
Tara Fitzgerald

Brij Maharaj

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TARA FITZGERALD*
Enviropro Environmental Consulting

BRIJ MAHARAJ*
University of KwaZulu-Natal

ABSTRACT
This paper aims to review the literature and themes relating to displacement, social justice, and the right to the city in the 21st century. Displacement, in its various forms, is central to understanding the human rights abuses and livelihood implications when urban rights are revoked, forcing inhabitants to the periphery, and is the focus of this paper. Whereas the city’s services, resources, and opportunities should be a collective right advanced by local authorities for all who occupy urban space, displacements lead to resettlement and impoverishment, especially as livelihoods are disrupted. Urban renewal, through mega-projects, clean-up campaigns, and speculative gentrification processes, violates human rights when the poor are displaced in the periphery. Such displacements are often a product of the neoliberal assault. There are social justice, economic, and cultural implications as their urban rights are revoked. The focus on rights is partly owed to philosophers such as Henri Lefebvre and geographers such as David Harvey who have pioneered works on the right to the city and social justice, respectively. The struggle for social justice can be viewed as a moral claim for the realization and advancement of human rights in the city.

KEY WORDS Displacement; Social Justice; Urban Rights; Resettlement; Impoverishment

The disintegration of authoritarian dictatorships in 1989–1990 and the subsequent transformation of the geopolitical global order brought issues of democracy and human rights to the fore. Any discussion of human rights and urban (or rural) space inevitably raises questions of ethics, morality, and social justice. There is a view that to realize its “potential as a scholarly discipline examining the human condition, . . . geography needs

* Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Tara Fitzgerald (tara@enviropro.co.za) or Brij Maharaj (maharajB@ukzn.ac.za).
to focus on human rights . . . Likewise, the study of human rights . . . needs the nuanced sensitivity of geography” (Honey 2004:732). The concern of progressive, critical geographers with social justice (Harvey 1973; Smith 1994), morality and ethics (Smith 2000), and law (Blomley 1994) implicitly has a human rights orientation.

Investment decisions, zoning, politics, urban diversity, and class cultures continually transform the city’s sociospatial structure and present several challenges, including inequality, human rights violations, exclusion, dispossession, uneven development, segregation, forced displacement, and resettlement. Onyebueke et al. (2020:1) described forced eviction as a “global humanitarian crisis.” The extent of forced removals has resulted in an unprecedented number of displaced people.

Although the implications of development-induced displacement have become increasingly evident, the extent of displacement has worsened in the 21st century. With the unprecedented volume of infrastructure development, especially in cities of the Global South, the risk of population displacement and resettlement is exacerbated. Whereas the last two decades of the 20th century (1980s and ‘90s) saw the displacement of approximately 10 million persons per decade, recent estimations were said to reach 20 million per decade by 2020 (Cernea and Maldonado 2018).

Displacement in its various forms is central to understanding the human rights abuses and livelihood implications when urban rights are revoked, forcing inhabitants to the periphery, and is the focus of this paper. More specifically, the aim of this paper is to provide a review of the literature and themes relating to displacement, social justice, and the right to the city in the 21st century. A key contention is that displacements are unjust because of the resettlement and impoverishment likely to occur when sustainable livelihoods are disrupted. Those forcibly resettled do not benefit from projects that lead to their displacement (Vanclay 2017). Instead, they experience impoverishment as they lose the social, economic, and cultural resources that previously sustained them (Ichwatus Sholihah and Shaojun 2018; Patel, Sliuzas, and Mathur 2015).

The publication of Harvey’s (1973) book *Social Justice and the City* served as a catalyst for more critical approaches to analyze urban development and to promote the struggle for social justice and rights in the city. The right to the city and social justice approaches recognize the struggle of urban citizens to access and appropriate urban space regardless of class or economic status (Marcuse 2012). However, contestations and struggles have been disrupted by the neoliberal policies that have exacerbated marginalization and social exclusion and have restricted the rights of the poor in the city. Such rights include, for example, human dignity, access to essential services like health and education, inclusion in decision-making, information, employment, freedom from displacement or eviction, and a safe and healthy environment.

