

## HOME ASSOCIATIONS

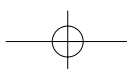
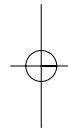
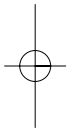
Between political belonging and moral conviviality

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### **A home association meeting**

A group of thirty people from Bali Nyong'a in Cameroon are meeting in Hackney, east London, on a Saturday night in the spring of 2007. The meeting is in the front room of a house, the home of one of the members, and the chairs have been pushed back against the wall to allow everyone to sit down; latecomers perch on armrests and congregate in the hall. This is a regular bi-monthly meeting of the Bali Cultural and Development Association-UK, referred to by members as 'the House'. Most people have come from London and the Southeast, but some have come from the West Midlands and further north in the UK; one couple came from the Isle of Man. People drift in over a couple of hours and start chatting and catching up on news, and go to the kitchen to drop off food and drink to be enjoyed after their discussions. As they come in they sit down, catch the eye of some of the others in the room and greet them formally by rubbing their hands together then clapping slowly and loudly three times in a measured rhythm. Those already seated join in in unison, the rhythm speeding up as the claps peter out. Drinks and groundnuts are shared as the meeting gets going.

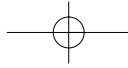
When the meeting is deemed to be quorate the President, a young law lecturer, calls the House to order and invites one of the women to open with a Christian prayer in English. After the prayer, people sit down and listen to the President's opening remarks, including a ritual invocation to members to come on time as the meeting is already behind schedule. As often happens there are visitors and potential new members so the President then invites people to introduce themselves. Each person gives their name and the quarter in Bali Nyong'a with which they identify. This prompts some teasing and comedy as different parts of Bali Nyong'a are



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given nicknames that capture their stereotypes – ‘Njenka Intelligence,’ says one man, boasting about Njenka’s reputation for scholarly connections. After introducing herself, a young woman who is new is cajoled into revealing her marital status by one man who asks whether the gate to her compound is open. His ribald question produces raucous laughter, which is only amplified when the woman replies that it depends who is pushing. The minutes from the last meeting are read.

Discussions begin with a debate about the group’s constitution and in particular about when they are obliged to offer financial help to bereaved members. When a group member or the relative of a member dies, the House contributes a fixed amount to the bereaved family as part of its condolences. A distinction is drawn between first- and second-class deaths, with the former being actual members, their spouses, children and parents and the latter being ‘brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles’. The House currently gives £75 to a member whose family suffers a second-class death, but the President proposes tightening up the definition of ‘second-class’ in order to limit the House’s liability. His aim is to give a more significant contribution (£100) to fewer people and also to have more money left over from group levies to give to development projects back in Bali Nyong’a. Trying to define who counts as a brother or sister proves hard, with particular disagreement about whether or not it is necessary for a sibling to come from the same womb. One member claims that, since their family are title-holders in the Palace in Bali Nyong’a, the House should recognize their status by always contributing in cases of bereavement regardless of biological relationship to the member. The discussion turns to whether the money should be drawn from the House’s existing funds or whether an ad hoc collection should be made at the time of each death. It is clear that most members regard this sum as only a token (particularly if a corpse needs to be repatriated to Cameroon) and as individuals they often feel obliged to give more to bereaved families as a supplement. One member points out the extra burden faced by women who are expected to prepare food to take to bereaved families when the House attends the wake-keeping. She asks why women are expected to bring food, which takes time to prepare, whereas men bring drinks, which do not. As a working woman she proposes that women should be allowed to take drinks to bereaved families if they so wish. This comment causes some consternation, particularly from other women, one of whom argues, ‘This is a cultural House. Have you ever heard of women buying drinks in Bali?’ To which others respond ‘Culture evolves, culture changes.’ After an extended, loud and passionate debate, the House concludes that

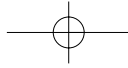
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women should be allowed to bring drinks to wake-keepings if they so choose.

During this debate a more senior member of the House arrives and announces that at 10pm they will be speaking, by mobile phone, to the traditional ruler of Bali Nyong'a, known by his title of 'Fon', who is in his palace in Cameroon. This is not usual during meetings but has been prompted by a land dispute back in Cameroon referred to as the 'Bawock crisis' – a violent conflict between Bali Nyong'a and Bawock over government officials' demarcation of their shared boundary and rival claims of land ownership on the boundary. The dispute has degenerated into running battles between young men of Bali Nyong'a and Bawock; homes and property have been looted and destroyed, and scores of people have been rendered homeless. The 'crisis' has made national headlines in Cameroon.

Shortly after 10pm, the man with the phone announces that he has established a connection to the Fon, and the House performs the formal greeting. The man then stands in the middle of the lounge, holding the mobile aloft on speakerphone. The Fon, who is barely audible, updates the meeting on the Bawock crisis and the Bali Traditional Council's position for over half an hour in Mungaka, the Bali Nyong'a vernacular. Not everyone can hear, either because they do not understand Mungaka or because the phone volume is low, so there is some background chatter during the call. When the Fon has finished speaking, the meeting greets him again in the formal manner, and the call is disconnected. The meeting then discusses the issues raised before pressing on with its own agenda.

The last item to be discussed is the cultural gala to be held that summer, at which the House is planning to launch its new uniform, a 'traditional' outfit made to order in Cameroon. The gala will provide an opportunity for the House to showcase dance and food from Bali Nyong'a to other Cameroonians in London so that 'people in the UK will know the Bali are here'. It will also raise funds for their annual development project, which will equip the health centre in Won, one of the quarters in Bali Nyong'a. In order to select which dances will be performed the Cultural Secretary of the House has brought to the meeting a DVD of traditional Bali Nyong'a dances. People watch while they eat the food that has been brought, including familiar dishes from West Africa such as jollof rice, fried plantains, roasted fish and chicken, fufu-corn, yam and njamma-jamma (a vegetable dish). It is agreed that the House will meet for rehearsals led by four members who know how to do the dances and can teach those who do not. Since there are



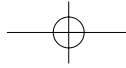
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insufficient members who know how to sing in the vernacular, and since not enough of the right musical instruments can be found in the UK to form a band, it is agreed to use recorded music. After 11pm, when people have finished their food and drink, they begin to leave, some rushing to catch the last train home, others sharing lifts in their cars.

