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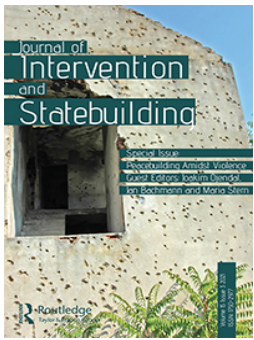
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# Peacebuilding, Structural Violence and Spatial Reparations in Post-Colonial South Africa

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## ABSTRACT

Peacebuilding approaches have placed emphasis on the restoration of political relationships and symbolic notions of community reconciliation, paying limited attention to the material causes of violence. In South Africa, the historical structural economic violence has been maintained, and after the formal end of apartheid, a lack of equitable distribution of resources is ongoing. This article conceptually and empirically argues that distributive justice measures are a way of compensating those affected by structural economic violence and addressing structural inequalities. Spatial reparations, we argue, could support readjustment of the socio-economic causes and consequences of violence in conjunction with promoting social justice.

## KEYWORDS

Peacebuilding; South Africa; structural violence; spatial reparations; distributive justice

## Introduction

In the transition from war to peace, efforts to build peace are often made as the violent conflict abates. Typically directed from the top-down, such peacebuilding activities can at times be counterproductive, exacerbate or fail to address conflict divisions (Autesserre 2014; More 2013). The state is often implicated in different types of violence because its weaknesses enable cultures of violence to persist (Elfvorsson 2016). This is particularly notable in South Africa through the maintenance of the spatial divisions and economic violence stemming from the colonial and apartheid displacement and segregation of communities categorised as ‘Black’ and ‘Coloured’. This article uses the terms employed by the apartheid government in order to discuss the divisions and narratives of the divisions, in acknowledgement that these so-called racial categories are a racist construction and were arbitrarily enforced. The article, furthermore, notes that ‘whiteness’ is crucially not a ‘norm’ of being but is ‘constructed and dominant’, and inverse colonial and racist understandings of this have been used to legitimize violence against ‘non-whites’ (Frankenberg 1993, 243). Segregation in South Africa was instigated by colonial powers and was further formalised through the government policy of apartheid, through which persons categorised as ‘Black’, ‘Coloured’, and ‘Other’ were displaced to the periphery of urban-economic centres. Yet over twenty-five years since the end of apartheid,

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intersecting spatial and economic divisions segment the post-violence city,<sup>1</sup> with further displacement through gentrification replicating racialised spatial and economic displacement (Lemanski 2014; Kappler 2021). As part of the special issue on ‘Peacebuilding amidst Violence’, this article demonstrates that there is a continuum of violence for individuals who face intersecting oppressions and as a result, are structurally marginalised. Therefore, if structural, spatial, and economic violence is to be addressed as a process of transformation, this article proposes the importance of distributive justice measures and suggests spatial reparations as a novel strategy of peacebuilding. As part of this special issue, which investigates peacebuilding as a process situated in the midst of violence, the article focuses on the spatial aspects of peacebuilding and argues that addressing questions of justice are a precondition for structural violence to cede.

Accepting that structural inequalities can be the root cause of conflict and create different registers of conflict, the *conventional* liberal peacebuilding toolkit can be seen to, at the very best, camouflage inequalities, and at the very worst, exacerbate them, rather than address them. This article argues that peacebuilding, as it is currently designed and implemented, is not able to deal with structural violence and to address the socio-economic causes of such violence. Informed by post-colonial literature, urban studies, and human geography, we acknowledge that material inequalities are socio-spatially located (McEwan 2003; Murtagh 2018, 2019; Harvey 2000; Gaffikin and Morrissey 2011).

In South Africa specifically, facing ongoing divisions, economic and social deprivation, and social injustice, a number of civil society groups continue to fight for material recognition and financial reparations for the suffering instigated by colonial powers, advanced by apartheid, and proliferated by marketisation and gentrification. In this article, we will look at spatial reparations such as land reforms alongside examples of the resistance to gentrification and ongoing issues with access to resources in Cape Town. Fundamentally, the issues surrounding appropriated land and inadequate housing in South Africa maintain the structural inequalities established through colonialism and compounded by the apartheid government. Mbembe (2018), in this context, demonstrates how capitalism and liberal democracy on the African continent can be seen to function, much like colonialism, as ‘traumatogenic institutions’ as they equally rely on techniques of classification, separation and racism. These are, of course, strategies of colonialism and the apartheid government, but also are continued in the post-colonial era and are spatially entrenched. Fundamentally, we demonstrate that peacebuilding efforts, in the broadest sense, have been unable to address such large scale, and transgenerational racialised inequalities through an almost a-material outlook on violence. Thus, this article contributes to developing peacebuilding research by pointing to the need for distributive justice in order to build a just and durable peace. In particular, we theorise on the potential of what we refer to as ‘spatial reparations’, to address persistent structural, spatial and economic violence such as unequal access to land, services, water and city space. In doing so, this article advances the spatial turn in Peace and Conflict Studies (Forde 2019; Bátorá et al. 2021).

