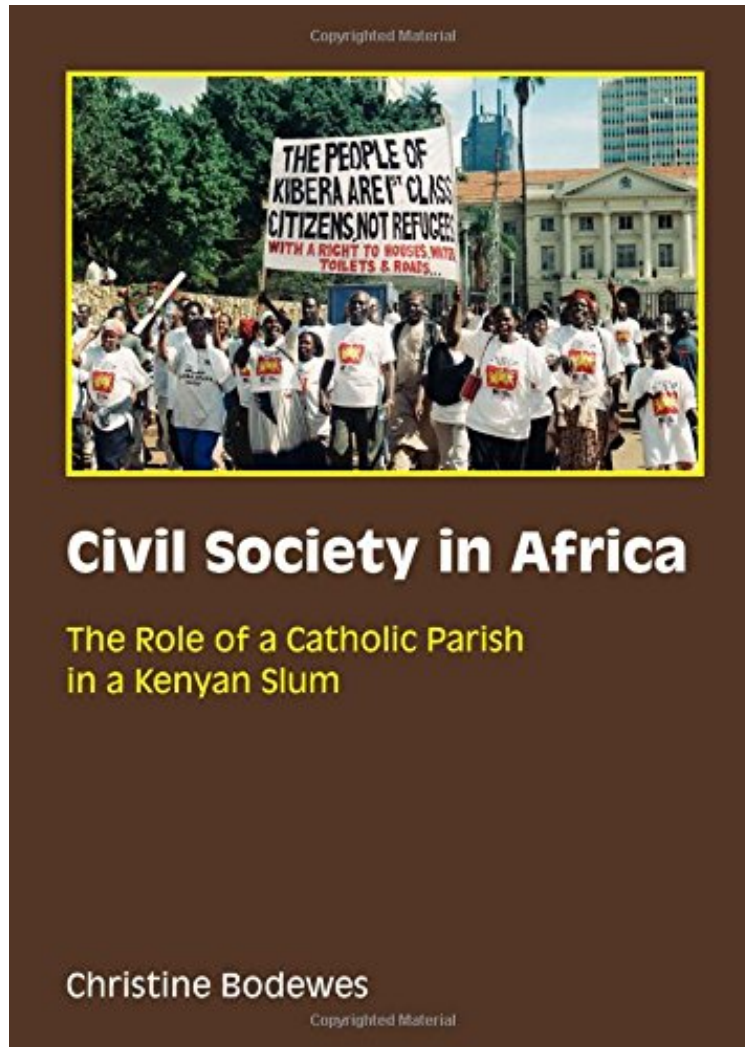


(Download) Civil Society in Africa: The Role of a Catholic Parish in a Kenyan Slum

Civil Society in Africa: The Role of a Catholic Parish in a Kenyan Slum

Christine Bodewes

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Christine Bodewes : Civil Society in Africa: The Role of a Catholic Parish in a Kenyan Slum before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Civil Society in Africa: The Role of a Catholic Parish in a Kenyan Slum:

This book examines the efforts of one particular civil society organization, the human rights ministry of a Catholic parish located in the Kibera slum in Nairobi, to determine the extent to which it was able to promote democracy,

human rights and the rule of law. It concludes from an analysis of the social, economic and political environment of Kibera as well as church structures, that parishioners demonstrated an observable improvement in their democratic values and behavior at a localized level, but they did not increase their involvement in advocacy and lobbying efforts. Parishioners were inhibited from holding government officials to account for their abuse of power primarily due to fears of retaliation; other factors such as apathy, ethnic divisions, limited resources and restrictive church protocols further curtailed their actions. The findings of this book are important for scholars and students active in the fields of political science, African Christianity, development studies, international law and human rights. This book is also an important resource for practitioners who are addressing the social, legal, political challenges facing the urban poor in Africa.

"In recent years all sorts of claims have been made for civil society in Africa. They range from the claim that civil society will be the salvation of Africa, to the opposite, that the reality is totally foreign to and unworkable in Africa - and several positions between. This book both pinpoints the issues, and then addresses them through a particularly revealing case study, a human rights office in a slum-based church mission. This fine book has advanced the debate considerably." - Professor Paul Gifford, SOAS, University of London "Based on Bodewes's experience of living and working with the community for several years, [the book] is a thought-provoking and challenging evaluation of the obstacles faced by poor people trapped in conditions of violence and degradation. It offers a nuanced and compassionate insight into the complexities of effective civil society action in situations where people face daily struggles to survive in situations of fear and intimidation. The research shows how the church is often seen not as a focus for activism and social change, but as a source of pastoral care, solace and ritual which lends some hope and meaning to otherwise desperate lives. It also suggests that Western aid agencies and religious leaders might be more powerful and effective agents of change than the most disempowered and vulnerable people whose human rights are violated on a daily basis... [I]t is an excellent resource for human rights workers, religious communities and NGOs, and deserves a wide readership." - Tina Beattie, Professor of Catholic Studies and Director, The Digby Stuart Research Centre for Religion, Society and Human Flourishing (DSRC), Digby Stuart College, University of Roehampton

About the Author
Dr Christine Bodewes is the Africa regional director for a private family foundation in the Netherlands. She received her PhD in African Christianity from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, in 2009. Her publications include *Parish Transformation in Urban Slums: Voices of Kibera, Kenya*. Nairobi; "The Catholic Church and Civic Education in the Slums of Nairobi" in *Jesus and Ubuntu: Exploring the Social Impact of Christianity in Africa*; "Can the Pastoral Circle Transform a Parish?" in *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: a Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*; and "Kenyan Perspective on Housing Rights" in *National Perspectives on Housing Rights*, as well as several peer-reviewed journal articles.