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Suburban Transformation in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Socio-Economic Mobility and Neighbourhood Change in 'In-Between' Spaces

ABSTRACT

Since democratic change in 1994 South Africa's cities have experienced major physical and social changes. Johannesburg, South Africa's major city, has been at the leading edge of the changes occurring in the landscape of the country's cities and therefore has generated a substantial scholarly literature. Geographical writings are concentrated mainly on the inner-cities and townships. Less research has been pursued on South Africa's suburban spaces and particularly in what has been described as the 'in-between' middle-class suburban areas. The objective in this article is to investigate the dynamics of suburban transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. The case study is situated in the south of Johannesburg and centres on neighbourhood change in former 'white' designated suburbs. The study discloses resident motivations driving change, issues of socio-economic mobility, and the shifts occurring in the nature of residential property development in these spaces.

Keywords: neighbourhood change, socio-economic mobility, post-apartheid, Johannesburg

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INTRODUCTION

For the political geographer, Christopher (1990, p. 421) the policy of apartheid or racial separation in South Africa became "one of the most controversial political problems in the latter part of the 20th century". The imposition of apartheid upon South African urban areas triggered legislation for race zoning which led to profound changes in spatial planning and the structure of the 'apartheid city' (Christopher, 1991, 1997; Lemon, 2021; Lemon et al., 2021). Over recent years South African geographers have produced a rich scholarship to document several aspects of urban change which has occurred in the three decades since the scrapping of apartheid (Maharaj & Mpungose, 1994; Kotze & Donaldson, 1998; Jürgens et al., 2013; Gregory, 2019; Visser, 2019; Massey & Gunter, 2020; Lemon et al., 2021; Donaldson, 2023). Arguably, the future prospects of South Africa's cities are linked to how the historical legacies of segregation and inequality are addressed (Massey & Gunter, 2020).

Since the demise of apartheid and of South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994, issues of research concern have spanned across the national hierarchy of urban settlements from the country's largest cities such as Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, to include also the dynamics of socio-spatial dynamics of change in its landscape of small towns (cf. Lemon et al., 2021; Donaldson, 2023; Drummond, 2024). At the intra-urban scale of analysis much attention has been devoted to unravelling the shifting urban landscapes particularly of the spaces in and around the country's inner cities, the peripheral areas occupied by the urban poor, and the burgeoning spaces of informal settlement (Visser, 2019; Massey & Gunter, 2020). Less research has been pursued on change occurring in South Africa's suburban spaces and particularly in what has been described as the 'in-between' middle-class suburban areas (Harrison & Zack, 2014a). It is against this backdrop that the objective in this article is to explore the dynamics of suburban transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. Our case study is situated in the south of Johannesburg and centres on neighbourhood change in former 'white' designated suburbs. The historically white working-class Johannesburg South that flanks the city's CBD and is populated by small semi-detached homes and row houses has received some academic attention (Harrison & Zack, 2014a, 2014b). Arguably, neglected by geographers and planners alike are, however, the middle-class southern suburbs which developed during the 1960s that traverse the hills of the Klipriviersberg (or elevated on the southern ridges). These suburbs of Johannesburg South are more expansive with private homes set in large gardens or spacious and gated townhouse developments.

This paper therefore explores the dynamics of socio-economic mobility and neighbourhood change in the two southern Johannesburg suburbs of Mondeor and Winchester Hills within the context of a post-apartheid city which bears vestiges of the racist urban morphology of the recent past. The paper is structured into a literature review, brief discussion of methods, followed by results, and a conclusion. Overall, the analysis represents a modest contribution to the literature on post-apartheid urban change in South Africa's largest city (Harrison & Zack, 2014a, 2014b; Zack, 2015; Gregory, 2019; Gregory

& Rogerson, 2018; Gregory & Rogerson, 2019; Zack & Govender, 2019; Zack et al., 2020; Ballard & Hamann, 2021; Ballard et al., 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The research is contextualised within two sets of literature. The first deals with international debates around the nexus of neighbourhood change and socio-economic mobility. The second section of material narrows to situate the study within existing writings concerning urban and neighbourhood change in South Africa in general and Johannesburg, the country's largest city, in particular.