This article is based on theoretical and empirical work. Whilst the article attempts to theorise the spatio-material limitations of peacebuilding and reinterpret spatial reparations, its insights draw from repeated engagement with and fieldwork in South Africa between 2012 and 2019. South Africa is chosen because of its heuristic potential and we are able to draw analytical links between the local and the global as well as

between the micro and the macro (cf. Millar 2021). We have employed various ways of conducting fieldwork in a self-reflexive manner drawing on feminist methodologies (cf. Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic 2020). Methodologically, the research gathers data collected through interviews conducted by the authors on spatial reparations, through research projects which were designed to explore the maintenance of inequalities in the city, and the use of space in the city. We also find that ‘being-in-the-place’ enables us to examine the spaces and places of the everyday, which is the privileged location for the researchers of this study (see Nordstrom and Robben 1995, 139). To stay attuned to lived realities helps us to resist and counter abstract notions of peace and justice (Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic 2015). Our approach requires us, as researchers, to be cognisant of power, positionality, and locality in research relationships (Kappler 2013; Thapar-Björkert and Henry 2004). We also acknowledge that ‘both the researcher and the researched are subjects with agency’ but recognise the often-unequal dynamics of research (Jakoby 2006, 171). Therefore, through various fieldwork methods we work to facilitate a research space where the binary constructions of researched/powerless and researcher/powerful are challenged, while acknowledging the unequal nature of research.

Accordingly, the article is guided by responses of participants and the themes that guide our analysis are based on recurrent discursive patterns that emerged during our field visits. Conversations and semi-structured interviews with a variety of stakeholders of intersecting identities have informed our theoretical reasoning for this article. Our empirical illustrations, as they pertain to housing, land reform and gentrification, reflect themes of the spatialised economic violence in South Africa as identified through the research. The continued structural spatial and economic violence such as unequal access to housing, utilities, and space is counter-intuitive to the aims of peacebuilding. What is required for sustainable peace and justice, however, as we will show through our analysis below, are spatial reparations. The following section will begin with discussing peacebuilding in the midst of violence and we will define structural violence. This will be followed by a discussion about distributive justice, and spatial reparations as a tool to address the manifestations of structural, spatial and economic violence in South Africa.

## Peacebuilding in the midst of violence

Peacebuilding, as a policy tool, emerged in the 1990s and was conceptualised in the Agenda for Peace by Boutros-Ghali (1992, 823). According to this landmark document, peacebuilding refers to: ‘action to identify and support structures which would tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict’.

This ambitious definition assumed that peace could be built through democratisation as well as the empowerment of marginalised sections of society (Boutros-Ghali 1992, 823). From early on, peacebuilding operations relied heavily on tools that had originally been developed in approaches to conflict resolution. The latter, both in the academic literature as well as policy circles, were largely based on psycho-social notions of dealing with conflict and therefore focused on tools such as trust-building exercises of dialogue projects (cf. Burton 1986; Azar 1990; Burton and Dukes 1999; Fisher 1999). The idea of the creation of a ‘culture of peace’ on the local level can be seen as part of this discourse (Boulding 2000). Deriving its methodology from these assumptions, peacebuilding

approaches developed a strong interest in societal dividing lines. This can perhaps be ascribed by the fact that peacebuilding was aiming to move away from a state-centric focus (which had shaped peacekeeping and peacemaking operations) and instead concentrated on what could be done on a societal, urban and localised level (cf. Richmond 2002; Björkdahl 2013). The idea was that such ‘fixes’ could best be subcontracted to non-governmental organisations, which, typically underfunded, would not require large resources to rebuild trust in broken communities (cf. Richmond 2005). Such work has primarily tended to concentrate on symbolic gestures, dialogue and community workshops.

Critically, traditional peacebuilding literature and practices do not sufficiently consider the idea that peace can be and is indeed sometimes built in the midst of violence. This is due to the many ways that peacebuilding has functioned as an elite concept, not only regarding *who* builds peace but *what* peace looks like on the ground (Richmond 2015; Elfversson 2016). Moreover, Visoka and Richmond (2017) criticise the uneven effects of neoliberal peacebuilding and in particular its focus on investment readiness and economic modernisation at the expense of inclusive social programmes, distributive justice and financial reparations. As a result, peacebuilding practices rarely manage to address ongoing and persistent structural violence and they often fail to bring about the structural transformation necessary for social justice in the long run (Millar 2017). It may be this very lack of structural transformation that potentially causes what Paffenholz (2021) in this issue refers to as ‘perpetual peacebuilding’, in which peace is never fully achieved. Thus, a new set of institutions, laws, norms, and resources are needed to counter the structural violence that reproduces poverty and unequal power relations (Chatterjee 2016). Such innovations are hard fought for, as Cárdenas’s and Olivius’s article argues in investigating the ways in which women have been carving out peacebuilding spaces in Myanmar (Cárdenas and Olivius 2021). They are often trans-scalar in nature (Millar 2021) and are embedded in a landscape shaped by political and economic inequalities.

Such material inequalities originate from multiple sources, many of which are outside of the influence of grassroots actors. Fundamentally, they tend to require a focus at the state-level, which organises the distribution of land and welfare, as well as global economic structures, which shape working conditions, and investments alongside capital accumulation and privatisation (Carmody 2002; cf. Nilsson and González Marín 2021). Hence, whilst fairly successful in creating opportunities of non-governmental efforts to tackle tensions at societal level, it can be said that peacebuilding has shied away from problematising the material underpinnings of inequality (Murtagh 2018, 2019). Instead, peacebuilding has often served to maintain the status quo (cf. Belloni 2001; Büscher and Mathys 2013) through the prioritisation of addressing different types of violence over others, coupled with a strong focus on reconciliation over social justice.

