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## **Abstract**

The issues of African diasporas, who are transnational non-state actors have become subject of bilateral, regional, and global discussions. The study raises the question of migration, integration and social cohesion thereby discussing the essential roles of the Nigerian diasporas that are living in Ghana and Ghanaian diasporas that are living in Nigeria are playing to the socio-economic development of both home and destination countries. The paper focuses on the roles of non-state actors in the development of home and destination countries and the extent of their interaction with the State. Drawing on both primary and secondary sources with the methodology that is largely qualitative, the paper situates its arguments on the back and forth movements of the Ghanaian and Nigerian diasporas within the sub-region of West Africa and their contributory functions in developing the social and economic contexts of Nigeria and Ghana. The paper seeks to highlight these roles and recommend that if the socio-economic contributions are harnessed effectively by the governments of the two countries, it will actually facilitate the actualisation of the sub-regional integration agenda of ECOWAS. Permeation of ideas, norms, values beliefs are essential in promoting healthy society devoid of wars, conflicts, destruction. It also strengthens cross-fertilisation of ideas, thereby resuscitating genuine unity and sustaining ingenuity that are being eroded in West Africa due to arbitrary creation of countries in the sub-region.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Ingenuity, cross-fertilisation, culture

## **Introduction**

The history of migration in Africa is complex and contemporary migration trends in Africa are rooted in historical antecedents. Migration of people across national borders and continents is a precursor to diaspora. The evolution of humanity is marked by migration resulting in the movement of individuals and groups of people.

The subject matter of diaspora has become an important topic in the work of historians, political scientists, sociologists, demographers, and other scholars.

The study focuses on the contributions of Ghanaian and Nigerian diasporas to the social and economic developments of both origin and destination countries of Nigeria and Ghana respectively. Their roles as transnational actors speak to the enormity and complexity of issues of migration, relational diasporic studies and sub-regional integration in West Africa.

## **Historical Complexities**

Africans in the sub-Saharan region have migrated in waves to other regions of the world beginning from seventy thousand years ago. The initial movement involved the Old World tropics; this was followed by occupation of Eurasia, Oceania, and the Americas (Manning, 2009: 1).

There is evidence from historical research about movements of people across international borders in the Pre-colonial era in West Africa. Nigeria, like other West African countries, has a long history of population mobility, both regionally and internationally. Linked with factors as diverse as long-distance trade, the search for pasture, urbanisation and the growth of administrative centres, the demands of mining, industrial production and plantation agriculture, armed conflict, land degradation, drought and rural poverty; migration has played a major part in shaping settlement patterns in the region (DFID, 2004). Census based estimates by the United Nations Population Division suggest that West Africa has the largest absolute international immigrant stock (based on place of birth data) in Africa. It is also the only part of sub-Saharan Africa where migration stocks relative to the total population have been increasing over the past few decades (de Haas, 2007).

International migration in Nigeria pre-dates the colonisation of Nigeria, irrespective of the difficulties encountered in classifying the moves as either internal or international and of getting accurate data. The former problem arises from the fact that Nigeria could not have been identified as a nation before colonisation, as different ethnic groups and/or nationalities lived under different kingdoms and empires within the geographical space now referred to as Nigeria.

