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## Compassionate Investment?—Diaspora Contribution to Poverty Alleviation in Francophone West Africa

Dieu Hack-Polay

### Introduction

Francophone West Africa comprises nine French-speaking countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo. Francophone West Africa includes some of the most impoverished nations on the planet, e.g. Mali, Niger and Mauritania. The recent history of the region is dominated by poverty. The region is among those that have experienced political instability in the world, with each one of them having gone through a coup d'état or an attempt of coup since independence mostly in the 1960s. French colonisation vigorously marked the countries of its former empire. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, France established its colonial rule over a large number of territories in Africa, Asia and South America. For many of these countries, Colonial Era was protracted till the 1960s.

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D. Hack-Polay (✉)

Lincoln International Business School,  
University of Lincoln, Lincoln, UK  
e-mail: dhackpolay@lincoln.ac.uk

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The ideal of the foundation and expansion of a French empire based on the notion of civilising mission was grounded in Darwinist perspectives of race superiority. According to McMillan (1992) Darwinist views were largely publicised through novels, travel brochures in the 1890s and these views elevated the imperialist idea, thus contributing to perpetuate its popularity. Seven decades of French occupation and decolonisation struggles by the colonised evidence the fact that decolonisation was not an overnight gain. Independence was widely celebrated in the 1960s. However, after independence, a multitude of facts happened that gave rise to a new form of struggle among the newly born nations. In the context of auto-determination, there arose the profound realisation that Colonial Era has left social and political footprints on the lives of the colonised, which may not be erasable. The reconstruction and mobilisation attempts were geared at undoing some of the undesirable colonial footprints and targeted cultural and psychological redress. These rebuilding works were referred to as valorisation of local norms and reconstruction of mentalities, etc. The illusion of independence gone, the nations realised that the struggle for real independence was not over (Nkrumah 1965; Benneyworth 2011). It became more and evident that the new struggle was not against a single adversary but against a multiplicity of forces including the former colonial power which was returning to charge with more allies some of whom were recruited directly among the locals. Neocolonialism is therefore not the action of the former colonial power alone but it is aided by African elites in an attempt to seek protection for their status and wealth.

It is therefore evident that the process of decolonisation is a longer endeavour than the African leaders championing freedom expected. Ferro (1997: 19) rightly affirms that 'decolonisation has often been limited to a change of sovereignty when there is only substitution of political authority by another and the old dependence mutates to a new form that benefits the colonial power and local elites'. Answering the question of remittances cannot be divorced from the imperial roots of the issue.

The Francophone African diaspora has grown over time. This spans through slavery times to the present. It is clear, that part of this diaspora has emerged to become 'natural' citizens of other geographical spaces,

e.g. African Americans, Black British whose fore parents were taken to the UK many centuries ago and they identify themselves as fully fledged part of the British ethnic architecture. For the purpose of this book, we consider the African diaspora to comprise people who are first or second generations of immigrants to the host countries outside of Africa and maintain ties with the country of origin (COO).

Such diaspora plays a critical role in the African Renaissance through their contributions to political reforms, economic ventures and tourism and charitable actions, etc. This is exemplified in a Kajunju (2013) article that terms the diaspora 'Africa's secret weapon'. Many African countries and African families look up to the diaspora for ideas and economic support. This stems from the belief that being the diaspora signifies better lives and enhanced learning opportunities placing the migrant in a position to transfer knowledge and economic capabilities. It is estimated that over 25 million people with African decent within our diaspora definition live outside of Africa. However, the African diaspora in the broader sense accounts for over 170 million people (World Bank 2012).

Part of the literature has characterised the African diaspora as 'brain drain'. This signifies the loss of talent from Africa to other socio-economic and culture spheres of our globe (Network of African Science Academies (NASAC 2009)). However, more and more voices are emerging to acclaim the same migratory movements as vital to the reconstruction or development of African economies and politics (Boyo 2013; Mugimu 2010; Easterly and Nyarko 2007).

This chapter examines some of the critical aspects of colonial heritage in Francophone Africa and considers current and historical events which help elucidate the diaspora phenomenon that constitutes a fundamental pillar of the study of remittances and diaspora investment. This chapter examines what Francophone African Diaspora investment represents in terms of the development of the region not only as a whole but also for individual families supported by the diaspora and the migrant themselves. This chapter expands on the concept of compassionate investment and the extent to which it is increasingly becoming a development factor alongside international aid.

