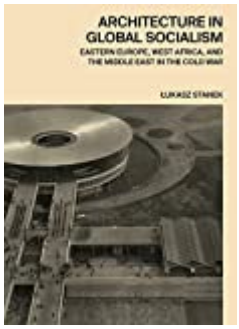
H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Ruth Fincher, Kurt Iveson, Helga Leitner. *Everyday Equalities: Making Multicultures in Settler Colonial Cities.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019. 264 pp. Ill., tables. $27.00, paper, ISBN 978-0-8166-9464-8.

Joseph Ben Prestel. *Emotional Cities: Debates on Urban Change in Berlin and Cairo, 1860-1910.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 288 pp. $93.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-879756-2.

Constance Smith. *Nairobi in the Making: Landscapes of Time and Urban Belonging.* Melton: Boydell & Brewer, Limited, 2019. 223 pp. $99.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-84701-233-3.

Łukasz Stanek. *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East in the Cold War.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020. Illustrations. 368 pp. $60.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-691-16870-8.



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Published on H-Africa (August, 2020)

Commissioned by David D. Hurlbut (Independent Scholar)

Beyond the Myopia of Privilege: New Directions in Global Urban Studies

Hoping to preempt a retaliatory attack, a Muslim immigrant slips off her scarf. She is riding a bus in Brisbane and wants no one to associate her with a Muslim gunman who has just taken hostages nine hundred kilometers away in Sydney. Her simple act of self-protection provides one twenty-first-century glimpse of the anxiety that often comes with living in modern cities: are you safe, do you belong?

Probing these insecurities may help to strip the veil from the eyes of the privileged, such as those citizens of the Global North who define the urban norm by their own affluent and secure experience. Four recently published urban studies, discussed below, set out to show their readers what they may have missed seeing. Ignoring geographical and cultural boundaries, their authors focus on urban problems shared across the globe. Doing so allows them to reject the historical experience of Western Europe as a universal model for urban development. They are interested, too, in the urban experience of all social classes. The anxiety expressed in the simple act of removing a head scarf suggests yet another trait the books share: most of them stress the historical and political significance of feelings.

In *Emotional Cities, Debates on Urban Change in Berlin and Cairo, 1860-1910* (2017), Joseph Ben Prestel makes the unusual choice of focusing, in alternate chapters, on two cities not normally compared. He is examining a period when life within both cities was intensifying in the wake of the rapid advent of steam power, railroads, and the telegraph. The emotional consequences of living in a time of revolutionized production and communication were profound and remarkably similar in Berlin and Cairo, at least among the middle classes. People worried that their social fabric was unraveling. Nighttime leisure activity like fast dancing and barhopping disturbed them. Working-class people had even begun promenading for pleasure in the streets of Berlin; how could the middle class avoid contact with them and, worst of all, with streetwalkers? Berliners thought they were losing their moral compass, while Cairenes facing similar changes feared they were losing their rationality. The city brought out dangerous, nervous feelings, ones they rejected as alien to traditional virtues like ***Sitte*** (German custom) or ***'aql*** (rational emotions in Cairo). By the early twentieth century these on-edge citizens were thinking they had found remedies by moving to the new suburbs and engaging there in physical exercise. The "they" in question are mainly the middle classes. They are the ones whose worries are most easily retrievable in the form of books, periodicals, medical literature, though some concerns of the lower classes may also be ferreted out of police files and court records.

Prestel wants to take the field of urban history and de-regionalize it as well as avoid Eurocentric models of normal historical development, like the ones embedded in the linear modernization theory of the 1960s. Instead of defining "stages" of development, he is interested in comparability across the globe. There were, of course, profound differences between the circumstances of Berlin and Cairo. They were not always in sync. Most notably, Egypt was subject serially in the late nineteenth century to control by two different metropoles—Istanbul and London—while Germany was pridefully launching its own empire. This difference in power and wealth had a major impact on people's emotions and debates, leading Germans, for example, to consider Egyptians backward and medieval, despite the fact that they were dealing with similarly unsettling experiences like massive urban migration. Nevertheless, the middle classes in both places feared a loss of social cohesion, in their eyes glaringly apparent in innovations like professional matchmaking (Berlin) and drinking alcohol (Cairo). They both argued that citizenship should be earned through taking control of one's emotions. As their cities grew more and more challenging, they increasingly turned to the countryside and searched for their "true" national