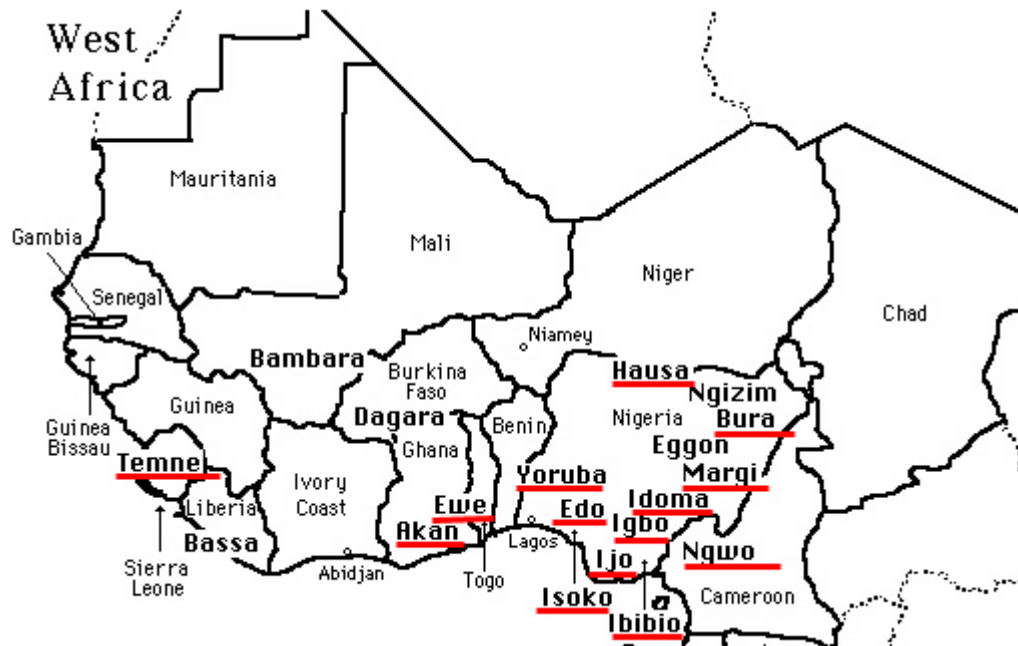
The slave trade, both across the Sahara Desert and the Atlantic Ocean, had a profound influence on virtually all parts of Nigeria. The transatlantic trade in particular accounted for the forced migration of perhaps 3.5 million people between the 1650s and the 1860s, while a steady stream of slaves flowed north across the Sahara for a millennium, ending at the beginning of the twentieth century. Within Nigeria, slavery was widespread, with social implications that are still evident today. Transhumance activities and the dispersal of the Fulani across the Sahel involved considerable mobility. Religious education and the *hadj* to Mecca were associated with major

mobility and sometimes settlement of West Africans all across West, North and East Africa (de Haas 2007).

Although there is a paucity of documentation on the human mobility and migration during this period, nevertheless, some studies, such as Alkali (1985) and Armstrong (1955) convey the idea that migration flows during the period were dynamic and diverse. According to Meillasoux (1969), the movements of the people within the West African region were linked to trade, including slave trade, conflicts, and natural disasters such as famine, rather than to manpower transfers or rural-urban migration.

Conde (1987) highlights three characteristics of migration which include change of residence, distance, and length of time. The idea of the place of residence may vary from the smallest administrative unit like a village to a large territorial area such as the province, region etc. Of significance is the distance because it is a factor that may influence the scale of migration. The third characteristic is the stay at the point of destination which could be lengthy or permanent, though it may also be temporary.

From the perspective of African experience, the distinction between internal and international migration is obscured because of the factors such as the arbitrariness of national boundaries that artificially divide homogeneous socio-economic units between two or more countries; the poorly policed boundaries which lack permanent physical features; the complimentary economies of neighbouring countries and cultural affinity in different countries (Adepoju, 1984).



**Figure 1: Map of West Africa**

Source: [www.mapsofworld.com/africa-country-groupings/west-africa-political-map.html](http://www.mapsofworld.com/africa-country-groupings/west-africa-political-map.html)

### **Theoretical Debates**

The word ‘Diaspora’ is an ancient term which is long used almost exclusively in reference to the dispersion of Jewish people all over the world. ‘Diaspora’ is a contested term because it refers to people who have left their place of origin for a destination place and yet maintain identification with the place of origin in some way. The literary meaning of diaspora means dispersion which originally referred to the movement of the Jews from their homeland. In the contemporary sense, the term is used in relation to any number of cultural and /or ethnic groups that are dispersed

around the world from their places of origin. Their movement may be forced or voluntary. There may emerge diasporas because of war and natural disaster on one hand which is referred to as forced migration or political, economic and opportunistic migration on the other hand. The migration of Africans within West Africa is far from being a recent phenomenon. People moved within and across the ethnic lines before the colonial era. In recent times the number of African emigrants has risen significantly, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

How did the term apply to the experience of the Africans?

Wilson (1997) traces the origin of the expression African diaspora to the period between the International Congress of Negro Writers and Artists sponsored by *Presence Africaine* in Paris in 1950 and the International congress of African Historians that convened in Dar es Salam in 1965. The expression appears throughout the lectures delivered by the two of the founders of African diaspora studies, George Shepperson and Joseph E. Harris .