Socio-economic mobility and neighbourhood change

Questions surrounding suburbanisation and neighbourhood change are a fundamental part of urban geographical research as they are dynamic places that continuously evolve (Betancur & Smith, 2016; Schmeller, 2021; Balizs & Somogyi, 2024). These changes can affect the composition, structure, and function of a neighbourhood and can also reflect wider social and economic transformations in cities (Hedman et al., 2011). Therefore, it is crucial to recognise the essential role of neighbourhood research in comprehending the broader urban context in which cities develop and transform over time (Modai-Snir & van Ham, 2018).

Research on neighbourhood change has been of interest to urban scholars for over a century, and several schools of thought have engaged with this concept (Harding & Blokland, 2014). One of the earliest explanations of neighbourhood change can be traced back to the Chicago or ecological school of urban sociologists in the early 20th century (Temkin & Rohe, 1996). The invasion and succession model, filtering and border model, racial tipping, neighbourhood lifecycle and neighbourhood revitalisation are the most prominent models that emerged from this school (Temkin & Rohe, 1996). However, the Chicago or ecological school has been criticised for applying principles of ecology found in the natural environment to understand complex social dynamics, resulting in social Darwinism (Betancur & Smith, 2016). Additionally, ecological perspectives on neighbourhood change are thought to be devoid of individual agency and promote racial and minority prejudice (Temkin & Rohe, 1996).

By the late 1960s, subcultural perspectives on neighbourhood change emerged, which emphasised non-economic factors such as social networks, a sense of community, and symbolism linked to subcultures as contributors to neighbourhood change. Sense of place became essential in understanding the social complexities of cities (Ley & Samuels, 1978; Pocock, 1983). Suttles (1968, 1972) viewed neighbourhoods as a social construction of space where communities attach specific labels and symbolism to neighbourhoods.

A political-economic approach to understanding neighbourhood change also emerged in the late 1960s. Betancur and Smith (2016) argue that this perspective examines neighbourhoods primarily

as a function of capital accumulation and social reproduction. Marxist urban theorists attempt to understand the political economy of cities and its impact on social and spatial reproduction. A central argument is that capitalism shapes political and social life in a distinctive materialist view of society (Smith, 2001). For Harvey (1973), the uneven circulation of capital accumulation in cities impacts urban and neighbourhood change. This phenomenon is evident in periods of boom, bust and decline in urban property development (Harvey, 1973, 2012), as well as in the accumulation of the periphery of cities, which is often associated with the depreciation and decline of the inner city. Once the periphery has been accumulated, renewed interest can see the re-accumulation and return of capital to the inner city through processes of gentrification and urban regeneration (Smith, 1979; Harvey, 1989; 2012). For Smith (1984; 1996), capital constantly seeks new frontiers for accumulation within the urban environment, which leads to the uneven production of space. Mollenkopf (1981) and Galster (2001) argue that neighbourhoods have become commodities and are spaces for the consumption of housing and other services such as schools and shopping. Harvey (1976) maintains that the production of living space and specific neighbourhoods for different classes in cities has become part of the capitalist system.

Atkinson (2015) contends that a significant link exists between class, socio-economic mobility, and neighbourhood change. Specifically, mobility flows refer to the rate at which households and individuals move in and out of particular neighbourhoods (Hedman et al., 2011; Coulter & Scott, 2014). The decision of households to relocate or remain in place is influenced by multiple factors such as government policies, employment opportunities, family composition, and preferences, making it a complex issue (Coulter et al., 2012). Moreover, historical urban development processes and desired neighbourhood characteristics have also played an important role in shaping mobility flows (Modai-Snir & van Ham, 2018). Clark et al. (2006) assert that the quality of housing and neighbourhood are critical in determining residential mobility. In addition, Winstanley et al. (2002) suggest that various social, economic, and life stage factors contribute to residential mobility. Socio-economic mobility is often associated with residential choice, as individuals may move to access better schools, proximity to work, retail, specific communities, and other favourable amenities (Clark et al., 2006).