### **Key themes: place, sociality and development**

This meeting was just one of many we have attended and was characteristic of the hospitality offered to us as strangers and researchers. This particular meeting also illustrates three of the key themes of this book. First, this is a meeting about 'place'. A place is 'a meaningful location' (Cresswell, 2004: 7), somewhere invested with layers of meaning by humans over time. What we describe as a place is usually defined in distinction from a space. The concept of space is conceived as abstract, non-normative, generalizable and measurable. It is about distances and flows. In contrast the notion of place is associated with the local, the specific, the unique and the particular. Places are the locations that matter to people because they return to them, build memories around them, write their histories, and call them 'home'. What holds the Bali Nyong'a group together, as in all of our case studies, is a shared sense of belonging to a particular place, even though some of the members have never even been there. For that reason these groups are often called hometown associations because the places to which they refer are hometowns. In this book, however, the term home association is used to emphasize the fact that the homeplace is not always a town – it might be a village, a town, an area (comprising several towns and villages) or even a nation. However, the scale and boundaries of that homeplace are often as intangible as they are contested. Sometimes the delimitation of boundaries is literal, as in the Bawock case. But as often, it is more subtle and concerns social as well as geographical boundaries (Fanso, 1986). For example some people who are not from Bali Nyong'a choose to belong to this meeting because their husbands or wives are from Bali Nyong'a and because it is a well-run group. Furthermore though almost everyone at this meeting shares a sense of belonging to Bali Nyong'a they all identify with different quarters, compounds and families, some of whom claim a status superior to others. Place, then, is not a bounded territory in any simple sense. Members say that when you are in the meeting in east London you are *in* Bali.

Second, this is a social meeting that combines pleasure and obligation. The pleasure comes from the fun of seeing friends, sharing food and



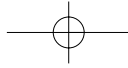
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gossip, and feeling at home amongst the convivial company of those who share and understand the experience of living in Britain. The obligation is to look after members in Britain by offering mutual support, particularly in times of need. This socializing is central to the longevity of associations like this one.

Third, this is a meeting that weaves together issues of diaspora, culture and development. The essence of diaspora identity is the ongoing and shared commitment to the maintenance of the place called 'home'. This might mean the improvement of a particular geographical space, but it might also mean the maintenance of the 'culture' that is an expression of that place anywhere in the world. So, the performance of Bali dances in London and the collection of money to improve health care in Cameroon are simultaneous and inseparable manifestations of the diasporic condition. From the perspective of the diaspora, the process of development binds together a concern for the welfare and improvement of *their* people and *their* territory. Hidden in the term 'their' is the inevitability of a politics of belonging, which is about policing that boundary of who is within the group and who is outside it.

### **Why home associations matter**

Diaspora groups are attracting attention from aid donors, governments, NGOs, and academics because of the increased interest in the relationship between development and migration. The argument goes as follows. Globalization has enabled an expansion of the world economy, creating better opportunities for individuals. But, since the benefits of globalization are distributed unevenly across space, they have increased inequality between nations and provided an incentive for increasing international migration. The proportion of international migrants relative to the world population remains relatively steady at 3 per cent, so the gross number of international migrants is rising with global population growth (GCIM, 2005). There are now around 200 million international migrants, almost half of whom are women (GCIM, 2005). Remittances from these migrants to their homes form the crucial link between international migration and social and economic development (World Bank, 2006). At a global scale recorded remittances are now significantly larger than overseas aid flows and comprise an annual flow of around US\$240 billion into the Global South (Ratha and Xu, 2008). Though only US\$10.8 billion of this is estimated to be sent to Africa, remittances from migrants are nevertheless an increasingly important source of money in urban and rural areas of the continent. However,

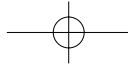


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much of this flow is 'private' in the sense that it moves between individuals, who are generally assumed to use it for personal consumption and immediate social needs. This means that these remittances are not being directly invested in the provision of public goods such as schools, hospitals and water supplies. In contrast diaspora groups, with their interest in specific development projects, offer a potential means of transferring capital and skills for the provision of public goods and services to the Global South. In addition these diaspora groups appear to have a direct knowledge of and links to beneficiaries in needy areas, which might enable them to bypass the unwieldy bureaucracies of state and development agencies. Diaspora associations might provide the crucial link between international migration and African development.

There are many immediate caveats that should be added to this argument. For example the distinction drawn between public and private is clearly over-simplistic. National economies benefit from recipients' private remittances and this benefit is in the public interest because it improves macro-economic conditions, theoretically liberating capital for infrastructure investment. For example remittances can reduce foreign exchange shortages and offset balance of payments deficits without incurring interest liabilities or necessarily increasing the level of imports of foreign goods and services. Also those families who do receive remittances often spend them on public services such as schools and hospitals, which generally rely on user fees. In addition the kind of consumption commonly associated with remittances (house construction, household needs and food) puts money into local economies. The argument also places a burden on diaspora associations that might well be unreasonable given their small scale and limited resources. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on international remittances in this argument underplays the significance of national remittances. Finally, it should be clear from the outset that the volume of money remitted to Africa through groups is very small relative to that remitted by individuals to their families. However, despite these objections this book takes seriously the idea that diaspora groups could be an important element of the relationship between migration and development. The book aims to understand how diaspora associations work, whether they do steer some of these remittances towards public goods, and whether donors can, or should, engage these groups as a way of reducing poverty in Africa. In so doing the aim is also to use these associations as a means to understand better the relationship between migration and development.

Three overarching questions are used to articulate our objectives. What is the structure and character of African diaspora groups? What



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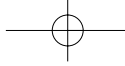
development work do African diaspora groups do? And, how do we understand the political work of diaspora groups? The book is organised around these questions and we answer them by following the diaspora associations from four home places (Bali and Manyu in Cameroon, and Newala and Rungwe in Tanzania; see figures 1.1 and 1.2).

**What is the structure and character of home associations?**

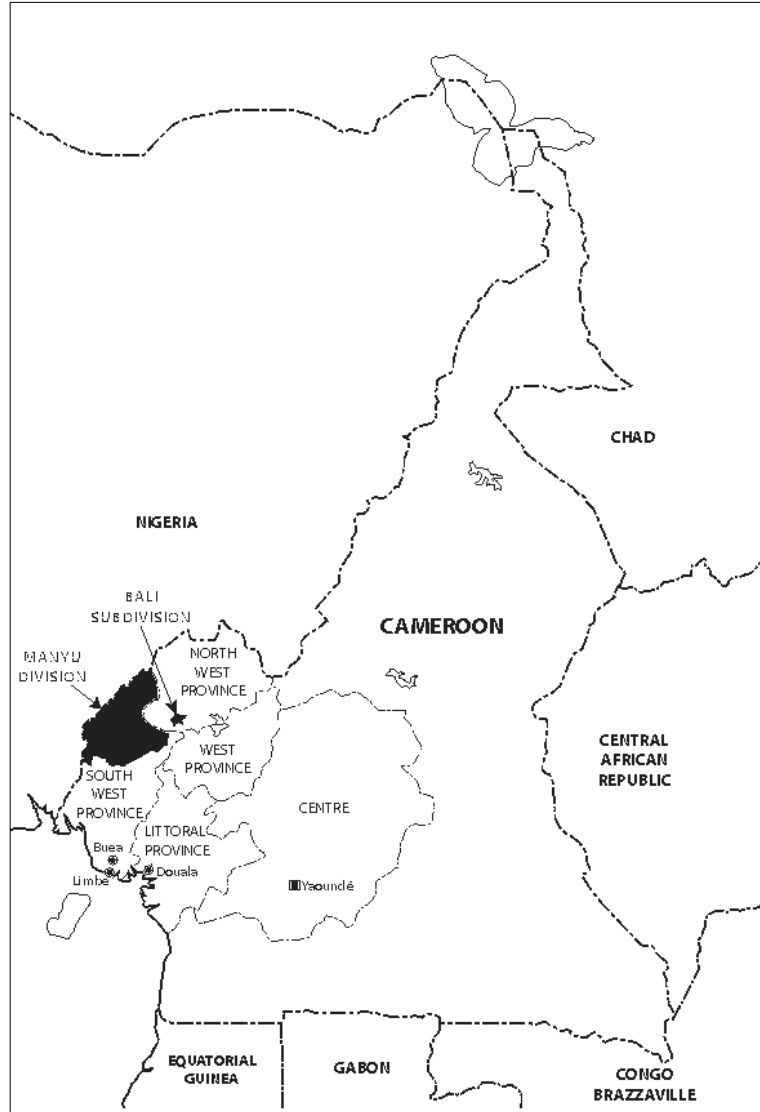
Home associations now operate between continents, and a key trigger in the current resurgence of interest in them is the apparent shift in the scale of their operation. However, important facets of their character and structure have been overlooked because studies of domestic and international migration have tended to proceed independently of one another. Two separate lines of enquiry have been pursued, each speaking in different academic registers. The first, in African Studies, has understood home associations as ethno-territorial groups that unite indigenes of a given home through a series of inter-connected 'chapters' located *within* particular African nation-states (Trager, 2001). A second, which has emerged at the intersection of work on diaspora, transnationalism, migration and development, has privileged the experience of *international* migrants and their potential contribution to the development of 'home' (e.g. GCIM, 2005).

