Gentrification in South Africa's inner cities: Dignity takings requires restoration

Geci Karuri-Sebina & Frederick Beckley

Abstract

Urban development in South Africa has generally sustained and reproduced spatially unequal and exclusionary trends and outcomes particularly for the majority of the poor non-White populace. This article re-examines the urban redevelopment processes and ecosystems of South Africa to identify why this might be the case. Atuahene's 'dignity' concept and framework is adopted for this inquiry. Her framework posits the combination of systematic property deprivation, dehumanisation and infantilisation of poor non-White South Africans as evidence to theorise that the urban land situation in post-apartheid South Africa constitutes 'dignity takings' (DT) and demands a 'dignity restoration' (DR) response. This article explores the applicability and usefulness of this DT/DR framework in advancing more spatially just and inclusive frameworks and futures for South Africa. It does this by applying the framework to the dynamics of urban socio-spatial change in post-apartheid South Africa, with a focus on the phenomenon of gentrification and its exclusionary effects in four urban case vignettes. The lived experiences of these cases are used to demonstrate that there are both material and non-material aspects to unjust urban development, and that both types of deprivation require attention. The article proposes that gentrification can be viewed as 'dignity takings', as it strips residents of their sense of place, ownership, and access to a better quality of life. It is thus argued that policymakers could consider the DR/DT framework as an urban development lens through which to understand the unsuccessful attempts to merely accept, resettle, or compensate displaced residents, proposing DR as a means to fully redress – rather than reproduce – the injustices of the past. The DR/DT framework could contribute towards achieving South Africa's Integrated Urban Development Framework's transformation goal of having development policies and approaches that move towards systematic DR that includes spatial justice, sustainability, efficiency, resilience, and good administration.

Keywords: Dignity takings, dignity restoration, gentrification, spatial transformation, inclusive urbanism, right to the city, shared value, South Africa

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GENTRIFIKASIE IN SUID-AFRIKA SE MIDDESTEDE: WAARDIGHEIDSNEMING VEREIS HERSTEL

Stedelike ontwikkeling in Suid-Afrika het oor die algemeen ruimtelik ongelyke en uitsluitingstendense en uitkomste volgehou en weergegee, veral vir die meerderheid arm nie-Blanke bevolking. Hierdie artikel ondersoek weer die stedelike herontwikkelingsprosesse en ekosisteme van Suid-Afrika om te identifiseer hoekom dit die geval kan wees. Atuahene se 'waardigheid'-konsep en -raamwerk word vir hierdie ondersoek gebruik. Haar raamwerk stel die kombinasie van sistematiese eiendomsontneming, ontmensliking en infantilisering van arm nie-Blanke Suid-Afrikaners as bewys om te teoretiseer dat die stedelike grondsituasie in post-apartheid Suid-Afrika uit 'waardigheidsneming' (DT) bestaan en 'waardigheidsherstel' (DR) vereis. Hierdie artikel ondersoek die toepaslikheid en bruikbaarheid van hierdie DT/DR-raamwerk om meer ruimtelik regverdige en inklusiewe raamwerke vir Suid-Afrika te bevorder. Die artikel doen dit deur die raamwerk toe te pas op die dinamika van stedelike sosio-ruimtelike verandering in post-apartheid Suid-Afrika, met 'n fokus op die fenomeen van gentrifikasie en die uitsluitingseffekte daarvan in vier stedelike geval-vignette. Die geleefde ervarings van hierdie gevalle word gebruik om te demonstreer dat daar beide materiële en nie-materiële aspekte aan onregverdige stedelike ontwikkeling is, en dat beide tipes ontberings aandag verg. Die artikel stel voor dat gentrifikasie gesien kan word as 'waardigheidsnemings' aangesien dit inwoners ontneem van hul gevoel van plek, eienaarskap en toegang tot 'n beter lewensgehalte. Daar word dus geargumenteer dat beleidmakers die DR/DT-raamwerk kan beskou as 'n stedelike ontwikkelingslens waardeur die onsuksesvolle pogings om bloot ontneemde inwoners te aanvaar, hervestig of vergoed, deur DR voor te stel as 'n manier om die ongeregtighede van die verlede ten volle reg te stel eerder as om dit te reproduseer. Die DR/DT-raamwerk kan bydra tot die bereiking van Suid-Afrika se Geïntegreerde Stedelike Ontwikkelingsraamwerk se

transformasiedoelwit om ontwikkelings-beleide en -benaderings te hê wat na sistematiese waardigheidsherstel beweeg wat ruimtelike geregtigheid, volhoubaarheid, doeltreffendheid, veer-kragtigheid en goeie administrasie insluit.

