Funded by
the European Union

TU Delft

 tuDelft
DESIGN
FOR
VALUES