Notably, critical peace scholars have long pointed at the continuities between war and peace as violence from war time spill over into peace time (Enloe 1987; Meintjes 1998). The persistence and continuation of different types of violence characterises transitions from war to peace. A wide conceptualisation of violence extends the notion beyond that of direct violence to include also structural violence (Galtung 1969; Schinkel 2010; Bernstein 2013). This conceptualisation is intrinsically important in reflecting critically on violence, and the organisations, and states which seek to establish the projects of peace and human security. Fundamentally, we identify structural violence as global and entwined in the histories of states who attempt to lead and transplant peace projects.

The wider framing of violence draws attention to exploitation, discrimination and repression as violence and is well established in critical fields such as post-colonialism, and gender and sexuality studies, but less so in peacebuilding scholarship. Through a wider lens of understanding violence, space can be read not simply through actors and acts of violence, but also in terms of structural violence.

It is for this reason that we adopt a wide definition of violence, taking Galtung's famous definition as a point of departure. Galtung identifies that violence is present 'when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realisations are below their potential realizations' (Galtung 1969, 168). Galtung utilises the example of access to healthcare, observing how violence (such as the lack of appropriate access to vaccination, healthcare) is present in deaths resulting from tuberculosis now, but not historically, observing that violence 'increases the distance between the potential and the actual and that which impedes the decrease of this distance' (Galtung 1969, 168). This wide definition of violence means that anything which harms people and can be avoided is to be regarded as violence. The main disadvantage of this broad definition of violence is that it lacks 'clear boundaries around what constitutes [...] violence', and there is a 'tendency to use the term violence as synonymous for everything that is evil or morally wrong' (Bufacchi 2005, 197). Yet, the broad definition foregrounds victims of violence and makes visible other aspects of violence. A narrow definition of violence, which understands violence as only as physical harm and perpetrated by individual actors, is not particularly helpful to capture violence that is structural, spatial, and indirect at the same time.

For our purposes, we are interested in the dimensions of violence that are relevant to peacebuilding in particular in the post-colonial, post-apartheid space of South Africa where direct and indirect or manifest and latent violence may interact through established structural socio-economic violence. We suggest taking social justice as the opposite of structural violence. This realignment of the understanding of violence leads us to argue that peacebuilding must address the attainment of social justice which involves thinking critically about structural and, therefore, economic violence. The latter includes neo-liberalisation, alongside unequal distributions of spatial reparations, which manifests through what Steenkamp (2011, 359) refers to as 'networks of violence'. Steenkamp (2011, 359) observes that these networks are composed of different logics and rationalities of violence and demonstrates how such networks become spatialised in the places that have suffered most in the violence and benefited least from the peace (cf. Tomlinson 2016). Therein, the fundamental structural problems that cause resentment, resource competition and ultimately violence remain largely unaltered by peacebuilding and reproduces instabilities as

former social relationships of power and dependency often survive the transition to peace with relative ease; communities may see fewer economic dividends than expected and their political and social marginalisation remains high or increases (Steenkamp 2011, 360).

Furthermore, as many critical fields of scholarship recognise, we can identify that, historically, and in many 'peaceful' spaces, women, people of colour, LGBTQIA+ persons and persons with a disability, among others including those with intersecting identities, continue to face conflict or violence every day in spaces with and without a wider history of conflict. As the conflict transformation literature observes, war and peace are intertwined



and the understanding of the two as intrinsically linear transitions must be critiqued and problematised (Lederach 1997). Accordingly, peace cannot be considered the opposite of war which emerges when conflict abates (Foucault 2003; Mac Ginty 2006). Holistically, and conscious of intersectional positionalities, peace and war often co-exist and the binary dis-integrates dependent on positionality (Crenshaw 1991). By situating peace and war not only in time but also in space, we are better able to deconstruct the uniform narratives of ‘peace’ and ‘war’. This also helps us understand structural forms of violence in post-war contexts and explore the challenges such violence poses for peacebuilding practices. In this article, we orientate these challenges spatially.

## Distributive justice and spatial reparations

The UN identifies the ‘deepest causes of conflict’ as ‘economic despair, social injustice and political repression’ (Boutros-Ghali 1992). Yet, deep inequalities between communities in a society are often not readily addressed and adjusted, despite the recognition of reparations as a right in the *The Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation* adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005 (UN 2006). The central argument of this paper is that in order for peacebuilding approaches to contribute to transitions towards peace, justice and democracy, they need to be able to address grievances and transform deep inequalities including socio-economic and material inequalities such as inequitable distribution of and access to land as well as access to political and economic resources. Secondly, and in combination, we are arguing that they need to focus on redressing structural injustices committed against individuals and communities in divided societies which are transitioning to more peaceful times, even though the process is frequently less linear than expected.

