



Settled Strangers: Asian Business Elites in East Africa (1800-2000)

Gijsbert Oonk

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Settled Strangers aims at understanding the social, economic and political evolution of the transnational migrant community of Gujarati traders and merchants in East Africa. The history of South Asians in East Africa is neither part of the mainstream national Indian history nor that of East African history writing. This is surprising because South Asians in East Africa outnumbered the Europeans ten-to-one. Moreover, their overall economic contribution and political significance may be more important than the history of the colonisers.

This book is an attempt to provide some balance in the form of a history of the South Asians in East Africa through the lens of the actors themselves. It studies the kind of social, economic and political adjustments the emigrant Gujaratis had to make in the course of this migration. By using insights from the social sciences, including concepts like cultural capital, family firm, transnationality, middleman minorities and cultural change, this book aims to achieve a broader understanding of communities that do not belong to nations, yet are part of national states.

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