## Colonialism and the Emergence of Francophone African Diaspora

As asserted earlier, there is little doubt that French colonialism has profoundly marked the peoples of the Francophone West Africa. A major part of the French colonial legacy in the region concerns language, education the economy and political system. These aspects of the country's life are examined in more details in the following paragraphs.

### Language and Culture

After the collapse of the French empire, there was a debate about the revalorisation of vernacular languages and local cultures. However, over half a century after independence was gained it is rather the opposite that is observed in most part of the francophone sub-Saharan region. To date, the official national language of all Francophone African countries remains the French language. It is taught in all schools at all levels; it is the medium and a subject of instruction. The same colonial policy which sought to censor vernacular languages in schools remains in application. In the 'independent' Francophone Africa, children are not to use their mother tongues within the school setting. This practice which echoes French colonialism could be termed neocolonialism (Hanson 2008; Kazianis 2011). In the administrative milieu, the situation is no different; the official working language is French and economic transactions are carried out in French. Political circles hold the thesis that the upholding of the colonial language serves the purpose of consensus seeking (Rosendal 2008). However, it is difficult to comprehend that the Francophone West African countries have not been able to develop a local language from its largest linguistic groups such as the *Baoulé* or the *Dioula* which constitute a quarter of the national population each in a country like Côte d'Ivoire. This raises the question of whether maintaining the French language is for strategic national interests or to safeguard the privileges of the new African elite. This is an interesting debate but we shall not venture in this as the question transcends the scope of this chapter.

## The White School in Black Africa

School and education in Francophone West Africa, both in their form and substance, retain all the characteristics of the French system. Curricula and qualifications (even the titles) are replicas of the French. After the pseudo independence, there have been a few attempts to reinvent education which would account for indigenous ethnic, religious and geographic norms (Boussougou and Menacere 2015; Haugen 1995). Celis (1990), a Belgian writer on Francophone education in Africa, spoke of the ‘white school in black Africa’, given its profound affiliation with Western education which hinders the capacity of Ivorian education to respond to local realities. It is, thus, a dysfunctional school which is incapacitated in terms of servicing the needs of endogenous development. For Celis (1990), the new Ivorian elite has bankrupted national education. This has implications and ramifications in several areas of social life, e.g. the so-called brain drain, a key driver of the formation of the diaspora. Celis contends that the educational system’s construction based on Western models is a key factor in creating graduates with limited relevant skills for the local economy. Many who harbour skills and potential feed the diaspora, causing a significant brain drain.

## Dominated Economic and Political Domain

The growth of the numbers in the diaspora is linked to historical and current global politico-economic issues. In the era of globalisation, it is often difficult to distinguish what legitimately derives from global influence and what is an act of neocolonialism. However, certain elements, particularly the degree of implication of global organisations in the political life of a country could aid in ascertaining to some extent neocolonialist drives from ‘normal’ effects of globalisation. The attentive observer of Ivorian politics since 1960s will recognise that the country’s economy has not gained independence, causing local entrepreneurs to live in the shadow of foreign investors (Hansen et al. 2016). For example, economic activities are intimately linked to that of France. In the Côte d’Ivoire, for example, large companies in strategic sectors such as, electricity

(CIE: Compagnie Ivoirienne d'Electricité), water (SODECI: Société pour le Développement de l'Eau en Côte d'Ivoire), telecommunication (CITELCOM: Côte d'Ivoire Télécommunications), the post office and major means of air travel are the properties of French companies.

The Bouygues Group, for instance, controls electricity and telecommunications while Renault and Peugeot almost monopolise the supply of buses and cars. It appears as though the Ivorian leaders have sold the strategic aspects of the country's life to foreign ownership in order to seek protection for their own personal assets and gains. This political decision has been made despite a sizeable proportion of the intellectual elite advocating for nationalisation of some key sectors. The Ivorian Prime Minister of the 1990s, Alassane Ouattara, decided that it was right to sell significant assets and industries to France. Critiques of the then Prime Minister (now President since 2011) argue that he acted in this way in order to seek France's support while he was seeking to be elected to the presidency (Akindès 2004). These types of complicities are not rare in the economic systems of the former French colonies in black sub-Saharan Africa. Though these were not well documented and proven, the later events in Ivory Coast will come to nourish the imagination of individuals and social groups as to the veracity of the facts. Many in the Ivorian elite believe that Alassane Ouattara benefited from foreign influence to attempt to destabilise the Ivorian regime through a coup. When the coup attempt in 2002 failed, the former prime minister sought asylum in France. So did many others suspected of involvement in the coup as well as masses among the general population who felt unsafe. It was the beginning of the second wave of mass exodus for Ivorian people seeking asylum. The first wave of exodus was in the early 1990s during the Premiership of Alassane Ouattara, the now President.

