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Diaspora-Led Development:

The Role of Hometown Associations in Their Home Country

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ABSTRACT

Across the globe, migration has remained an important phenomenon. Reasons like economic opportunities, education and family reunification has led to a growing number of Cameroonian settlers in Denmark over the years. As a result of this long stay in Denmark, Hometown Associations (HTAs) was formed. HTA was initially a social support networks but later changed to grassroots development actors who engaged in economic, cultural, as well as initiatives for education most especially in Cameroon.

This thesis looks at how the Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark take part in addressing specific aspects of underdevelopment in Cameroon, particularly concentrating on education. The theoretical bases for this research are Modernization Theory, World-Systems Theory, as well as the complementary perspectives of Diaspora and Transnationalism. Also, the study examines how these initiatives that are led by diaspora operate within the frameworks of global development. It also discusses how development is perceived nationally and internationally, as well as the analysis of the weaknesses of traditional, top-down aid models that were often regulators of grassroots agency and community ownership.

The study adopted a qualitative methodology which includes the use of interviews, focus groups and participant observation that are conducted in both Denmark and Cameroon. This research also examines how HTAs carry out projects that are based on community like, support of education, school construction and vocational training. The findings of the study show the potential of the HTAs as development actors who are locally informed as well as offer viable alternatives to conventional aid models.

Notwithstanding the challenges faced by the HTAs, such as limited resources and bureaucratic obstacles, they still play an important role in helping to reshape the development narratives at the grassroots. This thesis therefore contributes to the growing academic and policy discussions on areas related to diaspora engagement, by emphasizing the transformative potential that African migrant communities have in driving sustainable development.

Keywords: Diaspora, Hometown Associations, Development, Education, Denmark, Cameroon,

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent years, worldwide migration has increased as a result of diverse factors like education, employment, wars, family reunification and the search for a better living condition. This movement has changed socio-economic and political relations that exist across borders, mostly in Europe. Migrants today maintain strong transnational ties with their countries of origin as a result of globalization and rapid advancements in communication technology, (Castles & Miller, 2009; Jónsson, 2010).

Denmark, like many countries in Europe, has experienced increase in diverse population of different backgrounds. According to Barrett (2018), immigrants make up approximately 13% of the Danish population, thereby contributing to an increasingly multicultural society. In the light of this, a small but active Cameroonian community has emerged. Interviews from the field suggest that there are different pathways through which Cameroonians in Denmark arrived, it includes student visas, family reunification, and employment schemes like the Green Card Scheme that has now been discontinued. Many have since being integrated into Danish society while they still maintain strong cultural and emotional ties to Cameroon.

One clear example of this ongoing transnational engagement is the creation of Hometown Associations (HTAs) voluntarily. It is a community-based organization that was built around shared geographic or ethnic origins. In Denmark, there are lots of HTAs under the umbrella of the Association for Cameroonians in Denmark (ACAD) that has been established by Cameroonians. These organizations function as cultural support systems as well as grassroots development actors. They help to mobilize resources for social and economic initiatives back home (Milusheva, 2012).

Cameroon, especially in local areas, continues to face constant development challenges most especially in education, where issues like lack of infrastructure, limited access to learning materials, as well as shortage of teachers are many. In spite of the many years of international aid, many of these problems still remain unsolved, thereby stressing on the shortcomings of conventional, top-down development models. In order to address this, the diaspora communities like the Cameroonian HTAs have started to fill essential gaps by executing initiatives that are focused on education and are driven by the community.

Furthermore, this thesis looks at the contributions that Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark have made to the development of education in Cameroon, with a special focus on the Fako Division in the Southwest Region. While HTAs may support various sectors, this study focuses its attention on initiatives such as school construction, provision of learning materials, as well as vocational training programs. This research therefore, assesses whether these efforts represent a more locally responsive and sustainable option to traditional aid.

With the use of Modernization Theory, Diaspora and Transnationalism as Analytical Lenses as well as World-Systems Theory, this study therefore analyzes how HTAs engage in transnational development as well as how their initiatives support or challenge paradigms of global

development. Using qualitative methods which include interviews, focus groups and participant observation, this research focuses on local and diaspora perspectives on the analysis of how HTA-led interventions are experienced and also understood.

This study places Cameroonian HTAs that operate in Denmark as actors coming out in the development landscape, whose contribution to development as grassroots may present important lessons for changing development beyond paradigms that center on the state, as well as on those led by donors.

