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Development-Underdevelopment Nexus -- The Democratization-Authoritarianism Nexus -- Empowerment -- Chapter Two: The Context and Background -- Introduction -- The People -- Social Organization -- Women's Associations in Freetown -- Trends in Women's Associations -- Tensions Between International and Local NGOs -- Federations and Associations of National Unity -- Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations -- National Policy for Women -- Results of a PostWar Survey on Focus Groups -- Chapter Three: Collective Action for Political Empowerment -- Introduction -- Authoritarianism, War, and Economic Decline -- Women, Democratization, and the Quest for Peace -- The Role of Women's Associations, Especially the Women's Forum -- The National Commission for Democracy -- National Conferences on Democratization -- Female Activism in the 1996 Elections-A Test of Unity -- Gender Bias in the Body Politic -- 1997 Coup d'Etat and Escalation of the War -- The Peace Process Renewed -- Militarism, Peacekeepers, and Gender Vulnerabilities -- End of the War, the 50/50 Group and the 2002 Election -- The Impact of Women on Democratization and the Peace Process -- Chapter Four: Collective Action for Economic Empowerment -- Economic Profile of Women in Freetown -- Management and Decision-Making Positions -- Women's Economic Associations -- The Women's Movement -- The Gara Thrift and Credit Society and Similar Associations.

Rotating Credit Associations-Indigenous Mechanisms for Micro-Credit -- Cooperatives -- Chapter Five: Collective Action for Educational and Occupational Empowerment -- Introduction -- Gendered Education -- Contributions of Individual Women to Female Education -- Education and Female Professional Advancement -- Educational Challenges for Women -- The Educational Role of Women's Associations -- Vocational Education -- The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) -- Kankalay -- Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)-Sierra Leone Chapter -- Guilds, Professional Associations, and Alumnae Associations -- Female Education and Socioeconomic Development -- Human Resource Development -- Chapter Six: "Traditional" Associations -- Secret Societies -- Poro and Sande -- Sande/Bondo Female Society -- Sande and Social Change -- The Urbanized Secret -- Sande and the Health Care System -- Female Circumcision: A Global Practice -- Social Change, Female Circumcision, and Controversies -- The Enduring Features of Sande -- Chapter Seven: Mutual-Aid Associations -- Introduction -- Secret Society Affiliation -- Tensions Between Statutory and Customary Marriages -- Imposition of Moral Sanctions -- Multiple Mothering -- Recreational Activities -- Promoting Solidarity and Political Expression -- Chapter Eight: Islam and Women's Associations -- Introduction -- Women and Islam -- Limitations of Islamic Influence on Social Institutions -- Examples of Muslim Women's Associations -- Political Links Through Hajas -- Chapter Nine: Christianity and Women's Associations -- Introduction -- Christian Women's Associations -- Mobilizing Resources -- Maintaining the Ideology of Womanhood and Christian Marriage -- Promoting Healing -- Facilitating the Power of Prayer -- Female Charisma and Religious Leadership -- Promoting Unity.

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Sommario/riassunto

This book examines women's movements and women's collective action in Africa. Steady begins her examination in pre-colonial times, moving through the colonial period to the present. She looks at the various arenas which collective action has and can influence, comparing the impact on economic growth, education, democratizations, family formation, and women's rights. Steady uses Sierra Leone as the focus of her inquiry, in order for a detailed story to illustrate larger themes, but in every area makes comparisons to different parts of Africa; the case study here guides a larger inquiry. Written as a text, the book carefully explains the theoretical ideas (e.g., all key terms are defined, and then there is a discussion of how they relate to African issues specifically) and the historical knowledge (e.g., all historical events are described, there is no assumption of knowledge of African history) necessary to understand the meaning of current women's groups. What results is a clear and comprehensive treatment of an issue which is increasingly central to understanding changes taking place on the African continent today.