In addition to strategic economic sectors being in the hand of foreign companies, the national currency which is the CFA Franc in most Francophone West African countries has legendary alignment with the Euro. Prior to the introduction of the Euro currency, the CFA Franc was aligned with the French Franc. Fluctuation in the currency is inextricably dependent on the Euro. The CFA Franc, for many economic observers, has been one of the key pillars on which the strength of the French franc rested for many decades. Olukoshi (2001: 23) advances

that the CFA Franc ‘strengthened the French Franc on the international stage and offered distinct advantages to French companies in the Francophone World’.

## **Growth of the Francophone African Diaspora**

The growth of the African diaspora is linked to several factors. It is not only created by external influences as it is sometimes argued by a number of African scholars and commentators. But it is linked to both endogenous and exogenous factors, the deleterious effect of the new African elite, poverty, war and forced displacements as well as global labour mobility and education. This section examines two critical causes: the influence of the new African elite and wars.

### **Impact of the New African Elite and Franco-African Complicity**

Jennifer Brea (2002) argues that ‘Francophone African bloggers have grappled with their countries’ colonial legacies and the power history has to shape the present and the future. For them, independence is an illusion and in many ways, both psychologically and materially, Africa remains a colony of the old empires’. This assertion can be an interesting starting point for the analysis of a double-faceted neocolonialism and its emergence as a push factor for African emigration.

The African elites themselves become colonisers of the popular masses, using the national security apparatus against these masses. Suppression of oppositions is frequent (Doza 1995). Since the advent of the multiparty system in Francophone West Africa in the 1990s, the successive regimes since have suppressed the ordinary citizen and the opposition. In this supposedly new era, stability in the countries has collapsed and suffering, disease, murders and wars have increased (Beams 2000).

The new Francophone West African elite is characterised by a sharp division: one that is in power and supported by the former colonial power and one that lives quasi-permanently in an oppressed opposition.

The former colonial power uses local elites as agents to serve neocolonialist interests. Notre Voie (2004)—an Ivorian daily newspaper—writes that the new relationships between the former colonisers and the newly independent nations are relationships between master and servants. The double game of the colonial power among Ivorian elites is geared at protecting French interests regardless of who holds political office and power. This complicity between colonial power and local elites often leads to bitter rivalries and conflicts such as the two-decade long conflict in the Côte d'Ivoire since the year 2000.

## The Impact of the Civil Wars

The crisis that has been shaking the Côte d'Ivoire for almost 20 years results not only from the colonial game in the country with the new elites but also from the desire of the Ivorian elites to assert themselves as the lawful depositaries of the political power. The political climate has worsened since the discovery of important oil reserves in the country in 2000s. Competition between energy-hungry nations will lead to more division of the local elites. This supports the thesis put forward by Ayittey (1992) who advances that the assaults against Africa are always motivated by the economic interests of the aggressors be they internal or external. Olukoshi (2001) espouses similar views in his book entitled 'West Africa's political economy in the next millennium: retrospective and prospect'. Many observers of the Ivorian political and economic life would see the armed rebellion of 2000 as a fabrication from the Quai d'Orsay in view to dethrone Laurent Gbagbo, the then president, and install a leader who will be more favourable to colonial interests and would renew lucrative business and economic contracts in the key industries such as oil, electricity, water, telecommunication and automobile (see *The Guardian* 2011; RFI 2011). In this battle for control of the national strategic sectors, the elites, both in power and in the opposition, will take ambivalent positions. Some openly support the foreign influences while others attempt to collaborate with them in order to seek protection (Olukoshi 2001). However, there is often a strong resistance from the popular masses. In the context of the 2000 conflict, there has been a certain polarisation, leading to divisions along geographic and ethno-religious lines



creating a north–south divide, with an under-developed Muslim north and a more prosperous Christian south. The rebels occupied the north while the republicans controlled the south. In the state of confusion, insecurity, executions, mass murders, arbitrary imprisonments and rapes, a large number of Ivoirians sought cross-border refuge for the first time in the country's history (Médecins Sans Frontières 2002). This is not to assert that the Côte d'Ivoire was emigration-free prior to the 2000 conflict, but the analysis here emphasises the unprecedented numbers leaving the country to seek refuge in foreign countries (UNHCR 2016).

