Exploring the Potential of Diaspora as Non-State Actors in Promoting Global Governance, Investment, and Development in Africa

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ABSTRACT

The research investigated the underutilization of state-diaspora collaborations by home and host countries, posing a challenge to harnessing diaspora potentials in governance and development. Guided by comprehensive objectives, the research explored the evolution of African diaspora communities in the United States, capturing their experiences and challenges. Significantly, the study filled the gap in acknowledging diasporas' potential in global governance and development strategies for host and home countries, shifting focus from migration programs. It provided insights for policymakers, guiding effective strategies to harness diaspora resources, stimulate investments, and reinforce global governance mechanisms. Focusing on Nigeria's largest population in Africa and its high immigration rates, the research emphasized its role as a compelling case study. Further, the research highlighted diasporas' financial influence through remittances, investments, and entrepreneurial ventures in Africa. It employed an empirical approach, combining interviews, surveys, case studies, and desk research to gain comprehensive insights into diaspora engagements.

Keywords: *Diaspora, Global Governance, Economic Development, African Diaspora, Nigeria, State-Diaspora Collaborations*.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAI	Africa-America Institute
ABAA	African Bar Association of America
ACS	American Community Survey
ADC	African Development Centre
ADIFF	The African Diaspora International Film Festival
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
CANUK	Central Association of Nigerians in the United Kingdom
DC	District of Columbia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration.
PAC-ADE	President's Advisory Council on African Diaspora Engagement in the United States
NAPA	Nigerian American Professionals Association.
NiDCOM	Nigerians in Diaspora Commission
NIDO	Nigerians in the Diaspora Organisation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NNVS	Nigerian National Volunteer Service
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

This Chapter serves as an introduction to the research work. It covers the background, the problems the research aimed to address, the significance of the study and the methods employed to carry out the research.

➢ *Statement of Research Problem*

The underutilization of state-diaspora community collaborations by home and host countries poses a significant challenge to harnessing the potential of diaspora engagements in contributing to governance and development in Africa. The research aims to explore the intricate factors that hinder the effective leveraging of these engagements, spotlighting the substantial contributions and potential of diaspora communities in shaping Africa's socio-economic landscape.

➢ *Objectives of the Study*

To achieve this overarching aim, the research will be guided by a comprehensive set of objectives:

- Explore the evolution of African diaspora communities and their engagements in the United States.
- Conduct a survey encompassing both informal and institutionalized African diaspora groups, aiming to capture their perceptions, experiences, challenges, and limitations encountered while actively engaging in governance and developmental pursuits.
- Evaluate the tangible and intangible contributions made by diaspora communities to governance and economic advancements specifically within the Nigerian context.
- Identify crucial considerations and factors that hold significance for those seeking to bolster the influence of diaspora communities in governance and developmental spheres.

➢ *Significance of the Study.*

The research explores the significance of diasporas in the context of development strategies and global governance, with a particular emphasis on their potential benefits for both host and home countries. It acknowledges the existing interest in policy circles regarding this topic but underscores the current preoccupation with migration programs. Consequently, there is a compelling need to redirect attention towards policies that facilitate the utilization of diaspora resources for the mutual benefit of host and home nations.

This study seeks to provide insights into the roles and impacts of diaspora engagement, offering valuable guidance to policymakers and development professionals in the formulation of effective strategies for harnessing diaspora resources, stimulating investment opportunities, and reinforcing global governance mechanisms.

Its significance lies in its potential to enhance inclusive development, attract investments, and encourage active diaspora participation in Africa's development journey, with a specific emphasis on Nigeria as a compelling case study. With Nigeria boasting the largest population in Africa, a substantial youth demographic and a notable increase in immigration over the past decade serves as an ideal focal point for this research.

➢ *Literature Review*

In recent years, the diaspora has gained significant attention in academic and policy spheres, recognized as pivotal nonstate actors in governance and societal development (Abdulloeva, 2023; Effendi, 2022; Gnimassoun and Anyanwu, 2019). This heightened interest is fuelled by advancements in communication technologies, geopolitical shifts, and the forces of globalization (Adu, 2018; Adamson, 2015).

Across the globe, nations are increasingly formulating strategies to engage with their diasporas. Among 92 nations assessed with Migration Governance Indicators, half have enacted diaspora-related legislation, and 74% have established governmental entities focused on diaspora policy (Schöfberger and Manke, 2023; Lorenzi and Batalova, 2022; Paul Ankomah et al., 2012). Furthermore, over one-third formally involve their diasporas in development policy, and nearly half allow diaspora voting.

In the United States, President Biden established the President's Advisory Council on African Diaspora Engagement (PAC-ADE) to bolster U.S.-Africa partnership (The White House, 2023). However, Johnson (2023) warns that while leveraging the African diaspora as a soft power tool in U.S.-Africa policy is positive, explicit integration may risk creating divisions.

Similarly, China and India harness their global diasporas for economic purposes. The Chinese diaspora contributes significantly to establishing China as a global manufacturing hub (Siar, 2018; Nijbroek, 2022), while India's diaspora aids in its rise as an information technology leader (Hercog, 2013; Singh, 2021).

Diasporas also influence host country politics, exemplified by the Iraqi diaspora's impact on U.S. decisions regarding the Iraq war (DeWind and Segura, 2014). Origin states like Angola and Morocco have established formal diaspora institutions, such

as dedicated parliamentary seats (Gnimassoun and Anyanwu, 2019). Nigeria's Nigerians in Diaspora Commission exemplifies proactive engagement, aiming to harness diaspora resources for national development (NiDCOM, 2018; Sousa, 2019).

These institutional initiatives aim to facilitate diaspora participation in policy formulation and socio-economic advancement (NiDCOM, 2018; Sousa, 2019), acknowledging diasporas as influential agents in shaping governance.

Diasporas exhibit transnational traits, blending features from both home and host countries, offering advantages in conducting transnational business (Bagwell, 2015). Blaydes and Paik (2024) highlight the proliferation of premodern trade diasporas due to principles of accessing luxury goods and settling in regions with complementary resources.

Additionally, diasporas' altruistic ties to their homeland make them desirable for policymakers seeking contributions (Williams, 2018). Waldinger and Shams (2023) emphasize understanding transnationalism amidst global realities, with Ullah (2023) noting strengthened diaspora-country links during crises. Abramson (2023) underscores state-diaspora engagement as an intersubjective process integral to diaspora policymaking, focusing on integration rather than exclusion.

➢ *Conceptualization*

The conceptualization of the diaspora remains a topic of ongoing debate within academic discourse, lacking a universally accepted definition. Scholars and organizations have presented varied definitions, each offering unique perspectives. It is crucial to establish a benchmark definition of the diaspora, given its profound implications across various domains.

"Historically, the term diaspora has been associated with three conceptualizations: original, classical, and contemporary (Choi, 2003). Originally, diaspora comes from the ancient Greeks, who equated this term with conquest, migration, and expanding colonization. Classical diaspora refers to the practice of forcibly removing people from their homelands to places of exile (e.g., Jews, early Christians, Palestinians, and Africans). The meaning of contemporary diaspora is broader and helps in conceptualizing migrations, cultural differences, and other unique qualities in today's global society." (Ankomah P. et al 2012, p.386).

This definition forms the fundamental framework for this research, encapsulating the diverse origins of various African immigrant populations in the United States. The original and classical concepts provide context for Americans who trace their heritage back to Africa, identifying as integral parts of the African diaspora communities. Meanwhile, the contemporary diaspora interpretation applies to those who have migrated more recently, offering a comprehensive perspective on the evolving nature of diasporic identities.

Similarly, according Lonescu (2006, p.13) the United Kingdom House of Commons proposed a comprehensive definition of diasporas as: "International migrants who, although dispersed from their homelands, remain in some way part of their community of origin."

This comprehensive definition underscores the significance of sustained connections and affiliations with one's home country. It challenges the notion that mere relocation to a foreign land designates someone as part of a diaspora; instead, it stresses the active engagement and enduring ties individuals or groups maintain with their country of origin.

