CLAIRE MERCER, BEN PAGE and MARTIN EVANS, *Development and the African Diaspora: place and the politics of home*. London and New York NY: Zed Books. (pb £18.99 – ISBN 978 1 84277 901 9). 2008, 264 pp.

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Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0001972012000095

How to cite this article:
ANNA LINDLEY (2012). Review of CLAIRE MERCER, BEN PAGE, and MARTIN EVANS 'Development and the African Diaspora: place and the politics of home' Africa, 82, pp 321-323 doi:10.1017/S0001972012000095

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themes: seniority (especially the enforcement of male seniority), prosperity (through cattle and land in Teso) and propriety (through the symbolic management of dead bodies). Jones brightly shows how in Teso institutional change has been engendered in reaction to economic changes (the introduction of tax collection, the culture of cotton and the associated chief system introduced then to oversee its production), and social transformations induced by historical upheavals like colonization or the insurgency of the 1990s.

Finally, the only significant critique that can be raised is that it is too short a book. Each chapter could have been the topic of a whole manuscript. Ben Jones makes us want to learn more about Teso and the rural political realm. The clan structures appear between the lines but could be explored in detail in terms of their linkage with power and authority. The comparison initiated by the author through the use of a literature dedicated to countries other than Uganda should also be pursued through a comparison with other Ugandan ruralities, whether in marginalized areas of Uganda (West Nile, northern Uganda, or Karamoja, for instance), or on the contrary in the rural parts of central Uganda where the regime first established its administrative structure during the 1981–6 bush war, in order to provide civilians with salt, sugar and soap. Such a contrasted approach could tackle the link between the absence of the state, and its *de facto* modes of penetration. Last but not least, Ben Jones incidentally raises hypotheses on various related topics affecting Teso (such as the politics of the insurgency years, intergenerational conflicts, or land issues) that are all still largely undocumented and would definitely constitute an interesting complement or continuation to this brilliant research.

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CLAIRE MERCER, BEN PAGE and MARTIN EVANS, *Development and the African Diaspora: place and the politics of home*. London and New York NY: Zed Books. (pb £18.99 – ISBN 978 1 84277 901 9). 2008, 264 pp.

Development and the African Diaspora focuses on African home associations, exploring what they are, what they do and how they do it. The authors suggest that home associations are neither necessarily instruments of reactionary parochial tribalism nor automatically instruments of transnational transformative cosmopolitanism – two contrasting images common in the development research and policy literature. Rather, this approach situates home associations in relation to complex and shifting subjectivities, place-making processes, and negotiations of modernity and progress. It is alive to nuance, variation and contradiction, embracing complexity but not swamped by it.

The book is based on careful research with home associations linked with two Tanzanian and two Cameroonian 'home places'. As the authors rightly point out, this kind of detailed empirical research on African migrants' associations is long overdue, with recent policy enthusiasm for home associations as developmental actors tending to run ahead of research in African contexts. The book succeeds in moving very well between empirical detail and conceptual framing. Part I explores the significance of home associations, in general and in the specific African contexts discussed in this book; Part II traces the history and structure of the home associations in the case study areas; Part III highlights the researched

home associations' distinct areas of activity, from welfare to burials to education and infrastructure; and Part IV concludes by considering how international development policy makers might engage with home associations, and whether they should.

Four research findings are particularly important to underline, as they represent major advances in our understanding of African diasporas and development. The first point relates to the nature of home associations, which generally have been understood in African studies as ethno-territorial networks of 'chapters' connecting indigenes at home and in domestic destinations across the nation state, and quite often seen as reactionary, tribalist and elite-promoting in nature. Drawing on Lonsdale's seminal work on ethnicity, Mercer and colleagues distinguish between political belonging (exploiting affinity for elite political ends) and moral conviviality (local ideas about how groups should live together), and point to how the home associations they have studied often integrate elements of both. Home associations' declared developmental and cultural purposes should not eclipse the real political work that they do – shaping relationships of legitimacy and accountability, and often helping local political elites survive through uncertain times. At the same time, the authors emphasize the sincere work done in the name of progress through home associations: by definition narrow in their interests, home associations can nevertheless be part of a progressive politics of place. However, the authors are circumspect about the more recent celebration of heroic diaspora associations as channelling money from the global North to investment in public goods at the grassroots in the poorest parts of the world. Far from starry-eyed, Mercer and colleagues point to the actually quite variable nature of diaspora contributions, and the unevenness of their impact in terms of who benefits.