Such a critical analysis is commanded also because there is dismay about the inability of the Francophone West African countries to protect the liberty acquired at independence in the 1960s and the ensuing prosperity in the first two decades that followed. On the contrary, the living conditions of the populations are not better presently than they were 20–30 years ago (Sembene 2015). This, for many commentators, is caused by the destructive complicity between the African bourgeoisie and foreign interests, as Fanon (1968) would argue. For Fanon, the notion of national identity bears meaning only when it reflects collective revolutionary efforts which aim to engender the collective freedom for the oppressed people. However, it can be observed that there has been no collective liberation, but rather the liberation of a certain national bourgeoisie that was awaiting the departure of the formal colonisers in order to affirm itself. Leaders that derived from the colonial struggle and those that succeeded them copied what the former 'masters' did in order to ensure a new form of domination. Little has been done to contribute to the well-being of the masses that followed the calls for mobilisation that enthroned the new elite and took it to power (Kazianis 2011).

Ayittey (1992) observes that 'three decades of dictatorship and of incomprehensible political ideologies have left a legacy of fear, poverty, refugees, corruption and theft'. Military brutalities, torture, vandalism and arbitrary rules are part of the daily lives of ordinary citizens, bringing back memories of the Colonial Era. Many leaders have turned against the very people they claim to serve and work for foreign protection. According to the newspaper *Notre Voie* (2004) the people have been robbed of the true independence, which exemplifies what Fanon (1968) termed the treason of the people.

This has caused exodus to greener pastures, causing refugee flows leading to brain drain. The exodus is unprecedented because it exceeds any mass migration from the Côte d'Ivoire of any period in the country's recorded history, i.e. since 1895. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR 2016) put the numbers that have fled the country to enter the diaspora to over 400,000 between 2002 and 2012. The literature is consistent in its acknowledgement that such mass exoduses have led to significant brain drain since most of those who are able to flee across borders to the West are the educated and or the young who could lift the economy up.

The next section examines the nomenclature of a Francophone Diaspora in the UK, the Ivorian community. It explores their socio-economic circumstances including education, work and remittances as well as the investments they make in their homeland. We particularly seek to understand the rationale and the nature of such investment.

## **Diaspora and Direct Investment**

While most refugees and economic migrants from Francophone Africa traditionally landed in France, Belgium and French-speaking Canada, in the past three decades or so, a sizeable number of Francophone Africans have reached the English speaking world, e.g. UK, US, Australia, New Zealand, etc. This shift in the destination of Francophone African migrants is to some extent linked to the deteriorating relationships between France and African nations and citizens (Benneyworth 2011; Charbonneau 2008; Howden 2011).

### **Overview of a Francophone Diaspora in the UK: The Ivorians**

It has already been established that Francophone African migrants have been turning to the English speaking world in the past few decades due to difficulties in relationships between France and its former colonies. This explains why this chapter focuses on the Ivorians, a Francophone

African community in the UK. It is difficult to establish the number of Ivorian migrants in the UK (Tiemoko 2004). This is partly due to the fact that traditionally most francophone migrants arrived in France, Belgium, Canada or Switzerland. The lack of certainty about the number of Ivorians in the UK is also due to the difficulties in generating reliable statistics due to complex reasons: some arrive in the UK directly as refugees or students and others enter the UK from the European Union (IOM 2008) where they may have acquired other Western nationalities. The number in the UK stands at approximately between 5000 and 9000 according to community leaders (IOM 2008). This number represents a significant rise on the pre-2000 number of Ivorians in the UK, which was estimated to be around 2500 according to the 2001 UK Census.

