

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA AS AN AGENCY IN REGIONAL
INTEGRATION: THE CASE OF THE GHANAIAN DIASPORA**

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DECLARATION

I, David Nii Addo Quaye, do hereby declare that this work is as a result of my own efforts under the supervision of Dr. Juliana Appiah. No part of this work has been submitted anywhere else for any other purpose. I further declare that this dissertation is an original research work except for references from other sources which have been duly acknowledged.

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DATE.....

DATE.....



DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to God Almighty, my parents, and siblings for their relentless support throughout my academic journey.



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The journey to putting up this piece was fraught with many hurdles. Yet, with the support of the Almighty God and the many people mentioned hereafter, I have successfully brought this piece to fruition. First of all, I would like to extend enormous gratitude to Dr. Juliana Appiah, my supervisor, for her timely, constructive, and helpful feedbacks. I want to say thank you for guiding me through this vigorous process with patience and love. I am also thankful to the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation Ghana for funding my Masters studies through their generous scholarship. Dr. Rosina Foli, I sincerely appreciate your unwavering support throughout this journey. I am also grateful to Esther Spio who prayed and offered words of upliftment during this phase. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the LECIAD Class of 2022/2023, with special recognition to Barbara Baaba Arthur, who has been an incredible friend and support system during my time at LECIAD. My appreciation also goes to Shadrach Baa Naa Kundi, Joel Attoh, Charles Kwasi Addo, Barima Kwadwo Adusei, Elizabeth Kwarteng, Stephanie Tukpei, Mabel Attigah, Augustina Akapame, Christabel Asomani Appiah and Rita Dekumwin. Your encouragement and companionship helped me navigate this phase with love, hope, and reduced stress. Clement Amponsah and Randy Ohene Otu, I am deeply grateful for your encouragement and support. My sincere appreciation goes to all participants, who took time off their busy schedules to enable me collect data for this work, and the faculty members and staff of LECIAD, with a special mention to Ambassador Baa-Duodu and Dr. Philip Attuquayefio. God richly bless you all. Finally, for bringing me into this world and nurturing me to become the person I am today; exceptionally passionate to follow my goals, to constantly aspire greatness, and to craft my distinct identity in life, I owe you a great debt, a debt I can never repay, to my parents, Merquy Quaye and Hilda Akpe, I appreciate and I love you.

ABSTRACT

As Africa's regional integration continues to gain prominence in the African Union's agenda, there has been an increasing demand to rope in all relevant stakeholders, beyond the individual states. It is against this backdrop that the AU in 2003 formerly designated the African diaspora as its sixth region, essentially recognizing it as an integral constituency. At a critical phase where the political, economic and cultural importance of the Diaspora is being religiously evaluated, this paper disparagingly examines the agency of the African Diaspora in the integration process with a particular focus on the Ghanaian Diaspora. Mainly through content analysis of secondary data, this paper argues that the wholistic agency of the Ghanaian diaspora in contributing to Ghana's regional integration efforts remains untapped, except for the functional capabilities. Drawing from Ghana's numerous diaspora engagement initiatives, this paper maintains that previous governments and the current government have centralized their efforts on the economic agency of the diaspora, which is a fundamental flaw being replicated even at the continental level. At the same time, the elitist approach of regional integration has eluded the citizenry, to a large extent, the Ghanaian diaspora, thus, limiting their involvement. The paper recommends that for a more 'mutually beneficial' relation with the Ghanaian diaspora, the government must appreciate the full agency of the Ghanaian diaspora and re-access its engagement particularly within the purview of regional integration. Else, the newly adopted diaspora policy, like previous engagement initiatives will be conveniently pursued and not wholistically applied.

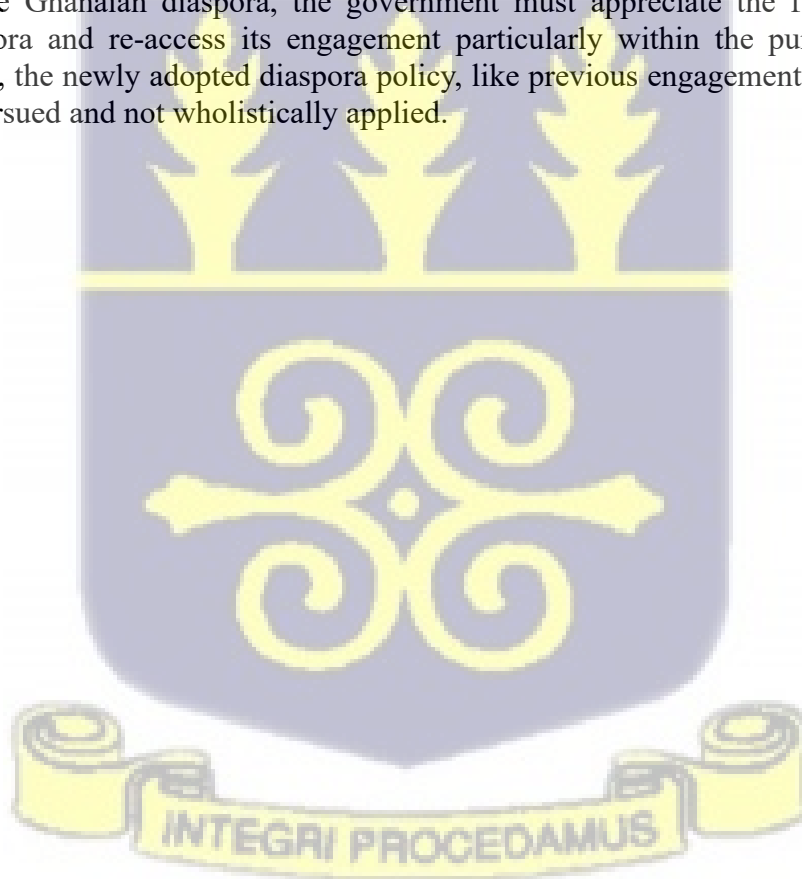


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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFFORD	- African Foundation for Development
AU	- African Union
AfCFTA	- African Continental Area Trade Area
CNN	- Cable News Network
CIDO	- Civil Society and Diapora
CSO	- Civil Society Organizations
ECOWAS	- Economic Community of West African States
EU	- European Union
FDI	- Foreign Direct Investment
GTC	- German Technical Cooperation
GIZ	- Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GIPC	- Ghana Investment Promotion Centre
IOM	- International Organization for Migration
IMF	- International Monetary Fund
IR	- International Relations
KPI	- Key Performance Indicators
LECIAD	- Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy
MENA	- Middle East and North Africa
MFARI	- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organization
OAU	- Organization of African Unity
PAP	- Pan-African Parliament
ROPA	- Representative of People Act
SAP	- Structural Adjustment Program

UNECA - United Nation Economic Commission for Africa

UK - United Kingdom

USA - United State of America



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

African diaspora engagement has gained increasing intellectual valorisation in recent years. Significantly, the recognition and characterization of the African diaspora as an essential community – the sixth region of the AU - through the adoption of article 3q of the African Union’s Constitutive Act (African Union Constitutive Act, 2002), affirmed the role of the African diaspora in the AU’s efforts to build a consolidated and prosperous Africa. Historically, the trans-Atlantic slave trade and subsequent migrations have resulted in the formation of transnational diaspora communities in various parts of the world. In the words of Paul Zeleza, “the growth of diaspora studies was facilitated from the 1980s by the rise of globalization and transnational studies as well as cultural studies” (Zeleza, 2008). Some scholars classify descendants of Africans who experienced the slave trade during the 16th and 17th centuries as "original African diaspora" (Bolaji, 2015) while contemporary diaspora is interpreted in a wider scope and aids in theorizing migrations, cultural differences, and other inimitable qualities in today’s globalized world (ibid).

The steady expansion in the global dispersion of the African diaspora is worth noting. In a 2013 CNN article written by Amini Kajunju, there were 39 million African diasporas in North America; 113 million in Latin America; 13.6 million in the Caribbean; and 3.5 million in Europe (Kajunju, 2013). As of late, Africans continue to relocate from their home countries due to many underlying reasons - primarily economic and security. Arguably, the wheels of Africa’s regional integration were propelled by key diaspora figures, who were invigorated by the spirit of Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism is regarded as a “political and cultural phenomenon which regards Africa, Africans, and African descendants in the African Diaspora as a single sociocultural unit”

(Edozie, 2012), whilst regional integration is conceptualised “as the process of increasing political and economic cooperation among states in close geographic proximity” (Madeira, 2014).

Critically, Pan-Africanism pioneered the global ideation that prioritised the urgency for Africans both at home and abroad to unite their collective gains (see Adoghome, 2008; M’Bayo, 2004; Murithi, 2007). As Edozie recounts *Marcus Garvey, Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and a host of others all acknowledged that in order for Blacks worldwide to change the paradigm of disrespect and exploitation we face daily, Africans in the Diaspora and the continent had to find effective ways to re-connect and work toward the unification of the continent into a giant country* (Edozie, 2012). Thus, it suffices to say that through Pan-Africanism, the African diaspora played a critical role in the liberation of modern African states from the shackles of colonialism as well as carving the path for Africa’s regional integration. These historical events highlight the agency and resilience of the African Diaspora in shaping the trajectory of African history.

This work examined the agency of the African diaspora, particularly the Ghanaian diaspora’s role in Ghana’s regional integration project. The paper argued that, while the African diaspora is framed in a tapestry of literature as a potential magic bullet in Africa’s development (Mbongeni, 2013), the discourse around the African diaspora has overly been shaped in a reductionist approach which fails to fully embrace the agency of the African diaspora, particularly the Ghanaian diaspora. Thus, there must be a paradigm shift in Ghana’s diaspora engagements if it seeks to divorce from the dominant argument that the diaspora is only milked as a “cash cow” for economic development. This line of argument is premised on Ghana’s foremost president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s historical prominence in the decoloniality and unification of Africa. The ideology, drive and influence of Nkrumah in harnessing the potential of all, including the African diaspora, in the regional integration agenda has been lost in the policy objectives of subsequent governments.

It is also striking to note that Ghana has been a favorable destination for those whose past are connected to the African roots. In Ghana, the ‘Diaspora’ has generally been used to refer to persons of Ghanaian descent living abroad, as well as ‘persons of African descent in the Diaspora’ as noted in the Rights to Abode under Citizenship Regulation 2001 (see Ghana Immigration Service. 2020. Right of Abode). According to the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, the government of Ghana “began to more actively” court Ghanaians abroad at the turn of the century, when it “launched a national process to formalize its relationship with the diaspora – Ghana’s ‘11th region’ – beginning with a ‘Homecoming Summit.’

Particularly, Ghana’s engagement initiatives with the African diaspora have gained increasing momentum in recent times through initiatives such as the “Year of Return” and “Beyond the Return”. The Ghanaian governments’ acknowledgement of the importance of engaging its diaspora community has led it to set up the office of the Diaspora Affairs. The Office of Diaspora Affairs was established in Ghana to facilitate the participation of Ghanaians abroad in the country’s development efforts

1.1 Operationalization of the concept “Agency”

Africa’s agency in international relations has been contended and the debate still reverberates in major writings primarily due to the marginalization of African actors in international relations discourse. While the emphasis on African agency has a historical cord, which permeates from the bottom up, assigning agency to African migrants is considered an “ambiguous” and “complex” task despite the recognition of an apparent agency exercised by migrants through traditional cultural knowledge and experimentations (Richardson et al, 2007). Shedding light on this notion, Amo Agyemang in his work *Understanding African States in International Relations* states that “the African state, unlike its European counterpart, is often

described as lacking the attributes of sovereignty, hence it is variously described as a lame leviathan with limited agency in international affairs” (Amo-Agyemang, 2019).

This subjugating narrative is a deliberate attempt to undermine the influence African actors exert in international relations by positioning them only as merely passive and supplicant players. Conspicuously, the discourse on Africa’s agency is erroneously mirrored, as Bayart so aptly puts it, “more than ever, the discourse on Africa’s marginality is nonsense” (Bayart, 2000, p. 267). It bears mentioning that, in this work, we do not intend to discuss the grand subject of Africa’s limited agency in international relations, but rather, through this prism, access the limited acknowledgement and utilization of the agency of the African diaspora. Agency, according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, in the context of international relations, refers to the following:

1. The capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power
2. A person or thing through which power is exerted or an end is achieved

In the works of Brown (2012, p. 7), he represents agency as “the faculty of acting or exerting power.” In this work, I posit that the multidimensional view of agency in contemporary IR writings places the African Diaspora as a transnational community with agency. This position is affirmed by Amanda Coffie and Lembe Tiky in their work *Exploring Africa’s Agency in International Politics* where they affirm that “African agency in international politics should be understood as multifaceted, incorporating both state and non-state actors”.

The African diaspora community, through its collective actions, is made up of non-state actors. They can be classified as either civil society or international non-governmental organizations. Their role in fostering development and promoting human rights across the globe indicates their agency in global affairs. Chipaike and Knowledge (2018, p. 7) add civil society organizations, whose influence manifests in the work of international NGOs, as a manifestation of

African agency. In essence, African agency should be examined from the lens of independent civil movements and not only regarded as a preserve of governmental actors.

Based on this analysis, the African diaspora can manifest its agency by building on the Pan-Africanism foundations to aid Africa's regional integration efforts. By tapping into the agency of the African diaspora, African states, in this case, Ghana, can rely on the economic, social and cultural prowess of its diaspora communities to accelerate their integration efforts.

1.2 Problem statement

The role of the African Diaspora in the regional integration process is one that cannot be overstated. As noted by Chinwe and Felix, "African Diasporas have a major role to play within the framework of the AU to drive sustainable regional integration in the continent based on their specialized or professional training, experience and exposure" (Chinwe & Felix, 2014). Also, Chikezie posits that "in spite of the growing diversity of the African diaspora in contemporary times, it is well placed to build on the long tradition and history of the African diaspora contributing effectively to Pan-Africanist ideas and struggles and contribute to Africa's regional integration" (Chikezie, 2001).

Prior to the total liberation of the African continent, Ghana played an instrumental role in the integration process. This was evident in the foreign policy direction of the first president of the Republic, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (Yakohene, 2009). Even more, Nkrumah's philosophy of an emancipated Africa was hinged on a cultural basis which targeted all people of African descent regardless of their location in the globe (Nkrumah, 1970). While there are studies that touch upon the Ghanaian diaspora's engagement and contributions towards the economic development of the state (see Ankomah et al, 2012), however, there is a need for more comprehensive research that specifically examines their role in regional integration.

The objective of this dissertation was to examine the role of the Ghanaian diaspora community in regional integration within the context of the broader African Diaspora. The study explored the initiatives of the AU and the Ghana Diaspora Affairs and analyzed the contributions and potential of the Ghanaian diaspora community in promoting regional integration and development. By delving into the historical basis, initiatives of the AU Citizen and Diaspora Directorate, and Ghana Diaspora Affairs, this work provides a nuanced understanding of the Ghanaian diaspora community and its potential for regional integration.

Several diaspora engagement policies have been attempted by governments, yet, the specific role the Ghanaian diaspora can play as a catalyst to accelerate Ghana's regional integration effort has not been discussed in the literature.

1.3 Research questions

1. How can the Ghanaian diaspora community spearhead Ghana's regional integration efforts within Africa?
2. What challenges does the Ghana Diaspora community encounter in promoting Ghana's regional integration within Africa?
3. In what ways can the government of Ghana mutually partner with the Ghanaian Diaspora community to promote regional integration?