identity in folk custom. Prestel acknowledges that the debates did have a nationalist cast: Berliners blamed the French ("last but not least the cancan," according to one Berliner) for their own moral decay (p. 33); Cairenes believed they needed to be ultra-rational—following the reason of the mind and no longer of the heart—as well as physically fit. Only then could they compete with robust European nations. Prestel argues that the urban turn to rural areas for solace and identity should be seen not only in nationalist or anticolonial terms, but also as a shared critique of modern city life. Berlin and Cairo were on a "parallel historical trajectory" (p. 20).

Writing with care, and a remarkable command of four relevant languages (German, Arabic, French, English), Prestel avoids reductive statements. He notes, for example, that while "emotional practices" are not entirely determined by social structures, they are "a historical product of social changes"; these feelings go on to exceed and destabilize the structures giving rise to them (p. 18). Prestel avoids making the two cities seem identical by stressing, rather, that the debates of their denizens show a "shared understanding," including a joint fascination with the new sciences of psychology and city planning as well as with medical advances (p. 192). He is more interested in the adoption of urban change than in the origins of those changes: he has chosen not to explore the impact of religious faith; nor does he discuss how class struggle and material interests produced the traits distinguishing and uniting his two cities.

Prestel has written an innovative work that complements the classic studies of nineteenth-century urbanization, like those by Frederick Engels and Charles Booth which laid out in meticulous detail the terrible conditions of housing, sanitation, and diet endured by the urban poor. In joining the two cities he challenges urban historians and perhaps even city-dwellers to divest themselves of their myopic focus on their own cities as unique and on European cities, in general, as defining the global norm.

Lukasz Stanek builds a different kind of transnational scholarly bridge in ***Architecture in Global Socialism, Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East in the Cold War*** (2020). Focusing on the work of Eastern Bloc architects and planners in two different regions of the Global South, he is trying to unseat not Eurocentrism ***per se***, but a bias toward the impact of Western Europe. There were other, underacknowledged "geographies of collaboration," he writes, that had a big postcolonial impact on urban space (p. 2). He joins scholars who have written recently about "worldwide mobilities of architecture" by showing how architectural apparatus—blueprints and master plans, materials and machinery, design details and images, norms and regulations, teaching curricula and methods—flowed out of Eastern Europe to sites in Africa and the Middle East, specifically Accra, Lagos, Baghdad, Abu Dhabi, and Kuwait City (p. 2).

The originality of this book lies in its depiction of the Cold War as a period when the big drivers of international architectural exchange came not only from former imperial metropoles like London or from new ones like New York or Moscow. The interactions of Eastern Bloc and African and Middle Eastern architects were frequent and manifold and, as Stanek writes with apparent pride, their projects were often under local direction. He wants to show that a "socialist world system" did indeed exist in the form of real and significant trade links. Stanek, a Polish architectural historian based at the University of Manchester, rewrites Cold War history by drawing attention to otherwise ignored players—Bulgaria, for example—that have been "written out of Western-based historiography of architecture" (p. 2).

This architectural history fits in the classic mold of describing in great detail the process by which architects and planners developed their plans, even for projects that were never built. This

act of careful reconstruction took Stanek to many eastern archives, plus a few in Africa and the Middle East. Abundantly quoting, describing, and illustrating these plans, he has written a book which almost constitutes an archive in itself. Regrettably, the text within the illustrations is not always legible (and never translated). References to the images are often glancing. What matters most is "the worlding of Eastern Europe" and the construction of a "world socialist system" that was neither utopian nor ideological, but an epiphenomenon of the "reality of foreign trade" (pp. 305, 171). Putting his findings in the broadest possible context, Stanek concludes that the Cold War accelerated the "global mobility of architecture" and was thus a progenitor of architecture's current globalization.

