
1997

Changing the Rules: The Politics of Liberalization and the Urban Informal Economy in Tanzania

Aili Mari Tripp

Summary

Aili Mari Tripp shows how the people of Dar es Salaam supply for themselves the various goods and services that the government could no longer provide. With the growth of an informal economy, they have demonstrated resistance to state control, resulting in broad political, economic and social transformations within Tanzania. Moreover, the unprecedented participation of women in informal economic activities has had a profound effect on gender relations. Tripp incorporates in-depth interviews and a field survey conducted at the household and micro-enterprise level in examining the influence and impact of the urban informal economy on Tanzanian society. This informal sector encompasses the enterprises of masons, cooks, cobblers, and tailors; a dizzying myriad of market vendors; even educators and doctors. Tripp shows how the urban informal economy challenges state-defined bases of social justice with alternative notions of economic equity.

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Recommended Citation:

Tripp, Aili Mari. *Changing the Rules: The Politics of Liberalization and the Urban Informal Economy in Tanzania*. California: University of California Press, 1997.
<https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft138nb0tj;brand=ucpress>