George Shepperson was of the first scholars to begin a dialogue on the diasporas and he viewed diaspora as migration of the people which was part of world history. Although, Shepperson's views of the African diasporas focused on migration outside of Africa, unlike some current scholars, he did recognise the important role of migration within the continent of Africa. Two examples of such migrations were the circumstances surrounding the creation of Sierra Leone and the movement of people of Malawi to parts of South, Central and East Africa the 1980s( Shepperson, 1968) .

Manning (2009) states that the use of the word coincided with the period of when the African and Caribbean countries were gaining independent and civil rights movements in those countries and United States brought black people to the political forefront and increase contact with one

another. This generated a renewed interest in tracing the historical contacts among Africans and people of African descent outside of Africa.

The key theoretical debates being engaged in this paper revolve around the increasing roles of diasporas in home and destination countries and the crucial feature of diasporic communities within the context of globalisation . This is the living of transnational lives at least in terms of identity and providing a focus for assessing both the challenges and opportunities that occur in the world. Castles (2002) asserts that diasporas are increasing at the moment due to the influence of technology which facilitates for example travel but also for social and cultural reasons which have not yet been fully explored. Members of diasporic communities are likely to have hybrid identities unless they maintain connection to homeland without residing there. This is corroborated by Fazal and Tsagarousianou (2004) that diasporas should not be seen as depending on displacement but on connectivity, or complex nexus of linkages that contemporary transnational dynamics make possible.

It should be emphasised in this paper that contacts with the places of origin are increasingly made possible given the contemporary development and sophistication of communication technology. Paradoxically, access to some communication gadgets may not be possible to forced migrants due to war, political persecution or environmental degradation.

### **The Puzzle**

The central problem that the paper tries to highlight is centred on the neglect by the States of the contributory roles of the Nigerian and Ghanaian diasporas in the home and destination countries in Nigeria and Ghana respectively. They are often overlooked actors in the area of socio-cultural development in the sub-region. Attention has always been paid to the African diasporas in the



Western countries especially US and Europe. It should be noted that despite its scale and complexity, the intra-regional migration in West Africa still remains poorly understudied, largely because of the incomplete and unreliable data.

Thus, harnessing the contributions of African diasporas outside of Western countries is an issue that has not been well articulated in the foreign policies of Nigeria and Ghana for the purpose of actualising the integration agenda of the ECOWAS.

In the United States for example, the survey conducted in 2009 shows the top five countries of origin for the 1.5 million African immigrants were Nigeria (209,908, or 14.1 percent of all African immigrants), Ethiopia (148,221, or 9.9 percent), Egypt (138,194, or 9.3 percent), Ghana (108,647, or 7.3 percent), and Kenya (87,267, or 5.8 percent). No individually reported country accounted for more than 14.1 percent of the African immigrant population. (American Community Survey, 2009)

Other individually reported countries of birth for African immigrants included: South Africa (82,339, or 5.5 percent), Liberia (72,111, or 4.8), Morocco (58,283, or 3.9 percent), Sudan (35,821, or 2.4 percent), Cape Verde (32,885, or 2.2 percent), Sierra Leone (32,467, or 2.2 percent), Cameroon (30,726, or 2.1 percent), and Eritrea (23,840, or 1.6 percent). (American Community Survey, 2009)

### **Significance of the Study**

The activities of diasporas and their organisations in Ghana and Nigeria in the social development of both countries of origin and destination are essential for enhancing diplomatic

relations between the two countries. Nigerian and Ghanaian diasporas and their associations operate in transnational settings by taking advantage of the opportunities that are available to them as a result of the Protocol on Free movement of Persons, and Rights of Residence and Establishment. The process enables the diasporas and their associations to operate transnational networks crisscrossing Ghana and Nigeria. They are able to build social, economic, and political bridges with valuable benefits across borders.

As succinctly expressed by Weiner (1985:14), the bilaterisation of migration may also become linked to other bilateral issues which are trade, investment, aid, water resources, and environments - involving a variety of diplomatic and bureaucratic agencies hitherto not related to migration issues. He further stipulates that any investigation on international migration issues should involve a close study of the changing intra-bureaucratic relationships within both sending and receiving countries.