The post-World War II upward socio-economic mobility and expansion of the middle class contributed to the widespread suburbanisation in many cities in the global North (Harvey, 1989; Michaels et al., 2012), and in recent decades in cities in the global South (Parnell & Oldfield, 2014). Indeed, socio-economic mobility patterns have implications for neighbourhood change. Restrictive policies and residential segregation based on race, ethnicity, and income have historically limited mobility (van Ham & Clark, 2009). Segregation based on these criteria involves advising different social groups to reside in specific neighbourhoods that are characterised by social differentiation and patterns of socio-economic strata (Hedman & van Ham, 2012). Thus, residential segregation often occurs based on socio-economic status, race, religion, or ethnicity (Popescu et al., 2018).

Urban and neighbourhood change in Johannesburg

The growth of South African cities can be attributed to economic expansion, mining, and industrialization (Parnell, 1991; Morris, 1997; Harrison et al., 2008; Berrisford, 2011). Since the colonial era, the urban areas of South Africa have been influenced by a set of restrictive policies aimed at racial and ethnic segregation, which has limited social and economic mobility and residential integration among different racial, ethnic, and income groups (Freund, 2010). The mining industry's dominance of the South African economy gave birth to the migrant labour system, which comprised of mostly black Africans who migrated from rural areas to work as labourers in the cities (Robinson, 2008; Murray, 2008; Turok, 2012). African labourers were housed in mining compounds and later in townships such as Soweto which were concentrated geographically on the periphery of cities (Christopher, 1990; Smith, 1992; Berrisford, 2011). Concern over rapid urbanization among black Africans after the Second World War led to fear among whites and subsequently led to the victory of the National Party and the establishment of the apartheid regime in 1948 (Todes, 2012; Du Plessis, 2014).

The Group Areas Act of 1950 and amended in 1966 was seen as the cornerstone for separate development in urban areas (Lemon, 1991). This Act aimed to segregate black Africans, Coloureds, and Indians/Asians from the white city to ethnic settlements in separate homelands or townships located on the periphery of cities (Maylam, 1995; Murray, 2008). The Group Areas Act separated where people could live, work, and go to school (Lemon, 1991; Ogura, 1996; Christopher, 2001; Turok, 2012; Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2014). The implementation of the Group Areas Act led to forced removals of people of colour, resulting in the complete loss and destruction of communities. Sophiatown in Johannesburg and District Six in Cape Town became notorious examples of forced removals in urban South Africa (Hart and Pirie, 1984; Hart, 1988).

The events of the 1976 Soweto uprising and mounting international sanctions increased pressure on the apartheid system for some limited reform. By the late 1970s and 1980s, the implementation of the Group Areas Act became increasingly difficult, especially in high-density inner-city neighbourhoods such as Hillbrow in Johannesburg. Hillbrow was among the first areas to desegregate and was ultimately reclassified as a 'grey area' (Hart, 1989; Morris, 1999; Du Toit, 2007; Harrison, 2014). This process triggered what is commonly referred to as white flight (Beavon, 2004; Berrisford, 2011; Veary, 2013). The late 1980s and 1990s were characterised by rapid desegregation in the inner-city of Johannesburg. Beyond the spaces of the inner-city, many working-class suburban areas located in the south of Johannesburg also became racially mixed in the 1990s (Morris, 1997; Schensul & Heller, 2010). The chequered segregated history of residential Johannesburg is dissected in detail by Ballard et al. (2021).

In 1991 the Group Areas Act was repealed, which marked the beginning of the disintegration of the legal structure of apartheid. This political shift had a profound impact on the socio-spatial layout of Johannesburg (Murray, 2011), albeit much of the apartheid-era spatial planning has remained a permanent fixture in urban South Africa (Mabin, 2005). Nevertheless, the inner-city and working-class

suburbs have since been associated with the urban poor, migrants, and other marginalized groups (Huchzermeyer, 2011).