NTLAFATSO METSENG EA AFRIKA BOROA: SERITI SA LITOROPO SE HLOKA TSOSOLOSO

Ka kakaretso, ntlafatso ea litoropo Afrika Boroa e tsitsisitse le ho hlahisa bocha mekhoa le liphetho tse senang tekatekano, tse qhelelang batho ba bangata ka thoko, haholo-holo Sechaba se futsanehileng sa batho ba bats'o. Sengoliloeng sena se etsa hlahlobo-bocha ea mekhoa ea ntlafatso ea litoropo le tikoloho ea Afrika Boroa. Sena se etsoa ho lekola se bakang ntlafatso e hlokang tekatekano. Mohopolo le moralo oa 'seriti' oa Atuahene o sebelisitsoe bakeng sa patlisiso ena. Moralo oa hae o tiisa kopano ea ho amohuoa thepa ka mokhoa o hlophisehileng, le ho nyenyefatsoa ha maAforika Boroa a futsanehileng ao e seng Makhooa. Sena o se sebelisa e le bopaki ba maikutlo a hore sebopeho sa litoropo ka mor'a puso ea khethollo ea Afrika Boroa ke 'se nkang seriti' sa baahi ('dignity takings' DT) 'me naha e hloka 'puseletso ea seriti' ('dignity restoration' DR). Sengoliloeng sena se hlahloba ts'ebetso le melemo ea moralo ona oa DT/DR ho ntšetseng pele meralo le bokamoso ba Afrika Boroa tse nang le toka, li bile li kenyeletsa bohle. Sena e se etsa ka ho sebelisa moralo ona ho lekola phetoho ea litoropo tsa Afrika Boroa ka mor'a puso ea khethollo, se tsepamisitse maikutlo holim'a ketsahalo ea 'gentrification' le litla-morao tsa eona litoropong tse 'ne tse khethiloeng. Litla-morao tseo baahi ba litotopo tsena ba tobaneng le tsona li sebelisoa e le mehlala e senolang lithloko tsa bona tse bonahalang le tse ipatileng, tse bakoang ke nts'etsopele e hlokang toka. Li boetse tse sebelisoa ho senola hore mefuta ena ea bohloki ka bobeli e hloka ho lokisoa. Sengoliloeng sena se fana ka maikutlo a hore ntlafatso ea 'gentrification' e ka talingoa e le 'ho nka seriti', kaha e amoha baahi maikutlo a bona a sebaka, borui, le phihlello ea bophelo bo betere. Kahona, sengoliloeng se sisinya hore bo ketsa-molao ba sebelise moralo oa DR/DT ele lense ea nts'etsopele ea litoropo eo ka eona ho ka utloisisoang liteko tse sa atlehang tsa ho amohela, ho fallisa, kapa ho lefa baahi ba tlositsoeng mahaeng a bona. Ba sisinya hore ho fapana le ho atisa mokhoa oa puso e fetileng, DR e sebelisoe ho lokisa thlokahalo ea toka ka botlalo. DR/DT e ka kenya letsoho ho fihlelleng lipehelo

tsa Moralo Kopanetsoeng oa Ntlafatso ea Litoropo Afrika Boroa, haholo tse shebaneng le ho tlisa toka, botsitso, bokhoni le le tsamaiso e ntle.

1. INTRODUCTION

In his book on the post colony, Mbembe (2015) argues that how Africa is depicted is not a true reflection but rather a projection of guilt. Like the complex and structural development challenges faced by many postcolonial cities, the legacies of colonial rule and systems have visibly manifested in South African cities in their various urban development forms and trajectories (Mabogunje, 1990: 212). Calls for spatial transformation and inclusion, however, cannot be delinked from that historical guilt, and any resolution – while rightly forward-looking – must consider the colonial legacy and the question of redress (Reddy, 2015: 32). This typically raises restorative justice issues through, among other things, land reform to attend to dispossessed and historically disadvantaged populations as critical to urban redevelopment policy and processes (South Africa, 2019). However, postcolonial exclusive urbanism extends beyond simply the assignment of ownership of physical assets. Simone (2010) identifies the struggles associated with the urban ownership of cities by urban residents. He argues that the possibilities associated with the materialisation of urban inclusive development find form in everyday undertakings of city residents. Acknowledging this helps identify critical urban politics of resilience beyond the physical which are defining aspects in considering spatial transformation and inclusive urbanism.

The Right to the City framework has emerged in recent decades, offering an alternative paradigm for rethinking cities and human settlements on the principles of social justice, equity, democracy, and sustainability, helping animate local issues and actors, and inform a redistributive policy agenda (Isandla Institute, 2011; Magidimisha-Chipungu, 2021). However, this framework remains an ideal and far from the norm (Karuri-Sebina &

Koma, 2015). Gentrification – broadly defined as displacement of poor communities occurring because of capital investment and urban regeneration (SACN, 2016a:13) – has characterised modern urban redevelopment globally and become synonymous with the celebrated outcomes of effective urban renewal. The fact that the desired 'renewal' conditions of order, cleanliness, increased investment, improved market demand, and increasing property value bear the contingent costs and impacts of displacing the urban poor is typically understated or accepted (SACN, 2016a: 17-19).

Systematic gentrification is problematised in this article, illustrating how people are dispossessed of property and robbed of their dignity, as theorised by international property law scholar Atuahene (2016; Atuahene & Sibanda, 2018). Atuahene adopts two significant concepts, dignity takings (DT) and dignity restoration (DR), learning from South Africa's Land Restitution Programme. DT is defined as the confiscation of property that takes into account dehumanisation or infantilisation of the dispossessed (Atuahene & Sibanda, 2018: 656). The approach proposes that the prescriptive remedy for DT is DR, which is compensation to the dispossessed and undignified through mechanisms that affirm their humanity and their agency (Atuahene & Sibanda, 2018: 657). The exploration of these concepts lends to the interpretation of non-physical impacts on the dispossessed – emphasising the significance of the humanity and agency of people, and not only their material belongings (Atuahene & Sibanda, 2018: 657). Neluheni (2019) investigates the effects of urban regeneration on the social well-being of the urban poor, by studying lived experiences in Johannesburg Inner City. The study highlights the negative physical and non-physical impacts of urban regeneration on existing and displaced residents, further contributing to dispossession. Gentrification can, therefore, be considered synonymous with concepts of urban regeneration

and urban redevelopment and framed as an example of DT.

DT and DR have been applied to land-reform processes in South Africa and forced displacement situations internationally. The focused application of these concepts to urbanism allows for the interrogation of current urban redevelopment scenarios within the South African context, beyond historical dispossession. The DT/DR framework offers a lens through which to interrogate contemporary urban redevelopment processes and ecosystems with an incisive inquiry into the multifaceted transformations required from a human-centric perspective. The article seeks to highlight how South Africa's inner cities have served as a microcosm of DT in the 21st century, systematically reproducing spatial inequalities and the same consequences for the urban poor. This acknowledgement is important for understanding how to interpret the transformation agenda promised in South Africa's urban policy and in the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) transformation agenda towards opening and expanding access to the benefits of living in towns and cities to all South Africans (COGTA, 2016).