## Distributive justice as peacebuilding

Distributive justice is a peacebuilding and transitional justice strategy that entails alleviating the effects of conflict and addressing the causes of conflict, which often means real or perceived socio-economic, political and cultural injustices (Mani 2002; Aggestam and Björkdahl 2013). Issues of distributive injustice underlie all contemporary intra-state conflicts. Relating more specifically to the concerns of this analysis, namely the interplay between distributive justice and just peace, distributive justice has enveloped in the field of conflict resolution primarily from a deontological perspective, that is, through a rights-based approach of satisfying basic human needs. In this, we want to challenge the privileging of symbolic over material needs in some of the traditional conflict resolution literature (cf. Burton 1986; Azar 1991). Distributive justice strongly correlates to what victims identify as core structural inequalities and historical injustices of conflict. Hence, in this article we understand distributive justice to address socio-economic injustices and, in doing so, addressing deep grievances of redistribution (on the scope of distributive justice, see for example, Carney 2005). The need to advocate for distributive justice is derived from maintained structural and systemic injustices, such as political and economic discrimination and inequalities of distribution that are frequently the structural causes of conflict (Carney 2005).



### *Spatial reparations as peacebuilding*

Critically, the basic distinction in reparations programmes is between material and symbolic benefits of either individual or a collective nature (Hamber 2000; Rubio-Marín 2009). Material reparations take different forms, including individual financial compensation, restitution of material goods, access to land and access to services such as education, health-care and other measures necessary for the rehabilitation of the victims of violence, human rights abuses and atrocities. Symbolic reparations may include official apologies, change in names of public spaces, establishment of dates and places of commemoration. Reparations programmes differ in scope (that is the total beneficiaries it covers), completeness (the categories the programmes are able to cover), comprehensiveness (crimes and harms that lead to reparations), complexity (the diversity of benefits), internal and external integrity and coherence (de Greiff 2006) as well as transformative potential and openness (Rubio-Marín 2009, 12). Increasingly, reparations are understood to be not only a juridical question but also a political one (Moffett 2017). Reparations are a means to provide individual remedy to the victims of the rights infringed, but also recognising victims of violence as citizens and equal rights bearers, as well as an act of assertion of these rights themselves, and an exercise of constructing and validating the legitimacy of the political order that respects and upholds such rights.

Reparations have of late received a lot of attention as a tool to re-adjust socioeconomic consequences of colonialism and conflict, and thereby broaden the scope of transitional justice to also encompass long-term development (Couillard 2007; Rubio-Marín and de Greiff 2007; Bernstein and Siebel 2011). Reparations have the potential to draw attention to the social and economic dimensions of violence, including the ‘racialization’ as well as ‘feminization’ of poverty that colonialism and conflicts further entrench, and the potential of transitional justice to create opportunities for equity. Reparations thus hold the potential to operate in a way that is cognisant of racial, class and gender relations in society at large, and be implemented in a way that seeks to address disparities of opportunity (cf. O’Rourke 2013). Yet, reparations programmes have not been designed with an explicit awareness of race, class, or gender. In conjunction, post-colonial scholars observe that the colonial legacy is rarely addressed in reparations programmes (cf. Barkan 2007; Tan 2007). In fact, racial and class-based inequalities that have their roots in the colonial past are often neglected when attempting to address structural harms suffered (Rolston and Ní Aoláin 2018). Overall, there is clearly a blindness to colonialism within transitional justice processes in general and reparations programmes in particular. This is acutely relevant in relation to settler-colonialism such as South Africa. Balint, Evans, and McMillan (2014, 195) find that ‘the extensive and enduring harms caused by settler-colonial practices and policies ... have not constituted the traditional focus of transitional justice discourse and practice’.

Thus, whilst programmes for reparations for victims of long-term structural violence could figure as a consistent category in state reparations programmes, they rarely do so. Even when such programmes are in place, class, race, and gender biases construct normative and practical barriers that prevent the affected individuals from accessing reparations (Rubio-Marín 2009).

Examining reparations is not only about policies and programmes, but also about reparations practices. Beyond the questions of what types of reparations – and for

whom – lurks the more specific question of how to imagine forms of redress that avoid reproducing racial, class or gender hierarchies, and that contribute to social justice initiatives to deconstruct such hierarchies and work towards equitable and peaceful societies (cf. Daly 2008; Walker 2016). In our broad understanding of reparations, we take issue with the artificial divide between material and symbolic reparations. Unequal land distribution, discriminatory spatial practices and access to space are frequently causes of grievances and are often root causes of conflict. As such, they need to be addressed through programmes of reparations in order to move towards social and economic justice and sustainable peace. We find that issues pertaining to access to space, redistribution of land and land reforms hold both symbolic and material value. Thus, we take a particular interest in what we refer to as ‘spatial reparations’. The latter emphasises the need for access to space in terms of its material, functional, and symbolic iterations. As Atuahene (2014, 116) observes, material reparations can also serve a dual purpose as material but also symbolic, as many respondents to the TRC chose land or housing ‘to affirm their dignity, legacy, place, ancestors, and culture’. Given that space serves not only as the symbolic, but also the physical infrastructure on which social relations unfold, it has to be seen as part and parcel of any negotiations that aim to create social justice in contexts where violence is prevalent. Therefore, we focus on spatial reparations as a form of distributive justice.

