Martina Barker-Ciganikova

1 Introduction

Housing matters. That, however, is not the only – although the simplest – answer to the question of why a volume of collected contributions on housing in colonial and postcolonial Africa is of imminent importance. Housing matters because, as a multifaceted process in itself, it helps us understand and analyze more complex developments and transformation processes that make societies reflect about themselves. Using housing as a lens, an endeavor we undertake in this volume, means achieving insights into how seemingly insignificant everyday struggles and experiences influenced and shaped such large questions as the reformulation of policies and ideologies. Housing initiatives and shifts in housing programs have always been embedded in broader colonial and postcolonial approaches to labor, health, and urban planning, which themselves have been entrenched in the all-embracing (post)colonial ideology of trusteeship and later modernity.

We, the editors of this volume, conceive of housing not only as a physical space but also as a network of social, cultural, and legal relationships, a series of interactions and activities between various players each of whom cultivates their respective interests. Housing is construed of as an arena of contestation, used by all involved players as a means to put forward their particular views and have them challenge each other. The outcomes of these confrontations vary and encompass transfigurations, adaptations, hybridizations, appropriations or the re-imagining of proposed plans and policies.[1] After the Second World War, the colonial state, wished to legitimate its rule by showing that it would stress aspects of welfare and development, and controlled "emancipation" and involvement of colonial subjects in the exercise of rule. For urban settings, this entailed specific consequences. Employers – a crucial group of players in housing provision – in many countries wished to discipline laborers and their families and to tie an emerging "labor aristocracy" to paternalistically structured capitalism. Workers, in turn, had to decide whether they preferred to live in an environment where access to the infrastructures and commodities of modernity was offered through housing or whether they wished to take up residence in less circumscribed but materially disadvantaged township settings.

Housing thus unfolds in its multiplicity. It refers to a complex living environment encompassing a series of varying aspects, such as kinship and community

1 See, for instance, Jennifer Robinson, "Global and World Cities: A View from off the Map," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26 (2002).

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networking, provision of social services amongst neighbors, a site of production of informal sector goods, services, and income-generation activities more generally.[2] Housing, in some instances, incorporates a service (in creating a shelter) while in others it amounts to a socioeconomic asset generating wealth and improved livelihoods.[3] What housing means and how one conceives of housing is highly context-specific and changes not only within a given time and space setting but also depending on composition and on the set of involved players. As a result, the (metropolitan) planners' ideas and intentions of regulating people's lives often clashed with residents' preferences and understandings of housing as a place of belonging, community cohesion and identity or as a space that provides social benefits.[4] On some occasions, everyday realities determined how housing policies were reshaped; on others, policies changed but realities remained the same.[5] Housing as an everyday practice often collided not only with the imposed policies but also with the lack of financial means at the disposal of those who resided and dwelled and those who searched for houses, homes, and accommodation.

The provision of housing is an ambiguous matter full of friction as it reflects the constantly changing relations between the metropolis, the colonial state, local administration, employers, and society. As a result, it sheds light on how colonial policies, social service delivery, migration, economic growth and other issues of societal transformation intersected over a prolonged period of time. The intersections are also expressed via multiple interactions and changing relations between the involved players at different levels including metropolitan and central governments, local administration, municipalities, government and private employers, experts of architecture, planning and construction, landlords, and tenants. The relationships within the networks were by far not bipolar; they were rather multifaceted as conflicts among actors played out according to their individual interests, motivations, strategies, and goals. As Rüther suggests in her contribution in this volume, in order to better grasp the heterogeneous and intersecting perspectives of different players as

2 Alan Gilbert, "Home Enterprises in Poor Urban Settlements: Constraints, Potentials, and Policy Options," *Regional Development Dialogue* 9 (1988). Abdi Kusow, "The Role of Shelter in Generating Income Opportunities for Poor Women in the Third World," in *Shelter, Women and Development*, ed. Hemalata C. Dandekar (Michigan: George Wahr, 1993). Graham Tipple, "The Need for New Urban Housing in Sub-Saharan Africa: Problem or Opportunity," *African Affairs* 93 (1994).

3 Robinson, "Global and World Cities."

4 Karol Boudreaux, "Urbanization and Informality in Africa's Housing Markets," *Institute of Economic Affairs* 28 (2008): 21.

5 Richard Harris, "From Trusteeship to Development: How Class and Gender Complicated Kenya's Housing Policy, 1939–1963," *Journal of Historical Geography* 34 (2008).

well as the processes of contestation, it is useful to imagine all actors positioned in a so-called "societal field of force." This socio-spatial understanding of housing, its politics, and its provision enables us to explore how power and rule were enacted and shifted over time. It reminds us that the equilibrium of forces had to be rebalanced carefully after each perturbation, as none of the actors was able to make any move in isolation.

Conception of the Idea

The present volume was born out of the workshop "Studying Housing in Interdisciplinary Perspectives," which we organized in November 2017 at the Department of African Studies of the University of Vienna within the framework of our three-year research project on employment-tied housing in (post) colonial Africa.[6] Some of the chapters are revised papers presented during the workshop, while others, in particular those written by members of our research team, are based on a first sway of field research conducted in the United Kingdom, Belgium, Lubumbashi (Democratic Republic of Congo), Livingstone and Lusaka (Zambia), Thika and Nairobi (Kenya). The contributors to this volume draw on a rich variety of primary and archival sources including official colonial reports and dispatches, manifold correspondence and records such as minutes and memoranda, statistical surveys, company-owned propaganda publications, newspapers clippings, and many others. The multitude and heterogeneity of these materials reveal friction and are not easily woven into an all-too-cozy master narrative. The analyses benefit from that friction and help us keep in mind that there are always multiple ways of assessing housing dynamics.

Housing has many more dimensions and facets than we originally imagined. The fruitful discussions during the workshop revealed how diverse our conception of housing was: a discourse, a constellation of social relations, a tool of self- and class-assertion, an attempt to counter established patterns of mobility and to exercise closer surveillance, a response designed by the metropolis, or local settler government to deal with the threat posed by social unrest, a promise, an unfulfilled

6 The project "Employment-tied Housing in Post-Colonial Africa: Language, Agency and Governance in Three Housing Projects in Kenya, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, c. 1940s to 1970s" is financed by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF project no. P29566-G28). We are a team of four: Kirsten Rüther, our principal investigator; Martina Barker-Ciganikova, post-doc researcher; Daniela Waldburger, post-doc researcher; and Carl-Philipp Bodenstein, pre-doc researcher. For more information see housing.univie.ac.at.

dream, a negotiation process, and almost always a means to achieve other ends. Against this backdrop, Carole Rakodi offers one possible definition encompassing the multifacetedness of housing: "Houses are not merely physical artefacts with practical functions and economic value. They also provide people with a sense of their own worth, enhance their sense of belonging, and empower them to act."[7] Hence we wondered whether housing really was a "tool of empire"[8] to exercise absolute control over private, social, and sexual relations of inhabitants and dwellers. Frequently it turned out to be an instrument in the hands of the "contained" to "reframe"[9] the imposed policies and practices according to their own rules and systems of agency. The factual mismatch between theory (planning), practice (implementation and building), and the creation of time- and space-specific ways of talking about houses leaves us assuming that it is both the attempt to coerce and a sign of civil resistance – a mechanism to defend oneself or even to defy the imposition of order.