This paper is divided into five sections. The first focuses on accumulation by dispossession associated with neoliberalism. Social justice and the right to the city is the theme of the second section. The third section assesses various conceptualizations of development-induced displacement. Resistance to forced resettlement is the theme of the fourth section. The final section focuses on forced resettlement and policy options.
NEOLIBERALISM: “ACCUMULATION BY DISPOSSESSION”

Neoliberal structural policies eschew state welfare interventions, entrench private property rights, and promote free trade and liberal markets, which would apparently create conditions that would elevate human well-being by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills. The counter view is that neoliberalism has done little to alleviate poverty but instead has created an unregulated capitalist system which favors the elite and dispossesses the poor (Harvey 2003b, 2005). This is what Harvey (2003b) has termed accumulation by dispossession.

Accumulation by dispossession and creative destruction are evident in the restructuring and transformation of urban spheres (Harvey 2007b). More specifically, neoliberal urbanisms are viewed as the transference of laissez-faire market capital into the sociospatial spheres of the urban domain (Rossi and Alberto 2015). Such practices are enacted through public-private partnerships to govern and extract wealth from a redeveloped city (Weber 2002).

Harvey’s (1989) seminal work on cities was the first of its kind to identify the neoliberal governance of urban space. The shift of urban governance from managerialism to entrepreneurialism facilitated rent-seeking in the city. Furthermore, political and decision-making roles shift from local authorities to the elites within the entrepreneurial city. In such instances, urban policies reform to suit the elite instead of addressing the needs of citizens.

Moreover, the adoption of neoliberal policies in cities of the Global South has resulted in a vast majority of regions succumbing to the destructive nature of the neoliberal regime. As such, creating gentrified spaces, for example, has destroyed cultural norms, livelihood social networks, and political structures (Harvey 2007a; Rossi and Alberto 2015).

In the quest for world-class status in the 21st century, many cities continue to promote policies that lead to increasing inequalities, dispossession, and displacement, and the urban poor become expendable (Bristol 2018; Haas 2020; Leon 2017). Against the background of increasing impacts and consequences of neoliberal policies, there has been increased focus on social justice and rights in the city.

DISPLACEMENT, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND RIGHTS TO THE CITY

Social justice approaches have emphasized the need to advance human rights in the city (Domaradzka 2018). Both approaches reinforce one another, as the right to the city is also the right to a just and equal society (Mair and Duffy 2015; Mitchell 2003; Purcell 2002). The seminal works of Henri Lefebvre ([1968] 1996) and David Harvey (1973) have influenced the right to the city and social justice discourses, respectively. The rights to the city include (regardless of race, class, gender, ethnicity, or status of citizenship, etc.):

1. habitation (equal access to the city and its resources),
2. participation (in decision-making and shaping the city), and
Lefebvre ([1968] 1996) argued that it is increasingly necessary to affirm the right not to be excluded from the city when urban transformations occur. The city should be appropriated not only by the masters of privilege but also by the masses relegated to the peripheries and ghettos (Lefebvre [1968] 1996).

The year 2018 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *The Right to the City*. As neoliberal development projects proliferate in recent years, the right to the city has made “a comeback as a rallying cry” (Schissel 2012:42). The right to the city has featured prominently in urban social movements in both the Global North and South to contest development-induced displacement (DID) and to advocate for social justice. Various alliances, campaigns, and coalitions challenge urban commodification because such transformations tend to revoke rights and displace the urban poor (Marcuse 2012; Mayer 2012; Schmid 2012).

For example, mega-events are touted as neoliberal strategies for economic growth and worldwide recognition for cities in the Global South. However, such events have significant socioeconomic consequences (Müller 2015). In the buildup to hosting major sporting events, cities introduce neoliberal mega-projects to clean up and restructure the urban environment (Maharaj 2017, 2023; Vives Miró 2011). Such projects simultaneously revoke rights through DID (Mair and Duffy 2015; Shin 2018; Smith 2014), and those affected struggle to retain their right to the resources in the city.