### **Spatialised economic violence in South Africa: The lack of spatial reparations**

The divisions formalised by the South African government under apartheid were spatial projects of displacement and violence, founded on the racial segregation enforced by colonial oppressors. Before any spatial displacement was ‘legalised’, vast displacement had already occurred as part of a larger colonial strategy (cf. Noyes 2012). In acknowledgement of this spatial continuum, Fraser (2007) refers to Gregory’s notion of the ‘colonial present’ to refer to the legacies of land inequality that colonialism instilled in South Africa, which continue to shape contemporary society. The formalised colonial division of land began in 1913 when the government of South Africa implemented the Natives Land Act, which cut land ownership of Black South Africans to 7 per cent. In 1936, this was increased to 13.5 per cent through the Natives and Land Trust Act but was unfulfilled (Clark and Worger 2016, 50; SA History 2021). As Fraser (2007, 837) observes, land restitution remained minimal and, even when realised, has ended up being chained to the need to form partnerships with agribusinesses owned by White people.

As far as mobility is concerned, in 1923, the Urban Areas Act had further restricted the residency of Black South Africans in urban spaces allowing local authorities to direct ‘African occupation (not ownership) in separate areas known as locations’ largely for serving White employers (Wentzel and Tlabela 2006, 85). One of the features of colonial spatial ordering was the segregation of the population in order to drive ‘non-Whites’ out of city centres. Among other legal acts that set the scene for the expansion of the racialised segregation project of apartheid, the Group Areas Act in 1950 apportioned rights and allowances of movement dependent on race and expanded segregation to include the Coloured population. Fundamentally, the spatial division was a project of oppression,

one of ‘white supremacy, that and nothing less’ (Huddleston 1956, 252–3 in Clark and Worger 2016, 45).

Our focus on land and land restitution is that it connects both material and symbolic needs for reparation. This is because land does not only serve the purpose of residential space, and of sustaining a livelihood and generating an income, it also holds importance for traditional leadership (Fraser 2007, 840) as well as in terms of its aesthetic, cultural, and spiritual relevance to its communities (Cousins 1999). It is therefore no surprise that land reform, today, remains one of the key concerns of addressing maintained inequalities as well as a source of violent and non-violent clashes between land owners and (the descendants of) the dispossessed.

### *The reparations debate in post-apartheid South Africa*

The reparations debate in post-apartheid South Africa takes its point of departure from the recommendations for reparations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The multi-party negotiations at the end of apartheid discussed reparations. Yet South Africa’s new constitution has failed to provide for reparations on a larger scale. Even many of the reparations that the TRC had recommended were only partially paid, with some victims continuing to wait for their full payment. In focus, the sum of financial reparation for the ‘21769 individuals officially recognized as victims by the TRC’ was reduced from a six-year, biannual payment of R17,000 to one payment of R30,000 (Pradier, Rubin, and van der Merwe 2018, 311). This form of reparation came under ‘individual reparation grants’ one of the five forms of reparation recommended by the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee of the TRC. To that end, the Committee on Reparations and Rehabilitation (CRR) was established to continue to investigate the reparations issue. The CRR’s conclusions were ambitious and proposed a comprehensive reparations programme centred around the ‘5 Rs’: redress, restitution, rehabilitation, restoration of dignity and reassurance of non-recurrence (Ferstman, Goetz, and Stephens 2009; Doxtader and Villa-Vicencio 2004; Colvin 2006). There was a tension between individual financial payments as favoured by some of the survivors and community groups, and collective reparations in terms of development as favoured by the South African government. Overall, the recommendations were too ambitious for the South African government to accept. Victim groups and civil society (such as the Khulumani Support Group) therefore continue to struggle to force the government to act on reparations. In 2003, the government finally enacted a reduced version of the CRR’s original reparations programme (Colvin 2006). Yet, structural economic inequalities are maintained and the undertaken distributive justice measures of reparations have been insufficient to bring about much needed social and economic justice. The following three sub-sections discuss issues of land reform, access to utilities, and the issue of gentrification. These three issues are interconnected in so far as structural attention and lip service is paid to ‘taking back’ land, while, largely, townships and informal settlements are left without access to basic resources. Furthermore, gentrification in the city is extending the displacement of apartheid by economic means, which in the apartheid city is frequently racialised, as we can see in the case of Bo-Kaap in Cape Town. Fundamentally, on one hand these issues represent a lack of

accountability to transforming the structural violence of apartheid, and on the other hand a furthering of this violence through the neo-liberalisation of the economy.

### *Land reform: The failure of spatial reparations*

As demonstrated above, the spatial inequality established through colonialism and apartheid has been trans-generationally maintained, and the promises of the African National Congress (ANC) to redistribute land have not transpired, so far. Yet, the need for material and spatial reparations, such as land reforms, in order to address root causes of economic, social and spatial inequalities in post-colonial and post-apartheid South Africa are key for peacebuilding efforts to work towards social justice. Land reforms remain as a key injustice of the apartheid era, not addressed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Notably, the area of land reforms is a complex spatial negotiation, in particular in urban spaces governed by market forces, 'where the hegemony of capital and development dictates land claims outcomes' typically transforming city space through its homogeneity (McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela 2015, 167). The influence of neo-liberalisation means that, the model of South African Land reform is based on a 'willing-buyer, willing-seller approach', which, as McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela (2015, 182) observe, is shaped by the 'invested interests of capitalism'. Fundamentally, attempting to alter the approach to land reform will have little effect 'if there are no changes to the country's economic model and development paradigm' (McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela 2015, 182). This reflects the neoliberal peacebuilding approach that fails to connect with local needs, and address social injustices such as poverty, spatial exclusion, and structural violence.