This volume brings together scholars from different disciplines, such as history, architecture, urban planning, African studies, linguistics, and literature. Firstly, the contributors apply a range of distinct methodological approaches to the study of housing. This made us opt for an open format, the beginning of a conversation rather than for driving a closed argument which can only be a sequel to this exposition. Secondly, we hint at parallels between British, Belgian, and French colonialisms, an endeavor only rarely (if at all) undertaken in academic discussions on housing. We do not intend to provide a systematic synopsis of housing policies and experiences made under all the various colonialisms and labor schemes which once occurred on the African continent. We intend to cover perspectives from a variety of developments emerging from local situations on the continent. It is from these varieties of policies and experiences that we attempt to delineate the field rather than from a systemic view that presupposes that different colonialisms set the structures of productively opening up space for future comparison. Again, we stress that housing is a lens. Hence, thirdly, we use individual housing projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Zambia, Cameroon, and South Africa to add to the currently vibrant academic debate on urban practices and their significance for past, present, and emerging social change. We want

7 Carole Rakodi, "Addressing Gendered Inequalities in Housing," in *Gender, Asset Accumulation and Just Cities: Pathways to Transformation?*, ed. Caroline O. N. Moser (London: Routledge, 2015), 82.

8 Daniel Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

9 See here Garth Andrew Myers, *Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

to establish how dwellers in various settings were exposed to the disciplining measures in housing arrangements and to a very particular circulation of ideas, values, and norms about urban life. In addition, we are glad to see that the contributors link the housing practices, planning ideas, and strategies to their respective metropolitan centers from where they (assumedly) emerged. We fully recognize that the housing policies and practices did not unfold in isolation; they were "nested" within a larger frame of the colonial discourse of subordination and pacification. In that sense, the workshop was also marked by linguistic traditions in academic production. On the one hand, participants worked with archival resources in different languages that reflected the linguistic situation in the metropolis as well as in the former colonies. On the other hand, all participants proofed their willingness to listen to presentations in English and French and some Swahili (sometimes with spontaneous interpreting). This plurilingual working mode showed that different concepts and notions of theory were a highly productive topic of discussion. The choice of the language for each paper in this volume was thus intentionally left to the authors.

Only rarely have comparative studies of housing dynamics been undertaken.[10] This is due to the Eurocentric framework that has dominated urban analyses since the colonial era and which concentrated on African urban developments relative to the West rather than encouraged a focus on intra-African urban variation.[11] Again, we take the liberty to not particularly highlight the metropolitan experiences impacting on developments and transformation processes in African surroundings or taking on their independent parallel political and technical priorities. The Eurocentric framework for analysis has also been one of the reasons why, in colonial as well as postcolonial settings but equally so in other periods of transition, it is deemed necessary to focus on "the slum", the most prevalent "other", as opposed to European forms and norms of housing.[12] We, however, wish to tie in with research that no longer takes that perspective but, instead, pursues a variety of alternative views on the city.[13]

10 See for instance Garth Andrew Myers, *African Cities: Alternative Visions of Urban Theory and Practice* (London & New York: Zed-Books, 2011); Robert Home, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

11 Kefa Otiso and George Owusu, "Comparative Urbanization in Ghana and Kenya in Time and Space," *GeoJournal* 71 (2008).

12 See, for instance, Marie Huchzermeyer, *Cities with 'Slums': From Informal Settlement Eradication to a Right to the City in Africa* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2011).

13 See, for instance, Edgar Pieterse and AbdouMaliq Simone, eds., *Rogue Urbanism: Emergent African Cities* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2013).

While the volume points to these complexities, the respective case studies target specific aspects of housing, thus making the understanding of its multifacetedness possible and accessible. Although the social and political realities of the individual case studies presented in this volume are context-specific and locally bound, they share a number of common patterns such as the use of coercive state control, the regulation of labor, or the disciplining of colonial subjects in and outside their respective abodes.

In this volume, the chapters range from depicting the daily life and housing conditions of mine workers in the Katanga Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo to tracing the question of what housing meant for dwellers by an analysis of Kenyan urban novels. The time span covered takes us from the foundation of Elisabethville (now Lubumbashi) in 1910 up to independent Nairobi in the 1970s. Overcoming the more conventional colonial/postcolonial divide characteristic of numerous studies, the contributors intend to highlight underlying continuities and changes across crucial periods and at times even point towards contemporary housing and urban developments. The majority of contributions in the volume is dedicated to the period between the late 1930s and 1960s, when colonial housing policies and practices underwent dramatic changes. The following section sheds light on the reasons behind and consequences of these changes. The final part presents the structure and individual chapters of the book in more detail.

Housing Policies and Practices

In the decades immediately before and after independence, an unprecedented demand for housing impelled governments into thinking about the provision, planning, and building of houses. What used to be a question of welfare in late colonial thinking came to overlap with the sensitive issue of who should enjoy a legitimate existence in African urban areas and hubs of commercialization and industrialization, and of how that existence would be imagined from various perspectives. Ever since then, housing has remained a pressing issue of urbanization and a key theme of relevance in the history of colonial Africa and thereafter.

Before 1940, apart from physical infrastructure projects by both Britain and France, there was only sparing metropolitan investment in their African colonies. The wartime metropolitan centers used colonies mainly as a resource; they focused on the extraction of commodities and the exploitation of the workforce, primarily through coercion and forced labor. The effects of these severe pressures

were complex and manifold. Reactions to them included strikes, unrest, protests or sabotage, varying throughout colonial Africa depending on the level of coercion and forbearance of the "subjects". On the one hand, the colonial state became ever more intrusive in people's everyday lives. On the other, once the expansion of development and welfare projects following the Second World War shaped the path for new opportunities, social and political changes were inevitable.[14]

Young male workers and farmers, in particular, made use of the benefits and promises that the cash economy and wage labor brought. What followed was increased industrial and infrastructure production, urbanization, the reformulation of gender and family relations, and the creation and redefinition of new urban bonds and identities. The escalating demand for political freedoms combined with the cost of social and economic development eventually put an end to colonial ambitions and the chaos they produced. The two major colonial powers, Britain and France, both attempted to modulate demands by promising reforms, welfare, and inclusion in decision-making. Trade unions and political organizations, albeit carefully selected and controlled from the top, were acknowledged and recognized. Legislative councils, with both nominated and elected members, and a huge variety of local advisory boards and committees, were created. The "subjects" were promised to become accepted players.

The essential task for the colonial powers was "to identify and to cultivate 'moderate' African partners in order to head off more radical alternatives"[15] posing a direct challenge to colonial control such as Mau Mau in Kenya from 1952 to 1960. The anticolonial struggle for emancipation assumed violent form, particularly in settler colonies where the intrusion of white settlers into both the economic and political realms was the strongest. Elsewhere, the emerging African elite – together with colonial officials and politicians in the metropolitan centers – discussed the imminent questions of modernization and liberalization of both state and social

14 For a more elaborate discussion of the political and societal changes following Second World War see for instance: John Parker and Richard Rathbone, *African History. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Walter Schicho, "Das Scheitern von Demokratie und Staat," in *Afrika: Geschichte und Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Ingeborg Grau et al. (Wien: Promedia, 2003); Roland Oliver and Anthony Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, 5th edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 211–303; John Illife, *Africans: The History of a Continent*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 219–273. Franz Ansprenger, *Geschichte Afrikas*, 2nd edition (Muenchen: C.H.Beck, 2004), 88–102.

