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**Parnell, Susan and Edgar Pieterse, eds. *Africa's Urban Revolution*. London: Zed Books, 2014, x + 309 pp.**

This volume is derived from a series of conferences and discussions at the African Centre for Cities at the University of Cape Town, beginning in 2008. The authors interrogate the paradox that although the African continent is roughly forty percent urbanized, comprising over 400 million inhabitants, Africa is still primarily viewed as rural. The editors, Susan Parnell and Edgar Pieterse, assembled fifteen essays from geographers, urban planners, historians, and policy experts from South Africa, Sweden, Canada, and the United Kingdom to elaborate on the policy implications of Africa's urban revolution. The volume's overarching argument is that African urbanization and its societal effects are not given sufficient attention by researchers and policy makers. This text provides an excellent contextual complement to Pieterse and AbdouMaliq Simone's more theoretical volume, *Rogue Urbanism*, which was also released by the African Centre for Cities.

Pieterse and Parnell's introduction identifies some of the major challenges of urbanization on the African continent: inequalities, peri-urban growth, under-employment, outdated colonial urban management schemes, and competing sources of power in urban settlements. They make clear, however, that "Africa's future is, opportunely, urban" (6) insisting that the stakes are too high to ignore the complexity and importance of African cities of all sizes. Jo Beall and Tom Goodfellow continue with an analysis of post-conflict urban growth, identifying causes and consequences of this urbanization. Cities are often a place of refuge during rural conflict, adding to urban growth rates and potentially rekindling tensions. The authors also dismiss the "myth of the temporary city" where post-conflict urban migrants are normally permanent.

In the third essay, Parnell and Ruwani Walawege show that although urban growth rates would continue with or without environmental push factors, global environmental change adds another element into an already unstable mixture. Jonathan Crush and Bruce Frayne complement, arguing that in order to meet food security demands in urban areas, industrial and commercial agriculture must begin to replace smallholder production. Gordon Pirie adds to this, showing that urbanization rates have revealed outdated and backlogged transport infrastructure. Comparing South Africa's "Gautrain" with the growing minibus taxi industry in African urban areas, he shows that existing mass transit has only increased transport inequalities (137).

An important issue that this volume tackles is whether urbanization is tied to GDP growth and employment. Ivan Turok and others argue that this relationship is not straightforward; shortcomings in urban services can offset what economic

benefits urban agglomeration could provide (76). Simone adds to Turok's discussion by calling for better transnational and regional urban connectivity. Parnell and David Simon offer a different view, arguing for larger central government role in urban economic planning in order to offset global marginalization and inadequate 1980s decentralization policies. These government initiatives must be neither neoliberal *laissez faire* policies nor high modernist planning initiatives; urban governments must take into account "the profound fluidity and dynamism of the urbanization process" (254).

The volume makes a valuable contribution to the study of urban planning and planning education on the African continent. Stephen Berrisford shows that urban "planning law has the effect of being no more than an irritant to developers but an oppressive force for the poor" (167). He also points out that more government attention is paid to poor peoples' legal violations rather than evasion by large-scale developers. James Duminy, Nancy Odendaal, and Vanessa Watson add to the discussion of urban planning by arguing for planners to "leave their offices" and adopt a more contextual, case study oriented education and training (196).

Overall, this edited volume provides an excellent review of the challenges facing African cities. Urbanization is growing and will continue to grow even if "push factors" are reduced; internal urban growth is large enough. This is the subject of Sean Fox's essay on urbanization as a global historical process. He presents a Malthusian argument that urban growth on the African continent stemmed from colonial era medical technologies that reduced mortality rates and food insecurity. For this reason, he argues that the only feasible way to cease urban growth is to take on an aggressive family planning agenda (275).

The authors agree that the stakes are too high to ignore the implications of African urban growth and continue to focus solely on rural dilemmas; they attempt to tackle urban issues with concrete, policy-oriented arguments. Particularly commendable are the charts, graphs, and photos scattered throughout the book, adding context and visual flair. Critiques of the book are small. It would have been useful to elaborate on rural-urban connections and dependency; Carole Radoki does allude to this in her study of urban religious organizations, but a full chapter would have added context and content. Nevertheless, *Africa's Urban Revolution* is a good read for anyone interested in urban studies, contemporary African issues, or demographics. It is accessible for mid-level undergraduates and above.

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