When these two sets of debates are brought together it might reasonably be assumed that contemporary international home associations express a transnational ethno-territorial relationship that can be imagined as a network shaped like an intercontinental spider's web connecting the home with its national and international chapters. Each node (the 'branches' or 'chapters' of the association) is connected to a place ('home') by a series of lines down which flow people, money and ideas. Such a first cut at visualizing the imagined geography of a transnational home association suggests a pattern of effective, open and even communication between the nodes with the homeplace at the centre of the network. But such an imagined geography is problematic; not only does it turn out to be empirically inaccurate in terms of the structure of the associations, it also produces a misleading analysis of territory, power and agency within these associations. Whilst parts of the association's 'national' past survive in the international arena, it is wrong to think of the process of their internationalization as merely the expansion of a unitary national network.

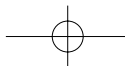
From a development perspective the most important part of home associations is the 'domestic diaspora'. This term refers to those



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**Map 1.1** Cameroon showing home areas and fieldwork sites in domestic diaspora

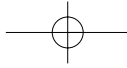




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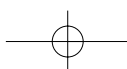
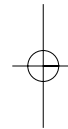
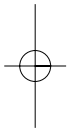
Map 1.2 Tanzania showing home areas and fieldwork sites in domestic diaspora

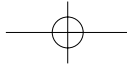


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individuals who have left their home area but not the nation-state in which they were born: for example, those workers who left their rural homeland in the colonial period to work on plantations or in the mines but who remained attached to a home place to which often they could not afford to return. According to standard definitions of diaspora this term is an oxymoron because diasporas are defined by their international movement away from a homeland. In the African context, however, the assumption that homeland and nation-state are always the same thing is erroneous. The 'domestic diaspora' is a necessary term because association members often argued that you could be outside your 'country' without leaving your nation-state, and might describe themselves as being 'abroad' whilst living and working in their national capital. The term 'domestic diaspora' better captures the ongoing shared commitment to a homeplace than the term 'internal migrants'. Furthermore, this concept addresses the bias within the migration–development nexus towards international migrants. The transnational network image says nothing about the relative size of flows of people, money or influence or the size of the membership at each point. The assumption is that the international 'chapters' of home associations make the most significant contribution to development of the homeplace. But our own finding is that the domestic diaspora is significantly more influential in financial and managerial terms than the diaspora overseas, and as such wields more power within the association. Yet from the perspective of the village, international migrants are more closely associated than the domestic diaspora with the dreams of development and material wealth, and the allure of modernity. This gives those overseas a different kind of leverage and authority at home. The international diaspora is still relatively insignificant when compared with the domestic diaspora in terms of number of members, volume of financial flows into the home, frequency of visits home and willingness to intervene in public life at home. The capacity to travel and the proximity to home are both crucial to the 'associational entrepreneurs' who make things happen, and this largely explains why those overseas remain relatively less important. This challenges the assumption that Africa's international diaspora has the most important contribution to make to Africa's development. This bias towards international migrants suggests that people have to leave Africa in order to be able to contribute anything useful, reflecting the long-standing Eurocentric representation of Africa as a place of poverty and passivity.

In the four case studies used here, the links between 'home', domestic diaspora groups and international diaspora groups are often poorly



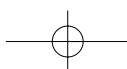
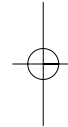
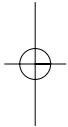


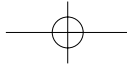
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articulated, fissile, transitory and very uneven in terms of their contribution to development at home. When things move through associations, they hop rather than flow. Certainly, the idea that one coherent association is capable of mobilizing both domestic and transnational migrants for the development of a static 'home' is generally misleading. The homeplaces themselves are not always the key territorial scale around which all associations choose to mobilize. Rather, the original 'homeplaces' sit within a wider and far more complex landscape of multiple, overlapping and sometimes contradictory 'homes', around which different associations choose to mobilize at different times. The shape of these home associations is thus unstable as the place-based identities around which people in the diaspora form associations are not fixed in time or space. People opt in and out of home associations, which variously claim linguistic, national, clan, ethnic, regional and administrative spaces as the 'home'. Home associations are established, then become defunct as their membership drops out or switches allegiance to another group. Many individuals have overlapping memberships of multiple associations.

The idea that home associations are constituted by 'branches' or 'chapters' requires some elaboration. In most cases, branches emerge organically in both the domestic and international diaspora rather than being established in a top-down manner by a 'home branch'. Branches are marked by considerable or indeed total autonomy, for example having their own individual constitutions and registering as separate associations with local or national governments. Among Cameroonians, women's associations provide an alternative, parallel set of 'branches' that are loosely affiliated to the main home associations. Sometimes, what might look to an outsider like the 'branch' of an international network is perceived by its members to be an entirely separate organization that happens to be concerned with the same homeplace. Nevertheless, particularly outside Africa, members do sometimes describe themselves as belonging to a 'branch' or 'chapter'; alternatively, members in the home country may view or represent associations in the international diaspora as such. Furthermore, the unitary network image runs the risk of assuming an internal homogeneity *within* branches, which is not borne out in practice. Any one branch is shot through with social and political differences, for example along lines of gender, age, profession, class, status, or allegiance to a political party.