**Table 1**

<b>Table 1. Total and African Foreign-Born Populations, 1960 to 2009</b>			
Year	Total foreign born	African born	
		Number	Share of total foreign born
1960	9,738,091	35,355	0.4%
1970	9,619,302	80,143	0.8%
1980	14,079,906	199,723	1.4%
1990	19,797,316	363,819	1.8%
2000	31,107,889	881,300	2.8%
2009	38,517,104	1,492,785	3.9%

*Source:* Data for 2000 from the 2000 census; 2009 data from the American Community Survey 2009. Data for earlier decades from Campbell Gibson and Emily Lennon, "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850 to

1990" (US Census Bureau Working Paper No. 29, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1999)

## **Methodology**

This paper draws from the fieldwork conducted by the author. The methodology used for the study is mixed method of qualitative and quantitative. Data were obtained by administering surveys containing predominantly structured questions to cross-section of diasporas both in Ghana and Nigeria. In addition, qualitative data were gathered through individual interviews with key informants. These include the officials of embassies of Ghana in Nigeria and Nigeria in Ghana, presidents of the two diasporic associations and some government officials of the two countries to assist in the interpretation and clarification of selected variables in the study. The sample size for this study was 384 for Nigerian diaspora in Ghana and 384 for Ghanaian diaspora in Nigeria. However, 357 survey instruments were returned by Nigerian diasporas in Ghana and 211 survey instrument were returned from Ghanaian diaspora in Nigeria due to the fact that a lot of the latter had been returning to Ghana piecemeal since the recovery of the Ghanaian economy towards the end of the 1990s.

The hypothesis formulated for this study guided the arrangement of the tables.

## **Research Hypothesis**

Null hypothesis was raised and tested in this study.

H<sub>0</sub>: Nigerian and Ghanaian diasporas in Ghana and Nigeria respectively are not contributing to the development of their countries of origin and destination

## **Research Questions**

In order to address the problem already stated, the following research question is raised;

What are the contributions of the Nigerian and Ghanaian diasporas to the social development of Ghana and Nigeria respectively?

### Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question:

#### Extract 1:

#### Respondents' Reasons for migration

The respondents were asked to indicate their reasons for migration. Table 2 depicts the respondents' year of arrival.

**Table 2: Major Reason for Migration**

Variations		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Nigerian diasporas	Greener pasture/Job/Looking for work	308	86.3	86.3
	Education/School	26	7.3	93.6
	Political matter/Community Crises	1	.3	93.8
	Adventures	8	2.2	96.1
	Business/Trading	8	2.2	98.3
	Other reasons	6	1.7	100.0
	Total	357	100.0	
Ghanaian diasporas	Greener pasture/Job/Looking for work	180	85.3	85.3
	Education/School	13	6.2	91.5
	Political matter/Community Crises	1	.5	91.9
	Economic reason like poverty	2	.9	92.9
	Skill acquisition	1	.5	93.4

	Adventures	4	1.9	95.3
	Business/Trading	1	.5	95.7
	Transiting to other Nations	9	4.3	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The major reason for migration of Ghanaian and Nigerian diasporas was in search of greener pasture or in search of job opportunity. The distribution revealed that the majority that is, 86.3% of Nigerians against 85.3% of Ghanaians were in search of job in Ghana and Nigeria respectively. 7.3% of Nigerians against 6.2% of Ghanaians left their countries for educational pursuits. Other important reasons for migration for Nigerian diasporas are trading and business while for their Ghanaian counterparts are political or community crises, business. They are also using Nigeria as transit to other countries.

**Extract 1.**

**Q: What are the contributions of Ghanaian diasporas in Nigeria to social aspects?**

**A:** Socially, relationships and links have been forged in the area of residences, church and schools and working environment. These links build up bridges across the two countries fostering warm relationship between the countries even at higher levels. Since close links and integration with a country cannot be done alone at the highest level, the grassroots' unity is essential. These interactions at the grassroots give meaning and content to the Nigeria/Ghana bilateral relations.