2. METHODS AND REVIEW APPROACH

The review provides background on the impact of gentrification on South Africa's inner cities, including four examples of gentrification. First, the review introduces the implications of urban redevelopment processes in post-apartheid South Africa. The way in which urban redevelopment practices perpetuate exclusion and displacement in urban areas is mirrored closely with the DT/DR framework, in order to identify the impact on the urban poor. Secondly, the review uses the DT/DR framework to problematise the effects of gentrification and how it has merely replicated inhumane living circumstances for the urban poor. Thirdly, the extent of exclusion and deprivation within four urban areas illustrates the implications of urban actors in gentrified cities of South

Africa. The case studies are well-documented, popular urban cases, and are, therefore, treated as short vignettes to specifically illustrate the presence of clear DT characteristics. In the discussion section, using a past-present-future framing, the implications of the findings are discussed. The discussion is based on well-documented histories and current realities evidenced through studies, policies, and reports, and these are also extrapolated toward future potentials based on some of the currently observed signals and trends.

Qualitative research methods are employed for the review study, primarily through the application of desktop research, including grey sources that were available through the online knowledge base of South African Cities Network (SACN). SACN produces the "State of South African Cities" reporting and specifically informing studies. Other scholarly works were sourced through searches on the University of the Witwatersrand's Library database and the internet (Google Scholar). The searches were conducted from June 2020 to December 2020. The primary keywords included dignity takings, gentrification, dispossession, dehumanisation, spatial transformation, urban inclusion, urban regeneration, urban redevelopment, and right to the city. There were limitations to the literature, particularly regarding how gentrification affects the social and economic well-being of communities, reflecting the lived experiences of the affected urban poor. This gap in literature compromises what Tyekela (2018) as well as Kayembe and Nel-Sanders (2022) refer to as the linkage between economic and social urban regeneration.

The four example cases were selected based on the experience of the authors who have worked extensively as researchers and practitioners across South Africa's major cities. The selection focused on depicting the lived experiences of the majority of non-White poor people in South Africa by means of short vignettes from well-established situations where it would be possible

to simply and clearly illustrate the concepts being explored. An effort was also made to effect geographic and issue variety in the selection of the cases, even though they would not fully represent the diverse range of urban redevelopment experiences. Future studies could expand on this indicative study to demonstrate and detail the systemic nature of these issues, and more importantly to study how they can be redressed.

3. KEY CONCEPTS

3.1 Dispossession and dignity: DT/DR framework

Apartheid dispossession consisted not only of direct land dispossession, but also of specific urban structuring and controls that made access to opportunities impossible for urban non-White people (Maharaj, 2020: 39). Land dispossession also deprived populations of their ability to affirm their humanity and reinforce their agency (Atuahene, 2016: 796; Maharaj, 2020: 50). As the post-apartheid city continues to bear the enduring, inscribed apartheid spatial structure, it has further embedded a particular economic and institutional logic. Its tendency has been towards sustained and reproduced spatial apartheid (Maharaj, 2020: 47-50; SACN, 2016b: 346), continually marginalising the urban poor. The nature of urbanism (urban life) has thus expanded to include emerging forms of urban exclusion such as gentrification, privatisation, ghettoisation, and suburban sprawl, which this article argues can be driven as much by the state as by the market. South Africa's fiscal and municipal financing framework is one of the important systemic factors that must be considered as contributing to the DT of the urban poor of South Africa.

DT is defined as the confiscation of property that also involves dehumanising people who are also dispossessed of their property and deprived of their dignity (Atuahene, 2016: 798). DT would be redressed through DR, which would require addressing the same dimensions of deprivation. Various

studies have discussed the legal framework for DT/DR (Diala, 2014; Atuahene, 2016; Andrews, 2018).

This article applies the core concepts of the DT/DR framework – property dispossession, dehumanisation, and infantilisation – to the South African urban redevelopment context, in order to interrogate the character of the prevalent urban logics and institutions that are intended to advance urban transformation towards just and inclusive cities in South Africa. For the purposes of this article, the definitions in Atuahene's (2016: 801) theoretical framework, where she proposes that "individuals and communities are deprived of dignity when subject to dehumanization, infantilization, or community destruction" are considered. These conditions are defined as:

- Dehumanisation is "the failure to recognize an individual's or group's humanity" (Atuahene 2016: 801) – thus, the deprivation of people's positive human qualities or rights, in the sense of degrading them.
- Infantilisation is "the restriction of an individual's or group's autonomy based on the failure to recognise and respect their full capacity to reason" (Atuahene 2016: 801) – thus, the deprivation of people's maturity and agency.
- Dispossession is referred to in the sense of *community destruction*, "when a community of people is … involuntarily uprooted, and deprived of the [material], social and emotional ties that define and sustain them" (Atuahene 2016: 801) – thus, the deprivation of property or material assets, in this case the physical displacement of the urban poor.

By extending the urban transformation question beyond the issue of historic property ownership and patterns that have preoccupied much of post-apartheid study, it becomes possible to interrogate the current constellation of urban actors, systems, institutions, and discourses. By exploring the DT/DR theoretical framework and its application to the dynamics of urban socio-spatial change in post-apartheid South Africa, insight could be provided into more empathetic and innovative approaches to issues that harm the urban poor and attendant remedies (Andrews, 2018: 653). The article examines the significant value the DR/DT lens may offer in South Africa's urban redevelopment framework, by reflecting on the experiences of South African cases, beginning by examining the common dynamic of gentrification.

3.2 Problematising gentrification

The concept of gentrification was introduced by British sociologist Ruth Glass in the 1960s to describe the displacement of the working-class residents of London neighbourhoods by middle-class newcomers (Glass, 1964: xviii). The gentrification phenomenon generally has to do with a set of complex and interrelated changes in an urban district's character and culture that increase property value and rents, attracting wealthier residents and correspondingly displacing poor communities (SACN 2016a: 30). Characterised by the neighbourhood scale, physical change in housing stock, and economic change in housing (Smith, 1996; SACN 2016a: 17-19), gentrification entails the combination of social, economic, and physical changes that identify it squarely as an urban redevelopment process (SACN, 2016a: 13). Gentrification represents an important and pervasive urban dynamic that is oddly rudimentary as a development discourse in South African urbanism, similar to other international contexts (Schnake-Mahl *et al.*, 2020: 2). It is arguably one of the most blatant reflections of underlying and sustained exclusionary urban redevelopment systems and processes, effectively being "the economic, social and physical changes to an area that result in class transformation and displacement for those living and operating businesses there" (SACN, 2016a: 6).