Home associations are opportunistic and acquisitive in terms of communication, information and membership. A network suggests a seamless flow of information between nodes and gives no sense of the relative ease or difficulty of communication for different people. In



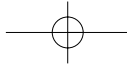


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contrast our experience has been that communication seems to be sporadic, contradictory and partial. This is compounded by the fact that many individuals who are potential members deliberately avoid the association. We had a strong sense that within Dar es Salaam and Douala the association leaderships were ‘desperately seeking the diaspora’ – they struggled to keep tabs on their own people. New members were always warmly welcomed and encouraged, and lapsed members were just as often lamented.

Home associations need to be understood in temporal as well as spatial terms. The image of a network tends to be static – it lacks any sense of temporality. For example in its focus on a single homeplace in the centre it distracts from the possibility that there are other centres of operation at different times. For example, it might make much more sense to talk about London as the centre of the association for the individuals in our opening vignette. From the perspective of a meeting in Hackney, Bali Nyong’a may feel like an unimportant place – rarely visited, little communicated with, often forgotten. The existence of Bali Nyong’a is the rationale for the meeting, but as a place it is often distant. At other times, for example during the main annual dance (called *Lela*), the town of Bali might become the centre of the association. In both Tanzania and Cameroon our research suggests that for much of the time the centre of these associations is in the capital city of the African country rather than in the homeplace. This is where decisions are taken, meetings held, money raised. For those members who never return home but who are active members of the association, it is not useful to suggest that the homeplace is always the centre of the network. How can we re-imagine the map of home associations in a way that makes the centre of the association for some people sometimes Bali Nyong’a, sometimes Yaoundé and sometimes London? Just as separating the African and international parts of the diaspora obscures the connections between them, so too separating the past from the present obscures the continuities and ruptures between the history of associations and their present character and structure. The sudden ahistorical interest in international migrants runs the risk of breaking these historical connections, which are integral to understanding the origins of associational forms.

Existing writing tends to suggest that home associations are fundamentally ethnic in character. In some cases they are explicitly referred to as ‘ethnic associations’. The ‘home’ to which home associations refer is often perceived to be an ‘ethnic homeland’, and historically the associations have often borne the name of an ethnic group. The case studies suggest that this view is problematic in at least

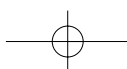
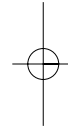
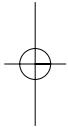


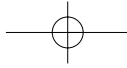
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three ways. First, it assumes that 'homeland' and ethnic territory are geographically coterminous. Second, it assumes that home associations are mono-ethnic. Third, and most significant, the idea that home associations are ethnic associations often relies on an essentialist definition of ethnicity. Nevertheless it would be perverse not to recognize that there is often a relationship between ethnicity and associational life in any place that needs to be analysed.

Each case study area contained several different ethnic groups, and their associations were often correspondingly ethnically diverse. Similarly several of the ethnic groups extended beyond the boundaries of the case study areas (for example significant numbers of people who identify themselves as ethnically Nyakyusa live in Rungwe, Kyela and Mbeya Rural districts (and beyond), yet the associations studied drew their membership from within the boundaries of a single district). There were some circumstances where different ethnic groups within the case study areas had their own separate associations, but even these often turned out to have a degree of internal heterogeneity. Home associations are always place-based but only sometimes comprise a single ethnicity. They are better characterized by an attachment to place than by an attachment to an ethnic group.

More important, however, is the way in which ethnicity is conceptualized. The term 'tribe' is generally avoided in contemporary African studies because of its associations with the primordial, the static and the uncivilized and because of the implicit distinction it draws between the character of social association in the Global South and that elsewhere in the world. Yet too often, when home associations are described as 'ethnic associations', it is this definition of ethnicity (prehistoric, fixed, geographically rooted) that is being used. In contrast following Zelinsky (2001: 44) among many others, ethnicity is more accurately understood as a social construct – there are no objective criteria by which to measure where one ethnic group ends and another begins. Two apparently identical neighbouring groups can (and do) claim to be ethnically different – the only apparent basis for accepting this difference is that members of these two identical groups claim to be different. Because they are social constructs, ethnic groups can change over time – they have a history – and the definitions of who is included and who is excluded can also change. Indeed the history of ethnic groups is often closely related to the history of associational life, as we show in chapters 4 and 5. However, to say that ethnic groups are a social construct is not to say that they are illusions. Ethnic groups will not evaporate merely because their histories have been revealed or their



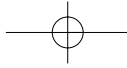


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changing characteristics have been demonstrated. An affiliation to one ethnic group or more is deeply embedded in an individual's consciousness, so the idea of a group creates its own social reality. It is the potency of this felt attachment that makes ethnicity so vulnerable to manipulation. An ethnic group is an 'imagined community' that is too large for personal contact between all the different individuals, but it is united by the belief that it embodies a unique set of cultural and historical features (language, religion, values, material culture, ceremony, political structure), which all members hold in common (Anderson, 1991). The boundaries of ethnic groups are defined through a relational process at the level both of the whole group and of the individual. As groups they come into being and define themselves through (often competitive) relationships with other social entities (perhaps other ethnic groups or perhaps colonial states). The identification of an individual with a particular ethnic group is a process undertaken through self-ascription by the individual concerned, but also through judgements made by other people. So, though often treated as relatively straightforward, the idea of ethnicity is actually cut through with antinomies – it is a construct but it is real, it is too large to be known yet involves immediate solidarity on the basis of shared features, and it only exists in relation to other social entities and cannot be understood as independent of them. The point is not that a fixed ethnicity can be read off from a particular home association, but that ethnicity and home associations both change over time, and the means by which they change are closely related.

Our findings contest the assumption that contemporary home associations articulate a transnational ethno-territorial relationship that can be conceptualized as a unitary network. We do not suggest that the international diaspora has no role to play in Africa's development, but we argue that the internationalization of home associations needs to be understood in relation to the history of African labour migration and associational life. Furthermore by decentring the homeplace as the focus of the network we aim to contest an inward-looking sense of the home as a physical space demarcated by boundaries and to replace this with a sense of the home being delineated by a series of social relations. This resonates with James Ferguson's (2006: 23) recent comments about globalization:

The questions raised by considering Africa's place-in-the-world, then, are indeed 'global' ones, but not in the way that most discussions of globalization would imply. Instead, they point to the need for a new framing of discussions of the global: centred less on transnational flows

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and images of unfettered connection than on the social relations that selectively constitute global society; the statuses and ranks that it comprises; and the relations, rights, and obligations that characterize it.

The pattern of linkages within African home associations is profoundly uneven. Some places are more connected than others; some people are more connected than others. The danger with thinking about home associations as networks is that this unevenness is lost. Instead, it is necessary to emphasize the way that social relations structure the association as a counterbalance to the tendency to look only at the organization when considering structure. A focus on organizations is a necessary precursor for policy-makers wishing to engage diaspora groups, but it can only ever reveal part of the story.