1.4 Objectives

1. Identify the role of the Ghanaian diaspora community in spearheading Ghana's regional integration efforts within Africa
2. Analyze the challenges that inhibit the Ghanaian diaspora's role in promoting Ghana's regional integration

3. Develop strategies for how Ghana can effectively collaborate with its diaspora community to enhance the government's regional integration initiatives

1.5 Scope of the study

This study focused on the role the Ghanaian diaspora in regional effort from 2006 – 2022. The basis for this scope is premised on the significant milestone in 2006 when the African diaspora was recognized as the sixth zone of the continent through the amendment of the AU Constitutive Act. Specifically, the research examined the role of the Ghanaian diaspora community in the regional economic and political integration within the context of Ghana's participation in regional organizations such as ECOWAS and AU.

Though the primary focus of the dissertation was on Ghana, the findings and insights have implications and relevance for other diaspora communities and their role in the integration process. The study examined the various diaspora engagement initiatives of the Ghanaian government alongside that of the African Union. Particularly, the activities of the office of the Ghanaian Diaspora Affairs was analyzed.

1.6 Rationale of the study

Regional integration efforts have been increased in recent times. African regional integration attempts can benefit greatly from the backing of the African diaspora. The diaspora can support regional integration in a number of ways, such as through various organizations, skill sets, particular knowledge networks, and individuals. By advocating for expanded citizen inclusion, increased cooperation, and greater integration of African governments, the African Union acknowledges the significance of the diaspora in fostering Africa's growth and economic development. The African Union's Diaspora Division acts as the focal point and nerve centre for

carrying out its decision to invite and inspire the African diaspora to take part in the growth and development of the African continent.

Ghana has acknowledged the need to create and strengthen the networks and engagement mechanisms necessary for increasing its ties with its diaspora. In order to establish a long-term connection between the diaspora and the nation's development goal, the Ghanaian government established a Diaspora Bureau under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration as well as an office for Diaspora at the Presidency.

An effective option to promote growth and development in Ghana has emerged from the growing connection between the diaspora and development. In spite of Ghana's development, the governments and development organizations can work closely with the diaspora to promote regional cohesion and entrepreneurship. The involvement of the diaspora can aid in enhancing the ties between trade, investment, and knowledge transfer that are crucial for regional integration.

Although the African diaspora is acknowledged for its economic contributions, not much studies have been focused on how it can contribute to regional integration. For example, the contributions of the Ghanaian diaspora may go beyond remittances and encompass knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship, and advocacy for laws that support regional integration. Studying particular instances of Ghanaians living abroad who have taken part in regional integration projects, such participating in cross-border trade or starting firms that close economic gaps, might offer information on their influence on promoting integration.

Also, regional integration is critical for African countries to achieve long-term growth. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the African Union's Agenda 2063 indicate the continent's commitment to regional integration. Understanding the contributions of the Ghanaian diaspora to regional integration can provide insights into the potential benefits of diaspora participation. The Ghanaian diaspora, for example, might play an

important role in developing cross-border cooperation, knowledge exchange, and trade facilitation, thereby increasing regional economic integration.

Additionally, Ghana has a long history of migration, including historical events such as the transatlantic slave trade, colonial migration, and modern emigration motivated by education and job prospects. The scale and geographical distribution of the Ghanaian diaspora make it significant. The Ghanaian diaspora in the global north, for example, is made up of significant personalities such as professors, entrepreneurs, and professionals who can contribute to Ghana's regional integration through a variety of channels such as diaspora investment, technology transfer, and advocacy.

Finally, recognizing the Ghanaian diaspora's agency in regional integration can empower diasporic communities and increase their sense of belonging. Platforms, for example, can be developed to allow diaspora networking, knowledge exchange, and collaboration. Ghana's government can provide platforms for diaspora engagement in regional integration policy debates and decision-making processes. Governments may leverage the diaspora's skills, networks, and resources to promote greater regional integration and development by encouraging diaspora engagement.

1.7 Conceptual framework

The research was carried out within the framework of transnationalism. The concept describes the presence of a Ghanaian diaspora and the connections that such a diaspora may have with the homeland. Transnationalism focuses on the connection and activities of individuals and communities beyond national borders, emphasizing the preservation of numerous social, economic, and cultural linkages.

1.7.1 Key proponents

The word "transnationalism" was originally used in an essay titled "Trans-National America" published in 1916 by 20th-century writer Randolph Bourne, who used the term to establish a new way of distinguishing relations among divergent cultures, however, political scientists began using the word transnationalism in the 1960s to describe phenomena for which a nation-state classification seemed neither attainable nor appropriate (Jakubowicz, 2012).

Morales et al note that transnationalism refers to the social, economic, and political ties that people have in both their home country and the country(ies) to which they have moved (Morales et al 2023). This concept captures the core of the Ghanaian diaspora's involvement in regional integration by recognizing their varied relationships and actions that transcend national boundaries. It enabled an examination of the Ghanaian diaspora's social networks, economic contributions (such as remittances and investments), cultural exchanges, and political engagement in both their home country and the nations to which they have migrated.

1.7.2 Key drivers of transnationalism

In recent years, transnationalism has grown due to the rapid development of technology that has impacted cross-border travel and engagement globally. Even more, enhanced transportation, internet connectivity and the birth of new media platforms have greatly influenced global interconnection. Thus, people have become increasingly interconnected and engaged in cross-border activities. Additionally, as a measure to address labor shortages and population growth, countries tend to rely on oversea migration. As a result, many individuals prefer migrating to other states in search of a better life, furthering the growth of transnational communities.

A combination of technological advancement, improved transportation, and labor downturns, has established a conducive environment for individuals to maintain strong ties with

their home countries while actively involved in social, economic and political activities abroad. Through investments, remittances, cultural exchanges, information sharing and political advocacies, transnationalism is reinforced. In effect, transnationalism provides an avenue to understand global processes and the agency of individuals and communities (in this case, the Ghanaian diaspora community) beyond the shores of their host countries. This phenomenon underscored the relevance of researching to understand the active role of transnational actors, such as the African Diaspora.

1.7.3 Main assumptions of transnationalism

One major assumption of transnationalism is that social, economic, and cultural activities are no longer limited to a single region or nation-state. It acknowledges the declining importance of borders and emphasizes the fluidity and interconnection of persons and communities beyond geographical boundaries. Researchers in social science can better characterize an increasingly complex global environment while also calling into question the artificially fixed nature of borders (Kasun, 2017). It also discourages the notion of immigration as a one-way integration process (Sánchez & Kasun, 2012) and enables cross-border research of social practices. As such, the African diaspora can play a critical role in the regional integration process despite not being located in Africa, in this instance, Ghana.

Transnationalism also emphasizes that individuals are not constrained to a specific geographic location but instead are exposed to a robust system of connectivity facilitated by the rapid growth of technology. For example, the development of modern means of transport, such as high-speed trains and airplanes, has resulted in easier crossing long distances. As Rosemberg et al note, “transnationalism assumes that persons are not bound to place, as much, as they are to space and technologies of place” (Rosemberg et al, 2017). This notion gives credence to the profound influence of technology on promoting transnational networks and directing how individuals

engage with one another. Hence the term social field, which describes social relations and space which facilitates exchanges such as (ideas, resources, networks) and power within those social relationships is negotiated (Schiller, 2004; Faist, 2000). Even more, the expansion of internet reach and widespread dependence on social media platforms have transformed the way people transact and connect.

According to Jakubowicz, another dimension of transnationalism is the role of the sending country; “it too can become increasingly involved in the “migrant community” of the receiving country, set priorities and pursue its interests” (Jakubowicz, 2012). Thus, transnationalism creates an opportunity for sending states (for instance, Ghana), to tap into its diaspora community and pursue its national interest. Essentially, transnationalism opens a window for African states to utilize their growing diaspora for regional integration purposes. The necessity of such a move is dependent on the sending state realizing the vast advantage at the disposal of the diaspora and putting in efforts to tap into such. The benefits that can be derived must be intentionally cultivated by states that have ties with their diaspora community.

1.7.4 Transnationalism and diaspora intersection

Transnationalism and diaspora have expanded the scope of analysis of international migration and the shifting state borders across populations (Faist, 2010). Albeit transnationalism and diaspora are sometimes used commutatively (Arthur, 2010), the two terms are grounded in separate intellectual genealogies (ibid). Some scholars examine how diaspora connect through transnationalism; for Olunfunke Okome and Vaughan (2012), “Transnational Africa means that Africa’s old and new Diasporas are thrown together in interesting combinations that challenge common understandings of identity” (Okome & Vaughan, 2012). Sökefeld defines diasporas as “imagined transnational communities, which are unique segments of people that live in territorially separated locations” (Sökefeld, 2006). Sökefeld argues that not all migrants inevitably form part

of the diaspora and also not all groups of migrants become transnational communities. Instead, it depends on the level of mobilization and self-view by such individuals. On the other hand, some authors (Georgiou, 2006; Johnson, 2012) argue the term “diaspora” is closely associated with cultural identity.

Schiller et al. (1992b) defined transnationalism as ‘the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement’. According to Faista, transnationalism and “its derivatives, such as transnational social spaces, fields and formations – have been used to connote everyday practices of migrants engaged in various activities” (ibid). Some of these activities comprise of reciprocity and solidarity within kinship networks, political participation not only in the country of emigration but also of immigration, small-scale entrepreneurship of migrants across borders and the transfer and re-transfer of cultural customs and practices (ibid).

Though the political undertone of transnationalism is low, nor widely discussed as diaspora, scholars such as Porters have outlined three viewpoints of the concept. These are the political, social and cultural perspectives. In the view of Jakubowicz, “the economically focused actions find expression in a multitude of smaller business relations (such as the typical import-export trade) as well as in remittances to relatives in the home country” (ibid). The political view concerns the political responsibilities assumed by transnational migrants. Jakubowicz further highlights the forms in which the transnational politics can take place:

- Political activity in the receiving country in order to increase political influence there.
- Exercising pressure on the home country, especially in fields of politics that are relevant to the interests of the diaspora.

- The transnational diaspora community can also enter into interaction with other (third) states and international organizations. As a result, they form lobby groups that extend beyond nation state structures.

Portes elucidates that cultural affinity is only enforced through the economic and political activities that transnational migrants undertake in both transnational spaces. Faista explains that, above all, since the introduction of transnationalism to migration studies in the early 1990s, it has sparked discussions on integration of immigrants (ibid). These explanations affirm the agency of migrants such as the African diaspora.

1.7.5 Criticism of the concept

Transnationalism has been criticized by some scholars, as is common with other frameworks. Vertovec notes that transnationalism has faced series of backlash through a plethora of academic works. One of the criticisms that has been labelled against transnationalism is that its applicability has become so broad to such an extent that terms tend to depart from its foundational meaning. While a majority of scholars ascribe to transnationalism as a concept ‘from below’ (Smith & Guarnizom, 1998), others profess transnationalism as a framework ‘from below’ (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Even more, some scholars tend to suggest that all migrants participate in transnationalism. However, as indicated by Sökefeld, “not all groups of migrants become diaspora or transnational communities”. Thus, there is a great variation in migrants’ cross-border activities. Portes et al believe that for individuals or groups to be classified as transnational, there must be an appreciable involvement in a ‘sustained social contacts over time’ by the group or people across national borders.

Against the backdrop of the arguments, Lucassen stresses that there must be a clear distinction when using the concept of transnationalism. While some scholars tend to appropriate

the term across various folds, he maintains that the distinction must be made within international, global and transnational. Terms such as “translocalism”, “trans-state activity and “bi-nationalism” were suggested to avoid confusion with the general concept of transnationalism. It is worth noting that transnational frameworks have usually emphasized economic and political relations maintained by migrants with their countries of origin. This situation has been predominant in Europe and the America where for instance Chinese, Polish and Russian immigrants maintain strong associations with their families back home by sending remittances, investing in businesses and developing strong political interest in their home countries. Similar instances can be viewed in Africa, due to the continuous flow of remittances from migrants to the home countries, which contributes significantly to the gross domestic product (GDP) of national economies.

1.7.6 Relevance of the concept to the study

The use of transnationalism as a framework for this study is due to its appropriateness. It throws lights on the interconnectedness of African diaspora to their home countries and emphasizes the agency of these transnational actors. Relying on the definitions of transnationalism and its features, it is clear that a study that seeks to tap into the agency of Ghana’s diaspora would be situated within the conceptual framework of transnationalism.

By utilizing this concept, a deeper understanding of the nuanced role of the diaspora in regional integration efforts was realized. It is imperative to note that Africa is currently pursuing economic integration before, hopefully, a political integration. As such, the feature of transnationalism being tied to economic underpinnings, is reflective of how relevant the framework was for this study. Castle and Miller (1993) argue that, “migration is the result of the integration of local communities and national economies into global relationships”. In effect, globalization has greatly influenced transnational relations between African diaspora and their

home countries. These relationships have been demonstrated through investments, remittances, return of skilled labor and technology.

Also, the concept of diaspora and pan-Africanism are closely tied in this study. What connects the diaspora as a transnational agency to Africa's regional integration process is the rooted in the fundamental basis of Pan-Africanism. As such, since transnationalism deal with culture and identity, this concept helps in situating the argument in a broader context.

1.8 Literature review

The literature review for this work was drawn from scholarly works, books, articles, research papers and publications which provided a valuable overview of how Africa has been engaging its diaspora. Particularly, it provided the ground for analyzing how the Africa diaspora is a partner for African governments in their quest for regional integration.

Africa's regional integration processes have undergone different phases under diverse circumstances - from the actions of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU). Throughout these years, different players have contributed immensely to the integration process. While largely the emphasis has been on governments as well as certain instrumental figures, particularly Pan-Africanist, until recently, not much emphasis has been placed on the substantial role the African Diaspora can play as partners in the regional integration efforts. This is expressed by Li Xing & Paul Opoku-Mensah who explains that "although the role of the Diaspora in economic and regional integration has become an issue of policy and theoretical salience, comparative analyses and understanding of the Diaspora and its roles are still in its infancy" (Xing & Opoku-Mensah, 2008). The paper by Li-Xing discussed the case of Chinese diasporas and what role they have played in the development of China. While the paper touched broadly on the African Diaspora, and also discussed how efforts are being made by Ghana to tap

into its diaspora community, it did not investigate how the government can recognize their agency in regional integration. The gap identified is what this paper investigated.

The term ‘diaspora’ is an old concept that has witnessed dramatic changes in recent studies. Formerly, the concept was associated to the historical experiences of the Jews. The concept was later stretched to cover religious minorities in Europe. Since the late 1970s, the interpretation of the word ‘diaspora’ has become more fluid and contested. According to Ankomah et al (2012), the study of diaspora has developed from two viewpoints: checklists of common features and typologies. With reference to common features, Sufran (1991) proposed a list of six essential characteristics that describe the diaspora:

1. dispersion from multiple locations,
2. retention of a vision of their original homeland,
3. lack of full acceptance by their host society,
4. regard for the homeland as their ultimate destination,
5. commitment to uphold or restore their homeland, and
6. maintenance of an ongoing relationship with their homeland

These characteristics represents the African diaspora in part but is mainly viewed by Sufran as the upholding features which gives undiluted meaning to Jewish diaspora. It is instructive to note that while many Africans were dispersed from different parts of the modern African states, with some upholding and preserving a strong pictorial vision for their original homeland, not many embody the other characteristics. This is because, while earlier group of diasporas regard their homeland as their ultimate destination, contemporary diasporas envisage integrating into their host countries. With reference to the typology underpinning the concept of diaspora, Cohen’s (1997) categorizes diasporas based on the factors that influenced their migration from their homeland. He explains that diasporas such as the Jews, Africans, Armenians, Palestinians and Irish are classified as victim or refugee diasporas because they were forced to exit their homelands. This

characterization corresponds with the reason why some diasporas tend to affirm their commitment to their homelands. Cohen argued that though it is historically accepted that the Jewish description of the term diaspora is the beating heart of all diasporic definition, such accounts has evolved with time. This is because, diaspora is now used in rather reminiscent context other than the Jewish traditional view. The writings of Sufran and Cohen both does not acknowledge the agency of the African Diaspora, particularly the Ghanaian diaspora and thus the essence of this work.

