

## The Sixth Zone: Historical Roots of African Diaspora and Pan-Africanism in African Development<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The re-emergence of Pan-African ideology in the last two decades is reflected in social, political, and economic structures found in Africa today. Pan-Africanism was the foundation upon which the struggle for African continental independence was anchored. This ideology united Africans and other individuals of African descent under a continental ideology that created a domain for support, cooperation and understanding. Today, Pan-African ideology has become a pull factor for the African diaspora to contribute to African development initiatives. By tracing the historical emergence of African diaspora and Pan-Africanism in Africa, this article argues that Pan-African ideology and the experiences of African diaspora has influenced increased contributions of African diaspora to development. Using explanatory methodology, this article adopts an in-depth analysis of historical accounts of the emergence of African diaspora to examine how the African diaspora has emerged as a strong pillar of development.

**Keywords:** Pan-Africanism, African Diaspora, Development, Cultural Identity, Africa

## Altıncı Bölge: Afrika'nın Gelişiminde Pan-Afrikanizm ve Afrika Diasporasının Tarihsel Kökleri

### Öz

Son yirmi yılda Pan-Afrikan ideolojisinin tekrardan ortaya çıkması günümüzde Afrika'da bulunan sosyal, siyasi ve ekonomik yapının yansıtılmasıdır. Pan-Afrikanizm, Afrika kıtası bağımsızlık mücadelesi üzerine oluşturulmuş bir yapıydı. Bu ideoloji, Afrikalıları, destek, iş birliği ve uzlaşma için bir alan oluşturan kıtasal ideoloji altındaki diğer bireysel Afrika kökenlerini birleştirdi. Günümüzde Pan-Afrikan ideolojisi Afrika gelişim girişimlerine katkı sağlamada, Afrika diasporası için çekim etkisi yapan bir etken haline geldi. Bu makale Pan-Afrikan ideolojisi ve Afrika diasporasının deneyimlerinin, gelişmek için Afrika diasporasının artırılmış katkılarını etkilediğini, Afrika'daki Pan-Afrikanizm ve Afrika diasporasının tarihsel birleşimini takip ederek savunuyor. Bu makale gelişimin güçlü bir sütunu olarak Afrika diasporasının nasıl birleştiğini incelemek için Afrika diasporası birleşiminin tarihsel hesaplarının derin analizlerini açıklayıcı yöntem bilim kullanarak benimser.

**Anahtar Kelimeler.** Pan-Afrikanizm, Afrika Diasporası, Gelişim, Kültürel Kimlik, Afrika

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## **Introduction**

In reference to the experiences of slave trade and continued oppression of Africans, famous individuals of African descent such as Marcus Garvey, Malcom X and Martin Luther King Jr all advocated that Africans, and in extension all people of African descent need to reconnect and if possible, join a giant sovereign union of a single socio-political, economic and cultural identity (Asogwa, 2017). They emphasized on the need for African descendants to work together to transform the paradigm of centuries of discrimination and leverage the continental political union in international relations (Walkers, 1997). As if to follow-up on this grand vision of African unity, the African Union declared the African Diaspora as the sixth region of the continent (other regions include, Eastern, Southern, Central, Western and Northern regions of Africa).

In 2006, the Constitutive Act of the African Union was amended to include African Diaspora as the sixth region of Africa (Bodomo, 2013). The Act defined the African Diaspora as “people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union” (Ibid). The Article manifests an official recognition of the role of African Diaspora irrespective of historical migration as either forced or voluntary (pre-slave trade, slave trade, post-slave trade and modern migration) in advancing the Pan-African philosophy through the development or rebuilding of Africa and African heritage.

Pan-Africanism and African diaspora are complementary, that is, they both represent the various facets of the struggle and interests of African descendants and only differ in how they are conceptualized. Whereas Pan-Africanism is an ideology, the African diaspora is an identity, but they both strive to achieve social, political, economic and cultural development of Africans at home and in the diaspora (Shramm, 2016). A study by Eaton et al., (2010), highlights that people of African descent both within and outside the continent not only share a common history or heritage, but, more complexly, share a common destiny that transcends historical prejudices enclosed in dark history of slavery, colonialism and centuries of racial discrimination.

Historically, the Indian Ocean and Atlantic Ocean slave trades, colonialism, Cold War, and the underwhelming economic status of Africa as a dependent continent are some of the historical developments connecting Africa to the rest of the world and which Pan-Africanism and contemporary African diaspora strive to transform (Falola, 2013, p. 29-52). The vision of the African people during the Pan-African uprising and today in the form of African diaspora remains the same; that is, the desire for African unity; true political and economic independence; and, historical and cultural awareness around the world.

Several scholars (Du Bois, 1995; Brown, 2016) argue that despite Pan-Africanism gaining popularity in the 1950s, the philosophy behind it existed way earlier not only through the protests to end slavery but also in the form of a consciousness about returning to Africa. Padmore (1971) documents that former African slaves kept the idea of Africa alive even when their chances of physically returning back to the continent seemed impossible. As

such, enslavement did not remove the sense of belonging to a wider African community or a return to the continent (Lake, 1995).