Lefebvre ([1968] 1996:156) stated, “The right to the city is like a cry and a demand.” The cry and demand are out of necessity for the proletariat to equally access and appropriate the resources and opportunities found in city spaces. The right is therefore to equal access to essential services, health and education, freedom from discrimination, affordable housing, equality, inclusion in decision-making, citizenship, information, employment, accessibility, sustainable development, a safe and healthy environment, and freedom from displacement or evictions (Marcuse 2012).

Lefebvre ([1968] 1996) was vague about how the right to the city would be realized, however (Schmid 2012). The right to the city “is not a natural right, nor a contractual one” (Lefebvre [1968] 1996:194) and is therefore not a legal claim enforceable by the judicial system (Huchzermeier 2018). Instead, it is a moral claim founded on social justice in the city, a space where the social hierarchy between formal and informal, core and periphery, elite and proletariat dissipate. Such a space would incorporate freedom, democracy, equity, accessibility, and the ability for all to reproduce the city (Harvey 2003a; Marcuse 2012).

Geographers such as Brenner (Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer 2012), Massey (2005), and Harvey (2003a) contended that an alternative space of inclusion is possible. Marcuse (2012:33) notes that an alternative space of inclusion is achieved by “‘Exposing, Proposing and Politicising.’” In this context, exposure relates to identifying and analyzing the challenges in urban areas and making those problems known to relevant authorities. Proposing entails collaboration with affected parties to identify solutions to the recognized difficulties. Lastly, politicizing includes identifying the political implications of the
exposed challenges and proposed solutions. This phase pays close attention to the political aspects of the potential strategy of implementation (Marcuse 2012).

This would produce a transformed urban space, which revokes displacement and promotes inclusion, social justice, acceptance, and equal appropriation; however, social justice and rights are continually contested by authorities who advance macroeconomic policies at the expense of the urban poor. Such practices create uneven development (Smith 1982) and revoke urban rights, displacing the poor and destroying previously sustainable livelihoods provided in the city (Butler and Aicher 2015; Maharaj 2017, 2023; Watt 2013).

Forced relocation, or development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR), has two different but related processes: displacement and resettlement. The latter constitutes the “process by which those adversely affected [by displacement] are assisted in their efforts to improve, or at least to restore, their incomes and living standards” (World Bank 2015:2). Hence, forced resettlement is the act of displacement combined with struggles to restore the livelihoods of those displaced. Forced resettlement occurs when (1) land is expropriated for developmental purposes, (2) people are in the “right-of-way” or footprint of a mega-project, or (3) new developments threaten to harm surrounding populations (Vanclay 2017).

Some scholars argue that the focus on DIDR has been in rural areas, especially displacement related to dams (Rogers and Wilmsen 2020; Roquet et al. 2017). DIDR in cities is underresearched, and the impacts of urban resettlement remain relatively unexplored (Ichwatus Sholihah and Shaojun 2018; Roquet et al. 2017). This knowledge gap has led to limitations in existing resettlement policies, and frameworks need to be revised to address urban DIDR (Choi 2015; Koenig 2014, 2018).

Displacements are unjust because of the forced resettlement and the impoverishment that are likely to occur. Those who are forcibly resettled do not benefit from projects that led to their displacement. Instead, they experience impoverishment as they lose the social, economic, and cultural resources that previously sustained them (Ichwatus Sholihah and Shaojun 2018; Patel et al. 2015).

These development projects epitomize social exclusion through physical and economic displacement (Grier and Grier 1978; Marcuse 1985). Cernea (2004) argued that social justice, equity norms, entitlements, and human rights should be paramount when development projects negatively affect vulnerable groups. As a result, various international finance institutions (IFIs) developed safeguard policies to identify and mitigate forced resettlement risks.

Urban geographers, planners, and sociologists have attempted to conceptualize the various types of displacement associated with urban development.

**CONCEPTUALIZING DEVELOPMENT-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT**

Displacement has many meanings, occurs in different contexts, and has wide-reaching consequences. The notion of displacement, and its various forms, is central to understanding the livelihood implications when urban rights are revoked, forcing inhabitants to the periphery. Initially, Grier and Grier (1978) argued that displacement
occurred in two primary ways: physical and economic. Chernoff (1980) viewed social displacement as the dislocation and subsequent replacement of one group by another.