15 Parker and Rathbone, *African History*, 118.

structures of the colonial state – to different avail.[16] While Britain negotiated the road to independence with each colony individually, France opted for a holistic approach via the creation of the "*Union française*" in 1945. But only in isolated cases did independence mean severing all ties with the metropolitan centers. Particularly in the economic sphere, the links remained intact and were even further strengthened by connections to new world powers and international organizations. What implications did these developments have for the development of urban centers in general and housing in particular?

New demographic trends and a changing global situation gradually raised housing expectations and produced a climate of opinion in which – almost worldwide – housing deficiencies came to be regarded as unacceptable. Political, cultural and associational life, among Africans and within Africa, unfolded in multiple directions. So did commercial, cultural, and intellectual networks which reached out to the ("cosmopolitan") world. Social mobilization, the emergence of independence ideologies as well as a "modern" and "educated" African middle class, or improved healthcare were only a few of the major societal transformations at play.[17] Wage labor, urban-rural mobility, and consequently rapidly growing cities with the concurrent need for housing became key characteristics of African societies and posed a significant challenge to colonial powers and their control over their "subjects" and "becoming citizens".[18]

Before the Second World War, Africans were not conceived of as belonging to the urban social sphere by the colonial administration. In the late 1930s and 1940s, a wave of disaffection with living and working conditions swept many African ports, mines, railways, and commercial centers in different countries.[19] In Kenya, for instance, unrest, protests, and labor strikes were directly linked to low wages and poor living and housing conditions. The 1946 Housing of Africans in the Urban Areas of Kenya Report noted that: "It cannot be denied that slum conditions [. . .] produce the worst type of citizen. Discontent becomes rife and efficiency decreases. One of the prime causes of the Mombasa riots in

16 Daniel Tödt, *Elitenbildung und Dekolonisierung: Die Évolués in Belgisch-Kongo 1944–1960* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft, Band 228, 2018); Michael Oliver West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class. Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898–1965*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

17 Cooper, *Africa since 1940*. Schicho, "Das Scheitern von Demokratie und Staat."

18 For an excellent treatment of that transition, with particular reference to the French Empire, see Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

19 A wave of strikes and unrest hit the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, railway and mines in the 1930s, Mombasa and Dar es Salaam in 1939, Katanga in 1941, Cameroon in 1945, and Gold Coast in 1948.

1939 was lack of proper housing, and similar causes have been found to be responsible for the more recent strikes and disturbances."[20] Herewith, the very existence of two vital determinants of colonial rule, namely order and productivity, was threatened. Colonial Zambia went through a similar period of unrest and dissatisfaction on the part of the workers. Yet the Northern Rhodesia Government was in a position to contain the situation and channel the quest for housing into a differing direction as compared to Kenya.

Colonial governments were particularly reluctant to accommodate Africans within emerging cities and towns for longer than just temporary sojourns of formal employment. Once the short-term contract terminated, the workers had to return to their areas of origin. The authorities attempted to regulate mobility of Africans by passing and amending laws and regulations. In times of labor shortage, Africans were forced to move to urban areas, for instance, through the imposition of various taxes. Adversely, if their numbers became excessive, pass and eviction laws were issued to ban them from the urban sites.[21] The stay of Africans there, especially if they were poor, was deemed illegal and illegitimate, unwanted and provisional, and authorities on many occasions demolished their (interim) dwellings. As the authorities were not able to cope with the situation and the budgets were overstrained, the provision of accommodation for the masses of urban wage earners was generally neglected. In many places, deplorable conditions of living and dwelling prevailed for the majority, and in urban centers Africans were often restricted to "native locations", which is where government and employees' housing was built. If one was not housed by one's employer or under a municipal scheme, it was extremely difficult to find private accommodation within the boundaries of the town. Most accommodation was "overcrowded, filthy and unweather proof."[22] In 1941 in Pumwani, one of Nairobi's locations, houses "of mud and wattle construction with scrap-iron roofs, with small windows and inadequate ventilation," with a permitted number of occupants of 171, were illicitly sheltering 481 persons.[23] Africans occupied but did not own the urban space.

20 G. C. W. Ogilvie, *The Housing of Africans in the Urban Areas of Kenya* (Nairobi: Kenya Information Office, 1946), 15.

21 Eviction procedures differed in respective colonies and in the long run. Colonial governments often proved reluctant to enforce evictions in Kenya or Northern Rhodesia, whereas in Southern Rhodesia the policies were carried out more immediately. This aspect of labor control and its connection to the availability of housing is ongoing work in progress in our project.

22 Nairobi Housing Scheme, 1941, CO 533/528/17, The Kenya National Archives (hereafter KNA).

23 Ogilvie, *The Housing of Africans*, 15.

The colonial authorities recognized that to a significant degree the housing situation was caused by the prevailing socioeconomic conditions, in particular by the low wages the majority of unskilled African workers received: "A low wage economy does not permit an African to pay more than Sh. 6.50 per month in Nairobi for a bed space, if and when he can get it. Very often he cannot and sleeps wherever he can, wet or fine."[24] A survey of wage conditions conducted in November 1952 in Nairobi revealed that 27 percent of unskilled workers were being paid the minimum wage of 56.5 shillings per month and 47 percent were being paid not more than 60 shillings. As for the more skilled type of industrial worker, monthly wages varied between 100 to 250 shillings per month.[25] The economic rent per bed space, the unit of measurement in Nairobi, was 17 shillings per month, but the housing allowance in the wage structure did not exceed 7 shillings.[26] Furthermore, as the minimum wage was calculated on the minimum requirements of a single man, it did not take into account the worker's family. The "single man" wage policy and "bed space" housing made it virtually impossible for any but the highly paid African to bring up a family decently in Nairobi. As George Atkinson, the Colonial Office Liaison Housing Officer, noted in internal correspondence, "[t]he discrepancy between the low wages of the Africans and the high rents is one of the biggest obstacles of housing provision."[27] At the same time, the high rents were to be blamed on the "greedy, unscrupulous" private African and Asian landlords charging excessive rents or tenants who sub-let their dwellings.[28]

Followed by an unprecedented boom in urbanization, the postwar housing shortage was massive, especially in hubs of industrialization and commercial centers. Still, the housing shortage, though most acute in Nairobi and Mombasa in the Kenyan context, was not confined to these two cities. Some government officials in smaller townships, for instance in Kisumu, noted lack of housing in particular for the "superior grades" of African employees: "The educated man

24 George Tyson, "The African Housing Problem: A Memorandum submitted to the Nairobi Chamber of Commerce," Nairobi City Council, 1953, in: CO 822/588 African Urban Housing in Kenya, 1953, The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA).

25 Summary of Information for Royal Commission: Number of Africans in Employment, in: CO 892/7/1 East African Royal Commission: Miscellaneous Papers, 1953, TNA.

26 Tyson, "The African Housing Problem," CO 822/588. Improved Housing in Kenya, *East Africa and Rhodesia*, 10 September 1953, in: CO 822/588 African Urban Housing in Kenya, 1953, TNA.