**Extract 2**

**Q: How do you describe the contribution of Nigerian diasporas to Ghana and also Nigeria their country of Origin?**

**A:** In the angle of investment, Ghana Investment Council shows a strong input of Nigeria being the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest investor in Ghana after the U.S. Nigeria has nothing less than \$1Billion investments in Ghana which is still growing – banking, insurance, manufacturing, informal trade and small scale productions. Though, everything is not smooth as some people taking advantage of the robust bilateral relationship between the two countries to the detriment of the many law abiding citizen of the country.

**Q: What are the contributions of Nigerian diasporas living in Ghana to Ghana and also Nigeria?**

**A:** Nigerians reside here and pay their taxes to the VAT , National Health Insurance) indirect tax. Education wise, in Komasi (Ashanti Region) some years back Otunfuo Education Fund was initiated by the Otunfuo who was the paramount ruler of the Ashanti region. Nigerians residing in the Ashanti region contributed immensely to the fund both in cash and in kind. In kind, construction of bore holes in rural Ashanti is on plan. Culturally, we participate in their traditional activities. Akwesi Day in cash and kind.

- Ownership of factories – manufacturing factory pay VAT, Internal Revenue Service (IRS). These taxes are meant for the development of Ghana community
- Recreational centers, schools are established for the benefit of the host community. Religion organization e.g. the Antioch Baptist Church has a school directed in bettering the welfare of the host city/community. Antioch Baptist Church belong to the Nigeria community and have established a school Heritage Baptist Academy for both indigenes and non-indigene
- An ANC patron owns a manufacturing factory providing employment for both Ghanaian and Nigeria.

- Commercial shops – Large shops owned by Nigeria provide jobs for both Ghanaian and Nigeria.
- A member of the ANC, who is a graduate of O.A.U. is a teacher in Ghana now transferring knowledge.
- Nigerian trained professionals like Barristers in Northern Ghana also provide services to the Ghanaian community

### Extract 3

## Contributions of Diaspora to Social Development of Their Country of Origins and

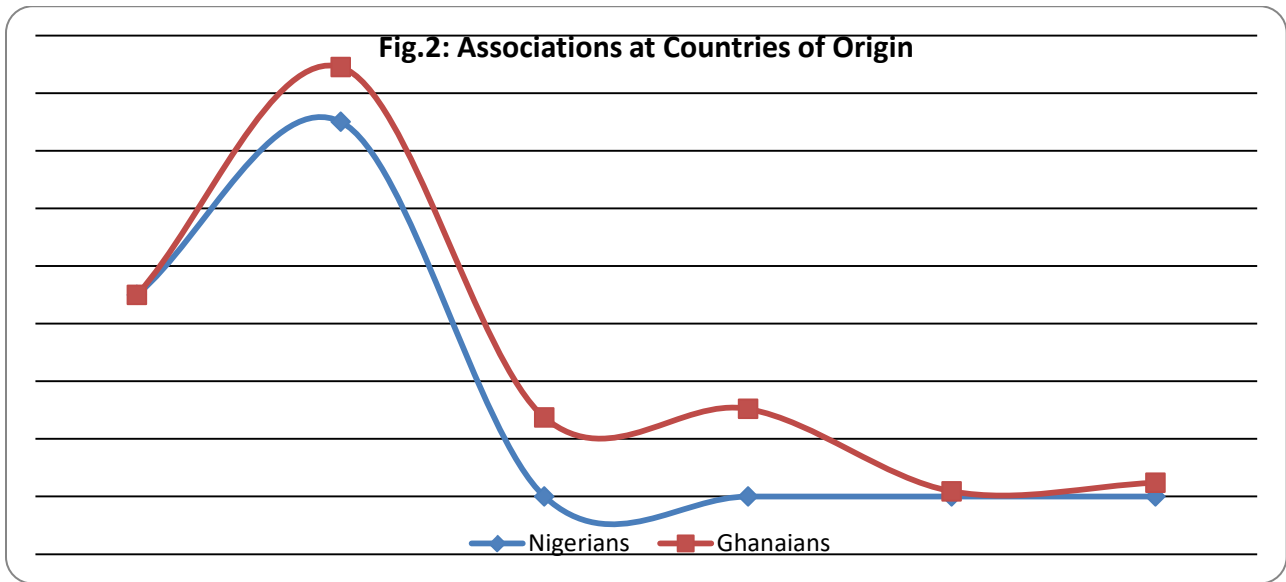
### Destinations

The social development of West African countries is one of the cardinal points of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment. The table 2 below presents the analysis of Nigeria diaspora in Ghana and Ghanaian diasporas in Nigeria.

