

and empirically rich. Klaus Seghers and Marie Huchzermeyer, for example, are two such comparativists overlooked here. In seeking to establish an original identity for the book, Mbembe and Nuttall seem unable to resist the temptation to dismiss the work of others by simplistically caricaturing it under the generic rubric of “political economy.” The authors claim to advance a new theoretical understanding of Johannesburg as an “Afropolitan city.” In response, critics will undoubtedly counter with the argument that they do not develop “theory” in any sustained or disciplined manner, and, correspondingly, that they sometimes allow their theorizing to slip into a kind of moralizing about how “bad” political economy is and how “good” culture is.

In their concluding essay, Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge refer to the “stale debate” between political economy and culture. This characterization produces a false dichotomy. Insights drawn from political economy and culture are not necessarily and inherently stale, sterile, or unproductive. Instead, they can produce a dialogue that advances our collective understanding of cities. Johannesburg is a cultural space that is elusive, and hence difficult to grasp—a city that defies simplifications. In my view, there is no privileged vantage-point from which to unravel its making and its meaning. Hence, it goes without saying that perspectives drawn from political economy, cultural studies, poststructuralism, and class analytic frameworks all provide useful angles of vision from which to develop an understanding of the processes of urbanization that have shaped this unfinished city both during and after apartheid. The perspectives we adopt have a great deal to do with what it is we want to know. We should not have to choose between political economy or culture, but rather appreciate what each lens brings to the scholarly investigation.

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Richard Grant, *Globalizing City: The Urban and Economic Transformation of Accra, Ghana*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2009. xviii + 187 pp. Maps. Figures. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$26.95. Cloth.

In this important book Richard Grant offers an approach for examining “globalizing cities”—that is, cities of developing countries that are undergoing urban and economic transformation—and situates cities such as Accra firmly within contemporary globalization processes. This book redresses the existing imbalance in scholarship on urban centers, which tends to privilege “global” (often Western) cities over “globalizing” cities (or ordinary cities in the developing world). In this way Grant incorporates Africa into global understandings of urban transformation. Highlighting the importance of primary research and fieldwork at the local level, he notes that globalizing

cities often lack the detailed data base that is available to scholars and others engaging in urban research on global cities. (The appendix to the book provides a particularly valuable note on data collection.)

Though some of the effects of globalization have been examined in developing cities, we lack a systematic interrogation of the very process of globalizing. For Accra, Grant offers three historic periods in its globalization trajectory and three key movements in the globalizing process. The selection of Accra as the colonial capital of the Gold Coast in 1877 situated it firmly within imperial networks. With the end of colonial rule in 1957, Ghanaians had the opportunity to determine the political and economic direction for Ghana and thus affect the character of its capital city. The third period, from 1983, has witnessed economic restructuring from above (international and governmental), and during that time (and especially over the past decade) external influences have profoundly transformed Accra's urban space. Grant's portrayal of globalizing movements emphasizes initiatives ushered in from above, from below, and from sources in-between, with particular emphasis on the roles played by return migrants and transnationals who represent both local and international networks and strategies. One outcome is the proliferation of gated residential communities, residential properties valued in the hundreds of thousands, the visible presence of foreign companies, and other remarkable changes in a country where the per capita income is around US\$400.

Chapters 2–6 examine these transformations in Accra's urban space and the economic activities that serve as the catalyst for these changes. Chapter 2, "Globalizing from Above," examines the role of foreign companies in transforming the urban economy of Accra, reviewing both the volume and the character of the corporate presence; the focus in this chapter is on Accra's external connections. However, Grant's contention that while Abidjan and Dakar were chosen as capitals for preexisting economic advantages, Accra's initial choice as a capital city was uninformed by such commercial considerations (21) is contestable. His position that Accra was the major terminal point of the colonial transport system through the 1920s also seems to gloss over the equally important role of Sekondi; it thus misses an opportunity to link Accra's growth and transformation to those of other Ghanaian cities enmeshed in the globalizing process. Post-1983 Ghana (marked by the introduction of liberalization policies under the World Bank/IMF) forms the context for Accra's emerging profile as a global city, as the Ghanaian government has sought to position the city as the "Gateway" to West Africa. In addition, this period has seen the nature of foreign investment change, with India and China overtaking the United Kingdom, the former colonial power, in investments and the number of companies operating in Ghana.