In calling for a more extensive view of displacement, Marcuse (1985) argued for the need to look beyond the direct forms of dislocation. He contended that this was too narrow a definition and there was a need to expand the notion to include various types of displacement that occurred under urban restructuring, and he argued that urban displacement occurred in four instances, including (1) direct last-resident displacement, (2) direct chain displacement, (3) exclusionary displacement, and (4) pressure displacement.

In the literature, residents’ physical displacement has been overemphasized, with little attention given to attachment to space and what the dislocation from place entails. In recognizing this, Davidson (2008) reconceptualized displacement to include both direct and indirect impacts. Such displacement-related effects include (1) indirect economic displacement, (2) community displacement, and (3) neighborhood resource displacement. Table 1 provides an overview of the conceptualizations presented by Marcuse (1985) and Davidson (2008).

Following the initial conceptualization by Marcuse (1985) and reconceptualization of displacement by Davidson (2008), there have been attempts to elucidate different forms of dislocation. Martin (2007) focused on political displacement, which transpires when residents are politically marginalized and outnumbered by newcomers. This occurs through the hierarchal shift that accompanies a regenerated area. In other words, political power transfers from one group to another, and influence is displaced from the poor and retained by the elite (Betancur 2002). Political displacement relates to Davidson’s (2008) community displacement (Table 1).

Table 1. Conceptualizing Displacement—Marcuse and Davidson

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<td>1. Direct last-resident displacement, informed by Grier and Grier (1978), refers to residents’ physical or economic displacement. Physical displacement occurs, for example, when landlords turn off the central heating within housing units, thereby forcefully evicting individuals. Economic displacement may occur because of excessive rental increases. Marcuse (1985), however, argued that both physical and financial disarticulation are likely to coincide where only the last resident of a unit is the victim of displacement.</td>
<td>1. Indirect economic displacement is related to exclusionary displacement (Marcuse 1985). It refers to the affordability pressures which accompany development in a previously underdeveloped area. Price shadowing—where redevelopment in one location simultaneously identifies other potential regions for development through increased housing and rental pricing (Vicario and Martinez Monje 2003)—decreases affordable housing availability, leading to augmented indirect economic displacement.</td>
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Table 1. Conceptualizing Displacement—Marcuse and Davidson, concl.

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<td><strong>2. Direct chain displacement</strong> considers the various displacements that have occurred since the physical decline of an area and includes all residents as displacement victims. Marcuse (1985) broadened the notion of displacement to include all those forced to relocate as an area physically declined.</td>
<td>2. Community displacement occurs when a city’s identity and governance are changed and there is a resultant shift in political power from the original residents to the newcomers.</td>
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<td><strong>3. Exclusionary displacement</strong> refers to households that can no longer access previously affordable housing as the area has been regenerated to cater to the elite. Here, Marcuse (1985) refers to two households: The first household relocates from the unit voluntarily and the unit is then redeveloped; the second household is one which was once able to reside within an area but no longer can because of increased property values (post-redevelopment).</td>
<td>3. Neighborhood resource displacement occurs when original residents succumb to feelings of alienation and disconnection as they no longer relate to the transformed sociopolitical state of their community.</td>
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<td><strong>4. Pressure displacement</strong> refers to urban residents resisting displacement. Such residents witness the changing sociospatial structure of their living environments. It is such changes that Marcuse (1985) argued would inevitably pressurize residents to relocate, thereby displacing them.</td>
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*Note: Adapted from Marcuse (1985) and Davidson (2008).*

Hyra (2015) argued that *political* and *cultural displacement* are interrelated, as the latter produces feelings of alienation amongst original residents who are forced to move. Political and cultural displacement result in the original residents feeling resentful toward, and alienated by, newcomers.

