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**The right to the city in post-apartheid South Africa:
Abahlali baseMjondolo's struggle for land, housing and dignity**

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Abstract

Fifty percent of the world's population live in cities today, but predictions of the sustained urbanization trend estimates that this number will increase to seventy percent by 2050. Meanwhile, the consequences of the urban divide and the demarcations between people in the increasingly fragmented societies could be demonstrated in the case of South Africa. In Durban an estimated 800,000 of the city's 3,44 million population, live in informal settlements in order to benefit from the city as a key generator of economic growth and human development. Against this background, the aim of this thesis is to understand how shack-dwellers organized in Abahlali baseMjondolo, frames the right to the city in the context of the post-apartheid project. By exploring collective memories of apartheid, employed in communicating the movement's interpretation of present events, social experiences of violence, repression and dispossession are understood. At the same time, through an emancipatory interpretation of the Freedom Charter, the movement seek to negotiate citizenship claims of land and service delivery which has continuously been denied through the state's criminalization of the poor and landless. Hence, through the struggle for land, housing and dignity the movement articulates the right to the city through a "living politics" based on political autonomy, participatory democracy and dignity, while demanding the inclusion of anyone's experience and intelligence. By understanding how the social movement draws on the past to interpret present events while negotiating citizenship, a profound vision of urban life is articulated from below in the context of rapid urbanization.

Keywords: Abahlali baseMjondolo, the right to the city, citizenship, collective memory, dignity

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| AbM | Abahlali baseMjondolo |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| BEE | Black Economic Empowerment |
| CLP | Church Land Programme |
| COSATU | Congress of South African Trade Unions |
| ECA | Ethnographic Content Analysis |
| GAA | Group Areas Act |
| GEAR | Growth, Employment and Redistribution |
| IFP | Inkatha Freedom Party |
| LPM | Landless People's Movement |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| MST | Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organizations |
| QCA | Qualitative Content Analysis |
| RDP | Reconstruction and Development Programme |
| RN | Rural Network |
| SACP | South African Communist Party |
| SAP | Structural Adjustment Programme |
| SDFN | Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SDI | Shack/Slum Dwellers International |
| UN | United Nations |
| UN-Habitat | United Nations Human Settlements Programme |

1. Introduction

Today, fifty percent of the world's population live in cities, and following the sustained global trend of rural-urban migration, estimates predict that seventy percent of the world's population will live in cities and urban spaces by 2050 (World Bank, 2018). Across different geographies, tensions and increased gaps between the haves and have nots in the cities are already present, and these will likely continue to be exacerbated in the future as unaddressed urban challenges unfolds. The United Nations (UN) is one of the global institutions that has made it a priority to emphasize the importance of the development of sustainable cities and communities through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the aim to “*make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*” (United Nations General Assembly, 2015).

Although urban reconfiguration has been an ongoing process since the industrial revolution, the gradual intensification of urbanization has prompted actions and reactions in the course of the contentious reality of the production of space. A significant starting point in this history was the example of Paris' urban renewal in the second half of the 19th century, led by Georges-Eugène Haussmann it was characterized by expropriation and a creative destruction, levelling the “slums”. The clear class dimension, where the processes first and foremost affected the most marginalized in society, has since reverberated through the history of uneven geographical development (Harvey, 2011:148-149). The publication *The Challenge of Slums*¹ (2003), attributes the increases in poverty and inequalities in the 1980s and 1990s to the retreat of the state as a consequence of prevailing neoliberal economic doctrines (UN-Habitat, 2003:43).

The effects of the uneven geographical development are palpable today around the globe through what the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) calls the urban divide, characterized by invisible borders that often split the “centre” from the “off-centre”. These demarcations between people in different urban spaces reflect the different socio-economic status of people and the fragmentation of society where space becomes the determinant of production of opportunities (UN-Habitat, 2008:VIII).

¹ The words ‘*slum*’ and ‘*informal settlement*’ are used interchangeably in the literature, generally they refer to sites of land that are illegally occupied by shack-dweller communities. However, given the varying characteristics of informal settlements, the use of ‘*slum*’ is usually considered to be a pejorative use that oversimplifies and undermines the people living in informal settlements. The dangers of the term have been discussed in terms of conflating the “physical problem of poor-quality housing with the characteristics of the people living there” creating a potential precedence for violent programmes of “slum clearances” (Gilbert, 2007:710; Gasparre, 2011:782).

However, as globalization continues to drive the increased flows of goods, capital and people, although at different pace in different geographies, conditions have been created to raise the question of the right to the city. This also includes questions of how hegemony is exercised through social constructions of space, or “the production of space” (Harvey, 2012:XV; Lefebvre, 1991:85). The history of urban-based class struggle embodies a desire of collective space as a public good, not for the consolidation of private redistribution of property, while it represents space as developing and nurturing progressive social movements, activities and purposeful engagement (Harvey, 2011:147; Harvey, 2012:115).

While there now is a long-standing recognition of the instrumental value to involve the poor to participate in the decision-making of improving their own conditions, new forms of urbanization are needed as democratization of public space is increasingly demanded (UN-Habitat, 2003:XXVII; Harvey, 2011:147). As these realizations now have reached international organizations such as the UN-Habitat, they have already been an integral part in South Africa’s history of struggle against colonialism and apartheid through articulations of the right to the city (Huchzermeyer, 2014:47).

However, with collective memories of apartheid and its structural legacy still perpetuating social, economic and political inequalities, exclusionary forces are still major factors affecting the meaning of citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa (Onwuegbuchulam, 2018:288). In 2006, many South Africans came out to celebrate “Freedom Day” to commemorate the first democratic elections. But in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality (Durban) 5 000 South African shack-dwellers from 14 informal settlements joined the social movement Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) to mourn “UnFreedom Day”. As a counterhegemonic memory of the expectations that came with the elections in 1994, it served as a reminder that for the poor are still not free (Gibson, 2007:70). Abahlali baseMjondolo, meaning “the people who live in the shacks” in isiZulu, was founded in 2005 in the coastal city of Durban to alter the conditions of the informal settlements. Given the longstanding grievances marking the post-apartheid period, of failures to address issues of access to land, employment and housing, there was no freedom to be celebrated for the poor (Selmeczi, 2011:70; Neocosmos, 2016:10).

Hence, the struggle of AbM has been seen as the struggle of the poor against their conditions of poverty (Hardt and Negri, 2004:135). It is a struggle demanding the universal rights and service delivery expected by all citizens, such as electricity, sanitation and clean water.

But it also represents a pursuit of a deeper meaning of access to land and what it means to live in the city (Huchzermeyer, 2014:47; Gibson, 2011:35).

While the discourse around the right to the city has received a great deal of attention in academia and activist circles in the West, the assumptions underpinning their approach of the discourse often remain Eurocentric (Rossi and Vanolo, 2012:49). The struggles of the landless poor in the global South carries several traits that makes them distinguishable from traditional social movements in the West (Meyer, 2013:190). In the contemporary context of post-apartheid South Africa, the incomplete victory over urban control during the freedom struggle are manifested through the continuity of anti-urban and exclusionary forces (Huchzermeyer, 2014:46). Meanwhile, the transformed struggle taking the shape of informal settlements' necessary claim for service delivery is intertwined with a process of negotiating rights and meanings of citizenship with the government's regulatory institutions (Short, 2014:165; Lyon and Goebel, 2018:x).

2. Aim and research questions

The antagonistic relationship that has arisen in Durban between Abahlali baseMjondolo and the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality is an example of existing grievances and the discrepancy in promises made and promises not delivered upon. The struggle for basic services and deliveries of electricity, sanitation and clean water in the informal settlements also pinpoints larger issues related to the right to the city and towards the right to a more human life (Pithouse, 2010:9).

Hence, the aim of this qualitative content analysis is to understand how shack-dwellers of the urban movement Abahlali baseMjondolo frames the right to the city in post-apartheid South Africa. The following research questions have been developed in order to address the main research aim of this study:

- How is the collective memory of the anti-apartheid struggle informing Abahlali baseMjondolo's interpretation of events in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa?
- What statements by Abahlali baseMjondolo describe how shack-dwellers' citizenship is being negotiated through claims of urban rights and resources?
- How is Abahlali baseMjondolo articulating an alternative vision of urban life?

2.1 Limitations

To understand how AbM conceptually frames the right to the city the geographical scope of this thesis is confined to the events and experiences of shack-dwellers in the informal settlements in Durban. The city, as part of the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, is where AbM originated. It has remained as the location of the headquarters as well as the site where several of the senior activists and members live and work. Although the movement has expanded with several affiliated settlements and branches all over South Africa, Durban has been the scene and epicenter of the struggle and formulation of the movement's politics.

An obvious limitation of the research is the absence of fieldwork and direct participation of the people engaged in the everyday struggles and development of AbM politics. However, this limitation has been weighed against the overall considerations and aim of focusing on the communicated meanings without any unnecessary ethical implications and rather focus on established approaches and consensus as to what the movement believes. This is limited to a political level of interpretations and less focused on the technical aspects of urban planning. AbM has been approached as a source of practices and expressions, it should be understood that there is no basis for equating communications of the movement consisting, of people living in shacks, with the voices of all the millions of South African shack-dwellers (Gibson, 2012:53). Lastly, it may be worth reiterating that the interpretations of urban process that the research give rise to, is limited to certain conditions in time and space that characterizes the particularities of socio-economic modernization in post-apartheid South Africa (Rossi and Vanolo, 2012:49).

2.2 Relevance to global studies

A key feature of globalization is the rapid rural-urban migration and urbanization. The dynamics driving the urbanization have been fueled by the global impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP), as part of the Washington Consensus to transfer power from the Third World nations to the Bretton Woods institutions (Davis 2017, 154). Meanwhile, policies induced by the ideology of neoliberal capitalism in the 1970s have had a profound impact on the reconfiguration of urban space. It meant a decline in Keynesian welfare, where the responsibilities of the State once were to ensure the provision of collective goods and protect the commons, and a shift to liberalization, deregulation, privatization and entrepreneurial urban politics (Blokland, et al, 2015:656; Harvey, 2011:106).

This has also meant a global exacerbation in the prevalence of “slums” and “slum-dwellers”, resulting in 78.2 percent of city population’s in least developed countries now being constituted by “slum dwellers” in contrast to only 6 percent in developed countries (Davis, 2017:22). Although oppositional movements to the consequences of neoliberal globalization have existed around the globe and articulated an alternative progressive politics, they have often remained fragmented in terms of global opposition (Harvey, 2012:111).

Hence, the plain fact that more than fifty percent of the world’s population already are urban inhabitants has altered the meaning of urban space (World Bank, 2018). The importance of the local in the global, and conversely the global in the local, constitutes a rescaling of social relations and processes. New geographical scales are evolving in terms of exercising power, the deterritorialization of the state is contrasted to the increased importance of urban governance. However, as the centrality of the local to the accumulation and circulation of capital and people has solidified, the debate is ongoing whether notions tied to the reconfiguration of urban space, such as gentrification, urban entrepreneurialism and urban redevelopment, are temporary or part of the long-term restructuring of urban space (Smith, 1982:139; 2002:430).

It is argued that deterritorialization as a contemporary form of disembedding, as well as other instances of when “social relations are taken out of local contexts of interaction”, results in fragmentation. While gated communities in segregated cities of the global South visualize both the emergence of a global middle class with weakened ties to the local and the fragmented city, it is worth keeping in mind the sustained relative power of the state (Eriksen, 2014:19-35). Because on the other hand the state still exercises its power through defining what is legal and not and thus has the power over inclusion and exclusion from the legal city. In this sense, one could argue that the state is the main cause of fragmentation by the power of designating the legality or illegality of settlements or even humans (Balbo, 1993:29-32).

Related to the concept of disembedding, the term of time-space compression captures an interesting potential role of globalization. Perhaps most symbolically represented by the internet, the instantaneous character of the global information society could, for good or worse, accelerate change. By extension this provides new opportunities for the emergence of Southern knowledge and experiences to speak for themselves are available with a global audience (Eriksen, 2014:41-43; Harvey, 1989:293).

Although this means a two-sided situation where civil society and some NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) are replicating behavioral patterns of urban entrepreneurialism that guides urban governance or regional development (Harvey, 2012:100). While the key principles and dynamics driving the production of urban space seem to share key features all over the globe, the material reality for the people in the global north compared to the global South differs fundamentally. Given the facts of the global inequalities and developmental asymmetries, findings also suggest that increased expectations from individuals, communities and society has increased as the urban poor are informed by globalization (Barnes and Cowser, 2017:171).

Nonetheless, the linking of the increased significance of urban space to people in order to realize their potential with the contentious reality of the urban divide has given rise to urban based struggles to claim the right to the city (Davis, 2017:22). In this context, globalization has simultaneously made possible the transboundary character of a globally interconnected civil society and new avenues for political emancipation (Kaldor, 2004:1-6). In this sense, understanding the framing of the right to the city in post-apartheid South African, by a social movement like AbM, becomes part in understanding the struggle of the urban poor. The experiences and thinking emanating from the informal settlements certainly connect the local to the global and vice versa, which if anything, is of relevance to the dynamics of global processes and global sustainable development (Hardt and Negri, 2004:135).

