

disqualify it from consideration – in a fashion that is more offhand than lawyerly. McIntosh returns to this midpoint between reflex and intention when she describes ‘linguistic atonement’, a post-colonial regret among settlers’ grandchildren. They don’t quite get the apology right: they learn KiSwahili in good faith, seeking to belong as equals in Kenya, but then they insult its native speakers by describing it as a pre-modern, romantic tongue. As a skilled linguistic anthropologist, McIntosh listens carefully and captures whites’ code-switching as it happens.

Regarding the way in which she wrote *Unsettled*, I am ceaselessly impressed by the book’s means of ‘studying up’. Wealthy, educated informants write back, and a thin-skinned critic-insider can undercut the success of any publication. On the other side, an ethnography that appeals to elites too much can undercut one’s credibility within the larger society. McIntosh threaded this needle, and she did it in a most daring fashion. Early in *Unsettled*, she describes whites as becoming aware of a ‘double consciousness’. Although she admits to a seeming absurdity in applying W.E.B. DuBois’s interpretation of African Americans, McIntosh’s admirably nuanced ethnography shows Kenyan whites negotiating their identity, belonging, and internal exile in a way analogous to any stigmatised social group.

Ultimately, Kenyan whites face a conundrum: as McIntosh relates, they have surpassed or suppressed their own past bigotry in order to belong in a Kenya where some Kenyans practice ‘tribalist’ bigotry with increasing fervour. Perhaps, Euro-Kenyans’ striving for unity sets them apart from – rather than belonging among – fellow citizens. Should whites, then, seek to be a tribe among other Kenyan tribes? McIntosh raises this question, one that no outside anthropologist can answer. *Unsettled* should help white Kenyans and those who care about them to consider this and other post-colonial options as thoughtfully as possible.

DAVID MCDERMOTT HUGHES
Rutgers University

On Their Own: Women, Urbanization, and the Right to the City in South Africa

by ALLISON GOEBEL

Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015. Pp. 256. £27.99 (pbk).

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The title is pertinently revealing of the book’s content: Allison Goebel’s *On Their Own: Women, Urbanization and the Right to the City in South Africa* is a straightforward intervention in urban studies, which offers a well-supported case for gender analysis. It encapsulates an impressively broad overview of various manifestations of women’s differentiated lived experiences, thus demonstrating the relevance of gender analysis in urban scholarship. Beginning with South Africa’s historical context, Goebel challenges the myth of women’s new presence and migration into urban spaces, particularly the city of Pietermaritzburg (Msunduzi) in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, which is her main case study area. She then delves into issues as diverse as access to economic

opportunities and unequal health outcomes, questions of love and intimacy, national housing policy and women's political activism through voting and protest. *On Their Own* is therefore an informative outline of gender inequality issues, built on a vast reference list of existing literature and current debates.

The volume is certainly a solid work of feminist scholarship, not least because of Goebel's methodological choices. She draws her data from household surveys, as well as from in-depth interviews with women, whose voices are given a proper place in the publication, both in word and in visual imagery. Women as single mothers and *gogos* (grandmothers), as unemployed household heads, grant recipients, and homeowners, as disenchanted lovers and abandoned wives, are the cornerstone of the book and it is evident that the author is not indifferent to their destinies. As a feminist scholar, Goebel also uses gender as a relational category and engages with intersecting systems of power and oppression, especially class, race and age. These hierarchies place Goebel's research participants – poor, black urban women – at the margin, both literally with regards to physical landscape of the city, and figuratively, in the social value order. However, the book often stops its analysis on the surface level and concurs with existing arguments presented by other authors. An experienced reader is left yearning for more theoretical propositions to be drawn out of Goebel's observations and for more interrogations of concepts and assumptions. For example, the book touches on important issues of different types of masculinities and femininities, as well as notions of whiteness and Zulu-ness, as they relate to the lives of Goebel's research participants, but they are left unchallenged and unexplored. Similarly, Goebel's use of the 'right to the city', which stems from the Habitat development discourses, seems more of an additional concept rather than an integral part of her overall thinking. As an issue of social justice it is certainly an adequate complement to the rights discourse of gender equality (p. 27), but it does not advance her already strong gender-based argumentation.

While *On Their Own* does not challenge readers already conversant in South African gender discourses, as the book comes out within a series on urban governance in Canadian academia, it certainly meets the needs of the readers, who wish to familiarise themselves with gender analysis of urban life. The book's conceptualisation as an updated collation of Goebel's earlier works contributes to this overall accessible, straightforward feel of the publication, although maybe stifling the innovation. Nevertheless, the issues that the author tackles in her work remain highly pertinent in 2017. In March of this year millions of poor South Africans were anxious and afraid that the Ministry of Social Development and the South African Social Security Agency will not be able pay their grants come 1 April. This near-crisis of the welfare system underscored that poor urban women's struggle is far from resolved and as the book argues, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) continues to grapple with implementing the often existing gender-sensitive policies. It is one of the key strengths of the book that it strives to point out government deficiencies, but at the same time recognises the advances that have been achieved since the end of Apartheid. The fact that Goebel is nuanced as a feminist scholar and aligns herself with progressive left academia in South Africa is not only commendable, but it also makes

her work a balanced introduction to gender discourses in South African urban context.

JÁN MICHALKO

School of Oriental and African Studies

The New Black Middle Class in South Africa by ROGER SOUTHALL

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In this pioneering work on South Africa's black middle class, Roger Southall argues that the black middle class' role in establishing a South African democracy has been seriously understated (p. xviii). The initial focus of the book is on a conceptualisation of the middle class within the two major traditions (Marx and Weber) of class analyses, and an argument is presented for the differentiation of the middle class. In opposition to some political commentators who argue that there is no direct link between politics and class, Southall claims that the middle class is intrinsic to democracy and remains hugely influential.

The history of the black South African middle class, covering the segregation and apartheid eras between 1910 and 1994, is provided in Chapter 2. Most likely due to an absence of relevant literature and data, this chapter skims over selected aspects of the black middle class within the political context of resistance, to colonialism and apartheid.

In Chapter 3 the post-apartheid black middle class is profiled. The inclusion of a section on the spatiality of this class would have been very useful in understanding the geographic parameters (in terms of time and space) of this class. After providing a critique of the consumption and production approaches in understanding the black middle class, Southall suggests a move away from hard data and asks that we query the relationship between class and power.

It is within the broader context of the ANC government's strategy to 'capture state power' that Southall's empirical analyses in the subsequent chapters illustrate how the ANC has through deployment (e.g. by capturing the state-owned entities) deliberately engineered the black middle class, offering voluntary retirement packages to white public officials, and introducing equity employment legislation (particularly enforced in the public sector). In this regard, Southall claims that black economic empowerment (BEE) has, despite being disputed and limited, played a crucial role in developing a black corporate elite.

In Chapter 6 the focus falls on the position of the black middle class in the workplace, illustrating the different middle class layers. Most importantly, it highlights that the number of black professionals remain small and that they are largely dependent on securing state contracts for maintaining their lifestyles. Southall argues that the ANC 'has become the means to access state power and resources' and that 'state power offers the opportunity for private accumulation' (p. 160).

In Chapter 7 the attention turns to how the lifestyles of the black middle class reflect their newly found wealth. Framed within the local political context, the