

ters are excellent candidates for a sustained comparative discussion, ranging from peasant ideology and traditional social institutions to the impact of neighboring states on domestic violence and the implications of collective memories in efforts at national reconciliation. Equally surprising, I might add, is the absence of Ben Kiernan—a recognized expert on Cambodia and, in his capacity as director of the Genocide Studies Program at Yale, the prime mover behind this project—among the list of contributors. Be that as it may, it is not the least of the merits of this anthology that it deepens our understanding of the horrors of the two largest genocides of the second half of the last century.

René Lemarchand
 University of Florida
 Gainesville, Florida

Obioma Nnaemeka and Joy Ezeilo, eds. *Engendering Human Rights: Cultural and Socioeconomic Realities in Africa*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. xii + 314 pp. Index. \$65.00. Cloth.

This edited volume on the health, educational, religious, legal, and cultural aspects of human rights for women is a rather mixed bag. The title of the book suggests that the focus is on women in Africa, but the introductory chapter instead discusses the various disabilities faced by women of African descent all over the world. Although the editors recognize that “women of African descent” do not make up a homogeneous category, they nevertheless pose the question: “Why are women of African descent denied human rights everywhere and at all times? Is it nature, culture, or deliberate policy?” (4). This sweeping claim remains unsubstantiated. Who exactly do they include under their rubric of women of African descent? Does an African ancestor constitute the defining element in one’s identity, even after many generations of intermarriage and subsequent waves of intercontinental migration? Many women of “African descent,” for example in Asia, are in fact totally unaware of their African ancestry. The chapters on France and Germany do not provide evidence that immigrant women from Africa and women of African descent are more marginalized than, say, Asian women.

The editors argue that the position of women has deteriorated as a result of the decline of many African economies: “In this context, sexual and coercive controls over women have often been exercised with a vengeance, just as they were in the colonial period” (8). This raises expectations that are not met by the case studies in the book: the condition of women is rarely discussed in relation to long-term economic developments. Similarly, while Nawal al Saadawi rages in her introductory essay against the use of all the major world religions as “weapons of control over people’s minds and bodies” (35), this theme is not taken up in the case studies on

Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

One of the most intriguing contributions is the chapter by Stella Babalola and Pearl Nwashili on girls and young women who work in the male world of motor parks (bus, taxi, and lorry stations) in Lagos. They point out that the girls and young women are motivated by sheer economic necessity, both in their work as hawkers or waitresses and in the additional income-generating business of casual sex. The chapter is based on a 1996 survey, which does not allow for conclusions about changes over time. Nevertheless, it offers a fascinating, if disturbing, glance into the world of Nigerian girls who are constantly exposed to sexual harassment in their working environment. The girls lack the economic power and the negotiating skills to resist harassment and to protect themselves from high-risk sexual contacts.

Jeanelle de Gruchy and Laurel Baldwin-Ragaven present an interesting study on African women's reproductive rights under apartheid and the contemporary legacy of this mindset of racial and social engineering. Sekai Nzenza-Shand offers a lively chapter on the dynamics of health and human rights in Tanzania and Zimbabwe, with a plea to look for inspiration from traditional African values and coping strategies. Several authors emphasize the need to tailor the universal human rights discourse to interventions that carry meaning in the local context. A number of chapters cover well-trodden ground, such as the contributions on female circumcision, sexual violence against girls in Kenyan schools, discriminatory systems of inheritance, and the dichotomy between the Western concept of human rights for the individual as opposed to African views of the individual as a member of a community. Several authors emphasize the limited meaning of legal provisions in situations where poverty reigns as the supreme arbiter.

Although most of the studies in this book do not break new ground, the volume offers lucid and mostly well-written insights into the concrete realities of gender and culture in Africa as seen from a human rights perspective.

Ineke van Kessel
Afrika-Studiecentrum
 Leiden, the Netherlands

Itaru Ohta and Yntiso D. Gebre, eds. *Displacement Risks in Africa*. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press/Victoria: Trans Pacific Press, 2005. Distributed by International Specialized Book Services, 920 NE 58th Avenue, Suite 300, Portland, Ore. 97213. xv + 394 pp. Tables. Figures. Bibliography. Index. \$74.95. Cloth.

The editors of this collection estimate there are between thirty-two million and thirty-seven million displaced people worldwide. With disproportionate numbers in and from Africa, there is evident justification for a critical and empirically informed volume such as this. The book begins with two