Although there exists a line of argument in which gentrification is defended and represented as a potentially benign or even desirable process of urban regeneration (Brummet & Reed, 2019: 24), other authors contend that gentrification is unequivocally an insidious process that is deeply rooted in global, racial capitalism (SACN, 2016a: 12). Some authors go as far as referring to gentrification as "the new urban colonialism", referring to situations of corporate appropriation of city centres (Atkinson & Bridge, 2004; 2013). It is argued that the systematic exclusion of the urban poor through gentrification dispossesses the poor not only of property and tenancy rights, but also of access to livelihoods; yet these are accepted consequences of gentrification (SACN, 2016a: 72).

Whilst gentrification easily rooted itself as a global blueprint for urban redevelopment (regeneration and renewal) practices in neoliberal public policy and urban redevelopment strategies, there has been strong critique against the acceptance and inevitability of gentrification (Donaldson *et al.*, 2012: 175; SACN, 2016a: 22). Far from being neutral, gentrification is a form of urban regeneration explicitly associated with class conflicts and displacement. This is why gentrification-infused displacement is typically linked to the eviction of people from an area by formal institutions and even armed forces (Ah Goo, 2018). Gentrification typically manifests a complex of class remaking of urban space, power struggles of the urban poor, upgrading of neighbourhoods, and large social displacement (Teppo & Millstein, 2015: 431-435). It is, however, distinguishable from other notions of urban redevelopment such as regeneration and renewal, in that it drives displacement and class transformation which occurs because of monetary investment and urban transformation (Shaw, 2008: 1700). There is also a strong relationship between gentrification, class, race, and gender (Rose, 1984; Smith, 1996; Lees, 2000).

In spite of gentrification being considered to systematically exacerbate patterns of exclusion, and despite much critique, gentrification has grown and embedded itself in urban dynamics through unmitigated

market forces – the result of poor government cognisance and intervention, and sometimes even of uncritical government urban strategies (SACN, 2016a: 16, 19).

Conceptualised almost exclusively in the north in relation to racial minorities, the concept of gentrification has proven to no longer be only a Global North phenomenon (Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2008). Cases in the Global South – for example, in India (Harris, 2008; McGaffey, 2018), Mexico (Pskowski, 2019), and South Africa (Ah Goo, 2018; Teppo & Millstein, 2015; Visser & Kotzé, 2008; Winkler, 2009) – serve as ample evidence of how gentrification has become intertwined with the dynamics of globalisation and urbanism (Smith, 2002).

There is a need for deeper consideration of the systems and implications of gentrification which is noted at the forefront of neoliberal urban policy across the globe (Lees *et al.*, 2008; Donaldson *et al.*, 2012). Drawing from the writings of Mbembe and Nuttall (2004), as well as Pieterse (2010a) who sought to spotlight the skewed reality of the knowledge relating to African cities, this article investigates the dynamics associated with African cityness and urban development. The DT/DR framework becomes a lens for contextualised study of gentrification-fuelled exclusion and deprivation within the empirical cases presented in this article, based on experiences in three South African cities (Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban).

4. GENTRIFICATION EXAMPLE CASES IN SOUTH AFRICA

South African cities are undergoing significant transformation, with evolving ideas and strategies for new living, working, and leisure spatial arrangements. The change process is realised through urban redevelopment objectives and strategies. Using property dispossession, dehumanisation, and infantilisation within the South African context, the example cases reveal the devastating impacts of

redevelopment-based gentrification and evictions on urban poor individuals and communities. This is done to illustrate urban DT, similar to the examination of the processes and impacts of apartheid-era DT (through land dispossession and expropriation) on urban poor communities in South Africa.

4.1 Johannesburg: New inner-city gentrification

The conditions to which residents are subjected during and after evictions, in the name of gentrification, signify elements of preservation of class division and dignity takings. The case presented by Ah Goo (2018: 176) identifies how low-income and middle-class residents are 'displaced' from their homes in the inner city of Johannesburg. The situation in the Maboneng Precinct is one clear example which demonstrates how poor, working-class, inner-city residents were evicted with no alternative accommodation, and were left to struggle to survive in and around the precinct. The case has been powerfully reflected in an interview with a resident of Maboneng (Ansell, 2021: 2). The former resident's account explains how gentrification and its exclusionary effects such as increased rental accommodation, and expensive restaurants displaced him and his band who

used to practise in Maboneng. The case shows how, by following the block-by-block redevelopment processes (2009-2010), the city residents were not only displaced, but also how the history of non-White Johannesburg was effectively diminished (Ansell, 2021: 2).

Walsh (2013: 406) further explains the processes of gentrification through a property dispossession and resistance lens. The former residents of Revolution House in Maboneng Precinct experienced the last phase of redevelopment in 2012, where forced evictions occurred, leaving residents expressing their resistance through graffiti on the walls and comparing their situation to the forced evictions of Sophiatown by the apartheid government (Walsh, 2013: 407). These residents were undergoing a process of displacement and replacement by wealthier (middle-) class groups who can afford the fashionable lofts and penthouses introduced by gentrification into a decayed inner city. Literal writing on the walls of Maboneng state: "We won't move.'' – evidencing the "The Forgotten Voices'' in inner city Johannesburg (Walsh, 2013: 407).