Some of the descendants of former enslaved and freed Africans who finally made the journey back to Africa during the 18th and 19th centuries regarded their return as a profound calling to transform Africa through similar approaches used in Europe and North America by seeking to develop new systems of commerce (West, 2005). A study by Crummel (1996) opines that it was a new system of capitalism and religion (Christianity) that was envisioned to transform Africa. However, whereas the premise of Pan-Africanism was grounded on triumphant Africa that was to be free from any foreign domination or slavery, the abolition of slavery did not lead to any significant liberation of Africans both in the diaspora and within the continent.

In the diaspora, Pan-Africanism established a wave of solidarity among African descendants in the Caribbean, Europe, and America that resonated with the domestic feelings in Africa during the oppressive colonial rule. This solidarity established a platform that became a fundamental component in the attainment of independence and providing a platform for cultural reconnection and identity for African diaspora. The statement that “we are all Africans” henceforth became the wheels for Afro-African relation (Mazrui, 1963, p. 88-92; Carmichael & Nkurumah, 1970).

More importantly, contrary to constricted views, Pan-Africanism is not an anti-race movement, rather, it is a pro-African movement emphasizing freedom of African states and the need to redeem African history with creative meaning that recognizes the humanity as equal and beyond the differences of race, nationality, political affiliation, religion or culture. This article therefore traces the origin and contemporary source of the African diaspora. The study attempts to bridge the African diaspora and Pan-Africanism as factor driving Africans in diaspora or people of African descent in becoming part and parcel of social, cultural, economic and political development not in Africa and abroad.

### **Defining the African Diaspora**

African history cannot be discussed outside the considerations of the knowledge that African people were dispersed to various corners of the world out of the African continent by several historical forces. At the front, are the Europeans who were equipped with ambitious post-medieval quests for global economic, political and socio-cultural domination?

Until 1960s, the term ‘diaspora’ was limited in its application relative to the Christian and Jewish religions (Suzuki, 2018). However, the historical conception of the term is associated with Greek language where it denotes ‘dispersal’ (Tiffany et al., 2000, p. 11). African diaspora which in the context of this paper is synonym to all people of African descent or heritage, was first used in 1965 by George Shepperson in a paper presented at the International Congress of African History convened at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (Gibson et al., 1968: 152-176). The argument behind the combination of the words Africa and diaspora, was the result of the interpretations of existing parallels between the dispersal of Africans due to slave trade and the Jewish diaspora. Scholars such as Shepperson (1976, p. 10-17), argued that in fact, the African American and Caribbean

intellectuals for the longest time, recognized themselves and articulated connections between their own people in exile and that of the Jews.

There was an emphasis on the relevance of defining the African diaspora by making cognizance time and space to allow for a comprehensive analysis of the maximum value of the new African historiography (Shepperson, 1976). The concept of African diaspora was expanded to entail scholarship on a series of reactions to coercion; imposition of foreign political and economic rule in Africa; the approximately four hundred years of the European enslavement of Africans and imperialism (Baumann, 1997, p. 377-404).

Cognizance is however given to the debate surrounding the definition of the concept of ‘African diaspora’. During the first debate held at the First African Diaspora Studies Institute (Howard University) in 1979, there were suggestions that the word be deleted from African Studies discipline because the phrase reinforced a tendency among authors to always view African history relative to European history (Tony, 1979, p. 441). Secondly, because Africans are not Jews and as such, use of other phrases such as ‘African dispersion’ was suggested.

Palmer in his work ‘Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora’ (1998, p. 24-25), while seeking to arrive at a more comprehensive definition of African diaspora, characterizes diasporic communities. Palmer argues that regardless of location, members dispense a common emotional attachment to ancestral land; are cognizant of their dispersal homeland; and, if conditions provide, aware of their oppression and alienation in the countries in which they reside. Additionally, members of diasporic communities are more inclined to hold sensations of racial, ethnic or religious identities that transcends geographic boundaries; share broad cultural similarities; and sometimes, articulate desire to return to their original homeland (Palmer, 1998, p. 24-25).

Nonetheless, defining African diaspora requires avoiding issues of pre-historical dispersion of humankind from its scientific evolutionary home in Africa to other parts of the world. Existing anatomic evidence place the earliest modern human beings in Africa before migration to the rest of the world some 100,000 years ago (Rotimi et al., 2016, p. 77). This acknowledgment is perhaps behind the famous dictum that; “we are all Africans beneath our skin”. This will therefore prevent including such understanding that stretches African diaspora behind any meaningful definition.

