



Electric Capitalism: Recolonising Africa on the Power Grid

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Although Africa is the most under-supplied region of the world for electricity, its economies are utterly dependent on it. There are enormous inequalities in electricity access, with industry receiving abundant supplies of cheap power while more than 80 per cent of the continent's population remain off the power grid. Africa is not unique in this respect, but levels of inequality are particularly pronounced here due to the inherent unevenness of 'electric capitalism' on the continent.

This book provides an innovative theoretical framework for understanding electricity and capitalism in Africa, followed by a series of case studies that examine different aspects of electricity supply and consumption. The chapters focus primarily on South Africa due to its dominance in the electricity market, but there are important lessons to be learned for the continent as a whole, not least because of the aggressive expansion of South African capital into other parts of Africa to develop and control electricity. Africa is experiencing a renewed scramble for its electricity resources, conjuring up images of a recolonisation of the continent along the power grid.

Written by leading academics and activists, Electric Capitalism offers a cutting-edge, yet accessible, overview of one of the most important developments in Africa today - with direct implications for health, gender equity, environmental sustainability and socio-economic justice. From nuclear power through prepaid electricity meters to the massive dam projects taking place in central Africa, an understanding of electricity reforms on the continent helps shape our insights into development debates in Africa in particular and the expansion of neoliberal capitalism more generally.

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