

Abstract

Title: Critical discourse analysis on Power, Gender mainstreaming and Democracy in South Africa

Author: Mxalisa Asiphe

The democratization theory and its practice have overlooked many dynamics in social, economic and political spheres. Since the emergence of democracy in South Africa, overarching changes have taken place in many areas of society, more especially in the documentation to acknowledge women as full citizens. However, women in particular are silenced by the masculine systematic chains still present in South Africa today even in the existence of gender quotas and equality policies. For the purposes of this discussion, the key focus will be on the syllogism that targets liberal policies on gender equality or, more concretely, inequality. The focus will be on the critical discourse analysis of the democratisation theory and the public subject definition as incorporated in liberal theory.

The definition of the public subject as analysed by liberals is an individual that has civic liberties, and that public subject in South Africa is a masculine man whose status and power is protected by liberalism. Looking at gender and democracy, the discussion must be on the intersectional dynamics which include power, structural systems in society and institutions. Using gender as a unit of analysis, this paper interrogates the complexities of democracy and social inclusion in a country that contends with perpetual everyday struggles. The paper further focuses on the lack of knowledge on the operations of power in gender mainstreaming in South Africa.

There is a lack of urgency from the government when looking into the ability to formulate gender mainstreaming that focuses on lived experiences in order to articulate social inequality. Gender mainstreaming has been replaced by a strategy of theorising and documenting gender equality in order to fit the international recognised democratization criteria and social cohesion. Documenting gender equality without implementation creates a distorted narrative of a free society and that dislocates the need to implement gender mainstreaming in order to recognise and deal with issues of power inequality, security, and civilian advancement without systematic chains. Gender discourses cannot be secondary when discussing the issue of civic economic advancement, social equality and political participation because in order for South Africa to consolidate its democracy, the government system must speak to the lived experiences of those facing multiple oppressions. It is important that these issues are reflected on as we move into another 25 years of democracy.