What impact did these eastern-inspired plans actually have on people's lives? Stanek claims that they provided "frameworks for everyday lives, … create[d] points of concentration, and … set extension vectors for urbanization processes" (p. 2). "New collective subjectivities" emerged and "global projects of solidarity" were tested (p. 27). The substantiation of these claims will have to be sought elsewhere.

How can we know the long- or even medium-term significance of a particular urban project? That question is impossible to answer if the users of those buildings or neighborhoods are left out of the analysis. This point is driven home by Constance Smith in ***Nairobi in the Making, Landscapes of Time and Urban Belonging*** (2019), an anthropological study based on her residence in Kaloleni, a Nairobi housing project built by the British colonial government in the 1940s for families of Kenyan workers. Unlike Prestel's focus on middle-class urban emotions and Stanek's interest in Eastern Bloc planners, Smith's eye is trained on slum-dwellers. How do they try to shape a decent and secure urban life?

The postcolonial Kenyan government has abandoned Kaloleni. There is no trash collection. Because the population of this mainly Luo (western Kenyan) neighborhood is now three times greater than it was created to house, its trash has become prodigious and unhealthy, especially when it rains and the streets stink like open sewers. The many people living in each cluster of dwellings—the original bungalow or block augmented by numerous jerry-built, revenue-earning "extensions"—share one latrine and one shower room without running water. Most residents work at informal jobs within the estate. (Only a quarter of Kenyans are employed in the formal sector.) Given its poverty, Kaloleni has an unsurprisingly high crime rate, but no police. Its residents are now facing a different kind of threat to their security than thieves. The danger is posed by Vision 2030, the Kenyan government's scheme to jolt Nairobi into becoming a globally connected, middle-income city. If the plans to raze the slum and allow two private Chinese companies to build in its place 55,000 apartments actually succeed, the people of Kaloleni will lose homes they have carefully built up over the decades and thus their own sense of history and belonging.

Rather than despair, the people of Kaloleni take a wide variety of creative initiatives to enhance their sense of belonging. They modify their domestic architecture to emulate the enclaved style of living in the richer quarters of Nairobi, building perimeter walls and putting up burglar bars. They not only try to manage the practical signs of decay by, for example, planting lawns, but they also tell the area's history in such a way that they become the legal owners of the land or even assert that their houses still belong to Queen Elizabeth; they stake claims by telling stories that document-bound historians would find distorted or simply false. "Kenya grew from here," they say, as if the run-down housing estate gave birth to today's independent nation, which, strictly speaking, it did not (p. 79). Asserting the historical importance of Kaloleni is their way of presenting its identity, and their own, in a positive light. One side effect of these flights of historical imagination

is that the colonial management of the estate is now remembered for its orderliness rather than for excessive control.

People adopt words like "digital" (in English) to express their understanding of a future in which they are actively trying to craft a place. They do not reject Vision 2030—the glossy and probably utopian vision of the new Nairobi being peddled by international city planners, corporate leaders, and local political elites—so much as worry that they will be left behind, "living in a museum where time stands still" (p. 172). They are strung up between fantasizing about what Vision 2030 might bring and fearing what it might take away. They have long hedged their bets, in any case, by building retirement homes in western Kenya. These days, however, fewer young people speak their parents' home language. They are increasingly wedded to Nairobi as their only home and as the site of all their dreams for the future. They are on Facebook and read diasporic blogs. The formerly inspirational power of nationalism and of devotion to one's rural place of origin is waning in favor of popular dreams of a "digital" future that can be attained, if at all, only in a city like Nairobi. When Smith calls for more studies of "global urbanism," she is aware that these patterns pervade the Global South (p. 182).