The area of land reform is one that is accounted for in the 1996 constitution. In focus, Section 25 of the The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (p. 12 s.25) concerns issues around the expropriation property, which may only occur under strict conditions in so far as it must be 'for a public purpose or in the public interest [...] and subject to compensation'. Fundamentally, this means that there must be an element of compensation in land expropriation. This is followed by guidelines regarding the amount of compensation which must be a balance 'between the public interests and the interests of those affected' (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa p. 12 s.25). In February 2018, the South African parliament voted for land reforms which would involve the seizure of land without compensation, with land to be transferred from White to Black owners (Roelf 2018). This closely followed the inauguration of the new President Cyril Ramaphosa and signalled efforts to address the long-promised reparations by the ruling African National Congress (ANC). Spearheaded by the 'radical left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)' the motion was widely supported (Roelf 2018). Despite the compensation outlined in Section 25, at a 2018 National Executive Committee Lekgotla (meeting) Ramaphosa<sup>2</sup> (2018), proposed that 'a proper reading of the Constitution on the property clauses' means that the state can effect expropriation with and, critically, without compensation if it is in the 'public interest'. The latter being demonstrated through 'public hearings', and the effect of the transfer of land being seen by Ramaphosa (2018) as a process which 'promote redress, advance economic development, increase agricultural production and food security [and] will transform the unjust spatial realities in urban areas.' At this point in time, it is unclear how these material, spatial reparations

will manifest, but it is noteworthy as an issue which has been used as a political rallying point. Critically, this is one that involves absolutes (through zero compensation) which holds the risk of replicating structural violence and instigating direct violence.

There is clear resistance by current landowners to the process of land reform, exacerbated by fears of dispossession. The discourse of fear is often maintained with reference to the contested expropriation of land of the Zimbabwean white farmer communities (cf. Samaita 2018). So far, most of the progress with respect to land reform has taken place within a neo-liberal market environment that has left little to no opportunities for small-scale Black farmers and, as Fraser (2007, 847) observes, demonstrates the continued presence of colonial structures in contemporary South Africa. Through this, we can see again how types of violence materialise in ways that particularly effect some of the most vulnerable persons. Crucially, the issue of land reform and reparations is important to address if peace is to be understood in a way which supports social justice. The current failure to develop a just process of land reform symbolises the ongoing colonial violence that in particular, Black and Coloured South Africans are subject to today. Rethinking land reform in a holistic way has the potential to reach more victims of apartheid and to work towards deconstructing the structures of oppression which instigated the theft of land. The following section pays specific attention to ongoing social injustices and the lack of access to basic resources and utilities in townships. Through this, it illustrates a basic extension of spatial reparations to include facilitating comprehensive access to water and electricity in townships and informal settlements.

### *Spatialised, racialised, class-based and gender-based inequalities and violence in townships*

The city of Cape Town, like most cities, is dually a space of great prosperity and significant poverty. Although access to, and quality of, utilities and housing varies across the city, townships and informal settlements have poorer access and poorer quality housing stemming from structural and economic violence. In these spaces, the quality of housing varies significantly from the more formalised housing complexes, lasting from the first materialisation of townships, to corrugated tin structures. There are 35 townships in Cape Town, which vary in population size and density (for example Khayelitsha is estimated to be home to 2.4 million people (Chaffey 2016)). In addition, currently there are 204 recognised informal settlements, but in actuality 437 ‘pockets’ of housing which range from ‘a large block of hundreds of homes’ to ‘small clusters of only a few homes scattered on land in between formal houses’, and some are even standalone housing on small plots of land (Informal Settlement Maps 2018). The prevalence of such informal housing is characteristic of the ongoing economic violence in the city, which impacts on the safety of individuals and the capability of individuals to access resources such as water and electricity, ultimately jeopardising the safety of individuals living in such conditions with greater insecurity for women, disabled persons, and the elderly.

The townships and informal settlements generally have poor access to sanitation and people live permanently with temporary toilet facilities and informal water pumps. Unequal access to public services, including water, illustrates the structural violence of the legacy of apartheid, which violates economic and social rights largely for Black and Coloured populations (Smith and Hanson 2003, 1517). The access to such public services

is temporally as well as spatially restricted as residents in many townships and informal settlements frequently experience service cut-offs, specifically in relation to water (Smith and Hanson 2003, 1536) but also are disproportionately affected by load shedding (rolling power cuts).

