



RESEARCH WORKSHOP
SEMINAR SERIES 2026

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF URBAN CRISIS: A FOCUS ON THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

17 SEP

Time: 1-3pm

Venue: PARI OFFICES

Register to attend in person

AND ONLINE

Register for Zoom

Civil society engagement with local government: **TRANSFORMATIVE WATER JUSTICE:** Some Pointers for Movement Building

by **REHAD DESAI**

This talk examines the concept of transformative water justice in South Africa, focusing on its significance, key challenges and practical implications in Johannesburg as part of the wider city region. It introduces the main ideas shaping the subject, considers relevant evidence and perspectives, and highlights opportunities for some concrete struggles that lay ahead. Participants will gain a clearer understanding of what systemic barriers exist to 'water for all' and leave with practical insights that can be applied to concerned township civic structures. The session builds on ongoing work of the Gauteng based Civic Action for Democracy and Equality (CADE), whose focus is to build genuine local participatory governance over water supply and distribution and to oppose attempts to further commodify water services.

REHAD DESAI completed a Masters in Social History in 1997 at the University of the Witwatersrand. He entered the TV and film industry as a current affairs journalist and soon moved on to focus on documentary film. His creative practice is concerned with the connection between environmental concerns and questions of public accountability and social justice. Through documentary film, Rehad examines how climate pressures and unequal access to essential resources affect urban communities. He is an acclaimed documentary filmmaker, *Time of Pandemics* (2022), *Capturing Water* (2025) and *Tales of A City* (2026), the last two titles speak directly to water justice looking at Cape Town and Johannesburg respectively.

DISCUSSANT

LESEGO LOATE is interested in sociohydrological questions exploring the fluid power-driven interconnection of society and water shaping water injustice. Part of this research interest pertains to the water regulation of coal mining integral to coal-centric socionatural relations of water ordering the water use of coal mines over other uses in the carbon-intensive political economy of South Africa. I am also interested in understanding the water injustice behind the water services crisis in Johannesburg, South Africa. Currently, I am part of SWOP's Just Energy Transition Programme.