However, Ajeti (2021), argues that the term "diaspora" lacks universal application globally. Some states, like those in the Middle East, avoid it due to associations with the Jewish diaspora. Instead, terms like "nationals abroad" are preferred, encompassing diverse meanings depending on the context, including all generations of migrants. In Morocco, policies use terms like "Moroccans living abroad" and "global Moroccans," indicating inclusivity based on automatic nationality for those born to Moroccan parents.

Moreover, specific regions have adopted distinct lenses through which they perceive the diaspora, amalgamating geographical location, heritage, and homeland interest as fundamental facets of diasporic identity. The African Union, for instance, offers a unique perspective "The African Diaspora consists of 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." (Nweke and Nyewusira, 2015, p.17)

The U.S State Department on the other hand, presented specific features for defining what constitute diasporas, stating: "Dispersion, whether voluntary or involuntary, across sociocultural boundaries and at least one political border; A collective memory and myth about the homeland; A commitment to keeping the homeland alive through symbolic and direct action; The presence of the issue of return, though not necessarily a commitment to do so; A diasporic consciousness and associated identity expressed in diaspora community media, creation of diaspora associations or organizations, and online participation (Department telegraph 86401, U.S. State Department)." (Plaza and Dilip, 2011). These varying definitions reflect the multifaceted nature of the diaspora phenomenon.

- *Institutionalizing Diaspora Contributions to Global Governance:*

Diasporas play a crucial role in global governance, acting as bridges between host and home countries (Na and Hong, 2022). It holds a unique position among non-state actors, gaining growing significance in international relations. The borderline position of diaspora, which belongs to two countries and two cultures at the same time enables diaspora to act as an intermediary in interstate relations. In addition to ethnic lobby, diaspora can facilitate bilateral relations, transfer values and function as a bridge between societies. (Sheludiakova et al., 2022; Effendi, 2022).

Craven (2018) underscores the significant influence of the diaspora on homeland governance, highlighting their contributions through remittances, advocacy efforts, and conflict mediation. Diasporas utilize multifaceted strategies, actively shaping foreign policy alongside other non-state actors within the intricate international context.

In the IOM's study on the diaspora's future, Bashair Ahmed underscores the substantial impact of the diaspora in conflict-afflicted countries of origin. Proposing that future-oriented policies should extend beyond remittances to address generational, gender, and identity diversities. (Bashair, 2021).

The impact of diaspora extends from collective groups to individual endeavours. To this, Ho and McConnell (2019) argued for the transformative power of diaspora diplomacy, introducing multidirectional aspects that reshape state power and territory concepts. They propose involving official and unofficial entities, highlighting diasporas as diplomatic actors influencing states and various social entities.

However other research advocate for institutionalizing diaspora networks to enhance their influence and potential. (Sheludiakova et al, 2022; Tittel-Mosser, 2023; Aggestam et al., 2023). Gamlen et al. (2019) examined why origin states establish diaspora institutions, identifying motives such as seeking material gains, embracing national identity, and governing inspired by international migration models. This recognition leads origin states to acknowledge diaspora contributions through celebratory events, financial campaigns, extended citizenship, and legislative representation.

Orogbemi et al. (2022) assert that diasporas, as non-state actors, significantly influence global politics through transnational networks. Enabled by modern communication, they wield influence in homeland and host countries, playing roles in conflicts, revolutions, and state-initiation, exemplified by the Czech diaspora's role in Czechoslovakia's establishment. Diasporas use confrontational and institutional means, shaping foreign policy globally.

In contrast, Ho and McConnell (2019) argued that diasporas can sometimes have conflicting agendas with their homeland states, as seen in Armenia, where efforts for international recognition of the Armenian genocide complicate bilateral peace efforts with Turkey and Azerbaijan. In furtherance to this, Aggestam et al. (2023, p.23) asserts that "As transnational civil society actors, diasporas have the potential to exercise an independent role beyond being mere pawns in the machinations of state actors." Diasporas mediate political crises and challenge prevailing power structures in the bid to demand for good governance in home countries. (Na and Hong, 2022)

- *Investment and Economic Development*

Diasporas wield considerable economic influence in their home countries, notably through remittances, direct investments, and entrepreneurial ventures, forming the core of contemporary research. Works by Ionescu (2006), Ankomah et al. (2012), and Mohan and Zack-Williams (2002) emphasize the diaspora's pivotal role in channelling remittances and investments into Africa. These financial inflows, crucial for poverty alleviation, infrastructure enhancement, and local economic growth, highlight the potential of diaspora-led initiatives in fostering sustainable development. (Williams, 2018; Vaaler, 2013)

According to Plaza and Dilip (2011); Diasporas serve as vital agents in boosting cross-border investments due to their knowledge, language proficiency, and cultural familiarity. African nations like Ethiopia and Kenya aim to leverage their diaspora for home country investments. Accurate data on the diaspora is essential for harnessing their potential, yet the African diaspora's size surpasses official estimates, often undercounted in surveys. Many retain emotional connections to their ancestral nations.

Furthermore, Gnimassoun and Anyanwu (2019) reveal a strong positive correlation between the African Diaspora's contributions and the region's real per capita income, especially notable among emigrants with higher educational qualifications. Their findings challenge conventional beliefs, emphasizing the significance of networks and financial and technological transfers facilitated by the Diaspora.

However, it's important to note that diaspora engagement isn't universally beneficial according to Williams (2018), he highlights potential downsides, citing instances where foreign investments might not always benefit local economies. Foreign investments could stifle domestic competition, displacing local firms, leading to reduced product quality and inflated prices in local markets (Riddle and Nielsen, 2011; Moran, 1998). And Graham (2014) suggests lowering expectations of diaspora investment for development, stating it's on par with other sectors, urging states to focus within and challenging the notion of a straightforward absolute win for diaspora engagement in development. Diaspora organizations sometimes face limitations making

them not as effective. According to research by the International Organization for Migration (2022), Diaspora associations in Italy as an example faced internal challenges like regulatory understanding, management, member commitment and external challenges such as limited funds and media attention and poor cooperation from government hindering engagements.

Further to this, Aikins and Russel (2021), argues that to thrive in the era of technological transformation, countries should leverage highly skilled individuals, including their diaspora. China, for instance, connects with academics abroad and encourages returnees. Although small countries, attempting similar approaches, face challenges in building and maintaining technology platforms. A collaborative, scalable solution is needed, recognizing the strategic importance of diaspora communities. (Walton-Roberts and Judge, 2023)

➢ *Research Questions:*
This thesis will address the following research questions:

- To what extent have African diaspora engagements in the United States impacted U.S.-Africa strategies?
- What obstacles impede diaspora participation as non-state actors in promoting investment, development, and governance in Africa?
- How can the potential of African diasporas and diaspora institutions be harnessed to cultivate bilateral partnerships and drive development in Africa?

- *Furthermore, the underlying hypothesis to be substantiated is:*
" Leveraging the diaspora's networks and resources enhances their role in shaping policies that impact both their home countries in Africa and the United States."

➢ *Methodology*
This research would adopt an empirical approach, drawing from the interpretivism epistemological tradition and a constructivist ontology. It aims to provide an explanatory understanding of the relationship between African diaspora engagements, the partnership between the United States and Africa, and their impact on economic development in Africa since the turn of the 21st century.

Methods such as interviews, and qualitative analysis of texts would be employed to explore the underlying meanings and contexts. The primary objective would be to uncover diverse perspectives and gain a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play, particularly the influence of diaspora engagements on economic development.

➢ *Desk Research*
Content analysis was done on existing academic research papers, scholarly articles, and journals, publications from international organizations, policy documents, government reports, online database, official statements websites, and other publicly available materials to offer insights into the strategies, initiatives, and programs related to diaspora communities and their contributions to governance and development.

➢ *Interview*
The primary data for this thesis was gathered through semi-structured interviews, chosen for their exploratory nature, which fosters active engagement and open dialogue. This method was particularly suited to the research's aims and accommodated the small sample size, allowing for a deeper exploration of specific themes and affording participants ample opportunity to express themselves.