## **The Creation of the African Diaspora**

### **Slave Trade**

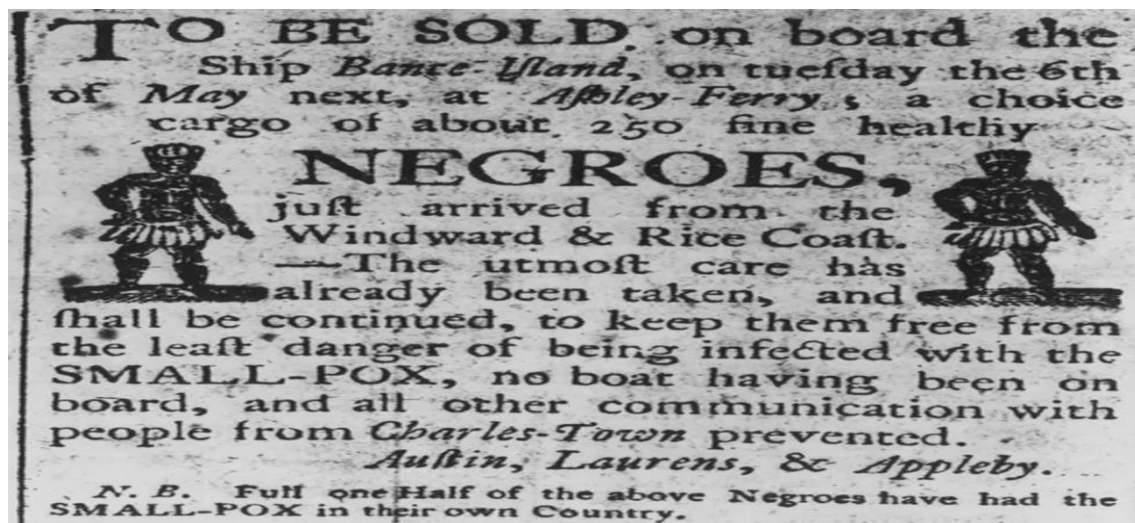
For many, the impact of the slave trade that emerged in the 16th century created the African diaspora. A historical scholar, Professor Oruno, asserts that slave trade and other associated factors of European colonialism and imperialism forced or influenced Africans to move from the African continent (Schneider, 2018). The Transatlantic Slave which was the biggest of all slave trade routes attracted slave traders who were engaged in the Trans-Saharan Slave Trade in the 10th and 11th centuries. The intensity of slave trade in the continent grew when

the first Portuguese voyages came into contact with communities along the Transatlantic coast in Africa in 1415 (Thornton, 2017). Initially, the Portuguese voyagers raided a few African communities and carried captors of war into slavery. However, this was short-lived as these coastal African communities adapted to the Portuguese attacks and proved capable of defending themselves and the coast. It was until a series of diplomatic negotiations between 1456-1462 that Portugal agreed to engage in peaceful trade in all items or goods with the communities they met. As such during the 1460s and 1470s, Portugal conducted no slave raids but instead engaged in peaceful trade (Schneider, 2018).

Henceforth regarding the acquisition of slaves, most slaves acquired during the Atlantic slave trade were purchased from African traders and not directly captured by the Europeans in wars. This is fundamentally because of the pattern of trade at the time whereby European merchants controlled the sale of ammunitions. The urgent need for ammunition by to defend against attacks from African rivals who had collaborated with the Europeans forced the otherwise reluctant African leaders to capture slaves in exchange for weapons to defend themselves. This often led to the emergence and development of the 'gun-slave cycle'.

Research on the number of slaves and direction of slave trade in Africa took its modern direction following the pioneering work of Philip Curtin (1969) who conducted a quantitative census on existing literature in 1969. His ground-breaking work set off a new wave of in-depth research and analysis of recovered documents such as shipping records, fiscal returns and reports regarding slave trade in Africa. These efforts culminated in the publication of the Transatlantic Slave Trade database by DuBois Institute of Harvard University in 1999. A second expanded online database was created in 2010 and is used as a standard research database to examine the numbers, direction, mortality and ethnicity of Africans shipped as slaves to the Americas (Thornton, 2017, p. 6-7)