2.3 Disposition

Following the first chapter's introduction and research problem, the second chapter outlines the research aim and research questions, delimitations and relevance to Global Studies. The third chapter provides a background, with an overview of the historical context to understand significant processes leading up to the socioeconomic context of Durban in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa. Chapter four discusses previous research followed by chapter five on the theoretical framework based on urban theory, citizenship and collective memory that will be used in conducting the analysis. Chapter six deals with the methodology including methods for collecting and analyzing data, including characterization of material and ethical considerations. Chapter seven presents the results with analytical inferences and discusses the main findings in relation to the research questions. Chapter eight conclusion summarizes key findings by answering the research questions and provides some suggestions for future research.

3. Background

In South African history, the continuity of white supremacy and segregation has remained more or less consistent since the country's colonization in the 1600s by the Dutch. More recently, the legacy of apartheid plays an important role in understanding contemporary society in relation to of land rights and urban access. Although the history is marked by colonization, the adoption of the 1913 Land Act is often recited as a critical moment in history setting the standard for inequality and division in the country. The law resulted in 87 percent of the land being reserved for whites, leaving 13 percent of significantly less productive land for the black majority population (Walker, 2014:655). Further on in 1923 the Natives (Urban areas) Act was introduced to realize racial urban segregation. The laws and regulations were during apartheid constantly tightened and amended, with the aim to control the population and exploit the African labor force (Lemon, 2012:116). During the intensification of apartheid in the mid-1900s the Pass laws meant that black Africans could only stay in urban areas for 72 hours to find work (Gates and Appiah, 2010).

The socio-spatial structuring of urban space was encapsulated by the Group Areas Act (GAA) in 1950 that based on the ideology of apartheid became a tool to control the use, occupation and ownership of land and buildings (Maharaj, 1997:135). During this time and onwards under apartheid, urban planning policies and practices were characterized by forced removals based on ethnicity and the creation of large townships, often densely populated by the subjects of forced removals (du Plessis, 2014:71). The apartheid city in essence became the extension of realizing strategies and policies to disenfranchise the majority of the African people, considered aliens in white-dominated urban areas, and hindering their enjoyment of rights and resources associated with citizenship. Consequently, the imprint of the formalized land theft in 1913 and following legislations, the design and consolidation of the apartheid city later came to reverberate socially, economically and politically as the root cause of structural inequalities and under-development in post-apartheid South Africa (Christopher, 2001:449; Onwuegbuchulam, 2018:288-295).

In order to oppose the white minority-rule during the antiapartheid struggle, the Tripartite Alliance was established in the 1990s consisting of the African National Congress (ANC), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) (Hurt, 2017:291-292). A couple of years later in 1994, with the fall of apartheid and the first democratic elections, ANC won a landslide victory under the leadership of Nelson Mandela.

While ANC for decades had shouldered the responsibility as the leading organization in the struggle against the apartheid system, ANC had established popular support based on core principles proclaimed in the Freedom Charter including land redistribution, decent housing and development (Bernstein, 1987:673). These principles also influenced the politics of ANC's local bodies in Durban that at the time condemned the "housing crisis in South Africa" while describing the living environments of informal settlements as "indecent" (Pithouse, 2006a, 171).

However, throughout the course of transition to democracy, the reality of post-apartheid South Africa significantly diverged from the principles and the political platform that once was guiding the liberation struggle (Neocosmos, 2016:165). Although ANC maintained its leadership under the presidencies of Thabo Mbeki, Kgalema Motlanthe, Jacob Zuma and, most recently, the former trade unionist, businessman and ANC lead-figure Cyril Ramaphosa inequalities and race- and class-based segregation have increased (Gibson, 2007:66; Southall, 2014:49; Huchzermeyer, 2014:47). The focus on Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) resulted in the production of a "black capitalist society", that made modest progress in altering the structural dynamics of inequalities. Meanwhile, the ethnic tensions, once incited between ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) during the formation of the anti-apartheid struggle, has been retrofitted with cultural chauvinism and nativism to suit the purposes of the black elite (Gibson 2012:53-64).

Although apartheid legislation has been repealed, it has meant little in actively reversing the previous effects of forced displacements and facilitating the reintegration of populations and redistribute land that was stolen (Christopher, 2001:454). In comparison to the apartheid city, post-apartheid land policy has been rooted in a neoliberal ideology guiding the conceptions of right to land and tenure security (Patel 2013:273). While the Government's urban land restitution programme has been delayed, relying on market forces of a willing seller and willing buyer scheme, the sociopolitical history of South Africa and the structural root causes of poverty based on race have consequently been hugely disregarded (Christopher, 2001:454; Onwuegbuchulam, 2018:292).

Against this backdrop of the uneven geographical development of urban space, the impact on primarily South Africa's urban and rural poor has continued to be manifested during the post-apartheid era, and the issues of land and urban access remain.

In Durban, the third largest city in South Africa with a population of 3,44 million, there has been estimates that over 800,000 of the population live in informal settlements (Stats SA, 2011; Pithouse, 2006b:107).

Between 2004-2009, the motivation to formulate legislations that could materialize the “elimination of slums” was wrapped in the rhetoric of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of “Slum-free cities” and pursuing the status of “world class cities” (Selmeczi, 2012:499; Gibson, 2011:19). KwaZulu-Natal was the first province to develop the widely controversial “KwaZulu-Natal Elimination and Prevention of Re-emergence of Slums Bill” (KZN Slums Bill) in 2006 (Huchzermeyer 2014:42). The political leadership’s welcoming of the “KZN Slums Bill” in pursuit of the “world class city” to attract investments of foreign capital had effects in terms of AbM’s prolonged legal struggle against its enactment (Pithouse, 2006b:106). Nonetheless, in the many commonalities in the experiences of gentrification and urban regeneration processes across the globe, the image of “unruly” shack-dwellers populating informal settlements became an obstacle to “development”, necessary to get rid of (Gibson, 2011:188).

Hence, the controversy surrounding the “KZN Slums Bill” proposed by the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality spurred popular mobilizations and legal actions organized by AbM to prevent the enactment of the bill. Although it was later appealed and ruled unconstitutional by the court, it has served as a reminder of the divisions and tensions between the shack-dwellers from the informal settlement and the apparatuses of the government (Huchzermeyer, 2014:43).

Since AbM first emerged and mobilized 5,000 shack-dwellers to mourn “UnFreedom Day” in Durban, the movement according its own estimates currently have currently more than 40,000 members represented across 47 branches (Press statement 2, 2018; Gibson, 2012:52). With modes of action that ranges from utilizing legal avenues, participating in the public discourse and street blockades to assert the rights of shack-dwellers, AbM has through the years encountered both successes and repression (Beyers, 2017:246; Gibson, 2012:52). Although part of the struggle is concerned with access to electricity, sanitation and clean water, it stands clear that the language of “service delivery” is not enough to understand the transformed struggle for the right to the city that could have a much more profound impact on South African politics (Huchzermeyer, 2014:47; Gibson, 2011:35).

4. Previous research

In terms of previous research, Mike Davis' popularized book *Planet of the Slums* (2017) has, although not necessarily inviting perspectives and experiences from "slum-dwellers" themselves, been an important work in exploring urbanization in terms of growing global inequalities and prevalence of "slums". The research effectively draws on evidence on the global state of cities produced by UN-Habitat. Including annual reports on the *State of the world's cities* (2003) and global reports on human settlements with focus on the urban poor and challenges related to "slums". Although echoing Davis' thesis of the key role of SAPs in the increase of squatter settlements and the related health and environmental consequences, Richard Pithouse makes an important point. Based on a contrary approach, Pithouse critiques Davis' lack of reflection in objectifying the "slum" based on the colonial and neo-colonial mode of "knowing" associated with anthropology and the World Bank (Pithouse, 2006b:103).

The junction in the literature that deals with both the perspectives emanating from social movements and urban poor and the development of urban space in the Southern hemisphere is exemplified in the comprehensive documentations and research on the Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) (Gasparre, 2011:788). As a transnational network based on community-based organizations, it was initially launched as a global platform in India and South Africa 1996. Today SDI has expanded to organizing the urban poor in 33 countries in three continents. The research of Noah Schermbrucker, Sheela Patel and Nico Keijzer examines for example how SDI has developed a funding mechanism for "slum" upgrading but on a basis of bringing people together in planning, design and implementation of projects and with a focus on the collective (Schermbrucker, Patel and Keijzer, 2016:83-89). In this case, the research of the material conditions of the urban poor and their experiences remains at the forefront in comparison to the critique aimed at Davis' work (Pithouse, 2006b:103).

Further examples of prior research include Sandra L. Barnes' and Angela Cowser's research on the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN), a women-lead membership-based organization of the poor established in 1992. They found that the majority of members participated due to the mission to secure stable housing but also had other motives. Economic incentives were usually the initial reason for joining, but psychological and emotional support and community mobilization also became important motivational factors (Barnes and Cowser, 2017:153-171).

Based on research of the same organization, Beth Chitekwe-Biti's documentation of the SDFN's collaboration with the City of Windhoek also concluded that in the face of continued marginalization the informal settlement dwellers of the city articulates a need to reimagine the city's residential development and the importance of ensuring the inclusion of the most marginalized to guarantee the reforms are grounded in local realities (Chitekwe-Biti, 2018:387). However, in comparison with AbM, Chitekwe-Biti's research clearly demonstrates the distinctions between social movements and their locally developed political praxis. This can for example be seen in the collaborative approach found in SDI and affiliated organizations that tend to be more "reformist oriented", which has caused authorities in South Africa to encourage AbM to join SDI in order to stop the creation of larger informal settlements (Beyers, 2017:247).

Since academic boycotts during apartheid hampered any substantial interactions between South African scholars and international scholars, the literature documenting the urban aspect of the anti-apartheid struggle is somewhat limited. Rather, the literature during the apartheid years tend to focus on issues that outside of the frame of this research, such as the more technical aspects of urban planning. However, with the democratic elections in the 1990s the spatiality of post-apartheid cities gained international interest although often treated with exceptionalism given the complex history (Newton and Schuermans, 2013:580).

As South Africa adopted international norms and the post-apartheid city increasingly became an environment of emerging social phenomenon, among these the shack-dweller movement Abahlali baseMjondolo, a number of documentations and case studies have been produced. Nigel C. Gibson is one of a number of scholars spending time with and writing extensively about post-apartheid South Africa and AbM. Gibson's work often draws on AbM's development of a "living politics" as a response to the post-apartheid conditions marking South Africa today. By applying a particular analytical lens based on Frantz Fanon's postcolonial analysis of decolonization, that recommends the development of a critique of the societal context from below, the lived experiences and articulations of the grassroots are put at the forefront of the research. Gibson also engages with what he calls "activist intellectuals" involved with AbM (Gibson, 2007:87; Gibson, 2012:53).

One of these prominent “activist intellectuals” spending time with the AbM is Raj Patel. Based on participation in activities organized by AbM and observations since the early days of the movement, Patel frames the shack-dwellers’ struggle as a school of collective political development resulting in the Abahlali politics. Patel emphasize that a change of the material conditions of the people living in the shacks does not provide a complete explanation of the struggle. Rather the practices and processes of internal direct-democracy and development of political thinking from below, autonomous of any party, are emphasized as areas interest for the development of the academic community (Patel, 2008:99-108).

Another scholar working close with the AbM, Richard Pithouse, has made the case through several documentations of the emergence and experiences of AbM that the movement’s presence in Durban is a challenge towards a technocratic perception of democracy. Through invoking Gramscian thinking on intellectuality, AbM’s commitment to intellectual autonomy demands a recognition that they are the people with the social awareness to shape their own world (Pithouse, 2006b:104; Pithouse, 2008:86).

Meanwhile, one paper that is in circulation concerning AbM and stands out in particular is *The Rise and Fall of Abahlali baseMjondolo, a South African Social Movement* (2014), authored by Bandile Mdlalose who allegedly joined AbM as an activist in 2008. However, it has been subject to controversies due to it being framed as an academic work although it is left with unsubstantiated and unreferenced misrepresentations with attacks on academics researching the movement. The journal has received both rebuttals from academics and AbM in order to contradict some of the severe accusations with documented evidence (Huchzermeyer, 2015; Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2015).

The review of the literature makes it apparent that a substantial part of previous research concerning the relationship between informal settlements and the right to the city is often confined by the focus on material conditions or conventional Eurocentric assumption about urban transformation that does not always apply in the global South (Rossi and Vanolo, 2012:49; Lyon and Goebel, 2018:xi). Hence, this study seeks to contribute to the variety of literature by engaging and understand activist perspectives from the urban poor. Given the aim of the research to focus on understanding the framing “from below”, the research will fill a gap in the literature by providing a consistent understanding of the framing of the right to the city from the contextual framework of AbM in post-apartheid South Africa.