Chapter 3, "Globalizing Residential Spaces" reviews the introduction and spread of gated communities in Accra. This is a fascinating chapter, providing an analytical framework for a phenomenon that all Ghanaians

and visitors to Ghana have noticed, although one wishes that the analysis had gone deeper: aside from a recognition of its foreign provenance, a coherent understanding of the phenomenon and its larger implications seems lacking. These gated communities are mostly a post-1991 phenomenon catering largely to Ghanaian transnationals and expatriates; again, they are a product of liberalization policies and globalizing forces. The chapter discusses the geography of these communities, the real estate companies that marshal international capital, the packaging of these houses and communities, and the profiles of the mostly transnational clients, who often are multiple home owners. Accra has seen the growth of “suburbs” for a while; it is now witnessing “globurbs,” as gated communities linked to global markets introduce new understandings of land values, homes, and community. Time will tell what impact these developments will have on traditional conceptions of family and the home.

Chapter 4, “Globalizing from Above and Between,” aims to “capture and document the creative ways that monies have been transferred into physical investments like buying a house” (67). The chapter reviews the shift from compound homes (traditionally associated with an extended family) to detached and semidetached (nuclear family) houses in Accra, and the decline in the role of the state as a provider of public housing since the 1980s. By 2007 there were 125 companies involved in real estate development, and 130 Western Union offices, reflecting the flow of remittances from Ghanaians abroad. Grant tracks these flows of monies, trying to identify senders and the end use of the remittances in terms of the real estate market. He ascertains that individuals pay for their houses mostly from savings, and that many have lived and worked abroad. But he also identifies local Ghanaians who have invested in housing abroad and diversified their sources of income; as elsewhere, real estate serves as an important social and financial investment in Ghana.

In chapter 5 the focus is on the core roles played by returnees and the investments they make in housing and businesses. Unlike returnees in the immediate postindependence era (who operated within national boundaries and often under the auspices of the Ghanaian state), present-day returnees are involved in transnational operations and usually stay clear of the Ghanaian state. Strategically, they are able to participate in both traditional and transnational networking—engaging in what Grant calls “in-between globalizing.” Opting to invest and operate from the globalizing city of Accra, they embed local relatives, by means of these activities, in transnational space. Grant categorizes these returnees as either elites or nonelites and examines their return and investment strategies based on household surveys and interviews with heads of households. Given the paucity of earlier data on the investments of Ghanaian returnees, this is a significant chapter, combining ethnography and available data to great effect.

Chapter 6 reveals how globalizing strategies are not the monopoly of either Ghanaian transnationals or expatriates, since slum dwellers are also

reimagining their existence and asserting their rights to affordable housing in the city through novel links with international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). In short, the poor, too, are framing their situation within changing global contexts, and the outcome is a new sense of empowerment in their interactions with the state; the active mediation of a new range of interest groups makes it difficult for the state to act arbitrarily, even where slum dwellers are illegal residents. Drawing on detailed data, this valuable chapter examines the settlement of Agboghloshie, a formal community in which residents hold title to their lands, and the informal settlement of Old Fadama, largely a post-1990 development. Fighting the attempt by the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) to evict residents of Old Fadama in 2002, community leaders created connections with international NGOs. For Old Fadama community leaders, a new world of activism has opened up, including visits to Thailand, Kenya, Nepal, Cambodia, and India in 2004–2005 through the auspices of organizations such as Slum Dwellers International (SDI). Such new networks have given voice and legitimacy to Old Fadama residents, prompting the government to dialogue with them instead of summarily dismissing their concerns. This chapter is particularly intriguing because of the scarcity of data on slums in Accra.

Concluding thoughts, offered in chapter 7, note how Accra has been transformed as much from above as it has been from below. The outcome is a “hermaphroditic landscape,” with a juxtaposition of international and local living, urban and rural living. Although not all cities in Africa are globalizing, this study is timely in offering a methodology for the study of globalizing cities and highlights future research areas, noting areas where information is poor and underscoring processes that need to be monitored in the near future. Whether or not Accra will become globalized or forever remain in a state of “globalizing” (or “becoming global”), we will need a new set of analytical tools to make sense of this new urban phenomenon. This book represents an important step in that direction; it is also a very accessible book that can be read by a varied audience for its rich insights.

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Francesca Locatelli and Paul Nugent, eds. *African Cities: Competing Claims on Urban Spaces*. Leiden: Brill, 2009. vii + 306 pp. Figures. Tables. Maps. References. List of Contributors. Index. \$87.00. Paper.

This book offers further evidence of the increasing interconnectivity and vibrancy of African studies across Western Europe. It emerged from papers presented to a themed conference in Scotland in 2006 of the Africa–Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS), the third book in the past five years to be published in AEGIS’s book series with Brill. It is not