**Figure 1:** Newspaper Column on Slave Sale in Boston circa 1700

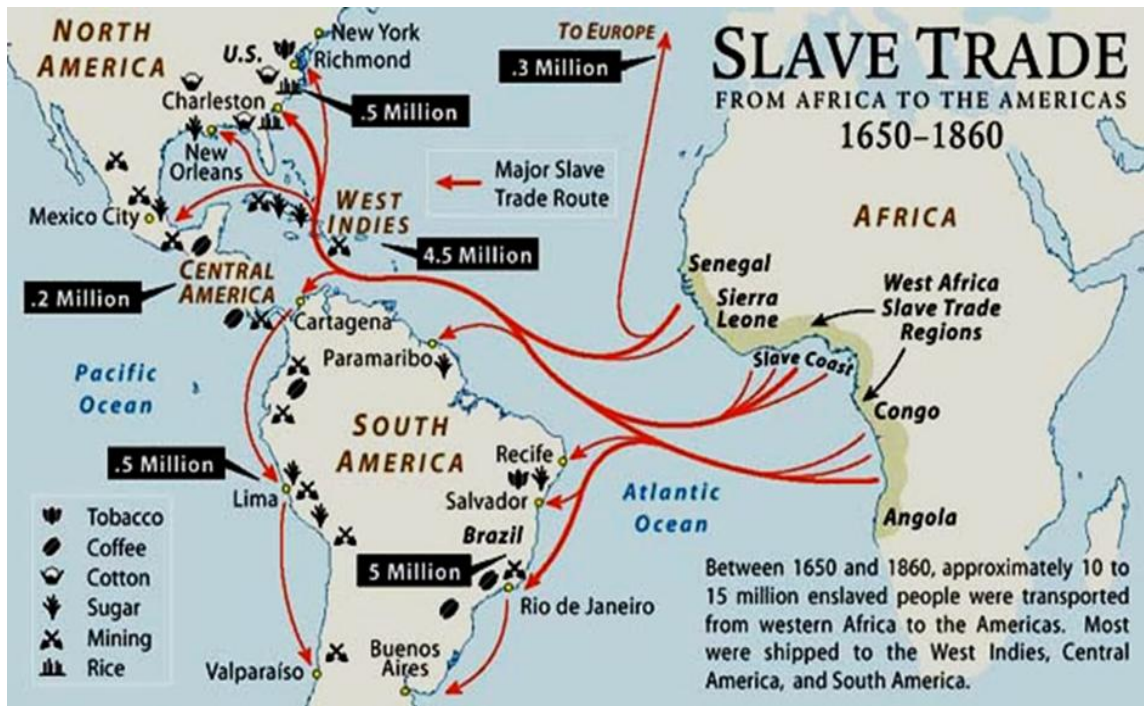


Source: The Guardian Newspaper, 2019



However, the actual number of Africans taken from the continent during the 4 centuries of slave trade period remains inaccurate (Friedman, 2017). This is because few records were kept and many of the assumptions made from scholarly analyses remain conflicting. According to a study by Walters (1997) on African diaspora, the conservative estimates of Africans taken during the slave trade period amounted to 900 thousand in the 16th century; 2.8 million in the 17th century; 7 million in the 18th century; and 4 million during the 19th century. In total, it is approximated that 15 million Africans were shipped as slaves to the New World (Americas) by the European and American slave trading companies (Hall, 2005). As such, projections of other studies that 30 million Africans were taken to the New World and considering that perhaps 50 percent of the slaves were lost during the rough journey by sea, then, 15 million has a strong correlation of accuracy (Walters, 1997).

**Figure 2:** Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (1650-1860)



Source: Richmond University (2014)

While it is difficult to assess how African slaves were divided in the new world, census reports allude that by the mid-19th century there were approximately 4 million people of African descent in Brazil alone (Walters, 1997) while W.E. Dubois documented that 3,638,808 Africans were in the United States (da Conceição Nascimento, 2015, p. 159). In Canada, due to the impositions of strict laws such as the Black Code and Fugitive Slave Act, there were an estimated 25,000 people of African descent (Cooper, 2000, p. 131).

Other than these regions, the remainder of African slaves were distributed across the Caribbean in countries such as Cuba and Puerto Rico that had an estimated 600,000 and 42,000 African population respectively (Thomas, 2013). Haiti and Jamaica, each had approximately 1 million Africans and probably another 500,000 spread across the other islands (Walters, 1997). An analysis by Tannenbaum (1992), highlights that half of the African slave population was distributed between North and South America. In North America, the United States had the largest population of African slaves and in South America, African slave population was perhaps more equitable between the Caribbean and Latin America (Walters, 1997). As such, the slave trade and slave distribution are one of the methods through which the African diaspora was established.

### War

Recorded historical accounts of conquests by Hannibal; the prowess of the Nubian warriors; the expansion of great kingdoms in the Saharan Desert; service in the armies of Southern India and the Moorish conquest of Spain all reveal that the role of the African soldier is as old as civilization. During the European wars, Africans were recruited in massive numbers to serve as foot soldiers for European and American armies. Despite being part of the war casualties, African servicemen nonetheless contributed to the creation of African diaspora.

**Figure 3:** African Troops fighting in Burma (WW II)



**Source:** Deutch Welle, 2020

Fighting during the World Wars was challenging. This is because for the first time, the world was experiencing conflict on a grand scale fought on many war fronts. With continued conflict, women, especially of

African descent became part and parcel of the World Wars. Previously, for France, the presence of women in military camps, both in France and in the colonial army was judged with a negative attitude. An article by Margret Darrow on French volunteer nursing in World War 1, opines that even though women contributed directly or indirectly during the War, the overarching feature of war was masculinity. Military commanders adjudged women as contaminating and weakening masculinity in times of war (Darrow, 1996).