1.8.1 Africa's regional integration and diaspora relations

Chinwe and Felix (2014) upholds that the Africa diaspora can play an instrumental role in repositioning the African Union for a sustainable regional integration in the continent. In their work titled *Diaspora, African Union and Sustainable Regional Integration in Africa* they argue that, it is about time Africa depart from following Europeanized integration theories by charting a different path. This is because, other regions have integrated without necessarily following the established European theories of integration. Instead, Africa's current drive towards regional integration must be wheeled by the pan-Africanist ideology which was powered by the Africa Diaspora. They emphasize their point by saying “the contention here is that African Diasporas have a major role to play within the framework of the AU to drive sustainable regional integration in the continent based on their specialized or professional training, experience and exposure” (Chinwe and Felix, 2014).

They look at the term ‘diaspora’ through the lens of the American Institute for Cultural Diversity which explains that the diaspora means ‘dispersal or dispersed’. Thus, diaspora according to them depicts “persons who for one reason or the other are dispersed outside of the African continent” (Chinwe and Felix, 2014). Based on this perspective of the diaspora, they highlight how the Africa diaspora has exerted their agency in regional integration through ‘Back-to-Africa’ campaign instigated by Marcus Garvey; ‘pan-Africanism’ championed by George

Padmore and ‘Afrocentricism’ which originated as a continental philosophy during the early 1980s. According to the writers, “the African Diasporas have been significant players in the construction of our national and continental narratives in the drive towards regional integration” (ibid).

Kennes (2007), has argued that the success of regional integration rests heavily on the internal capabilities and shortfalls of member states as well as the extent to which they are prepared to meet their commitments to their integration institutions. Thus, a state’s commitment to regional integration is a necessity. In order for the state to exude that level of commitment, it must engage and empower all institutions and agencies that can consolidate its efforts in the integration process. Agencies such as the African diaspora cannot be overlooked. It is, therefore, not surprising that African integration has suffered many shortfalls – due to many factors including the failure of individual states to build on the pan-Africanist ideology and collaborate with all agencies needed for the integration drive.

Specifically, the most prominent challenge to regional integration which fits in this work is the fact that Africa has a low sense of ideological direction. This is highlighted by Chinwe and Felix who mention that “the lack of ideological direction in Africa is a major challenge to regional integration on the continent” (Chinwe & Felix, 2014). The pan-Africanist ideology served as the magic bullet for leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah to promote the decolonization and African unity agenda. It also formed the basis for the pan-Africanist movement driven by African diasporas such as Marcus Garvey. In effect, Chinwe and Felix point to the valuable role of the diaspora to regional integration in Africa.

Li Xing and Paul Opoku-Mensah in their paper *Diaspora in Development and Integration: The Case of the Chinese and African Diasporas* highlights the diaspora’s role in contemporary regional integration and development. They examine the comparative role of the Chinese diaspora and Africa diaspora in the development and integration process of their home countries and

regions, indicating that “although the role of the Diaspora in economic and regional integration has become an issue of policy and theoretical salience, comparative analyses and understanding of the Diaspora and its roles are still in its infancy” (ibid). According to them, though there are proliferation of writings on globalization in the 21st century, the exact impact of Africa diaspora as transnational actors in regional integration has not received much attention. In their view, “people are more transnational today than at any other time in history, and successful economic development and integration increasingly depends on human capital crossing borders” (Xing & Opoku-Mensah, 2008).

Focusing on the Africa diaspora, the Alpers note that the global dispersion of the Africa diaspora is influenced by voluntary and involuntary actions. The involuntary actions were caused by the transatlantic slave trade while the voluntary actions are contemporary intended migrations. This positioned is re-affirmed by Alpers (2001) who states that

“the global dispersion (voluntary and involuntary) of Africans throughout history; the emergence of a cultural identity abroad based on origin and social condition; and the psychological or physical return to the homeland, Africa. Thus viewed, the African Diaspora assumes the character of a dynamic, continuous, and complex phenomenon stretching across time, geography, class, and gender.” (Alpers, 2001:8).

Stressing the overarching role of the diaspora in regional integration, Kwesi Prah argues that “the very notion of African unity and integration is a Diaspora construct”. He expounds on this statement by establishing that: “the roots of the idea of African Unity are buried in the mid-nineteenth century. Together and enmeshed with the related ideas of nationalism and pan-Africanism, they emerged as the articulate response of people of African descent in Africa and its diaspora to the continuing experience of western domination and exploitation” (Prah, 2000:2)

Article 3 (q) of AU constitutive act states that the AU would “invite and encourage the full participation of the African Diaspora as an important part of our continent, in the building of the African Union” (AU constitutive Act).

1.8.2 Ghana’s engagement with the diaspora

The literature that concerns Ghana’s engagement with its diaspora has been situated within the context of economic and social development of the state. Though Ghana has a long history of committing to the regional integration effort, particularly the economic integration process, contemporary literatures have been focused on how to tap into the diaspora for economic advancements. According to Paul Ankomah, Trent Larson, Venita Roberson and Jerono Rotich in their work titled *A Creative Approach to Development: The Case for Active Engagement of African Diaspora in Ghana*, they posit that Ghana’s diaspora engagement has been centered on economic development. Based on their account, one of the benefits Ghana derives from its diaspora communities is remittances to relatives at home. As highlighted by Asiedu (2005), overseas remittances through official flows rose from \$263 million in 1995 to about \$753 million in 2001.

Bolaji (2015) in his work *The African Union's Call for Global Pan-Africanism and the Ghana-Diaspora Relations in the 21st Century*, he explores how Ghana provided the fertile ground for Pan-Africanism through the mandates of Kwame Nkrumah. The paper also analyzes how successive governments have progressed on Nkrumah’s foundation by creating a receptive opening for the Ghanaian diaspora communities. While the paper examines these issues, it does not discuss how the necessary frameworks that can see to it that the contemporary Ghanaian diaspora become a partner of the government in its current drive towards economic integration within the sub-region and the continent as a whole. In fact, the AfCFTA secretariat has been raised in Ghana due to its significant involvement in the regional integration process. How does the government consolidate their efforts by roping in the Ghanaian diaspora? These gaps are what this paper intends to fill.

1.9 Methodology

The qualitative research approach was used to gather and analyze data in this study. As described by Crossman, qualitative research is a sort of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data in order to extract meaning from it to better understand social life via the study of specific groups or locations (Crossman, 2020). This approach best fits because it provided a thorough examination of the experiences, views, motives, and obstacles that members of the Ghanaian diaspora encounter in their participation in regional integration. It also provided sophisticated knowledge of the complexities and nuances of diaspora agency through interviews, focus group discussions, and open-ended questions that quantitative approaches alone may not convey.

Equally, qualitative research helped gain an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural, economic, and political conditions in which the Ghanaian diaspora functions. It contributed to a better understanding of the social networks, cultural linkages, and historical circumstances that shape diaspora contributions to regional integration. This helped in explaining the contextual elements that influence diaspora members' decisions, actions, and perceptions.

The study also relied on the case study approach to analyze the role of the African diaspora in regional integration. The case study approach is especially beneficial when an in-depth understanding of an issue, event, or phenomenon of interest is required (Crowe, Cresswell., Robertson, et al., 2011). It aided in examining the factors, processes, and consequences of the Ghanaian diaspora's contributions to regional integration by relying on definite cases within the Ghanaian diaspora, such as individuals, organizations, or initiatives. This level of study helped in discovering useful insights and the generation of complex understandings of diaspora engagement. In effect, the combination of primary qualitative interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and secondary data analysis provided a thorough picture of the situation.

1.9.1 Sources of data

Data for the study was sourced primarily through avenues such as questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and direct observations, whilst secondary data was sourced from journal articles, reports, books, reliable internet sources and peer-reviewed papers. Primary data was sourced from five (5) experts of diaspora affairs in integration from the African & Regional Integration Bureau, the Diaspora Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, the ambassador of the United State of America, African Diaspora Collective, Diaspora African Forum, Head of Diaspora Affairs at the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre in addition to academics sought through snowballing based on their willingness and availability.

Semi-structured interviews gave participants a framework for asking crucial questions while allowing them to freely share their unique experiences, thoughts, and insights. Semi-structured interviews, in contrast to structured interviews with defined questions and limited responses, allowed participants to comment on their experiences, shared narratives, and provided inimitable insights on their agency in regional integration. A semi-structured interview has been referred to as a ‘conversation with a purpose’ (Burgess, 1984).

In addition, 25 open ended questionnaires were also administered, using secured online forms, and a stratified random sampling to Ghanaian diaspora living in Ghana and in the global north. The study relied on different classification of participants in order to have a nuanced understanding of their experiences, challenges, insights and individual desire to spearhead regional integration efforts. The distribution of questionnaires to a representative sample of Ghanaian diasporas both home and abroad, gave qualitative data on their experiences, obstacles, and levels of involvement in regional integration efforts. This enabled the acquisition of qualitative data, the analysis of which provided useful insights for the research objectives.

1.9.2 Study population

Members of the Ghanaian diaspora living in Ghana and abroad were the study population for this research. Ghanaian diaspora from various professional backgrounds, such as academics, entrepreneurs, professionals, and community leaders, were included in the research population. The study population comprised a variety of participants to ensure a full knowledge of the Ghanaian diaspora's agency in regional integration. The study engaged individuals who have actively contributed to regional integration activities, such as those involved in cross-border trade, entrepreneurship, policy advocacy, or cultural exchanges. Furthermore, members of diaspora organizations or associations who aim to promote regional integration or have an impact on Ghana's integration within regional organizations such as ECOWAS were included in the study.

1.9.3 Sampling methods

Purposive sampling was used to choose participants with specific experiences that are highly relevant to the research aims. The study recruited members of the Ghanaian diaspora with skills, knowledge, and active involvement in regional integration. Individuals involved in cross-border trade, entrepreneurship, policy lobbying, cultural exchange programs, or other activities connected to regional integration were included.

Snowball sampling was also used to supplement the purposive sampling strategy. Snowball sampling begins with the identification and recruitment of a few key individuals who match the research criteria. These participants are then invited to recommend and refer other potential participants with related experiences or insights. Snowball sampling helped to contact individuals with valuable perspectives on diaspora agency in regional integration by leveraging the networks and connections of the original participants.

1.9.4 Tools of analysis

For analysis, interviews were transcribed and inductively coded. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis helps to have a more comprehensive understanding of any problem (Alhojailan and Ibrahim, 2012). The acquired data was organized into themes based on the research objectives. Various analytic approaches, according to Shamo and Resnik (2003), "provide a way of drawing inductive inferences from data and distinguishing the signal (the phenomenon of interest) from the noise (statistical fluctuations) present in the data."

This allowed for a nuanced understanding of role of the African diaspora in regional integration while focusing on the specific role of the Ghanaian diaspora community.

1.9.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations in research are essential norms and principles that guide the conduct of researchers throughout their study. In compliance with these ethical standards, an introductory letter from LECIAD was provided to justify the collection of field data. Participants' consent was obtained prior to conducting interviews. Furthermore, participants were assured that their responses would be kept strictly confidential and used solely for the purposes of this study. In addition to addressing ethical considerations, the study also assessed validity and reliability to ensure the credibility and consistency of the findings. Validity was ensured by carefully designing research instruments that accurately measure the intended constructs, such as the role of the Ghanaian diaspora in regional integration. The study also maintained reliability by implementing consistent procedures across all phases of data collection, ensuring that the results could be replicated under similar conditions. These measures strengthen the overall trustworthiness of the research findings.

1.10 Arrangement of Chapters

This dissertation is broken into four sections.

1. The first chapter provided an overview of the research.
2. The second chapter examined the role of the African Diaspora in regional integration in general and the Ghanaian diaspora community in particular. This chapter also examined the policies governing diaspora engagement.
3. The third chapter looked at the issues limiting Ghanaian diaspora community involvement in regional integration.
4. The fourth chapter provided a summary of the research's results, conclusions, and suggestions.



2.1 Introduction

The chapter is organized into seven segments. The text starts by delving into the geographical patterns seen in migration. It examines the agency of the African diaspora to the regional integration efforts of Africa. It zooms into the connection between the African Diaspora and their home countries. It recounts the genesis of the Ghanaian Diaspora. It then discusses the challenge in incorporating the African diaspora in the regional integration project. The chapter then

examines Ghana's migration pattern, which encompasses both intra-regional movements, as well as the broader global diaspora, extending beyond the confines of the African continent. It then chronicles the various means through which Ghana has engaged with its diaspora community. The chapter ends by discussing the performance of Ghana's engagement with its diaspora through the lens of the AU Diaspora Engagement Self-Assessment Tool.

Mohammed Bashir Salau succinctly captured migration as the underlining factor that led to the development of the African diaspora. According to George Shepperson, who is regarded as the first historian to join the word 'African' to 'Diaspora' in 1965, the African Diaspora "describes the great movement or migration of people of African descent during the eras of slavery and imperialism" (Salau, 2018). While Shepperson's description is valid to some extent, the current dispersion of people of African descent is notably influenced by economic and social factors. In current times, the increasing level of global interconnectedness as a result of globalization, has facilitated the dispersion of people of African descent. The effect is seen in how African diaspora communities have emerged in jurisdictions outside the boundaries of their homeland. Despite the formation of diaspora communities outside their home countries, there is often a two-way relation or what can be classified as a 'transnational tie' between diaspora communities and their home country. This is emphasized by Joseph Harris who regards the African diaspora as "a triadic relationship linking a dispersed group of people to the homeland, Africa, and to their host or adopted countries." (Salau, 2018).

Through international migration, it has become easier to trace the whereabouts of the diaspora communities. International migrants "include all persons who have changed their country of residence, regardless of the reason for migration" (UNDESA, 2022). The Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs has provided the most comprehensive figures on international migration, some of which have resulted in the formation of diaspora communities. Per the 2020 international migrant stock, the estimated number of

international migrants in the world increased from 221 million in 2010 to 281 million in 2020 (UN International Migration Stock, 2020).

The 2019 report noted that in developed countries, almost 12 of every residents were international migrants (UN Migration Stock, 2019). This suggests that there is an increasing rate of African diaspora communities being formed in the global north. It is imperative to state that, in 2019, about 82.3 million people migrated to Europe, making it the continent to host the largest international migrants. This was followed by Northern America hosting 58.6 million migrants. Africa and Western Asia received 48.6 million migrants. Interestingly, though there is a great population of migrants in Europe and North America, there has been a sturdy decline in the growth over the years. Between 2010 and 2019, per the UN Migration Stock Report, Northern Africa and Western Asia, as well as Sub-Saharan Africa, witnessed the fastest increase in international migrants at a rate of 4.4% as opposed to 1.7% rate in Europe and 1.6% in Northern America (UN Migration Stock, 2019).

Even more in 2019, 39% of all international migrants simply moved from less developed regions to less developed countries (South-South migration), indicating that international migration was shifting from South-North migration. This is supported by a report by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation which states that “Intra-African migrations since 2010 have increased by +43.6% compared to +26.0% for Africa-Europe migrations” (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, n.d.).

This trend suggests that the pattern of international migration and the growing of diaspora communities is not only reflected in South to North migration i.e. migrants moving in search of greener pastures from developed countries, but, could be necessitated by other factors.



2.2 Agency of the African Diaspora to Africa's Regional Integration

Africa's regional integration efforts have been slow due to many constraints dating back to the colonial era. In recent years, however, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has been acclimatized as a breakthrough for the continents' economic integration. Despite this grand breakthrough, there are many untapped areas by key stakeholders and policy makers both at the regional and continental level. One of such is the agency of the African Diaspora.