During apartheid, suburbs were predominantly white, middle, and upper-class spaces (Mabin, 2005; Lemanski, 2007; Murray, 2013). By the 1980s Crankshaw (2008), however, observes a significant growth of a black middle class. The upward mobility of the black middle class and a demand for middle class housing during this time set the stage for rapid transformation of white residential suburbs following the repeal of the Group Areas Act in 1991 (Ballard et al., 2021). Indeed, in the post-apartheid era, the suburbs have become increasingly diverse and integrated, with the emergence of a black, Indian/Asian, and coloured middle class resulting in the desegregation of former white suburbs, especially those located within relatively close proximity to the townships (Crankshaw, 2008; Ballard & Hamann, 2021). Despite this, the cost of property in former white middle class suburbs and the legacy of decades of segregationist urban planning continues to influence where specific groups of people live and work and socio-economic segregation persists, which is still strongly tied to race in contemporary South Africa (Bakker et al., 2020; Ballard & Hamman, 2021).

Despite the significant scholarly attention focused on changes in the inner-city and townships, suburban areas have received less scrutiny (Gotz & Todes, 2014). Only a small number of scholarly investigations have focused on the transformation of suburbs and the changes that these spaces have undergone in recent decades (Kotze & Donaldson, 1998; Marais & Visser, 2008; Visser, 2013). The south of Johannesburg is no exception, as it has often been neglected by urban scholars (Butcher, 2021; Harrison & Zack, 2014). The south of Johannesburg has been dubbed by urban researchers as a "forgotten area" (Harrison & Zack, 2014a, p. 269). Harrison and Zack (2014a, p. 270) describe the southern suburbs of Johannesburg as *"...in-between space[s], seemingly neither poor enough nor rich enough…"* to warrant significant research interest. The south of Johannesburg neighbours the extensively studied townships of Soweto and is referred to as a *"terra incognita"* or largely unexplored in urban studies. In this context, this paper examines the impact of socio-economic mobility and neighbourhood change in Mondeor and Winchester Hills in the south of Johannesburg.

METHODS

A qualitative research approach was adopted. The findings draw on qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews conducted with three distinct groups of participants including residents, business owners, and real estate agents who reside in, trade, and market property within Mondeor and Winchester Hills. A total of 76 participants were interviewed in this study. Interviews with fifty residents provided insights into changing demographics, neighbourhood characteristics, socio-economic mobility, and social dynamics within the study site. Interviews were conducted also with 19 business owners which expanded on trends and changes in the business environment over time. Lastly, a set of interviews with seven real estate agents provided observations on broader changes within the physical, social, and economic fabric of the suburbs over the past few decades.

RESULTS

The findings from the interviews provide insight into four themes, namely socio-economic mobility and neighbourhood change; resident motivations; physical and social change in the suburbs; and the changing landscape of business and services in suburban spaces. Each of these issues is now examined.

Socio-economic mobility and neighbourhood change

The suburbs of Mondeor and Winchester Hills are located in the south of Johannesburg (Figure 1). Historically, the south of Johannesburg is closely tied to the expansion of the city's white working-class suburbs (Hart, 1989). The mining and industrial sectors, located toward the south of the central business district of Johannesburg meant that suburban development further south would largely cater to the working class who were skilled artisans servicing the mines and other industries. The southern suburbs of Johannesburg are colloquially classified into either the "old south", or the "new south". The old south is typified by small semi-detached and detached working class homes set on small stands which developed from the late 19th century to the 1940s. From the 1950s and 1960s onwards suburban expansion further south saw the development of another group of suburbs known as the "new south".
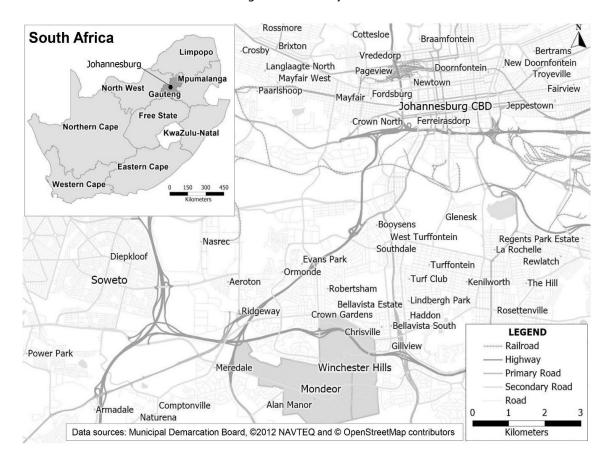
Figure 1. The study area