However, in the colonial army, the controlled presence of women during prolonged times of peace gradually led to a change in the anti-women attitude in military camps. Consequently, when France began recruiting more African soldiers to the colonial army, they were gradually encouraged to marry and establish households near French forts (Zimmerman, 2011, p. 304-5). Marriage was viewed as an opportunity for France to tie down African soldiers to the War and eliminate the fear of desertion. Additionally, the army command could use the opportunity to exploit the wives of African soldiers and their nucleus families to provide other responsibilities such as providing meals to the soldiers. As such African soldier in overseas France began creating and raising their own families who are now part of the African diaspora by descent.

In World War 1, the British galvanized 63,000 African soldiers and 190,000 porters while the Germans mobilized 1,168 soldiers in East Africa. Whereas a majority of these soldiers lost their lives, 215,000 African soldiers were enlisted to fight for France in European soil (Tournes, 1936). The first group of African soldiers drawn from south of the Sahara was deployed in the September of 1914 and went on to fight in Picardy, Ypres, Somme, Verdun (France), Gallipoli (Turkey) and in the Balkans. African soldiers from West Africa fighting under French command during the war increase to 92 battalions by 1918 (Koller, 2008, p. 118). During World War 2, France fell so suddenly that it did not have adequate opportunity to deploy African soldiers to its defense whereas on the British side, 374,000 enlisted African soldiers were actively repulsing the Italian army on the African front (Killingray and Plaut, 2012).

The experiences of war for Africans brought about new opportunities to develop civilian skills such as clerical works or drivers that enabled them advance into semi-skilled military occupations. Other soldiers travelled far and wide to regions such as India, Burma and Palestine and this enabled them to develop broader outlook and ideas (Walters, 1997). Indeed, not all of these soldiers made the journey back to the continent once they completed military service. Those who had been involved in the actual fighting in Europe became bolder and laid claims to the European metropole not as colonial slaves but as citizens with guaranteed human rights associated with citizenship. According to (Killingray and Plaut, 2012), during World War 1, 2,290,589 soldiers of African descent were mobilized, and the number increased further to 3 million enlisted to serve in different capacities during the war.

The contact between Africans and Europeans during the wars and colonial era contributed in creating African diaspora. Exchanges between the two continents strengthened and the continued exploitation of Africa created economic and cultural bonds that later facilitated migration from Africa to Europe. As a result, a



significant number of the African diaspora is found in European countries such as France, Britain, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium and Spain.

### **Commerce**

One of the unique qualities of Africans and indeed the African slaves, was their sheer physical strength and skills as seamen (Bolster, 2000). These two attributes became fundamental necessities in expanding global commerce following the emergence of industrial revolution. An extract from Walters (1997) on Black maritime tradition documents that, "Africans have a long distinguished maritime heritage. The Black pharaohs of Egypt are known to have sailed wooden plank ships 170 feet long on the Mediterranean and are believed to have reached the American shores in the 8th century." When slavery came to an end in the 19th century, freed Africans established homes in seaports such as Marseille, Liverpool, Nantes and Cardiff (Akyeampong, 2000).

African settlement in these ports led to intermarriage with the locals while others imported brides from Africa leading to the establishment of permanent African diaspora communities. Personal accounts by individuals such as Olaudah Equiano who was taken from his homeland to the West Indies became experts in sailing such that he earned his freedom and moved back to Sierra Leone (Equiano, 2009). Other accounts from the 18th century also record about James Forten who laboured as a seaman to get to England before returning back to America. Forten became a prosperous captain of his own ship and played an integral role in the establishment of the American Colonization Society that aimed at resettling Africans back to the Coast of West Africa as well as fighting for African civil rights in America (Bacon, 2007).

African seamen therefore contributed to the creation of the African diaspora communities. However, there continues to be a lack of adequate scholarly attention regarding the role of African seamen in the establishment of diaspora African communities and this remains a subject for further research.

### **Immigration**

Today, Africans continue to migrate from the continent to other parts of the world. Unlike in the past, African immigration is not stimulated by slavery or war but rather, the increasing need for higher education, employment and political asylum. Whereas European and American institutions also had students of African descent in the 18th and 19th century, the beginning of the 20th century is recording a sharp increase in the number of African students pursuing education all over the world.

In the past during the 18th century, Africans sent to Europe and America were handpicked from the noble families of African chiefs and notable members of African community where European mercantile had established settlements along the coasts of Africa. Others were also sent as part of European Christian missionary programmes or proteges of ship commanders (Gnamankou, 2015). Unlike Europe, few Africans immigrated to the US for studies before the 20th century because of the absence of direct colonial ties with Africa. Early groups of Africans to move to the United States in the colonial era included names such as Kwame Nkrumah who later became the symbol of Pan-Africanism and the struggle for African independence from European colonialism.

According to (Walters, 1997), by 1965, there were 287 professors and almost 7 thousand African students in the US alone. After studies, the drive for economic progress or prosperity influences many of these students to settle down and establish African diaspora communities not only in the past but also today.

