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Urbanization and Spatial Transformation in Southern Africa: Informality, Governance, and Segregation since 1885

Urban transformation in, and across Africa since 1885 has radically altered social, economic, and cultural practices. Its effects are among the most fundamental historical and contemporary socio-spatial transformations across the continent. More than just recent demographic shifts since African independence, urbanization must be theorized and studied in its polyvalent forms and legacies for multiple reasons, especially because these effects have such dramatic impacts on the urban present. Historical spatial change shapes contemporary inequalities specifically related to African urban forms, economies, and governance structures. This dissertation interrogates these topics through five chapters, which tackle distinct yet interrelated themes. It assesses contemporary urban issues, all of which are guided by a historical framing of the influence of colonialism on urban processes. The introduction addresses core themes associated with African urban theory, with attention paid to definitions and debates regarding African urbanization, informality, spatial segregation, and urban inequality. This introduction lays the framework for the following five chapters by locating the author's position in relation to contemporary discourse within these respective literatures. The first chapter assesses how colonialism in Zambia shaped changing labor regimes throughout the twentieth century, ultimately creating the structure of precarious, unsupported modes of informal labor that are so prevalent today. From here, I assess how the city of Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of Congo acted as the headquarters of a region where 25% of global copper supply was sourced by 1930, where the uranium used in WW2-era atomic bombs was extracted, and where 60% of global cobalt production is currently procured and used in batteries in mobile phones, computers, and cars. The third chapter shifts its focus to South Africa where I link colonial urban and pandemic control and segregation measures as determinative of today's urban, health, and class related disparities. The final two chapters use the prior discussions to integrate two contemporary issues that are highly influenced by the legacies of colonial urbanization and spatial segregation. The fourth chapter assesses how notions of popular sovereignty are fought for, contested, and negotiated in contemporary South Africa. Such notions of popular sovereignty are sought with specific reference to structural issues such as spatial justice, racial disparities, poverty, and economic redistribution. My final chapter addresses the prevalence of informal settlements across the African continent in relation to climate change. Here, I posit a bi-directional relationship exists between modes and forms of urbanization and the

risks and severe consequences of climate change. Again, these contemporary issues are framed by the effects emanating from unequal urban realities. All five chapters deal with issues that could be addressed individually but given the theoretical and empirical commitments of this dissertation, it is important to view them alongside each other, prompting a re-assessment and re-thinking of African urbanization. This is done through this dissertation's simultaneous historical and contemporary analyses, its broad focus on multiple urbanization 'sites' and processes, its interrogation of the 'urban' as necessarily defined by historical, economic, and governance regimes, and importantly, its commitment to a structural analysis of African urbanization across temporal and spatial scales.