This links to the second major contribution of the book, which is to highlight the frequently poorly articulated, transitory, intermittent, opportunistic nature of diaspora groups' contribution to home development. Rather than centralized hierarchical structures radiating out from the home area, home associations emerge as often multiple, overlapping, decentred, constantly shifting networks with uneven geographies of connection, suggesting that we should rethink home associations 'as practices rather than structures' (p. 228).

The third key finding is the significance of the role of the 'domestic diaspora' in home associations. Internal migration has been rather overlooked in recent migration–development research and policy debates, but not so in this study. Indeed, the authors suggest that the domestic diasporas are in fact more influential in home associations, in financial and managerial terms, than the international diasporas studied in the UK (although it would be interesting to see the role of migrants in other African countries, an acknowledged gap). The authors waste no time in pointing out that the common perception that domestic migrants' contributions to home development are minor compared with the contributions of international diasporas in the global North feeds on Eurocentric representations of Africa as backward, dynamized by contact with the North.

This brings us to the fourth major contribution of the book: it suggests that diaspora involvements should lead to a reconsideration of what development represents. Mercer and colleagues rightly argue that 'much research has concentrated on how diasporas can be incorporated into existing models of migration and development rather than on new conceptualizations of what diasporas bring to development' (p. 50). Home associations provide some alternative answers to the key questions: what is development, who does it, how, and where? The authors emphasize the importance for home associations of moral support, often marginalized in the relentlessly materialist bent of dominant Western visions of

development: 'Culture is the object and medium of development; it is not a barrier
to it. So development might mean better schools, roads and hospitals, but it might
also mean better burials, weddings and dances' (p. 157). Perhaps the most
challenging leap, for conventional development thinking based on territory, is the
home associations' focus on the development of a 'people'. This means that
mutual moral support in the diaspora (for example, comforting the bereaved
abroad) in ways that build community and enhance their foothold in a foreign
society, is for many associations as relevant as building schools in the village.
Thus while place is the rationale for home associations, home associations are
part of the reproduction of place in ways that have unsettling implications for
conventional understandings of development.

   This remarkably well-written and engaging book should also be read by anyone
interested in reimaginings of development, and in the roles of civil society,
particularly its translocal and transnational dimensions. It nuances and advances
our thinking on the role of migration and diasporas in development.

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ROSALIND SHAW and LARS WALDORF, with PIERRE HAZAN (eds), *Localizing
Transitional Justice: interventions and priorities after mass violence*. Stanford
CA: Stanford University Press for the Stanford Studies in Human Rights.
(hb $75 – 978 0 80476 150 5). 2010, 352 pp.

Shaw and Waldorf's collection represents an insightful critique of transitional
justice in its theoretical paradigm and actual uses. By means of a wide-ranging
analysis of the concept in its relationships with local contexts, this work pushes
the boundaries of intellectual as well as applied approaches to post-conflict
realities, questioning the ethical implications and the validity of the transnational
concept of justice (Teitiel, Introduction). The editors have collected contributions
from different disciplines and organized them to guide the reader from the
conceptualization of transitional justice to its practical inconsistencies. In par-
ticular, the case studies presented here evaluate and compare the truth-telling
politics on which the concept is primarily based to strategies of silence and
resistance often adopted by local actors. While transitional justice promotes a
'revealing is healing' policy, the authors show how some of the involved parties
may prefer to focus their efforts toward peace simply on dealing with the present
rather than remembering the past.

   In Part I, the editors reflect on the international political construction of
transitional justice and its embedded moral authority, traced by Hazan to the post-
9/11 US anti-terrorism campaign. Despite the progressive shift toward local forms
of jurisdiction, supported by the increasing number of surveys used to consult
people in post-conflict areas about their priorities, Weinstein, Fletcher, Vinck and
Pham underline how local justice remains a complement to tribunals and truth
commissions, which still prioritize the post-Second World War Nuremberg Trial
approach and UN international norms over local needs and experiences.

   This paradox and its aftermath are further analysed in Part II, in which
particular attention is paid to the crystallization of social actors into rigid
categories of victims/survivors and perpetrators, with the consequent annihilation
of their political power. Thus, Theidon points out how Peru's victims of Sendero