processes of informalisation leave the political implications of these trends largely unexamined. In her introduction, Lindell rightly states: 'Praised or victimised, informal workers are seldom seen as political actors' (p. 1). Against this norm, the collection places the political dimension of the informal economy centre stage. Even more important, it raises a number of crucial questions about issues of agency and subjectivity, and about the relationship between informality and state structures, challenging simplistic claims about the marginalisation of informals from centres of power and realms of political action. These questions openly and actively deconstruct some of the 'myths' characterising the literature on the informal economy. They cannot but remain largely unanswered in this volume, but powerfully set the basis for a rich research and political agenda for the future.

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Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique by ELIZABETH MACGONAGLE
Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007. Pp. ix + 192, £40.00 (hbk).
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This is what one might call a post-post-colonial book. At its core, *Crafting Identity* challenges the 'invention of tribalism' thesis first advanced by Leroy Vail and Terence Ranger. Those authors blamed colonial powers for marking, accentuating, and outright fabricating differences among Africans, and thus for generating perpetual inter-ethnic rivalry and violence. If colonials considered Africans to be atavistic bigots, these post-colonial scholars reclassified them as merely good colonial subjects. Ethnicity was a Euro-modern, not Afro-primordial, product. In making this argument, did Vail, Ranger, and a generation of scholars overcorrect for metropolitan prejudice? Elizabeth MacGonagle suggests exactly that.

Crafting Identity opens by establishing the roots of the ethnolinguistic label known in Zimbabwe and Mozambique as 'Ndau'. These traces are as old as the written word in this part of Africa. MacGonagle draws from the records of Portuguese explorers back to the sixteenth century and makes impressive use of the oral history she personally collected in the field. Much of this material concerns practices particular to the Ndau: female scarification, male ear-piercing, marriage customs, the configuration of secular and religious leadership, and so on. Some of this middle part of the book reads like an ethnographic village study, and MacGonagle slips occasionally into functionalism. Rain-making ceremonies, for instance, 'stressed the central role of chiefs as a powerful, stabilizing, and unifying force in Ndau society' (p. 83). Elsewhere, however, she describes how the rule of chiefly succession – from father to first-born (living) son – encouraged murder and banishment among brothers. *Crafting Identity* also encounters the problem of intentionality. Indeed, the title implies a conscious effort on the part of African subjects to represent themselves as both unified and distinctive. Bodily adornment, MacGonagle writes, 'made a statement about standards of female beauty and attractiveness while signaling an ethnic boundary' (p. 80). The statement elides agency, and suggests a deeper difficulty with the whole notion of identity when projected back to the pre-colonial period. Identity is not the same as difference. In identifying as something, people place themselves consciously in

opposition to others and in a classificatory system of one sort or another. Clans – which MacGonagle also discusses – constitute a system of identification with deep roots. But she succeeds less well in establishing the existence of a similar structure of boundaries and belonging within which Ndau-ness fits. The Ndau may well have invented everything now known as Ndau, but it is still possible that colonials invented the Ndau.

In fact, *Crafting Identity* proves most persuasive when it links this process to a different kind of external ruler: the Gaza Nguni empire. For much of the nineteenth century, this Zulu-derived polity governed the Ndau with a harder and harder fist. War, enslavement, mutilation and forced migration reached their apex under Ngungunyana – until Portugal defeated him in 1895. MacGonagle's informants recalled this oppression as a crucible, within which they came to know themselves as a group. Indeed, the label 'Ndau' derives from the words of supplication women used in the presence of Nguni men. Some obeyed and some resisted Ngungunyana. The problematic defined all of these subjects. Most intriguingly, the Ndau carried with them after 1895 a memory and an expectation of extreme violence. MacGonagle only suggests this possibility, but it is one that might help explain Ndau leadership of the often-brutal Renamo rebels in the 1980s. In fighting Mozambique's post-colonial government, did Ndau excavate and recycle pre-colonial war crimes? *Crafting Identity* allows the next historian – perhaps MacGonagle herself – to approach this loaded question.

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Participatory Development in Kenya by JOSEPHINE SYOKAU MWANZIA and ROBERT C. STRATHDEE
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The capacity of participatory development to both democratically empower and efficiently provide public services is a growing question in research on development practice. The authors of this impressive study evaluate one such attempt at participatory development, conducting an in-depth analysis of the Basic Education Improvement Project (BEIP), implemented by the Government of Kenya in conjunction with the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The authors evaluate the project's participatory aims against theoretical frameworks, most particularly that employed by Jim Ife's *Community Development: community-based alternatives in an age of globalization* (2002).

A central tension arises when one seeks to define participatory development. Are citizens to be incorporated into decision-making processes for the sake of democratic inclusion or, rather, because citizen participation is a proven method for bringing about the best decisions? The authors claim both, but show how difficulties in implementation compromised these hopes severely. For example, the BEIP needed expertise due to its aim of constructing school infrastructure for disadvantaged communities, and as a result the 'use of technical expertise, aid assistance and representation negated equal partnerships' between recipients and providers (p. 94). More theoretically, the authors complain that the participatory element was limited by the 'emphasis on structural outcomes, as