Smith has done empathetic and adventurous fieldwork. (Her lodging in Kaloleni was no bigger than her bed.) She scrupulously avoids making Manichaean statements by, for example, saying that Nairobi seems to be simultaneously a place of impossibility and potential; uncertainty has been made routine. The ambiguities and incongruities of living in the Global South, she argues, should not be explained away but recognized for what they are: "generative" (p. 182). By "generative," she may mean that, despite the failure of most Kaloleni residents to live truly "digital" lives, their creative efforts in dealing with the challenges of home-making have succeeded in generating a sense of belonging, of life projects, of meaning. These efforts contribute to the particularity of Nairobi, which is now in danger of being homogenized by international real estate markets that treat land only as a financial resource and that frame the city's future as a generic global city for the elite.

Rather than *faits accomplis*, Smith writes, cities are continually being made. Urban "belonging is about crafting a place for oneself in the future" (p. 181). One hopes that future researchers, or perhaps even Smith herself, will grapple with questions she does not address about the direction this "making" is likely to take. One feels driven to ask what the slum-dwellers are *actually* forging in the material world, not simply in their imaginations: can they reap any tangible benefits, or are they simply creating a tenuous sense of belonging? Further, do they frame their hoped-for benefits—whether tangible or intangible—mainly in individual or in communal terms? In short, are the solidary nationalist dreams of the 1960s being replaced by individualistic hopes for the material rewards of modern urban inclusion like luxury apartments?

In *Everyday Equalities, Making Multicultures in Settler Colonial Cities* (2019), four geographers (Ruth Fincher, Kurt Iveson, Helga Leitner, Valerie Preston) approach the problem of modern urban anxiety from a decidedly activist point of view. Professing "progressive ideals" (opposition to racism, support for social justice), they have co-authored a book with the practical aim of not only honoring but also promoting public and private initiatives that will allow people to live together as equals without sacrificing their cultural differences. A salient example is the Muslim woman who, after removing her scarf in order to avoid being stigmatized in public, was joined by a non-Muslim stranger who urged her to put it back on and then launched an "I'll ride with you" hashtag to offer protection to other Muslims.

The key words in their title—***equality***, ***multiculture***, ***settler***—flag their ethical concerns: that

all people living in a city, immigrants or not, should be treated equally; that modern cities should be defined as "multicultures" because cities are inevitably "socially diverse societies" (p. 1); and that even Melbourne, Sydney, Toronto, and Los Angeles should be understood as "settler colonial cities" because they were "established through concerted efforts to dispossess and eliminate indigenous societies" (p. 2). Another key word—***everyday***—signals their celebration of the humble.

The immigrants who flock to these cities, mainly from Latin America and Asia, are being buffeted by the forces of neoliberalism and neoconservatism raging not just in Australia and North America but around the globe. The authors envision two enemies. Neoliberals fail immigrants by advocating individual self-help and resisting the use of government resources to ease their integration. Neoconservatives, proposing that the state deploy its powers to defend inherited social hierarchies, find a dangerously receptive audience among right-wing populists and white nationalists. Despite this arsenal of anxiety-provoking forces, the four case studies demonstrate the situation is not hopeless. Agitation may have the power to spark progress by orchestrating egalitarian everyday encounters until they are institutionalized. If people can work hard to forge solidarities which have political repercussions, a new social order can slowly be made.

By arguing for the equal treatment of all groups, the geographers are not arguing for "assimilation," "toleration," or even official policies of "multiculturalism," because they all fail to tackle "the inequities associated with cultural difference, particularly racialized difference" (p. 25). They are situating themselves instead in the long line of activist-reformers alarmed at injustice and poverty like Jacob Riis (and of postcolonial theorists like Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall). They are thus distancing themselves from urban designers like Ebenezer Howard and Frederick Law Olmsted who focused on creating agreeable urban space in which new communities could gradually be forged. In fact, the geographers find excessively optimistic, or even naïve, the idea that sheer contact will inevitably lead to social harmony, preferring to make a simple statement: popular initiatives matter.

The sequence of the case studies takes the reader serially through everyday challenges faced by immigrants: making a home (Melbourne), working for a living (Toronto), moving around the city (Sydney), and making public space (Los Angeles). The Melbourne case study shows how very complicated it is to make a home in another culture. "Home" is not only a house but also a neighborhood. The physical shape of both is important. Rules laid out by the government in a public housing project, as well as by developers in private developments, have a big impact on how "at home" people actually feel. Do recent refugees, for example, have to live packed together in segregated housing, and can they get access to a public park? Does the way a particular space is configured, and even decorated, allow people to feel they belong to a neighborhood where they can show care for one another and share jokes?