Ten leaders from African diaspora organizations based in the United States were selected randomly from the different strata of diaspora organizations, for both in-person and virtual interviews.

These organizations encompassed a diverse range of focuses and geographical locations:

- One organization in California focused on fostering African development through strategic initiatives in entrepreneurship, partnerships, and philanthropy.
- Three organizations headquartered in Washington D.C. primarily focused on policy related to U.S. and Africa partnerships.
- Two youth-led African diaspora institutions, one based in Maryland connecting descendants of Africa globally and another headquartered in Dallas focused on African startups, venture capital, and impact investment in Africa.
- Two cultural African diaspora institutions, one based in Houston, Texas, and the other in Chicago.
- One African diaspora organization based in New York focused on fostering partnerships between the United States and Africa through education and training.
- One based in Atlanta, Georgia, with a general focus on policy and development. 70% of the selected institutions have been established for over a decade, while the remaining 30% were founded within the last five years.

All respondents were assured anonymity. Virtual interview sessions were recorded solely for transcription purposes, with all personal information such as names removed from the transcripts.

The interview questions were designed based on the research questions and hypothesis with the aim to uncover insights into the organizations' experiences, particularly the challenges and constraints they encounter when contributing to global governance and recommendations for enhancing engagement and inclusion strategies.

- *Survey*

Employing an online survey as a primary data collection tool, a comprehensive questionnaire (Appendix 1) with ten questions, was widely distributed among African diasporas in the United States. It was shared through various channels including WhatsApp, text messaging, Facebook, and emails to contacts in diverse networks such as diaspora organizations, professional circles, acquaintances across in America. Additionally, outreach was conducted with numerous Africa diaspora organizations to distribute the survey among their members. To enhance response rates, reminders were sent twice, emphasizing the survey's availability.

While a total of 539 responses were received, only 275 were from Africans residing in the United States, the other 264 were from diasporas but not from Africa and 2 responses were incomplete. Resulting in a sample size of 273 only.

- *Case Study Analysis*

The case study focused on Nigeria, leveraging desk research to analyse diaspora contributions to governance and economic advancements. The examination included assessing existing mechanisms designed to harness and maximize these contributions. As Africa's most populous nation, largest economy, and a major oil producer, Nigeria holds a strategic position as the United States' second-largest trade partner and third-largest recipient of U.S. foreign direct investment in Africa (Husted, 2023). The study investigates the diaspora's crucial role in governance and development within this intricate context.

- *Limitations.*

This research encountered limitations due to a lack of diverse existing literature on the subject and restricted access to existing materials and database, potentially limiting the breadth of information available for analysis. Additionally, challenges arose in data collection as some of the target respondents completed the survey partially and people who are not African diasporas responded to the survey as well, impacting the comprehensiveness of the data collected.

Another limitation was the reluctance of diaspora respondents to participate in the interviews, driven by concerns about the true objectives of the study and uncertainties regarding the utilization and intended purposes of the gathered data, interviewees were assured of anonymity to encourage participation.

Additionally, biases in respondents' answers may occur due to personal interests potentially affecting the accuracy and objectivity of the data obtained.

CHAPTER TWO
DIASPORA NETWORK AND COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

Over the years, diaspora networks and community structures have undergone a significant transformation, evolving from informal groups formed around familial, ethnic, religious, national, and regional affiliations to well-structured, institutionalized organizations. This evolution also encompasses broader connections based on gender, professional networks, and political affiliations.

The institutionalization of these diaspora networks arises from a growing recognition of diasporas as influential non-state actors on the global stage, capable of catalysing change. The surge in migration rates and its potential impact on development, alongside the aspiration to enhance a country's global competitiveness, have driven recent state-led initiatives. These initiatives aim to tap into the social, political, and economic capital accumulated by diasporas abroad. Recent studies indicate a rising trend in state-led diaspora engagement initiatives worldwide, contributing to the institutionalization of diaspora governance institutions. (Baser and Ozturk, 2020). Diaspora networks exhibit a diverse structure, encompassing individuals self-identifying as part of the diaspora, informal groups united by shared objectives and identities, registered non-governmental diaspora organizations, and state diaspora institutions. These networks channel their contributions into various areas like policy, economic development, expertise, and entrepreneurship.

State-led diaspora institutions showcases a growing trend. By 2012, approximately 27 states had established distinct government ministries exclusively focused on diaspora affairs. About 40% of United Nations (UN) member states have developed diaspora-focused administrative departments, directorates, or units within their executive branches. Legislative branches of origin states also house diaspora institutions. Standing committees like Nigeria's House Committee on Diaspora Affairs or dedicated parliamentary seats, as seen in Angola, underscore the legislative focus on diaspora issues. These institutions sometimes include formal advisory councils, such as the Hungarian Diaspora Council, tasked with reviewing legislation affecting diaspora groups. (Gamlen et al., 2019).

➤ *Evolution of Diaspora Institutionalization:*
Worldwide, there are more than 200.000 diaspora and migrant organizations (Schöfberger and Manke, 2023, p.12). The evolution of diaspora institutionalization spans various historical epochs and nations, reflecting a global journey toward recognizing and engaging with diasporas. Initially, select countries commenced engaging with their diasporas, emphasizing national independence, cultural promotion, or safeguarding their nationals abroad. Early examples include Mexico's Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, established in 1821, which has long collaborated with the Mexican diaspora in the United States, ensuring protection of rights and supporting socio-cultural activities.

The strategic importance of diasporas in cultural, political, and economic realms prompted institutional connections early on, as seen in Lebanon's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants established in 1943, paralleled by the creation of the World Lebanese Cultural Union. Akin to this, the Ukrainian World Congress was formed in 1967, signifying the emerging role of diaspora organizations.

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed the development of institutions focusing on overseas workers in nations like Pakistan and the Philippines, acknowledging the significance of labour migration in the region.

From the late 1980s, diaspora-related institutions grew, integrated into relevant ministries. Former colonies with substantial diasporas, including Angola and Senegal, established ministries in the early 1990s. This period also saw diverse institutionalization, including the emergence of novel types like quangos and advisory bodies, exemplified by the High Council of Malians Abroad.

The early 2000s witnessed the global proliferation of dedicated diaspora institutions. Influential international developments such as the Millennium Development Goal, emphasizing lowering remittance costs, and the World Bank's 2003 World Development Report highlighting remittance importance catalysed governments' interest. Additionally, the United Nations General Assembly's high-level dialogue on migration and development in 2006 emphasized diaspora engagement's potential for a "triple win" in migration and development. (Tittel-Mosser, 2023).

Subsequent initiatives like the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 and the Global Compact for safe, orderly, and regular migration recognized the crucial role of diasporas. International organizations like the World Bank, IOM, and International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) facilitated further development of diaspora institutions, enhancing their role in national, regional, and global dialogues.

Amidst this global trajectory, about 97 diaspora-related institutions emerged in the last decade, reflecting the increasing recognition of diasporas' potential for sustainable development. (Tittel-Mosser, 2023).

➢ *African Diaspora in the United States.*

The population of Black African immigrants in the United States has grown significantly over the past few decades, experiencing a 200% increase during the 1980s and 1990s and a subsequent 100% increase during the 2000s. The sub-Saharan African diaspora now exceeds 4.5 million people, as per the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS). (Randy et al, 2012; Lorenzi and Batalova, 2022).

In 2019, around 2.1 million sub-Saharan African immigrants resided in the U.S., accounting for 5% of the overall foreign-born population of 44.9 million. This group represents a rich diversity, hailing from 51 different countries with varied ethnicities, languages, and educational backgrounds. Notably, the number of sub-Saharan African immigrants has surged by sixteen times since 1980.

The majority -53 percent- of these immigrants come from Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, or Somalia. Western Africa stands as the largest subregional source, while Southern Africa contributes relatively fewer immigrants. Among the prominent locations, the top three populations are concentrated in New York, the Washington District of Columbia (DC) area, and Dallas (Lorenzi and Batalova, 2022; Lacarte, 2022).

Table 1 Sub-Saharan African Immigrant Origins in the US (2019).