The African Diaspora can be an important catalyst and partner for governments and development institutions to foster cooperation, development, regional integration and entrepreneurship in Africa, just as the World Bank describes for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) diaspora (World Bank, 2016). According to the summary of draft discussion paper for the African Knowledge Networks Forum (AKNF) in preparation for the African Development Forum 2001 (ADF 2001), "Defining Priorities for Regional Integration", Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie (2001) notes that, "the African diaspora is well placed to exercise their agency in contributing effectively to Africa's regional integration". Ifeanyi Felix and Felix Chinwe (2014) also agree that "African Diasporas have a major role to play within the framework of the AU to drive sustainable regional integration in the continent based on their specialized or professional training, experience and exposure."

Unlike some literatures that considers the migration of people of African descent as a 'brain drain', diaspora communities, particularly skilled professionals, can serve as an important human capital advantage for their home countries and the African continent as a whole. As discussed by Afua Yakohene, the process of integration, in whatever form it may take, be it economic, political or the reliance on human resources – in this case the African Diaspora, requires deliberate attempts with an envisioned goal (Yakohene, 2009). The big question is, what is the goal and priority of African states in their engagement with the Diaspora?

According to the Diaspora Collective, about 170 million people of African descent live across the globe. As expanded by the Diaspora Collective, approximately 39 million people of African descent have migrated to North America, with about 113 million in Latin America, 14 million in the Caribbean and 4 million in Europe (Diaspora collective, n.d.). Considering these numbers, it is evident that Africa has a great deal of human resources that can be leveraged for its integration process.

In examining the impact of the diaspora, African leaders have mainly been fixated on the annual remittances received by the home countries. Annually, it is estimated that about \$95.6 billion dollars' worth of remittances flow into Africa, contributing to about 2-3% of Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) (Ford, 2023). The World Bank specify that \$46.6bn of the \$95.6bn went to North Africa and \$49bn to sub-Saharan Africa. Significantly, Egypt was the heaviest recipient with about \$31.5bn being transferred through overseas remittances, while Nigeria is believed to be the second destination of overseas remittances to the tune of \$19.2bn in the year 2021. Ghana is reported to be the next in line receiving about \$2.7bn (ibid).

Even though the role of overseas remittances play an integral role in the socio-economic development of the state, the role of the human resources has often been overlooked. It is therefore safe to say that the effect of the diaspora on economic development have been assessed through a myopic lens by African leaders. This is because, recent literatures have shed light on how the Diaspora can promote trade, innovation, investment and technological acquisition. As such, myriad developing and developed states are reinforcing their relationship with their Diaspora in order to leverage on these benefits.

Based on recent literatures, there is considerable research which projects the diaspora as a 'tool' for international integration and fostering entrepreneurship (Ghatak et al.2009; Felbermayr and Toubal 2008). The African diaspora can express their agency in several ways including;

1. Serve as a link for foreigners who envisage doing business in specific countries of their origin.

2. Diaspora communities can singlehandedly develop specific industries in their countries of origin. In the wake of industrialization, diaspora communities can re-engineer certain industries such as commerce, transportation which will facilitate businesses beyond their home jurisdiction.

3. Diaspora brainpower can be a resourceful tool for knowledge and skills transfer. There is plethora of knowledgeable and skilled diasporas who can aid in Africa's regional integration due to their unique experiences overseas. For instance, diasporas abroad can share insights into successful integration projects such as the European Union (EU) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

4. Diaspora communities can facilitate a surge in investment transfers between sending and receiving countries. This can be done by building strategic partnerships. These among others are critical ways through which the diaspora can exercise their agency.

2.3 Connection between the African Diaspora and their home countries

Generally, what sets Africans apart from other nationals are the unique characteristics they portray, for example through their distinguished culture, language, food etc. It is therefore not surprising that Africans usually establish their own communities in their host countries. By doing so, they reinforce their own subcultures in foreign states. Despite immigrating, with a good number gaining citizenship and permanent residency, African diaspora still hold on to their identity which makes it unfeasible to 'fully integrate' in the host country. For instance, Africans in Europe establish their own 'African markets', curate African concerts and even continue to speak their local dialect with their fellows, thereby maintaining their transnational relations with their home countries. By virtue of these, most African Diaspora usually channel their funds into establishing

projects such as owning properties in their home countries. They tend to keep close ties with their families, and involve themselves in activities back home. Some even provide funding for political campaigns and projects.

For many, migrating to these host countries are launchpads to economic freedom. As such, overwhelming tax regimes and ‘structured systems’ only encourages them to accumulate enough money and channel it home. This showcases the ties these diaspora communities have with their home countries. It is important to note that, these interactions are primarily led by the diasporas, and not largely influenced by policy direction or action of governments. Governments have only curated ceremonial linkages with their diaspora. Thus, diaspora ties are not necessarily occasioned by government engagement but individual desire to keep ties with family and friends’ home.

2.4 The challenge of incorporating the African diaspora in Africa’s regional integration

The leitmotif being emphasized in this study is that the African diaspora, particularly the Ghanaian diaspora, can exercise agency in the regional economic integration of the continent. The ability of these diaspora communities to exercise their agency rests on policy makers to harness their untapped resourcefulness. As established earlier, overseas remittances make up the most reliable source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for African states. In fact, the World Bank in its 2022 Migration and Development Report suggest that “remittances to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) withstood global headwinds in 2022, growing an estimated 5% to \$626 billion” (World Bank, 2022). These investments propel job creation and also cushion African families. The diaspora also plays other roles such as the transfer of technologies, investment, being a source of knowledge transfer amongst others.

Despite their agency, there are certain barriers hindering their ability to be fully incorporated in the regional integration process. It is imperative to state that though the African

Union, championed by Senegal, changed its constitutive act in 2003 to include the African diaspora as a key partner, it has fallen short of formally recognizing the diaspora as the sixth region (Opoku-Mensah, 2006). The legal consideration of the African diaspora as the sixth region is considered as a defining moment that has acknowledged the agency of the African diaspora, after several years of being ‘shadow participants. Opoku-Mensah refers to the change as a “needed corrective” to what might legitimately be described as a historical injustice given that the African diaspora was the original source of the inspiration for the integration project but was completely left out by the OAU” (Opoku-Mensah, 2006).

The legal establishment of the African Diaspora as the sixth region by the African Union has resulted in a series of important ingenuities that has institutionalized the political relations between the AU and the African Diaspora. According to Opoku-Mensah, these includes;

1. The amending of the Constitutive Act to include Article 3q that calls for the participation of the diaspora in the activities of the AU
2. The establishment of the Western Hemisphere African Diaspora Network (WHADN), the brainchild and outcome of the AU Western Hemisphere
3. African Diaspora Forum held in Washington DC between December 17- 19, 2002
4. The AU technical meeting on relations with the diaspora, held in Trinidad and Tobago between June 2-4, 2004
5. The First Conference of Intellectuals of Africa and the Diaspora organized by the AU in October 2004, and a number of other initiatives.

Despite the birthing of these magnificent initiatives, the exact role of the African Diaspora in the integration project is not fully covered (ibid). Legally codifying policies without the development of a robust working strategic plan has been the order of the day. Conventionally, the African Diaspora have been regarded as a catalyst for Africa’s integration due to historical reasons.

This was fully encapsulated by former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, who in a speech where he said;

“the stirrings and fermentation of the notions of decolonisation and freedom on the African continent were significantly inspired by the courageous pioneers of African freedom in the diaspora. It was in the year 1900 when the Trinidadian barrister Henry Sylvester Williams initiated the first Pan-African conference, in London. That conference was seminal to the political and philosophical movement of Pan-Africanism throughout the world, the catalyst that has ultimately led to the formation of the AU, at the beginning of the 21st century.”
(Mbeki, 2003).

The crux of diaspora engagement has, myopically, been based on a 'functional' approach to the incorporation of the African Diaspora in the integration process. In this sense, the involvement of the diaspora has been grounded in the mobilization of the financial resources for the growth of the continent. Essentially, though the historical basis is somehow relevant, current revolves around identifying and utilizing the diaspora communities dotted all over the world in support of Africa's economic development. This position is stressed by Howard Jeter, the former US Ambassador to Nigeria who said that current stage of the Africa diaspora relationship, “is the era of organized and institutional co-operation and collaboration” (ibid).

Paul Opoku-Mensah highlights some challenges inhibiting the incorporation of the diaspora in the regional integration efforts. Chiefly, the African diaspora is not a homogeneous community thus making it difficult for the AU to sufficiently cater for all of them. This is a significant barrier because every country has its unique diaspora community though historically, there seem to be a conceptualization that connects the ordinary African Diaspora to the African dream regardless of origin. This challenge is rooted in the historical basis for which the African Union is pursuing the inclusion of the diaspora in its activities. As such, the AU is seen as the central body pursuing the integration process without recognizing that the African Diaspora are to

be considered as real partners with agency. As noted by Opoku-Mensah, successful integration is achieved when there is an actual collaboration between the people and their organization. Such integration does not follow established formal political structures such as what is being pursued by the AU. In effect, to successfully rope in the African Diaspora in Africa's regional integration, there must be a reframing of the approach.

2.5 The Ghanaian Diaspora: From Continental to Global Migration

Through international migration, the Ghanaian diaspora community has been formed and deployed across the globe. There is usually the view that once people migrate from one region to new regions, they are automatically considered as diaspora. It is thus important to consider the view of Zeleza who strikes a distinction between migrants and the diaspora. According to him, the diaspora is constituted after a prolonged stay of an individual in a new region evolve into a permanent stay (Zeleza, 2005). In effect, people who migrate just for the purpose of seeking a source of livelihood for a short while and return to their home country are simply temporary migrants and not diasporas. He captures it succinctly this way;

“... it is the offspring of such migrants who complete the transition from migration to diasporization for their families and communities. Thus, the diasporization process is a cumulative one beginning with migration, followed by resettlement, and is reproduced through the offspring of the migrants. Using this schema, I would distinguish between African migrants, diasporized Africans, and African diasporas. In this context, long-term African-born residents of the diaspora hostlands would be considered diasporized Africans, while their offspring turn into African diasporas, more fully socialized into the experiences and identities of the historic diaspora. In other words, the process of diasporization has spatial and temporal dimensions:

African diasporas refer to Africans and their offspring resettled outside the continent”

(Zezeza, 2005).

It is imperative, however, to note that the position of Zezeza lays a foundation for this study, by recognizing the formation of the diaspora begins with international migration. There must first be a movement from the home to a host region. It is therefore not surprising that migration studies have been a feature of African politics as long as the records have it. In a recent report by the Pew Research Center, though African immigrants make up a small share of the U.S immigration population, their overall numbers are practically doubling every decade since 1970 (Pew Research Center, 2017). The relation between Africa and the rest of the world have largely been dominated by major trading, evidenced in the trans-Saharan trade period.

Then there was also the interaction between Europe and Africa dominated by the slave trade, which engineered a new pattern of migration between Africa and the rest of the world (Boahen, 1975). Many Africans, including Ghanaians partook in the slave trade, resulting in the creation of global historical diaspora. Broadly, the Ghanaian diaspora can be situated within this diaspora formation since notable Ghanaians partook in earlier migration and interaction. In this study, I characterize the Ghanaian diaspora as a blend of both historical and contemporary creation. With reference to historical diasporas, the Ghanaian government, led by President Akufo Addo, championed a reparation summit which resulted in the establishment of a global fund to compensate Africans for the slave trade. Speaking at the conference, President Akufo-Addo said “it is time for Africa — whose sons and daughters had their freedoms controlled and sold into slavery — to also receive reparations,” (AP News, 2023). The conference was well attended by senior government officials, private stakeholders and members from the diaspora community. diaspora community. Also, Ghana has somehow relied on the historical diaspora by granting them dual citizenship, with many of such returning back to contribute towards the socio-economic development of the home region.

Acknowledging the reality that the development of diaspora communities is heralded by international movement, the Ghanaian diaspora formation is now in perspective. This perspective coincides with the position of Adepoku who argued that the formation of the Ghanaian diaspora can be traced from the pre-colonial era, through to post-colonial era (Adepoku, 2008). A new political environment emerged during the post-independence era, and its effects impacted the growth of the Ghanaian diaspora in Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa, Cote d'Ivoire spearheaded the influx of immigrants since the 1960s, followed by Nigeria (Adepoku, 2008). Many of the migrants were from Ghana seeking better livelihood in the sub-region. Nigeria for instance, migrants moved there due to the discovery of oil, which reflected in infrastructural growth, thereby attracting skilled and unskilled personnel from the sub-region (ibid). Ghanaians who migrated were forced to do so due to the economic downgrade and political crises during the 1970s (ibid). As such, migrating to neighboring countries was a safety net for many Ghanaians.

It is important to note that the mass migration which occurred during the period was facilitated by the passing of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons. Adepoku explains that Article 27 of the ECOWAS treaty provided the background for the establishment of a common unrestricted community for persons within the sub-region. By default, this resulted in Nigeria being a major destination for the Ghanaian diaspora (ibid). Many diaspora returnees from Nigeria influenced even more Ghanaians to relocate to Nigeria under the guise of a better standard of living in Nigeria. Unsurprisingly, in 1983, Ghanaians represented 81 percent of the sub-region's nationals lawfully inhabitant in Nigeria (ibid). In 2020, according to UN estimates, "Nigeria is the leading destination country, accounting for 24% of all Ghanaian emigrants" (OECD, n.d.). Also, in a report by Peter Quartey, conducted for the International Organization for Migration, it indicated that Ghanaian international migrants represented 71 percent of all international migrants in West Africa (Quartey, 2009). Though Ghanaians were largely dotted across West Africa, a substantial number also began to migrate to Southern Africa, in countries such as South Africa and

Botswana. According to Adepoju, this was as a result of the collapse of Nigeria's economy during the 1990s (ibid).

2.6 Ghanaians Beyond Africa's Horizon

As discussed above, the migration of Ghanaians within the sub-region was very evident during the 1970s through the 1990s. Equally, many Ghanaians have migrated outside the shores of Africa. According to the literature, Ghanaians are dotted across the world, with the largest population in North America and Europe. According to the UN, it is estimated that approximately One (1) million Ghanaian emigrants lived abroad in 2020, which is 3.2% of Ghana's population (OECD, n.d.). The report further notes that Ghanaians abroad are mainly in North America and Europe (close to 52% of the Ghanaian emigrant population) – and sub-Saharan Africa (48%) (ibid.). In sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria takes the lead, with Ghana's neighboring nations like Côte d'Ivoire (with 112,000 emigrants), Togo (with 47,000), and Burkina Faso (with 33,000), collectively representing 19% of the Ghanaian diaspora. Beyond the African continent, the United States ranks as the second most popular destination for Ghanaian emigrants, with 201,000 individuals choosing it. It is then followed by the United Kingdom (131,000), Italy (55,000), Germany (33,000), and Canada (25,000) in that order (ibid).

As discussed by Zeleza, contemporary diaspora emerged within three instructive periods. That is colonization, decolonization and the period of the structural adjustment (Zeleza, 2005). The diaspora encompasses a diverse group of individuals, including students who initially travelled abroad for education but chose to stay, seafarers who settled in foreign lands, and others who migrated and eventually became citizens in accordance with the immigration regulations of their host countries. It is worth noting that at the time of Ghana's independence and during the post-Cold War era, Ghana boasted a high literacy rate compared to its neighboring countries in the

subregion. As a result, Ghanaian migrants were generally well-educated, skilled, and qualified for employment in various capacities within neighboring African nations (Piel, 1995).

Some Ghanaians pursued educational opportunities in the United Kingdom and the United States, often through government-sponsored or scholarship programs. Over time, they assimilated into Western systems and embraced the respective cultures, which they held in high esteem. This initial wave of Ghanaian students and scholars who departed the country for advanced training abroad during the 1950s and 60s can be regarded as the first generation of Ghanaians who migrated abroad. In Ghana, they were commonly referred to as the "been to" generation.