The Maboneng precinct case not only identifies DT through property dispossession, but also alludes to how residents experiencing these
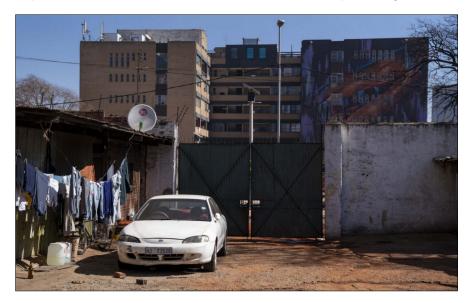

Figure 1: How everyday life looks different outside the gentrified cocoon of Maboneng

Source: Oatway, 2019: online

evictions are subjected to starkly dehumanising conditions (see Figure 1), where women and children are subjected to environments that can only be described as sub-human (for example, hanging clothes in parking areas; children playing in dangerous spaces not designated for recreation such as light industrial buildings, and living in windowless rooms without any natural light). Gentrification in Johannesburg has been described as leaving women homeless and subject to 'conditional love' for temporary shelter, where their voices are silenced by their new partners. 'Conditional love', in this instance, is used to refer to courtship enforced by the need to acquire basic needs (Ah Goo, 2018: 191). These conditions demonstrate some of the dire social consequences of unmanaged inner-city development models, which fail to secure public interest in terms of dignity, safety, and secure tenure, particularly for the most vulnerable populations.

4.2 Cape Town: The waves of gentrification

People who have lived through the machinations of urban redevelopment on land that was allocated for social housing can be faced with tenure security, displacement, and a diminishing sense of community, due to the exclusionary elements of gentrification (McCool, 2017). McCool (2017) reports on a Cape Town study of respondents calling for the "end of spatial apartheid", having been displaced by their ability to afford new high rental prices. This is after land allocated for social housing (a Tafelberg property in Sea Point, Cape Town) by the local government was reallocated and sold to private property developers (McCool, 2017). The respondents exclaimed how the move back to the township was dehumanising, with community members depicting their circumstances as being 'doomed'. The term was used to describe the circumstance of being forced to go back to hometowns (typically in former apartheid-era homelands) when people had gained their independence and a sense of place in the city. The article calls for

the end of spatial apartheid in the inner city and highlights the lived experiences of exclusion of the local preys of urban redevelopment processes. Numerous residents have reportedly moved to temporary squat housing in the Helen Bowden Nurses' Home in Green Point (illegally), which is an abandoned building, and all the residents have one thing in common: lack of access to affordable housing in the city.

A historical Cape Town neighbourhood, Woodstock, has cases of residents being forced out of their communities to be replaced by luxury apartments (Christianson & Haynie, 2019). The urban poor who found a home in the city at the end of apartheid have steadily been evicted and forced into the outskirts again, and segregation in the city is ever-growing (Garside, 1993; Christianson & Haynie, 2019). Two years after the Reclaim the City social movement emerged, made up of working-class residents and evictees, the residents occupied an old empty government hospital in Woodstock which they called Cissie Gool House (CGH) (see Figure 2). The displaced residents of CGH in central Cape Town used to be too far away from economic opportunity, and now their new, well-located home will be replaced with high-end redevelopments with no inclusion of the urban poor residents

(Christianson & Haynie, 2019: 2). These situations are unempathetic for working-class people in the city, and dehumanising for residents who are trying to improve their well-being – thus emphasising the skewness of urban redevelopment strategies. One of the residents described their situation as follows:

> "We are new-born babies, we are students, we are elderly, and we are disabled people. We are a community that celebrates birthdays, marriages, and deaths across races and religions. A community where we feed those who are hungry from our gardens" (Christianson & Haynie, 2019: 3).

These cases depict how degrading and dehumanising evictions that discard the urban poor are pursued in the name of making cities attractive for reinvestment and redevelopment. Madlingozi (2017) identifies how the South African Constitution has enabled and entrenched the motives of apartheid segregation and refers to what De Sousa Santos (2007: 3) terms the "abyssal line", the line dividing the colonial worlds of the haves and the have nots, where the White population is viewed as superior and more worthy than the Black population. Inevitably, this line means that urban redevelopment policies would not serve the urban poor; rather, they seek to perpetuate the exclusionary

Figure 2:   A room in the Cissie Gool House
Source: Christianson & Haynie, 2019: 3

elements of development processes, leaving vulnerable groups (women and children) subject to inhumane conditions and poor standards of living. The argument places scrutiny on the actors of development processes (decision makers) and the processes (urban renewal) that entrench inequality and poverty, even in the postcolonial city.

4.3 eThekwini: The right to the city social movements

The cases presented by Abahlali baseMjondolo, a 'shack dweller' movement in South Africa, are significant in highlighting the importance of unequal power relations in designing and maintaining the built environment. Decision-making processes are not inclusive and the evictions to which Abahlali baseMjondolo (2020) are subject are a true reflection of the inhumane and dehumanising effects associated with urban redevelopment in South African cities. The residents of the settlements represent a strong culture and identity which is systematically undermined by prevailing urban redevelopment processes. The essence of power and leadership is established through culture and social hierarchies (Martins & Coetzee, 2007).

Abahlali residents wanted permission to rebuild demolished shacks, where location is determined by proximity to economic activity in the current area (Wicks, 2018). The local municipality (eThekwini) denied such requests, despite them being on behalf of the urban working class – the domestic workers, the trolley pushers, the car guards, and other low-wage workers providing services to the communities and businesses in the area. Walsh (2013) argues that such trends evidence that the Right to the City has been misguided by capitalist associations embedded in accumulation and dispossession, neglecting the livelihoods, circumstances, and needs of the displaced, leaving citizens marginalised and with no shelter. The case of Abahlali baseMjondolo presents a scenario where Right to the City principles have been neglected. There has

been no consideration pertaining to active citizenship, which involves recognition of the choices of the urban poor; there has been no effective integration, redress, and redistribution of urban land with regard to urban planning and resource allocation, and local governance has not committed to collaboration with the urban poor (Isandla Institute, 2011).

The Abahlali Women's League has continuously complained and communicated their grievances with the eThekwini municipality, but there have been no effective dialogues regarding accommodating the needs and choices of the residents (Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2020). Rather, they have been subjected to inhumane evictions, resulting in the loss of critical documentation such as clinic cards and grant documents (Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2020). Such instances entrench unjust and unlawful outputs of urban redevelopment. It can be argued that urban redevelopment processes ignore other dimensions of displacement (destroying livelihoods, limiting access to opportunity, and dissolving community cohesiveness). Arguably, these processes strip citizens of their dignity in claiming rights to the city (RTC), removing the residents from places they called home.