Drawing inspiration from Davidson (2008, 2009), Stabrowski (2014:794) described *everyday displacement* as “the ongoing loss of the agency, freedom, and security to ‘make place.’ ” In a similar vein, Butcher and Dickens (2016) talk of *affective displacement*, Atkinson (2015) talks of *symbolic displacement*, and Valli (2015) refers to a *sense of displacement*. Such forms of displacement all relate to the sense of loss which occurs when residents can resist physical removal but experience inequality and discomfort.
accompanying the fight to remain in a redeveloping area (Atkinson 2015; Butcher and Dickens 2016; Valli 2015). Such dislocation primarily relates to community displacement (Davidson 2008). These forms of dislocation are indirect in that physical movement does not occur.

Kern (2016) introduced the notion of temporal displacement as the privileging of specific landscapes, which inevitably results in the marginalization, exclusion, and displacement of certain groups and their needs.

Zuk et al. (2017) argue that residential displacement is direct and forced, attributing it to forced displacement. Forced displacement refers to the involuntary relocation of residents from their established communities and neighborhoods and could be physical (evictions), economic (livelihood disruptions), or exclusionary (beautification strategies). A good example would be urban lands cleared for FIFA- (Federation Internationale de Football Association) or IOC- (International Olympics Committee) related infrastructure projects that forcibly displaced countless communities in the emerging economies of Beijing, Seoul, Athens, New Delhi, South Africa, Brazil, and Russia (Broudehoux 2019; COHRE 2007; Foxall 2014; Maharaj 2015; Talbot and Carter 2018).

Governments form public-private partnerships to facilitate mega-project developments required for such events. Additionally, beautification campaigns disguise poverty in the quest to create world-class cities. The combination of mega-projects (stadiums, sports venues, transport networks, hotels and accommodation, and entertainment facilities) and beautification strategies were responsible for challenging rights and displacing and excluding countless citizens, mostly the urban poor (Corrarino 2014; de Oliveira 2020; Gauthier and Alford 2020; Ruggie 2016).

Those forcibly displaced include informal settlers and traders, vendors and hawkers, street children, the unemployed, the homeless, substance abusers, and sex workers (Corrarino 2014; Maharaj 2017). These persons did not fit the ideal image of a neoliberal city and were denied access to urban space. Such clean-up tactics are evident in most host countries, including those in the Global North and South (COHRE 2007; Kennelly and Watt 2011; Suzuki, Ogawa, and Inaba 2018). It is significant to note, however, that clean-up campaigns are not only tied to mega-events but are likewise evident under authoritarian regimes where the poor fall prey to the neoliberal city. This was evident in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, under Operation Murambatsvina, which targeted those living and working in the informal sector (Mazuru 2019). In less than two weeks, 700,000 urban inhabitants lost their source of employment, their homes, or both (Hammar 2017).

Displacement is mostly associated with development projects that spatially dislocate the urban poor from the city, compromise their livelihoods, and increase their risk of impoverishment. Often, the only option for the poor is to organize and mobilize to resist displacement and forced relocation to the periphery.

**RESISTANCE TO FORCED RESETTLEMENT**

Forced removals, through evictions, clean-up campaigns, and development-induced displacement, result in the “hygienization” of public space and the “violent un-homing” of vulnerable communities. Resettlement is one of the most acute forms of powerlessness, as
those removed lose control of their physical space and lose access to resources and amenities. Powerlessness, coupled with the urban poor’s lack of developmental benefits, has led to increased resistance to DIDR (Hirsh, Eizenberg, and Jabareen 2020). However, because forced resettlement literature focuses mostly on the rural experience, resistance studies have focused mainly on dam-related projects (Oliver-Smith 2006), with little analyses given to urban resistance measures (Koenig 2015).

Urban resistance to forced resettlement is a political action that calls for the inclusion of affected persons in decision-making, genuine consultation, participation, and involvement in the formulation and implementation of resettlement plans. City residents are well positioned for activism because of the high density of urban areas (allowing for collective action) and residents’ proximity to centers of power (Koenig 2015).

