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Harmony O'Rourke, *Hadija's Story: Diaspora, Gender, and Belonging in the Cameroon Grassfields*. Publisher: Indiana: Indiana University Press. 272 pp. Year: 2017. ISBN: 0253023831.

Reviewed by: Fulera Issaka-Toure, University of Bayreuth, Germany.

Harmony O'Rourke is an associate Professor of history at Pitzer College in the United States of America. Her book adds to the African history collection and opens up new areas of academic debate on not only the subjects of gender, belonging, and diaspora but it also raises methodological issues concerning writing African history. Besides the introduction and the conclusion, the book is divided into two parts which are made up of six chapters. Part I is composed of two chapters while Part II covers chapters three through six. In Part I of the book, O'Rourke takes the reader through the relationships between colonisers and "native strangers". The manner of the relationship, as she opines, was informed by the host grassfielders, the permanent strangers and the perceptions of the European colonisers. The discussion paves the way for the reader to understand the encounters between the Europeans, grassfield hosts, and Hausa-permanent strangers. This relationship ends with the establishment of an Islamic court, a key aspect of the book. In Part II, the author takes the reader through the ways in which Hausa authority and identity are both contested and challenged; it too shows the manner in which people negotiate inequalities in both local and long-distance contexts. This part of the book uses some rich materials from the oral narratives and court records.

The heart of the book lies in the ideas of diaspora formation, belonging and gender. O'Rourke successfully contributes to the academic debates on these three themes; all of which run through her book. On gender and diaspora formation, O'Rourke's inputs lies in the fact that she makes it clear from the beginning that gender has contributed towards the formation and development of African history; it has, however, not been presented and approached from this dimension because the records have mainly been male dominated. She clarifies the point that women not only participated actively in the diaspora formation through various means. They too, she argued, made inputs through 'intimate movements'; as she phrased it.

As regards the notion of 'belonging', she strongly illustrates that women participate positively in their newly found home where they have settled. She refers, for example, to Hadija's story that indicates how a woman who have had an erased past found herself through the procesws of belonging in a newly established community; it is in such a community that she socialized constructing her sense of belonging. The story reflects the agency of women in finding their sense of belonging and it highlights their contribution towards the diaspora demonstrating their gendered positionalities and contestations.

An important aspect of the book lies in the methods that the author employed in writing it; she not only included archival materials but she too made use of extensive interviews. These mixed methods helped to shape the book into a fairly credible resource. It, however, says much about the archival records' limitations as regards the issue of gender. In fact, historical writing as captured in some archival records deliberately omitted a number of important female charactors

whose contributions should have been written. Nonetheless, this raises methodological difficulties that arises when writing gender as a key subject into the historical records.

On the whole, the book may be described as a vital resource for anyone who studies African diaspora studies; more importantly, however, is the fact that it touches on two other themes, namely the issue of gender and one's sense of belonging within the diaspora. This timely contribution opens up a new conversation about Hausa diaspora and this is especially so with regard to the women's roles in identity and diaspora formation. In essence, the book is a good source for both academics and non-academics who have an interest in this area.

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