27 Letter from Atkinson to Rogers, 4 January 1953, in: CO 822/588 African Urban Housing in Kenya, TNA.

28 Harris, "From Trusteeship to Development," 317. East African Royal Commission, 1953, CO 892/7/1, TNA.

with a wife finds it impossible to obtain adequate accommodation in Kisumu at the present time unless he is a Government employee."[29] In 1953, the chairman of the Central Housing Board, the statutory body responsible for housing policies, referred to the fact that the higher-paid Africans throughout the colony were complaining that they were being ignored in the matter of housing. "Schemes were being prepared and carried out for laborers, but nothing was being done to accommodate clerks and artisans."[30] Public opinion was critical of the government's lack of initiative. There was a rising awareness that, with the development of industrial areas and the emergence of the industrial worker, "it is essential that housing policies should give the maximum aid to the town African in establishing not only himself but his family in decent living conditions, and doing so within his income."[31]

Challenged by this pressure and the increased number of labor-related unrest due to, among other factors, inadequate housing and living conditions, the colonial state made a determined effort to find alternatives. The 1940s thus marked a shift in official colonial housing discourse and policy. The political context within which decisions were made changed; in a number of colonies, permanent living and housing for male, working Africans in major urban centers became inevitable. The metropolitan centers were frightened. The loyalty of Africans was needed.[32] In Kenya, once again, to reflect the social and political changes and the inclusion of Africans into urban life, specific attention was given to the construction of municipal housing schemes, replacement of bachelor with family housing, launching of aided self-help schemes, in particular in the form of home-ownership and tenant-purchase.[33] In addition, employers were to become more active in the provision of housing. The employers were a very heterogeneous category and there was a great variety both in type and quality of accommodation they offered to their employees.

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29 Municipal Board of Kisumu, Housing Committee, 9 August 1951, in: DC/KSM/1/16/53 Vasey Kisumu Housing Committee, 1948–1956, KNA.

30 Kisumu Municipal Board, 3 December 1953, in: DC/KSM/1/16/53 Vasey Kisumu Housing Committee, 1948–1956, KNA.

31 "Housing." *East African Standard*, 28 June 1951, in: ABK/17/6 Vasey African Housing General File, 1951–1953, KNA.

32 Richard Harris and Susan Parnell, "The Turning Point in Urban Policy for British Colonial Africa, 1939–1945," in *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories*, ed. Fassil Demissie (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 150.

33 Such a policy was in line with globally connected efforts towards the promotion of home-ownership and finance on the basis of private capital. See Nancy Kwak, *A World of Homeowners: American Power and the Politics of Housing Aid* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

Although the contribution of employers in Kenya towards addressing the housing shortage never truly satisfied the demand,[34] it was substantial. According to a 1959 survey, 67 percent of employed Africans in Nairobi were housed by their employers.[35] As Anderson noted, the need for more housing was recognized by the Town Council as early as 1911. However, nobody was willing to dedicate resources to build housing for African workers and a constant battle between central government, municipal authorities, and employers characterized the housing scene.[36] These categories were often one and the same as government departments were, for a long time, the largest employers in the town. Although it was a legal obligation in Kenya upon an employer to provide either suitable housing for his African employees or an allowance for rent,[37] the housing facilities provided by individual employers varied greatly:

> [O]nly the larger firms such as the railway, bus companies, etc. have provided housing. Employees not so housed find accommodation in municipal housing schemes and African-owned lodging houses. Domestic servants, who comprise about one-sixth of the urban population, are usually housed on the employers' premises, and the type of housing provided varies greatly, the usual accommodation consisting of one small hut without cooking or bathing facilities.[38]

The state, by far the largest employer,[39] provided housing for its African employees, with several state agencies, such as the Public Works Department, Posts and Telegraphs Department, or the Health Office, building houses at the same time. For decades, the Kenya and Uganda Railways, the largest employer in the country, was considered exemplary both in terms of quantity and quality

34 A 1951 report noted 10,000 bed spaces shortage despite all the efforts. N.M. Deverell, *Social Conditions Arising out of the Growth of Large Urban Populations in East Africa* (City Council of Nairobi: Annual Report of the African Affairs Department, 1951).

35 Richard Harris and Allison Hay, "New Plans for Housing in Urban Kenya, 1939–1963," *Planning Perspectives* 22 (2007): 199. This was counted on the then conventional bed space. The survey included only those within city limits and informal employment.

36 David Anderson, "Corruption at City Hall: African Housing and Urban Development in Colonial Nairobi," *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 36–37 (2001).

37 Section 41 of the Employment Ordinance made it obligatory to provide housing for those employees whose earnings did not exceed 100 shillings per month or else to provide in addition to the wage a sufficient allowance *in lieu* to enable an employee to rent appropriate accommodation.

38 Ogilvie, *The Housing of Africans*.

39 According to available statistical information, in 1951, approximately one quarter (93,361) of the total employed population of 412,416 Africans were employed either by the Kenyan Government or the East Africa High Commission. East African Royal Commission, 1953, CO 892/7/1, TNA.

of housing.[40] As for the private employers, only larger industries and companies could afford to create separate housing estates for their workers; small businesses housed their staff in quarters that were attached to, or part of, their business premises.[41]

The employees were at least as diverse and multiple as their employers. There were professional and commercial middle classes, clerical and skilled manual workers, workers in commerce and industry, petty traders and hawkers, white-collar workers in government service, laborers, domestic servants, semi-skilled and unskilled – the largest group of all, and the formally unemployed.[42] Notwithstanding their differences, ethnic and professional backgrounds, all had one thing in common: they were in need of housing. The housing survey conducted by the Labour Department in Nairobi in 1950 found alarming conditions regarding housing provision:

> A very great proportion of these employees, in fact, had no form of roof at all: 15% were found to be sleeping in places where they should never be in at all, such as railway landhies, Nairobi Club area, Indian and European residential areas etc. A further 20% lives at the expense of others, paying no rents but moving about from place to place every few days. 30% shared rooms with friends and paid rent in proportion to the number of people in the room, while 25% are tenants in African locations. The remaining 10% have their own houses.[43]

Women present in urban areas were categorized along different lines. Rather than being thought of in terms of wage employment and economic contribution,

40 Cooper, for instance, noted that the railway housed 80 percent of Mombasa's railway workers. Frederick Cooper, *On the African Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1987), 48. Railways were also one of the very few employers, which provided family quarters instead of the ubiquitous bed space typical for municipal and council housing schemes (Deverell, *Social Conditions*). In contrast, the Rhodesia Railway's compounds in colonial Zambia were a permanent focus of critique. Politicians, medical officers and town councilors argued that Government should set a better example in their own housing to push Rhodesia Railways towards providing accommodation of required standards: "At the moment when the Municipal Council is building much better houses in the Maramba and we are endeavouring to persuade the Rhodesia Railways to improve their African quarters it is disheartening to find Government still setting the lowest standard of all." Senior Medical Officer, J.A. McGregor, Livingstone, to Provincial Commissioner in Livingstone, 24 March 1941, in: LGH 3/5/1 Livingstone: African Housing, 1937–1946, National Archives of Zambia.