Lastly, conflict in several African countries has contributed to the creation of the African diaspora. From the struggle against white apartheid regime in South Africa to severe civil wars in Somalia, Ethiopia, Liberia, Rwanda, Sudan and South Sudan, many Africans refugees went into exile in Europe, America, Australia and Canada. Many of these refugees first flee to neighbouring African countries such as Botswana (South Africans during apartheid), Kenya (Somalis and South Sudanese), and Uganda (South Sudanese) before they immigrate to Europe or America.

### **Ghana as the Root of Pan-Africanism in Africa**

The conceptual framework upon which Pan-Africanism was founded originated from the descendants of enslaved Africans in diaspora whose disconnection from cultural and true national identity reignited their desires to re-establish their African identity (Mark & da Silva Holta., 2013). However, in Africa, Pan-Africanism was a political instrument used in the struggle for African independence by emphasizing on continental unity as the platform through which true socio-economic and political independence could be achieved before and after independence.

Ghana gained its independence from the British at a time characterised by intensified demands by African nationalists fighting for independence. Even though independence was granted to Ghana, there were still strong interests by the United States and the Soviet Union to interfere in its internal affairs. As a result, Ghana embarked on a very careful adoption of foreign policy to cement the relationship between the US, UN, and the Commonwealth in 1958 while at the same time developing a Pan-African philosophy to drive the struggle for independence for other African countries particularly through the UN platform.

After gaining independence in 1957, Ghana began earnest preparations to host the first Conference of Independent African States in 1958. Before the convention of the Independent African States Conference in 1958, Padmore (close associate of Nkrumah and a founding Pan-Africanist in Africa) took it upon himself to visit all the seven independent African states and invite them to the conference in attempt to unite Sub-Saharan African with the North African countries such as Liberia with Ethiopia and Ghana (Ahlman, 2010).

**Figure 4:** All African Peoples Conference in Accra

**Source:** Pambazuka News, 2019

The conference was to provide the first formal platform for independent Ghana to outline its vision for Pan-African policy to other African countries (Ghana, 1958). During the conference, Nkrumah emphasized that the success of the Pan-African policy depended on African unity free that was free from external interferences from either US or Soviet Union that were involved in an ideological at the time (Grilli, 2015).

However, despite the call for neutrality, Ghana established closer ties with western powers than with the Soviet Union (Anglin, 1958). Indeed, Ghana was very important for the western bloc in their anti-Soviet policy and this was clearly manifested during the independence celebrations in which US was represented by Vice-President Richard Nixon while the Soviets were represented by the Minister of State Farms. For Ghana, the urgent need to access more funding for the projects undertaken by the new government such as the Volta River Project necessitated the new regime to develop closer relations with Western bloc (Thompson, 1969).

To appease the Commonwealth, Ghana did not display radical nature towards the West and instead used the platform to reaffirm its rejection of Communist ideologies; re-assure the West of Ghana's support whenever called upon; and guarantee the lack of interest by Ghana to revisit the colonial past that may spook emotions of revenge (Thompson, 1969).

In exchange, the Commonwealth countries supported Ghana to join the UN which was an ideal platform through which Pan-Africanism could receive support because the UN Charter guaranteed the rights and freedoms for self-determination of countries (Padmore, 1971). In a calculated and gradual process, Nkrumah began denouncing colonialism and advancing for African political unity and closely worked in collaboration with other African groups to vote on important issue concerning Africa (Botwe-Asamoah, 2013). Through the UN, Nkrumah spread the Pan-African ideology throughout the African continent (Nkrumah, 1958).

Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist ideology transcended past the colonial state boundaries, looked above the narrow confines of religion, descent, tribe and culture for the pursuit of a single goal culminating in the political unification of Africa. As such, when France granted Guinea independence, Nkrumah quickly proposed a

unification deal between Ghana and Guinea (Union of West African) (Grilli, 2015). Nkrumah considered such a union as a key step towards laying the foundation for the future unification of Africa.

However, by recognizing the complexities involved establishing a political union with countries that had just attained independence, Ghana proposed the establishment of regional federations as intermediate post-independence steps that would eventually lead a united African continent as a single political entity (Austin, 1970). Moreover, all independent African states that formed or joined regional federations were to be autonomous in the meantime but united on matters touching on African interests (Padmore, 1971).

Nkrumah stressed on the importance of the Union of West African states to be transformed into a continental union at a later stage. Nkrumah pointed out the wind of political change blowing throughout the African continent and with it, the desire of Africans to be able to develop a singular African political identity that will defend and uphold the rights of all men just like the evolution of the thirteen American colonies that developed into 49 states creating the United States of America. Nkrumah argued that Africans stood a better chance of safeguarding and defending their national rights and freedoms through African inter-dependence (AAPC, 1958).