Urban resistance has taken several forms, including (1) negotiation with decision-makers about the effects of infrastructural development, (2) use of local, multisectoral, vertical, and national alliances to build and influence support for the displaced, (3) utilization of social media to gain public support, (4) activists and affected persons highlighting the human rights violations enshrined in resettlement policies, and (5) mass demonstrations placing pressure on politicians and reminding them of their constitutional obligations to their constituents (Koenig 2015).

Resistance to DIDR involves various bodies and spaces that act in solidarity to advocate for preserving livelihoods, the right to stay put, and human and property rights. Despite the policy protections for vulnerable groups, urban DIDR remains a contentious issue. Those who are displaced are resettled to the periphery and struggle to retain their rights to the city (Patel et al. 2015), a scenario all too familiar in South Africa, especially under apartheid.

FORCED RESETTLEMENT AND POLICY OPTIONS

Displacement threatens the welfare and property rights of affected persons. At the global scale, several IFIs have developed resettlement guidelines to mitigate the negative implications of forced resettlement (Drydyk 2007; Georg 2007; Terminski 2013); however, IFIs are accused of being “agents of neoliberalism” (Babb and Kentikelenis 2018), thus questioning the inherent contradictions between being profit-seekers, on the one hand, and protectors of the vulnerable, on the other. Nonetheless, where development projects require funding from IFIs, resettlement guidelines are expected to be strictly adhered to (at least in theory) to (1) mitigate the negative implications of forced resettlement and (2) facilitate measures to restore livelihoods (Vanclay 2017).

In 1980, the World Bank adopted its first policy centered on the socioeconomic impacts of forced resettlement associated with mega-projects. The World Bank’s guidelines have been revised over the years and have morphed into a global benchmark which have influenced multilateral, bilateral, and state policies on forced resettlement.

These policies guide the resettlement process and recognize that displacement can be both physical (relocation or loss of shelter) and economic (lost assets or livelihood strategies; Vanclay 2017). The primary focus of all three policies is to:
• prevent displacements or, where unavoidable, to mitigate the negative impacts associated with DIDR;
• avoid forced evictions;
• engage with affected communities and provide consultation and compensation for lost assets;
• recognize that cash compensation is not enough for livelihood restoration;
• improve or restore the livelihoods of those displaced; and

These policies advocate that livelihood restoration is fundamental to ensuring successful resettlement. Satisfactory relocation—that is, resettlement with livelihood restoration—can be realized by recognizing the rights of those who have been displaced. These include the right to information, consultation, participation, negotiation, compensation, and rehabilitation (Vanclay 2017; Van der Ploeg and Vanclay 2017).

Where displacement is unavoidable, the policies provide guidelines for developing a resettlement action plan (RAP). RAPs focus on compensation for lost assets, relocation costs, and livelihood restoration for project-affected persons (PAPs). Borrowers from the IFIs are required to employ skilled resettlement practitioners to conduct a baseline survey that determines the number of displaced persons, demographic information, assets, livelihood strategies, and vulnerable groups. Such information is required to formulate a livelihood restoration plan (Asian Development Bank 2012; International Finance Corporation 2012; World Bank 2017).

Scholars have argued that these policies lack guidelines on urban resettlement and methods to restore wage-based livelihoods, however (Koenig 2014, 2018; Roquet et al. 2017; Smyth et al. 2015). Policies to mitigate forced resettlement were first introduced for dam-related projects. In such mega-projects, PAPs were rural and relied on land-based assets and natural resources for livelihood strategies; hence, all three policies have a rural bias, focusing on land as the primary livelihood strategy (Koenig 2014, 2018). Likewise, there is a strong emphasis on restoring livelihoods that depend on common property resources and natural assets (Asian Development Bank 2012; International Finance Corporation 2012; World Bank 2017). Such resources (common property and natural) do not encompass wage-based strategies of urban inhabitants.

The city space provides refuge to the urban poor through informal occupations. Such occupations, defined as irregular, transient, and artisanal, mainly include street vending, trading, hawking, and traditional small-scale productions (Roquet et al. 2017) and are mostly overlooked by IFIs.

