

on the changing structure of urbanisation and migration however obscures the considerations of ordinary Africans to settle or stay in town, or to move back to their rural origins. The authors grapple with this problem, yet without grounding them in the lived experiences of urban – and (de)urbanising – Africans.

Second, while the book is rich in quantitative detail, it does not systematically situate the presented material in broader academic debates. This problem most acutely emerges in the introductory section, which lacks an engagement with older literature on urbanisation in Africa (with the exception of the reference to J. C. Mitchell on p. 37). This strikes the informed reader as odd: these studies have quite convincingly shown that, in addition to the economics of migration, the migration practices of actors cannot be understood outside a cultural framework in which they are produced and have meaning. Though the value orientations shaping migration appear here and there in the case studies, they are not developed into a coherent argument, nor do they reappear in the analytical parts of the book. Thus, the book is less theoretically profound than this important topic justifies.

Third, the book embraces a comparative ideal, which does not contribute to the clarity of the analysis. Principally, this ideal is at variance with the heterogeneity of the selected urban cases. The authors claim that ‘East and Southern Africa constitutes a cohesive geographical region with similar political histories’ (p. 6), yet this is not the impression one gets from the case material, with the contrasting role of the state in Botswana and Tanzania being a case in point. Further, adopting a comparative perspective entails introducing contrasting cases, and it is therefore not clear why the authors left out a discussion on Zambia – widely held to be an interesting example of recent and significant de-urbanisation.

By way of conclusion, the editors of this volume should be complimented for bringing together a number of concise case studies, which cover substantial geographical ground. As such, it offers an analysis of statistical and recent census data, which will certainly be of interest to readers with a general interest in Africa. The reader interested in the sociology of urbanisation in Africa, however, may be left with an appetite for a more detailed analysis of the micro foundations of urban life.

J. JOOST BEUVING
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Conflict and the Refugee Experience: flight, exile and repatriation in the Horn of Africa by A. BARIAGABER

Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006. Pp.180. £50.00.

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This book outlines the changing face of refugee movements across the Horn of Africa over the last 40 years. It charts the massive rise in numbers of refugees across the region, growing from 6% of Africa’s refugees in 1974, to over a half in 1986, and still representing over a third, 1.1 million people, in 2004. This book will be of great value to anyone who is studying the situation of refugees in the Horn of Africa.

The introductory section gives an overview of the literature on political violence and refugee situations across the world and in the Horn of Africa. The following three sections of the book run consecutively through the 'refugee experience' in three stages: flight, exile and repatriation. Each section has two chapters that cover case studies of one or two of the four key countries of the region that have been moving in and out of violent conflict over decades: Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan.

The book argues, first, that in the context of their failure to find solutions to their internal problems, states have tried to utilise the movement of refugees as a means to strengthen their national security. Second, the different actors involved in managing refugee issues, including individual refugees, make 'considered' rather than merely reactive decisions throughout the refugee experience, hence tending to be 'value-maximisers'. Third, the patterns of refugee flight influence patterns of settlement and repatriation in their turn (p. 8).

At a time when the plight of refugees in the Horn of Africa are so often presented as a result of ethnic tensions and other intractable problems embedded in the region, the longer-term perspective taken by Bariagaber offers a very valuable counterbalance by reminding us of the crucial role of the global superpowers in shaping conflicts in the region during the Cold War. For example, today it is easy to forget the optimism surrounding Somalia at independence, when its homogeneous population and strong identity were seen as a recipe for peaceful development. Unfortunately, its focus on restoring the lands of greater Somalia, its 'search for a more complete nation-state', led to its disastrous war in the Ogaden where it was defeated by Soviet-backed Ethiopia, and its descent into clanism, to become a 'less complete nation in search of a state' (pp. 61–70). Current events in Somalia show that this troubled search is continuing.

The strength of this book lies in the detailed analysis of the evolution of refugee situations and their inter-relationships in the countries of the Horn of Africa. I found the author's attempt to embed his analysis of refugee movements within a theoretical framework less successful. The book draws most heavily on Kunz's (1973) 'kinetic model', which likens refugees' flight to the motion of a billiard ball, which lacks an 'inner self-propelling force' (cited, p. 45). While the author is right to highlight the dearth of theoretical literature on refugee movements, it is unfortunate that he has not picked up on the critiques of Kunz's work, which highlight its almost complete denial of refugees' agency. With that in mind, it is not surprising, therefore, that the author repeatedly finds that the refugee movements between the countries of the Horn are more 'considered' than the 'acute' movements described in Kunz's work would suggest.

The choice of this theoretical framework, that casts the refugees as devoid of agency, is consistent with the emphasis of the book on the actions and perspectives of states, military movements, and occasionally aid agencies. In a book that aims to explain the dynamics of refugee movements, the refugees themselves are curiously absent. The 'refugee experience' is portrayed as a cycle of flight, exile and repatriation, again a formulation that has been widely critiqued. Most disturbing is the sense that repatriation marks the end of the 'experience' and the best solution. For example, the author describes the impact of the UNHCR operation to repatriate Somali refugees from Ethiopia between 1997 and 2004 through the declining number of refugees in the camps. While acknowledging

that he has only been able to offer a ‘cursory review’, he still concludes that it ‘leaves no doubt that the Somali refugee repatriation from Ethiopia has been successful’ (p. 128). To my mind without any sense of the refugees’ experience of repatriation, there remains considerable room to doubt the success of the operation from their perspective.

The book, which has clearly evolved through research over some years, would have been strengthened by a more thorough attempt to update the bibliography beyond 2000. For example, while the literature on refugee repatriation in the region is still sparse, there are recent works to which the author does not refer, for example by Gaim Kibreab, Jonathan Bascom and Laura Hammond. It would also have helped if the book included some maps, especially for those unfamiliar with the geography of the region.

OLIVER BAKEWELL
University of Oxford

Citizen of Africa: conversations with Morgan Tsvangirai by
STEPHEN CHAN

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Chan presents the book’s two objectives as first, an assessment of how Tsvangirai, the MDC leader, has matured, presumably since the formation of the MDC, and second, to search whether he has his own intellectual roots (p. 6). The book, as the author asserts, was written at a time of the MDC’s fledgling electoral fortunes (p. 1), increasing scepticism by the West as to whether the party could wrest power from ZANU-PF, and against the background of rising factionalism within the party.

One cannot, in the circumstances, help but conjecture that Chan hoped, through the book, to indulge in a public relations exercise that would portray the party and its leader as a worthy investment, and confound the sceptics before the 2005 parliamentary elections. Chan’s affection and respect for Tsvangirai are undisguised throughout the book.

Chan laments the state’s increasing repression and monopoly of resources and the state media as constituting major impediments to the MDC. He further postulates that ZANU-PF’s intellectual platform, founded on pan-Africanist reasoning and rationality, accounts for its diplomatic successes in Africa and the West (p. 3). It is rather arguable whether ZANU-PF’s successes are not more a reflection of the MDC’s failure to articulate and identify with the ideals of the liberation struggle. As Tsvangirai himself admits, the MDC should have invested more in Africa than in a Western-oriented human rights agenda (p. 94).

Chan claims that the historic referendum of February 2000 was won by the MDC, forgetting that the vote ‘no’ campaign was spearheaded by the National Constitutional Assembly, NCA. He further repeats the tired official lie that war veterans engineered the subsequent farm invasions. All available evidence, including the logistical and financial support for the invasions, points to the state’s involvement.

Chan sets out structured interviews, and poses leading questions to elicit responses that fit into his conception of what an MDC leader and future president