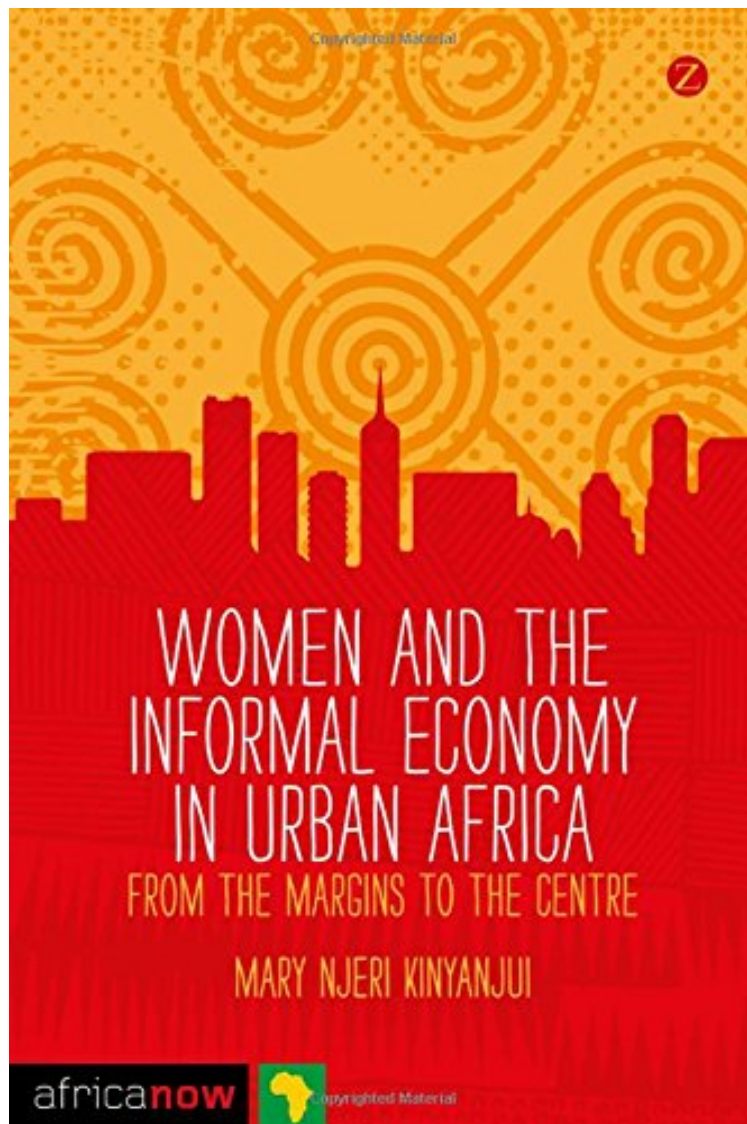


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Women and the Informal Economy in Urban Africa: From the Margins to the Centre (Africa Now)

Mary Njeri Kinyanjui

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Mary Njeri Kinyanjui : **Women and the Informal Economy in Urban Africa: From the Margins to the Centre (Africa Now)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Women and the Informal Economy in Urban Africa: From the Margins to the Centre (Africa Now):

In this highly original work, Mary Njeri Kinyanjui explores the trajectory of women's movement from the margins of urbanization into the centers of business activities in Nairobi, Kenya and its accompanying implications for urban planning. While women in much of Africa have struggled to gain urban citizenship, and continue to be weighed down by poor education, low incomes and confinement to domestic responsibilities, a new form of urban dynamism partly informed by the informal economy is now enabling them to manage poverty, create jobs and link women to the circuits of capital and labour. Relying on social ties, reciprocity, sharing and collaboration, women's informal 'solidarity entrepreneurialism' is taking them away from the margins of business activity and catapulting them into the centre. Bringing together key issues of gender, economic informality and urban planning in Africa, Kinyanjui demonstrates that women have become a critical factor in the making of a postcolonial city.

Setting out a critique of Western urban planning models as applied to African cities, while recognizing not only the positive contributions of economic informality but also articulating its indigenous characteristics, and at the same time asserting women's agency and dynamism as a basis for new models in advancing urban growth is ambitious for such a slim volume, yet is precisely what Mary Njeri Kinyanjui's incisive observation and analysis achieves in this concise, groundbreaking work.