By 1959, Nkrumah's views began to gain more publicity especially after the Conakry declaration of 1959 that referred to a Union of African States open to all independent African states and federations that agreed in principle with the ideals in which the union was anchored (Legum, 1962). Nkrumah began to intensify his struggle for a union of African states by firstly withdrawing Ghana's membership from all colonial institutions' regional boards like the West African Currency Board, West African Frontier Force and West African Cocoa Research Institute (Aluko, 1976). Nkrumah also attacked other regional colonial institutions such as the Central African Federation which was a federation between Nyasaland and Rhodesia as Ghana continued to shape its idea of regionalism.

In other words, Pan-Africanism within Africa is to large extent attributed to the initiatives of Ghana and the vision of Kwame Nkrumah of the complete liberation of the continent. The independence of Ghana also provided a wider scope on the struggle for independence as it sparked more efforts from leaders of African liberation movements all over the continent and revitalized movements in the diaspora. Nkrumah devoted his energy to writing and laid a solid foundation for the Pan-African movement in the continent and which the African diaspora continues to associate with even today.

### **Contributions of African Diaspora to Development**

The political leadership in Africa today express confidence in the role played by the African diaspora in development of the continent. This expression of confidence has been expressed by the African Union decision to designate the African diaspora as the Sixth zone of the continent. In the last decade, AU has taken bold steps in driving the Pan-African agenda that has resulted in efforts to address the relations between Africa and its diaspora

community. Secondly, the heterogeneity of the African diaspora in that it is widespread throughout Europe, the Americas, Asia and Middle East has necessitated that the Pan-African message be a common unifying factor between Africa and its diaspora.

While the challenge of integrating the African diaspora remains real, the Pan-African philosophy becomes the motivating factor that supports the efforts of African diaspora to contribute in the development of the continent through remittances and direct investments in home countries. Different proposals for the integration of the diaspora are yet to show progress that is sustainable. Some views support the designation of a coordinator and a representative to the AU in charge of the African diaspora. Other views support only the inclusion of the modern African diaspora who should be integrated into their respective homeland countries. In the midst of these divergent views, the AU has opted for the platform of Civil Society Organizations as the best platform to inclusively incorporate African descendants in the diaspora (Muchie et al., 2006). The diaspora civil organizations can therefore work with the AU Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) in which 20 seats out of the 150 have been allocated for the African diaspora communities. Notably, the selection or election of these 20 representatives has been left to the preserve of the African diaspora civil society organizations and the mechanisms for achieving this remains a working progress.

The African diaspora is key stakeholders in the development of African countries through their financial resources, transnational movement of people, knowledge, information and ideas across socio-economic and political dimensions. Diaspora groups and individuals deploy their resources more hastily and flexibly than other official channels that tend to be slowed by bureaucracy (Natsios, 2011). According to Tsuda (2009, p. 4), diaspora returns can be through different institutional channels, individual initiatives or the encouragement of homeland governments.

Russel (1992) argues that remittances are the most tangible link in evaluating the role of diaspora communities and development. Indeed, remittances are one of the biggest contributors of foreign income inflows after foreign direct investments through contribution to international reserves and the significant role in financial import. Financial remittances from the diaspora communities in Africa help in reducing the high rates of poverty, improve health, facilitate better access to education and increase investments in commerce (World Bank 2006). This is because remittances enable thousands of households in Africa to diversify their income sources and thereby create an environment that encourages savings and investment.

According to a report by Foundation Centre (2010) on international financing, US foundations contributed an estimated \$255m in Africa in 2010. Additionally, for the same year, contributions from UK international grants for development to Africa was approximately £89m. Comparatively, Africans in diaspora contributed in remittances in 2010 and which has significantly grown to an estimated \$40 billion substantively surpassing funding from private foundations, bilateral and multilateral aid agencies (Africa Grantmakers' Affinity Group, 2016). This is illustrative of the fact that Africans are taking the lead in transforming local communities in the capacities of civil society's leaders, mentors, educators, policy makers, financiers and community leaders.



A report by World Bank on financial remittances to sub-Saharan Africa highlight a consistent positive growth since 2017 amounting to \$37.8 billion, \$39.2 billion in 2018, and \$39.6 billion in 2019 (See Fig.1). Nigeria topped African recipients with \$22.3 billion in 2017 while remittance to Liberia accounted for the highest share of GDP at 25.9%. A report released by the Economic Insight (2018), reported East Africa to be the leading region amongst other regions in Africa with 6.3% growth and cited remittances as one of the key economic growth drivers. In Kenya for instance, remittances were sighted to be higher than the foreign income obtained from tea, coffee and tourism (The Kenyan Wallstreet, 2018).

It is however imperative to note that remittances are not substitute for other forms of finance for development but rather, are important mechanisms for financial flow that help in the immediate improvement of welfare in recipient country families. To have better appreciation of the impact of cash remittances in African countries, an analysis of the aggregate estimates of international migrant remittance flows indicate that cash remittances are relatively more than official development assistance. Additionally, remittances are more stable than foreign direct investments, thus, an important and stable source of external finance for Africa.