4.4 City of Johannesburg: Infantilisation

The delivery of urban redevelopment procedures strips people not only of their property and humanity, but also of their agency and status as respectable and capable adults. Marson and Powell (2014: 1) define infantilisation as a behavioural pattern within which a person in authority interacts with or treats subjects in a childlike manner. Erving Goffman identifies typical characteristics of infantilisation as the use of a child-like vocabulary, the public disclosure of clients' personal information, and stereotypical perceptions of incompetence among the urban poor (Marson & Powell, 2014: 144).

The case of the City of Johannesburg and their indigency management decision to withdraw the Free Basic Water (FBW) policy serves as an

example of infantilising behaviour, as identified by the Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa. The urban poor were subjected to means-testing to target the residents who were eligible to receive a basic service (Khunou, 2018; SERI, 2018: 4). The test would identify poor households by using the household monthly income to determine the indigent status of the household. The means testing has systematic and procedurally exclusionary characteristics and is attributed to child-like treatment towards the adults in households. Residents are expected to line up in single file like school children upon registering. The procedure of registering is considered an exclusionary tool alongside the criteria of the monthly income baseline, which is exceeded by larger families with higher living expenses. This is considered to further exclude them from accessing FBW. The provision of the monthly income statements leaves household adults' financial information subject to public view when lists are produced to notify residents of registration status (Khunou, 2018).

5. DISCUSSION

In relating these cases to the DT/DR and gentrification, using a past-present-future framing, the implications of the findings are intended not simply to validate the applicability of the DT/DR frame, but also to attempt a generative signalling of legacy, current reality, and potential future directions.

5.1 The past: A legacy of dignity takings

Within a South African context, it is inevitable that the injustices of historic dispossession are alluded to whenever the topic of property ownership is broached. Legitimising property ownership in South Africa typically demands going back to the history of land and property dispossession, and the illegitimate way in which European colonialists accumulated capital and laid the foundations for their own well-being at the expense of the local and indigenous people.

Furthermore, South Africa is often threatened with the crises faced in Zimbabwe and Namibia in terms of problematic market-assisted and corrupt land reform and/or redistribution strategies, which can legalise colonial distribution and stunt development (Cliffe, 2000: 276).

Millions of people were uprooted from their ancestral lands during colonial expansion in South Africa (Cliffe, 2000). The displacing of the urban poor population was done with measured cruelty and never associated with any form of compensation (Cliffe, 2000). The framework of DT can be used to encapsulate the impacts of the processes of apartheid spatial planning when the Black urban poor populations were dispossessed of their ancestral land and moved to reserves (South Africa, 2010). The forceful and violent removals from communities of shared values and cultures highlight how dehumanising the acts of property dispossession were. The legacy of DT is no new concept to the South African development scene, and this is what the article emphasises while navigating through urban redevelopment strategies such as gentrification. Tracking these DT elements throughout South Africa's property history begins to unveil the relevance of the framework and the need for DR. Inherently, the patterns of privilege and power in South Africa are associated with the historical dispossession of the Black urban poor population of their rights to use and purchase land (Bond, 2014).

While there is a need to redress apartheid injustices, including land redistribution and reform, this is expected through the willing consent of the minority population that benefited from the apartheid loot. Essentially, the system adopted a willing-buyer willing-seller approach which does not advantage the majority of the impoverished population (Lahiff, 2007). Several scholars (Pienaar, 2009; Bond, 2014; Modise & Mtshiselwa, 2013) have identified that city governance ignores very critical aspects of historic dispossession that impact on neighbourhoods and cities (Bond,

2014: 236). The era of globalisation since 1990 has framed and captured development systems and urban policy. In the attempt to encompass the idea to become 'global', cities and neighbourhoods have experienced increased inequality, higher unemployment levels, and increased informal settlements (Bond, 2014: 236). Murray (2011) argues that post-apartheid cities such as Johannesburg have introduced new trends of social segregation which have further marginalised the Black urban poor. South Africa's urban policy has adopted the mainstream aspects of capital accumulation and class struggle (Myambo, 2017). Dating to the 19th century settlement history, cities in South Africa have since reflected apartheid-capitalist economic activity (residential, commercial industrial, and environmental). The basis of the urban redevelopment context was founded not only on racial segregation, but also on labour accumulation, capital accumulation, and social control motives (Bond, 2014).

Nonetheless, while the attempts to redress apartheid injustices are acknowledged, the effort is also left subject to the willing consent of those who benefited from colonisation and apartheid. The primary tool is market-based, founded on the principle of willing-buyer, willing-seller, implying that those who now own land will either be eager or just enough to sell the land, which was attained through infantilising and dehumanising actions (Myambo, 2017). It is not surprising that, until the present, the redress has not been fulfilled and apartheid's scars on land relations are still intact. Murray (2011: 455) not only encapsulates traces of social segregation, but also identifies the elements of dehumanising and infantilising acts of the apartheid property dispossession.

Given that the motives and marks of apartheid systems have remained largely in place, it is not surprising that related race, class, gender, and generational biases also persist in society. This article questions the premise of the ascribed mechanism, tools, and techniques to achieve

urban redevelopment. The biases in urban redevelopment policy reflect explicitly in the desegregation of middle- and upper-class settlements (Sandton, Rosebank, Midrand); yet other elements of urban life are embodied in inequality and uneven development greater than apartheid times. There still remains a need for a holistic and integrated critical lens to the failures of urban policy to restore dignity to the majority of Black urban poor South Africans in the postcolonial cities.

