

opposed to rights (where the process of participation constitutes the right of self-determination)' (p. 97). Leadership provided by technocrats rendered citizens' participation 'tokenistic-coerced or passive-instrumental' (p. 100). In conclusion, the authors argue that the stress on participation in the BEIP did not empower ordinary Kenyans, but rather led to a form of 'new centralism' in which disadvantaged communities were co-opted into the decision-making process only insofar as representatives were chosen from within their midst, thus allowing technocrats to regain dominance over development policy. The result was a return to the centralist bent of previous development attempts, undermining the twin goals of democratic inclusion and efficient provision.

Participatory Development in Kenya presents an exhaustive evaluation of one hoped-for attempt at inclusionary development policy. The sobering finding that genuine citizen participation never occurred throughout the implementation of the BEIP demands further research on whether participatory development can ever be state-led.

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Chinese and African Perspectives on China in Africa edited by AXEL NARNEIT-SIEVERS, STEPHEN MARKS and SANUSHA NAIDU
Oxford: Pambazuka Press, 2010. Pp. 274, £16.95 (pbk).
doi:10.1017/S0022278X11000176

This edited collection is a companion volume to the earlier 2007 volume published by Fahamu on *African Perspectives on China in Africa*. It arises out of a workshop held in 2008 which brought together Chinese and African participants from civil society and academia to discuss these issues. The distinctive nature of the book arises from the Chinese perspectives presented.

Most of the chapters are relatively short overviews and provide useful updates on a number of themes and issues, such as China's strategic relations with Africa. One of the chapters also discusses the history and evolution of African studies in China. After broader overview chapters, the book then moves on to country case studies which are perhaps more novel, interesting and engaging. Some of these chapters are based on primary research, although often undertaken for non-academic purposes. Probably the most notable chapter amongst these is the one by Daniel Ribeiro on 'Disappearing forests, disappearing hope: Mozambique', which looks at the environmental impacts of Chinese companies. To this reviewer's knowledge this is the only empirically based work on China's environmental impact, and it contains many shocking statistics and stories related to deforestation.

One of the things to come out strongly from the book is the areas of difference and overlap between Chinese and African perspectives on China in Africa. Most contributors are critical of Western hegemony and structural adjustment in Africa, with a former African Development Bank official, Sanou Mbaye, writing of the 'power, the adaptability and monstrosity of free market forces' (p. 46). However, while the African contributors tend to be more sceptical of the role of political elites in both China and Africa, some of the Chinese contributors write of the 'great leader', Mao Zedong, the 'supposed' human rights abuses of the

Sudanese government, and the fundamental ‘equality’ between China and African countries.

Some of the contributions are perhaps a little naive, as they end with a list of policy proposals which Chinese and African governments should pursue. While some are interesting, such as the proposal that Chinese and African governments should push for press freedom, in the absence of an analysis of the deeper social and political forces at play, calling for the promotion of democratisation is unrealistic. However, the Chinese government is already adopting many innovative economic and environmental initiatives such as building one hundred clean energy projects in Africa.

This is a useful addition to the literature on China in Africa. It is not primarily an academic book, but contains many interesting facts and some important individual contributions. Perhaps its most distinctive aspect, as noted earlier, is the different perspectives presented which enable a dialogue to be established, most notably between Chinese and African non-governmental organisations. This of itself is an important and refreshing development.

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African City Textualities edited by BRANKA PRIMORAC
London & New York: Routledge, 2010. Pp. 121, \$140 (hbk).
doi:10.1017/S0022278X11000188

African City Textualities is self-consciously intended as a riposte to the pessimistic views of the African city under the black cloud of the ‘planet of the slums’ that seems to be increasingly shrouding the continent. Inspired particularly by the geographer Jennifer Robinson’s recent *Ordinary Cities*, the essays collected here mostly emphasise the experiential, the creative and the hopeful – rather than the despairing – voices from within African cities which are increasingly going to be the cauldron of national development. Indeed Robinson, who stresses the city as source of innovation, offers a couple of pages of commentary at the end of the volume. Ivan Vladislavic, the South African novelist, is the ultimate African flâneur who can observe a Johannesburg so fractioned, so transformed, that multiple meanings imbue the same voices, gestures, signs and sights. But his plea for tolerance and bridging is hardly the whole story.

Terence Ranger takes us through systematic ways in which long-time black residents of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe’s second city, mark their past. This convincing essay could be a model for those interested in how to capture memory systematically in the urban African context. Subjects remember racism and deprivation, but also the comforts of a colonial paternalism, and moments of hope and belief in political progress as well as defeat. Its texture allows for a deeper sense of the currents of urban life than the big paradigms.

Of all the essays, however, only Donal Cruise O’Brien in considering Dakar actually takes on Mike Davis and company at the level of political economy. The editor, Ranka Primorac, is herself a literary critic and most contributions consider literary representations of the city ranging from the sophisticated post-modern fiction of Vladislavic to the advice, which apparently changes little, for would-be Nigerian wives by pamphleteers over the past half-century. Other chapters