Then there is the Ghanaian diaspora created by the effects of the Structural Adjustment Program during the 1980s. Due to the catastrophic condition of the economy within the sub-region, Ghana, like many other West African countries, had to embrace the structural adjustment program introduced by the Bretton Woods institutions (Loxley, 2007). The SAP resulted in job losses and withdrawal of subsidies on social services such as education, health and transport (ibid). This conditioned citizens to migrate in search of alternative means of livelihood, thereby creating Ghanaian diaspora communities abroad. One could argue that the development and creation of the Ghanaian diaspora communities abroad was largely due to economic and political insecurity, as corroborated by Anarfi, Awusabo-Asare et al. Thus, many were simply looking for social security which appeared guaranteed in the global north countries.

2.7 Trajectory of Ghana's engagement with its diaspora

As consistently highlighted in the previous chapter, since the turn of the millennium, the diaspora has become an agent in development despite existing decades before now (Skeldon, 2008; Faist, 2008; Sinatti and Horst, 2015). As described by Ankobrey et al, "a remarkable increase in remittance flows in the early 2000s gave rise to the celebration of migrants' transnational engagements" (Ankobrey et al, 2021). According to the 2021 World Bank Migration and

Development Brief, “remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries surpassed the sum of FDI (\$259 billion) and overseas development assistance (\$179 billion) in 2020” (World Bank, 2021). This has intensified the interest in diaspora as a catalyst for development, and there is a growing scholarly interest in the diaspora as agent of development.

Based on a number of scholarly writings and reports, there is budding evidence to suggest that migration can have positive results for countries of origin. It is therefore not surprising that the African Union has recognized the plausible significant contribution the African Diaspora can have on its integration agenda, thereby designating the African Diaspora as its sixth region (Özoral and Agwanda, 2020). In this same viewpoint, the increasing establishment of Ghanaian diaspora communities abroad have informed the country to devise different approaches to tap into the resource of its diaspora. As Ankobrey et al, 2021 rightly puts it “the Ghanaian state approaches migrants’ remittances as an important resource for the development of the country” (ibid).

Consequently, Ghanaians residing abroad began to adopt the term 'diaspora' more frequently and presented themselves as collectives working in the best interests of their home country (Nieswand 2009). Over the past decades, the Ghanaian government have shifted from seeing migration as a brain drain. Thus, it has been developing policies which attempts to reap from its diaspora communities abroad. In fact, in 2017 during an interview with Akwasi Awuah Ababio, the Director of Diaspora Relation at the office of the President, he said government considers the diaspora as the ‘11th region’ of Ghana whose resources must be harnessed for the growth of the economy (Class FM, 2017).

As the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence, Ghana’s relationship with the African Diaspora has been studied. Nkrumah's assumption of leadership in the Pan-African movement positioned Ghana as an attractive choice, particularly for African Americans who sought to return to Africa. It's worth noting that during the 1960s, a significant number of Civil Rights Movements in the United States established connections with African leaders and showed

a stronger affinity with the liberation efforts happening in Africa during that same period (Gains, 2012). Gains highlights the presence of a substantial number of African Americans who either visited or established themselves in Ghana. This group encompasses notable figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., George Padmore, W.E.B. Dubois, Malcolm X, Maya Angelou, John Henrik Clark, Richard Wright, Pauli Murray, C.L.R. James, and Muhammad Ali (ibid). Thus, under Nkrumah, Ghana was presented as a safe haven for members of the African diaspora (Coffie, 2012).

The strides made by Nkrumah was shattered after his overthrow (Mazzucato, 2007). It was only resuscitated during the second coming of Ghana's military leader Jerry John Rawlings in the 1990s. During that period, a number of conferences and celebrations were organized, including Emancipation Day and Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival (Panafest), under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism, to promote tourism among the African diaspora (Alhassan, 2010). These became annual celebrations for Ghana to showcase itself as a home for the African diaspora (Cofie, 2021). During that period, tourism had grown to become the third foreign exchange earner for Ghana (Teye, 2000). Specifically, in 1998, tourism added \$285 million to Ghana's export earnings, constituting roughly 5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This contribution increased to \$650 million with approximately 600,000 tourists in 2004 (ibid).

It must be noted that during these entire periods, Ghana did not have a comprehensive framework or policy for engaging its diaspora. It was during the John Agyekum Kufour reign as president of the Ghana in the 21st century that the country began a process of 'formalizing a relationship with the diaspora community' (Cofie, 2021). This began with the introduction of the Homecoming Summit in 2001. The summit was purposed to deepen dialogue, identify opportunities for new relationships and explore alternative ways of tapping into the resources of the Ghanaian diaspora communities (ibid). Kufour further introduced another initiative in 2007 called the 'Joseph Project'. This initiative was designed to induce a sense of belonging among the

transnational community. While previous initiatives focused on embracing the collective African diaspora, these initiatives were crafted towards the Ghanaian diaspora in particular.

The implementation of the dual citizenship provisions in the Citizenship Act, 2000 (Act 591) and the Citizenship Regulations, 2001 (li 1690) enables Ghanaian citizens to obtain a second nationality without forfeiting their Ghanaian citizenship. Approximately seven years after its inception, it is believed that around 5,903 Ghanaian emigrants had registered under this Act. The 2010 census data indicated that 2.9 percent of Ghana's population held dual citizenship (Teye, 2017).

Additionally, it offers the 'Right of Abode,' permitting individuals in the diaspora who are ineligible for dual citizenship to receive diaspora visas. Furthermore, the Diaspora Vote Committee's efforts led to the inclusion of proxy voting or electoral participation in the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act (ROPAA, Act 699) of 2006 (ibid). In other to formalize the engagement with its diaspora, Ghana also created agencies and centers tasked to promote these rights and responsibilities granted to the diaspora. Chiefly among these institutions was the establishment of the Non-Resident Ghanaian Secretariat by the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) in 2003, which was charged to manage diaspora activities and serve as the point of contact for encouraging Ghanaian diaspora to invest in the country (Vezzoli and Lacroix, 2010).

Another establishment of the state in 2007 was the Ghana Opportunity Network, tasked to ensure that the diaspora had access to 'timely and credible' information (ibid). Other initiatives progressed by the state includes the renaming of the Ministry of Tourism to the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations. Though this was changed by subsequent government. In 2006, the Ministry of Interior created the Migration Unit to help liaise with the plethora of national agencies established to synchronize migration and integrate it into development agendas.

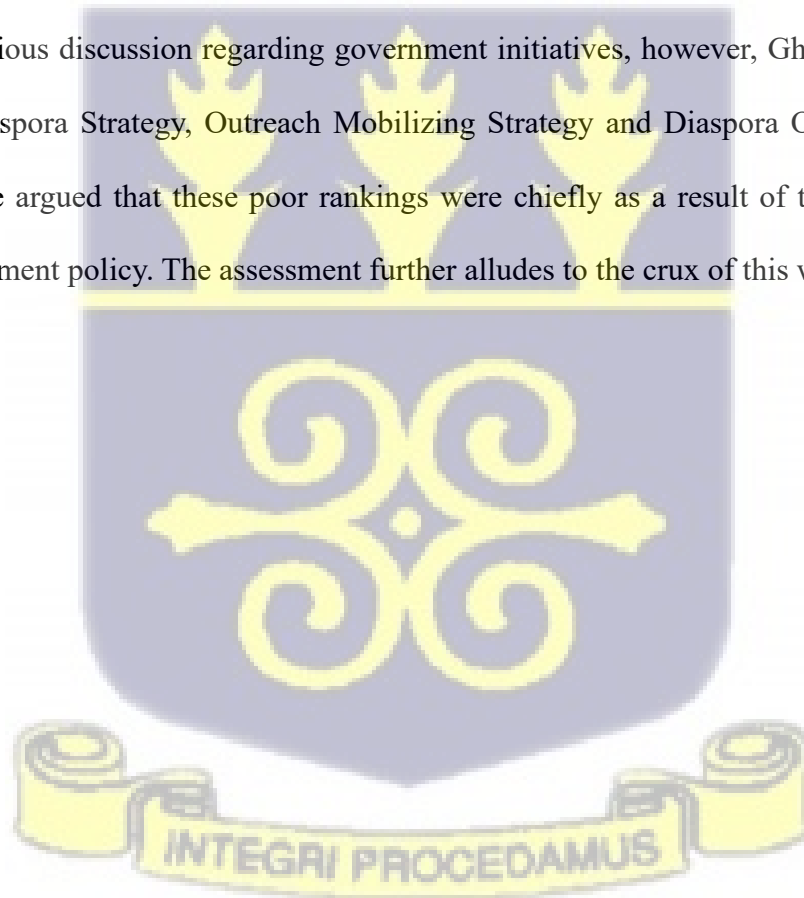
During the era of President John Atta Mills, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MFARI) partnered with organizations and institutions such the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the German Technical Cooperation (GIT) and the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) at the University of Ghana to establish the Diaspora Support Unit (ibid). Later on, a colloquium themed “Linking the Ghanaian Diaspora to the Development of Ghana” was organized by the MFARI and IOM, a launchpad event for the Diaspora Support Unit.

It is interesting to note that in 2019, Diaspora Affairs was no longer under the Ministry of Tourism, instead, the government upgraded the Diaspora Support Unit into a Diaspora Affairs Bureau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. The current government, led by President Akufo-Addo, in 2017 established an office for Diaspora Relations at the presidency. The office is responsible for coordinating and implementing policies and programs aimed at engaging the diaspora in national development. The office collaborated with the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) and the MFARI to organize the ‘Homecoming Diaspora Summit’. The summit which formed part of the governments’ effort to enhance relations with its diaspora communities came off between July 5 to July 8 in 2017. It is highly regarded as one of the most significant diaspora engagement platforms. One would have thought that it would have grown to become a yearly initiative in other to maintain strong and consistent engagement with the country’s diaspora, however, it has not seen the light of day since 2017.

Another initiative of the current government is the Year of Return developed in 2019, which has metamorphosed into ‘Beyond the Return’, a 10-year long project under the theme, “A decade of African Renaissance – 2020-2030” (Visit Ghana, n.d.). According to the government, the Year of Return was designed to commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the arrival of the first recorded enslaved Africans in Jamestown Virginia in 1619 (Year of Return, 2019).

2.8 Ghana's engagement with its Diaspora against other African countries

The African Union in 2007 set up the Citizens and Diaspora Organizations (CIDO) to lead the AU's diaspora engagement. CIDO was subsequently directed to act on the implementation of the five (5) Legacy Projects of the AU, i.e. African Diaspora Skills Database; the African Diaspora Volunteer Corps; African Diaspora Investment Fund; the African Diaspora Marketplace; African Institute for Remittances (EUDIF, n.d). Between March and July 2019, the AU through the Diaspora Division of CIDO with support from GIZ, developed the Diaspora Engagement Self-Assessment Tool (DESAT). The report from the tool noted that on a scale of 4.0, Ghana's engagement with its diaspora stood at 2.1, ranking behind Rwanda (3.3), Burundi (2.4) and Nigeria (2.2) in that order. The report noted that, political will is prominent in Ghana's case – as can be seen in the previous discussion regarding government initiatives, however, Ghana scored low in its National Diaspora Strategy, Outreach Mobilizing Strategy and Diaspora Oriented Programs pillars. It can be argued that these poor rankings were chiefly as a result of the absence of the diaspora engagement policy. The assessment further alludes to the crux of this work.



3.2.5 Ghana

OVERALL DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT SCORE	Completed April 2019
2.1	Completed by Fauziah Ibrahim, Administrator, Diaspora Affairs Office, Office of the President

Ghana DESAT Pillar Scores 2019

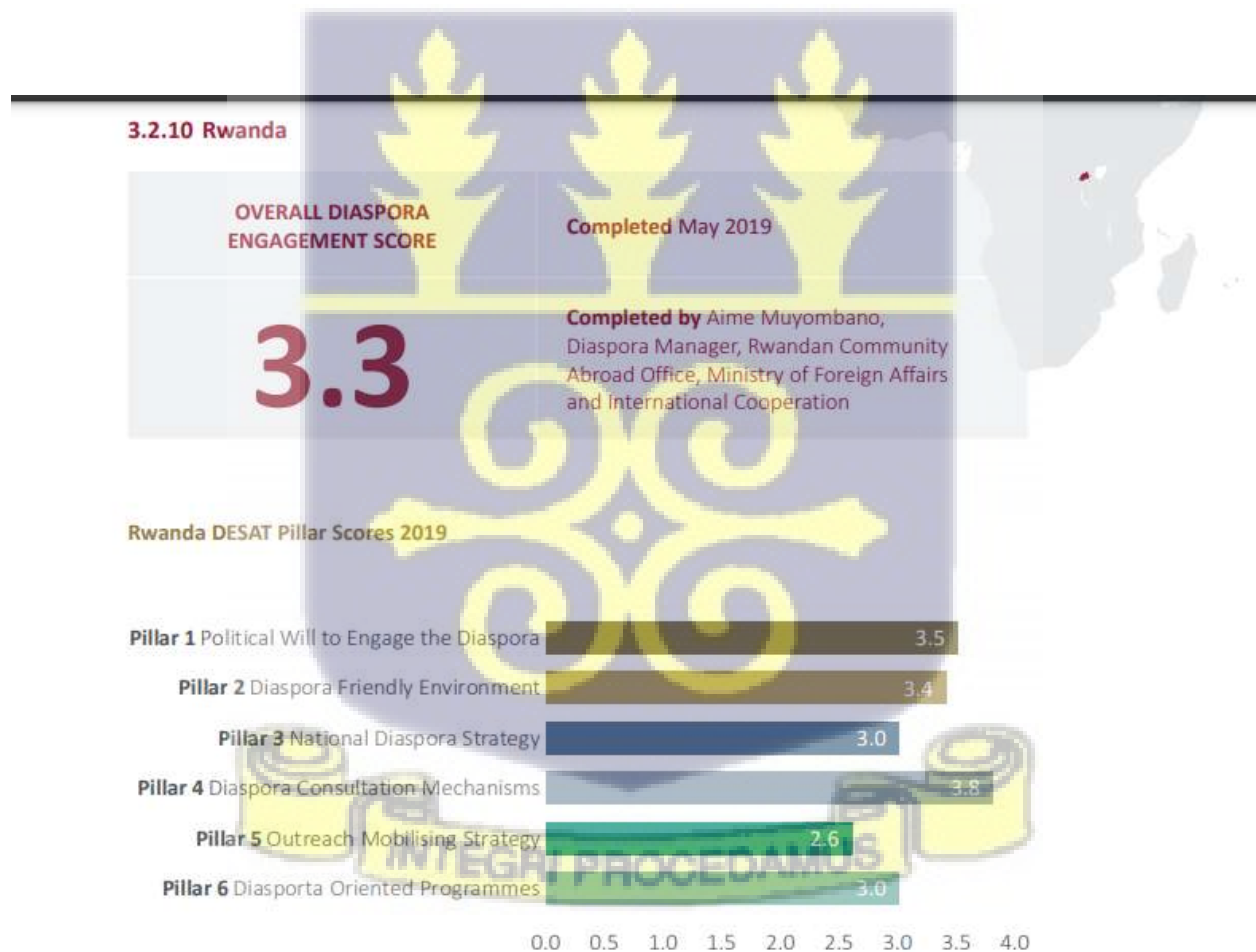
Pillar 1 Political Will to Engage the Diaspora	3.0
Pillar 2 Diaspora Friendly Environment	1.9
Pillar 3 National Diaspora Strategy	1.9
Pillar 4 Diaspora Consultation Mechanisms	1.8
Pillar 5 Outreach Mobilising Strategy	1.6
Pillar 6 Diaspora Oriented Programmes	1.5