Homes in the 'new south' mostly are characterised by detached homes set on much larger stands to cater to growing middle-class and upper-middle-class residents (Harrison & Zack, 2014a). Suburbs such as Mondeor and Winchester Hills formed part of this expansion of the new south (Figure 1). Gradually moving into the 1970s and 1980s the southern suburbs saw an assortment of other land uses that included more residential developments, industrial, warehousing, retailing, and wholesale outlets, and some recreational and cultural facilities which caused a significant change in the functional use of the south of Johannesburg (Harrison & Zack, 2014b).

The demographic profiles of both Mondeor and Winchester Hills have changed significantly since the end of apartheid (Table 1). The demographic changes as evidenced by Statistics South Africa show that there was a rapid increase in the percentage of black, coloured, and Indian/Asian racial groups into Mondeor and Winchester Hills (StatsSA, 1996, 2011). In this instance, the percentage of blacks has increased from 19% in 1996 to 45% in 2011 in Mondeor (StatsSA, 1996, 2011). Whilst the suburb has attracted previously disadvantaged black citizens the statistics also highlight 'white flight' from these suburban areas post-1994 from 69% white in 1996 to 23% white in 2011 in Mondeor (StatsSA, 2011).

Table 1. Racial composition changes in Mondeor and Winchester Hills between 1996 and 2011

Race	Mondeor	Winchester Hills
Black (1996)	19%	21%
Black (2011)	45%	47%
Coloured (1996)	6%	4%
Coloured (2011)	16%	9%
Indian (1996)	4%	10%
Indian (2011)	14%	25%
White (1996)	69%	63%
White (2011)	23%	16%

Source: StatsSA, 1996, 2011

Resident motivation and socio-economic mobility

The majority of the resident participants who were interviewed in this study moved to Mondeor and Winchester Hills from peripheral black or Indian township areas such as Soweto or Lenasia after 1994. The interviewees stated a variety of reasons for choosing to live in these suburbs. For many the proximity to work was a motivator due to the nearby highway access linking the southern suburbs to the central business district (CBD) of Johannesburg and surrounding commercial nodes. Many also considered that the local schools offered a better quality of education than the township areas where they had lived before, thereby benefiting the educational development of their children. A further motivation was the aesthetic appeal and access to services of the suburbs, which sees an improvement in living standards as the areas are located near shopping centres, specialist retailers, better healthcare

facilities, and other services. Overall, the interviewees felt that these suburbs provided the setting for a healthy, family-oriented, and safer life. In some cases, the move to Mondeor brought them closer to their religious place of worship, and for some Muslim participants living near the mosque heavily influenced their decision to move into the neighbourhood. Some residents were motivated by their 'rags to riches' stories, detailing wanting a better life for themselves and their families. Indeed, moving out of the township for some participants is linked to gaining social status. For many of the resident participants, their motivation to move was driven by socio-economic mobility. One participant recalls *"My mom would always mention how she wanted my big brother and I to grow up in an environment that would enable us to see life beyond the township, she wanted us to have access to better opportunities than she and my dad had when they were young"* (Interview 6, WH resident #6, 07/09/2020). This means the upward socio-economic mobility of these individuals and families into these suburban areas is seen as a proxy for a better life.