41 Harris and Hay, "New Plans for Housing in Urban Kenya," 199.

42 Memorandum on Housing in Africa, 1953, in: CO 859/490 Housing and Town Planning in Africa, 1953, TNA.

43 Letter from Carpenter to Editor of *East African Standard*, 22 August 1950, in: ABK 17/13 Vasey Inquiry into African Housing, 1949–1965, KNA.

a 1951 report listed Nairobi's women as (a) genuine wives, resident with their husbands, mainly of the higher paid groups; (b) concubines; (c) prostitutes, and (d) migratory Kikuyu wives and children.[44]

As stated above, the low-wage economy meant that ordinary African workers were not in a position to pay the rent. They needed supplementary income, which they ordinarily obtained from the land owned by them in the rural areas. The constant commuting between rural and urban areas lowered the efficiency of the workforce, and made it more difficult to impose order:

> We can no longer take it as the normal state of affairs that a man works in Nairobi and his wife and family scratch a livelihood out of an allotment in the Reserve. [. . .] The losses in the turnover of labour due to these divided households and the periodical visits of the African to his plot in the Reserve must cost the country and industry generally, considerable sums.[45]

Converting migrant casual labor into a stabilized urban workforce was directly linked to the consequent need for social services and, in particular, improved housing conditions. Permanent building materials replaced temporary ones. The minimum allotted space per occupant was increased. To be able to cater for a family, a wage increase, regular employment, a house and security for retirement all became part of the social and political engineering programs. It was believed that a stabilized, disciplined, and urbanized working class would lead to increased efficiency and suppress the unrest that threatened the social order. Such a "powerful pacification device"[46] was hoped to maintain control by deliberately creating "responsible" dwellers, loyal and committed to the colonial government.

Inadequate housing was understood as "a known menace to health, to social stability and to the maintenance of law and order."[47] Poor housing conditions were seen as "ideal for subversive activities" and directly contributing to unrest. While describing the living conditions of Africans in Nairobi's shanty towns, the Sunday Post reporter noted "distinct signs of unrest and dissatisfaction, [. . .] this is the stuff of which rebellion is made, [. . .] toilet is the bush, they draw their water from puddles, swamps. [. . .] It stinks of filth and hate."[48]

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44 Deverell, *Social Conditions*.

45 Tyson, "The African Housing Problem," CO 822/588.

46 Viviana d'Auria, "In the Laboratory and in the Field: Hybrid Housing Design for the African City in Late-colonial and Decolonising Ghana (1945–57)," *The Journal of Architecture* 19 (2014): 330.

47 "Housing," *East African Standard*, 28 June 1951, ABK/17/6.

48 "Rebellion's Nursery: Quarry Shanty Towns," *The Sunday Post*, 27 May 1956, in: NHC/1/381 Nairobi County Council African Housing, 1952–1958, KNA.

The local media readily amplified the link between housing and revolutionary thinking: "there is no better breeding ground for crime, no better forum on which real and imaginary grievances can be ventilated and enlarged, than an overcrowded hovel of 'bedspaces' dimly lit by a flickering oil tin light, with nothing to do in the early hours of the evening after work but grumble."[49]

Economic thinking was as important as the imposition of law and order. In the 1940s and 1950s, the situation in Nairobi was considered so bad that an embargo on recruitment of any more workers was being contemplated.[50] Industrial firms and commercial employers were also told they would be refused land for the erection of new factories and offices unless they built housing estates for the workers they intended to employ.[51] That such a drastic measure would bear catastrophic consequences was obvious; the financial loss, in particular during the scarcity caused by war conditions, would have had an overly dramatic impact, not only on the colonies but on the metropolis itself, at times highly dependent on exports from the colonies.

As a consequence, urban housing became a priority. Special funds were created for housing projects. Interestingly enough, in many British colonies, including Kenya, although the low-paid workers and poor dwellers were the most numerous group and thus in the direst need of housing, the provision of dwellings for the poor was not at the center of attention. Colonial housing policy in Kenya was meant for the more stable: the white collar, civil servants, government workers, municipality employees and better-off workers such as railway men. As Cooper argued, "these policies attempted to fix a working class into a direct, long-term relation with capital and the state."[52] Even site-and-service or tenant-purchase schemes were reserved for those with a certain level of income.[53]

The wish of colonizers to establish "decent" living conditions surely indicates how their technocratic perspective was imbued with concepts of morality, ideas of discipline, and the notions of imposing order and hierarchy: people

49 "The Root of the Trouble," *Sunday Post Reporter*, 15 February 1953, in: CO 822/588, African Urban Housing in Kenya, 1953, TNA.

50 Letter from Vasey to Norton, 13 November 1952, in: CO 822/136/3 African Housing Plans, 1947, TNA.

51 East African Royal Commission, 1953, CO 892/7/1.

52 Frederick Cooper, "Urban Space, Industrial Time, and Wage Labor in Africa," in *Struggle for the City: Migrant Labor, Capital, and the State in Urban Africa*, ed. Frederick Cooper (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983), 3.

53 Ernest A. Vasey, *Report on the Housing of Africans in Townships and Trading Centres* (Nairobi, 1950). Karen Tranberg Hansen, "Lusaka's Squatters: Past and Present," *African Studies Review* 25 (1982). Richard Stren, "Underdevelopment, Urban Squatting and the State Bureaucracy: A Case Study of Tanzania," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 6 (1982).

with supposedly superior knowledge provided the means to help others emerge from "non-civilization", poverty and chaos – in brief: from circumstances which rendered society "illegible" and thus a challenge to the emerging modern state.[54] At the same time, the focus on housing as a technical matter depoliticized the debate and avoided discussion of controversial political issues, such as emerging civil rights, entitlement to private property or to political representation. The coming into being of a political voice and the emergence of a particular modern African urban identity through access to urban housing is thus one dimension of housing the volume explores. As Rüther states in this volume: "The debate had shifted from issues of labor stabilization to more openly expressed complaints of residents with self-asserted urban identities." By the very act of laying claim to their urban homes, the new dwellers assumed new notions of self-understanding, worth, personhood, and family.

Despite imperial attempts to impose control, there were no uniform, linear master-housing plans implemented in practice. The gatekeeper colonial states had only "weak instruments for entering into the social and cultural realm over which they presided."[55] The social, economic, political, and cultural networks created by Africans thus often remained beyond the state's reach. As a result, a multiplicity of inter/re/actions, such as resistance and accommodation, or appropriation and independent communication, occurred when designed policies were actually implemented. In consequence, as demonstrated in this volume's contributions, a rather heterogeneous and "unplanned" set of housing forms and designs emerged. Where the authorities or employers failed to provide housing, dwellers took matters into their own hands. What emerged, often described as "slums", "squatter settlements" or "unauthorized housing", were spontaneous reactions to formal urban planning deemed illegal, irregular, and informal by those in power:

> An urban sub-proletariat was coming into being all over Africa, swollen by the influx of jobless people driven out of the rural areas by the war effort, with its forced labour, compulsory crops and heavy taxation: they consisted of ill-paid workers, rootless individuals from here, there and everywhere, and the unemployed. Temporary accommodation became permanent, with hardly any roads, public services or sanitation.[56]

54 James Scott, *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

55 Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, 5.

56 Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "Economic Changes in Africa in the World Context," in *General History of Africa: Africa since 1935*, ed. Ali A. Mazrui (California, UNESCO: James Currey, 1999), 295.

Africans came into cities without waiting for the blessing of the colonial state.[57] They brought their families along with them and had no intention of returning. The state was forced to find a solution. Instead of using force to push them out, the state opted for co-optation: stable employment, stable families, stable housing, stable communities, and – in due time, even though perhaps never fully achieved – a stable political system.