**What development work do African diaspora groups do?**

Though most contemporary home associations claim that development is one of their key purposes, there have been few critical and sustained analyses of the development work that they do (see Honey and Okafor, 1998a; Trager, 2001; Henry and Mohan, 2003; Henry, 2004; Yenshu, 2005; Mohan, 2006). Instead recent research on home associations in Africa tends to focus on the relationship between home associations and the state. The emphasis is on the role that associations have played in the emergence of a 'politics of belonging' (Geschiere and Gugler, 1998; Geschiere and Nyamnjoh, 2001) in which ethnically defined subnational spaces become the key territorial unit in which citizens have both rights and responsibilities. In these accounts home associations enable the survival of incumbent political elites during periods of economic and political uncertainty (structural adjustment and democratization). The self-declared development role of home associations is treated as a façade that masks their 'real' political function. But this is an epistemological injustice against the sincere work that certain individuals and groups do in the name of development. This is neither to endorse the naïve enthusiasm for diaspora-led development that has bewitched some of the international policy debate nor to suggest that the development work that home associations do should not be assessed critically, but it is to suggest that the claim that these associations make to be undertaking development should be taken seriously.

Currently the contribution that African home associations make to formal 'development' is fairly limited and sometimes of questionable value in terms of poverty reduction. Yet it is distinctive and articulates local desires for, and forms of, 'progress' that are innovative. These

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associations are important vehicles through which dreams and desires for development are expressed, debated and enacted. Members of home associations in Cameroon, Tanzania and Britain express a widespread desire for more of the goods associated with 'development'. One of the starkest empirical results from all four case studies is the demand across the social spectrum for more roads, bridges, information technology, extension workers, schools and healthcare facilities and services. Critical academics, in their enthusiasm to get with 'post-development' or 'alternative development', tend to ignore this simple point (de Vries, 2007).

Home associations are seen by many as key to the provision of developmental goods at home. Associations in the four case studies have funded: schools, health facilities, water supplies, mortuaries, community halls, libraries, internet cafes, church buildings, orphanages, museums, visits from overseas medics, restorations to palaces and other cultural buildings, legal costs in land disputes, public toilets, flagpoles, computers and cars for traditional rulers, and the restoration and equipping of government buildings. They occasionally support productive agricultural activities (for example farm-to-market roads, small oil palm plantations, and inputs for cashew farmers) but such examples are rare and generally not very successful. The projects listed are quite small, often take years to complete and are rarely objectively evaluated. In quantitative terms far more development funding comes from governments or traditional donors (international NGOs, religious institutions, multilateral organizations) than from home associations. But sometimes home associations are able to raise or lobby for significant amounts of money over short periods. For example, in 2003 the home association in Bali Nyong'a raised £22,000 from the domestic diaspora in just three months for a water-by-gravity project (Chapter 9). These examples are significant because they challenge the view that development has to be financed by external donors, who have their own normative view of what constitutes development and therefore of what they will fund.

Different associations, different capacities

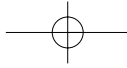
The capacity of different home associations to deliver development is extremely variable. Whereas a focus on individual remittances tends to lead to an analysis that explains spatial differences in terms of financial factors (such as interest rates and financial stability in different remittance-receiving countries), a focus on grouped remittances and home associations points to an additional set of factors as well – in particular, history, politics and identity. For example the different histories of



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migration in different places have produced different types of home associations in different places. If migrants are working in poorly paid jobs on plantations their association will have far less capacity than an association whose members are professionals working in government service. Political history can also be significant. The postcolonial nation-building project in Tanzania meant that home associations were effectively illegal from the mid-1960s until the mid-1980s. This had a profound effect on their institutional memory and local credibility. Social history is also important. In two of the four case studies the early history of mission education resulted in larger numbers of individuals accessing good positions in the postcolonial civil service with concomitant benefits in terms of accessing government resources. Economic history has meant that at various times in both Cameroon and Tanzania home associations have been forced into delivering different public services because state provision has collapsed or been withdrawn due to macro-economic failures. Local politics too has an influence over the effectiveness of home associations as development agents. The second-wave democratization of the 1990s boosted the capacity of some Cameroonian home associations as they became an important mechanism through which the incumbent political party retained power. The increase in resources that flowed through home associations in this context enabled them to deliver more development goods.

Issues of identity are also key to explaining why some home associations have more development capacity than others. Identity is the process by which an individual is consciously labelled using a series of familiar social categories. Ethnicity for example is the term used to describe the facet of an individual's identity that relates to himself or herself membership of a particular ethnic group. Becoming a member of a home association is a form of behaviour through which an individual tells himself or herself and the world something about who they are and with whom they identify. In some cases that identity subsequently entails particular responsibilities that influence behaviour. For example certain ethnic identities (such as that from Bali Nyong'a) require individuals to perform in a certain way in relation to stereotypes of obedience to hierarchies or mass participation in community labour. Those case study associations that perform an identity linked with hierarchical chieftaincy can be effective in achieving broad-scale mobilization for development through that identity. Ethnicities that perform an identity tied to a flatter social structure, meanwhile, may be no less effective at mobilizing people for development projects but this may be through different means (such as neotraditional societies) and at a more localized level of identity (such



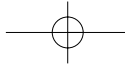
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as the village); broad-scale ethnic mobilization, at home or in the diaspora, may be more problematic for them.

The value of the idea of identity is its ability to reveal the relative priorities of the different social categories for a particular individual in particular contexts. Membership of an ethnic group is not necessarily the only – or even the dominant – facet of the way an individual is identified. So it is inappropriate to define ethnic group independently from other social variables such as class, nationality, religion, or gender. For example, the relative importance given to family, ethnic group and nation will influence an individual's willingness to send collective remittances to a development project via a home association.

The concept of identity has been subjected to considerable critique (Fardon, 1996; Hall, 1996; Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Brubaker, 2002; Pieterse, 2003). First, it implies that individuals have characters that can be entirely fixed and defined by a (relatively) short list of ahistorical sociological labels. This is intuitively unconvincing. Second, the idea of an identity pays insufficient attention to the distinction between how people label themselves and how other people label them. Preserving this boundary is important because of the conflicts that arise when there is a difference between a person's own understanding of her or his self and other people's ascription of particular labels to her or him. How do individuals internalize the various external labels attached to them? How do they externalize their identity through their behaviour? How do the stories they tell the world about themselves change over time? Changes in the way these questions are answered can have a significant influence on the history of home associations. Third, in attempting to capture the multiple affiliations that are necessary to describe an individual's identity, the categories used (gender, nationality, race, ethnicity ...) become reified. Instead of treating these concepts as socially constructed they become concretized, naturalized and objectively real. For this reason it is worth introducing the concept of subjectivity as distinct from identity.