This shift and motivation to move from townships to these suburbs was observed by several real estate agents. One estate agent noted that a lot of people buying in these areas are from townships located on the periphery of the city; *"Soweto, Eldorado Park, Lenasia, Zachariah Park... [and] from other provinces, because before they were not allowed to come to Johannesburg to buy, now if I have got cash, money talks these days so they can buy houses anywhere..."* (Interview 3, real estate agent #3, 23/09/2020). This view is shared by another estate agent who explains that people move; *"From your townships like Soweto and Ennerdale and they moved to upgrade their lives you know, they can afford to live in former White suburbs now"* (Interview 5, real estate agent #5, 25/09/2020). This indicates the major impact that the abolition of apartheid-era segregationist policies had on the socio-economic mobility of people following South Africa's 1994 democratic transition.

To gain a deeper understanding of the socio-economic mobility of the participants, various cost of living indicators indexed by bond or rental payments, monthly expenses, and the ability to save after monthly expenses were explored. Indeed, the relationship between income, the availability of finance and credit, and the affordability of new housing have been shown to influence the extent to which people can move in and out of formal housing stock in South African suburban neighbourhoods (Marais & Cloete, 2017; Ballard et al., 2021).

In Mondeor and Winchester Hills, the majority of residents interviewed paid between R3000-R9000 per month on their rental or bond repayment. Overall, the resident participants revealed that these suburbs were affordable for them. The majority of resident participants agreed that managing their household's finances was important to maintain their lifestyles. One resident explained that *"we cut costs on travelling, for instance, work is close for me, as well as my children's schools are close, everything is in our area we don't have to go far to go shopping or other places..."* (Interview 1, WH resident #1, 31/08/2020). This was confirmed by another resident; *"It's affordable for me...work is not far for me, my rent is not that expensive, and I don't have a big family to feed, fortunately"* (Interview 2, WH resident #2, 01/09/2020). These perceptions on the affordability of the area provide evidence of increased income and improved living standards for those that reside in these suburbs.

In terms of monthly living expenses, the majority of residents disclosed that they spent between R9 001- R12 000 on monthly living expenses. These living expenses include, but are not limited to municipal rates and taxes, water and electricity, groceries, data, car instalments, petrol, clothing accounts, school fees, extracurricular activities at schools, medical aid, insurance, home maintenance, including garden services and pool maintenance. It was revealed that residents believed that their saving habits are guided by their monthly expenses. Residents agreed that their savings fluctuate from month to month. One resident from Winchester Hills noted that *"sometimes I can save about R1 000-R3 000 p/m and sometimes I can save about R3 001-R6 000 p/m"* (Interview 20, WH resident #20, 26/09/2020). The reasons why residents who were interviewed chose to reside in the areas of interest were also directly based on the fact that they could afford to live in these areas and could survive within their means.

As maintained by Harrison and Zack (2014a) the signs of desegregation in formerly white neighbourhoods disclose a fundamental shift in socio-economic mobility of populations that is linked to access to mortgage funding and employment opportunities that were a barrier for blacks, coloureds and Indians/Asians during apartheid.

Physical and social change

The features of the built environments of Mondeor and Winchester Hills differ in that Mondeor is characterised by many standalone houses and only a few townhouse complexes, whereas Winchester Hills has an equal split of townhouse complexes or cluster developments and standalone houses. In our sample of interviewees 36 residents of both suburbs live in standalone houses with only 14 residents who were interviewed in both Mondeor and Winchester Hills stating that they lived in townhouse complexes or cluster developments.

Most resident participants in both Mondeor and Winchester Hills considered that they had not witnessed major physical changes in the suburbs. From their perception during the previous 15 years, there had been few new developments and little physical change in these neighbourhoods. None of the resident participants highlighted a downgrading of the built environment of the suburbs, however, a few interviewees did note that some home renovations had taken place; *"I've seen more people renovating their homes into double-storey, building high walls and getting more security like with electric fences"* (Interview 17, WH resident #17, 16/09/2020). The point made by this resident speaks to the upgrades or renovations that residents have made to their homes over the years. A different perspective on physical and social change was given by the property sector interviewees. One marked feature of physical change noted among several real estate agents was the development of townhouse complexes post-1994. One real estate agent (who works for Harcourts Delta) with over 40 years of experience in the areas of interest explained that; *"the only changes that I've seen is that there have been a lot of townhouses that have been built in the area, especially in the Winchester Hills area* (Interview 1, real estate agent #1, 21/09/2020). This shift to townhouse developments was also

