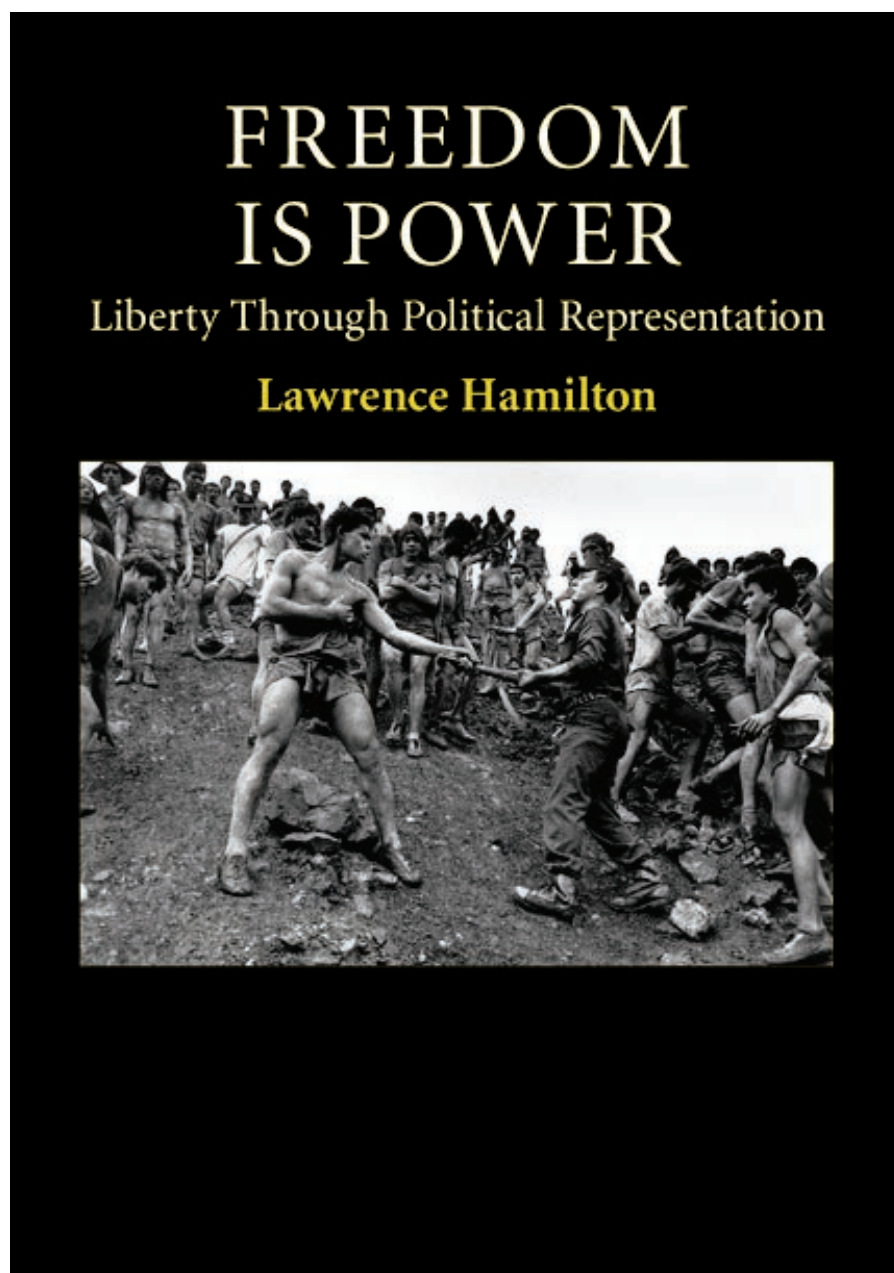


Freedom is Power: Liberty through Political Representation

Lawrence Hamilton

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 231 pp

Reviewed by Ndwakhulu Tshishonga (UKZN, School of Built Environment & Development Studies)



Freedom is Power questions whether South Africa is finally free twenty years after apartheid was dismantled.

Hamilton uses political theory and analyses from other contexts, such as Brazil, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the global economic crisis which still haunts the world. Although the book is motivated by the situation in South Africa, it offers a framework for questions about freedom in other countries as well.

Hamilton manages to provide a convincing argument that power has a symbiotic relationship with freedom: freedom relies on power and emancipation for all can only be upheld if regarded as power through political representation. He applies democratic theory to underscore the view that contemporary freedom can be gained through inclusive representative and participative approaches, which can both reduce domination by the powerful and empower the marginalised. The book demonstrates the importance of inclusivity in all spheres of politics; oftentimes those elected to represent the majority tend to exclude their inputs.

The book is beautifully written in clear language and informative especially for those interested in democracy and the value of participative democracy. It is invaluable to academics and students and I highly recommend it for a university-level reader in subjects such as politics, history and citizenship, and for all those interested in South African democracy and freedom. [NA](#)