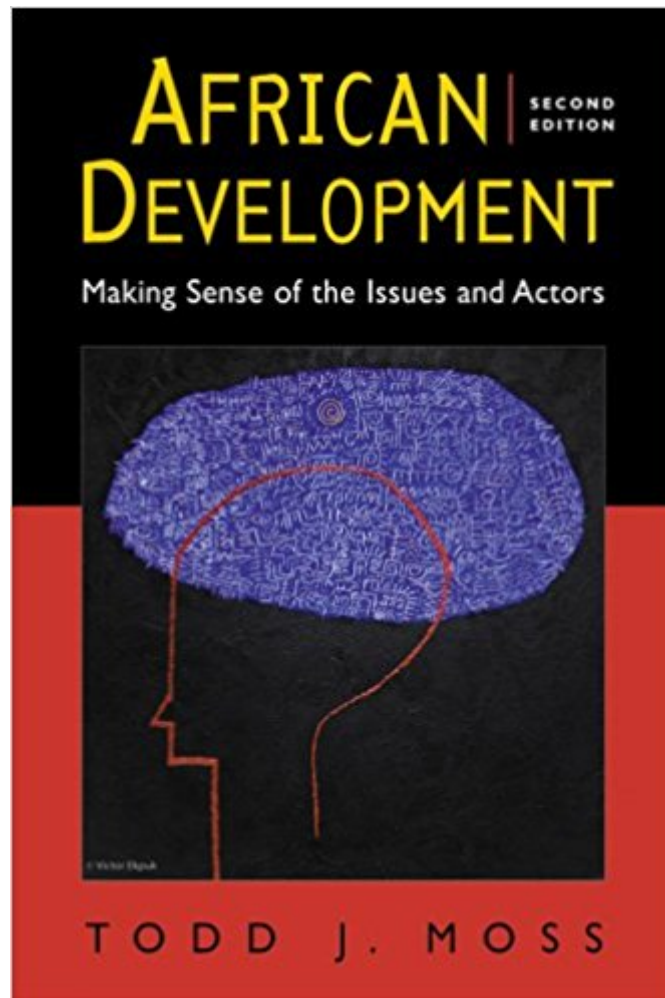




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African Development: Making Sense Of The Issues And Actors



Synopsis

In the ongoing battle against global poverty, the countries of Africa continue to present the greatest challenge. *African Development* offers a comprehensive introduction to the issues, actors, and institutions interacting across the diverse continent. Each chapter is organized around three fundamental questions: Where are we now? How did we get to this point? What are the current debates? Interspersed throughout are vivid sidebars acquainting the student with ten well-known "big men" and ten equally important but lesser known African actors. The text also includes the ABCs of development jargon. Other useful features include chapter-by-chapter suggestions for further reading and a comprehensive index.

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Customer Reviews

An excellent introduction to current political and economic issues in Africa. Chapter 1's 'Ten Tips for Sensibly Studying African Development' are reason enough to read the book... Highly recommended. --Choice

"An excellent and much-needed volume that brilliantly manages to make complex issues clear.... Balanced and honest, it will help students distinguish between the hype, the myths, and the realities of many topics of concern to Africans and Africanists." --Pierre Englebert, Pomona College --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is dedicated (in part) to "the next generation of Africaphiles," and does a great job of breaking down complex subjects for people new to the issues. The style is highly readable, with a broad range of topics covered with just the right amount of detail. Think of it as The Idiot's Guide to Africa. I would recommend this book to professors teaching undergraduate-level seminars, or to anyone with a general curiosity about foreign aid. I would not recommend this book for those seeking detailed explanations, those who like to fact-check, or those hoping to cite the information they are reading. I bought this book to aid in my research for a writing project on HIV. I skipped right to the chapter on poverty and HIV/AIDS and found a number of compelling statistics (the life expectancy in Botswana has dropped from 58 to 38 in the past 3 decades, ARV programs have only a 60% retention rate,...). Excited, I grabbed a pen and notebook, only to realize that these stats appear without citations; in fact, there are NO citations in this book, leaving me to wonder if the author compiled it from stuff he read on the Internet. There are some jaw-dropping facts mentioned in this book; but without their proper citations, academics can't really use them. The author does not credit the sources of his many facts and ideas (save for an unsorted bibliography at the end), which I find academically dishonest. This book may be helpful to a person seeking a digestible overview of a broad subject. (It's helped me narrow my focus and find books I can ACTUALLY use in my research project). However, it's useless as a work of scholarship. I am hopeful that a third edition would give due credit to its sources where they are used.

A basic overview of the history of Africa and economic, political, and regional development. Focusing less on individuals than on major topics, this examines the impact of issues like human rights and GMOS in the region that can both hurt and help a region simultaneously. Differentiating countries and periods, this proves that there is no simple solution, but one still must be attempted both internally and externally for development.

I bought this for an understanding Africa course in College, and I never actually referred to it during the class. Of course, every class and professor is different, but I found it to be a waste of money for me. I would be sure you have checked with your professor on the amount you will be using the book to see if it is worth the money for you.

As other reviewers have indicated, the book is well organized and clearly written. But - again, as others have indicated - there are far too many "facts" and statistics without references to sources used. Researchers would therefore find little use for this book; even the undergraduate student

would find few avenues to pursue should any of the topics discussed within the book spark interest - particularly for a research project, such as a term paper. As a professor of the inter-related subjects of African politics/history/development, books like this can be a crucial basis for surveying the issues at a very introductory level. But today's writers (and publishers) must also understand that all undergraduate students need to develop their personal investigation/research skills as they contemplate life options and/or wade through the results of a google search, or other. Even those behind Wikipedia understand the need to provide citations to their, often general, overviews for the student/researcher/autodidact who wants to dig deeper. A book like this is sorely needed, I acquired a copy as soon as I saw the title. I only wish a bit more care was put into providing sources. In the end, the reader is left with the impression of far too introductory generalized fluff on a topic that deals with matters of life and death. In this world of information bombardment, knowing where the information comes from, on a topic as important and pressing as this, is especially crucial. 3 stars for addressing the matter at all, organization, and clarity. But this reader is left disappointed.

This book sets out to "provide some of the basic information about development in sub-Saharan Africa to smooth the progress of further study." That's exactly what you get: not 'the answers', but an extremely clear, thorough, and sure-handed guide to all the right questions. No better such guide exists. If you're looking for the smart person's entry point, this is it. If you're an experienced researcher or practitioner looking for a framework within which to organize your thoughts, this is it, too. Moss gives concise biographies of the most important postcolonial 'big men', sharp summaries of some of the key events that have shaped the development process across the continent, and painstakingly even-handed but clear-eyed synopses of the different sides of international debates on aid policy, trade, investment, and others. The text always provokes thought but never condescends. The author is a PhD political scientist who used to write for The Economist newspaper, which should tell you that 1) the writing is crisp and exact, and 2) he knows his economics, but 3) is never 'economistic' and has a firm grasp of the political forces that shape Africa's response to outsiders' development efforts. To give you the flavor, here are the "ten tips for sensibly studying African development" whose discussion in Chapter One motivates the survey to follow: "1. There are no panaceas and few quick fixes", "2. Don't believe the (good and bad) hype", "3. Resist the temptation to exoticize", "4. Development is always political", "5. Development is more than money", "6. Be careful with 'facts'", "7. Be skeptical of data", "8. Keep perspective on Africa's size", "9. Get to know some specific countries", "10. Go! [to Africa]".

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