

programs. Englund sets out to expand the definition of democracy of human rights, and provides vast data to argue that what “freedom” means for the poor often does not correspond to limited notions of individual political freedoms.

Overall, Englund is convincing and effective in his fresh and critical questioning of how limited notions of freedom and democracy serve the poor. *Prisoners of Freedom* is an bold and important addition to scholarship about human rights because it traces how philosophical notions are put into practice. Further, the book is exceptionally well-structured and researched. Englund's work will be of interest to activists and international aid workers as well as scholars of African history, economics, and politics. Although well-written and argued, *Prisoners of Freedom* as a classroom text is dense in parts and would be best used in upper-level undergraduate or graduate courses. This excellent book ultimately demonstrates that the practice of human rights is more important in the implementation of justice than mere abstractions about individual political freedoms.

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Women in African Parliaments. Gretchen Bauer and Hannah Evelyn Britton, eds. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006. 235 pp.

Women in African Parliaments is a comparative study of women's representation in legislatures in many Africa countries, based on qualitative data. Sources include interviews, newspapers, publications and unpublished papers by scholars, etc. With women moving into new and groundbreaking political leadership positions globally (Liberia , Chile , Germany and Jamaica), this book is very timely.

Divided into many chapters, this book addresses the reasons for the increase in women's political representation, the issues related to women's representation in legislatures, and the impact of women's MPs on legislation. It also argues that the mode of electing women to parliament, and the interpretation of the reserved seats, has also meant that women representatives have found it difficult to challenge the government in controversial matters (for example, in Uganda). It attributes the use of quotas as one big factor in the rise of women's political power in these selected Africa countries. Timothy Longman shows that in political gender balance, Rwanda leads the world (p.144). Women compose more than 30 percent of the South African and Mozambican parliaments respectively. Also, half of Rwandese members of parliament are women. Uganda is also a trend-setter having had the 6 th highest women MPs in 2005, first Female VP in Africa – Dr. Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe (Tripp, p. 113). Women also hold one third of local council seats – a leader worldwide in female representation in local government.

Despite these facts, the title of the book is rather too general and might be misleading. There are varied cultural, ethnic, religious, and particularly historical experiences in a continent made up of up to fifty-two countries. Five case studies make broader comparative observations across the continent problematic. However, the authors keep to their stated theme. The case

studies show that there are similarities in factors that facilitated women's increasing participation in their respective parliaments. For example, the book establishes the link between the election of women members of parliament in some of these countries to political office with lengthy liberation and nationalist struggles, revolutions or democratic transitions. The emergence of a democracy movement in Rwanda in the early 1990s is an example (Longman, pp.133, 142). The same applies to South Africa and Namibia .

Gretchen Bauer also observes that women contributed in many ways: "As armed combatants, 'radical, mothers,' community activists inside Namibia , university and vocational students trained abroad, and the backbone of exile camps in neighbouring countries" (p.97). Furthermore, the specific situation for women in post genocide Rwanda also drew more women into the political area. This was associated with their experience in civil society and as refugees in Uganda which formed an important basis for their entering politics.

The book successfully attributes the rise in women's representation to other factors such as information and communication technologies (ICTs), increasing educational opportunities that gave rise to stronger female leadership, changing donor strategies (p. 113), and global women's movements. For example, there was a strong presence of Rwandan women in civil society (for providing social needs) before the 1994 genocide. Women's organizations in Rwanda also promoted government's policies of setting aside reserved positions for women as well as encouraged the population to support the candidacy of women through educational programmes. In addition, some of the countries studied have drawn up constitutions, and laws that use a gender-neutral language forbidding discrimination on the bases of sex (p. 99-100).

Brief historical backgrounds are appropriately used to enhance the reader's understanding of prior situations, and the book illustrates that similarities of experience may not necessarily mean identity in their interpretation for women MPs - they vary depending on country. Women's political representation translated into women-centered policy initiatives substantively in some of these countries, but not equally in all of them. For example, South African women MPs have made key "cultural changes to the environment of parliament that honor and accommodate the domestic obligations of members of parliament" (Britton, p. 70).

At the same time, Jennifer Leigh Disney's view is that women's political representation does not necessarily translate into women-centered policy initiatives. As Bauer observes: "In contrast to the situation in South Africa, women MPs in Namibian have not managed to make their national legislatures more women or parent-friendly" (p. 104).

There was clear diversity in the existence of country-specific variations in constraints towards advancing women's rights (p. 119) – sometimes marriage is a basic criterion for women contenders, and single women and divorcees spend time explaining their status. There are problems of state manipulation of women leaders (p. 112), and the use of female-friendly policies to serve other purposes. In Senegal, religious constraints result in women's inability to make major gains in achieving political power (Greavey, pp. 154, 157, 166).

One interesting aspect of the book is that it highlights the point that women's successes in elected office and in activist organizations do not always seem to be reinforcing each other. The solution according to Shireen Hassim (p. 179), is effective transformation as it will help women parliamentarians accomplish more goals. Applying this solution to the breadth of the African experience becomes problematic. Africa is a continent. Expanded case studies are needed to counter this problem. Overall, this book shows that until women are fully represented in politics, laws will not reflect the realities of their lives (Disney, chapter 2). A recent United

Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) report, titled *The State of the World's Children 2007*, shows that women's involvement in government tends to result in gender-friendly policies. Yet, women are underrepresented in legislatures around the world due to lower levels of education, social attitudes and their greater work-burden.

With appropriate its title, this book is suited for parliamentarians, middle and senior level government executives and officials, women and men in local governments, political parties, research and training institutes, and civil society organizations and non-government organizations who are leading or participating in governance reform initiatives in their respective countries, especially in Africa.

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Fiscal Disobedience: An Anthropology of Economic Regulation in Central Africa. Janet Roitman. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. 233 pp.

Travelers in Central Africa know the risks of mobility in an age of declining economic fortunes and increasing violence, whether from poor roads or from authorities demanding gifts, money, and proofs of identity. Traders and workers struggle to operate as officials and independent entrepreneurs exact payments or pillage trucks and stores. Since many supposed bandits are in fact directly or indirectly serving government authorities themselves, it is little wonder that so many Africans have questioned the legitimacy of African states and challenged the ability of the state to monitor and organize commercial activity. How do different people and institutions construct what are legitimate and illegitimate forms of obtaining wealth and intervening in commerce? This study examines the political rationalities and discursive foundations of economic regulation in northern Cameroon during the 1990s. Drawing extensively from Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality and the ability of power relations to both control and create subjects, this book seeks to uncover varied understandings and techniques of fiscal classification dating back to the era of the Sokoto caliphate. For historians and anthropologists trying to understand the problematic nature of state economic regulation and constructions of licit and illicit behavior, this is a fascinating work, even if much of the author's contentions lie on a relatively thin amount of evidence that cry out for further research.

This study should be considered a collection of related essays rather than a coherent anthropology of fiscal regulation. In keeping with the author's post-structuralist framework, the book eschews linear narratives. Roitman contends that political sovereignty over economic and other matters should not be taken as a given, but rather as a concept that emerges from configurations of power that are continually remade and undermined. Such state-sponsored initiatives as forcing Africans to pay taxes in francs, the creation and dissolution of prices controls, and the use of censuses to track mobile and fluid communities helped to construct subjects of fiscal regulation. She takes a genealogical approach to trace the emergence of political rationalities and vocabularies, such as the efforts by colonial and post-colonial regimes