If identity describes the way that the individual consciously presents her or his self to the world, then subjectivity describes the ways that those presentations do not always work. The stories never quite work because the categories used to 'identify' people appear to be fixed and unchanging, as if they were outside history – but of course they are not, and they do change. If identity is the attempt to fix certain characteristics to an individual then subjectivity is the individual's experience of their imperfect relationship with their identity, the limits of the fit between their 'identity' and their sense of self. The expectations of the leadership of a home association may rely on attempts to assert identity; their

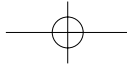


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success or failure may have more to do with the subjectivity of the association's membership. By 'diaspora identity' we mean an individual's process of becoming conscious of being a member of a particular autonomous group of people, of presenting themselves as a member of the diaspora and of being understood by others as such. 'Diaspora subjectivities' on the other hand describe the unsettling experience of an individual who finds the story they tell themselves and the world about being a member of the diaspora does not always quite fit. Practising diasporic identity is about consciously articulating the diaspora group's essential characteristics, making self-conscious statements about identity, or more practical behaviour such as choices about whom to avoid and whom to spend time with. Evidence of a particular diasporic subjectivity would emerge through the expression of anxieties about belonging or other neuroses. Identity then is a concept to be treated with caution but it remains for us a crucial tool in understanding why some individuals choose to become involved with home associations and therefore why the home associations from some places are more effective agents of development than others (Chapter 8).

The distinctiveness of diaspora development

It is not the scale of the developmental work that home associations do that is important so much as its distinctiveness. Such work creates opportunities for the articulation of local desires that are innovative. In other words, it defines what counts as development differently. As the list of activities above demonstrates, home associations often undertake projects that donors would probably not consider as 'development'. This is only possible when they have their own financial resources. When home associations require external funding, they have to work within donors' current framework of development by casting their projects in recognizable and acceptable terms. Yet some home associations are still able to tailor such projects to suit their own definitions of development. In Tanzania for example, home associations undertake projects that would not normally be associated with mainstream development models. One such project was run by one of the Rungwe home associations in Dar es Salaam, SHIMABU (Shirika la Maendeleo ya Busokelo, Busokelo Development Association). In 2003 SHIMABU was awarded Tsh5 million by the Foundation for Civil Society (FCS), a multi-donor funding body, to hold a series of training workshops in Busokelo aimed at raising awareness among government officials and village leaders of the vulnerability of elderly peasants, and to offer training for the elderly themselves on how to deal with witchcraft accusations, deprivation and

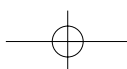
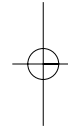
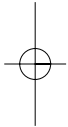


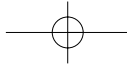
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poor health. But it was really the witchcraft accusations that the Director in Dar es Salaam considered to be the development objective. As he explained, 'this was our main topic actually. Old women are being accused and we want these things to stop.'<sup>1</sup> However, the focus on witchcraft accusations is less apparent from official SHIMABU and FCS project documents, which place the problem as just one of many within a more standard and familiar language of 'development problems' such as the need for poverty reduction and health education for vulnerable groups, and for good governance and leadership at the local level. Home associations have some room for manoeuvre if they know how to locate their specific concerns within donor discourses.

Home associations operate in a context where rural development has been colonized by NGOs, so they tend to mimic them in their use of developmental language, documents and rituals (project proposals, participatory meetings with 'project beneficiaries'). But at the same time, home associations have emerged organically and are historically rooted in a way that NGOs are not. It is no surprise, then, that home associations have adopted the language and form of NGOs. From the perspective of development professionals they might appear amateurish (for example in a lack of monitoring and evaluation), yet it is this amateurish quality that makes them so innovative and interesting. For example, their use of the canon of development terms casts the same words with different meanings. Take 'community participation': this term is used frequently and unproblematically by home associations, but their actual enactment of it differs from standard definitions. For home associations it is more often about the heroism of the indigenes and their commitment to place, a symbolic demonstration of what can be achieved without external help. The practice of 'community participation' is also used to produce the social relationship between those in the village and the 'elites' outside (the elites participate by giving money, those in the village participate by giving labour). Similarly 'culture', and its relationship to development, is viewed differently by members of home associations, as the following comment from the annual general meeting of the home association in Bali Nyong'a suggests:

We are not gathered here as shareholders of a public utility company, nor as members of a democratically elected body for which our country is so rightly praised, but as members of a development and cultural association. I believe strongly that organizations such as this can only have impact if we draw on our rich, well-documented and dare I say widely appreciated culture. No money we contribute could equal that contributed by government, but our cultural capital is immense, it is immeasurable. So I





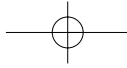
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plead with delegates to speak, act and deliberate. We are here with twin objectives: to promote the development of our subdivision; and to evolve within the cultural context of Bali, one of the ethnic groups of Cameroon ... We are all here for the cultural development of Bali.<sup>2</sup>

Here, the explicit reference to 'culture' ties it very firmly to a distinctively local approach to development, in contrast to a more common and problematic notion of culture that not only sees it as rooted in the past, but also as something to be overcome through the process of development itself. However, what this quotation also shows is that home associations are defining their work not only through responding to the world of NGOs, but also through the need to work within the framework of a national government. So, the language of culture enables the home association to take on some of the responsibilities of the state without criticizing it for failing to deliver. In general, the home associations considered here describe their work as 'complementing' government efforts.

The way in which home associations stretch definitions of development is particularly apparent in relation to their welfare activities. Another key finding of this research is that the work that home associations do to look after their members is far more important than the work specifically labelled as 'development.' Associations spend more time and money comforting members who are bereaved than they do talking about development. Yet when we suggested that development was a much lower priority for these associations than the welfare support that they offered their members, people often disagreed with us on the grounds that the welfare of the diaspora was the development of the home. In one sense this is an instrumental claim: if those in the diaspora can be helped to succeed then the homeplace will ultimately benefit. But in another sense it is a broader claim that the wealth of the place is in its people, and as such supporting each other in the diaspora is the development of the homeplace.

There is a tension emerging between the desire of international development institutions to engage African diaspora groups and the more innovative and locally specific approaches to what constitutes development that are identified here. This is because though donors have embraced diaspora-led development, they also wish to retain their own vision of what constitutes 'development.' Whilst the choice of whether or not to engage with donors is in the hands of the home associations, there is a risk that if they do, they will find that they lose the capacity to define development in their own terms. Key policy documents are taking a clear normative stance on what types of diaspora association and what



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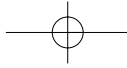
types of development are acceptable. For example the Report of the Global Commission of International Migration (GCIM 2005: 29–30) states that:

[D]iasporas should be encouraged to promote development by saving and investing in their country of origin and participating in transnational knowledge networks... The commission commends the positive impact of diaspora and other migrant organizations that are constructively engaged in development initiatives in countries of origin, particularly through the targeted transfer of collective remittances. One way to enhance this process is for governmental and non-governmental organizations to provide matching funds for such remittances, on the condition that they are put to effective developmental use. It is of equal importance for those who are providing matching funds to ensure that diaspora organizations do not represent narrow regional, political or personal interests. Despite their potential value, diaspora organizations can be exclusionary; pursuing divisive agendas in countries of origin and even contributing towards instability and the prolongation of armed conflict. If their developmental impact is to be maximized, it is essential for such organizations to respect the principles of human rights, good governance and gender equity.