**Table 2: Social Contributions to Place of Origins and Destinations**

Variations		Nigerian Diasporas		Ghanaian Diasporas	
		N	%	N	%
Do you belong to any association in your country of origin?	Yes	125	35	88	41.7
	No	232	65	123	58.3

In this table, participants were asked if they belong to any cultural group in their countries of origin. Table 2 shows that 35% of Nigerian diaspora in Ghana indicated that they belong to a cultural in Nigeria while 65% did not belong to any association in Nigeria. However, 41.7 % Ghanaian diaspora in Nigeria indicated that they belong to one association or the other in Ghana while 58.3% did not belong to any association in Ghana. In fig.2 associations that diaspora belongs were presented.



Source: Field Research, 2010

In this fig.2, participants were asked to indicate the associations they belong in their countries of origin. It was revealed that 65% of Nigerian diasporas in Ghana indicated that they belong to age group associations and 35% town clubs. However, among Ghanaian diasporas 9.5% belong to age group associations, 13.7% youth development association, 15.2% belong to community-based association and 0.9% political associations while 2.4% belong to religious groups in their country of origin.



The most direct way in which remittances contribute to economic and social development is the improvement in the living standards of the recipient. As discussed in table 2, the decision to migrate may be a conscious choice to improve the income prospects of the household and to reduce risk associated with income instability. To the extent that this decision is successful, remittances would improve the living standard of the household enabling a higher level of consumption and increased educational opportunities for the rest of the household.

## Hypotheses Testing

### Hypothesis 1

Nigerian and Ghanaian diasporas in Nigeria and Ghana are not contributing to the development of their countries of origin and destination.

Table 3: Contribution of Diaspora to the development of their countries of origin

Variations	Gender	Responses		Df	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig
		YES	NO			
Nigerian Diasporas		298	20	1	6.755	<0.05
	Male	298	20			
	Female	32	7			
	Total	330	27			
Ghanaian Diasporas	Male	141	11	1	4.474	<0.05
	Female	49	10			
	Total	190	21			

The summary of chi-square table above revealed a significant difference between male and female Nigerian diasporas at  $X^2=6.755$ ,  $df=1$  and 0.05 significant level and significant between male and female Ghanaian diasporas at  $X^2=4.474$ ,  $df=1$  and 0.05 significant level. However the YES is greater than NO for both male and female Nigerian and Ghanaian diasporas. This implies

that there are significant contributions of Nigerian and Ghanaian diasporas to the development of their countries of origin.

Table 4: Contribution of Diaspora to the development of their countries of destination

Variations	Gender	Responses		Df	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig
Nigerian Diasporas		YES	NO	1	21.042	<0.05
	Male	302	16			
	Female	33	6			
	Total	335	22			
Ghanaian Diasporas	Male	179	5	1	4.548	<0.05
	Female	24	3			
	Total	203	8			

The summary of chi-square table above revealed a significant difference between male and female Nigerian diasporas at  $X^2=21.042$ ,  $df=1$  and 0.05 significant level and significant between male and female Ghanaian diasporas at  $X^2=4.548$ ,  $df=1$  and 0.05 significant level. However the YES is greater than NO for both male and female Nigerian and Ghanaian diasporas. This implies that there are significant contributions of Nigerian and Ghanaian diasporas to the development of their countries of destinations.

### **Conclusion and Global Implications**

This study of African diasporas within the continent of Africa has brought a new dimension to the contested debate about Diaspora, Transnational Communities and Identity. This study has layers of contributions that speak to the larger debate about sub-regional integration of ECOWAS, which will have a spillover effect on the regional integration agenda of the African Union.

The study is intended to address policy-level issues and questions that make a pioneering contribution to an emerging research agenda on the subject matter of African diasporas in West Africa and their developmental roles in facilitating regional integration.

The study is also considered to be relevant in contributing to development of a paradigm for understanding the foreign policy cooperation of West African States in the areas of migration and regional integration which focus on diasporas overall activities in their home and origin countries

From the academic perspective, the interdisciplinary nature of the research is expected to fill the gap in Transnational Studies in International Relations of Africa.

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