**Title: Sense of Place or *Place of No(n)Sense*? Revisiting the social dynamic of the low-cost housing provision in South Africa.**

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Session: Geographies of quality of life, deprivation, and inequalities

**Abstract**

The South African government delivered the largest number of subsidised houses in the world since the dawn of the democratic state. However, this great effort does not appeal to the principles that its policies have set out in terms of equality. Along with the delivery of this high level of state-funded housing, many of the home dwellers in these houses feel as though they have been marginalised and forced out of the areas of various opportunity, to peripheral spaces of marginality.

Many researchers believe that the South African housing delivery pattern resembles that of apartheid segregationist planning, which exacerbated the social inequalities in the country. The emergent themes emanating from an interpretative phenomenological analysis revealed that social problems were pertinent factors to the lack of the formulation of community social cohesion within a few prominent low-cost housing developments. Without this aspect, community building will be hampered, and thus cohesive neighbourhoods will be lacking.

Through unpacking the lived experiences of residents within low-cost housing settlements, it therefor becomes apparent that there is a dire need for the issue of social development needs to be placed back on the housing agenda, making the sense of place as important a requirement as that of civil infrastructure. It is, after all, a statutory requirement of the Housing Act of South Africa. This study brings to life the voices of the marginalised in these settlements through a creative and visual story which tells of their various challenges faced.

**Keywords**: sense of place, social sustainability, social cohesion, low-cost housing, South Africa