5. Theoretical framework and key concepts

This chapter explores the theoretical framework and key concepts underpinning the analysis of the material. The theoretical framework allows for connections to be made between what is found in the material to general social processes that are substantiated by previous research. In this case, urban theory serves as the main theoretical framework from which the approach to interpret and make sense of the data is adopted, while collective memory and citizenship are the associated concepts being applied to understand the themes emerging from the material.

5.1 Urban theory

Through the last couple of decades there has been a resurgence in the interest to understand social phenomenon and meanings associated with urban space. This has resulted in academic and activist circles revisiting both foundational scholarly work in the field of urban theory by Henri Lefebvre and more recent elaborations by David Harvey (Short, 2014:42). Much of their work to interpret the contemporary development and reconfiguration of space have been used by both activists and academics to articulate their aims and understand fundamental dynamics defining urban space. Hence, to understand the context of the post-apartheid city of Durban and the ideas, culture and ideology that are underpinning AbM's framing of the notion of the right to the city, it is necessary be familiar with urban theory as an analytical framework for understanding urban processes (Huchzermeyer, 2014:47).

The notion of production of space and the popularized term of the right to the city were first articulated by philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1991:10-11; Lefebvre, Kofman and Lebas, 1996:23). According to Lefebvre, space is socially constructed and as such it contains everyday discourses. This means that hegemony is exercised through the production of space and it is utilized as an instrument of actions and thought, and it can be used as a tool of social control and social reproduction (Short, 2014:70). Meanwhile, the right to the city has been understood as the articulation of both a cry and a demand. A cry to reposition the city away from the reproduction of social relations under capitalism, while the demand was to create a less alienated alternative of urban life that is more meaningful and open to encounters between people (Harvey, 2012:X). Demanding "the right to access, use and enjoy the city" and consequently allow all who inhabit the city to participate in the production of urban space is what Lefebvre, during his time, imagined as an ideal and stepping stone to an urban revolution (Short, 2014:164-165).

Among the contemporary successors and proponents of the notions developed by Lefebvre, urban geographer David Harvey has advanced and deepened the thinking around the right to the city and its relation to urbanization and capitalist social relations (Harvey, 2011:158).

Harvey's parallel interest in the history of neoliberalism as a dominant discourse, with a political agenda of privatizations and deregulations, greatly influences his writing and understanding of social tensions in cities. This can be seen in his account of the global impact of the neoliberal state in the 1970s and onwards where accumulation by dispossession has constituted a key displacement process. Utilizing legal and illegal methods to allocate wealth and costs adversely along dominant power structures in society, the process has served to restore class power through commodification and privatization of land and the conversion of property rights into exclusively private property rights (Harvey, 2004:63).

In addition to this framework, urban restructuring has repeatedly been realized, perhaps more visibly, through creative destruction. As an economic term it was once elaborated in a Marxist sense by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to describe how overaccumulation triggers inherent crises in the capitalist system, resulting in the destruction of accumulated capital and the productive forces (1848:17). The disruptive phase during the destruction of the productive capital was later explained by Joseph A. Schumpeter to be part of the evolutionary process of capitalism, that subsequently entailed development and growth (2003:83). Whereas Harvey emphasizes the class dimensions in terms of the adverse effects of creative destruction, by adopting an economic term and applying it in an urban sense the notion is helpful in understanding the social reproduction that occurs in the urban. Through the production of space, manifested in gentrification and urban regeneration, the economy of dispossession becomes apparent (Harvey, 2011:148, Harvey, 2012:16). As explored by Niel Smith, the visual alternation of the urban landscape through gentrification and urban regeneration serves to revitalize the profit rate at the expense of less affluent populations and working-class communities in the inner cities (1982:152-153; 2002:446).

In *Rebel Cities* (2012), Harvey's critique of the direction of urban development concludes in theorizations of global struggles to reclaim the commons and re-appropriate urban space in contrast to the increased commodification of the commons. The theorization includes an historical approach of urban trends of struggles, stretching from the Paris Commune and Haussmann's "creative destruction" of Paris' urban centre to contemporary networked struggles.

These struggles are global, fragmented in terms of their opposition yet interconnected in the history of urban-based class struggles, from the pacification programs in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, the Occupy movement and the organization of shack-dwellers in India and South Africa (Harvey 2012: 111-117; Harvey, 2011:80). The underlying theme is that the urban poor are resisting dispossession, repression and evictions through organizing in independent structures and developing their own local political cultures. Through staging mass mobilizations and protest they have achieved some improvements of the living conditions in their settlements (Mayer, 2014:190). In light of urban processes of accumulation by dispossession and creative destruction, a democratized right to the city is framed as a part of an urban revolution where the dispossessed reclaim power and create new forms of urbanization (Harvey, 2005:64; Harvey, 2011:158).

Perhaps less popularized in activist circles, Marcello Balbo raises several important points of particular relevance concerning the development of fragmented cities in developing countries. These fragmented cities, as distinguished from the “western city”, are described as a direct cause of the colonial period which developed two cities – one for “the population” and one for “the natives” (Balbo, 1993:24-26). Upon the legacy of the dualistic colonial city, the current fragmentation is visible in terms of different settlement patterns or differences in services and infrastructure. Of a particular interest in Balbo’s writings is the emphasis on the role of the state as a main cause of fragmentation through its power of inclusion and exclusion. By deciding what is legal and not, the state holds the right to the city. Through designating settlements deprived of infrastructure or services “illegal” the state is by definition governing access to the legal city and by extension not recognizing the people living in the “illegal” fragments as citizens (Balbo, 1993:27-32).

In summation, the adverse effects of dynamics driving urban restructuring have made cities political spaces and put them at the heart of struggles over who has the power over the production of urban space (Harvey, 2012:111; Mayer, 2014:190). Through processes of belonging, lived experiences, inclusion and exclusion, cities are today the place for the formation of political agendas and identification. It is supposedly also the arena where the distance or barrier between politics and the people could be transcended geographically (Gordon, 2007:447; Blokland, et al, 2015:659).

Given this framework, urban theory provides an understanding of notions that enables an interpretation of how shack-dwellers in informal settlements, through collective actions in their everyday practices, embody the resistance to exclusionary practices and what has been referred to as the right to the city (Short, 2014:164-165).

5.2 Citizenship

Meanwhile, citizenship has traditionally been defined by the social, political and legal membership of a nation state (Marshall and Bottomore, 1992:8). In this sense, citizenship include for example universal access to minimal standards of education and provision of welfare in society, the right to vote and freedom of expression and association, covering rights in the social, political and legal sphere (Della Porta and Diani, 2006:48-49). However, it is worth to reiterate that there has been an increase in dimensions to citizenship. Perhaps most notably exemplified by the inclusion of women in the public sphere and the increased mainstreaming of gender as opposed to earlier days when only white men with property were granted full citizenship. Naturally it follows that in the contemporary globalized world, with increased flows of people, debates over citizenship are still relevant in terms of inclusion and exclusion for example in relation to flows of immigrants and certain marginalized ethnicities (Della Porta and Diani, 2006:219; Gordon, 2007:448). It could be said that under global modernity individual rights and duties are perceived as vested in citizenship. However, the increasingly problematic nature of this notion is demonstrated in the increased difficulty of internally displaced people, certain minorities, asylum-seekers and migrants to assert their rights (Eriksen, 2014:59; Della Porta and Diani, 2006:48-49; Nah, 2012:503).

In Deborah Yashar's research of indigenous movements in Latin America, citizenship has been shown to be multidimensional rather than defined by a single relationship between the state and its citizens. As indigenous movements have demanded autonomy and localized governance, while also claiming national representation and a guarantee for their rights through all levels of society, the assumptions underpinning the structure of liberal democracy have been challenged (Yashar, 1998:39). Although rejecting the concept of global citizenship, Yashar shows that the impact of globalization on state structures reverberates through local communities as reflected by the claims of the activists' demands (Guillen, 2001:253). Meanwhile, the blurred borders between the public and the private sphere have developed new potential for conflict in relation to defining identities (Della Porta and Diani, 2006:62). Hence, citizenship is ultimately emphasized as processual, contextual and fluent.

It is experienced through different forms of identification and less about a set of certain endowments. In this framework citizenship in a nation or state is only one part of the multiple layers of allegiances that the notion of citizenship carries (James, Lazar and Nuijten, 2013:28; Della Porta and Diani, 2006:49). Given the increased relevance of the urban as a space for formation of political agendas and identities, it is in the political space of cities inclusionary and exclusionary practices are visible when citizenship is negotiated and enacted (Della Porta and Diani, 2006:219; Gordon, 2007:447; Blokland, et al, 2015:659).

5.2.1 Urban citizenship

It could be said that the national framing of people and place does not take into consideration the reconfiguration of space and the increased complexities tied to both globalization and urbanization. This reconfiguration and rescaling of the state's focus has led to what could be framed as the crisis of national citizenship, meanwhile the relevance of urban citizenship has been emphasized given the increased importance of urban community affiliation on the basis of everyday acts of citizenship (Blokland, et al, 2015:659; Rossi and Vanolo, 2012:159-160; Selmeczi, 2015:1077). In the context of urban citizenship, the city has become the subject and driver to mobilize urban collectives claiming new articulations of citizenship. The claims cover a wide-range of demands from affordable housing, to education and costs of public transport (Blokland, et al, 2015:655).

This means that cities are considered as a space where rights and duties of citizenship are enacted. In comparison to general understandings of citizenship that ultimately are enacted in the realm of parliamentary democracy through the act of voting, the local is usually where the political spaces are created. As a multitude of subjectivities struggle for appropriating the urban, citizenship could be defined as a process negotiated between individuals or groups and the local government bodies that regulates access to the meanings, rights and resources that are associated with citizenship (Lyon and Goebel, 2018:ix).

Hence, Angelo Gasparre frames citizenship through citizen participation in the case of SDI. As a transnational network of national urban poor federations, it strives to address issues of land, infrastructure and services in their dwellings through collective self-organization and dialogue with local authorities. Although the relationship with the government is critical to SDI and it acknowledge local government authorities as important actors in development, the organization seek to negotiate citizenship through what has been called "deep democracy".

This means an increased space for claims of citizenship rights, based on negotiation and long-term pressure that builds on the everyday experiences of the urban poor to realize gains in society (Gasparre, 2011:789-792). In Arjun Appadurai's exploration of citizenship in Mumbai, India, spectral citizenship, urban inequalities and "slum cleansing" has become intertwined with the city's struggle to attract global capital. The pull effect of people from poor rural areas in pursuit of work and a better life has resulted from the shift in the economy from being based on manufacturing towards being centered around trade, tourism and finance. Consequently, in the context of Mumbai's 12 million citizens, 50 percent live in "slums" or similar low-quality forms of housing while only occupying 8 percent of the city's land. According to Appadurai, these conditions of immense spatial stress and uncertainties about the meaning of citizenship conflates with violent outbreaks where local ethnopolitics and national xenophobia have been linked together in the politics of national sovereignty (Appadurai, 2000:628-649).

With a similar sensitivity to the impact of global dynamics, Mary Kaldor has observed the role of civil society following the end of the Cold War and the increased global interconnectedness. According to her distinction of the "activist perspective" of civil society it is described as a space to deepen democracy, extending participation and autonomy to the citizens while it demands active citizenship as an essential characteristic for redistribution of powers in society (Kaldor, 2004:8-11; Eriksen, 2014:76). Citizenship is imbued similar meanings by Michael Neocosmos' emancipatory perspective on citizenship. This understanding of the notion becomes particularly relevant in the field of development, where the notion of participatory development has emerged. This notion carries a wide array of connotations, however underlying themes are based on providing alternative practices to state-driven and top-down processes that include the involvement of the residents (Neocosmos, 2016:212-213).

The key take away when conceptualizing citizenship in the context urban post-apartheid South Africa and the Lefebvrerian sense of the right to the city, is to understand how the notion has evolved to encompass profound and multidimensional meanings. Particularly in a context where the apartheid connotations in the language of the "surplus population" is still pertinent in expressing the realities of those living in "informal settlements" under post-apartheid neoliberal capitalism. The continuity in exclusionary practices, through delineating the "surplus population" as politically illiterate and less than citizens, takes concrete forms through legal and illegal evictions (Gibson, 2011:123; Gibson, 2012:55; Selmeczi,

2015:1081). Hence, urban citizenship is intertwined with conceptions of the right to the city by encompassing emancipatory approaches of the “surplus population’s” claims of rights to urban life (Beyers, 2013:977).

5.3 Collective memory

The notion of collective memory, also referred to as social memory or cultural memory, links up with the overall aim of understanding how the right to the city is framed by AbM through bringing clarity in how the movement relates to events and ascribes meaning to them based on perceptions of history. In contrast to individual memories, people as members of social groups based on different identities such as class, nationality, gender or profession share sets of collective memories (Bohlin, 2001:16-17).