The best way to understand this thesis is from the angle of a case study analysis that addresses a specific challenges or problem, with a strong theoretical framing. First, the central problem of this study centers on the persistence of educational underdevelopment in Cameroon despite many years of aid. Second, the study investigates whether HTAs that are led by diasporas provide more sustainable and participatory solutions in Cameroon. The empirical focus of this study is on Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark, mostly the Association for Cameroonians in Denmark (ACAD) and its affiliate bodies which, are examined as a bounded case through the qualitative method. Simultaneously, this analysis anchors on Modernization, Diaspora and Transnationalism and World-Systems theories and scholarship on grassroots and participatory development. The interpretation of findings is guided by these perspectives, thereby allowing this study to shed more light on how transnational, community-based actors challenge or promote dominant development paradigms.

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is arranged into eight chapters, where each builds upon the previous in order to present a comprehensive analysis of the role of HTAs in Denmark as diaspora-led development actors in Cameroon:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction**
  This chapter introduces the research topic through the presentation of the background, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, significance of the study, as well as an outline of the thesis structure.
- **Chapter 2: Literature Review**
  This section reviews important and related academic literature regarding diaspora engagement, development theory, HTAs, as well as critiques of conventional aid models. It also identifies key conceptual gaps which the study intends to address.
- **Chapter 3: Methodology**
  It describes the qualitative research design that is employed in the study, which includes interviews, focus groups, and participant observation that are conducted in both Denmark and Cameroon. It also outlines the narrative and thematic approaches that will be used to analyze data, and also explains the ethical considerations, researcher positionality, and study limitations.
- **Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework**
  This chapter presents and discusses the development theories that underpin the study, such as Modernization Theory, Diaspora and Transnationalism as Analytical Lenses and World-Systems Theory and also explains why they are useful for the analysis of

diaspora-led educational initiatives. It further clarifies how these perspectives inform the interpretation of activities of the HTA and also provide the conceptual lens through which the findings in later chapters will be examined.

- **Chapter 5: Contextual Background**
  The section focuses on the demographic presence and organizational dynamics of the Cameroonian diaspora in Denmark. It also looks at the origin and role of HTAs. It centers mainly on the ACAD and its regional affiliate bodies, as major actors in the development of education that is led by the diaspora.
- **Chapter 6: Data Presentation and Analysis**
  It is the presentation and analysis of the findings from fieldwork that are conducted in Denmark and Cameroon. The chapter makes use of thematic analysis to find out how HTAs mobilize for the development of education, the nature of their interventions, as well as how their efforts are perceived by both members of the diaspora and the benefiting communities
- **Chapter 7: Discussion**
  This section focuses on the interpretation of the findings through postulations of the theories used as well as relevant literature. With the use of Cameroonian HTAs that operates in Denmark as a case study, this chapter looks at the strengths and weaknesses of their initiatives for education while considering their sustainability and legitimacy, as well as reflecting on the broader implications for the engagement of the diaspora and strategies for grassroots development.
- **Chapter 8: Conclusion**
  It summarizes the key findings of the study and points out their conceptual and practical implications for understanding of the development that is led by the diaspora in Cameroon. It also looks at the potential and constraints of HTAs as actors for development by drawing observations from the entire thesis.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In spite of the many years of programs for development and international aid, many rural areas in Cameroon like the Fako Division continue to dwell in underdevelopment, especially in the educational sector. Problems like ruined infrastructure, reduced access to learning materials, shortage of teachers, as well as disparities in the region persist, thereby weakening the efforts that are made toward inclusive and equitable education.

Traditional aid models that are often marked by top-down, interventions from donors have been generally condemned because they are inefficient, lack sustainability, its failure to meaningfully engage local communities they are meant to serve (Chambers, 1997; Korten, 1990; Easterly, 2006). All these inadequacies have created the need for an alternative. The desire for this alternative led to the emergence of actors whose focus on development is aimed mainly at the.

Among these actors are the HTAs that are based in the diaspora, which include Denmark. HTAs were originally created as networks for cultural and social support. These associations have increasingly carried out roles that are focused on development, which involves the organization and funding of projects for grassroots development in their communities of origin. In relation to

education, their contributions cover school constructions, the provision of learning materials as well as skills training and scholarship programs.

However, the effectiveness, sustainability as well as importance of the development of these interventions that are led by diaspora remain overlooked, mainly with respect to the Cameroonian HTAs that are operating from the newer diaspora settings like Denmark. There have been critical questions about whether these efforts deeply address systemic gaps in education or risk reproducing the weaknesses of the aid models of which they seek to rise above. This study therefore, addresses this gap by looking at the way that Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark design, implement as well as sustain initiatives that focus on education in Cameroon, and how these initiatives are seen by the benefiting communities in the Fako Division.