The Toronto case study pushes the theme of space into the modern workplace by drawing attention to the isolation of many urban workers. Cashiers and domestics, among other "low skill and feminized occupations," typically work alone, enjoying minimal contact with their peers (p. 132). How can they become aware of their shared interests if they never speak? Unions and community associations can galvanize feelings of solidarity when they organize meetings even outside the workplace, especially in creative ways. One trade union demonstrated the power of nonstate initiatives by recruiting mainly Caribbean women hotel workers to sing in a choir. Singing together, the women were able to forge a sense of solidarity that cannot evolve among workers, like cashiers, who never share a space. One cleaner,

and proud choir member, observed, "in our last round of bargaining we're on the news all over, so people are listening to us [sing and bargain]" (p. 113). Meanwhile, the grievances of the cashiers—working part-time, in isolation, with unpredictable schedules—went unaddressed.

By focusing on public transport, the Sydney chapter shows that even fleeting encounters on a bus can reinforce and challenge hierarchies. Filming a racist rant, for example, allows the ranter to be publicly shamed. Posters against yelling or hogging seats can be used to set standards of appropriate behavior. If religious, labor, and community organizations can forge a coalition to support, say, asylum seekers, there is a chance that progressive legislation can be adopted, like a $2.50 daily cap on refugees' transport fares. This cap was actually adopted by the New South Wales government after a carefully orchestrated campaign that included setting up meetings to hear asylum seekers' stories, then deluging the minister of transport with used tickets marked "Mobility with Dignity" and finally encouraging the primate of the transport minister's church to lobby her. All these behind-the-scenes efforts were designed to avoid making public demands that could inflame popular resentment against migrant entitlements. They worked.

The Los Angeles case study lauds the creation of new public spaces where Asian and Latin American migrants can commune with each other, bridge their own differences, and forge new associations governed by progressive rules. The two cases in point are the 2003 Immigration Workers Freedom Ride to Washington, DC, and the creation of Worker Centers within L.A. itself. The people traveling by bus to Washington found their buses to be "mobile classrooms" where they engaged in instructive storytelling, learned tactics of civil disobedience, and put the latter to use. At the Worker Centers people identified and discussed instances of racism and sexism occurring even among themselves. In both cases, having actual physical space in which to communicate resulted in the taking of political initiatives. In the process a new sense of solidarity was born.

By focusing on globally pervasive patterns of discrimination against immigrants and investigating their possible remedies at a microlevel, the four geographers are asking their readers to drop the blinkers of privilege. Their earnest and carefully documented efforts pay close and respectful attention to what people actually do in their daily lives in the city. While Stanek's Eastern Bloc architects refer rhetorically to "solidarity" and "collective subjectivity," these four geographers and their students actually delve into the quality and impact of individual, small-scale human interactions in their cities. They are interested in the ***enactment***, more than the rhetoric, of equality, especially when it occurs on a "microscale." They document and validate the mundane. They take classic concepts like "public space" and freshen them up by showing that public space can exist and have value wherever people encounter one another, not just in, say, formally designated areas like Central Park. Public space can be created by popular initiatives, not only by planners and architects. In the process of putting their sense of justice on display—by riding, for example, with a woman who feels unequal and unsafe—ordinary people are redefining the urban norm.

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Citation: Diana Wylie. Review of Fincher, Ruth; Iveson, Kurt; Leitner, Helga. *Everyday Equalities: Making Multicultures in Settler Colonial Cities.* ; Prestel, Joseph Ben. *Emotional Cities: Debates on Urban Change in Berlin and Cairo, 1860-1910.* ; Smith, Constance. *Nairobi in the Making: Landscapes of Time and Urban Belonging.* ; Stanek, Łukasz. *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East in the Cold War.* H-Africa, H-Net Reviews. August, 2020.

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