A multiplicity of actors has characterized the housing field. As the central government lacked the required resources and capacity to meet the demand for new urban housing,[58] other players such as local government actors, municipalities or private companies and estates were encouraged to provide housing facilities for the ever-increasing numbers of new urban residents.[59] None of the actors, though, seemed keen on taking the lead in housing questions. As Cooper noted, "everyone was in favor of a stabilized African work force but no one wanted to pay for it."[60] The administrative burden of housing and the responsibility for it was transferred between different echelons of colonial government or to other players, mostly employers. Except for the mining sector, employers, in turn, were often interested in the devolution of this task back to the municipalities. Notwithstanding the increased investments and new strategies, the resources made available for the provision of housing were always too short, the demand never satisfied. If finances were made available, housing policies, as Boonen and Lagae demonstrate in their chapter, often failed in many aspects in large part due to "the unwillingness of the metropole-based officials, architects and planners who promoted general solutions to the problem of housing shortage, based on abstract ideas of rationality and cost-efficiency, [. . .] to adapt to local specificities."

The communication between these various actors and echelons of the colonial government, as archival sources reveal, was oftentimes highly bureaucratic and centralized with an insufficient exchange of information between the metropolis and the colonies. The procedures were lengthy and time-consuming; the decision-making was marked by internal conflicts. The institutions were ill-prepared and, though working simultaneously, they were poorly coordinated. The multiplicity of actors stood in contrast with the constant lack of qualified personnel.[61]

57 For a detailed analysis of this train of thought consult Cooper, "Urban Space", and Cooper, *On the African Waterfront*.

58 See, for instance, Tipple, "The Need for New Urban Housing in Sub-Saharan Africa."

59 See also Robert Home, "From Barrack Compounds to the Single-Family House. Planning Worker Housing in Colonial Natal and Northern Rhodesia," *Planning Perspectives* 15 (2000).

60 Cooper, *On the African Waterfront*, 123.

61 See also Luce Beeckmans, "Editing the African City: Reading Colonial Planning in Africa from a Comparative Perspective," *Planning Perspectives* 28 (2013): 619.

To sum up, institutional fragmentation, malfunctioning departments, and administrative glitches were not uncommon encounters in the housing field. The ideas of the empire and the reality of the colonies often clashed.

This ambiguous and indeed conflicting situation between different actors was rendered visible not only in the provision of urban housing, but also with regard to infrastructures and services. Ultimately, it also touched upon the conceptualization of urban forms and their transformation. The morphogenesis of urban areas between the late nineteenth century and the 1930s was based on the garden-city model of urban planning in combination with an economic planning rationale that was intended to meet the needs for industrial developments of different sectors such as mining, agriculture, and transportation.[62] Throughout colonial sub-Saharan Africa planning and development of urban structures were initially pursued by military planners and engineering staff mostly based in the colonial metropolises. They were only gradually adopted by civil engineers and urban planners working from inside the colonial territories in the last two to three decades of colonial rule.[63] Physical and socio-spatial segregation along racial lines were legitimized based on the logics of hygiene and public health as well as on notions of establishing and fostering spatial dominance and control.[64] Differences in the degrees of segregation between colonies and colonial rulers were balanced out by increasing exchanges of knowledge and cooperation in matters of tropical medicine and later architecture and urban planning.[65] Sanitary corridors and physical boundaries or barriers in the form of railway lines and industrial zones, or green belts and rivers, structured urban spatial forms.

Later, colonial planning rationales were replaced by ideas of developmentalism, modernism, and the discourse of urban planning unfolding in the context of the network emerging from a succession of international conferences on

62 Robert Home, "Town Planning and the Garden Cities in the British Colonial Empire 1910–1940," *Planning Perspectives* 5 (1990): 25.

63 Carlos Nunes Silva, "Urban Planning in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Overview", in *Urban Planning in Sub-Saharan Africa: Colonial and Postcolonial Planning Cultures*, ed. Carlos Nunes Silva (London: Routledge, 2015), 9–10.

64 Garth Andrew Myers, "Designing Power: Forms and Purpose of Colonial Model Neighborhoods in British Africa," *Habitat International* 27 (2003), 193–204; Ambe Njoh, "Ideology and Public Health Elements of Human Settlement Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Cities* 26 (2009): 9–18; Ambe Njoh, "Urban Planning as a Tool of Power and Social Control in Colonial Africa," *Planning Perspectives* 24 (2009): 301–317.

65 Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "From Residential Segregation to African Urban Centres: City Planning and the Modalities of Change in Africa South of the Sahara," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 32 (2014): 1–12.

modern architecture.[66] The rationale of segregation and exclusion, however, was basically kept untouched, less so on principles of hygiene, but rather on economic and technical grounds. While the political and social transformations between the 1930s and 1960s did not radically scrape off the urban tissue of earlier decades, they continued to influence the theory and practice of late colonial and postcolonial urban planning. As a result, planning often proved ineffective and inefficient in the light of rising urbanization rates and its increased demand for housing and infrastructures. Many urban planning initiatives and ideas were only partly operationalized or not at all. In fact, different branches and departments (technical, economic, legal, social welfare, etc.) of urban development were acting parallel to each other or in little, sometimes no, knowledge of each other. Moreover, the political struggles of the pre-independence era complicated urban planning even further as technocratic policies and legislations were readily questioned by African political classes who could hold against them not only their inefficiencies, but more so the unevenness and inequalities of infrastructural service distributions and urban densities.

The "inefficiencies and inequities created by the colonial city"[67] outlived the transition to postcolonial African urbanities. The divide between low- and high-density areas and between the availability and lack of urban infrastructures and services shifted from being based on racial to social segregation and exclusion.

As the complexity of the tasks was growing, so was the vastness of the network of actors dealing with housing. Kooiman argues that "interdependencies between these actors [...] must be recognized, as no single actor has the knowledge and information required to solve complex, dynamic, and diversified societal challenges; no single actor has sufficient potential to dominate unilaterally."[68] New bodies, ministries, departments, and institutes specializing in housing, both in the metropolitan centers and the colonies, such as the Building Research Station, Tropical Building Section, the Colonial Housing Research Study Group, or the Housing Advisory Committee for British Colonies (oftentimes duplicating their efforts) were established. Knowledge and experiences were exchanged and shared across the regional boundaries; study tours were organized. Our archival research at the National Archives in Kew, the State Archives in Brussels, and the Archives of the *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* in Brussels revealed rich information on

66 Nancy Odendaal et al., "Planning Education in Sub-Saharan Africa," in *Urban Planning in Sub-Saharan Africa. Colonial and Postcolonial Planning Cultures*, ed. Carlos Nunes Silva (London: Routledge, 2015), 285–300.

67 Home, *Of Planting and Planning*, 227.

68 Jan Kooiman, *Governing as Governance* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2003), 11.

social mobility, the circulation and exchange of ideas, concepts, and experts, in particular through housing conferences, implementation of city master plans, or appointments of town planning advisers. One of the aims of this volume is to encompass this large network and the multiple interactions within.

When speaking about actors, what do we know about dwellers and their preferences? What building materials and how many rooms did they desire for their houses? Was indoor or outdoor cooking the preferred choice? What do dwellers expect from housing and what does housing mean to them? Martina Kopf, in this volume, states that housing has been

> a source of constant stress and strain [for the dwellers]. On the one hand, this concerns the quality of living space – represented by smells, the lack and malfunctioning of sanitary services and narrowness – and on the other hand, this concerns the precariousness and instability of housing, as a consequence of insecure tenancies, the illegalization of housing and the resulting threat of eviction.