5.2 The present: Exclusive urbanism and its enabling ecosystem

The government has committed itself to addressing the injustices of apartheid and uneven distribution of land in the country (CoGTA, 2016). To address these injustices and inequalities, the government initiated a comprehensive land-reform programme which was substantially supported on a constitutional basis, i.e., the Land Redistribution Programme (Cliffe, 2000). This programme consists of three elements: restitution, land redistribution, and tenure security. The current climate of the programme, which increasingly also reflects upon the urban redevelopment dimension, has failed to deliver at full capacity, due to various dynamics associated with state and institutional behaviours, systems, and missed targets (South Africa, 2019).

The behaviours of institutions such as government, companies, and organisations have led to a significant backlog in sustainable inclusive urban development (Cliffe, 2000). The inability of the government's approach to encourage the adoption and diffusion of sustainability initiatives has further created exclusion in urban society and South African cities (Neiva *et al*., 2020: 690). Murray (2011: 455, 457) interprets the inner cities not only as spaces of infrastructural decline, but also as places where marginal classes negotiate livelihoods and rights under intimidating police control and exclusionary bureaucracies acting on the threshold of the law.

The example cases presented are true reflections of unjust processes and outcomes of contemporary urban redevelopment systems. Redevelopment in the inner city is supplemented by private investment, which introduces commercial activity that resembles commercial and residential infrastructure and urban trends that are not inclusive of the urban poor (Frias, 2006). Expensive high-end cafes and restaurants, loft apartments, and high rental values characterise the aspirational environment in neighbourhoods, simply imitating Euro-American hipster style, and less like the existing and adjacent local areas (Frias, 2006). Displacement becomes not only inevitable, but also intentional.

At present, the urban policy and the development systems remain uncritically market-driven, especially in the inner cities of South Africa. The consequent failures of development policies are evident, for example, in housing policies introduced with the intention of redressing injustices of the past. Bond's (2014) analysis of the Housing White Paper (Department of Housing, 1994) and Urban Development Strategy (1995), which later became the Urban Development Framework (Department of Housing, 1997), provides a systematic timeline of the status and influences of urban development policy. These policies highlighted the state's standpoint, focusing on the significant role of private capital investment. The notion of seeking personal gains within institutions such as the government, the private sector, and civil society was embedded, with no inclination towards the creation of shared value.

The African National Congress (ANC) enacted the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) as part of their inaugural manifesto (1994), which served as an attempt to redress the ills of the Natives Land Act, property dispossession, and injustices of apartheid spatial planning (South Africa, 2019). The RDP promised to provide housing and job opportunities for the Black impoverished population. However, the RDP continued to locate people further away from where they could not access opportunities, and development policy became inherently exclusionary (Parliamentary Liaison Office, 2017). The categorisation of individuals into class or by income levels effectively excludes those who cannot afford, and those who can are included in service-delivery initiatives. The State of South African Cities Report 2016 states this explicitly: "South African cities are still largely benefiting those who can afford to buy their rights and freedom to the city" (SACN, 2016b: 157). Institutional inertia has been used to describe the current context of urban policy, in that those who have decision-making power have collectively and unanimously made decisions that exclude the urban poor (Pieterse, 2010b).

South Africa's urban poor have been subjected to merit criteria, in order to attain basic infrastructure and services from the government (SERI, 2018). This institutional perspective is embedded in decision-making processes, service delivery, and urban redevelopment logic. Evidently, responding to the voices of the poor means service-delivery provision, housing, or grants. Yet even then, the urban poor are expected to prove eligibility to gain access, increasingly also in the form of forcing African foreign nationals to always carry immigration status documentation or else risk harassment and detention (Tati, 2008: 433). This is not dissimilar to the imposition of a 'dompas' during apartheid where Black people over the age of 16 years were expected to identify themselves with a passbook to gain rights to access and navigate through the city (Tati, 2008: 433). The shift from passes to passports is ironic, and even more illustrative of the systematic discriminatory logic of contemporary urban redevelopment and governance. Institutional administrative logic excludes the urban poor and embeds and sustains the exclusionary intentions and impacts of urban redevelopment strategies.

Whilst more recent development policies such as the IUDF (2016) continue to perpetuate the narrative of competitive, modern cities, the urban poor continue to be ill-treated and pushed further out of the city (SACN, 2016b). The institutional logic (of urban policy and governance) by the state has been sustained through neoliberal influences, which have sustained and even reproduced spatial apartheid (Donaldson *et al.*, 2012: 175). The tendency to reproduce the negative costs and externalities of urban redevelopment has, in effect, extended apartheid-era DT and has further limited access to opportunity for the urban poor.

The approach to urban redevelopment in South Africa claims to be in the name of being globally competitive, while the inner-city impoverished population gets poorer and further excluded from the country's potentially fruitful urbanism (what the IUDF terms the 'urban dividend') (COGTA, 2016: 20). Acknowledging the evident need for change in this urban redevelopment system invites the possibility of the DT/DR framework offering a stepping-stone towards inclusive urbanism.

5.3 The future: Imagining an ecosystem for inclusion

DR has been argued as the logical and appropriate remedy for the deprivation of property and dignity, and it is proposed that this can be achieved through a combination of reparation and restorative justice (Atuahene, 2016: 802). Reparation is the right to have restored the property which was previously deprived in discourse or conflict and compensated in the case where the property cannot be restored (Atuahene, 2016: 802). Restorative justice refers to restoring property loss, restoring injury, restoring a sense of security, and social support (Atuahene & Sibanda, 2018: 657). The various levers and tools discussed herein can encourage and foster a more inclusive system of urban development.

The RTC framework is a promising basis for DR and has the potential to counter and redress all three elements of DT. The RTC framework begins to tap into the governance of South African cities in a democratic manner, and further refers to the rights to access, occupation and use

of urban land (Karuri-Sebina & Koma, 2015; Magidimisha-Chipungu, 2021). The framework takes on an anti-capitalist approach looking to renew and transform urban life in favour of the disadvantaged (Karuri-Sebina & Koma, 2015: 144). Yet South Africa has not embedded RTC in its urban policy principles (SACN, 2016b: 128), even though the RTC framework's principles align with the New Urban Agenda (NUA) in terms of the integration of equity into development policy to extend opportunities and encourage access to the public sphere (SACN, 2018: 21).