For social movements, defined as over-time cohesive collectives that challenges hegemonic political and cultural powers, collective memories provide a framework to interpret the contemporary context based on shared ideas of history and past events. Hence collectively held frames of the past together with experiences of the contemporary post-apartheid society could become a determinant that inform mobilization of support and collective actions in the present (Kubal and Becerra, 2014:865).

In the field of Social Movement Theory, the notion of collective memory is designated as an important feature in forming a collective identity upon which it is potentially possible to mobilize collective action (Della Porta and Diani, 2006:108). Although the formation of a collective identity alone is not sufficient to mobilize collective action, it is, along other socio-structural variables, an important piece in the psychological processes from where collective action emerge. A collective identity makes it possible for individuals to have a sense of belonging in a group that is representing a meaningful aspect of the self, hence these representations are visible in official communications that are connecting present actions through references to certain ideas of past events (Wright, 2010:579).

Research of collective memory has shown that it can become a foundation of creating new myths and institutions by re-appropriating history and social experiences and craft and transform them to bring about a consistent identity and sense of belonging in social movements. In addition to providing a framework of the past upon which it is possible to bring about a shared identity, the crafting of collective memories is utilized to serve social purposes in the present (Swidler and Ardit, 1994:308-310).

For example, research of Brazil's Landless Workers Movement, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST)*, shows how it uses its official publication to articulate the collective identity. The memories of violence and repression emphasize the role of a counterhegemonic memory with the social purpose of collective mobilization for a new economic development to contest neoliberalism, remembered as an ideology perpetuating violence. Furthermore, the official publication serves as the source to preserve the movement's institutional memory (Straubhaar and Villalón, 2015:118).

In a similar vein as the case of MST, another important point to be made in understanding the role of collective memories within social movements is the less conscious process of the development of organizational possibilities. These are generally passed down from older generations to younger activists. This understanding could be of particular relevance in countries with a history of liberation struggles for decolonialization where the subsequent political influence that political movements or experienced individuals have obtained transforms the political and cultural norms and conditions of the struggle (Della Porta and Diani, 2006:154).

Similar research of formations of collective memories as in the case of MST, can also be found in other countries in South America that has been marked by repression and the neoliberal waves during the 1970s and 1980s. Where collective memories serve to articulate the rhetoric of movements and make contemporary arguments to legitimize the movements' course of action in the present. The fusion of the historical memory of struggle and present visions of the future speaks to the strong desire to build understanding, solidarity and hope (Straubhaar and Villalón, 2015:109-110).

6. Methodology

With the aim of understanding how AbM frames the right to the city in post-apartheid South Africa, the following chapter will discuss the method of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). It has been chosen as the most appropriate method for data collection in order to identify themes that are related to the shaping of values linked to articulations of collective memories, citizenship and alternative visions of urban life. An interpretivist approach is used in the analytical phase, applying the theoretical framework to understand the themes in relation to the movement's framing of the right to the city.

6.1 Qualitative Content Analysis as method of data collection

Generally quantitative research in social sciences originates from positivist assumptions that does not focus on meanings as much as what is considered the “objective” through the measuring of frequency and extent through the collection of numerical data (Altheide and Schneider, 2013:25; Bryman, 2012:159). In comparison to more interpretivist approaches of qualitative research methods, the qualitative generally tends to focus on processes, that is to say how collective events, actions or patterns develop over time in a certain context (Della Porta, 2014:6; Bryman, 2012:402). Although qualitative research designs in comparison to quantitative research designs often have been critiqued on the lack of generalizability and replicability, two strengths of quantitative methods, qualitative approaches put at the forefront human subjectivity and contextuality (Chambliss and Schutt, 2010:222). The pursuit of exploring and understanding meanings associated by individuals or groups to social phenomenon and problems has become an important tool in further engaging with issues or topics that would not otherwise be explored although carrying personal or societal significance (Creswell, 2009:3).

Hence, to be able to address the research aim of understanding how AbM as a social movement is framing the right to the city based on its context, articulated through collective memories and ascribed meanings of citizenship and urban life, an inductive qualitative research approach has been deemed the most appropriate approach to allow themes to emerge from the material (Berg, 2009:3; Chambliss and Schutt, 2010:242). Since the material at the forefront of the research are statements published by AbM over an extended period of time, data collection has been based on the steps of Qualitative Content Analysis, also referred to as Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA), proposed by David L. Altheide and Christopher J. Schneider (2013:5-31).

QCA has been chosen on its merit to allow for establishing a systematic method for data collection that enables the material to properly represent the phenomenon being investigated, as well as its analytical dimensions allowing for interpretation of data through the application of appropriate theories and concepts (Bryman, 2012:557).

Yet, there are a number of qualitative methods that could have been considered as relevant in order to analyse data based on documents and written texts such as press statements and theoretical papers. For example, the focus of discourse analysis on interpretations and in-depth research of communications has a strength in the opportunity to uncover the interplay of power relations and constructions of dominant meanings in the language (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002:2). However, the choice of discourse analysis would imply a more guided research process from start to finish in terms of a greater theoretical emphasis on the linguistic relationships and intertextuality. It would also be a limitation given the reduced scope of data to analyze and the temporal range. Although both discourse analysis and QCA rely on extracting meanings from communications, QCA in comparison observes if the social and cultural context displays a significant impact on the unit of research during the given period of time when the communications take place (Berg, 2009:253; Bryman, 2012:289). Furthermore, the advantage of QCA in systematically collect and categorize larger quantities of data over extended periods of time, makes it possible to extract themes and meanings specifically pertaining to collective memory, citizenship and values associated with articulations of urban life (Altheide and Schneider, 2013:25; Berg, 2009:364-365).

In comparison with the related method of quantitative content analysis, the issue of reliability and validity are topics in a recurring debate concerning some of the potential limitations in qualitative methods (Stemler, 2001:5). In terms of QCA, conducting the analysis of the manifest content and making valid inferences and achieve reliability, relies on establishing transparent coding procedures (Chambliss and Schutt, 2010:85). If coded properly the classifications ought to be consistent and present a more fixed meaning of the analysed texts (Stemler, 2001:5). This to a large degree correlates with the non-negligible significance of the chosen dataset, which are official press statements and theoretical papers that conveys a both an explicit and an implicit meaning that formulates the cornerstones for exploring the research questions (Hermann, 2008:152). Potential problems that could be encountered when using QCA could be cases of excessive data sampling or oversimplification of data.

However, in avoiding these problems the sampling has initially been tested on a smaller sample in order to develop a well-defined research topic and appropriate categories for coding the larger sample, which is usually considered a key step to avoid the aforementioned problems (Finfgeld-Connett, 2014:349).

Following the categorization of elements in the dataset, obtaining data through QCA allows for the extraction of key themes in the selected press statements and theoretical papers. The themes, understood as recurring theses throughout the texts, conveys both explicit and implicit meanings of past and present experiences. These are subsequently subject to inferences by the researcher through the application of the established theoretical framework of urban theory and the notions of collective memory and citizenship (Altheide and Schneider, 2013:53). This iterative process of compiling the dataset and refining the categories, to observe both explicit meanings and its purposes and implicit meanings in the latent content, are the foundation to enable the researcher to make inferences (Stemler, 2001:1; Hermann, 2008:151).

6.2 Method of analysis

In order to employ QCA to systematically analyze and make inferences, words or features such as themes in the data needs to follow a rigorous coding procedure to properly measure the variables in the research questions that are corresponding to the research aim (Chambliss and Schutt, 2010:85). Hence, the application of QCA in collection, analysis and interpretation of data has as mentioned been constructed along the suggested stages of document analysis provided by Altheide and Schneider in *Qualitative Media Analysis* (2013). Similar procedures as proposed in the approach outlined by Altheide and Schneider's QCA have also been suggested by other authors and represents a typical set of measures of codification in QCA (Bryman, 2012:557; Berg, 2009:362-363).

The model covers necessary steps, from generating the research question, constructing a research protocol, collecting the data to conducting data analysis (Altheide and Schneider, 2013:19; Bryman, 2012:559). As an iterative and reflexive process, the data as well as the coding of categories are repeatedly reviewed and refined to allow themes to emerge (Chambliss and Schutt, 2010:251; Berg, 2009:348).

In practical terms this has included the construction of a research protocol based on Altheide and Schneider's steps (2013:44). In the draft of the research protocol the questions, covering relevant categories and variables linked to the research problem and guiding the data collection, have been formulated as follows:

- What are the themes related to collective memories of the anti-apartheid struggle and the post-apartheid context in South Africa?
- What are the themes related to claims of urban citizenship?
- What are the themes speaking towards an alternative vision of urban life for South African shack-dwellers?

In order to collect the data, a rationale and strategy to generate categories was designed based on purposive sampling, or more specifically theoretical sampling (Bryman, 2012:418). As QCA is focusing on the meanings and themes emerging from communications, this form of sampling avoids confining the analysis in preset categories and rather allows for the analysis to progressively capture what emerges in the iterative process of data collection (Altheide and Schneider, 2013:54-57). Hence, in the following steps of identifying data segments and collecting the data the emerging and open-ended coding approach, in comparison to a priori coding, has allowed the data to respond to the research questions and avoided the exclusion of meanings that could be of significance to understand the framing of right to the city by AbM (Stemler, 2001:3). The dataset has been compiled and categorized through the construction of a protocol for data collection, initially the draft of the protocol was tested against the collection of four documents upon which it was refined (Altheide and Schneider, 2013:44; Berg, 2009:363).

The coding of categories or variables into themes has consequently provided the basis of the inductive approach of data analysis through the discovery of patterns and relationships (Bryman, 2012:575; Chambliss and Schutt, 2010:241). In order to further understand and explore the processes in the meanings of the documents, the analytical framework builds upon the researcher's familiarity with the data and the ability to associate the data with the appropriate conceptual and theoretical issues (Altheide and Schneider, 2013:68-73). Hence, in this phase the interpretivist nature of the research becomes more salient in terms of applying the theoretical framework that has emerged based on the iterative dimension of previous steps in the data collection (Altheide and Schneider, 2013:70).

In this case, the analytical framework is based on the application of urban theory and the conceptualizations of collective memory and citizenship. The role of the theory then is to engage with both the explicit and implicit meanings in order to explain the relationship between the themes and the context that they are derived from (Bryman, 2012:580; Berg, 2009:21).

6.3 Material

The collected material that is underpinning the analysis to answer the research questions consists of primary and secondary data. The primary data has been compiled by the researcher conducting the analysis, as opposed to secondary data that has been compiled by someone else and then analyzed (Altheide and Schneider, 2013:7; Bryman, 2012:13). The primary data consists of official press statements made by AbM and leadership figures in the name of the movement. It has been collected through a process of purposive sampling, or more specifically theoretical sampling. This means that the material has been consciously sampled on the basis that it corresponds to the purpose of the research. The strategy of sampling has been based on criteria that ensures that the sample represents knowledge of the given situation and experiences and completeness to ensure that the sample represents the issues being studied (Chambliss and Schutt, 2010:123-124).

The selection of primary sources has first of all been based on their accessibility online in digital format, this can in various aspects be seen as both a strength and weakness. Strength in terms of their availability and transparency, but also a weakness since it inevitably results in a limitation that disregards the rich resources that exists beyond the material that are available online. While electronic resources pose new possibilities for research, it should be mentioned that in order to support the validity and replicability of the research, offline storing is a related and necessary precautionary step in the archiving of the collected material. Given this premise, the material and related research protocol is backed-up and accessible through the researcher (Altheide and Schneider, 2013:10; Mosca, 2014:20).

Furthermore, what is obtainable through cyber space represents only a fraction of the intellectual work and possible research material on this topic, the issue of accessibility also includes a limitation in language. While the sample only consist of texts written in English, it should be known that there are more resources available in the other official languages spoken by activists such as isiZulu and isiXhosa.

Given these preconditions for the sampling of material, the data collection has resulted in a selection of nine press statements made in the official name of the movement, as well as two longer theoretical publications by the president of AbM, S'bu Zikode, and senior activist Lindela S. Figlan. The texts written by Zikode (2014) and Figlan (2012) was part of the initial theoretical sampling as well as refining the research protocol template and motivated by their inside knowledge and the aim to assure representativeness. For each of the written texts relevant statements linked to the identified emerging themes have been categorized in separate research protocols. The majority of the material are stretching from the period 2014-2018 in order to limit the research to more recent events. But the material has also been completed with a number of documents from the early years of the movement with the purpose to include aspects that emerged during the foundational years. This also include material from the first wave of xenophobic violence that reflected the context in which AbM articulated a very tangible idea of citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa.

Secondary data that has been collected and used for the analysis is a booklet compiled by Church Land Programme (CLP), a South African NGO that works in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. CLP is one of few NGOs that works closely with AbM and has done so since the early days of the movement. This is partly due to their core practice of animation which is a participatory approach and reflective praxis. It builds on the commitment to social mobilization of the poor and respecting the fact that transformation must come “from within” the group which has been contrasted to some NGOs that strips the poor of their agency as actors of change (Church Land Programme, n.d.; Gibson, 2011:34-35).

