

for 19th century capitalism in which the assimilation of interest and rent to profit lost much of the dynamism of the period. The relationship between these historical categories remains obscure as a result. At a time when rentier capitalism appears to be dominant and of course finance rules, while traditional profit-seeking is in decline, Bracking's book offers insight into both contemporary and early capitalist history.

The history of industrial capitalism is full of the vagaries of money and markets, of inequality of debt yet the official story remains one of profit. There have been massive shifts in their causes and consequences. For example Marx and Engels were deeply aware that the formation of an industrial labour force entailed rapid growth in commercial demand for housing, food, clothing and transport, while the revival of self-production in the countryside introduced new dynamics there. The development of home consumer demand subsequently lay at the core of several further booms in consumption – the formation of a national market; for example. Usury and debt became universal, as we all recognise now. What we now call financialisation adds up to numerous ingenious ways of making money flows out of working people's lives.

Sarah Bracking's book is at once both sophisticated and naïve. Some discussions are rather broad in scope, perhaps too broad. Others offer analyses in great detail, lists taken out of context at a low empirical level. The reader will learn about all sorts of technicalities, ETFs for example (exchange traded funds). We learn about malfunctions with which Africans are wearily familiar – petty restrictions on service delivery, linked to corruption of course. Bracking has a nice turn of phrase, referring for example to the dominant economic trends as privatisation, informalisation and criminalisation. She returns in conclusion to her methodological standbys of critical realism and empiricism. But at the length available, you probably need already to know what she is talking about.

There are rousing conclusions but again much too brief. Has finance changed the structures of capitalism? Are we now beyond neoliberalism? Critical realist lists of African political economies add up to vague and general descriptions of limited scope. It still seems odd that global money flows should sit alongside parochial social details as demonstrations of such an ambitious argument. Perhaps that is the point, but it isn't always obvious how.

I turned to this book because of its elegant design, then because of the cooperative nature of the social relations involved. These two elements add up to an attractive mix. But, for all Sarah Bracking's sophisticated contemporary knowledge of a vital field of social enquiry, there remains a lack of conviction in its intellectual organisation.

KEITH HART

*London School of Economics and Political Science*

**The Green State in Africa**, by CARL DEATH

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*The Green State in Africa* offers the most comprehensive conceptual and empirical assessment of the environmental politics of the green state and its applications.

It is situated in state-centred global environmental politics and its implications for the present and future of the society and the state in Africa. Carl Death draws on a broad range of multi-layered environmental problem areas from land appropriation, to urbanisation, from climate change to blue and green economy and from global environmental politics to nationally and regionally networked environmental public. The author has succeeded in plugging-in the 'absence of the state' employing post-colonial theory and unique biopolitical and post-colonial governability. The making and remaking of African notions of border, territory and environmental spaces crucial for human survival is presented within a historical context informed by the partition of Africa and its present-day influence on the relationship between state and citizen. It also informs as inter and intra-state relations in respect to border communities and trans-frontier ecological interventions (for example, the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park which straddles the borders of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe) aiming at engineering and rationalising (in a neo-liberal market-based) rather than softening the state control over lived-spaces. In other words, it privileges the 'wilderness' as an environmental market over people and profit over community.

*The Green State in Africa* comes to life in the last three chapters which stitch together three major themes underpinning the African state's pervasive and unrelenting efforts to introduce environmental markets (through carbon markets, the Clean Development Mechanism and carbon tax) and the proliferation of green economy projects in many a country in the continent (pp. 173–81). The jury is out as to whether the ultimate goal of the creation of environmental markets is green growth and transforming the African economies through sustainable development or land grab in the name of ecological modernisation.

The centrality of IR within the realms of the African state and the production of territory, population and markets (environmental or otherwise), is tempered by ecologically coercive international development policies and interventions and their critical role in the production and reproduction of a variety of African green states. Carl Death is not satisfied with the notion that 'conditionality' is an economic, market or 'political behaviour' regulating instrument separable from environmental politics. The two are intrinsically linked. Despite African power asymmetry in environmental production and regeneration, capacity is compensated with Africans' environmental solidarity (through the African Union) which subsequently shaped its continental environmental jurisdictions and practices. Africa's position in the global market economy, its demands, booms and busts are shaped by global market dynamics over which it has no influence.

*The Green State in Africa* is revealed as an expression of Afro-ecologism's contestation of land and land-based resources, post-colonial biopolitics and populations, the last frontier of development and Africans' solidarity both at the continental and local levels (pp. 235–56). According to Death, the notion of an African green state should not be misconstrued for uniform governmentalities immersed in homogeneous ecological discourses and practices, but represents rather a generalised notion of several shades of green. This book is topical, stimulating and extremely important, and is a must read for academics, policy-makers and NGOs and civil society organisations and activists engaged in

environmental politics in Africa and elsewhere. It is particularly useful for graduate and postgraduate students who wish to challenge orthodoxies and claim new understanding of the promise and tribulations of the environmental politics of the green state in Africa.

M. A. MOHAMED SALIH

*International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam*

**Made in Africa – Learning to Compete in Industry** by CAROL NEWMAN, JOHN PAGE, JOHN RAND, ABEBE SHIMELES, MÅNS SÖDERBOM and FINN TARP

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By now, most of us are familiar with the Africa ‘rising’ narrative; over the last 15 years, many African economies have grown at breakneck speed, turning around the dismal performance of the 1980s and 1990s. Yet, very few African firms have become internationally competitive. Africa remains the world’s least technologically developed region, with a negligible industrial base. Why is this, why is industry important and what can be done about it? That is what this book is about.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I discusses why industry matters for Africa. Part II (Chapters 2 and 3) traces Africa’s industrialisation efforts and outcomes since the 1960s, and thereafter moves on to the current global economic landscape, considering new challenges and opportunities for breaking into industry. Part III (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) looks at three key drivers of firm-level productivity in low-income countries – exports and competition, firm capabilities and industrial agglomerations – and analyses their relevance to Africa’s industrial development. Part IV (Chapters 7, 8 and 9) examines policies needed for achieving industrial competitiveness, both from the perspectives of African governments and donors.

It is especially in the last five years that the need for structural transformation in Africa has started to reappear on the development agenda. In addition to this book spearheading the issue, international organisations have shifted their focus to it. While serving as Chief Economist of the World Bank, Justin Lin conducted a project studying light manufacturing in Africa. The UN Economic Commission for Africa now regularly publishes work that emphasises the need for industrial competitiveness. Economist K. Y. Amoako has established an African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET).

But this book in particular has some novelty; it is based on a research project (Learning to Compete: L2C) spanning many years and involving national researchers in 11 countries – nine in Africa and two from emerging Asia. The book is mainly a story about firms, and it’s especially the case studies of these firms that bring clout to some of the book’s findings. For example, it has become well established that industrial agglomeration is an important source of raising firm-level productivity. But in low-income countries, we don’t see that much agglomeration; and the L2C case studies help shed some light on this. Looking at firms in Ethiopia and Cambodia, the authors find that firms often face a price-productivity trade-off in the choice of clustering – clustering