A 1951 report on social conditions in Nairobi is a testimony to how housing in urban centers was a dream imagined by each and every dweller in a very specific way:

> [w]here each individual seeks primarily his own interest and where apparently passive acceptance of bleak living conditions is coloured by the fact that the young men dream dreams of self-government with ministerial posts for all, the old men see visions of a return to pastoral or agricultural life surrounded by rich crops and large herds and the women secretly hanker after economic independence. Few, as yet, conceive that they might be 'builders of cities.'[69]

Notwithstanding the precarious conditions, residents did their best to improve their houses, or beautify their homes, so as to make the most of an adverse or even oppressive system. At all times, to some extent, many Africans put a lot of effort into managing space and diversity to their own benefit. Some managed to endow places with their own insignia of power, faith, and custom and found sufficient ways around imposed rules and orders.[70] The chapters in this book establish what happened along the often meandering paths from conceptualizing housing down to implementing it in late colonial and early postcolonial settings in terms of social or political change.

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69 Deverell, *Social Conditions*.

70 Laurent Fourchard, "Between World History and State Formation: New Perspectives on Africa's Cities," *Journal of African History* 52 (2011). Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall, "Writing the World from an African Metropolis," *Public Culture* 16 (2004). Myers, *Verandahs of Power*.

We are fully aware that this period, 1930s–1960s, cannot be described equally well from all points of view. Whereas the official sources representing the metropolitan centers and colonial state are rich, others remain silent or, if available, are buried deep in archival records. By carefully browsing through files of numerous archives and by conducting elaborate field research, the contributors of this volume were able to reconstruct, at least partially, the intentions, initiatives, criticisms, and (hi)stories from below of the residents, dwellers, and inhabitants. Such an endeavor is of crucial importance because how people were housed is a reflection of how they were integrated into society.

Structure

The cover photo, taken by Carl-Philipp Bodenstein during his field research in Livingstone, Zambia, in 2018, has been selected for its depiction of the multiple yet interwoven ways housing can present itself. The picture symbolically reflects the dimensions and aspects of housing that the contributions in this volume revolve around. It highlights, among others, the continuities in housing and urban processes from the colonial to the post-independence era.[71] The colonial buildings in the back, evidently still occupied today, are a manifestation of spatial appropriation by dwellers. The construction site in the foreground provides ample maneuvering space for transformations. To a careful observer, the photograph reveals part of a high-density area with too little open space left between individual houses, non-availability of financial, material, and possibly personal resources to complete the foundations, and even lack of privacy. Did the owner dream too big and is now awaiting additional cash flow from remittances? Did administrative hurdles come up along the way with the municipal council questioning the soundness of the construction? We can only speculate as the shot was made in passing. What we can claim with certainty though is that the complex processes of provision and building this particular house have undergone multiple alternations since the conception of its original plan. The picture gives testimony to the fact that housing as a built environment in the making never turns out in reality as what it was originally intended.

The dimensions of housing are approached at different levels of analysis in this volume. The first three chapters, contributions by Kirsten Rüther, Sofie Boonen and Johan Lagae, and Martina Kopf on Zambia, the Democratic Republic

71 See Carole Rakodi, *Harare: Inheriting a Settler-Colonial City: Change or Continuity*? (New York: John Wiley, 1995), 8.

of Congo, and Kenya place the becoming urban dwellers and their interactions with other actors of the housing network at the focus of analyses. The authors examine conflicting interests, interactions, and processes of negotiation as players were claiming their spaces to maneuver, attempting to make the best of their living and housing conditions. The selected foci – compliance or denial to pay rent, appropriation and transformation of space, and household formations according to dwellers' ideas – are all expressions of agential power on the side of the residents. Residents tried to engage with the openings and opportunities that housing offered.[72]

The main entry point of the three next chapters is worker housing – according to Home,[73] the commonest built element of the colonial landscape. The two case studies set in Lubumbashi, former Elisabethville by Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu and Daniela Waldburger respectively, and Cameroon by Ambe Njoh and Liora Bigon explore how employment-tied housing served as an instrument for the projection and articulation of state power during the colonial era and has remained an important tool for the exercise of societal domination and control by the postcolonial state up to the present day. All three contributions testify to how vital employers are to our narrative. For decades, they were accorded a central role by colonial and independent governments in the provision of housing for permanently employed Africans in urban centers and workplaces.[74] Nevertheless, the reach of their control was by far not omnipotent. As Cooper[75] claimed, the initiatives of workers to gain control of their own lives and those of the state and capital to remake the workplace, living place, and colonial society all shaped each other. The final part of the introduction depicts each contribution in more detail.

Innovatively, *in lieu* of an epilogue, we included, in a form of an interview, the views of an architect and a civil engineer who, while on construction sites, transform interdisciplinary (theoretical) approaches into daily negotiations with on-site people and communities. While studying housing from an interdisciplinary perspective – a central endeavor in our research – we saw it as an enriching opportunity to involve housing practitioners into the debate. At the same time, this exchange of ideas and input from colleagues enabled us to further reflect on our preliminary research findings and served as a potential outlook for the future. Opening up the field to housing practitioners is an invitation to participate in an ongoing conversation. After all, research is a continuing process and we

72 See Robinson, "Global and World Cities."
73 Home, "From Barrack Compounds."
74 See, for instance, Harris and Hay, "New Plans for Housing in Urban Kenya."
75 Cooper, *On the African Waterfront*.

think it is worth stressing the procedural character of research unfolding with regard to (post)colonial housing politics.

Kirsten Rüther explores in her chapter the interwoven complex relations between the colonial state, various employers, and the becoming urban dweller in Northern Rhodesia. At the center of her analysis is the concept of rent: rent paid, rent complied with, rent delayed, rent omitted, rent resisted, rent collected. Rent serves here as a lens through which multiple conflicts playing out between a variety of actors at different levels, be they landlords, tenants, or state agencies, got articulated in practice. Her selected timeframe, from 1948 to 1962, is chosen with precision, as it is in this period that the meaning of rent changed dramatically as it reflected the shifting political, economic, and social circumstances.

By tying the multiplicity of actors together in a so-called "societal field of force" through the concept of rent, Rüther is able not only to capture their interactions and mutual relations but, even more importantly, to explore how power was enforced and rule established and how these carefully balanced constellations of power changed over time. Rent was a manifestation of power as it regulated access to housing. Unaffordable rent often led to subject-citizen mobilization in the form of resistance, boycott or unrest. As the meaning of rent shifted in the context of rising African nationalism, the paying of rent served as a manifestation of individual, political responsibility and made a precondition to the enjoyment of citizenship rights and African representation in elected bodies. Ultimately, the main contribution of the chapter is that, by tracing back the changes of meaning of rent shifts in conceptions of power, rule and obedience can be better understood.

In the second contribution, Sofie Boonen and Johan Lagae illustrate how the urban landscape of one particular *Office des Cités Africaines* (OCA) neighborhood of Ruashi in Lubumbashi in the 1950s speaks of the manifold ways in which its inhabitants have responded to a physical environment shaped according to western dwelling patterns and introduced in the context of colonialism. Deeply rooted in the paternalistic rationale underlying postwar colonial policies in the Belgian Congo, in particular the first Ten-Year Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Belgian Congo (1949–1959), the OCA houses were not merely intended to provide shelter for the booming African population in Congo's major urban centers. They were also a major element in a broader project of social engineering, aimed at the "emancipation" of the African household defined in terms of a nuclear family. As such, the houses underwent major alterations over time, for instance, through the addition of informal structures or privatization of public spaces.

