

With this collection of cases, the book is effective in opening a series of debates and theoretical perspectives which, rather than building a homogeneous theoretical body, provide a heterogenic conceptual display. In particular, I would like to highlight two major contributions that the book makes to the debate around housing informality.

First, it throws a bright light on the political and legal perspectives involved, placing the focus on the relationship between institutions and residents by exploring the rationale behind power. Why do citizens push at the boundaries of urban law? And to what extent are these actions tolerated by governments? Concepts such as toleration and non-compliance are utilized to explain this relationship. They refer to 'the space of shadows where a practice is neither actively repressed nor integrated into dominant norms and laws' (p. 39), and this is precisely where informality develops. As described by Smart and Aguilera in their chapter, toleration 'condenses political, economic and social interests into a distinctive form of power, often quietly' (p. 39). The understanding of these forms of power shows, indeed, commonalities between regions of the global North and South, or even between democratic and authoritarian regimes, by revealing the strategies of public institutions. Similarly, the concept of non-compliance goes to the 'neglected zone between planning regulations and enforcement practices' (p. 151), evidencing the strong relationship that exists between them and how a better understanding of them will lead to more just and effective planning.

Second, following an exploratory and sometimes bold approach, the chapters generally succeed (some more than others) in offering fair comparisons with dissimilar cases. This presents an interesting approach to global comparisons that could foster cross-learning between the so-called global North and global South, debunking the problem of housing informality as being solely a 'developing world' issue by positioning it as a real and pressing problem in Western and Eastern Europe. By the end of this book, more than affirmations, there are new questions and paths to explore for a better understanding of housing informality using global comparison as the main tool. Echoing Gilbert's words: 'comparison creates confusion but it is creative confusion' (p. 34).

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Alesia M. Montgomery 2020: *Greening the Black Urban Regime: The Culture and Commerce of Sustainability in Detroit*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press

Alesia Montgomery captures the essence of struggle in Detroit over the last decade: property and power. In *Greening the Black Urban Regime*, she delivers a complicated and unflinching view of the collapse of Detroit's Black urban regime under the market logics of racial capitalism. Montgomery deftly avoids the narrow confines of gentrification arguments and the flat analyses of urban farms and gardens that have proliferated in recent work on Detroit to produce an account of urban restructuring that is deeply critical and incredibly full.

The mix of methods, materials and sources in this book creates a richness and depth that allows Montgomery to weave together the histories of place with the evolution and transition of neighbourhoods and of her informants. She artfully walks the reader through the transition of Detroit's once wealthy Piety Hill, to the down-on-its-luck arts and counterculture haven of the Cass Corridor, and to the gentrified enclave it has become, while telling this story through the experience of those formed in its past and straddling its future. Within her account, the voices of Black residents are at the forefront, both in resistance and in claiming their place within the transformation of the neighbourhood. In too many works on Detroit, the city's majority Black residents are flattened into a single representation or signal, as either victim or exemplar of

an ill-defined resistance. In this work, Montgomery engages with the complexity of Black life in Detroit from the depths of hopelessness to the exhilaration of expanding opportunity and possibility. In her autoethnographic asides, encounters on the street illustrate the divergent experiences of Detroit residents, their relationship to neighbourhood transitions, and the divergent trajectories and geographies of inclusion and expulsion.

Montgomery argues that the rise of 'new Detroit' presages the ascendancy of alternative facts under the Trump administration, as billionaires, downtown boosters and a fawning fly-over press focused on the islands of farm-to-table restaurants and rent-subsidized downtown shops of mortgage mogul Dan Gilbert's Potemkin Village in the city's core. The revitalization narrative of Detroit relied heavily on signalling both a commitment to green urbanism and the active erasure of elderly Black residents and the working poor in Detroit's downtown and Cass Corridor or its gentrified real estate moniker Midtown. Montgomery effectively dismantles the window dressing of the gentrified enclave by connecting it to the ongoing dismantling of 'racially stigmatized neighborhoods' (p. 69). She argues that 'we must learn to see the range of places produced by the return. The return leads to the yuppie shop as well as the homeless tent' (*ibid.*).

Montgomery conceptualizes contemporary economic development schemes in Detroit as deploying a Zong ship market logic. The Zong was a merchant ship with 470 enslaved people that sailed between West Africa and Jamaica. As it neared Jamaica the ship was steered off course. With the crew running low on supplies, the Captain ordered the enslaved thrown overboard in order to salvage the investment of a Liverpool consortium by making a maritime insurance claim: the human cargo was deemed disposable so that investors could avoid a loss (p. 52). This approach effectively situates the double movement of white enclosure in the geographically limited revitalization of Detroit and the exploitation and expulsion of (Black) residents in the city's collapsing neighbourhoods. In centring the logic of racial capitalism, in which the racialized and other are sacrificed for the concentration of resources for the few, Montgomery both demonstrates and develops a way forward in theorizing the 'neoliberal order and the urban ecology with race-making histories' (p. 19) as well as our understanding of Detroit's development and un-development over its 319-year history.

Although these gentrified enclaves are often the place where much of Montgomery's ethnographic work occurs, the focus of this book and her work in general is on minoritization, or racial domination. The collapse of the Black urban regime in Detroit is facilitated by a sustained assault on the sovereignty and finances of Detroit by federal and state governments and local officials, increasing reliance on the whims of private philanthropy and the largesse of a few billionaires dominating development and investment in the city. Montgomery documents, as others have before, how philanthropic organizations strategically withdrew or redirected their resources when local officials sought to wrest control over long-term strategic planning away from the private firms and consultants hired by foundations to map out Detroit's long-term future.

One of the key contributions of Montgomery's book is how it situates the rise and fall of the Black urban regime in Detroit within the larger framework of racial capitalism, the 'rise of a racist neoliberal order' (p. 69), and its contextualization of the fiscal austerity that has consistently been deployed to discipline Detroit since the election of Coleman Young in 1973. It is Montgomery's framework, methods and focus that make this one of the more powerful analyses of Detroit in the last decade. It provides researchers and students with fruitful new avenues for understanding the urban transition that has occurred in US cities since the financial crisis.

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