FIGURE 4 OVERALL DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT SCORES



Source: DESAT Diaspora Engagement Self-Assessment Report, 2019

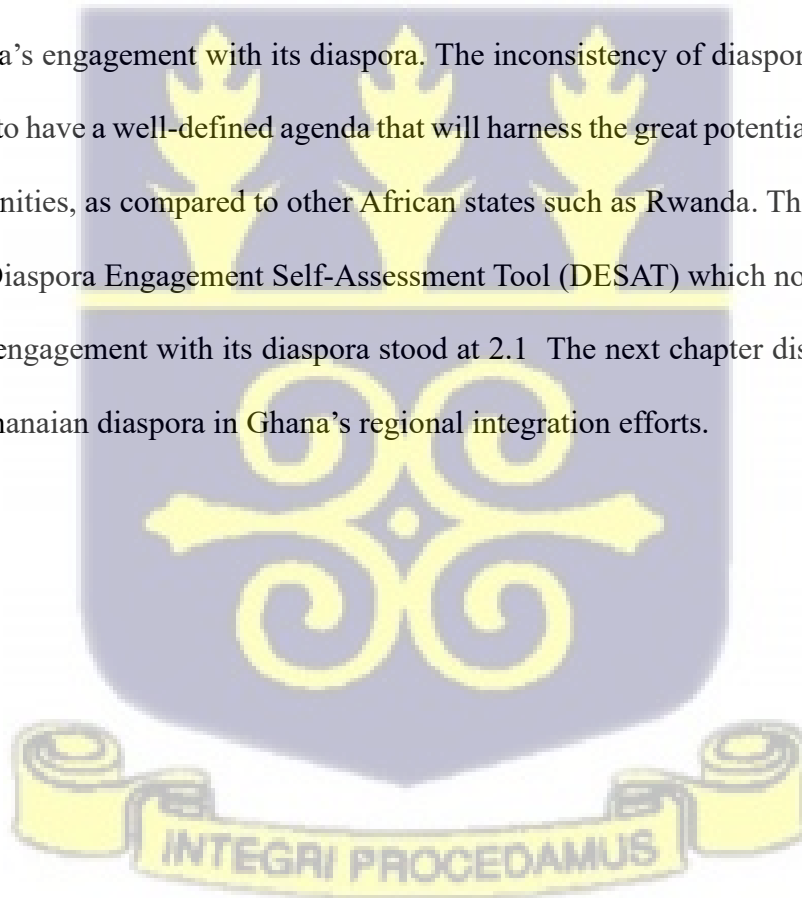
In Rwanda, its engagement with the diaspora is high as a result of the adoption and implementation of a diaspora policy in 2009. The policy has served as a defined working document helping in engaging with its diaspora, tap into their knowledge base, upscale entrepreneurship and drive technological and investment opportunities. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, “Rwanda has been the most proactive in engaging its Diaspora” (UNECA, 2010). In Rwanda’s case, the diaspora engagement policy was factored in the country’s Vision 2020 plan. According to AFFORD, in the Vision 2020 strategy, “the role of the diaspora is included explicitly in the strategy, which also included a target for reducing dependency on remittances to 3% or less of Rwanda’s GDP” (EUDiF, 2020).



Source: DESAT Diaspora Engagement Self-Assessment Report, 2019

2.9 Conclusion

The initiatives designed by successive governments in their engagements with Ghana's diaspora have been largely ad-hoc, lacking any strategic direction and dependent on the government in power. While Kwame Nkrumah recognized the functional roles of the diaspora as a catalyst for integration, successive governments have overlooked the agency of the diaspora in Ghana's regional integration efforts. Instead, successive governments have targeted the financial resourcefulness of the Ghanaian diaspora community alone, without devising a more coherent and consistent policy which will acknowledge and recognize the diaspora not merely as a society with resources, but a society which can exercise agency if considered as a partner. This is currently missing in Ghana's engagement with its diaspora. The inconsistency of diaspora engagement has made it difficult to have a well-defined agenda that will harness the great potentials of the Ghanaian diaspora communities, as compared to other African states such as Rwanda. This is evident in the African Union Diaspora Engagement Self-Assessment Tool (DESAT) which noted that on a scale of 4.0, Ghana's engagement with its diaspora stood at 2.1. The next chapter discusses the factors inhibiting the Ghanaian diaspora in Ghana's regional integration efforts.



CHAPTER THREE

FACTORS LIMITING THE GHANAIAN DIASPORA COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION EFFORTS

3.0 Introduction

Efforts to accelerate Africa's regional integration has gained prominence over the past decade. Though regional integration is regarded as a cornerstone in Africa's development, several limitations have hindered the successful implementation of strategies that have been devised by individual states – such as Ghana, and at the continental level by bodies such as the African Union. Particularly, despite the sustained transnational agency of the Ghanaian diaspora in economic, political and social activities (Nsiah, 2015), successive governments have failed to recognize how building a strategic win-win partnership can help accelerate the regional integration drive. Ghana is largely considered as a forerunner in Africa's regional integration process. One must not lose sight of the fact that, the roles played by Ghana's first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, such as laying the foundation for Africa's integration has not gone unnoticed by scholars. Ghana has actively been involved in various regional integration projects such as the establishment of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Even more, the secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is located in Ghana, showcasing the country's prominent role in leading the continent's economic integration.

This chapter focused on unraveling the setbacks that have occasioned the limited involvement of the African diaspora, particularly the Ghanaian diaspora in the regional integration mission. In order to understand the nuanced relationship that hinders the involvement of the Ghanaian diaspora, the study collected data via interviews and questionnaires which targeted persons with diverse backgrounds. The study relied on thematic analysis to define and analyze the

factors in a broader perspective. As echoed in previous chapters, Ghanaian diaspora's involvement in regional integration efforts can serve as a catalyst to propel the involvement of other African diasporas. By focusing on Ghana, the researcher examined the most convenient practices, strategies and unique approaches that can enhance diaspora involvement in Africa's regional integration efforts. The outcome of these approaches can be implemented across the continent by serving as a mirror to other African countries to tap into their diaspora, though Rwanda has made great efforts in partnering with its diaspora, according to the Diaspora Engagement Self-Assessment Toolkit (DESAT) of the AU.

The researcher is optimistic that by undertaking this study, the objective of emphasizing the transnational agency of the African diaspora is prominent. The chapter also allows researchers, policy makers, academics and other stakeholders gain a deeper understanding of the agency of the African diaspora, particularly the Ghanaian diaspora and how their agency is undermined and challenged by several factors despite its sustained transnational ties. By unearthing these insights, the researcher creates a platform for further discussions, while providing the window for the development of policies and strategies that can lead to a well-defined and beneficial partnership between Africa and its diaspora in relation to the continent's regional integration project.

3.1 Thematic Areas

Thematically, the data collected were premised on; the level of awareness of regional integration by the Ghanaian diaspora, agency of the Ghanaian diaspora, the sources of information regarding regional integration, and the limitations that hinders the ability of the African diaspora to exercise their transnational agency.

3.2 Demographics of respondents

The study took into consideration views and perspectives of experts in diaspora affairs as well African diasporas who are home and abroad. In all, 30 respondents were interviewed, with five being experts within government, civil society and private organizations. Organizations represented include the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, the African Union Commission, the African Diaspora Collective and the African Diaspora Network.

3.3 Knowledge of Regional Integration

The idea of regional integration is one that has over the years been an elitist conceptualization. In many studies that have been conducted, regional integration is not a familiar concept to the ‘ordinary’ African. Even though the African Union Agenda 2063 sought to bring the idea of regional integration closer to the ‘ordinary’ African, not much has been done to facilitate the bottom up approach. This situation is not elusive to persons in the diaspora. Many African diasporas, such as the Ghanaian diaspora, find themselves in ‘foreign lands’ and become more lost in the African integration narrative despite maintaining transnational ties. According to a senior officer at the African Union Commission’s Diaspora Affairs Unit, regional integration based on the Agenda 2063 is hinged on Africa’s renaissance. She explained the concept as:

“When we talk of issues of integration, we are looking at Africa’s renaissance, we are looking at issues of coming together, forming a formidable force for Africa to be a key global player when it comes to economic issues, development and infrastructure at all levels. We want to see a united Africa”

Her response affirms the view of Okome & Vaughan who explained that the concept of transnationalism, which is implied in this study as transnational Africa “means that Africa’s old

and new Diasporas are thrown together in interesting combinations that challenge common understandings of identity” (Okome & Vaughan, 2012). The AU official further noted that the integration process is broad and encompasses different dimensions of African unity:

“Basically, Africa’s integration is broad but it cuts across issues of movement, how united we are, how do we cross each other’s path moving on. Can a Ghanaian just move into Nigeria, or the next African country. What are some of the parameters and what are some of the leverages that these actually bring. That is what we are championing”

Based on this, the researcher invited some Ghanaian diaspora to reveal their knowledge about regional integration. The reason is that, if the African Diaspora, such as the Ghanaian diaspora are unaware of the concept of regional integration, it is practically impossible for them to exercise their agency. In uncovering the level of awareness of regional integration amongst the respondents, the researcher discovered that only five people out of twenty-five Ghanaian diaspora, representing 20% of the sampled population, had knowledge about regional integration, with three being diasporas in Ghana and two being diasporas in the USA. Ten respondents, representing 40% of the sample size intimated their somehow knowledge about the concept, and another 40%, which accumulate to ten respondents from the sample population indicated their unfamiliarity with the concept.

One respondent, a Ghanaian diaspora residing in the US indicated that:

For me as a Diaspora, my focus has been sending money back home to help my family and also establish a small business for my parents. I am not too sure what definition I will give to the concept except that it means coming together. As to how that can happen, I am not so sure about it.

This perspective is reminiscent of Jakubowicz's view that the diaspora can express their economic transnational agency through remittances to relatives in the home country, a key assumption of the transnationalism (Jakubowicz, 2012). The opaque knowledge of the concept of regional integration is a fundamental cause to worry, especially at a period where there is a narrative to build prosperity for Africa's people. The knowledge of the concept seems to be one which some chanced on through their academic journey.

In the view of a Ghanaian diaspora who has been in the USA for the past 30 years, regional integration is just a school concept.

Regional integration is only studied in school. I read about it during my master's study period. The systems in Africa are not open enough to enhance it. I am aware of it but I don't think the system will allow it to thrive. This is something someone like Dr Kwame Nkrumah started years ago. Today, we are still talking with no actions. I am aware of it, to be honest with you except I don't know how it is being operationalized from my situation as a diaspora.

Even though trading is one of the strongest pillars of regional economic integration, infrastructural facilities needed to ease business transactions across the continent are merely existent. (Brixiova et al, 2011). So, in as much as transnational actors such as the diaspora are not bound to place and can exercise their agency due to the rapid growth of technology as noted by Rosemberg et al (2017), there is a significant barrier in the case of Africa. A Ghanaian diaspora who recently moved to Ghana in December 2023 mentioned that:

Well, I am pretty much concerned about the well-being of my family and myself. I have invested in some businesses but they are primarily local based. I believe that by expanding my trade to other African countries, I can contribute to regional economic integration. But look at our roads, look at the cost of flights within Africa and look at our digital systems.

Nothing works properly in Africa. So, I am just focused on securing my needs and contributing to the economy of Ghana through remittances and my business which runs primarily in Ghana.

When the respondents were asked about their knowledge of regional integration institutions in Africa, some had knowledge of a number of the institutions working to progress regional integration efforts. Out of the twenty-five respondents, five African diasporas knew about notable institutions, another ten were not quite familiar and remaining ten who did not know how exactly the said organizations operate. The Diaspora desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration is the foremost organization known to be the driving force of diaspora relations in Ghana. According to a Ghanaian diaspora who has lives in the US:

I know when it comes to Ghana, there is an office in charge of diaspora affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In fact, the Ministry is by extension a regional integration outfit, if you look at its full name. So, I know it plays a critical role in fostering cross-country relations. I also know of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC). GIPC also has a diaspora desk in charge of ensuring that we are involved in regional integration somehow through trade.

As highlighted throughout this study, the African Union is highly recognized as a key regional actor in the integration process. A Ghanaian diaspora respondent in Nigeria intimated his knowledge about the organizations fostering integration at the continental and local level

The African Union is the continental body in charge of regional integration. When it comes to West Africa., I know its ECOWAS. Then in Ghana, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. I also know there is a diaspora desk at the office of the president. All

these institutions have a role to play in regional integration when it comes to the involvement of we the diasporas.

The researcher further probed to know whether the respondents had knowledge of any specific projects or initiatives being pursued by the institutions mentioned above. When the researcher asked the sample population of Ghanaian diasporas, eighteen of the respondents said they were oblivious of any specific agenda being religiously pursued by any institution whether private or public. Five additional respondents who were private and public officials working within the diaspora relation chain discussed some initiatives being undertaken.

In a conversation with a top official at CIDO's Diaspora Affairs Unit, she disclosed that there are several initiatives being carried out to engage Africa's diaspora. Key among them, she said, is the drive to establish diaspora networks. According to her, the AU does not engage with individuals but rather with diaspora groups.

"We have various ways of making sure that the diaspora is engaged. How do we start? By making sure that there is a mapping going on at the various blocks. So, in Europe, we make sure that we encourage phases of diaspora, we encourage them to form networks. Because we cannot say that as a continental body we have enough staff to carry out due diligence and so forth. If there is an umbrella organization, we make them understand what it means to have power in network. We make sure they are well registered"

Her position is in tandem with the scholarly argument that transnational actors such as the African diaspora can exercise their agency by entering into interaction with other states and organizations – in this case the AU, by forming lobby groups, which in this study can be associated with diaspora networks. They can then exercise their political agency by operating outside the

nation state, which is one of the fundamental assumptions of transnationalism. CIDO's official further added that:

“We engage them in regional consultation conferences to understand their needs. In 2023 December we carried out a consultative diaspora forum with the main topic on how to domesticate the global report on migration. What are the enablers that can enable the diaspora to grow?”

Thus, there seem to be some level of engagement being done at the continental level through CIDO's initiatives. Speaking to the Ambassador of the African Diaspora Collective (ADC) in Ghana, she intimated that her outfit has been working with the Diaspora Affairs Office of the President of Ghana to fill the huge education gap which is limiting the transnational agency of the diaspora to be tapped by the government.

“We got a partnership agreement with the diaspora affairs office of the President for the last three years in order for us to do three things: an annual report that says what is the impact of the diaspora on the continent. The diaspora on the continent are not gathered in a way the AU has asked; for there to be one organization that collectively puts the information and gather the data in a way that is concise and that is understandable and that gives some directives. So, we came up with the diaspora annual report. We just submitted the 2022 report”

She further went on to state that:

“So, we are integrating ourselves through a top down approach by utilizing NGO's and Civil Society Organizations from a bottom up approach from the grassroots level because we are a grass root organization. So that culminated into this years Diaspora

engagement policy which has been worked on for several years. We have been put in charge of coalition of all the diaspora groups in Ghana”

Away from the ADC, in an expert interview with a top official at the Diaspora desk of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, she explained that generally, the level of awareness exists greatly among the elites engaged in diaspora relations. She intimated that while Ghanaian diasporas have been informed of some strategic initiatives that can enhance the regional integration drive, only a handful fully participate in them, with a great number focused on trading and doing business primarily in Ghana.

“The knowledge regarding regional integration is generally low amongst the Ghanaian diaspora. The problem is that, the conversation can be described as elitist. Though efforts are being made to amplify the various mechanisms that are available, access to information is practically low making it difficult for the ordinary diaspora figure to make use of them”

She noted that Ghana’s efforts towards integrating with other countries in the sub-region and beyond has been primarily based on economic interest. Thus, GIPC has been focused on delivering its mandate of increasing investments in Ghana as well as helping diasporas expand and tap into greater African market. This, she believes will go a long way in helping to promote regional economic integration.

