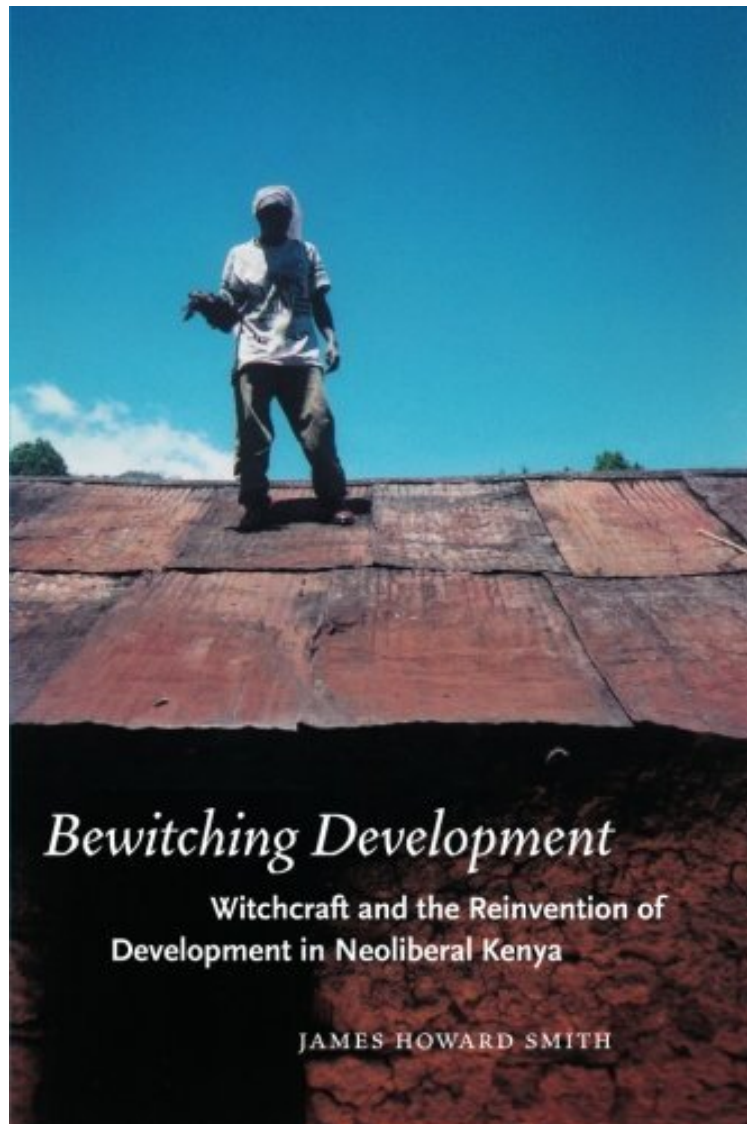


(Download free pdf) Bewitching Development: Witchcraft and the Reinvention of Development in Neoliberal Kenya (Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning)

Bewitching Development: Witchcraft and the Reinvention of Development in Neoliberal Kenya (Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning)

James Howard Smith

*ebooks | Download PDF | *ePub | DOC | audiobook*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#842865 in eBooks 2009-10-15 2009-10-15 File Name: B008PP99AY | File size: 49.Mb

James Howard Smith : Bewitching Development: Witchcraft and the Reinvention of Development in Neoliberal Kenya (Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bewitching Development: Witchcraft and the Reinvention of Development in Neoliberal Kenya (Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. BewitchingBy Brian SiegelThis is a delightful book. Kenyans, like Zambians and Tanzanians, are hung up on the ideology of development, and eagerly want to get ahead. Structural adjustment policies have gutted public services, some of which are now being offered by NGOs. These external agencies, staffed by strangers, give some individuals access to inexplicable wealth and influence. Hence the witchcraft suspicions. Smith shows how the locals use witchcraft concerns to assert their own view of improvement. "Moreover, in the process of controlling witchcraft, Kenyans [here] also work to bring the embattled often absurd sign 'development' under social control, all the while creating communities and networks around the idea."

These days, development inspires scant trust in the West. For critics who condemn centralized efforts to plan African societies as latter day imperialism, such plans too closely reflect their roots in colonial rule and neoliberal economics. But proponents of this pessimistic view often ignore how significant this concept has become for Africans themselves. In *Bewitching Development*, James Howard Smith presents a close ethnographic account of how people in the Taita Hills of Kenya have appropriated and made sense of development thought and practice, focusing on the complex ways that development connects with changing understandings of witchcraft. Similar to magic, development's promise of a better world elicits both hope and suspicion from Wataita. Smith shows that the unforeseen changes wrought by development—greater wealth for some, dashed hopes for many more—foster moral debates that Taita people express in occult terms. By carefully chronicling the beliefs and actions of this diverse community—from frustrated youths to nostalgic seniors, duplicitous preachers to thought-provoking witch doctors—*Bewitching Development* vividly depicts the social life of formerly foreign ideas and practices in postcolonial Africa.

Critiques of development abound (most notably offered by proponents of development), as do assertions of the links between magic and modernity. In his exceptional ethnography, James Smith goes beyond the standard anthropological practice of "localizing" these overarching abstractions. Instead, he revitalizes discussion by demonstrating how development provides a lens through which to examine a host of challenging problems, both historical and contemporary, at the regional, national, and, indeed, global level in Kenya. Moreover, Smith develops a highly innovative, and undoubtedly useful way of framing development, not as a measure of economic indicators, but as part of a wider politics of time, as Kenyans (and plainly many others) worry about "falling behind" and "getting ahead" on scales and increments that are interpersonal and political. Words like magical and bewitching are not only the themes of Smith's work, they also capture the character of his deeply grounded, highly illuminating anthropological interpretations.