nary working woman in South Africa. Bread-and-butter issues are, however, largely absent from the book. No mention is made of the South African pension or of schooling policy, and there is only a passing nod to land ownership issues.

All in all, however, this is a commendable introduction to the gender issues confronting women parliamentarians in South Africa. One hopes the author will go on to produce more work on gender policy, and continue to track and report on the experiences of women parliamentarians in South Africa. Chapters of the book will be useful for classes focusing on the experiences of women in politics and, more broadly, of researchers examining the links between women's representation in government and gender policy.

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Africa's Media: Democracy and the Politics of Belonging *by Francis B. Nyamnjoh. London, Zed Books, 2005. 320 pp. Cloth, $85.00; paper, $25.00.*

This book is an informative and quite comprehensive overview of the media situation in Africa, especially as it relates to the ongoing process of democratization. The author covers Africa more generally and offers his own native country, Cameroon, as a case study. The book is divided into nine chapters, discussing both political and professional issues facing the task of strengthening modern media and their role in promoting democracy. The analysis straddles the formal and the informal. Thus, much of it is nested in the "politics of belonging" (p. 3), Francis Nyamnjoh's term for the politicization of ethnicity in Africa. His argument is that the media have difficulty in emancipating themselves from the insular perspective associated with this type of politics. He even goes as far as suggesting that journalists and editors in Africa often act irresponsibly and unethically, making allegations without backing them up with facts. To be sure, he acknowledges the difficulties that reporters face in trying to pursue facts in African officialdom, but he accuses the media of being too commercially driven. This criticism he applies not only to the many tabloids that now flourish in African countries, but also to other, more mainstream media. Although in the past, governments succeeded in muzzling the media, these days, the media take liberties that cause confrontations with government to an extent that was not the case before the process of democratization began.

Africa's Media is written by one of Africa's most versatile and productive social scientists. Nyamnjoh has served as professor in sociology and anthropology at universities in Botswana, Cameroon, and South Africa. Before taking up his current position as associate professor and head of publications and communications with the Council for the Development of Social Science

Research in Africa—the equivalent of our Social Science Research Council—he served as vice president of the African Council for Communication Education from 1996 to 2003.

My own assessment of the book is that it is rich in facts and details but thin on theory. There is no attempt to systematically analyze the media with a view to explaining their shortcomings. The author accepts that the media are both part of the problem and the solution when it comes to building democracy in Africa, but it is difficult to grasp what the main factors are, other than the politics of belonging and a lack of professionalism in the media corps.

The book also could have benefited from a more thorough edit: it is quite repetitive, the chapters that deal with the specific situation in Cameroon could have been shortened, much of the detail is superfluous, and the main points could have been covered in the chapters dealing with the African situation at large. The author also includes a lot of political history that seems unnecessary for the purposes of his argument. For instance, the long history of politics in Cameroon, although interesting for the uninformed, really does not add anything to the discussion of the contemporary media situation.

Nyamnjoh's conclusions are quite pessimistic. No one can deny that the media situation in Africa, compared to other regions of the world, leaves a lot to be desired, but his dim view seems to stem from his own intimacy with the conditions in Cameroon. His native country is at the bottom end of the democracy ladder in Africa, and it is fair to say that conditions for the modern media tend to be much better in many other countries—Nigeria, for example, and particularly East Africa and South Africa.

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Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World *by Andrew Wilson. New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2005. 352 pp. $40.00.*

Andrew Wilson's book expertly plumbs the depths of post-Soviet politics, introducing readers to a world in which cynical "political technologists" craft and destroy people, parties, and programs in order to achieve and maintain power for their unprincipled clientele. This is a study of elite political culture, focusing on the "black arts of political manipulation and double-speak inherited from the Bolshevik era" (p. xv). Wilson challenges those who view post-Soviet politics through the lens of transitions to democracy. Instead, he argues that "fake" democracy reigns supreme, and that politics has changed primarily in appearance, not substance, since the Soviet era. At the same time, he rejects deterministic arguments that posit a deeply rooted authoritarian political culture in the region. Rather, post-Soviet elites have built upon past practices because they find them expedient and can get away with it.