The booklet itself has been developed by activists from AbM in conjunction with other activists from social formations of the dispossessed. The title is “*Living learning*” and it was produced in 2009, to enable self-reflection and theorizing about the politics of the movement, including the important aspects of political autonomy, participatory democracy and dignity. As such, it is an important piece in building an understanding of the explicit and implicit meanings that are being conveyed in terms of the development of a “living politics” as a response to conventional conceptions of politics. That is to say, a practical theory and “politics of the poor”, as articulated by those living the experiences as poor or marginalized (Pithouse, 2008:82).

6.4 Ethical considerations

Particularly given the fact that the research is not based on fieldwork, the number of ethical considerations could be perceived to be rather limited. Nonetheless, when conducting qualitative research and the subject of the research being a social movement, it is important to reflect upon the role of the researcher. Given the relationship between the researcher's role as a generator of knowledge and the power of science, findings may have political implications. Furthermore, it may also have repercussions for activists working in environments where political dissent might result in repression from authorities. As has been mentioned, violent repression has indeed been a consequence experienced by AbM activists due to their dissent (Milan, 2014:2; Gibson, 2012:64). Hence, one of the core principles of ethics in this research has been to avoid harm to the research subject. This has been respected by the research's limitation to official press statements and resources that has been made available online by the organization itself (Chambliss and Schutt, 2010:55). Along similar lines, since QCA has been referred to as an unobtrusive method or a non-reactive method, this has meant that "research participants" have not had to relate to the research itself (Bryman, 2012:304; Berg, 2009:364).

A second important consideration to ensure the fulfillment of ethical standards in the research at hand, is maintaining an approach that respect the emerging political subjectivities of the social movement in question. Research on social movements tends to recognize that there is no neutral or apolitical research. What this means for the research is that when going about researching a social movement that is invoking the right to the city "from below", there needs to be an awareness of the divide between academia and activism given the different internal and organizational dynamics (Freire, 1996:16; Milan, 2014:3). Hence, reflecting on appropriate application of the research, with considerations of the purposes the research serves and what audiences are addressed, is an integral part of the ethical considerations (Chambliss and Schutt, 2010:68-69). Ultimately, in terms of reflexivity, it is important to respect the preservation of the desired autonomy of thought emanating from the shacks in AbM's pursuit of an autonomous voice and local ownership. While Eurocentrism in academia certainly impose limitations in research, one needs to be transparent that the research's restriction to sources available in English, digitally and online, only represents a fraction of the intellectual work that is produced in the informal settlements.

Based on these realizations it is necessary to keep in mind that the data collected for the analysis is non-representational in nature and that it would be incorrect to generalize any findings (Abahlali baseMjondolo, n.d.; Rossi and Vanolo, 2012:49).

7. Results and discussion

This chapter will present, analyze and discuss the findings, through the application of urban theory and the notions of collective memory and citizenship. Guided by the research questions and the overall aim of how AbM is framing the right to the city in post-apartheid South Africa, the results in the form of key themes are presented with the analytical inferences and a discussion in order to contextualize the findings.

7.1 How is the collective memory of the anti-apartheid struggle informing AbM's interpretation of events in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa?

Given the specificities of the legacy of apartheid, South Africa has to a certain degree been treated with an exceptionalism in research given the complex history of the country (Newton and Schuermans, 2013:580). Nonetheless, since ANC assumed power of the post-apartheid government and initiated a policy of demobilization of the popular forces that once brought the party to power, many of the very same people who struggled against apartheid has mobilized in “new” social movements to address the persistence of grievances (Bryant, 2008:41). Hence, while formations of social movements on the African continent and around the globe share commonalities, certain organizational choices remain context specific (Della Porta and Diani, 2006:154). This means that how people from informal settlements organized in AbM, understand themselves, the movement and the state and consequently interprets contemporary events are impacted by their relationship to memories of the struggle against apartheid (Bryant, 2008:42).

7.1.1 Theme of anti-apartheid struggle

Drawing on collective memories of past experiences combined with experiences of events in the present has been a factor in establishing the underlying formation of the AbM's politics. While both the perceived and the actual unresolved social issues from the legacy of apartheid have been exacerbated with the unfulfillment of expected standards of global modernity, social experiences of the past have become directly linked to meanings and social purposes in the present (Eriksen, 2014:59; Swidler and Ardit 1994:308-310).

Just like in many other postcolonial countries, the demands for rights and resources associated with citizenship have formed integral roles for the struggle against the exclusionary forces of colonialism and the right to the city (Huchzermeyer, 2014:47). For example, the notion of urbanization is articulated by AbM in terms of the collective memory of experiences of the poor and black, both in the past and present.

Following media circulations of an article, issued shortly after the assassination of one of AbM's Chairpersons, a press statement was published by AbM responding to several allegations aimed at the movement. Claims charged the movement as responsible for the construction of new shacks and "land grabs", orchestrated through the recruitment of people in rural areas to the city (Hans and Sihle, 2014). Drawing on the collective memory of the dynamics underpinning the movement of people and the continuity in the discourse applied to marginalize the poor and black, AbM stated:

for more than a hundred years the rulers of this city have been claiming that land occupations and movement into the city by people who are poor and black is a 'crisis' that must be stopped by all means /.../ The apartheid government could not stop urbanisation with all its repression, its violence and lies, and the ANC government will not be able to stop it with its own repression, its own violence and its own lies. (Press statement 7, 2014)

In addition to the context of the publications, AbM makes it clear in its press statement that the claims made in the circulated article were made to "*encourage and legitimate violence*" against the movement (Press statement 7, 2014). It might seem peculiar for an outsider to see the apartheid government and the ANC government being associated and, in a sense, equated to each other. But in the recurring theme of the collective memory of the anti-apartheid struggle, where shared ideas of past events have emerged as a framework to interpret the contemporary context, it is understandable given its overlap with other themes of perpetuated violence, repression and discrimination (Kubal and Becerra, 2014:865).

Another example of these overlapping themes, where the history of violence is re-appropriated and transformed to explain repression perpetrated by ANC and to emphasize a counterhegemonic memory of the right to the city, was communicated in November 2018 (Swidler and Arditi, 1994:308-310; Straubhaar and Villalón, 2015:118). In the year preceding the general election in South Africa, held in 2019, the press statement in response to the attack on a land occupation stated that:

The hypocrites in the ANC continues to speak about land reform in parliament and in the media while violently evicting black people in the cities, like the apartheid government did. They do not recognize our humanity. We are treated like animals. (Press statement 1, 2018)

While ANC generally has been remembered as the sole representative of the anti-apartheid struggle, AbM's designation of ANC as hypocrites clearly articulates that there has been a disconnection in how ANC is viewed and the present actions of the party. The previously held idea of ANC as leading an emancipatory national liberation struggle has since the realization of the post-apartheid state been equated to the politics of the nation state where the emancipatory politics have been exhausted (Neocosmos, 2011:189). This speaks to an understanding of the co-option of the previous liberation struggle into the existing power structures, where ANC in light of contemporary events rather are perceived as the representative of the continuity of oppression, once upheld by the apartheid state (Hardt and Negri, 2013:118-119).

Naturally in the context of South Africa, any talk about struggle becomes a reminder of "the first struggle" against apartheid and by association the popular mobilizations led by ANC. It is notable that the meanings conveyed by contrasting the present struggle with the past, seeks to establish a narrative and collective memory that challenges the dominant view of the progress that has been made (Bryant, 2008:57). Given the continued popular support of ANC and its institutionalization in key areas of society, it is important to bear in mind that AbM's voice should not be equated to the voice of the millions of shack-dwellers in the country (Goebel, 2011:372; Gibson, 2012:53). Nonetheless, invoking associations and political terminology coined during the apartheid regime and intertwining it with the interpretation of present dynamics related to schemes of gentrification and urban redevelopment becomes a discursive tool. In essence, the violent evictions are part of the dynamics where the removal of the poor is a prerequisite to realize urban planners' and administrators' objective to frame Durban as an attractive city, safe for investments and capital (Smith, 2002: 446).

Hence, the spatial segregation prevalent in the production of space in post-apartheid housing and land policies are in AbM's communications framed as being enforced through repeated evictions and "forced removals" (Press statement 7, 2014; Short, 2014:70; Gibson, 2011:188). Which, through the act of remembering, draws on the apartheid oppression to inform the interpretation of present ANC, while AbM's similarity with the goals in the anti-apartheid struggle suggests the identification with a collective identity that call for the abandonment of "the party" (Bryant, 2008:57; Neocosmos, 2011:189).

7.1.2 Theme of violence and repression

Although the focus on criticism of ANC varies over time based on contextual factors, the counterhegemonic discourse seeks to use the current violence and repression experienced by the movement to mediate and connect the collective memory of apartheid to post-apartheid ANC. Meanwhile, the reclaiming of political principles established in the Freedom Charter, that guided ANC in the anti-apartheid struggle, are employed to construct and appeal to a sense of collective identity. As a core document formulated under the popular struggle against apartheid, the Freedom Charter comprise principles that are well-known among the South African population and it has high political credibility (Wright, 2010:579).

In this interpretation, the collective memory of “struggle” remains intact and continuous, while it serves the purpose of articulating the movements present rhetoric and arguments that legitimize actions in the present (Swidler and Ardit, 1994:308-10; Straubhaar and Villalón, 2015:118). For example:

Land occupations take the programme of the struggle against colonialism and apartheid forward. They take the programme of the Freedom Charter forward. They take the struggle for justice and the Right to the City forward. (Press statement 4, 2015)

What is notable is that these memories are not necessarily confined by the boundaries of any particular movement or organization, rather the counterhegemonic discourse forms the basis for solidarity with other actors. Built on the memory of dispossession under colonialism and apartheid, coupled with present processes of creative destruction of settlements that impact the poor, the continuity of the struggle is recognized through the experiences of members across different social formations of the dispossessed. These include Rural Network (RN), Landless People’s Movement (LPM) and Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (Neocosmos, 2016:180-181; Gibson, 2011:133). The solidarity with movements of the landless was expressed already in the early days of the formation of AbM:

we express our solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe suffering terrible oppression in their own country and terrible xenophobia in South Africa. We also express our solidarity with the people battling eviction in Joe Slovo and Delft in Cape Town and the whole Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign as well as the Landless Peoples' Movement and all organisations, big and small, standing up for the right to the city, the humanisation of the rural areas and for justice for the poor across the country. (Press statement 9, 2008)

Hence, the experiences of continuity of violence and repression is an important theme in the process of interpreting and make comparisons with the memories of the past. As noted, although the collective memory manifests historical specificities tied to the apartheid system, the articulated narrative for mobilizing collective action transcends the national border through the solidarity with, in this case, people in Zimbabwe. The oppression that was referred to as a basis for solidarity is exemplified by the large-scale redevelopment process of “urban slums” in the neighboring country that initiated a “slum-clearance programme” in 2005. In this case of creative destruction, the process was realized through and described in the apartheid language of forced removals, ultimately resulting in demolitions of informal settlements leaving an estimated 700,000 people homeless (Rossi and Vanolo, 2012:126; Gibson, 2011:188).

While there is a strategic overlap in terms of a “global collective memory” of oppression among the marginalized peoples across the globe, the experiences of the Zimbabwean shack-dwellers are of a certain proximity in terms of underlying dynamics (Press statement 9, 2008; Straubhaar and Villalón, 2015:118). Given AbM’s statement that was made ten years after its first proclamation of solidarity, the shared experiences of oppression have a strong basis of continuity. Speaking of the violence faced by land occupations, AbM reiterated that:

The ANC leadership in the ward have made it clear that they will not accept the occupation and they have made it clear that they intend to continue to mobilise violence to destroy it. (Press statement 1, 2018)

While experiences of violence and repression in South Africa undeniably are reminiscing collective memories of apartheid that are influencing the interpretation of present events through the legacy of South Africa’s complex history, the common denominator of dynamics of dispossession mitigates a certain degree of the “rainbow nation’s” exceptionalism (Newton and Schuermans, 2013:580). Hence, the parallels between the “slum-clearance programme”, “Operation Murambatsvina”, in Zimbabwe and the similar social experiences in South Africa, build on a shared repertoire of violence and repression tied to dispossession that continuously informs and shapes linkages between poor peoples’ struggles for the right to the city (Naicker, 2016:47).

7.1.3 Theme of freedom

The last theme, in terms of how collective memories of the anti-apartheid struggle are informing the interpretation of contemporary events, relates to how conceptions of freedom conceived primarily through the Freedom Charter are re-appropriated to formulate a collective identity for social change (Swidler and Ardit, 1994:308-310).