Just over half of the Ivorian migrants in the UK live in London. The rest of the community is distributed across the country, with Birmingham taking a larger proportion followed by Newcastle, Glasgow and Edinburgh (IOM 2008). Table 5.1 provides a breakdown of the distribution of the Ivorian community in the UK.

The choice of the place to live is largely dictated by economic opportunities, e.g. employment and training. The London and Southeast England areas appear attractive due to the presence of a sizeable opportunity for unskilled labour which is attractive to newcomer migrants in general and to the francophone communities in the early period after arriving in the UK. Besides, London and the larger metropolitan cities such as Birmingham and Newcastle harbour more employment opportunities (Aznar 2013), being economic powerhouses in the UK. This explains why, according to statistics provided by the London School of Economics, London absorbs nearly 40% of the total UK migrant inflows

**Table 5.1** Geographical distribution of Ivorian migrants in the UK in 2008

Place	Number	%
London	4500	50.0
Birmingham	3000	33.3
Newcastle	1000	11.1
Glasgow	200	2.2
Other	300	3.3

(LSE 2007). The literature also establishes that new migrants tend to move to areas where there is an established community network that they can tap into. This means that London and the large cities mentioned earlier will continue to experience growth in the number of migrants of certain ethnicity and nationalities. The Ivorian diaspora follows this trend.

## Social and Community Lives in the UK

As discussed above, the Ivorian community in the UK lives predominantly in large cities. London is the preferred destination of the Francophone migrants, including those from the Côte d'Ivoire. Early Ivorian immigrants settled mainly in the London area and started to create community groups as the numbers grew. The expansion of the Ivorian community groups occurred in the post-2000 era when a significant number of refugees arrived in the UK. This followed the political difficulties and the Ivorian Civil War described earlier in this chapter. The UNHCR (2008) put to 2170 the number of new asylum applications by Ivorian nationals between 1997 and 2007, pushing the number of Ivorians in the UK and London particularly since these new arrivals remain almost exclusively in the London area. Within those cities, there are areas of concentration of the Francophone community, with areas traditionally attracting Black Africans being the major receiving pockets. These include the London boroughs of Brent, Lewisham, Southwark and Greenwich.

IOM (2008) recorded around 60 community groups and charities serving the Francophone communities in the UK. These communities are a pull factor when it comes to new migrants seeking a place to live (Hack-Polay 2008).

## Work and Employment

Language barriers and unfamiliarity with the labour market (Tiemoko 2004; Hack-Polay 2008) are key determinants of the entry of migrants into the unskilled labour market. Though, as in many migrant

communities in the UK, many in the Ivorian diaspora are well educated, they suffer high levels of underemployment. A significant proportion of the population works in jobs below their qualifications (European Commission 2012). The main reasons for this have generally been attributed to language barriers and race. However, given that most aspirants to employment have qualified in the UK, Hack-Polay refutes this argument and propounds that the lack of authoritative networks reduces the opportunities available to recent diaspora. Despite low paid employment and having to take up second jobs to support themselves in the diaspora, the Ivorians and the Francophone community at large, strive to find the resources for remittances and establish small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) back home that create employment for family members. This sets cross-border money remittances as a substantial strategic opportunity in Côte d'Ivoire (Scharwatt and Williamson 2015; World Bank 2016). The diaspora's drive to support selves in the country of residence at the same time as helping others in the COO despite their own hardship faced in the foreign countries reinforces the perception that without genuine compassion investment in others at home may not be possible. Hence the notion of compassionate invest that we coin in this chapter.

## Compassionate Investment

An important aspect of Francophone Africans' life in the UK is the relentless attempts to contribute to the development of their native lands. This takes many different forms. Some send remittances to support the daily lives of relatives left back. Others invest directly in the economic system, setting up SMEs. Often, such investment does not produce direct benefits for the migrants themselves but rather other beneficiaries in the homeland (Scharwatt and Williamson 2015; European Commission 2014; African Development Bank 2013). Without such support, the left-behind relatives could experience hardship. This disinterested investment has led us to term it compassionate investment. The next part of this section examines the nature of compassionate investment and the rationality behind it as well as the

benefits to wider nations. The diaspora contributes to the economic life of the COO via two main means of direct investment: remittances and business venture creation.