observed by another real estate agent mentioning the physical changes they had noticed in the areas of interest; *"It was predominantly full title homes. After 1994 townhouses and clusters were developed. Gauteng has expanded and is still expanding and to cater for the influx of people instead of building homes, developers started building townhouse complexes and estate living"* (Interview 2, real estate agent #2, 23/09/2020). The shift to development of townhouse complexes, estate developments and gated communities is a common feature and well documented in post-1994 urban South Africa. These types of developments are seen as a form of defensive and escapist urbanism due to the rapid increase in crime (Murray, 2011).

The majority of interviewees signalled the more diverse demographic profile of both areas. In both Mondeor and Winchester Hills changes in residents' race, gender, age and cultures were highlighted. One resident in Winchester Hills disclosed that the social changes they had noticed were the influx of the Muslim community. It was observed as follows:*"I would say I see more and more Indian and Muslim people move into the area because of the Mosques that are in and around the area".* Another resident had observed signs of "white flight" from the area; *"I have noticed more and more Black, Coloured and Indians moving into the area, and more White people moving out"* (Interview 5, WH resident #5, 05/09/2020). Overall, residents who have resided in these suburbs for over 10 years had noticed greater social and demographic changes than during the first decade of desegregation. An element of white flight was noted also amongst the real estate agents. One estate agent explains that the areas have become *"less white, most have moved to the new south, your Bassonia, Aspen [Hills Estate], Meyersdal, so I see them moving outwards, and more black people moving in and other racial groups as well"* (Interview 4, real estate agent #4, 24/09/2020). These findings from the property interviews mirror the interviews done with residents as they show that there is a growing number of people who are moving from townships into former white occupied residential areas such as Mondeor and Winchester Hills.

The positive changes that the real estate agents noted were how Mondeor and Winchester Hills have become more racially integrated in the post-apartheid period. One estate agent explained that: *"We have got people of other races moving into the area and the demographics now have changed"* (Interview 1 real estate agent #1, 21/09/2020). Similarly, this was the view expressed by another property respondent: *"Today the area is mixed racially"* (Interview 7, real estate agent #7, 29/09/2020).

The township lifestyle is often characterised by a strong sense of community, given a history of shared hardship and isolation, whereas life in middle-class suburbs tend to be characterised by a more insular lifestyle. This phenomenon was noted by some resident participants. The interviews from both Mondeor and Winchester Hills revealed that many of these residents felt that there was a lack of inclusion or connectedness between them and their fellow community members. For example, one Mondeor resident opined that: *"We are segregated, people are living their lives separately from the community. People have different ideas and meanings of what a community is and should be. I think also it has become a matter of time, to be honest, the time has become limited, people are working for most of the day and come back later...I think it's a sign of our time, we have become more isolated*

as a people and we have become more complex" (Interview 20, M resident #20, 09/10/2020). In Winchester Hills, the interviews revealed that most residents felt that they did not share similar values with their neighbours. This is largely due to residents not knowing their neighbours and living in isolation from one another. One resident recalls; *"We hardly converse with my neighbours to see what similar values we share* (Interview 1, WH resident #1, 31/08/2020)".

Despite these observations, the existence of a sense of belonging and community was observed by some interviewees through civic participation. Resident participants from both Mondeor and Winchester Hills had mentioned that some community members actively participate in community initiatives. For example, some are involved in initiatives such as the local Community Policing Forum (CPF) for crime prevention, while other community members mentioned participating in religious activities or initiatives that involve the church or mosque. Overall, residents agreed that participating in civic activities was important for the enhancement of a sense of community. However, most of the resident's participants who were interviewed admitted to not actively engaging in community activities, stating time as an obstacle.

