



African Women: A Modern History (Social Change in Global Perspective)

Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch

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Over the last century, the social and economic roles played by African women have evolved dramatically. Long confined to home and field, overlooked by their menfolk and missionaries alike, African women worked, thought, dreamed, and struggled. They migrated to the cities, invented new jobs, and activated the so-called informal economy to become Africa's economic and social focal point. As a result, despite their lack of education and relatively low status, women are now Africa's best hope for the future. This sweeping and innovative book is the first to reconstruct the full history of women in sub-Saharan Africa. Tracing the lot of African women from the eve of the colonial period to the present, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch explores the stages and forms of women's collective roles as well as their individual emancipation through revolts, urban migrations, economic impacts, social claims, political strength, and creativity. Comparing case studies drawn from throughout the region, she sheds light on issues ranging from gender to economy, politics, society, and culture. Utilizing an impressive array of sources, she highlights broad general patterns without overlooking crucial local variations. With its breadth of coverage and clear analysis of complex questions, this book is destined to become a standard text for scholars and students alike.

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