“GIPC is an investment-oriented institution. We believe that Ghana has the potential to be Africa’s biggest hub when it comes to doing business. We are putting in place the necessary structures that can enable everyone, particularly the Ghanaian diaspora make use of the myriad opportunities available here”

Another respondent, who works as a top Executive of Homelands Advisory and member of African Diaspora Network's Executive Leadership Council, also emphasized the need to increase the conversation surrounding African diaspora and regional integration, particularly how the African diaspora can rope in their unique experiences and expertise. The Homeland Advisory is a Consultancy firm rooted in the field of migration and diaspora engagement, serving clients worldwide from the UK. According to him, it is evident that regional integration is not a priority discourse among policy makers.

“I do not think that regional integration is on top of the agenda when it comes to diaspora engagement. In fact, as at the time we are speaking now, there is no diaspora policy guiding the Ghanaian governments in their dealings with the diaspora. So, there must be increased conversation around the subject”

Also, the Ambassador of the United States African Diaspora Collective in Ghana, stressed on the need for government agencies such as the Office of Diaspora Affairs and the African Union to make their efforts more visible in other for the African diaspora, particularly the Ghanaian diaspora to recognize the works being carried out.

“Information dissemination is low. Even worse, the understanding of who a diaspora is lost amongst policy makers and the ordinary citizen. Though the government has made commendable strides over the period, the absence of a coordinated effort is hampering the involvement of the diaspora in its affairs. The diaspora does not see themselves as partners. The level of engagement is low”

Based on the views shared by these experts and the ‘ordinary’ Ghanaian diaspora, it is evident that there is a great deal of work needed to access the transnational agency of the African diaspora. Conventional Biblical saying has it that for lack of knowledge my people perish – it is

in this same light the African diaspora find themselves. They are rarely informed and this goes a long way to accentuate their non-involvement, hampering their effective sustained transnational ties with Ghana and the continent at large.

3.4 Agency of the African Diaspora

The agency of the African diaspora, particularly the Ghanaian diaspora, in the regional integration drive is one that has been absent in the literature. The contention in Ghana's case is that the most recent diaspora engagement policy has failed to encapsulate the diaspora as key partners rather than as 'cash cows. In the sense that, the proposed diaspora engagement policies have primarily focused on increasing remittances and encouraging the diaspora to visit the country with no deliberate plan of action to tap into their transnational agency in many other areas. On December 15, 2023, the Government of Ghana launched its latest diaspora engagement policy. According to Ghana's leader, President Nana Akufo Addo, the scope of the policy framework goes beyond just remittances. It is anchored on exchanging knowledge, skills and innovation for long term investment for a more sustainable development of the country. Evidently, the frontiers of the Ghanaian diaspora policy document failed to clearly highlight the role of the diaspora in regional integration. This plainly shows that, the agency of the Ghanaian diaspora in Ghana's regional integration effort will continue to be untapped, for as long as it does not become a priority of the government and its affiliated agencies.

In the 2020 proposed Ghanaian diaspora policy document, the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were primarily hinged on the Ghanaian diaspora returning to the country, partaking in national governance and providing remittances for economic development.

The situation is even dire at the continental level. Despite the fact that the African Union is regarded as the primary engine powering the regional integration narrative, there are more questions than answers when one critically analyzes the actions of the body. In article 3 (q) of the AU's Constitutive Act Amendments, it states that it shall “invite and encourage the full participation of the African diaspora as an important part of our Continent, in the building of the African Union” (Araya, 2019). In essence, the African Union constitutive act recognizes the fact that the African diaspora have an important role to play in the integration process of the continent thus a need to invite their full involvement. As Araya further noted, despite this recognition by the AU, there has been no “significant” structural change to directly involve them through policy actions.

In addition, although the AU's Constitutive Act states that it will include the diaspora in its processes, there has been no sanctioned policy changes. This position is affirmed by Professor Maurice Tadajeu who intimated that the diaspora's inability to join or partake in the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) is a clear indication of a ‘policy deficiency’. This is because, one of the objectives of the PAP is to “familiarize the peoples of Africa with the objectives and policies aimed at integrating the African Continent within the framework of the establishment of the African Union”, as noted by Hakima Abbas. By familiarizing the diaspora with the policies and objectives of the AU in Africa's integration project, the AU can feed into the transnational capacities of its diaspora in all areas.

The absence of the diaspora in PAP which is regarded as a policy deficiency by Professor Maurice was corroborated by a senior officer at CIDO's Diaspora Affairs Unit. According to her, there is a draft legal and political framework for diaspora engagement awaiting validation from member states.

“I agree with the professor to a large extent. But then again, let us bear in mind that we are currently having a draft legal and political framework for diaspora engagement that my department is yet to see its validation by member states. Under this we have the PAPs, they engage the diaspora alright but yes, they are not part of the policy process. Let us not forget as well some of these nuances where you see a country like Senegal which is far advanced with its political diaspora whereby you have members of cabinet as diaspora. So, at the end of the day, we are looking at a mandate whereby who and who should be represented at the Pan-African Parliament”

The researcher, therefore, asked all twenty-five participants if they recognized their agency and how to capitalize on that for a continental Africa. Twenty of the respondents, representing 80% indicated that they do recognize their agency which the remaining five, representing 20% were somehow unsure of what power they exercised to contribute to an agenda they discussed as being beyond them. A Ghanaian diaspora living in the UK had this to say when quizzed about his recognition of his agency.

“I am fully aware of my agency in contributing to Ghana and Africa at large. From where I find myself now (UK), I have built a solid network, amassed a great deal of professional talent and also resources to do many things which can function beyond the borders of one state”

Another respondent also in the UK explained how the governments fail to recognize how powerful they can be.

“These African governments, including the Ghanaian government does not even care about regional integration. It is about them and what they get in return. They only see us

(Diaspora) as a source of remittances and nothing else. All the programs they organize are only meant to get us to return and spend our monies and nothing beyond that”

Based on the responses, the government’s inability to access the transnational agency of the Ghanaian diaspora is in stark contrast to Jakubowicz’s argument that one dimension of transnationalism is the capacity of the sending state, in this case Ghana, to become increasingly involved in its diaspora community by setting priorities and pursuing its interests. Clearly, the priorities of the government are limited to the economic agency of the diaspora, which corroborates the statement of the Executive Director of the Homeland Advisory that regional integration is not a priority for the Ghanaian government.

Transnationalism, as a theoretical framework, posits that individuals and communities maintain multifaceted connections across borders, influencing and being influenced by events in both host and home countries. In the case of the African diaspora, the exercise of transnational agency in Africa’s integration becomes a nuanced process that is not fully discovered by governmental bodies. While the diaspora appears to understand their agency, the sort of partnership needed to help them exercise it are non-existent or not clearly defined.

Thus, the stark realization is evident that the Ghanaian diaspora, just like the global African diaspora are not fully involved in the regional integration efforts. This is highlighted by Mzukisi Qobo who says that “It would seem that Africa’s elites are focusing on the wrong set of priorities with too little genuine commitment towards the goal of Africa’s development. For regional integration in Africa to be a success, Africa’s leaders will have to move beyond grand gestures and abstract visions” (Qobo, 2007).

3.5 Sources of Information on Regional Integration and Their Utility

According to William Pollard, “information is a source of learning. But unless it is organized, processed, and available to the right people in a format for decision making, it is a burden, not a benefit”. This profound statement underscores the need for information regarding regional integration to be properly organized and equally made available through the most appropriate media to its intended audience. The researcher noted that the social media pages of the AU, particularly CIDO’s Diaspora Affairs Unit did not carry much information on diaspora engagement with reference to regional integration. Even more, the website of CIDO is sophisticated making it difficult to identify the needed information relating to diaspora engagement. This situation was not different from that of the Ghanaian government and its diaspora agencies.

In essence, the researcher gauged the accessibility of regional integration information to the Ghanaian Diaspora. The researcher intended to identify the role of other non-state actors such as the media and civil society groups in championing the regional integration agenda. The researcher found out that 60% of the respondents who regularly access information through the new media such as social media and blogs had not interfaced with any news regarding regional integration. An additional 30% of the respondents who sourced their information from Television and Radio channels indicated the absence of mainstream media trumpeting regional integration news. Furthermore, 10% of the respondents who were heavily involved in diaspora networks mentioned that they have come across regional integration conversations due their involvement in sectorial activities of diaspora groups. These results indicate the low level of information dissemination regarding regional integration. While mainstream media is not doing much, new media is equally out of touch with the regional integration drive. Mainstream media is generally

held accountable as the fourth realm of government and thus it is imperative for these mediums to be used to disseminate government's efforts.

Quite notably, these channels are famously known to focus a greater portion of their airtime to political discourses, mainly internal political disruptions amongst leading political parties in the country. In a speech delivered by the Executive Chairman of the African Prosperity Network, Gabby Otchere Darko, he noted that political and business leaders must prioritize the integration agenda. He made these statements while speaking at the maiden edition of the Global African Forum on September 23rd, 2023 at the United State of America. His statement further affirms the need for regional integration to be spearheaded by all, not only government leaders but also non-state actors such as the media and private business leaders. Speaking to a Senior Lecturer at the Political Science Department of the University of Ghana, he emphasized the need to build strong partnerships in order to accelerate news dissemination and consumption.

“The media, much like political leaders, possesses significant influence. It is crucial to acknowledge that, akin to integration being a cooperative endeavor, there must be a meticulously coordinated collaboration among the media, political figures, and civil society to disseminate information about the integration process. Recognizing regional integration as a prerequisite for Africa's development, it becomes imperative to be intentional and purposeful in promoting it.”

The responses above emphasizes the need to increase information regarding regional integration at all levels. It is a task that goes beyond political leaders, though they have an important role in ensuring its success. The media must begin to lead research and churn out documentaries and news stories originally made to promote regional integration – and not stories at the back of conferences only. Mainly because, the media serves as a conduit for information exchange between the home country and the diaspora, making it a transnational outfit. News,

cultural updates, and events from both regions are disseminated through various media channels, fostering a sense of connection and shared awareness, further giving meaning to the transnational capabilities of Ghana's diaspora.

3.6 Challenges to Diaspora Engagement in Regional Integration

The ability of the African diaspora to exercise their agency is premised on many suitable factors. In essence, the researcher asked respondents what setbacks they face, if any, in exerting their transnational agency in the regional integration project.

3.6.1 Unfamiliarity / Gap in Education

One of the major hindrances that is obstructing the ability of the Ghanaian diaspora to exercise their agency in the regional integration effort is their unfamiliarity with the process. This sentiment was popular amongst 80% of the respondents who were quizzed. The 'ordinary' Ghanaian diaspora has little to no information on regional integration. Chikezie (2001) notes that "creating awareness among the African diaspora about the links between the local, the regional and the global is an urgent and ongoing political task". The concept of transnationalism emphasizes the linkage that exists and needs to be built between the African diaspora and their home countries. Essentially, creating awareness among the Ghanaian diaspora specifically around the intertwined web of connectivity that exists between their home country, the continent and the globe at large is paramount. The stark reality is that the Ghanaian diaspora have not been immersed in the integration project. As disclosed by respondents, the lack of awareness meant restricted application of agency. The Executive Director of the Homeland Advisory had this to say:

"Many Ghanaians living abroad may not be fully acquainted with the ongoing efforts and opportunities associated with regional integration. Thus, fostering greater awareness and understanding among the diaspora is crucial for them to actively engage and contribute to

the regional integration initiatives. There is the need for targeted information dissemination and community outreach to bridge the gap and empower the Ghanaian diaspora to play a more informed and participatory role in shaping the future of regional integration."

He further adds that:

"Regional integration is a broad concept that encapsulates many stakeholders. Though efforts are being made, there must be expediency in taking the message close to the people. The Ghanaian diaspora has the ability to contribute significantly towards economic integration. Partnership is key"

Engaging with a top official of CIDO, she remarked that the diasporas are unwilling to engage with officials in their host country which is mainly due to inaccessibility to information.

"Diasporas unwillingness to engage with their country's representative missions abroad because the people are not trained to understand and appreciate diaspora engagement. And we (CIDO) have interpreted to be lack of knowledge of the whole concept. We designed a concept note on members of the diplomatic corps outside the continent. I remember travelling with my former director to the UK for a key diaspora event; we get there and there is no African diplomat present and yet they have been invited. So, from that disconnect, it does not really help"

Another respondent, a faculty at the Political Science Department of the University of Ghana intimated that:

"There is the need for targeted educational initiatives, such as workshops, seminars, and community-based programs which can serve as effective platforms for disseminating crucial

information. By delving into the complexities and benefits of regional integration, these initiatives can equip the Ghanaian diaspora with the knowledge required for informed decision-making and active participation. We must promote partnerships between academic institutions, community organizations, and regional bodies. This, in turn, positions the diaspora to play a significant and informed role in shaping the trajectory of regional integration”.

In the summary of draft discussion paper for the African Knowledge Networks Forum (AKNF) meeting of 17 and 18 October 2001, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in preparation for the African Development Forum 2001 (ADF 2001), “Defining Priorities for Regional Integration”, Chikezie states that:

“Awareness raising about regional integration, should be integral to the actual data capture process in order to create synergy between activities and gain maximum return on investment. As the diaspora is constantly under construction we should maintain ongoing outreach efforts to key sectors, for instance to African students pursuing their education in the north”

It is important to drum home the fact that unfamiliarity with the concept of regional integration among the Ghanaian diaspora undermines their ability to exercise their agency in significantly contributing to the success of the project. The responses discussed above showcases the need to amplify all efforts to create awareness among the diaspora in order to harness their potential agency in building an integrated continent.

3.6.2 Lack of Political Inclusion and Ideological Direction

The absence of political inclusion and recognition at the continental and individual country level, as in the case of Ghana, serves as major constraint to the fulfillment of plethora of projects on the continent. The issue is further accentuated by the obvious absence of an ideological direction when it comes to regional integration. Ifeanyi Felix and Felix Chinwe state that Africa needs to have a defined ideological direction if it hopes to succeed at regional integration. They opined that:

“The absence of defined ideology in an organization is akin to a ship without direction. Such organization cannot elicit any form of commitment from members hence the level of the political will of African states to the objectives of the AU has been quite low. This is so because a clearly spelt ideological direction will act as a galvanizing force for both African leaders and the citizens in championing the objectives of the African Union. Such ideology will provide the fundamental ideas behind the integration project of the AU in the region and sustain its currency”

This position is affirmed by a Senior Faculty at the Political Science Department. He stated that:

“The African diaspora represents a vast reservoir of talent, resources, and knowledge. Yet, their ability to actively contribute to the continent's integration remains hampered by a fundamental flaw: their persistent political exclusion. Many African governments, despite rhetoric of inclusion, fail to implement concrete policies that recognize the diaspora as legitimate stakeholders in the regional integration process”

He further adds that:

“This exclusion manifests itself in various ways. First, the lack of clear legal frameworks and voting rights marginalizes the diaspora from political decision-making processes.

Second, inadequate representation in regional institutions further exacerbates the problem. The current structures often fail to adequately reflect the diverse voices and interests of the diaspora, leading to a sense of alienation and disenfranchisement”

With reference to the absence of a unified political ideology, a civil servant at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration had this to say:

“The lack of a shared ideological framework presents a significant barrier to the diaspora's agency in shaping the future of Africa. Without a clear ideological foundation, the diaspora's efforts become fragmented and diluted. Instead of a unified force pushing for progress, we witness a cacophony of voices advocating for disparate, even competing visions for regional integration.”