Boonen and Lagae skillfully depict the complexity of the designing and building process and highlight the tensions between the central and local administration which were characteristic of the process. The authors' interpretation of

the convoluted process of appropriation, adaptation, and transformation that took place in Ruashi by its inhabitants is pleasingly refreshing. They read this transformed urban landscape neither in terms of a failed modernist project nor as merely an act of resistance against an imposed colonial order. Instead, in line with Philippe Boudon's 1969 study of Le Corbusier's *Cité Frugès* in Pessac, they approach Ruashi – but also other OCA-neighborhoods in other Congolese cities – as an example of an *architecture habitée activement*, an "actively lived-in architecture" providing maneuvering space for transformations. Instead of condemning or regretting the change of the original concept, this alternative view understands the modifications as a positive contribution. As the authors argue, addressing the complexities of the "actively lived-in architecture" helps to gain a better appreciation of everyday struggles OCA inhabitants undergo up to the present day.

Martina Kopf "reads" the city and the urban households of post-independence Kenya in the 1970s from a different perspective, through literature – such a crucial narrative and source for understanding post-independent perceptions of politics and the everyday. Analyzing two literary works by Meja Mwangi, *Going Down River Road* and *The Cockroach Dance*, portraying the lives of the urban poor living in unstable and informal working and housing conditions, she demonstrates the potential of fiction and literary analysis as means to question and disrupt objectifying approaches towards people in low-income livelihoods prevalent in Western (academic) literature. Kopf approaches fiction and narrative as tools giving meaning to the realities people live in and argues that Mwangi's novels contribute to a better understanding of the housing conditions of Nairobi's working poor by, among others, "offering a window into the history of urban settlement and of social and ethnic stratification at the shore of the Nairobi river."

Through Mwangi's novels, Kopf shows the emergence of a particular modern African urban identity. The household, a key concept in her analysis, is understood as a fluid, dynamic, and short-lived concept which manifests itself in multiple constellations, be it a household managed and financed by an African woman in her early twenties, a shack occupied by male buddies or a polygamous household. Housing, Kopf argues, emerges in Mwangi's novels as a subject of narration which on a literary level connects to larger stories of urbanization and urban development. It can be read and interpreted as a microcosm which reflects hierarchies not only of class and "race" but also of gender in post-independence Nairobi. In her analysis, she touches upon colonial patterns of labor migration continuing into postcolonial capitalist development and the continued restriction of urban space for Africans in the Nairobi of independence. Even though published four decades ago, Mwangi's texts are still relevant for the way they tell stories of urban life from below.

Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu takes us to Katanga Province, Lubumbashi (Elisabethville) in Congo. In his own words, a child of *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* (UMHK) himself, in Mwembu's contribution we feel the real *connoisseur* of living, working, and housing conditions talking. He knows every street, every building, and every corner of Lubumbashi; the city becomes alive through his descriptions. His contribution traces the evolution of Lubumbashi since its foundation in 1910 up to the independence of Congo in 1960. He explores the attempts of the Belgian colonial state to implement full political segregation of the city along racial lines into three separate zones: white, black, and the so-called *zone neutre*, separating the two by at least 700 meters which, according to official medical reports at that time, would prevent the transmission of malaria from the African to the European part of town.

Dibwe dia Mwembu interlinks the city's development, in particular *la ville noire*, with that of the region's biggest employer, the mining company UMHK. Through his detailed description, we get enriching insight into UMHK's workers' camps which served mostly as reservoirs of African labor force for the booming industry. Established to stabilize and discipline the workforce and to protect them from the "backward" influence of the rural areas, the founders' intention was to create a feeling of social community and belonging or, as Mwembu says, to craft a *grande famille discipline et saine*. This socialization led to a creation of a new collective identity which had far-reaching implications, among others, on the language usage: people employed in the UMHK were referred to as *ba Union Minière* or children as *batoto ba Union Minière*, and people referred to each other as "brother" and "sister".

Daniela Waldburger takes the discourse of Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu further and scrutinizes the concepts of hygiene and health the UMHK used from the 1940s onwards as a stabilization tool to discipline its workers. She displays how the UMHK's decisions and strategies in the project of social engineering mirrored the Belgian Colonial state's ideas of development for the colony. Waldburger draws parallels between the *zone neutre*, on the scale of the city, and the house, on a smaller scale – both of which became core objects of the Belgians' concern for cleanliness and hygiene. Her research focuses on the worker and his house. She argues that the house "was one if not the central element of the experience of the good life."

Waldburger pays special attention to the "civilizing" measures of the UMHK associated with the topics of home, house, hygiene, and health. Hygiene was directly linked to the health condition of workers; they needed to be both physically fit and emotionally balanced to sustain productivity levels. As a linguist, she explores the prevalent discourse, language usage, and communication strategies that key actors, such as the colonial state, the UMHK or workers,

selected to make themselves understood and to (re)negotiate their respective individual interests. By analyzing a variety of primary archival materials, including official propaganda materials of the UMHK and the Belgian colonial state, she illustrates the strategies these players used to exercise control over the workers. Waldburger's contribution is multifaceted and gives voice to a whole range of actors; a valuable element of her research is the detailed description of demands the workers posed on the company. These varied from requests for electric light in the house to running water for toilets, or the installation of doors that can be locked from the inside to secure more privacy.

In one more contribution of the volume, Ambe Njoh and Liora Bigon trace the development and use of company towns – settlements built, owned and operated by corporations or individual investors – as an instrument of social engineering employed by the European colonial powers. Their detailed analysis of one such establishment, the workers' camps of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) in Cameroon created by the British colonial government in 1946, illustrates how workers' camps were constructed to articulate power and maintain social order in built space, and at the same time how they served as transmitters of Eurocentric ideals of work and general conduct to the workers. Through close supervision, it was hoped to instill in the workers the Western work ethic, minimize absenteeism and, above all, facilitate employee retention.

One of the main challenges for the CDC was the provision of housing for these workers, amounting up to some 20,000 men. The facilities maintained racial (and later socioeconomic) residential segregation and, as Njoh and Bigon illustrate, different types of housing were provided for different categories of workers. The spacious parcels of land complete with lawns and gardens reserved for European employees of the corporation were typically far-removed from African employees' quarters (usually military barrack structure like) and perched atop higher elevations overlooking these quarters. This constituted just one example of how workers were disciplined and their movement controlled. Njoh's and Bigon's contribution is of particular contemporary relevance as, with the demise of colonialism, the indigenous leadership of the corporation has continued the colonial practice of articulating power and maintaining social order through built space.

This collection concerns itself with the specific role of housing in colonial and postcolonial Africa. In particular, it seeks to uncover and reconstruct the multiple ways in which housing served as a means to achieve other "higher" ends, be it increased efficiency and productivity, or stability and tranquility. Ultimately, permanent housing, rooting Africans both politically and geographically, was meant to create a stabilized, obedient urban middle class – a class of citizens to which the political and economic power was to be handed over in

due time. By restructuring African class and gender relations and by creating a stabilized (male) working class, racial ideologies gave place to categorizing Africans along socioeconomic lines. Housing served as a disciplining instrument, an attempt by the colonial state to exercise some authority over all dimensions of dwellers' lives, private, residential, and social aspects included. Studying housing as a reflection of colonial and development discourses and practices provides an excellent opportunity to understand fundamental urban transformations and the shaping of physical spaces under colonialism and post-independence.

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