The collective memory invoked of the political influence that was gained by ANC following the decolonization and liberation struggle, acknowledges the impact it has had in terms of the transformed conditions of continuity of struggle (Della Porta and Diani, 2006:154). For example, the struggle against apartheid had in the aftermath of the first democratic election secured and increased some space that subsequently could be used in the poor and landless' continued struggle:

After apartheid the new Constitution (1996), and then the Prevention of Illegal Eviction [PIE] Act (1998), gave some protection to people occupying land without the permission of the state or the capitalists. It was still possible for people to be evicted but only after an order of the court had been issued. (Press statement 4, 2015)

As has been suggested in the literature on collective memories, previous experiences of the anti-apartheid struggle feeds into the organizational choices and possibilities in more recent formations of “new social movements”. Hence, interpreted through the legacy of passed down organizational possibilities, the creation of new political spaces and avenues of action in combination with “old” means of resistance have resulted in a more multifaceted mode of struggle (Della Porta and Diani, 2006:154). As acknowledged by AbM:

We have won many victories in court (using the law) and on the ground (using our own inkani) in the struggle to ensure that South Africa belongs to all who live in it. (Press statement 6, 2015)

However, what this means in relation to conceptions of freedom and the reconfiguration of the conditions of struggle, that has become less about struggle against colonialism and apartheid, coincides with the framing of the strategic shift that happened during the liberation struggle (Naicker, 2016:48). As ANC in the 1980s was promoted as the sole representative of the anti-apartheid struggle, ANC gradually solidified its role as the leading social movement in the country.

Around the democratization, a trajectory was initiated of professionalization and transition from a social movement towards a political party, while the pursuit of access to the state resulted in an increasingly hierarchical and elite driven structure of the party (Gibson, 2011:164-165).

In terms of the conception of freedom as conceived in the Freedom Charter, the collective identity that is being articulated have been reframed from being defined by ANC's struggle against colonialism and apartheid, to appeal to the more "inclusive" shared experiences of oppression experienced by poor, black and landless people (Naicker, 2016:48; Bohlin, 2001:16-17; Wright, 2010:579). According to AbM it becomes clear that:

The ANC has no confidence to the Freedom Charter. It has disregarded the mandate of the people, the same people that freed its leaders from prison, allowed others to return home from exile and elected it into power. We are told to embrace the 'politics of patience' but patience only means accepting that our oppression will continue for ever. It means that we must continue to live in undignified and sometimes life threatening conditions for ever. (Press statement 4, 2015)

The significance this statement can be by interpreted through the fact that the Freedom Charter has always been seen as the core of ANC's thinking in terms of formulating the visions in transforming the state and the South African society (Neocosmos, 2016:165). While ANC on one hand has exhausted the emancipatory politics, once conceived as its core principles, the "politics of patience" articulates the emergence of political subjectivities based on the continued oppression of the poor and landless where "*the people's lives is a contradiction to freedom*" (Living Learning, 2009:26; Neocosmos, 2011:189). AbM's re-appropriation of the mandate, based on the historical claims and social experiences asserted in the Freedom Charter, makes clear that struggles are not permanently progressive (Goebel, 2011:372). Hence, "revitalizing" the struggle by appealing to a more all-inclusive notion of freedom, conveyed through citizenship claims, carries a particular significance in terms of the right to the city in post-apartheid South Africa (Neocosmos, 2016:165). In the understanding of AbM:

Freedom is a way of living not a list of demands to be met. Delivering houses will do away with the lack of houses but it won't make us free on its own. Freedom is a way of living where everyone is important and where everyone's experience and intelligence counts. (Press statement 9, 2008)

Reinvigorating this emancipatory approach towards freedom is strongly contrasted to the “politics of patience”, or what also could be referred to as the absence of participatory class politics that ANC abandoned during its transition to a political party (Gibson, 2011:76-79). Given the history of ANC’s transition as a signifier of the outmaneuvering of alternative discourses in the liberation struggle, the understanding that the right to the city must be demanded and seized makes such an approach a challenge to the established political order in the post-apartheid project (Goebel, 2018:60; Beyers, 2017:236). While AbM’s acceptance and inclusiveness of emerging expressions of political subjectivities or “*everyone’s experience and intelligence*” in the urban political space, the authorities’ response of suppressing protests indicates a worrying path of the post-apartheid project (Press statement 1, 2018; Goebel, 2011:372). This has led to the evoking of Mandela’s highly symbolic statement:

Nelson Mandela said that ‘If the ANC does to you what the apartheid government did to you, then you must do to the ANC what you did to the apartheid government’. (Press statement 3, 2015)

While re-appropriating Mandela’s authority as a national figure in the collective memory of South Africans, the statement articulating the rhetoric of AbM draws upon two sets of collectively held frames of the past that inform the movement’s interpretation of the present context to mobilize support and justify collective action (Kubal and Becerra, 2014:865; Straubhaar and Villalón, 2015:109-110). The first relates to the shared ideas of the history of oppression experienced from the apartheid system, while the second relates to the memory of ANC’s resistance during the apartheid system. While the evoked collective memory of the apartheid oppression carries strong symbolism in conveying the relationship with the state in the post-apartheid context, it builds on the political subjectivity of the poor, black and landless’ right to the city that were an integral part of the anti-apartheid struggle (Huchzermeyer, 2014:47).

Meanwhile, parallel to the appeal to a collective identity based on the poor, black and landless people’s shared experiences of oppression, the memory of ANC’s resistance simultaneously appeals to a collective memory of the history of urban-based class struggle (Harvey, 2012:115). In particular in its formation during the 1980s, before the transition towards “the party”, the struggle has been characterized as a popular mass movement. The return to this interpretation of this inherited memory of organizational possibilities is already visible in the present given the organizational choices of AbM that are focusing on processes of community

representation that are thoroughly democratic (Naicker, 2016:47-8; Della Porta and Diani, 2006:154; Bryant, 2008:47).

Ultimately, the collective memories invoking a non-exhausted emancipatory understanding of freedom is today strongly present in AbM's organizational approach of fostering a culture of discussion allowing for organic intellectuals to elaborate alternative futures (Gramsci, 1971:134). These interpretations extend in particular to the sequent aspirational claims when negotiating an all-inclusive conception of citizenship where a vision of an alternative social order underpins the struggle of the poor against their conditions of poverty (James, Lazar and Nuijten, 2013:27-28; Hardt and Negri, 2004:135).

7.2 What statements by AbM describe how shack-dwellers' citizenship is being negotiated through claims of urban rights and resources?

In the material of AbM official communications, statements in relation to citizenship has been categorized in three different themes that are relevant to the process of negotiation between AbM and government bodies regulating the access to rights and resources associated with citizenship (Lyon and Goebel, 2018:ix). As mentioned in the previous section, the Freedom Charter formulates the collective memory through which ANC's contemporary politics are interpreted, but it also guides the aspirations and citizenship claims of AbM (Press statement 4, 2015; Press statement 6, 2015; Press statement 7, 2014; Bernstein, 1987:673). While citizenship claims are negotiated in different ways at the national, regional and local levels, in the initial outlook of the communication's, the notion seem to be less associated with the traditional meaning of a certain set of endowed rights and responsibilities in the social, political and legal sphere on a national level (Press statement 7, 2014; Figlan, 2012; Della Porta and Diani, 2006:49). The resulting themes that have emerged describes how citizenship is negotiated in AbM communications, based on citizenship claims, the criminalization of shack-dwellers and the denial of rights and resources associated with citizenship.

7.2.1 Theme of citizenship claims

While the unfulfillment of the principles in the Freedom Charter are invoked in several communications, the most important principle invoked is that "*All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose*" (Press statement 6, 2015). AbM's view on the issue of land has further been summarized in the words of senior activist Lindela S. Figlan who is saying that "*Our struggle began with the question of land and land remains at the centre of our struggle today*" (Figlan, 2012).

Furthermore, in an address to the 10th Biennial Consultation on Urban Ministry, the president of AbM, S'bu Zikode, spoke on the question of “*freedom without land*”, reiterating the fallacy in thinking that the “*land question is a rural question and that the main question in the cities is the housing question*”. According to Zikode, the question of land, even in the cities, always comes before the question of housing (Zikode, 2014).

Framed in the global context of urbanization and many other African countries where the rapid growth of cities is coupled with the fragmentation of societies and the exacerbation in the prevalence of “slums”, demanding land is a claim of citizenship (World Bank, 2018; Davis, 2017:23; Balbo, 1993:29-32). The claims of access to land, becomes the physical representation of space and the determinant of the abstract production of opportunities. Or in other words, the claim of land build on an understanding of the profound impact it would have as a vehicle to transform modes of urban governance to ensure social cohesion and development for the city’s inhabitants (UN-Habitat, 2008:VIII; Gandy, 2006:372).

In later communications AbM has explained that “*people occupy land because the government has failed to restore land to the people and to secure the people’s right to the cities*” (Press statement 4, 2015). The narrative of the failure to commit to the principles of the anti-apartheid struggle are mixed with the collective memory of notions of identity and belonging that are tied to land. Ultimately, land occupations are seen as the continuation of the “first struggle” with land as a source of the conflict. It is in AbM’s press statements the primary mode of action to materialize the principles that were fought for under the Freedom Charter, hence for AbM it is clear that “*with land we can start to be counted as citizens of this country*” (Figlan, 2012; Wright, 2010:581). In order to claim the rights and resources that are provided to the citizens inhabiting the city, land occupation is seen as an act to claim urban citizenship (Selmeczi, 2015:1077; Lefebvre, Kofman and Lebas, 1996:33). The actions of land occupation are further legitimized in the light of the absence of a “legal urban land reform”, where conversely land occupations are stated to function as an urban land reform from below (Beyers, 2017:247):

Occupation, which is expropriation from below, is the organized decommodification of land. Corruption that results in the selling of land and housing, whether from above or below, is the informal recommodification of land.
(Press statement 2, 2018)

The understanding of expropriation from below and decommodification of land builds on one hand on the perception that the state in post-apartheid South Africa has become the means of enforcing the processes of accumulation by dispossession along ANC patronage. But it is also situated in a longer-term context given the understanding that “*the land question in South Africa has its roots in historical dispossession*” (Press statement 4, 2015).

While the issue of land dispossession was at the center of the colonialization it was further solidified during apartheid when coupled with the formalization of racial segregation and the government’s racially motivated expropriation of land. With the failure of ANC and the political leadership to implement land reform the issue has been left unresolved and resulted in adverse effects in terms of the unequal allocation of wealth and costs in society (Onwuegbuchulam, 2018:294-295; Harvey, 2004:63). Since the land reform was structured into restitution, redistribution and tenure reform, it has been impacted by the realignment of society along the redistributive logic of capitalism and the hegemony of the market and private property, where accumulation by dispossession has continued to constitute a key displacement process (Patel, 2013:273; James, Lazar and Nuijten, 2013:29). Hence, the class dimension of the allocation of the burden has been carried by the historically dispossessed people, the poor, black and landless South Africans in the shift away from commitments of land distribution as a vehicle for restoring rights and poverty alleviation (Harvey, 2011:148; Harvey, 2004:63).

Hence, the right to the city is understood primarily by the claim to citizenship through the question of access to land, made in a legal sense based on the aspiration to achieve the rights proclaimed in the Freedom Charter. Meanwhile, the denial of claims to land has reinforced the completion of accumulation by dispossession where the alienation from land subsequently excludes those deprived of private property rights from their full citizenship (Gibson, 2011:120).

7.2.2 Theme of criminalization

The dialectics of the right to the city and the negotiation of citizenship is also framed through the state’s response towards AbM’s rights-based language and its governmentality in relation to the access to the “legal city” (Balbo, 1993:29-32). AbM seek to justify the exercising of citizenship through land occupations based on the historical rights narrative when referencing the freedom struggle. In this sense, the struggle is tied to an understanding of land reform as a means for restoring citizenship and prerequisite for national unity.

While the political liberalization in 1994 might have increased the space for public expression, in terms of justice for the dispossessed, citizenship continues to be denied through criminalization (James, Lazar and Nuijten, 2013:27-28):

The land question is a matter of justice but the state seems determined to try and make it appear as a matter of criminality. The Freedom Charter says, 'our people have been robbed of their birth right to land, liberty and peace'. (Press statement 6, 2015)

This new stage of disenfranchisement based on the criminalization of the poor, amount to what have been observed in other struggles for citizenship rights where the claims and actions undertaken by historically disenfranchised peoples have been derived to the incomplete political liberalization and realization of reforms (Yashar, 1998:38-39).

Despite of the state's disregard of rights associated with liberal democracy, the fragmentation of the unity set out in the Freedom Charter was realized when it became clear that the primary beneficiaries of citizenship rights in the post-apartheid project would be the liberation elite (James, Lazar and Nuijten, 2013:28). While the state holds power to designate legality and the local authorities govern the legal right to the city through enforcement of legislations, the state's criminalization of AbM's claims becomes an on-going exclusionary discursive act. Particularly when contextualized through AbM's claims of selective evictions and service delivery conducted based on ANC patronage, criminalization in present post-apartheid South Africa has become as means of the dominant social group to reaffirm its power (Press statement 7, 2014; Press statement 5, 2015; Balbo, 1993:24-29).