Such a policy leaves the definition of ‘effective developmental use’ in the hands of those who provide the matching funds. Furthermore it suggests that it is possible to find diaspora organizations that do not represent ‘narrow regional, political and personal interests’. However our sense is that such interests are invariably at the heart of home associations because they are place-based. In some contexts (such as international conflict) even a ‘national’ homeplace might be seen as a ‘narrow’ interest. Rather than search for those diaspora associations that are progressive because they do not represent narrow interests it would be more useful to try and find a progressive politics of place. All these associations represent place-based interests and are therefore to some extent exclusionary, so the question is: is it possible to imagine a politics of place that is not by definition seen as parochial or where being exclusionary is not a problem?

### **What is the political work of home associations?**

Home associations are an important institution within the contemporary politics of neopatrimonialism. They can link regional elites to the centres of political power. As such they can be springboards for the politically ambitious, and mechanisms for securing the support of rural electorates.



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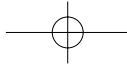
They can be used as part of a divide-and-rule strategy by central government to foment hostility between 'indigenes' and 'strangers' in an era of multi-party politics. Yet such a blunt reading of their political effects is unbalanced.

John Lonsdale has drawn a crucial distinction between 'political tribalism' and 'moral ethnicity' among the Gikuyu of Kenya as a means of bringing an alternative dimension to the otherwise sweeping stigmatization of ethnicity in African politics:

... my reading of history suggests that ethnicity has been the arena of common moral debate as much as a vehicle of unquestioning social ambition. Its deep political language has followed an inner logic partly independent of the changing uses to which its key concepts have been put in high politics. Its values have fired but also disciplined ambition. If that be so, the study of an ethnic imagination may not be so subversive of modern African states as is generally believed; it may be constructive (Lonsdale, 1992: 317–18).

For Lonsdale, moral ethnicity entails Gikuyu political values being used as a potential check on politicians as the public can pass normative judgement on 'how to proceed' (Falk Moore, 1996). These values have a degree of autonomy from the way 'tribe' is brought into high politics. A similar argument can be used to mount a 'defence of place' in the politics of development (Escobar, 2001). Just as there may be a potentially constructive politics of ethnicity, so too there may be a 'progressive politics of place' (Massey, 1993, 1994, 2006).

A progressive politics of place distinguishes between 'political belonging' and 'moral conviviality'. Political belonging describes a process of exploiting affinity to place for elite political ends. Moral conviviality expresses local ideas about the right and wrong ways for diverse groups of people to live together and the process by which differences can be overcome. These two processes coexist. Loyalties to place can be used as part of a divisive and dangerous politics of belonging. This relies on the idea of rigid, impermeable socio-spatial boundaries. But there is an alternative set of values linked to places that has enabled the incorporation of a diverse range of individuals into communities whose boundaries turn out to be highly permeable. Despite the explicit attempt to draw boundaries around territories and corral those who belong there into that space, there are myriad ways in which other people are incorporated into these places on a daily basis. The values that underpin the practical means by which different people live together in places remain autonomous from the way in which the idea of belonging is being used in high politics.



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In the African context this separation of place and ethnicity might initially appear counterintuitive, but it is useful both empirically and theoretically. Of the four homeplaces considered here, none are coterminous with a single or distinct ethnicity. This is underlined by the home associations themselves, none of which is ethnically homogeneous. Indeed, in the case of the Tanzanian diaspora in the UK, associations are primarily based on national rather than ethnic identities. So, using place rather than ethnicity sits more comfortably with actual practices. In addition, a focus on place offers an alternative to the straitjacket of mapping the African social landscape in terms of ethnicity, one that recognizes long histories of mobility and mixing. To imagine place as equivalent to ethnic homeland is to have allowed political belonging to erase history and moral conviviality.

Affinity to place has become more important in recent years. It is often claimed that we live in an age marked by accelerated mobility (of people, money, ideas) and of consequent changes (social, cultural, technical, economic) whose visible outcome is increasing mixture. Such changes are usually discussed together under the banner of 'globalization'. There is a sense that as space is being annihilated by time (Marx, 1973 [1857]) faster than ever, so everywhere starts to feel the same. The experience of mobility is assumed to generate anxiety and insecurity, among both those who move and those who do not. The rapid pace of change produces a desire for fixity, a desire to find a refuge from the hubbub, a place where identities are stable and homogenous rather than hybrid and changing. This desire is used to explain the way that place-based politics have returned to the fore. This shift is often described as a 'retreat' to the local. The idea that local places are outside globalization may be a fantasy but nevertheless has material effects and political consequences.

This increased loyalty to place is generally assumed to be politically reactionary. This is partly because it is thought to be based on a series of false hopes (that it is possible to escape from the experience of frenetic change; that coherent and gentle communities are coincident with particular locations). More significantly, increased loyalty to place is assumed to be reactionary because it looks inwards to small communities of interest rather than outwards to higher levels of solidarity. So classically in some of the literature on Cameroon, the increased loyalty to local places is seen to have undermined attempts to form trans-ethnic opposition parties that can articulate alternative ideologies and policies to the ruling party. In contrast, in Tanzania attempts to build political platforms based on local loyalties are considered taboo, yet rural



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homeplaces are becoming more important as state capacity declines (Kiondo, 1995; Kelsall, 2000). The rise of competitive localisms, a concern with boundary-making, a linking of indigeneity to representative politics, introverted historical narratives and attempts to police who belongs where are all visible signs of political belonging. Home associations are often interpreted as part of this retreat to the local and therefore as politically reactionary because they are overtly place-based.

Some African governments and elites have embraced this turn to the local in order to achieve their own ambitions and have thus amplified its reactionary consequences. The strange rise of the terms 'autochthone' (indigene) and 'allogène' (incomer) within public language in Cameroonian (but not Tanzanian) newspapers and political speeches is perhaps the most startling manifestation of this trend. However, the constitutional rise of ethnic labels on identity cards, covert government support for indigenous groups in exchange for electoral loyalty, explicit moral endorsement of indigeneity in political speeches, legislation that provides financial incentives for policing belonging (such as the Cameroonian community forestry law), and the careful manipulation of high-profile political burials all add further evidence to support the argument that there is a deliberate and knowing attempt to manipulate people's attachment to place for Machiavellian political ends in Cameroon. The result is that a loyalty to place that was already resurgent as a result of increased global mobility is sometimes exaggerated by government policy. Even in Tanzania, (generally taken to be the model for African states in erasing political tribalism) the capacity of the taboo on talking about ethnicity is being tested. This emerges in debates about the selection of parliamentary candidates. For example in 2005 in Mbeya Urban parliamentary constituency, which is 'home' to a large number of Nyakyusa 'migrants', the self-ascribed indigenous Safwa elite manoeuvred on grounds of ethnic belonging to prevent a Nyakyusa candidate from standing. This squabble was quickly censured and disciplined by the central mechanisms of the ruling party and condemned in national papers, yet it reveals a potential tribalization of politics. In the end a Safwa candidate was selected. Furthermore, Tanzanian government ministers laud those urban elites who become engaged with development in their homeplace and involved in home associations, and this inevitably produces competitive localisms. The spectre being raised here is of a process of increasing 'political belonging'.

