Spatial Justice: Analysing its Applicability in Promoting Land Tenure Security in Kigali City, Rwanda

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Research background
Most of urban (re)development programmes in developing countries are decried to fuel spatial injustices that exclude low income and poor people from the processes of urban development[1]. Those injustices are linked to the lack of political and legal framework that recognises and protects the rights to land resources for poor and low-income people [2]. Spatial injustices also relate to the enforcement of land development rules that do not recognise some types of land use like those prevailing in low-income and poor urban neighbourhoods [3]. To promote the development of inclusive cities and to advance land tenure security for all urban dwellers, proponents of spatial justice demand for inclusive spatial development rules that provide all people with equal opportunities to use land resources [4]. In this way, there is a need for studies that ascertain how contemporary urban (re)development schemes are aligned with that claim of spatial justice. Kigali city is used as a case study.

Problem statement
From 1990s, Kigali city has been characterised by uncontrolled spatial growth that resulted into the proliferation of informal settlements. To alleviate that problem, Kigali city authorities have been implementing new urban development schemes that provide the legal framework for orderly urban development since 2007. Modern basic urban infrastructures, luxurious hotels, shopping malls, business and residential buildings are being developed [5]. The aim is to develop a city which is more liveable and attractive. However, existing studies claim that the process of Kigali city development displace low-income dwellers from their land properties [6]. This research project applies the framework of spatial justice to analyse whether the development of Kigali city spurs the integration of all urban dwellers into the urban fabric.
Research objectives
This study has five main research objectives:
- To identify the forms of spatial injustices that may be detrimental to land tenure security and patterns of spatial justice that can promote land tenure security in urban areas;
- To develop indicators of spatial justice that can be applied to measure the degree to which urban development schemes promote land tenure security;
- To examine if Kigali city development schemes deliver on the theoretical promises of spatial justice;
- To develop a spatial justice-based framework that can be applied in urban redevelopment processes to enhance land tenure security for all urban dwellers.

Research methods
Research methods include the review of the general literature on spatial justice and urban redevelopment, land tenure security, and various published documents on land management in Kigali city and related geo-datasets and reports. Primary data on Kigali city were collected through household survey, semi-structured interviews and field observations. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis is grounded on the following simplified framework

![Fig.1: Research framework](image)

Within that framework, three dimensions are identified: rules, processes and outcomes [7-9]. Therefore, the evaluation of spatial justice and land tenure security is carried out at each of those three dimensions using developed indicators.

Expected outcome
To evaluate if contemporary urban (re)development schemes promote spatial justice and land tenure security, a comprehensive and holistic set of evaluative indicators is developed. Those indicators can be used to measure the trends of spatial justice and land tenure security throughout any urban (re)development programme. Rwandan land governance system is not documented sufficiently. Therefore, this research contributes to the knowledge of urban land governance in Kigali city, based on spatial justice framework. Hopefully, it will inspire urban planners and decision-makers to take into account the rights to land for poor and low-income inhabitants and to integrate those people in the urban fabric.

References