The changing landscape of suburban business and services

A total of 19 business owners of small, medium and micro enterprises were interviewed in Mondeor and Winchester Hills. These businesses ranged from a variety of services such as medical, cleaning, petrol station, printers, car wash, dry cleaning and fitness to retailers, a restaurant, and a music and art centre. Most of the business owners in Mondeor that were interviewed trade along the main thoroughfare of the suburb from standalone homes that had been rezoned and converted into commercial premises post-1994. The trend of the development of multi-functional commercial and retail spaces within previously exclusively residential suburbs is common throughout Johannesburg and is linked to continued decentralisation (Crankshaw, 2008; Mabin, 2014). One interviewee explained that; *"Columbine Avenue used to be strictly a residential area; now there are a lot of businesses, people have turned the houses on that main road into businesses and shopping complexes"* (Interview 3, real estate agent #3, 23/09/2020).

The motivation to operate a business in the area included recognising gaps in the market of suburban areas. In the case of one business owner from Winchester Hills their reasons for starting or moving their business to this area were motivated by the following: *"There was a big demand in terms of production, printing for schools, businesses and the court demanded for us to open…"* (Interview 1, WH business owner #1, 04/10/2020). A further start-up motive for several entrepreneurs was the affordability of operating a business from a residential property as opposed to renting a shop in an established shopping mall: *"It was much cheaper to start off at home than renting and we wanted to be in the community, we wanted to work with a lot of the kids in the community. And if we had to go out, let's say to a complex, it might have been difficult to attract customers"* (Interview 3, M business owner #3, 26/10/2020).

The interviews disclosed both benefits and challenges from operating a business from home or rented spaces. Business owners in Mondeor and Winchester Hills shared that operating their businesses from a residential property is much more affordable than running it from a rental shopping mall or complex. From the interviews, it was found that some business owners, however, did outline the advantages of trading from a shopping complex. One business owner indicated that trading from a shopping mall or complex could grow a business' clientele; *"I think the appeal is natural, people frequent malls, it attractive to everyone, it is safe, generally safe, you are generally assured that your car is safe as well…one place where you can get everything"* (Interview 2, M business owner #2, 26/10/2020). Similarly, another business owner explained that; *"There are a lot of people coming to complexes and malls bringing in new clientele"* (Interview 6, M business owner #6, 03/11/2020). This same view was echoed by a business owner in Winchester Hills who also felt that shopping malls and complexes *"attract more clients and again it depends on the kind of business you run, for example, if I owned a clothing store it would make sense to get a shop in a complex or mall so that I can pull clients who walk past"*

Overall, other positive changes that the real estate agents noticed was due to these urban spaces becoming more diverse it has resulted in the growth of the business sector and economy of suburban neighbourhoods. One real estate agent observed the development of more shopping centres, secure townhouses, improved roads and affordable housing are some of the positive changes I have identified (Interview 6, real estate agent #6, 25/09/2020). From the perspective of the real estate agents there was evidence of local economic development, upliftment in property, and with people renovating their homes an increase in investment and turnover increases when it comes to development of rental homes by developers. This trend has brought in different groups of people into the area in particular a younger demographic cohort.

CONCLUSIONS

As argued recently by Massey and Gunter (2020: 1) urban geographers in South Africa have made a "significant contribution to the understanding of cities and urbanisation in the Global South". The theme of urban change is one that has been of critical concern most especially with the shifts in the complexion of the country's cities as a result of the post-apartheid transition which occurred in 1994. Johannesburg, South Africa's major city, has been at the leading edge of the changes occurring in the landscape of the country's cities and therefore has generated a substantial scholarly literature. It has been argued here that in addition to the radical transformations occurring in the geography of the inner-city and of townships the issue of neighbourhood change in suburban areas of Johannesburg has been an under-represented focus. Overall, this study has contributed a focus on change which is taking place within the "in-between spaces" of South Africa's leading city and which has been a knowledge gap in the South African literature on neighbourhood change. The research has disclosed resident motivations driving change, issues of socio-economic mobility, and the shifts occurring in

the nature of residential property development in these spaces. Of note is the observed differences in the perceptions on changes in the physical landscape as put forward by residents as compared to real estate agents. Further research is merited into the overlooked processes and nuances of neighbourhood change in suburban spaces.

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