He added that:

“This lack of ideological clarity can erode trust and consensus within the diaspora community. Different groups, adhering to conflicting ideologies, find it challenging to collaborate and work towards common goals. How can the Ghanaian diaspora and the Nigerian diaspora work hand in hand? We need to find a solution to this”

Also, in a publication by a Ghanaian diaspora with the name Augustine Boahen, the policies of the Ghanaian government do not consider the diaspora. He shared his opinion following the introduction of the Ghana card as the only document of identification. He said:

“During President Kuffour's time, much noise was made about ROPA and it has just been lips service because successive governments have done nothing to allow Ghanaians in the

diaspora to vote. Even how some of us are treated in our respective embassies leaves much to be desired. I know many of us in the diaspora are eager to contribute our quota to the development of our motherland, it is therefore disheartening to note that our policy makers don't think about us when it comes to policy making”

The sentiments shared by the respondents as well as the literature suggests that the ability of the diaspora to contribute to Africa’s regional integration is being hampered largely by political exclusion and lack of a precise ideological direction at the continental level – which trickle downs to the individual states.

3.6.3 Limited Economic Opportunities and Investment Incentives

While it is true that the African diaspora command immense economic potential, entrepreneurial skills, and strong financial capabilities, the conditions needed to make use of them are non-existent or complicated. As noted by the World Bank, it is estimated by researchers that annually, the African Diaspora saves about \$US53 billion (World Bank, 2015). Despite this economic potential, the ability of the African Diaspora to contribute to Africa’s Regional integration is greatly hindered by limited economic opportunities and inadequate investment incentives. This situation provides a worrying scene which deprives the continent of immense source of growth and development.

Aside remittances, there are no targeted policies. This is highlighted by Kamau and Kimenyi as they rightly put it:

“Unfortunately, many opportunities for the diaspora to contribute to the development of Africa remain unexploited largely because of the lack of proper coordination and the inability to envision the importance of the diaspora beyond remittances”

Speaking to a Professor of Trade at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration he explained the restrictive investment regulations as a key impediment.

“Ghana, despite its recent economic growth and vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem, still faces challenges in attracting and retaining investment from the African diaspora. While the country has implemented several initiatives to encourage diaspora engagement, bureaucratic hurdles and restrictive regulations continue to hinder their full participation in the economy. Navigating the investment process in Ghana can be overwhelming for diaspora entrepreneurs due to its complex bureaucratic procedures and lack of transparency. This can lead to delays, frustration, and ultimately discourage investment”

As Oviatt and McDougall argue, due to the transnational ties that bonds diasporas to their home countries, in this case the Ghanaian diaspora to Ghana, diaspora transnationalism results in investments, links home and host countries in various areas including political, and socio-economic matters. It also influences the diaspora to establish businesses and transfer technological information and technical expertise gained from host countries to their home country (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005) Even more, per a diaspora outreach series conducted in 2015 by the Diaspora Investment Alliance, one of the major barriers to investment in home countries is the issue of transparency.

“Diasporas often do not have sufficient information on impact investment or donation options to make informed decisions. When it comes to investments, the costs of sourcing and vetting deals are often prohibitive for individual investors, particularly in markets with a lack of credit bureaus”.

These responses explain the urgency needed in providing a conducive environment for diaspora investment. By removing the bottlenecks, Ghanaian diaspora will have greater reasons to channel their economic and technical prowess to securing an integrated Africa.

3.6.4 Over-reliance on remittances

Attracting remittances has consistently been a pillar in governments engagement with its diaspora. According to a 2021 report by the IMF, remittance inflows to sub-Saharan Africa over the years, has significantly surpassed the amount of aid and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) being received by states. Despite the increase in remittance inflows, the cost of remitting is high, as noted by Allen “to give a sense of the magnitudes, sending 200 dollars to SSA cost on average 8.5 percent—or 17 dollars—higher than in other regions and far from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goal of 3 percent” (Allen, 2021). Based on findings from the World Bank, remittance inflows to GDP (%) in Ghana was reported around 6 % in 2020, which is higher than Foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2021 which represented roughly 3.3% of the GDP (Sasu, 2024). Based on this, greater effort is being channeled by the government to tap into this economic agency of the diaspora.

In a conversation with a top official at CIDO, she described the government of Ghana’s consistent engagement with its diaspora mainly because of their economic prowess is unsustainable. According to her, the government does not seem to have a clear-cut idea of the gaps that requires to be filled by the Ghanaian diaspora, a situation which requires attention.

“One of the challenges I would mention is the perception that because remittances are soaring so high, so we have to engage diasporas. We do not have to engage diaspora because of their money. For us to have the full benefits of diasporas, we need to consider them as partners. Reliable partners that we are entering into vantage ventures with them”

She further explained that:

“At the end of the day, we making sure that we have a homecoming is fine but then again, what are some of the well laid down mechanisms that can make sure that it is sustainable. For example, during the Year of Return, probably if we had taken note of the number of investors who came in, the number of business people who came in, the number of practitioners, as a country do we even know where we want gaps filled? Data again comes to play. Do we even have a strategic plan so that when the diaspora come in, we can sell it? The answer is no.”

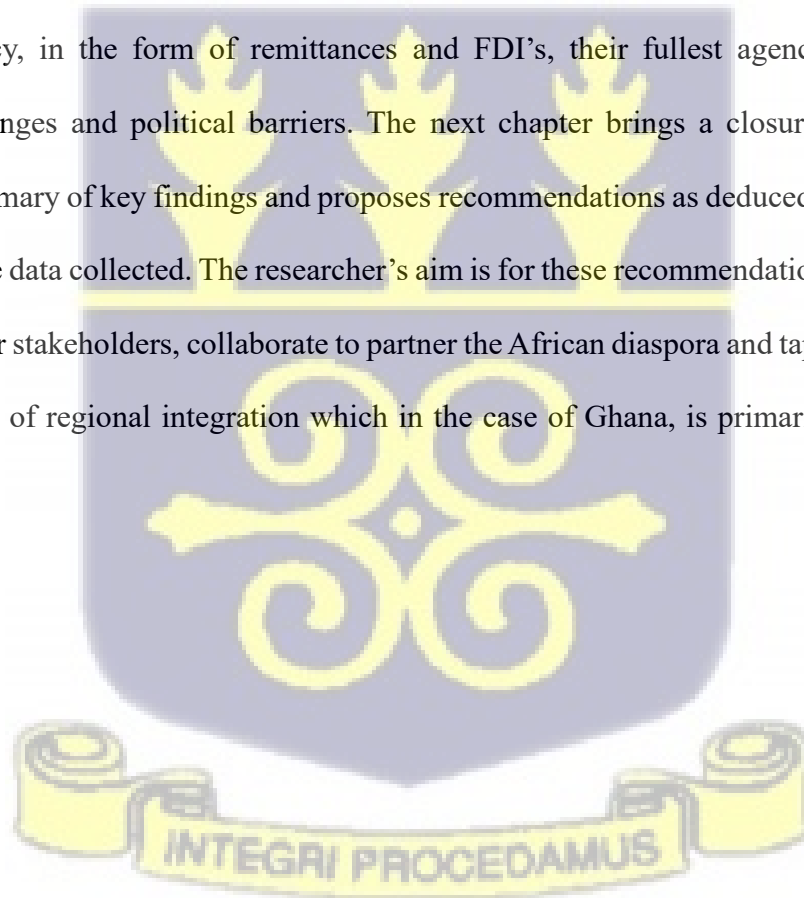
Her position was corroborated by a Senior Lecturer at the Political Science Department of the University of Ghana who mentioned that in as much as remittances are great, we need to be more strategic.

“While remittances represent a significant source of external finance for Ghana, contributing to economic growth, concerns arise regarding their tangible impact on broader societal development. Despite the substantial volume of remittances received annually, identifying large-scale, demonstrably positive contributions facilitated by the economic agency of the Ghanaian diaspora remains challenging. Therefore, it is imperative to move beyond solely focusing on remittance inflows and develop a strategic plan that prioritizes maximizing their impact on the well-being of the wider community”

The over-reliance on remittances has restricted the transnational agency of the African diaspora, a situation which requires correction from government.

3.7 Conclusion

The chapter focused on gauging the agency of the African diaspora through expert interviews as well as interviews with Ghanaian diasporas currently home and those abroad. The main aim was to ascertain the transnational ties that exists among the African diaspora, specifically the Ghanaian diaspora. The chapter revealed that transnational ties have been established through economic and social relations between the Ghanaian diaspora and the state. The researcher also studied some literatures on the subject juxtaposing them with the responses gathered from the respondents. The chapter paints a gloomy image of the Ghanaian diaspora when it comes to contributing towards Ghana's regional integration efforts due to the lack of prioritization of regional integration by policy makers. While the African diaspora is highly patronized with reference to their transnational economic agency, in the form of remittances and FDI's, their fullest agency is hindered by structural challenges and political barriers. The next chapter brings a closure to the study by providing a summary of key findings and proposes recommendations as deduced from the analysis sourced from the data collected. The researcher's aim is for these recommendations to guide policy makers and other stakeholders, collaborate to partner the African diaspora and tap into their agency for the purposes of regional integration which in the case of Ghana, is primarily economic than political.



CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

4.0 Introduction

This final chapter of the study highlights the fact that the African diaspora, particularly the Ghanaian diaspora has transnational agency as expressed in the concept of transnationalism. It throws the spotlight on the summary of findings deduced from the chapter above and provides a conclusive evaluation for the study. The chapter equally highlights some recommendations needed to help tap into the agency of the African diaspora, with specific emphasis on the Ghanaian diaspora.

4.1 Summary of Findings

This study looked at the agency of the African diaspora in the regional integration efforts of Ghana. Below is the notable summary of findings from the research.

4.1.1 Knowledge of Regional Integration

Findings from the total sampled population of respondents revealed that only 20% had knowledge about what regional integration entails including initiatives being pursued such as the African Continental Free Trade Area. The result disclosed that 40% of the population size had no knowledge about regional integration. This emphasizes the knowledge gap that exists among the diaspora communities – a stark contrast to the recognition of the diasporas Africa's 6th Region by the African Union. This level of unawareness accentuates the inability of the diaspora to contribute

significantly towards the regional integration agenda, particularly Ghana's focus on economic integration through the ECOWAS and Africa at large through the AfCFTA which has its secretariat in Ghana. This is firmed by Kamau & Kimenya who argue that the African diaspora is grossly underutilized due to the poor engagement initiatives being carried out at the continental and individual country level. The study identified a lack of focus on regional integration as a core diaspora capacity among stakeholders tasked with boosting diaspora engagement, further compounded by a lack of coordinated efforts.

4.1.2 Agency of the Ghanaian Diaspora

The study also revealed that while a majority of the respondent i.e. 80% recognized their agency, they bemoaned the disparity that exists between them and policy makers. This situation is echoed by Professor Maurice Tadajeu who intimated that the diaspora's inability to join or partake in the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) is a clear indication of a policy deficiency. This is because, one of the objectives of the PAP is to "familiarize the peoples of Africa with the objectives and policies aimed at integrating the African Continent within the framework of the establishment of the African Union", as noted by Hakima Abbas. In Ghana's context, the diaspora believes that the government only regards them as a cash-cow and not active partners for development both home and regionally. This transnational gap is therefore limiting the agency of the Ghanaian diaspora as emphasized by Mzukisi Qobo who professes that "for regional integration in Africa to be a success, Africa's leaders will have to move beyond grand gestures and abstract visions" (Qobo, 2007).

4.1.3 Sources of Information on Regional Integration and Their Utility

The researcher found out that 60% of the respondents who frequently access information through the new media such as social media and blogs, there has been no conversation regarding regional integration. Also, the 30% of the respondents who sourced their information from

Television and Radio channels indicated that they had not interfaced with regional integration news updates. This evidence points to a low level of information dissemination amongst key stakeholders, a situation which is limiting the agency of the Ghanaian diaspora. As per the accounts of the 10% who mentioned their involvement in regional integration efforts, they were practically involved in diaspora network groups. This emphasizes the need for government and the media to utilize these diaspora networks as a channel to transmit information to the Ghanaian diaspora.

4.1.4 Barriers to Involvement

The researcher found out that majority of the respondents were unfamiliar with broader regional integration project – a situation which is regarded as a major setback in the Diaspora's ability to exercise their agency. This finding runs through the argument of Chikezie (2001) who professes that creating awareness is an urgent and ongoing political task. This position is further highlighted in the summary of draft discussion paper for the African Knowledge Networks Forum (AKNF) meeting of 17 and 18 October 2001, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in preparation for the African Development Forum 2001 (ADF 2001) which also noted the urgency in accelerating engagement efforts. The reason behind ramping up engagement discourse is that it will go a long way to help the Ghanaian diaspora exercise their full transnational agency. Without knowledge, there is no power. And with no power, significant actions are curtailed.

The study also discovered that limited economic opportunities and investment incentives serve as a major roadblock for the African diaspora. The respondents believed that conditions to invest are cumbersome while the major focus is usually on receiving remittances by sending states. This is amplified by Kamau and Kimenyi who note that there is no proper coordination to tap into the economic and socio-political prowess of the Ghanaian diaspora due to the myopic scope of mainly receiving remittances. The respondents were of the view that processes needed to explore

business in Ghana are unfavorable. Despite the fact that the AfCFTA secretariat is in Ghana, not much is being done regarding economic integration.

4.2. Conclusion

This study investigated the agency of the African diaspora particularly the role of the Ghanaian diaspora in Ghana's regional integration efforts within the context of transnationalism concept. The findings and analysis presented alludes to the research's problem statement that there is an absence of a defined engagement policy to tap into the agency of the Ghanaian diaspora to contribute to Africa's regional integration efforts despite their sustained transnational ties. While the Ghanaian diaspora policies are increasing engagement with the Ghanaian diaspora, a critical agency which can be harnessed is being neglected or overlooked by policy makers. The researchers interview with twenty-five Ghanaian diasporas alongside some five professionals in the regional integration field revealed a great deal of unfamiliarity with regional integration amongst the diaspora community. It is therefore imperative to demand more from agencies and organizations mandated to increase diaspora engagement in a more pragmatic way. Agencies such as the diaspora affairs at the office of the President, the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration amongst others, must step up their game in order to fully harness the transnational agency of the Ghanaian diaspora. It is worthy to note that the research was in tandem with available scholarly works similar to this subject. Particularly, literatures that discussed the low level of engagement with the diaspora, the agency of the diaspora and the need to consider the diaspora as partners through the transnationalism concept. The study also shows that there must be deliberate coordinated efforts from the African Union all the way to the individual member states. This is because, a disoriented AU cannot help individual country succeed. The Africa diaspora possesses great potentials and agency and it is only left for decision makers to prioritize a holistic approach in engaging the diaspora.

4.3. Recommendations

The following forms part of the researchers' contribution to accelerating diaspora engagement in other to drive the regional integration project from the Ghanaian perspective.

- a. There must be a deliberate attempt by political leaders as well as other stakeholders such as CSO's and the media to amplify Ghana's regional integration process in other for the Ghanaian diaspora to be immersed. This can be done through targeted partnerships with diaspora groups, increase efforts to have a comprehensive database of the Ghanaian diaspora and also through paid advertisement on traditional and new media platforms. Conferences, exhibitions and other forums can be utilized to increase engagement efforts. Throughout this engagement, regional integration, in tandem with Ghana's economic regional integration efforts, must be at the centre of discussions.
- b. Refine diaspora engagement policy and include KPI's for diaspora role in regional integration.
- c. Government and its partner agencies such as the GIPIC must simplify and automate the investment process to make it easier for the diaspora to establish businesses that are transnational.
- d. Government must create dedicated targeted agencies and programs to provide guidance, mentorship, and networking opportunities for diaspora entrepreneurs.
- e. Government must have a single unit dedicated to diaspora affairs with sub-agencies. This is crucial to enable proper coordination as against having multiple agencies with no focus or direction as well of duplication of duties.
- f. Continental bodies such as the AU must critically engage with existing regional integration initiatives to identify weaknesses and propose improvements based on an understanding of

local contexts and needs. Including diaspora representatives in the Pan-African Parliament will enable the voices of the diaspora be heard and taken into action.



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