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Rewriting the African diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic

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Abstract

This essay argues that despite the growing popularity of diaspora studies, our understanding of the African diaspora remains limited by both the conceptual difficulties of defining what we mean by the diaspora in general, and the African diaspora in particular, and the analytical tendency to privilege the Atlantic, or rather the Anglophone, indeed the American branch of the African diaspora. It begins by trying to explore the various conceptions of the African diaspora, foregrounded by a critique of Paul Gilroy's influential text, *The Black Atlantic*. This is followed by discussions of what the author considers to be the four dominant dimensions of the global African diasporas, namely, the intra-Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, and Atlantic diasporas. Finally, the essay examines the emergence of the new global African diasporas.

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