Hence, the discursive and physical exclusion during apartheid sought to reaffirm power based on ethnicity, in the post-apartheid project it is reaffirmed through political antagonisms. Meaning that the disenfranchisement connected to the criminalization of AbM is inevitably tied to their refusal to rely on patronage for access to what have been conceived of as rights (James, Lazar and Nuijten, 2013:28-29). In the end, the criminalization of the shack-dwellers has further been reinforced by the superstructure of the post-apartheid project, where the denial of justice sought in the Freedom Charter have turned the hegemonic notion of citizenship away from right bearing citizens into passive consumers (Goebel, 2011:369).

Hence, AbM's support of "illegal" land occupations and "illegal" connections to the electric infrastructure becomes in the economy of dispossession acts to claim the citizenship of shack-dwellers and the poor who are unable to pay for their urban citizenship rights in Durban (Harvey, 2012:25).

7.2.3 Theme of denied rights and resources

Entailing the theme of criminalization, which remain in the legal and discursive sphere, is the physical enactment of exclusionary practices through the deprivation of adequate housing and service delivery which in essence means the denial of rights and resources associated with citizenship (Balbo, 1993:27-32). While the question of land is at the heart of AbM's negotiation and enactment of citizenship, it is intrinsically and subsequently linked to the issue of housing and urban life in general. The communicated significance of land as a prerequisite for building homes to develop the communities and the lives of the shack-dwellers' families, attaches a profound meaning on "place", as a specific location in the local where an individual work or live (Press statement 3, 2015; Lyon and Goebel, 2018:ix). But it is also a question of the power to take control of their own lives and communities (Press statement 8, 2014). As stated by Zikode:

Houses that are far outside the cities exclude people from opportunities for livelihoods, education and the other benefits of life in a city like health care, sports facilities, libraries, entertainment for young people and cultural life. (Zikode, 2014)

Hence, the violence and repression in the form of evictions and invasions of the "Anti-Land invasion unit", that shack-dwellers repeatedly are subjected to, have strong implications given the assigned meaning of "place" and is in effect a denial of urban citizenship and the right to the city (Press statement 1, 2018). Essentially, the experiences of arrests, beatings and shootings amounts to the somatic criteria of direct violence. At the same time, the evictions and destruction of homes and denial of infrastructure in the informal settlements undermine the livelihoods of the urban poor population which amounts to nothing less than structural violence (Beyers, 2017:236). This form of violence is exercised through the uneven distribution of social and economic goods such as the deprivation of electricity, clean water and sanitation that are related to the increase of shack fires, diseases and sickness that objectively could have been avoided (Press statement 9, 2008; Galtung, 1969:168-171).

Although evictions and destruction of shacks simultaneously are wrapped in an overarching discourse of “development” and “upgrading”, it could be interpreted as projects of urban regeneration through creative destruction. The clear class dimension of these dynamics seeks to achieve the removal of shack-dwellers from the inner-city. With the cost of eradicating not only social bonds and communities, the unequal powers between shack-dwellers and the authorities ultimately produces unequal life chances among the citizens (Smith, 2002:446; Harvey, 2012:16-25). As a political project the fallacy of the “development” is demonstrated in the limited improvement of the living conditions of the urban poor. This is expressed by AbM in the example of how evicted shack-dwellers return to the settlements to ensure partaking in livelihood opportunities that can be claimed through negotiating urban citizenship rights and the right to the city (Living Learning, 2009:15-16; Press statement 7, 2014).

As in many other struggles for urban citizenship, this demonstrate the complexity and the error in disregarding the rescaling and multidimensional character of citizenship. The claims of “service delivery”, such as the provision of electricity, clean water and sanitary services, represents and concretizes the movement’s everyday political struggle of basic services and resources associated with citizenship (Blokland, et al, 2015:655). While the governing bodies’ paradoxical actions of cutting of electricity goes against the very concept of development it further contributes to the fragmentation of the city and the preservation of the “dualistic colonial city” (Balbo, 1993:24-32).

The *raison d'être* of the “dualistic colonial city” becomes clear in the context of Durban’s pursuit of the “world class city”, as it is encompassed by an urban entrepreneurialism that legitimizes the violence required to build the new urban world on the ruins of the informal settlements (Gibson, 2011:19-20; Harvey, 2012:16). The rhetoric of the looming threat of a spread of informal settlements and the degeneration of the city into the dystopian imaginaries of the “feral city”, inevitably reinforces the discursive removal of any notions of urban citizenship as part of the shack-dweller’s right to the city. In this struggle over the production of space, the removal of shack-dweller’s agency and political rights becomes the precursor to the physical removal of the poor from the city (Norton, 2003:98; Simone, 2001:16; Gibson, 2011:189).

Throughout its existence, AbM has faced numerous challenges that have targeted the movement by undermining its members' claims to citizenship (Press statement 5, 2015). A significant example of how AbM conceptualizes and negotiates citizenship claims of rights and resources in the framing of the right to the city occurred during the waves of xenophobic violence and pogroms that swept across South Africa in 2008 and 2015 (Neocosmos, 2016:164; Naicker, 2016:46).

While cities could potentially constitute the space where participatory politics initiated by the government could be performed, the shack-dwellers in AbM's experiences of exclusion in the fragmented society is seemingly linked to the context of the crisis of national citizenship (Blokland, et al, 2015:659). In light of the rescaled "geographies of belonging" to cities and the local where the recognition of minority identities are negotiated, inclusiveness of urban citizenship during the xenophobic violence in KwaZulu-Natal could be compared to other contexts where spatial stress and social uncertainties, fueled by ethnopolitics, have created preconditions for violence (Rossi and Vanolo, 2012:158-159; Appadurai, 2000:649).

Aside from negotiating citizenship through claims of land and service delivery, AbM expressed their solidarity with people from Zimbabwe already during "UnFreedom Day" in 2008 when "Operation Murambatsvina" took its toll and the first xenophobic waves affected many of the Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa (Press statement 9, 2008). Little had changed in 2015 when it was clear to AbM that "Operation Fiela", the South African equivalent to the Zimbabwean "slum-clearance programme", was "*an armed attack on the poor by the state that is mainly targeting people born in other countries*" (Press statement 6, 2015). Yet, the divisionary biopolitics based on an ethnopolitical and xenophobic rhetoric did not only target people from outside of South Africa, but anyone in precarious living conditions that could be categorized as a "migrant" and blamed for the country's problems (Gibson, 2012:55). It subsequently prompted the following response by AbM:

The idea that people from the Eastern Cape must remain in the Eastern Cape is much closer to the logic of apartheid than to the Freedom Charter which clearly states that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it' (Press statement 7, 2014)

However, AbM was one of the movements that strongly and effectively built alliances and links to fight xenophobia (Naicker, 2016:48-55).

AbM's appropriation of space within the city was in this context encompassed by an emancipatory politics where the identification and belonging were based on everyday acts of urban citizenship, in contrast to the national citizenship's appeal of belonging based on a national community of shared cultural traits (Rossi and Vanolo, 2012:158-161; Beyer, 2013:977; Neocosmos, 2016:164).

We have continued to struggle against xenophobia working closely with migrant organisations, including the Congolese Solidarity Campaign. We have worked hard to tie the struggles of oppressed South Africans and migrants together. We are proud that we have stood strong against xenophobia and that we have been willing to take real risks to stand with our comrades from other countries. (Press statement 3, 2015).

In this extreme sense of the production of space as reproducing spatial, social and political exclusion based on ethnic chauvinism and nativism, AbM's anti-xenophobic approach is rooted in an all-inclusive notion of citizenship, based on shared experiences and residence as recited from the Freedom Charter, rather than citizenship rights based on indigeneity (Short, 2014:70; Naicker, 2016:55). This inclusiveness is not only reflected in calls for solidarity, but also put into practice in terms of its membership criteria that are based on residence in the settlements, without regard to ethnicity, language or citizenship (Press statement 4, 2015; Gibson, 2012:55-61).

From the analysis of AbM's negotiation of citizenship, it becomes clear that the meanings negotiated are processual. Although new meanings of citizenship emerge connected to dynamics of urbanization, they are simultaneously linked to identifications of the continuation of the historical dispossession of citizenship through criminalization. Hence, AbM's identification with the dispossessed poor and landless, provides the "template" for AbM's claims of restoring citizenship through access to land. While the negotiation includes claims of land and service delivery, AbM's understanding of urban citizenship demonstrates a more aspirational character of the meanings attached to citizenship. Exemplified through the statements and actions in reaction to the outbreaks of xenophobic violence, AbM's commitment to all-inclusive notions of citizenship articulates a profound vision of a future social order where the full extension of citizenship rights is realized in the urban based on belonging and participation (James, Lazar and Nuijten, 2013:27-28).

7.3 How is AbM articulating an alternative vision of urban life?

The three themes speaking towards articulations of an alternative vision of urban life revolve around the concept of a “living politics”, or sometimes referred to as “abahlalism”, that encompass how AbM imagine the right to the city and urban life. The key themes that emerged are related to aspects of political autonomy, participatory democracy and dignity.

7.3.1 Theme of political autonomy

In AbM’s third call to join them in mourning “UnFreedom day”, South Africans’ persistent living conditions of poverty and inadequate housing was recalled once again on the day celebrating the first democratic elections (Press statement 9, 2008). However, the continuous organization of UnFreedom day did not only serve as an reminder, but it also positioned AbM as a new social movement that provided an alternative for enacting self-organization and autonomy, embodying the lives and practices of shack-dwellers while articulating the right to the city as the right to a more human urban life (Huchzermeyer, 2014:46; Short, 2014:165).

In comparison to Mike Davis’ depiction of the “ruthless Darwinian competition” of informal urbanism, where the increasing numbers of poor people struggling over the control of their lives’ generate self-destructive communal violence, AbM’s assertion of political autonomy strongly contrast to the implicit assumptions of shack-dwellers’ lack of political agency (Davis, 2017: 201). While the State’s governing bodies have exercised its power of exclusion through the designation of the “illegality of land invasions”, informal settlements grants shack-dwellers a certain autonomy and opportunities of self-organization independent of the state (Gibson, 2011:22; Balbo, 1993:27-32). For AbM this has meant:

When we were formed most of our members come out of the ANC but we took a decision to be independent of all political parties and to this day no one can hold membership of any political party, or have a job in an NGO, and be a leader in our movement. We are a membership based and democratic movement and all decisions are taken via democratic processes. We have always kept our autonomy from all political parties and NGOs. (Press statement 4, 2015)

As described in previous chapters, AbM’s interpretations of the contemporary political landscape through the continuities of dispossession of land and their voice based on experiences of violence and repression that reinvokes memories of the apartheid system, the political autonomy has resulted in the abandonment of “the party” as a mode of organization (Neocosmos, 2011:189).

This tendency, of the disillusionment of party politics, has been visible among other new social movements in South Africa, but also globally where the interconnectedness has opened up new avenues for emancipatory politics (Kaldor, 2004:2). In the case of AbM the new imaginaries of social life that the political autonomy gives rise to, in combination with the movement's mobilizing potential and effective use of both litigation and mass-protests, is seen as a potentially forceful opposition to the state's hegemony. Consequentially, as a political threat to the hegemony, authorities have used both repression and co-option through encouraging the movement to join the SDI in an attempted to challenge AbM's autonomy (Beyers, 2017:247; Chitekwe-Biti, 2018:387). However, conforming to SDI's "reformist" or "collaborative nature" is interpreted as an irrevocable compromise with AbM's key principles, undermining autonomy and replacing it with a dependency on government bodies to realize development, making the question of "service delivery" a tool of coercion (Gasparre, 2011:789-792).

Hence, in the narrative of the "ANC tradition" to label AbM's constituency as "dangerous" and based in "unruly informal settlements", alternative discourses and AbM are rendered "out of order" (Gibson, 2011:188; Gibson, 2012:58). But according to AbM, being "out of order" is better because then the experiences and knowledge of the shack-dwellers will not be undermined (Living Learning, 2009:27). As mentioned in the previous statement, the organization's commitment to political autonomy is also extended to the influence of NGOs. The importance of maintaining the autonomy have resulted in a position where, in the words of AbM:

We do not accept any money from any organisation that wants to use its money to give it the power to give direction to our movement, or to compromise our organisational or political autonomy in any way. (Press statement 7, 2014)

The vigilance towards NGO influence is based on previous experiences of collaboration where principles have been abused by NGOs and the perception that some are loyal to ANC, which have caused the meaning of "NGO" in some cases being reinterpreted to "Next Government Official" (Press statement 2, 2018; Press statement 4, 2015). Particularly in the view of neoliberal conceptions of civil society, as a "third sector" with the purpose to substitute state functions, some NGOs are interpreted as a threat that potentially could undermine the agency of the poor.