The ongoing water crisis, which peaked in late 2017, refocused attention to the intersecting issues of race and access to resources, as the city of Cape Town was the first major city to face potentially running out of water. This led to widespread water restrictions for the entire population with level 6B restrictions limiting residents to 50 litres per day, which was eventually increased to 70–105 litres (City of Cape Town 2019). The depth of the crisis materialised in different ways dependent on the space of residence; from questions around filling swimming pools to having enough water to grow vegetables in a home garden (Powell 2018). It has been pointed out that especially poorer communities had been used to severe water restrictions for a long time before, being dependent on getting water from standpipes anyway and using grey water to flush toilets (Bratton 2017). Furthermore, it is well documented in development and post-conflict policy and academic literature that women are disproportionately affected by water issues (Dublin Principles 1992). In a deeply unequal city such as Cape Town, this inequality has serious implications for the safety of women living in townships. As Harris et al. (2016, 562) observe from research conducted in two townships in Cape Town, Khayelitsha and Philippi, water access is typically localised with some residents benefiting from an in-home tap, while others may have to walk ‘up to 50 m to a communal standpipe to fill buckets as needed.’ This poses a security issue for women collecting water who fear ‘sexual assault, particularly at night’ (Harris et al. (2016, 574). The intersection of resource insecurity with physical security demonstrates the sustained and widespread impact of colonial structures of oppression. For women in townships, the vulnerability of the spatiality manifests in acutely physical ways, and trans-generationally perpetuates the divisiveness of apartheid through varying access to basic resources. The potentials of material reparations or spatial reparations are here presented as a spatial intervention whereby the safety and security, and everyday quality of life, may be drastically improved by closer attention to the provision of resources in township communities. While these spaces grow informally, it is arguably the responsibility of the government to ensure provisions for basic rights are met, and that this is the very least that may be done in terms of spatial reparations in the city and surrounding areas.

In focus, we can see how structural and economic violence manifests in physical ways and impacts disproportionately on Black and Coloured women living in lower socio-economic neighbourhoods, townships, and informal settlements, who face intersecting oppressions. Distributive reparations that aim to restore equity in access to such utilities as water and electricity can thus be seen as a crucial element in addressing maintained social injustices.

### *Rethinking spatial reparations: Bo-Kaap’s gentrification*

In Cape Town, the many stories of displacement and segregation mark out the transgenerational campaign of racial segregation and economic violence demonstrating the interconnectivity of structural, physical, cultural, and economic violence.

A post-apartheid materialisation of this is displacement due to gentrification, Bo-Kaap, at the foot of Signal Hill, is one of the city spaces facing this encroachment. The history of the area as largely Malay stems from the construction of residences for slaves from the East Indies but also East Africa and Malaysia (SA History 2020). Through the Group Areas Act of 1950 the area was designated as residential space for Cape Muslims (Iziko 2021). The historically largely Malay and working-class area of the city has been receiving increasing attention from developers looking to build residential housing, and from affluent individuals looking to live more centrally in the city (Iziko 2021).

As properties are increasingly being bought for large sums of money, the assessed value of the land increases. This means that individuals may no longer receive benefits due to the perceivable increase of their property value, so people are asset rich but experiencing cash poverty. Often, increasing property value will push property tax higher meaning people then need to sell their houses and relocate elsewhere (Group Interview 2018).

For many residents, these fears of relocation are similar to the times of apartheid and the constant fear of being displaced – this time just ‘by means of economic forces’ (Donaldson et al. 2013, 180). However, due to the communities of resistance (Sivanandan 1990, 52), strengthened by the spatial segregation of apartheid, the issue of displacement has trans-generationally reinforced and spatially anchored the socio-cultural identity of the Bo-Kaap area. The resistance of displacement through gentrification is centred around the space as one of memory, identity, and heritage. The struggle is not just about affordable housing but the semiotics of the space, which tells the story of the community. Two interviewees discussed the complexity of issues facing residents in Bo-Kaap, from a rise in crime to a reduction of the number of Mosques, and the ongoing court battles faced by the Civic and Ratepayers Association (BKCR), which has faced developers in court over different planned developments in the area. The BKCR led the ‘Hands Off Bo-Kaap’ and ‘Save our Bo-Kaap’ initiatives and have also successfully gained public support for the declaration of the space as a heritage site. Heritage conservation has become one of the main sources of resistance to gentrification, through the successful appeal for the community and historical shared spatiality of Bo-Kaap to be institutionally recognised and protected from the development of large residential apartment blocks. Thus, heritage conversation can become a means of spatial reparations and a means of ensuring communities’ right to housing and social justice through this. This functions dually, through resisting gentrification and affordable housing, but also through symbolic protections of the space which impact on the latter. Notably, the protection of the space through heritage conversation has the potential to maintain the community at an everyday level and, through this, bridges the physical space with the cultural heritage of the Bo-Kaap. Therefore, in the case of the Bo-Kaap, the preservation of heritage is both a material and symbolic effort, aimed to maintain community heritage and spatial practices.

The community resistance in Bo-Kaap illustrates the intersection of land reform and heritage protection of space, with social justice and peacebuilding, in so far as the current drivers of (re)development are directed by capital and market-driven city planning provisions. The encroaching gentrification of this and other city areas (such as Salt River among others) can therefore be read as a wider manifestation of largely racialised class conflict and the persistent income inequality that is largely maintained through apartheid planning in Cape Town (cf. Donaldson et al. 2013, 174). In rethinking spatial reparations, there is a clear potential for the incorporation of the heritage protection of displaced and



oppressed communities facing marketisation alongside broader structural and economic violence. This is very much recognised by the BKCR, which takes non-violent direct action against the developers, and prioritises the procurement of heritage status for the area. Through the BKCR there is civil society resistance against the marketisation of the heritage of the space, with an emphasis that the Bo-Kaap residents ‘are not going to be bought’ (Group Interview 2018). Through this resistance, the impact of bottom-up actors and civil society actors in securing social justice is demonstrated, though this notably must be supported by municipal and governmental protection of heritage spaces.