## The Nature of Compassionate Investment

So far we have introduced the concept of compassionate investment but it is important to frame it in a way that it provides an intelligible picture for the reader. Compassionate diaspora investment is significantly different from traditional investment that seeks profit for one individual and a small group of investors. However, in compassionate investment, the individual investor or the group seeks to improve the lives of others, usually relatives or their native communities. Compassionate investment has two parts: remittances and cash investment in business ventures. While remittances are 'grants', business ventures are for-profit investments whose returns are to be used or expended by the relatives delivering the diaspora business. This makes the profits earned charitable profit. It is unconsciously an extension of the state's provision to its citizens.

The list below exposes the main characteristics of compassionate investment:

- Disinterested: the diaspora investor creates businesses to benefit relatives and country predominantly
- Performed whole-heartedly: the diaspora investor invest emotionally and psychologically in the business
- Acceptance of the burden by the diaspora (work-life balance): the investor works additional hours and sacrifices his/her own work-life balance to generate revenue to support the business with limited expectation of payback
- Not for personal gain: the interest and well-being of the left-behind relatives and the country drives diaspora investors' effort
- Supportive: the diaspora investor provides additional assistance and resources and seldom questions the accounts of the recipients

- Collectivist perspective (unlike traditional investment which is individualistically orientated)
- Sacrificial

Compassionate investment does not go without cost to the diaspora. The cost is not only in mere financial terms but also emotional and physical. Many in the diaspora, do work long hours, are involved in second or multiple jobs and forsake their work-life balance in order to generate enough revenue to support themselves in exile and show compassion for the left-behind extended families (Hack-Polay et al. 2017). This is a cost or rather a sacrifice that the diaspora is happy to bear provided it continues to bring smile to relative and prosperity and less dependence to the motherlands.

## Remittances

Remittances are the first form of investment of the diaspora in the home country. These are direct responses due to poverty alleviation. Through this, the migrants ensure a steady flow of income that supports the living of relatives. In most cases, these are critical supplements to meagre local income which enables the relatives' to stretch their earning and improve their living conditions. Without the supplements coming from the diaspora, such relatives may be on the poverty line. In other cases, the remittances from the diaspora come in as 'godsend' lump sums on which the family wholly depends. The migrant then operates as a 'family bank', a fruitful investment that pays back. In these situations, the migrant needs to continue to be in employment in the diaspora in order to maintain the viability of the 'family bank' and continue to act as a life support for the left-behind relatives. This supports the daily purchase of commodities, school fees and expenses, medical cost, funeral costs, etc. A study by Hack-Polay et al. (2017) shows that on average migrant send £3000 annually to their home country in respect of remittances. In much of Francophone West Africa, this would represent the average salary of professionals such as nurses, teachers,

police officers, etc. It is therefore evident that remittances strengthen the financial positions of the migrants' nuclear or extended family in the COO.

A number of diaspora members build houses back home aiming to retire there one day. The literature argues that rarely do the migrants actually return to occupy those houses (Flahaux 2014). The retirement plan, therefore, acts as a pretext to build reasonable homes for family members. Evidence suggests that many of the investors do not actually go back or retire back home as they purport; some just do not make it due to early death, critical illness or disability. Others have their children born and married abroad and decide to remain close to their adult children and their grandchildren. The fact that the diaspora does not necessarily expect payback on the support they provide to relatives reinforces the perspective that such investment is compassionate investment.

## **Business Venture**

Other francophone Africans set up business in the COO and work in the UK to support those businesses. These ventures usually aim to create jobs for family. However, they are also viewed by the investors as some type of insurance for retirement as it is hoped that the business would have matured on the migrants' return to the homeland. Though the investment does not generate immediate profit (or profit at all) for the diaspora investors, the ability to help relatives out of unemployment and poverty is the guiding rationale for diaspora direct investment. In this sense, such investment is what we earlier termed compassionate investment.

