



Development and the African Diaspora: Place and the Politics of Home

By Claire Mercer, Ben Page, Martin Evans

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There has been much recent celebration of the success of African 'civil society' in forging global connections through an ever-growing diaspora. Against the background of such celebrations, this innovative book sheds light on the diasporic networks - 'home associations' - whose economic contributions are being used to develop home. Despite these networks being part of the flow of migrants' resources back to Africa that now outweighs official development assistance, the relationship between the flow of capital and social and political change are still poorly understood.

Looking in particular at Cameroon and Tanzania, the authors examine the networks of migrants that have been created by making 'home associations' international. They argue that claims in favour of enlarging 'civil society' in Africa must be placed in the broader context of the political economy of migration and wider debates concerning ethnicity and belonging. They demonstrate both that diasporic development is distinct from mainstream development, and that it is an uneven historical process in which some 'homes' are better placed to take advantage of global connections than others.

In doing so, the book engages critically with the current enthusiasm among policy-makers for treating the African diaspora as an untapped resource for combating poverty. Its focus on diasporic networks, rather than private remittances, reveals the particular successes and challenges diasporas face in acting as a group, not least in mobilising members of the diaspora to fulfill obligations to home.

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Editorial Review

Review

'This engaging and well-written book offers a richly empirical analysis of the roles of diaspora associations in development back home. Ultimately, the book requires us to rethink many assumptions about the migration-development nexus for Africa, recentering the discussion on nuances, context, heterogeneity, and the everyday lives of people who make these long journeys' Garth Myers, Kansas University 'This is a timely addition to ongoing discourse on the structure and diverse character of African home associations. The authors' incisive participatory research has convinced them that despite their limitations, these associations offer transformative possibilities. Policy makers, researchers, students, development partners and relevant stakeholders will find the book very informative' Aderanti Adepoju, Network of Migration Research on Africa 'Showing the entanglement of national and local politics and elites with a sense of obligation and loyalty to place, this original book reveals the limits and potentialities of 'home' associations in the modern development project. A must for overseas developers the book illuminates an important field of enduring interest' Pnina Werbner, University of Keele

About the Author

Claire Mercer is a Lecturer in Geography at the University of Leicester, UK. Ben Page is a lecturer at University College London. Martin Evans has undertaken consultancy and advisory work for the Department for International Development, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Overseas Development Institute, Center for International Climate and Environmental Research-Oslo and Chatham House.

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