Region and Country	Number of Immigrants	Share (%)
TOTAL SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	**2,094,000**	**100.0%**
Eastern Africa	737,000	35.2%
Eritrea	49,000	2.4%
Ethiopia	256,000	12.2%
Kenya	153,000	7.3%
Somalia	115,000	5.5%
Uganda	44,000	2.1%
Zimbabwe	21,000	1.0%
Other Eastern Africa	99,000	4.7%
Middle Africa	195,000	9.3%
Cameroon	73,000	3.5%
Republic of the Congo	39,000	1.9%
Democratic Republic of Congo	61,000	2.9%
Other Middle Africa	23,000	1.1%
Southern Africa	116,000	5.5%
South Africa	111,000	5.3%
Other Southern Africa	5,000	0.2%
Western Africa	926,000	44.2%
Cabo Verde	36,000	1.7%
Ghana	199,000	9.5%
Liberia	98,000	4.7%
Nigeria	393,000	18.8%
Senegal	31,000	1.5%
Sierra Leone	46,000	2.2%
Other Western Africa	123,000	5.9%
Africa (not elsewhere classified)	120,000	5.7%

Notes: "Africa, not elsewhere classified" includes people from Africa who did not report their country of birth, and some may have been from North Africa. Source: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2019 ACS. (Lacarte, 2022).

Table 2 Top Concentrations for Sub-Saharan African Immigrants by U.S. Metropolitan Area from (2015-2019)

Metropolitan Area	Immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa	% of Metro Area Population
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA Metro Area	194,000	1.0%
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	192,000	3.1%
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX Metro Area	99,000	1.4%
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area	95,000	2.7%
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA Metro Area	90,000	1.5%
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX Metro Area	88,000	1.3%
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH Metro Area	66,000	1.4%
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD Metro Area	56,000	0.9%
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA Metro Area	53,000	1.4%
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA Metro Area	52,000	0.4%

Source: MPI tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2015-19 ACS. (Lacarte, 2022).

➤ *Diverse African Diaspora Groups in the United States*

The African diaspora in the United States collaborates to establish shared objectives, resulting in the formation of a myriad of diverse organizations and communities that play multifaceted roles in societal, cultural, political, and economic development. These entities showcase diverse structures, aims, and focuses, reflecting the intricate nature of the African diaspora. Research conducted on 50 randomly selected African-focused diaspora organizations in the United States delineated diaspora engagement models into six distinct categories; Organizations aiding recent African immigrants in the U.S., Policy-oriented groups, Entities preserving cultural heritage, Organizations dedicated to causes like education and climate change, Groups fostering professional development and career networks and Business and economic development groups promoting entrepreneurship. (Tittel-Mosser, 2023; Gamlen, 2014).

CHAPTER THREE
DIASPORA'S GOVERNANCE POTENTIAL.

This chapter explores the broad spectrum of contributions made by diasporas, delving into their impact on policies and development.

➢ *Africa Diaspora and Home Countries*

The impact of diasporas on their home countries is far-reaching, extending beyond highly educated migrants, significantly contributing to their homelands. This contribution spans remittances, trade and investment facilitation, and the transfer of skills and technology, as noted by Ratha and Plaza (2011).

Diasporas can play important roles in governance, they can promote trade and foreign direct investment, create businesses, spur entrepreneurship, and transfer knowledge and skills. Although some policymakers see their nationals abroad as a loss, they are increasingly realizing that an engaged diaspora can be an asset - or even a counterweight to the emigration of skilled and talented migrants. (Newman and Plaza, 2013).

• *Remittance*

Remittances from the diaspora is important in bolstering local livelihoods, supporting community development projects, and fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. In 2010, African migrants channelled over $40 billion back to their home countries, with unrecorded flows likely amplifying this figure. These remittances form a critical bridge between migration and development, constituting a substantial portion of several African nations' Gross Domestic Product (GDP). They offer stability and countercyclical support during economic downturns or crises. These funds are known to fuel productive investments such as agricultural equipment, housing, and business development. (Fang and Wells, 2022; Newman and Plaza, 2013).

• *Trade and Investment*

While globalization has eased cross-border interactions, navigating cultural and linguistic barriers remains a hurdle for global traders. Leveraging diaspora networks offers a potential solution. Various research studies indicate a strong, positive link between the size of a diaspora community and increased international trade between the host country and its diasporic origin (Fang and Wells, 2022).

Diaspora members actively foster trade links between their host and home countries, promoting ethnic goods and acting as conduits for trade and investments. African governments actively engage with diasporas to gather market insights and initiate investment endeavours, establishing trade councils and participating in forums to attract diaspora investors. Leveraging their familiarity with both regions, diaspora members diversify investor bases, introduce financial products, and provide crucial market information, thereby facilitating investment and ensuring regulatory compliance. (Ratha and Plaza, 2011).

• *Diaspora Bonds*

Annually, African diaspora members collectively save approximately $53 billion. Encouraging even a fraction of these members to invest $1,000 each could generate $3 billion annually for African development through diaspora bonds—savings instruments aimed specifically at diaspora members. These bonds, available in small denominations to cater to less affluent migrants, fund projects such as housing and infrastructure back in their home countries. Diaspora bonds, appealing due to emotional ties and higher returns compared to standard savings accounts, serve as a stable funding source. (Ratha and Plaza, 2011).

• *Technology, Skills, and Knowledge Transfer*

Facilitating the transfer of technology and skills, diasporas contribute through associations, expat assignments, and distance teaching. Initiatives such as mentor programs and collaborative research leverage diaspora skills, while policies aim to harness financial resources, skills, and technology from diasporas, benefiting countries within and outside Africa.

Governments are engaging diasporas through embassies and specialized agencies, aiming to encourage investment, provide counselling, and offer policy advice. (Ratha and Plaza, 2011).

➢ *African Diaspora and Host Countries.*

Diasporas, beyond their contributions to their home countries, play an instrumental role in shaping and enriching their host nations, a facet often overlooked in research. As highlighted by Galmen (2013), they act as conduits fostering trade and investment, directly benefiting their host countries. These communities introduce new commercial dynamics, instigate cultural transformations, and wield influence over domestic and foreign policies.

One prominent dimension of their influence lies in managing relationships between international businesses and the African continent.

Beyond economic realms, diasporas wield influence in policymaking and advocacy within their host nations. They participate in policy formulation, advocating for various causes relevant to their residence countries. This involvement extends into diverse sectors, where their influx has infused host nations with a wealth of cultural diversity, skills, and perspectives. Such contributions have fostered vibrant multicultural societies across various sectors, enriching host countries in multifaceted ways.

Moreover, as per Newland (2022), destination country governments have actively connected with their resident diaspora in diverse manners. These engagements, facilitated via national development structures, often include supporting the establishment or reinforcement of diaspora organizations, offering grants for development initiatives initiated or executed by these organizations.

➢ *Diasporas in International Policy*
Numerous diaspora communities are capitalizing on the increasing global interconnectedness to wield influence in policymaking. Policy formulation often shapes diasporas, but conversely, diaspora groups hold considerable sway over policy outcomes (Fang and Wells, 2022).

Craven (2018) discusses diasporas as governance actors, emphasizing their indirect and direct contributions to homeland governance. Indirectly, diasporas engage in political advocacy, influencing democratic processes and institutional reforms in their homelands. They leverage knowledge and expertise to enhance political institutions, fostering transparent and accountable governance systems. Diasporas also mobilize for foreign policy and human rights, impacting the rule of law indirectly. Conflict mediation among diasporic ethnic groups indirectly influences homeland actors.

Diasporas wield considerable influence as a form of "soft power" in foreign policy and drive economic development in their countries of origin while actively participating in their host nations. Notably, the Chinese diaspora has significantly contributed to China's economic ascent. These communities increasingly shape the political landscape of both their host and home countries. The Jewish diaspora notably influences the United States and the European Union in their relations with Israel. As transnational entities, diasporas are pivotal non-state actors shaping global political and economic dynamics (Khara, 2020).

