



# Capital Cities in Africa: Power and Powerlessness

*Goran Therborn*

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## **Capital Cities in Africa: Power and Powerlessness** Goran Therborn

Focusing on capital cities in nine sub-Saharan African countries, this volume traces how the power vested in them has evolved through different colonial backgrounds, radically different kinds of regimes after independence, waves of popular protest, explosive population growth, and, in most cases, stunted economic development. Starting at the point of national political emancipation, each case study explores the complicated processes of nation–state building through its manifestation in the “urban geology” of the city—its architecture, iconography, layout, and political use of urban space. Overwhelmed by the inevitable challenges resulting from their urbanization, the governments seated in most of these capital cities are in effect both powerful—wielding power over their populace—and powerless, unable to implement their plans and provide for their inhabitants. Exploring this dichotomy as well as urban forms of multilayered power, this analysis carves a new path in the rich field of studies related to African cities and politics.

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