There have been attempts in recent years to counter the negative externalities associated with urban redevelopment such as gentrification, seeking to restore dignity and social coherence within South Africa's urban landscape. For example, there have been efforts in developing inclusionary housing, financing, land, and urban management programmes (SACN 2016b: 147). There are also policy principles alluded to, for example, in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 (South Africa, 2012), and the enactment of Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) 2013 (South Africa, 2013). These policy principles speak of embedding more humane and environmentally sustainable living and working conditions (South Africa, 2013). Chapter 8 of the NDP 2030 further focuses on ensuring that cities are accessible to all who live in them, in order to counter the inefficiencies and inequities in urban fabric (cities) (South Africa, 2012: 260). Both policies explicitly state a set of spatial transformation principles that include social justice and redress. These signify a critical shift in policy development towards built environment reform and restoring dignity to South Africa's urban poor and offer a basis for DR.

There have also been local policy efforts. The City of Johannesburg enacted the Inclusionary Housing Policy 2019 through explicit strategies to advantage and enable the ownership/access to housing by mandating that all developments set aside 30% of the total units for lower earning households (City of Johannesburg, 2019). The purpose of the policy is to address the reintegration of the dispossessed into the fabric of society, which begins to redress one key aspect of DT. *Batho Pele*, the national programme for better service delivery and improved administrative justice, also serves as a useful lever to combat the injustices of the past through the application of key principles to development. These include applying principles of consultation, service standards, redress, access, and courtesy in the public service culture (South Africa, 1997: 15).

The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000 (PAJA) also seeks to ensure just administrative action toward decision-making by administrations that affect the lives of citizens (South Africa, 2000). PAJA 2000 encourages decision-making that is fair, just, and inclusive to all who had previously been excluded from decision-making. This has led to the formation of strong advocacy groups in representation of local communities or common needs in urban spaces. The Institute of Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS),[1] at the University of the Western Cape, for example, proposed a shared value approach to restore dignity to residents in our cities (Western Cape Government, 2021). Asiye eTafuleni (AET)[2] is another example of a strong Durban-based NGO that supports inclusive and empowering built environment and development strategies favourable for the urban poor. Additional organisations such as the Ndifuna Ukwazi,[3] the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation,[4] and the Socio-Economic Rights Institute[5] also provide evidence of transformative thinking within the structures of urban development, on top of highly active social movements such as Abahlali baseMjondolo[6] (Shack Dwellers Movement) and the South African Slum Dwellers International Alliance,[7] including the Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDUP),[8] in South Africa. Such movements and organisations empower communities, provide structure, and represent the unheard voices of the previously excluded.

However, efforts towards more inclusive economies, job creation, empowerment, and effective countering of gentrification are not without significant challenges. The South African New Growth Path Strategy was an attempt, on a large scale, to induce inclusive decision-making and economic growth; yet the first decade of the 21st century saw greater inequality in South African cities (Ncube, Shimeles & Verdier-Chouchane, 2013: 1; South Africa, 2010). The adoption of neoliberal policies in South Africa has hindered inclusive development, coupled with the self-serving behaviours of institutions with further embedding colonial legacies (Donaldson *et al.*, 2012: 176).

Gentrification can be viewed as DT, as it strips the residents of their sense of place, ownership, and access to a better quality of life. Not neglecting the acknowledged attempts in postcolonial development policies to unravel the legacy of apartheid, these attempts have tended to reproduce characteristics that do not empower or include the urban poor. This theorisation identifies an urgent need for policies and strategies that work towards DR, using mechanisms that intentionally involve advocacy groups in decision-making, shared value creation, and pursue direct strategies such as inclusionary housing policies that practically advantage the urban poor and entrench the RTC framework in urban redevelopment systems. The government needs to 'intentionally' change the thinking and framing of urban redevelopment toward DR and provide shared value-driven policy and legislative enactments, in order to restore the dignity of previously dispossessed and displaced South Africans.

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1   https://www.plaas.org.za/

2   https://aet.org.za/

3   https://nu.org.za/

4   https://livelihoods.org.za/

5   https://www.seri-sa.org/

6   https://abahlali.org/

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7   https://sasdialliance.org.za/

8   https://codohsapa.org/

6. CONCLUSION: TOWARDS DIGNITY AND INCLUSION

There is an underlying exclusionary logic in neoliberal, post-apartheid urban policy that espouses spatial transformation but perpetuates DT and is blind to the need for DR. Beyond the historic dispossession of non-White, urban poor South Africans through colonialism and apartheid, the unabated and unquestioned forces of gentrification have been allowed, by the current dispensations, to continue to deprive the very same populations of both place and dignity. Considering the arguments that DT extends beyond simply material aspects, the implications for DR go further to demand processes that seek not only property restoration or compensation, but also the rectification of non-property dignity deprivations.

DR offers a powerful framework, due to its dual attack on material deprivation and human dignity (Atuahene, 2016). Dignity can be restored to South Africa's urban poor through empowerment and granting the citizens agency, and this can be encouraged through a change or shift in institutional behaviours. Promoting shared value through the provision of equity for local communities, rather than accepting the undignified effects of gentrification, presents one means to allow for new opportunities, leading to inclusive and just urban redevelopment strategies.

South African cities can no longer rely on only isolated and diffuse site-by-site regeneration or land-transfer remedies. Indeed, the RTC framework offers a progressive framing for more wide-ranging, inclusive urban redevelopment processes and decision-making. Understanding the role and opportunity the framework poses for improved governance and post-apartheid urban transformation is critical to both procedural reform and restoration. The DR framework directs focus and power to the dispossessed and displaced communities. In addition, the framework does not propose a fixed remedy for all contexts in a generic way; rather, the framework is context-specific in that the same remedies will not necessarily apply to all South African cities or communities of the dispossessed. The dignity framework simply offers room to reimagine the possibilities of redress, and to reframe the discourse on gentrification and other development processes toward reaching goals of inclusive urbanism.

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