Recognizing their impact, the African Union integrated Diaspora as a sixth region alongside North Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa, underscoring the diaspora's significance. (The White House, 2022).

➢ *Comparative Analysis of African Diaspora by Subregions:*
The contributions and characteristics of African diasporas vary widely across regions, with notable shifts in regional representation. Research by Corra (2022) indicates decreasing proportions of immigrants from Northern and Southern Africa, while Central, East, and West Africa show increasing or stable trends. Southern Africans display comparatively lower immigration rates, influenced by factors like social, cultural, and economic conditions. A brief analysis of diaspora remittances to sub-regional GDP in 2021 highlights West Africa as the region making the highest contribution.

Fig 1 Diaspora Remittances Contribution to Sub-regional GDP in 2021
Data Source: NOMAD/World Bank, December 2022, (Williams, 2023)

• *East Africa*
East Africa accounts for over 35% of African immigrants to the United States, making it the second-largest region of origin for Sub-Saharan African migrants there. Migration from this region is influenced by various socioeconomic factors. A notable trend is the growing acknowledgment of the diaspora's role in national development, prompting initiatives for dual citizenship and voting rights. More than half of the East Africa countries have granted voting rights to their diasporas, fostering a sense of identity and connection. The primary trend in East Africa involves formalizing engagement policies, capacity building, and implementing frameworks, albeit challenged by the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, rising global food prices, and climate change-induced issues. Despite these challenges, diaspora remittances have grown substantially since 2000, reaching around US$45 billion in 2021 for Sub-Saharan Africa. While some East African countries receive smaller remittance amounts, they remain crucial to their economies. (Williams, 2023)

Table 3 East Africa Countries

Country	2021 Remittances As a % Share of GDP
Burundi	1.5
Djibouti	2.4
Eritrea	NA
Ethiopia	0.6
Kenya	3.1
Rwanda	2.3
Somalia	25.1
South Sudan	29.8
Tanzania	0.6
Uganda	2.8

Data Source - (Williams, 2023)

- *West Africa:*

Remittances play a vital role in the economic landscape of West Africa, accounting for a significant portion of the sub-region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at 7.6%. In 2022, remittances to West Africa reached nearly $34 billion, surpassing Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) combined. These resilient financial inflows contribute to macroeconomic stability by providing a stable source of foreign exchange, bolstering reserves, and reducing external vulnerabilities. Despite differing in nature and purpose from ODA and FDI, remittances remain essential for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the sub-region. Nigeria leads among West African countries in remittance inflows, receiving an estimated $20.1 billion in 2022, followed by Senegal with $2.5 billion. Remittances continue to serve as a critical lifeline for economic development and progress in West Africa. (Fliss, 2024).

Table 4 West Africa Countries

Country	2021 Remittances as a % share of their GDP
Benin	0.5
Burkina Faso	3.6
Cape Verde	18.2
Cote d'Ivoire	1.2
Gambia	28.3
Ghana	6.1
Guinea	0.2
Guinea-Bissau	25.1
Liberia	9.0
Mali	4.4
Niger	3.2
Nigeria	4.2
Senegal	9.8
Sierra Leone	5.9
Togo	8.0

Data source: (Fliss, 2024)

CHAPTER FOUR
NIGERIA CASE STUDY

This chapter scrutinizes the Nigerian diaspora in the United States, focusing on their contributions and roles in governance and development.

➤ *Nigerian Diasporas*

Official data from the UN Population Division estimates that in 2017, there were nearly 258 million international migrants globally, making up about 3.4% of the world's population. Nigeria contributed significantly to this migration trend, with approximately 1.3 million emigrants in 2017, making up 0.6% of its total population. However, these figures likely rose in subsequent years, though not accounting for Nigerians born abroad who hold citizenship in their birth countries. Unofficial reports estimate the Nigerian diaspora at around 15 million (PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) 2019).

Nigerians in the diaspora play a pivotal role in Nigeria's present and future development. In 2019, diaspora remittances amounted to US$25 billion, equivalent to 6% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Additionally, Nigerian expatriates constitute a significant portion of highly skilled professionals globally, holding influential positions in multinational corporations, industries, and international organizations. Their collective expertise, extensive networks, and diverse experiences significantly contribute to the socio-economic growth of Nigeria. Leveraging the diaspora community not just for remittances and bonds but also for their invaluable support in nation-building is crucial (International Organization for Migration, 2021).
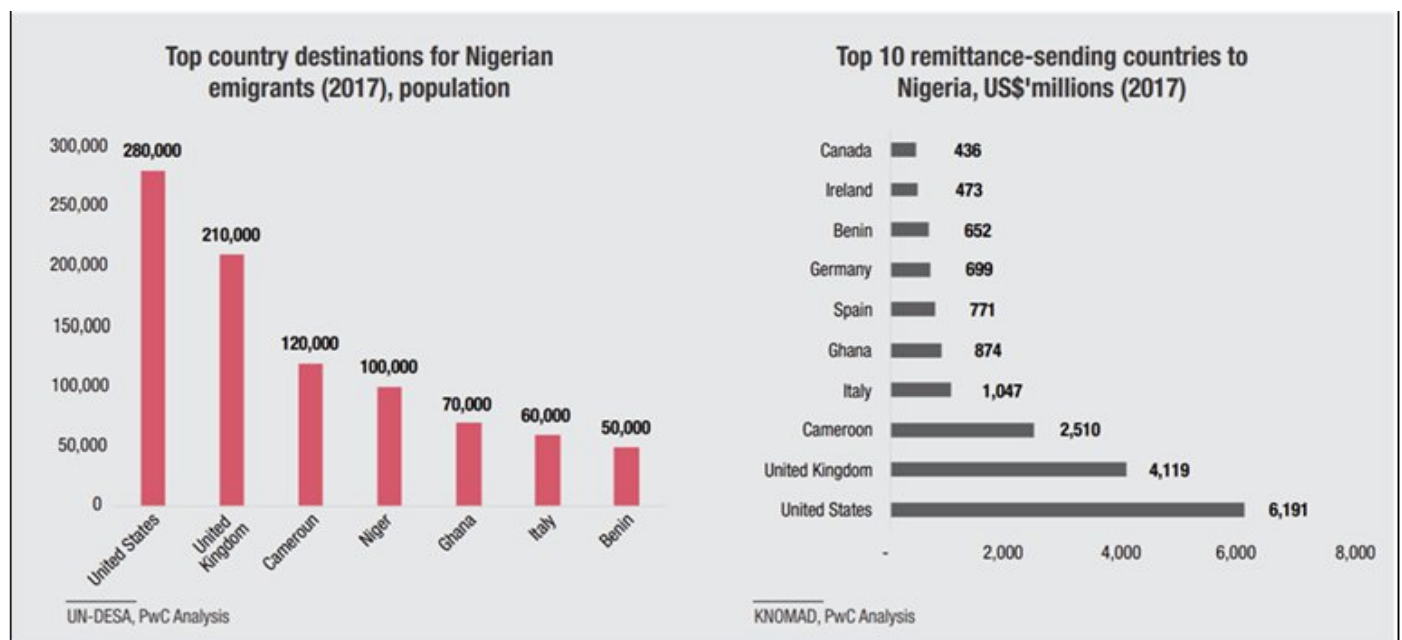

Fig 2 Primary destination countries for Nigerian emigrants and the top nations from which remittances predominantly originate. Source: (PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) 2019).

In 2017, remittances from the United States totalled US$6.19 billion, constituting 9% of the nation's overall remittance outflows. The United States represents 22.6% of all Nigerian diaspora members globally. Notably, the average remittance per capita from Nigerian emigrants in the U.S. to Nigeria stands at US$22,107 per individual (PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) 2019).

Engaging the diaspora intensified after Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria acknowledged the vital role of its diaspora in national development. The President at the time, actively engaged with Nigerians abroad during his international visits and initiated programs to attract Nigerian professionals living abroad back to the country. This effort led to the establishment of the Nigerians in the Diaspora Organisation (NIDO) in 2001, creating branches across the US, Europe, Russia, and Asia. Other diaspora groups like the Central Association of Nigerians in the United Kingdom (CANUK).

