

RESEARCH WORKSHOP
SEMINAR SERIES 2024

A multidisciplinary approach to the study of Urban Crisis: A focus on the City of Johannesburg

14
NOV

Time: 1-3pm

Venue: Wits Anthropology Museum
and online

Register to attend in person

<https://rebrand.ly/xf8uvz6>

Exploiting the infrastructural labour of logistics: Circulation and the reproduction of racialised capitalism in Gauteng, South Africa by Bridget Kenny

This paper examines the spatial expansion of warehousing and logistics in Gauteng, South Africa. Logistics is constitutive of a reorganisation of capital investment, which has rewritten the landscape, shifting from production to distribution. Based on interviews with industry experts, warehouse and logistics workers and unions in and around greater Johannesburg, the paper examines the restructuring of investment, rescaling of space, and reorganization of the labour process and conditions of work in key firms involved in logistics in South Africa. It argues that these processes rely on exploiting this located infrastructural labour, which is mostly black and further invisibilised, reinforcing a long history of racist labour regimes in the country. Logistics becomes a particularly vivid site for a conjunctural analysis of changing capital accumulation, the enduring exploitation of living labour, and powerful significations around new technology, development and the nation which undervalue and obscure black workers' labour in a repetition of historical forms of racialised capitalism in South Africa now.

Bridget Kenny is a Professor of Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She works on labour, gender, race and urban space in South Africa historically and today.

DISCUSSANT

Sarah Nuttal is Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies at WISER. She is the author or editor of numerous books. In 2024, she edited *Your History With Me: The Films of Penny Siopis* (Duke University Press) and co-edited, with Isabel Hofmeyr, *Publishing from the South: A Century of Wits University Press* (Wits University Press).