## Conclusion: The fight for spatial reparations in South Africa

The discussion in this article reflects the continuing structural violence that shapes South African society and manifests in unequal land distribution, unequal access to basic utilities, and gentrification which parallels apartheid displacement. Gated communities, gender-based violence, township gang violence, and poor access to land, water and resources are all manifestations of spatial and structural inequalities that the transition to democracy in 1994 and ongoing process of reconciliation have so far failed to solve. Notably, the inequalities which persist do not occur in a vacuum. The extension of European colonial involvement in South Africa through neo-colonial business interests (specifically in the mining sector) has meant that a peacebuilding intervention focused on the restoration of social justice has been largely absent. After all, such action would have potentially ‘risked’ destroying the very environment in which foreign business interests have been thriving.

Whilst the TRC managed to address some of the most traumatic stories of suffering, its mandate never included a broader transformation of the socio-economic underpinnings of South African society and in many ways, it has fragmented it (Moolman 2013, 98). Within the five areas of reparations, ‘symbolic reparations’ and ‘institutional reform’, in theory, could be applied most closely to the ongoing economic violence in the country (Buford and van der Merwe 2004, np). While institutional reform has the potential to address the inequalities which persist in South African society, land restitution has the potential to fulfil spiritual and cultural needs in terms of allowing for displaced communities to be spatially reunited. In many cases, this may be difficult as communities have long been spatially estranged. The success of such processes will certainly depend dually on the willingness of land owners to engage with the issue of land reform, and, perhaps more critically, the socio-economic empowerment which can help facilitate the mobilisation of marginalised communities.

Due to ongoing political corruption and inefficiency of prioritising social justice, much of the efforts to transform the maintained racial inequalities has not been articulated from the political elites, but instead from below. Some of this has been articulated in the ‘Fall’ movements, starting with ‘#Rhodes Must Fall’ and then merging into ‘#Fees Must Fall’. Such protests reflect the extent to which colonial structures have still been maintained in South Africa and are linked to ongoing material inequalities. The more violent response of the Economic Freedom Fighters in their demands for land return without compensation, coupled with calls for ‘White settlers’ to leave the country have also been directed by the manifested racial inequalities, with land reform representing a core issue.

In this context, spatial reparations, as we propose them in this article, offer the advantage that they link material and symbolic restitution mechanisms. Material without symbolic compensation, or vice versa, only achieves partial justice, so both need to go hand-in-hand. Land restitution, both on an individual and collective level, coupled with infrastructural improvements and appropriate and safe housing are important aspects of delivering spatial reparations. Such reforms would ensure that peace is more than a superficial gesture of reconciliation, but instead a genuine redress of past wrongdoings, and working towards social justice. This article has proposed a range of ways in which spatial reparations, both material and symbolic, can be used to improve everyday lives, preserve heritage of space, and to address and avoid replication of the structural violence of apartheid. Accordingly, we argue that spatial reparations may be a first step towards bridging the gap between reconciliation and justice, between symbolic and material processes. Such reforms, as well as the balance between symbolic and material approaches to peace will differ from context to context, as they have to specifically address the ways in which injustices were committed in the past. Some countries may need a more materialist approach, others will rely primarily on symbolic initiatives. Since, in the South African case, the TRC had primarily addressed symbolic dimensions of peacebuilding, we illustrate in this article the need to complement those with material reforms specifically pertaining to land and, as Atuahene (2014) observes, we understand that these are frequently interdependent.

Peacebuilding in the midst of ongoing structural violence is fraught with significant challenges, but also opportunities to support social justice initiatives, equipped with interdisciplinary understandings of social challenges, power and economic inequality. Fundamentally, Cape Town cannot be considered a post-conflict or post-violence city as it is, in many ways, a city still fraught with violence. As we have considered above, there has been a lack of sustained effort to readdress the layers of oppression faced by Black and Coloured communities. Critically, through symbolic and material reparations which can facilitate equitable access to social, economic, and political resources, we may still see an improvement in the everyday lives of individuals facing structural, physical, and economic violence. As demonstrated, despite economic and spatial marginalisation, in Bo-Kaap local actors are able to organise, mobilise, and effectively resist economic violence in the city of Cape Town. However, inequalities materialise differently in townships where residents face significant obstacles in securing basic access utilities, and it is critically the responsibility of the state to provide these resources. It is therefore essential that narratives of peace are unpacked from elite interests and understandings to make visible and create opportunities for conversations around the everyday experiences of conflict and violence. Fundamentally, we need to prioritise the inclusivity of local voices and civil society actors in order to structurally, symbolically, and spatially readdress racialised segregation and inequalities created during colonialism and cemented during apartheid. This can only be done through a cooperation between local civil society, a responsible national government working towards an equitable society and international support that strengthens both in an effort to ensure that peacebuilding efforts address all forms of violence as limits to social justice.

## Notes

1. Used here to acknowledge the formal end of apartheid but aware of the continuing structural and physical violence which continues as a result of the system of separateness.

2. This marked a harder stance towards land reform, emulating the return of land in Zimbabwe under Mugabe.

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