Government-diaspora interactions yielded significant outcomes, including permitting Nigerians to hold foreign citizenship without forfeiting their Nigerian nationality in 2002. Additionally, the Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS) emerged in 2003 for enhanced diaspora engagement ((Sousa, 2019; Wapmuk, 2021).

Recognizing the strategic importance of the diaspora, Nigeria drafted the National Policy on Diaspora Matters in 2016, incorporating feedback from diaspora Nigerians. In 2017, the Nigerian government enacted the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) Establishment Bill. This entity aimed to leverage the human, capital, and material resources of the

diaspora for Nigeria's socio-economic, cultural, and political advancement. Furthermore, in 2019, the government designated July 25th annually as a recognition day for the diaspora (PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) 2019; Wapmuk, 2021).

➢ *Nigeria Diaspora in the United States*

By 2050, Nigeria is projected to surpass the United States in population, exceeding 375 million people. Its diverse demographics and political structure distribute power and services along ethno-regional lines. Despite potential economic growth from abundant oil reserves, agriculture, and manufacturing, Nigeria faces severe challenges and heavily relies on oil exports. About 90% of U.S. imports from Nigeria in 2022 were crude oil and mineral fuels. Nigeria is a key U.S. trade partner. U.S. direct investment in Nigeria was $5.6 billion in 2022, with a historical focus on oil and gas, but diversification into sectors like services has occurred (Husted, 2023).

In addition to Nigerian immigrants in the U.S., approximately 450,000 foreign-born Nigerians reside in the country, forming the largest African-born population. Predominant areas of settlement include Houston, New York, Dallas-Fort Worth, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore. This group boasts high education levels, with over 60% holding bachelor's degrees or higher, often working in professions like science, medicine, and education. (Husted, 2023; Pressley, 2022).

➢ *Contributions of Nigeria Diasporas*

As highlighted by the Chairman of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), the Nigerian Diaspora plays a pivotal role in the country's current and future development. Remittances in 2019 amounted to a substantial US$25 billion, constituting 6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Moreover, Nigerians abroad represent a significant portion of highly educated skilled labour globally, holding influential positions in multinational corporations and industries. This diaspora community offers a wealth of experience, extensive networks, and expertise, contributing significantly to Nigeria's socio-economic advancement. (International Organization for Migration, 2021).

Additionally, a considerable portion of remittance transactions remains unrecorded or happens through informal channels, suggesting that the actual inflow of remittances into the country might surpass the officially recorded figures. (PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) 2019).
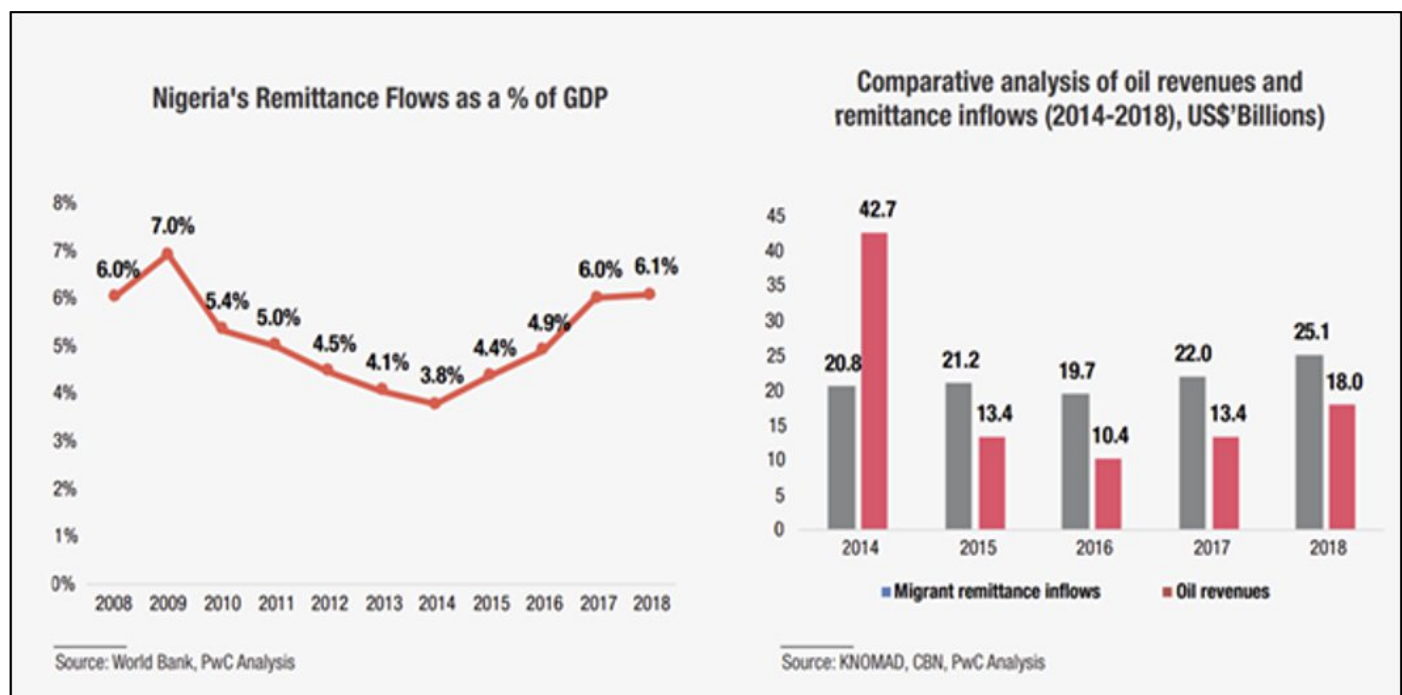

Fig 3 Remittance Percentage GDP and a Comparative Analysis of Oil Revenue

In 2018, migrant remittances to Nigeria totalled US$25 billion, amounting to 6.1% of the country's GDP, showcasing a notable 14% year-on-year growth from the $22 billion received in 2017 (PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) 2019).

The Nigeria Diaspora Policy emphasizes fostering effective collaboration between the diaspora and the government across various engagement endeavours. It advocates for the development of policies, plans, programs, and priorities through a collaborative spirit, emphasizing partnerships and cooperation. This approach aims to permeate all facets of diaspora engagement, including alliances with the government, private sector entities, non-governmental organizations, and civil society groups (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021).

CHAPTER FIVE
RESEARCH ON DIASPORA ENGAGEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

This chapter utilized research tools including desk searches, interviews, and surveys to identify challenges and limitations faced by diaspora organizations and the African diaspora in their contributions to global governance and development.

➢ *Diaspora in Global Governance.*

Diaspora policies diverge significantly between viewing diaspora as assets/partners or losses/threats. Some governments perceive diaspora as lost resources, aiming to lure them back or prevent migration, while others prioritize bilateral agreements for legal migration and migrant rights protection.

Certain nations rely on diaspora contributions without creating reciprocal incentives, missing the essence of mutual engagement. While many diaspora members contribute out of sentiment, successful policies require a two-way relationship, offering benefits to all involved parties. There's a misconception that diaspora engagement is impervious to policy intervention. While grassroots initiatives largely drive diaspora ties, governments can facilitate involvement by removing barriers and fostering economic opportunities rather than directly managing resources. (Newland and Plaza 2013)

Emerging criticisms delve into the political underpinnings of diaspora engagement, suggesting that states utilize diasporas to enhance their influence. Scholars like Varadarajan (2008) argue that state attitudes reflect a neoliberal global economy, wherein diaspora communities serve as avenues for capitalist expansion. This perspective highlights the complex power dynamics when diasporas engage with powerful states and underscores the constraints posed by structural dynamics and imperialist influences on diaspora agency in global politics (Craven, 2018).

➢ *Interview Analysis and Discussions*

This section delves into the influence of Diaspora communities on policymaking in Africa and the United States, aligning with the hypothesis that leveraging their networks and resources enhances their policy-shaping role.

Before the interview, participants received a guide outlining the interview's purpose and questions, with assurance that data would be used only for academic research and their anonymity guaranteed. Acceptance of the invitation indicated consent.