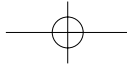
However, an increase in ethnic territorialization as a result of political manipulation of ideas of belonging did not always worry those with

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whom we spoke in either Cameroon or Tanzania. When we sketched out some of the potentially negative outcomes of pursuing place-based politics, association members were bemused by the very notion that ethnic mobilization could be problematic. This was generally also true of those in the international diaspora. In the Tanzanian case this is because there is considerable pride that ethnic conflict has largely been avoided (an outcome usually compared with Kenya or Rwanda). In the Cameroonian case there were occasions when the turn to increasingly local spheres of interest among those in the UK was regretted, but this was for practical rather than political reasons. In contrast most people, particularly in Africa, saw the rise of home associations and place-based politics through the idiom of 'healthy competition'. The activities of one elite group of migrants stimulated those of their neighbours, we were told. The incentive to get organized, form an association, and do some development work in your homeplace was that you did not want neighbouring towns to get ahead of you in the development stakes, that it would be shameful if they did. In other words, competitive localism was seen as 'a good thing' – a healthy stimulus to mobilizing communities.

One response to the finding that people were not worried about the potential for 'balkanization' of the state would be to say that they just do not understand the risks and to conclude that they (Cameroonians in particular) are 'sleepwalking towards disaster'. Given examples like the violent boundary dispute in Bawock, people must surely be either deluded or naïve if they are not conscious of the divisive political consequences of investing effort in these local competitions and excluding some individuals from communities on the grounds that they do not belong. But the people with whom we spoke are not deluded, naïve or indeed complicit – rather they are aware that ethnic territorialization is 'just politics' and that in contrast an autonomous commitment to moral conviviality is generally able to regulate the kind of competition between places. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that politically reactionary events in some of the case study areas are often justified using the language of belonging. But this is balanced by a conviction that the people know the right way to live with their neighbours. When things do go wrong (as at Bawock) it is because the balance has been tipped towards the pole of political belonging by those with particular political agendas.

The requirement to form a normative judgement about the politics of place-based associations emerges from the desire of policy-makers to intervene in the development work that diasporas do. Policy-makers want to know if home associations fall into the category of diaspora

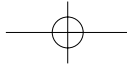
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organizations that are 'exclusionary; pursuing divisive agendas in countries of origin and even contributing towards instability and the prolongation of armed conflict' (GCIM, 2005: 30). The difficulty is that home associations are inherently narrow in their interests because a loyalty to place is what motivates people to join, so it is futile to look for good or bad associations. Instead a progressive politics of place that sets up moral conviviality as a counterpoint to the dangers of political belonging shows how all associations are at risk of being exclusionary, but are not necessarily so. The merit of teasing out the rather crude dichotomy between a progressive and a reactionary politics of place is that it makes transparent what remains hidden in much of the critical analysis because of the aversion to making overt normative judgements. There is, in other words, a tendency in the discussion of the politics of belonging to move too quickly to a dismissal of place-based politics relying on an implicit suggestion that it is reactionary and to refuse to address the need and desire for a sense of attachment to place as more than just a response to globalization.

**Outline of this book**

The book is divided into four parts. Part One addresses the conceptual objective of rethinking the relationship between migration, development and politics when seen through the lens of diasporic home associations. Part Two deals with the structure and character of the home associations that have been studied. Part Three considers how home associations weave together development and politics in the work that they do. Part Four returns to broader questions about the relationship between migration and development, and summarizes our main findings.

After this introduction Part One continues with an explanation of the choice of Cameroon and Tanzania and the research methods used (Chapter 2). The reader is introduced to the four case study areas of Bali, Manyu, Newala and Rungwe. Chapter 3 ('Rethinking research on African diasporas and development') shows how ideas about the relationship between migration and development could be enriched by incorporating insights from the literature on diaspora and associational life. Writing on diasporas challenges conventional understandings of development in important ways: what it means, how it should be done, by whom, and where. The developmental work of diaspora associations cuts across many areas of research, yet there is a lack of dialogue between those who work on migration within Africa and those who work on international migration and transnational mobility. We argue against the

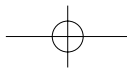
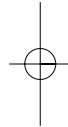
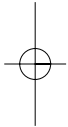


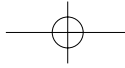
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epistemological separation of mobility inside and outside of Africa within the migration–development nexus because it obscures continuities and tends to underplay the significance of movement within the continent.

In Part Two (“The history and structure of home associations”) the focus shifts to the four case studies. Chapters 4 (on Cameroon) and 5 (on Tanzania) outline the history of migrants’ associational life in each country and show how these national and local contexts have shaped the character of the particular migrants’ associations linked to each case study. The different forms that home associations take in different places is a reflection of the exigencies of political organization, social and economic history, and the associated narratives of changing identity.

Part Three (“The developmental and political work of home associations”) analyses the current work that the four home associations do. Politics and development are considered together because, we argue, they are inseparable. The sequence of the chapters in this section reflects the priorities of the home associations themselves. So welfare and social support (Chapter 6), which are common to all of the associations we have encountered, is their first concern and so it is prioritized in our discussion. Home associations stretch definitions of ‘development’ to include the welfare and social support of those in the diaspora and those at home. This theme is continued in Chapter 7 with a discussion of home associations’ role in ‘modernizing’ ‘tradition’. The focus of the chapter is the construction of a mortuary in Bali Nyong’a by the home association. Issues around burial are a common concern among associations. The mortuary project provides a good example of the way in which diasporas do development differently and provides a lens through which we can examine the relationship between those ‘at home’ and those ‘outside’. In Chapter 8 we turn our attention to the provision of education services. Tanzanian associations in particular have invested heavily in secondary education at home. The Tanzanian case reveals the uneven development of diaspora-led education provision by examining the differences between the Newala and Rungwe diasporas’ attempts to improve secondary provision at home. Chapter 9 reflects on the limits to the capacity of home associations to provide public goods by discussing the construction of a large water supply system in Cameroon. The water project reveals the reliance of home associations on their domestic members and contacts (for example with governments) rather than on their connections with the international diaspora. But this case is also interesting because of the way in which the association dealt with the very stiff challenges it faced when the project was (initially) unsuccessful.





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That the project did not fail entirely shows the strength of home associations in terms of their persistent commitment to particular places and their embeddedness in social relations, ensuring that leaders are held accountable to home places.

Part Four summarizes our main findings, identifies areas where more research is needed and considers opportunities for development policy-makers to engage diaspora associations. The argument that there could be a progressive politics of place is developed further in this final chapter.

Notes

1. Interview, Rungwe diaspora in Dar es Salaam, September 2005.
2. Bali Nyong'a Development and Cultural Association AGM, Bali, Cameroon, February 2005.