Philanthropy has also become a key aspect of the relations between African diaspora and the continent. Personal philanthropy to family members and the larger community is not only an inherent characteristic of African family life and community, but it is increasingly becoming an important aspect of development in Africa. Helping through personal contribution for various reasons is considered noble and attracts high esteem in the society. In the course of the past two decades, there has been growth in philanthropic institutions across Africa alongside the informal traditions of individual giving. Motivations for giving are derived from values, experience and social background. For many wealthy individuals, there is a strong desire to give back and make a difference in the lives of others, especially in their own communities because of reasons that for example relate to the fact that several African philanthropists grew up surrounded by the challenges they then seek to solve, leading to a very strong personal connection to the issue of philanthropy.

The East Africa Association of Grantmakers for instance, was amalgamated from five founding organizations between 2001-2002 with representatives from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, to form a networking platform to share and learn from each other. The organization has henceforth expanded to partner with the Africa Philanthropy Network (APN) which is a Pan-African network of grant-making organizations that facilitates networking and experience-sharing among established and emerging African philanthropic institutions.

### **Discussion**

There exists a strong relationship involving the Africa diaspora in the larger agenda of Pan-Africanism and African development as they continue to occupy a strategic position that connects Africa with the rest of the world. Their strategic relevance is found in their ability to be able to learn from overseas experiences from which they are able to transmit development benefits to Africa and create more cultural awareness about Africans.

The African Diaspora continues to transfer valuable intellectual resources and new political ideas which are profoundly reshaping the political dispensations on a continental platform. The African links with other established humanitarian, political, economic and business networks in their host countries is very beneficial to the African countries that may be lacking access to influential socio-political and economic networks overseas. Moreover, members of African Diaspora have been involved in global decision-making processes and engage in lobbying for changes in donor policies in Africa such as advocating for debt relief, trade concessions, opening markets to African products and enhancing aid budget for social services and the informal economy that cater to the poor.

Unfortunately, despite the noted benefits, Africa diaspora continue to operate on the margins of their host countries due to the weak social, economic and political position in which they find themselves overseas. Furthermore, in the donor community and non-governmental agencies, the invaluable efforts of the African Diaspora are not considered comprehensively in development policy and practice. Often, their intellectual input to development strategies and political discourse are neither sought nor appreciated. Lastly, African diaspora organizations suffer from capacity constraints such as their weak capabilities to make their activities more visible to the larger public; weak and informal social organisation; absence of proper channels to access useful information and networks; and, they continue to be marginally linked with the mainstream development agencies.

On the issue of financial remittances there is a greater need to recognise and appreciate the impact of African diaspora remittances on the region's economies in regard to economic development, financial savings and investment. However, there can be greater economic reward if these remittances are appropriated through relevant and well organised structures that promote a culture of savings and investments. This can be achieved for instance, through the establishment of an integrated special bank across different African region as a start before implementation on a continental level through channels stipulated under the African Union. An African diaspora bank will very beneficial because it will create a banking network that generates savings for investments within the region because the regulatory system can be developed in such a way that diaspora remittances are subjected to lesser taxation, effective and efficient transactions and conducive environment to promote investment. This will also improve individual investments and establish a larger tax base for African governments.

It is also imperative to further promote African diaspora and transnational networks to enhance stronger social, economic and political networks through which wealth can be directly channelled, transfer of skills and innovative entrepreneurial ideas, information and intellectual capacities and ideas. There is need to establish greater connections between home countries and the diaspora communities to improve visibility, influence and profile through joint ventures in the form of public relation exercises and training of diaspora organizations to enhance capacity to establish an atmosphere that promotes open dialogue; celebrates and rewards success; improves confidence; and, creates momentum for growth.

The African diaspora organisations should further promote closer bonds or working ties with African institutions such as African Union, regional organizations, African governments, civil society networks, academic

institutions and media and advertisement industries. Contemporary global political environment that is characterised by increasing economic crises and social issues such as racism in western countries provides an opportunity for Africa to mobilise its diaspora. African governments at this point should continue with the reform agenda and transform Africa into an attractive destination for investments and social life for the African diaspora.

Finally, the African diaspora provides an ideal opportunity in which the dream of Pan-African dream can be realized. Foremost, there are clear advantages of the financial remittances over foreign aid that has been criticized as a factor contributing to the underdevelopment of the continent. The diaspora remittances are a far better substitute of foreign aid and has higher impact on development especially at the grassroots level where recipients benefit directly. Different African diaspora organizations are also involved in development projects and not all remittances are consumed in recurrent expenditures. There are investments in development projects such as housing projects, construction of health centres and community schools. As such, more appropriate ways need to be developed to integrate such kinds of projects with the national government agenda and other mainstream development agencies. In light of this, African diaspora organizations should establish a platform for project information sharing with other African diaspora communities across the African continent to share experiences. This will go a long way in integrating the diaspora community with the Pan-African agenda on African unity and development.

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