Business ventures are major parts of diaspora direct investment. Mohamoud (2003), Nyarko (2014) and Plaza and Ratha (2011) argue that the African diaspora creates businesses in their native countries every year. These businesses contribute \$53 billion to the local economies yearly according to Plaza and Ratha (2011), making a significant contribution to the national economies. Thus, whether the diaspora business generates profits, mere breakeven or makes losses is not the



critical subject of analysis but rather the significant contribution deriving from such ventures since they are made up of foreign cash directly injected which travels through the economic system of the homeland and impacts many other socio-economic life. For example, families and individuals who are beneficiaries of compassionate investments experience a significant relief from the effect of poverty, having their buying power enhanced and quality of life improved (Le Goff 2010). The diaspora investment is of the size of international aid received by poor countries (Scharwatt and Williamson 2015; *The Guardian* 2013). Estimates in this area put amounts of remittances globally at \$530 billion (World Bank 2017) and at \$60 million USD for Francophone West Africa (Scharwatt and Williamson 2015). Country-specific comparisons show the growing pre-eminence of remittances and diaspora direct investment over international aid money received. For instance, according to the World Bank (2012), Indian migrants in the UK remitted \$4 billion to India in 2011, compared with the \$450 million in aid that the UK donated; remittances from the Bangladeshi diaspora amounted to \$740 million, which doubled the amount Bangladesh received in aid (\$370 million) from the UK in 2011. Remittances to Francophone West Africa are equally significant compared to international aid. Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, has experienced growing remittances from its diaspora which sent \$1.64 billion in 2015 an increase on the \$1.3 billion the country received in remittances in 2014 (Country Economy 2016). This contrasts with just over \$922 million in aid (OECD 2016) received by Côte d'Ivoire in 2014.

While international aid goes to government agencies and aid organisations, remittances are sent directly to the individual and families or invested directly in small business creation. The majority of small businesses created by diaspora money are in the retail sector, e.g. shops, small trading units, etc. and hospitality (small hotels, beds and Breakfast), housing (home building and rental accommodation), transport (taxi, buses, etc.). Table 5.2 depicts the major areas of investment covered by DDI in Ivory Coast. However, diaspora investment is very diverse with more investment in wholesale, import-export as well as investment in the gas and oil industry. The key feature of diaspora direct investment is that it covers an area of critical necessity that can

**Table 5.2** Summary of types of diaspora direct investment in Ivory Coast

Type of business	Housing	Transport	Hospitality/Catering	Retail	Shares
Significance	High	High	Medium	High	Low

help the recipient families make sense of their daily lives and generate almost immediate steady income.

## Conclusion

This chapter has examined the causes of the Francophone West African migration into the diaspora and the lives of this diaspora in the UK. We have also considered the effort made by the diaspora to look compassionately on the COO and the left-behind extended family. The contribution of the Francophone African diaspora has been characterised as compassionate investment. Compassionate because the investment put in aims to help soothe poverty in the countries and more critically help improve the living conditions of their families left back. The compassionate nature of the investment means that while the businesses that the diaspora set up in the native countries may be profitable, there is no expectation of reaping the benefits of their ventures. The main benefits the diaspora receives are the satisfaction that family members have improved lives, education, housing, welfare and can access health services without a struggle. Another aspect of the compassionate investment made by the diaspora is in the form of remittances which are cash handouts directly into the 'pockets' of family members to put towards the cost of living more immediately. Remittances are characterised as compassionate investments because they are monies loaned by granting with no expectation of payback or interest.

Compassionate investment goes towards achieving a more tangible independence of family members from the state and to some degree independence of the nation-states from the neocolonialists. This is, thus, a contribution to the national struggles which, in many Francophone African countries, have become almost permanent struggles. Economic dependency is as much as political dependency during colonial times.

The diaspora's contribution via direct cash investment in the national economic systems of the homeland is, therefore, a substantial contribution to national independence, though in the current state of affairs, the road to tangible liberation is a long way ahead. From the main coverage of this chapter, we have exposed the inequalities constructed by complicities between the new African elites and the foreign powers, creating two different societies: the popular masses (impoverished) and the new bourgeoisie. The diaspora direct investment aims to grant greater power to those in the impoverished masses who are fortunate enough to have been able to invest in one of their daughters and sons by enabling them to reach the rich West. The diaspora's investment back home can, therefore, be seen as a return on investment for the families whose 'children' made it to the West.

Compassionate investment does not go without cost to the diaspora. The cost is not only in mere financial terms but also emotional and physical. Many in the diaspora who work long hours are involved in second or multiple jobs and forsake their work-life balance in order to generate enough revenue to support themselves in exile and show compassion for the left-behind extended families (Hack-Polay et al. 2017). This is a sacrifice that the diaspora is happy to make provided it continues to bring smile to relative and prosperity and less dependence to the motherlands.

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