Participants needed to meet three criteria: residing in the United States, leading a diaspora organization in the United States, and being of African origin.

Interviews with the representatives from ten diaspora organizations unveiled a mix of shared perspectives and variations regarding diaspora engagement in global governance and development.

• *Representation in Global Governance Structures:*

There is a consensus that diaspora institutions are not adequately represented in global governance structures and decision-making bodies. Both home and host countries need to work more to foster diaspora participation in global governance efforts. Tangible recognition of diaspora contributions in policies and decision-making processes is deemed critical in this era of fast globalization.

• *Increasing Engagement Efforts of the U.S. Government with Diasporas:*

All the representatives acknowledge that efforts by the United States Government to engage with diasporas are increasing, albeit slowly. They perceive this as a positive step in the right direction, particularly noting deliberate efforts in recent years to create more platforms for engagement, especially with the African diaspora. For instance, the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit held by the Biden administration in December 2022 demonstrated a renewed commitment to expanding partnerships with African countries and engaging with diaspora communities. President Biden's executive order establishing the President's Advisory Council on African Diaspora Engagement in the United States (PAC-ADE), this council as part of building on the U.S strategy towards sub-Saharan Africa is geared towards achieving the commitments from the engagements between Africa countries and the United States, further underscores the U.S growing commitment.

• *Engagement and Collaboration with African Governments:*

While 70% of interviewees noted a growing interest from African governments to collaborate closely with diaspora institutions, particularly in economic development and investment initiatives, they highlighted a lack of focus on policy matters. They emphasized the importance of diaspora institutions contributing to policy discussions due to their deep understanding of both United States and African culture, economies, and geopolitics. This input could provide valuable clarity and realistic considerations for the countries' strategies and policies, ultimately driving investment and development. However, the remaining 30%, primarily represented by youth-led organizations, expressed dissatisfaction with the minimal or non-existent engagement from African governments.

- *Challenges Faced by Diasporas Institutions in Engaging and Contributing to Global Governance and Development.*

Existing gaps in communication channels between African diaspora communities and governments in Africa despite efforts to enhance engagement was emphasized. Challenges include identifying appropriate organizations to work with, determining the right channels for engagement, and ensuring consistency and sustainability. Technological advancements and cultural understanding also influence the effectiveness of these channels. Limited transparency in decision-making processes, linguistic and cultural diversity among African countries, bureaucratic procedures, and economic constraints further impede access to crucial information and resources.

- *Obstacles to Recognition in Global Decision-Making:*

Diaspora organizations encounter numerous challenges in having their voices heard and considered in global decision-making processes. These hurdles include limited access to decision-making forums, lack of recognition of institutions, insufficient representation in international institutions, and disparities in resources compared to established stakeholders. Cultural and linguistic barriers, power imbalances, and systemic biases favouring established interests further marginalize diaspora perspectives.

- *Misconceptions-Recognizing Africa's Diversity:*

60% of the people interviewed raised the concern that there is a prevalent misconception in the approach towards engaging with the African region, as it often overlooks the diverse cultural, religious, geographical, political, and economic landscapes across its 54 countries. Instead of recognizing Africa's complexity, it is frequently treated as a monolithic entity. This oversight underscores the need to involve various diasporas in the discourse, as they can serve as vital bridges to acknowledge and address the region's rich diversity. Embracing this diversity in engagement strategies is crucial for fostering meaningful and inclusive partnerships that truly reflect the multifaceted nature of the African continent.

- *Role of International Organizations and Governments:*

International organizations and governments should play a crucial role in supporting diaspora involvement in global governance. They should create inclusive platforms for participation, provide financial and technical assistance to diaspora-led initiatives, promote policies that recognize diaspora contributions, and offer capacity-building programs to empower diaspora communities.

- *Initiatives and Strategies to Enhance Involvement in Global Governance:*

Suggestions for enhancing diaspora involvement in shaping global governance policies included fostering inclusive platforms for dialogue, leveraging digital technologies, establishing dedicated spaces for diaspora representation, creating funding mechanisms for diaspora-led projects, and advocating for diaspora-friendly policies such as dual citizenship and voting rights. Educational and cultural exchange programs are also proposed to facilitate meaningful participation.

In summary, while there is growing recognition of diaspora involvement in global governance, significant challenges remain in effective communication, representation, and inclusion. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders to create a more equitable and inclusive global governance framework that fully harnesses the potential of diaspora contributions.

➢ *Survey Analysis and Discussions*

Of the 539 responses received, 275 were from individuals of African descent residing in the United States, with only 273 completing the survey questionnaires in full. The following is a summary of their responses.

- *Diaspora Engagement in Global Governance and Development: Interests and Involvement:*
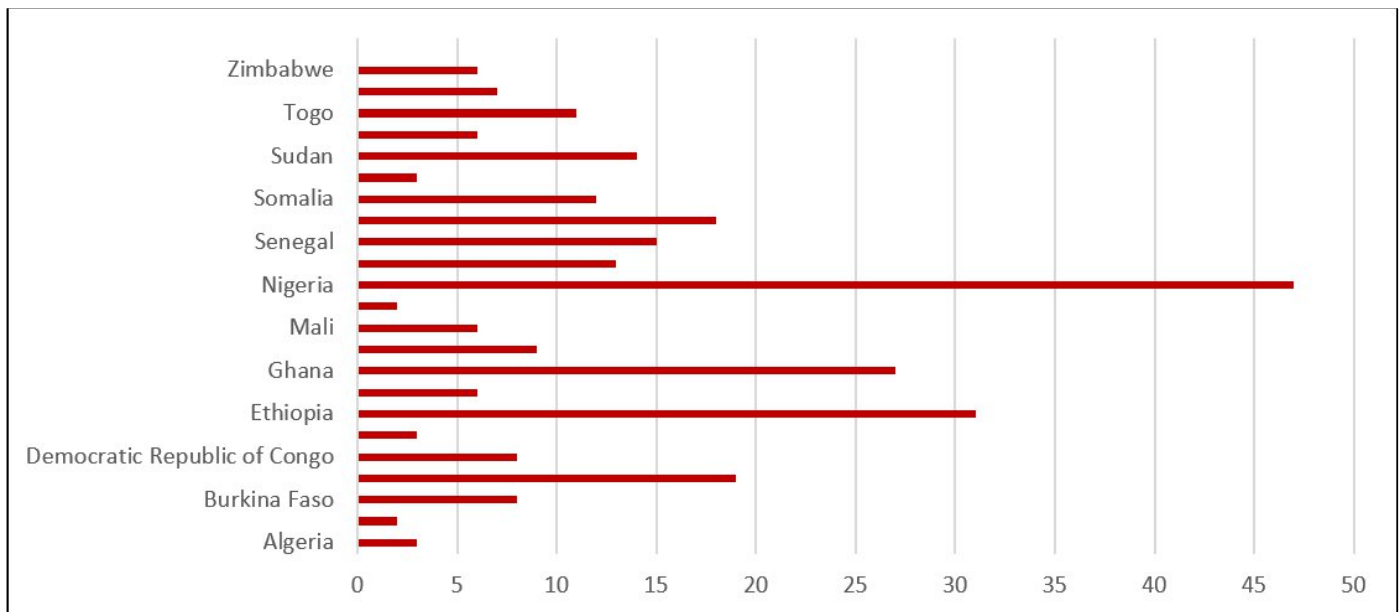
Fig 4 Country Distribution of 273 Respondents
Data Source: Survey Research

Of the 273 respondents, 269 maintains connections with their home countries and have participated in initiatives or projects to promote governance or development there at some level, representing a 98.5% engagement rate. Among them, 37% contributed through structured and formal systems and institutions, while 63% utilized indirect and non-structural methods. These indirect methods included direct remittances to family, investment in local businesses and startups, financial and expertise support to individuals interested in governance, and philanthropic support to local communities.

