



# Narratives of the Subaltern: Housing, Postcolonial Imagination, and Urban Governance in Botswana

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Book manuscript in development. A cross-genre scholarly work integrating housing governance research with narrative urban inquiry. Grounded in postcolonial theory and peri-urban fieldwork, the manuscript examines how institutional systems have shaped lived housing experience and spatial belonging.

## Abstract

*Narratives of the Subaltern: Reflections on the Postcolonial Imagination of Housing in Botswana* interrogates the spatial, political, and epistemic foundations of urban housing in post-independence Botswana. Through a hybrid methodology that combines critical postcolonial theory, and Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space, the book examines how colonial land regimes and planning logics continue to structure housing access, land tenure, and socio-economic stratification in Greater Gaborone.

Structured as a travel narrative that moves between autobiographical memory and contemporary fieldwork in peri-urban villages such as Mogoditshane, the text foregrounds lived experience as a site of theory-making. By centering the voices of youth and residents navigating informal economies, ancestral land claims, and bureaucratic exclusion, the work extends Gayatri Spivak's proposition to "let the subaltern speak" into the domain of African urbanism. The analysis reveals how nationalist land policies, technocratic planning systems, and housing finance mechanisms reproduce imperial rationalities under the guise of development, thereby generating new forms of dispossession within tribal territories absorbed into metropolitan expansion.

The book argues that housing in Botswana is not merely a technical problem of supply, affordability, or infrastructure, but a contested terrain of imagination, where competing epistemologies of land, community, and ownership confront one another. By revisiting the *kgotla* as both spatial form and political philosophy, the study recovers indigenous socio-spatial logics that challenge the privatized and individualizing premises of Western urban modernity.

At the intersection of urban studies, African studies, planning theory, and postcolonial scholarship, *Narratives of the Subaltern* contributes a decolonial reading of housing that repositions peri-urban Africa as a generative site of theoretical innovation rather than peripheral empirical evidence.