The World Bank pays the least attention to urban-based livelihood strategies. In addition, the IFC (2012:33) states that the resettlement policy “does not apply to impacts on livelihoods where the project is not changing the land use of the affected groups or communities.” However, in urban areas, city dwellers rely on skills and social networks for livelihood strategies. While this may be disrupted by physical displacement, the land use
remains the same (Koenig 2014); thus, the policy considers non-land-based livelihood strategies (Koenig 2018). The ADB did make some effort to incorporate language on non-land-based livelihoods, however, and stated that resettlement areas must have access to transport networks and employment opportunities (Asian Development Bank 2012).

Although all three policies specifically focus on livelihood restoration, little to no guidelines exist about how wage-based livelihoods can be restored. According to Koenig (2014), many urban resettlement projects are mostly (re)housing strategies in which livelihood restoration is overlooked. Interestingly, before resettlement, the urban poor often lack access to physical capital in the shape of formal housing. Instead, they reside in informal settlements where their location is more critical; however, when hosting mega-events, Global South cities restructure urban space for event requirements and aesthetic appeal. Slum settlements get demolished, and informal residents often relocate to formal housing on city borders (Nogueira 2019). Urban resettlement is therefore considered successful merely by the provision of housing. In peripheral locations, however, transport networks are often nonexistent or considerably expensive and employment opportunities are scarce. In such resettlement projects, livelihood rehabilitation is sacrificed for formal housing (Koenig 2014, 2018).

In 2014, a symposium in South Africa focused on “resettlement and livelihoods” under the auspices of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA). Two hundred and fifty attendees (government and private sector representatives, academics, civil society, PAPs, and IFIs) from 42 countries attended the seminar. The purpose was to identify issues in resettlement projects and to recommend solutions. Five key themes emerged:

1. Resettlement plans are failing communities.
2. There is more alignment between IFI policies and national legislation—countries are increasingly implementing resettlement legislation.
3. Livelihood restoration is inadequate and not planned or implemented effectively, and there is limited guidance for urban resettlement.
4. Skilled practitioners are the key to success—RAPs need thorough planning, and research into PAPs needs to commence as early as possible.
5. Resettlement practice is improving but requires more resources and training. (Smyth et al. 2015)

Effective resettlement is often constrained by inadequate consultation and participation, lack of political will, and policy gaps (Kabra 2018). Problems persist in resettlement projects despite the introduction of policies (Koenig 2018). Developers are not required to abide by IFI safeguard policies if they are not borrowers. Under such circumstances, developers must comply with national legislation centered on land acquisition, zoning, resettlement, and social welfare interventions (Koenig 2014).
CONCLUSION

Throughout history, cities have been synonymous with inequality and opportunity. The social-spatial characteristics of cities are primarily responsible for determining whether such a space is one of inequality or opportunity. In the urban arena, there have been some critical intellectual reflections about who has rights to the city and who is excluded. Lefebvre ([1968] 1996) argued for the equal appropriation of space and inclusion of the masses in urban transformations. This right is therefore not an exclusive entitlement for the elite. Instead, it includes marginalized and disenfranchised persons (Marcuse 2012).

This paper presented a review of the literature and themes relating to displacement, social justice, and the right to the city. Although the city’s services, resources, and opportunities should be a collective right advanced by local authorities for all who occupy urban space (Lefebvre [1968] 1996), displacements lead to resettlement and impoverishment, especially as livelihoods are disrupted. Urban renewal, through mega-projects, clean-up campaigns, and speculative gentrification processes, violates human rights when the poor are displaced to the periphery. Such displacements are often a product of the neoliberal assault. The poor are displaced and forcefully relocated to the periphery, and there are social justice, economic, and cultural implications as their urban rights are revoked. The focus on rights is partly owed to philosophers such as Henri Lefebvre and geographers such as David Harvey, who have pioneered works on the right to the city and social justice, respectively. The struggle for social justice can be viewed as a moral claim for the realization and advancement of human rights in the city.

REFERENCES


Fitzgerald and Maharaj  Displacement, Social Justice, and the Right to the City 65


Fitzgerald and Maharaj  Displacement, Social Justice, and the Right to the City 67