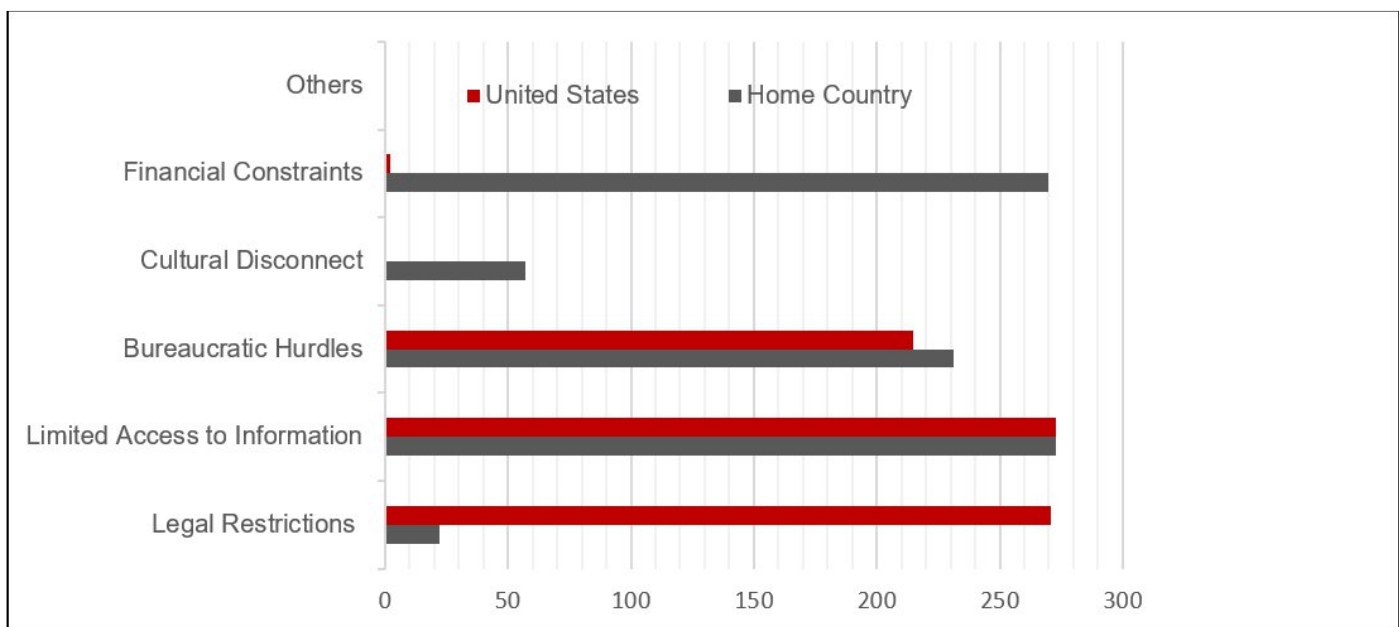- *Challenges in Engaging in Governance and Development Initiatives:*

Fig 5 Challenges Faced by Diasporas
Data Source: Survey Research

The survey uncovered the primary obstacles faced by diasporas hindering their active participation and contribution to global governance in the United States. These hurdles included legal restrictions like citizenship and residency requirements, limited access to crucial information such as updates on developmental initiatives, policies, and investment opportunities, as well as bureaucratic obstacles. Legal restrictions and limited access to information, were top on the list. Similarly, limitations hindering their contributions to their home countries included restricted access to information, bureaucratic hurdles, and financial constraints. Limited access to information and Financial constraints had the highest percentage.

- *Insights from Engagement in Governance and Development Initiatives:*

Table 5 Level of Recognition of Diasporas in Home Countries

Well Recognized	0
Moderately Recognized	106
Minimally Recognized	164
Not Recognized	3

According to the survey, 38.8% rate the level of recognition and support from their home country's government for diaspora contributions to governance and development as moderate, 60% rated it as moderate while about 1% believed that diasporas are not recognised by home countries.

Table 6 Level of Influence in the United States

Very Influential	0
Moderately Influential	59
Minimally Influential	214
Not Influential	0

78% of respondents believed that African diaspora communities have minimal influence in the United States in shaping policies related to African affairs while the remaining 22% believed that diasporas are moderately influential in this space.

Table 7 Effectiveness of the Channel of Communication

Very Effective	0
Moderately Effective	15
Minimally Effective	166
Not Effective	92

According to the survey, 34% of respondents find the communication channels between African diaspora communities in the United States and African governments ineffective for collaborative development efforts, 60% finds it minimally effective while 6% finds it moderately effective.

The insights above reveal shortfalls and addressing these is crucial for fostering effective collaboration, enhancing recognition of diaspora contributions, and amplifying their influence in governance and policy-making processes both domestically and internationally.

- *Empowering African Diaspora in the U.S for Impactful Contributions to Governance:*

Empowering diaspora communities in the United States to play a more impactful role in African governance requires addressing several key areas of concern, as highlighted by respondents.

Firstly, there is a pressing need to address the lack of consistency in information provision, which currently inhibits diaspora participation in governance. Deliberate efforts must be made to ensure the availability of accurate and timely information, alongside the creation of platforms facilitating effective participation.

Furthermore, inclusivity remains a significant challenge that must be tackled to enable robust engagement. This involves creating spaces and mechanisms that embrace diverse voices within the diaspora community, ensuring their perspectives are valued and integrated into decision-making processes.

Additionally, the issue of dual citizenship and representation in African parliaments is paramount. Addressing these challenges is crucial for unlocking the full potential of African diaspora communities.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The exploration into the role of diaspora communities in Africa's governance and development landscape unveils a critical yet underutilized asset in propelling socio-economic progress. Throughout this research, the intricate layers hindering effective state-diaspora collaborations were navigated, uncovering profound insights into the challenges and potentials of diaspora engagement.

The study's multifaceted objectives led to an in-depth analysis of African diaspora communities in the United States, shedding light on their evolution and engagements, and delving into their perceptions, challenges, and contributions to governance and economic advancements.

The research addressed three questions: the extent to which African diaspora engagements in the United States impacted U.S.-Africa strategies, the obstacles that impede diaspora participation as non-state actors in promoting investment, development, and governance in Africa, and how the potential of African diasporas and diaspora institutions can be harnessed to cultivate bilateral partnerships and drive development in Africa.

Additionally, the research explored solutions that could enhance harnessing the potential of diaspora in the United States, outlining both challenges and opportunities present.

➢ *Recommendations*

The findings underscore the necessity for governments to address several key issues affecting diaspora engagement. Firstly, there is a pressing need to improve consistency in information provision and eliminate bureaucratic obstacles. Moreover, fostering inclusive platforms for dialogue, leveraging digital technologies, establishing dedicated spaces for diaspora representation, creating funding mechanisms for diaspora-led projects, and advocating for diaspora-friendly policies such as dual citizenship and voting rights are essential recommendations stemming from the research findings.

• *Based on these findings, the following Recommendations Are Proposed:*

✓ Strengthen Diaspora Engagement: Establish formal two-way communication channels with the diaspora by leveraging technology to address existing disconnects and information access gaps regarding government diaspora strategies and efforts.
✓ Address Trust Issues: Develop mechanisms to tackle the lack of trust between the government and the diaspora. This may involve including diaspora representatives in critical dialogues related to policy and development and implementing recommendations arising from these discussions.
✓ Support Diaspora Contributions: Support platforms and mechanisms that enable diaspora contributions, both tangible and intangible, to both host and home countries. Given Africa's diverse countries with unique strengths, resources, and challenges, tailor initiatives to accommodate these differences.
✓ Implement Diaspora-Friendly Policies: Implement policies that encourage diaspora participation in both host and home countries, such as citizenship policies and voting rights, to foster strong ties and active involvement.
✓ Streamline Bureaucratic Processes: Take necessary steps to reduce bureaucratic hurdles that hinder individual participation and contributions, thus facilitating smoother engagement.
✓ Facilitate Capacity Building: Initiate state-led programs aimed at building capacity and fostering partnerships to encourage diaspora contributions to development initiatives.
✓ These recommendations aim to address the identified challenges and enhance the effectiveness of diaspora engagement strategies, ultimately fostering stronger ties between diaspora communities and their countries of origin.

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