This dichotomy between civil society and the poor has been framed in the difference of how civil society is claiming that another world is “possible” as opposed to “necessary” (Living Learning, 2009:49; Kaldor, 2004:9). Hence, in AbM’s articulation of an alternative vision of urban life, political autonomy becomes a prerequisite for development, as it is upheld both through the rejection of party politics and the encouragement of a non-imposing approach towards NGOs. Ultimately, this key pillar seeks to realize the potential of the knowledge that can be drawn from their own lived experiences (Living Learning, 2009:46-47).

7.3.2 Theme of participatory democracy

Consequently, the second theme of participatory democracy is interwoven with the commitment to political autonomy. After all, autonomy and self-organization without full democratization and inclusiveness in the decision-making could result in new hierarchies (Gibson, 2011:22). Participatory democracy is of a particular significance whether speaking about development on a macro-level or in the development of cities. Hence, development could be categorized in three different modes: development without the poor, development for the poor and development by the poor (Ballard, 2012:564). Development by the poor could be linked to what in the development literature is called participatory development and contrasted to the state-driven, top-down process of development that essentially undermines any form of active citizenship (Living Learning, 2009:15; Neocosmos, 2016:199). The lack of involvement and participation of “the subjects of development” could, according to AbM, if implemented be another mode of oppression:

We can also see the difference between liberating and oppressing possibilities even in ideas like ‘development’– in practice, because it usually is done without truly liberating and involving the people, development has actually become a war on the poor. (Living Learning, 2009:36)

One explanation to understand how it can become “*a war on the poor*” and the significance of involvement is to see it as reaction towards the present suppression of alternative discourses of struggle (Gibson, 2011:2). But it can also be contextualized through the experiences of the direction of development that has been adopted in South Africa to address the persistent challenges of poverty. In this sense, the interpretation of ANC’s concessions towards a broadly neoliberal approach of economic development policies for political democratization, have resulted in what have been observed in other contexts in relation to the withdrawal of the Keynesian welfare state (Blokland, et al, 2015:656; Harvey, 2005:64).

It has been highly palpable by the poor in the experiences of government applications of development projects. The neo-Keynesian Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), initiated at the time of the democratization, declared the right to housing as a human right with the aim of reaching low-income households with decent structures including access to sanitation, clean water, energy and drainage (Beyers, 2017:236-237; Neocosmos, 2016:167; Hurt, 2017:297). While residents of informal settlements were offered houses under the RDP, significant flaws have emerged in conjunction with gentrification schemes that are exemplified with residents later still moving back to informal settlements (Living Learning, 2009:15; Beyers, 2013:967).

The RDP was in 1996 replaced by the neoliberal macro-economic policies of the government's five-year plan, Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) (Goebel, 2011:370; Gibson, 2011:77). With time the agenda increasingly dismissed any form of "people-centered development" while the impacts of the programme became increasingly visible through unemployment and commodification of basic services (Beyers, 2017:237; Hurt, 2017:303).

Hence, what AbM is demanding is in line with what have been acknowledged as instrumental to the development of inclusive and sustainable cities, a voice in the development and by extension power over their own lives and a participatory approach of "working with the people" (Living Learning, 2009:15). Similar to other shack-dwellers' movements, including SDFN in Namibia, it is a call for including the experiences of the marginalized urban poor in the development of more inclusive and sustainable cities (Barnes and Cowser, 2017:153). It even echoes the same understanding as of international institutions and SDG eleven, that have recognized the instrumental role of ensuring the participation of the urban poor in decision-making that is affecting their living conditions (UN-Habitat, 2003:XXVII). But in relation to AbM, the sovereignty of the state in governing the legal city simply serves to assert its power over the right to the city (United Nations General Assembly, 2015; Balbo, 1993:27-32). Given these circumstances, the living politics articulated by AbM is seemingly close to the imaginaries of Lefebvre, where the demands of the involvement in development and a democratized right to the city builds on the interpretation of the urban as the best suited environment for pursuing a just and egalitarian society (Rossi and Vanolo, 2012:160).

7.3.3 Theme of dignity

In terms of the last theme in the formulation of AbM's politics, the imperative notion of dignity emerges, which is less prevalent in western discourses of the right to the city. Given that "*land is at the heart of the struggle*", it becomes an important piece tied to the restoration of dignity (Figlan, 2012). Since ANC attempted to address the land issue through a market-based approach, it has not only increased polarization in the distribution of wealth and power, but it has made it increasingly harder to sustain urban identities, citizenship and belonging (Christopher, 2001:454; Harvey, 2012:15-16). However, as land is perceived through the dichotomy of its commercial value and social value, AbM asserts that:

We do not believe that land should be bought and sold and we hold firm to our position that the social value of land must come before its commercial value. (Press statement 2, 2018).

Contrasting the social value to the commercial, could be interpreted in terms of a progressive social movement that is attempting to bring about a coherent urban politics through dignity. While the realization of the commercial value of land has been pursued through the market-based approach, the social value of land is used in the dichotomy to expose the underlying socio-economic inequalities that are reproducing the social exclusion of shack-dwellers from the benefits of "development" and justice through the production of space (Short, 2014:70). Hence, the social value of land is framed to be realized through land restitution, that would benefit the poor while delivering the positive right to land and restore dignity of the historically dispossessed (Beyers, 2017:235; Mayer, 2014:190).

The alternative vision of how the right to the city is framed, and by extension how urban life is envisioned, is further expressed through AbM's own summation of the struggle demanding "land, housing and dignity", where demands for land and housing are strongly rooted in latter (Press statement 4, 2015). One could say that the claim of dignity is a rather abstract claim, nonetheless it essentially permeates all of AbM's commitments and visions (Short, 2014:164-165). It is a distinguishable from western movements in terms of the vocabulary employed in the struggle. In Durban the individual dignity is part of the political struggle, something that is seldom present or seen in claims of traditional progressive movements in the west (Mayer, 2014:190; Pithouse, 2009:246-7).

This could be explained by how the articulation of a "living politics" signifies the development of a politics of the poor (Press statement 9, 2008; Pithouse, 2008:82).

While the notion of surplus populations are not necessarily distinct social conditions confined to the apartheid system, but also realities of neoliberal capitalism, it signifies the dispossession experienced in the informal settlements (Neocosmos, 2016; Gibson, 2011:123-150). In the framing of the right to the city, the continuity in exclusionary practices of delineating the “surplus population” through criminalization and illegality becomes connected to the issue of dignity given that when speaking of land dispossession “*we can surely also talk about ‘mind dispossession’*” (Living Learning, 2009:28). In this context and related to the lack of participatory politics, development and criminalization, shack-dwellers are seen as less than citizens and, on the basis of their poverty, as politically illiterate (Selmeczi, 2015:1081). In this way other ways of “knowing”, rooted in the social experiences of the poor and landless, are often excluded from the public debate (Pithouse, 2006b:103-104).

Drawing on a paradigm that is contrasted with dominant notions of knowledge and intellectuality, AbM subsequently is echoing the notion of organic intellectuals developed by Antonio Gramsci (Gramsci, 1971:134; Pithouse, 2006b:104). In the movement’s pursuit to maintain their political autonomy and its ambition to foster a praxis where the agency of the poor is intact, the Gramscian maxim that “everybody is an intellectual” becomes a direct antithesis to the idea of the “politically illiterate poor people” in the “surplus population” (Selmeczi, 2015:1081). Given this assumption of restoring dignity through maintaining the shack-dwellers’ intellectual autonomy, emancipation can only come from “within”, or in other words from those with shared experiences of oppression (Living Learning, 2009:35).

Hence, within the framework of Lefebvre, AbM’s framing of the right to the city, with an emphasis on dignity, reverberates the ideal of creating less alienated alternatives of urban life. The vision of the urban where “*everyone’s experience and intelligence counts*” becomes a demand of the right to access, use and enjoy the city, and repositioning it away from the reproduction of the hegemonic social relations (Press statement 9, 2008; Harvey, 2012:X; Short, 2014:164-165). Employing the Lefebvrian notion of the right to the city, this is indeed an articulation of a radical vision with urban revolution as an ideal, aiming at reclaiming the power of the dispossessed while working for a democratized right to the city and new forms of urbanization (Huchzermeyer, 2014:47; Harvey, 2011:158). Furthermore, it is understood that only by challenging the technocratic understanding of social progress that is channeling dissent away from popular empowerment, proper development will take place and the human dignity of the poor will be respected in urban life (Press statement 9, 2008; Pithouse, 2010:9).

But perhaps the most interesting with AbM's vision of urban life is based on the fact that in the wake of the displacing effects of accumulation by dispossession, formations of new social movements of poor and landless people continue their struggles knowing, just like AbM, that "*land is often won and lost in local struggles but we also struggle for a just country and a just world*" (Press statement 3, 2015). In this regard, globalization to a certain extent have provided the global network of struggles, including AbM, an opportunity to speak for themselves and deliver their knowledge and experiences of the right to the city to a global audience (Eriksen, 2014:41-43; Harvey, 1989:293).

8. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to understand how shack-dwellers in Abahlali baseMjondolo frames the right to the city in post-apartheid South Africa by applying the theoretical framework based on urban theory and notions of collective memory and citizenship. In the analyzed official statements and publication made by the movement it has been possible to identify key themes that explain the framing through key aspects pertaining to the struggle of AbM.

The findings suggest that collective memories of the violence and repression perpetrated during apartheid, are used as medium to interpret and convey the message of the continuity of the “first struggle”, once was led by ANC. However, since ANC became part of the state its actions have increasingly become interpreted as a signifier of continued oppression as dynamics of urban redevelopment have resulted in violent evictions of shack-dwellers. While the anti-apartheid struggle achieved certain gains that underpins the basis of AbM’s present struggle, the theme of the collective memory of emancipatory conceptions of freedom conceived in the Freedom Charter have been re-appropriated to encompass and inform organizational choices and aspirations in the present struggle for the right to the city.

These aspirations feeds into AbM’s negotiation and expressions of citizenship claims. With the question of land as the central theme of claims to citizenship, it signifies a continuity of the struggle to correct both past processes of dispossession and the present accumulation by dispossession, conducted through the commodification of land. Framed through a “urban land reform from below”, land occupation is a method of the shack-dwellers in AbM to enact their citizenship and deliver the principles of the Freedom Charter.

However, given the state’s control over the right to the legal city the theme of criminalization emerged as it is aimed at undermining the movement’s attempts to justify its citizenship claims. It is demonstrating the dynamics of the city where urban citizenship rights are removed in the discursive sphere. But it is also inevitably linked to the subsequent theme of the direct physical denial and removal of rights and resources associated with urban citizenship. In the context of urbanization where the city is a representation of materializing opportunities and securing livelihoods, the process of creative destruction of shacks and forced removals of the poor from the inner-city amounts to structural violence.

In the exertion of violence, the contentious reality of the production of space is starkly challenged as AbM's communicated vision of an all-inclusive notion of citizenship, based on residency, participation and belonging has been manifested directly in the face of xenophobic violence.

The core themes in the alternative vision of urban life that AbM articulates are based on interdependent ideas of political autonomy, participatory democracy and dignity. This vision of urban life is embraced through the expression of a "living politics" or "abahlalism", developed to advance the politics of the poor. In this regard, maintaining the political autonomy of the movement, made up of the poor and landless, is communicated as a critical aspect in order to create a space for developing autonomous thinking. Being independent of the perceived power structures among NGOs and traditional political formations, allows for the emergence of the knowledge that can be drawn from the shack-dwellers' own lived experiences and articulations of an alternative vision of urban life.

While the reaction towards ANC's increased professionalism and hierarchical structure have naturalized direct democratic processes internally within AbM, the theme of demanding participatory democracy also extends to the development of the urban in general as a response to the development approaches of the post-apartheid project. But perhaps the most interesting aspect in relation to the framing of the right to the city is how it is articulated through a vision of a social order rooted in human dignity. In comparison to many western social movements, AbM's language of struggle emphasize the human dignity of the poor, inextricably the struggle of reclaiming the power of the dispossessed calls for the inclusion of everyone's experiences and intelligence.

In the end, AbM's framing of the right to the city draws on the continuity of the dispossession experienced during apartheid, while the political subjectivity of the struggle has been consolidated around the poor and landless' demands. In essence, the demands can be interpreted as a radically different vision urban life and an aspiration of new forms of urban development. Based on a broadly inclusive approach towards the right to the city, as based on residence, the democratized right to the city and restoration of human dignity has become part of a shared repertoire across the global network of struggles of the poor and landless.

In order to further develop new forms of sustainable urbanization it is suggested that policies are informed by case studies including a participatory approach to explore sustained struggles of progressive social movements and how they are articulating solutions to urban challenges.

While the limited scope of this thesis has focused on understanding the right to the city as framed by AbM through their struggle and politics, the fact that national and international institutions have incorporated claims and demands made by movements like AbM, tells us that the field is of immense significance in the development of urban life. Hence, it would be a suggestion for future research to focus on how and at what point does formal institutions show signs of adopting or accommodating demands emerging from these kinds of struggles?

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