This study therefore, tries to study the role that the Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark play as an emerging actor of development, with a specific focus on their contributions to education in the Fako Division. It also looks into whether and how their initiatives represent a more sustainable, participatory, and locally based alternative to the traditional approaches of development.

1.4 Research Problem and Objectives

The main problem of this research focuses on the capacity of HTAs that operate in Denmark to act as a meaningful agent of development in terms of education in Cameroon. In spite of the years of international aid, regions like the Fako Division are still faced with challenges of inadequate infrastructure, insufficient resources for teaching, as well as lack of equality in access to education. These constant issues showcase the weakness of conventional, top-down aid models. As a result, it opens space for alternative actors of development.

Among these, HTAs that are led by the diaspora have emerged as grassroots organizations that are mobilizing transnational resources in order to support educational initiatives that are based on the community. This study examines how the HTAs in Denmark contribute to the development of education in Cameroon, specifically looking at whether their strategies offer a more sustainable, inclusive as well as alternatives locally engaged substitute to traditional development models.

Main Research Question

How do Cameroonian Hometown Associations (HTAs) in Denmark design, implement, and sustain educational initiatives in Cameroon, and how are these initiatives perceived by the beneficiary communities in the Fako Division?

Sub-Research Questions

1. What are the strategies that HTAs use to mobilize resources and partnerships for projects that are focused on education?
2. What types of educational interventions do HTAs carry out, and what are the challenges they encounter?

3. How do the local beneficiaries including the students, parents, teachers, and school administrators perceive the importance and impact of these educational initiatives that are led by the diaspora?

Research Objectives

The aim of this study is to critically examine the contribution of the Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark in terms of development, with a particular focus on their initiatives for education in Fako Division. The specific objectives set are:

- Identify the main barriers to Cameroon's educational development, especially in under-resourced regions.
- Analyze the strategies and activities that are employed by Cameroonian HTAs in order to support education in their communities of origin.
- Assess the outcomes of educational projects that are led by the HTA from both diaspora and local perspectives.
- Investigate the organizational, financial, and institutional difficulties that these associations encounter.
- Explore how beneficiaries such as students, teachers, parents, and community leaders experience and interpret the effect of these interventions.

Assessing Success in HTA-Led Development

In this study, "success" is not only evaluated by statistical indicators or conventional economic indicators, but also through the narrative accounts as well as the noticeable outcomes that are present in the community. These outcomes include improved school attendance, clear access to educational learning materials, better infrastructures in the classroom as well as improved vocational opportunities.

Fieldwork data that are gathered through interviews, focus groups, and participant observation show how members of the diaspora and stakeholders at the community level describe and experience progress in education.
It is important to tackle these aspects through the theories that were outlined earlier. Modernization Theory focuses on the control of formal indicators in judging progress, while World Systems theories on the other hand, reveal how worldwide hierarchies and resource flows affect opportunities available for grassroots actors. When meanings of success that is constructed locally are positioned alongside these frameworks, it allows for a critical analysis of how initiatives of the HTA both interact with and confront the conventional models of development, thereby reinforcing the emphasis of the study on participatory and approaches that are context sensitive.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction and Purpose of the Literature Review

This chapter offers a critical review of related literature on development that are led by diaspora, with a focus on HTAs in Denmark and their contributions to education in Cameroon. This review is helpful in different ways.
First, it establishes a conceptual and theoretical framework by defining main terms, such as diaspora, development, and Hometown Associations, as well as framing debates about the alternative development models.

Second, it positions the research within the scholarship on transnationalism, non-state development actors, and the weakness of conventional aid models in sub-Saharan Africa and Cameroon in particular, showing how diaspora groups like HTAs have surfaced as grassroots organizations that are capable of mobilizing resources across borders.

Also, it identifies gaps in the literature such as the limited attention to Cameroonian HTAs, and the absence of adequate literature on their educational work in newer diaspora settings like Denmark. While the involvement of the diaspora in development is well documented, few studies have examined how educational initiatives that are led by the HTA compare to or complement traditional aid models, notably within the context of Cameroon.

Diasporas do not only engage in development through remittances but also through political lobbying, knowledge transfer, and projects for the grassroots. Recent debates stressed on the strategic, long-term effect of organized diaspora efforts in education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

Furthermore, this chapter improves the research questions and justifies the methodological approach of the study. By engaging with existing scholarship, it structures the research problem and positions this thesis within the discussions of sustainable, transnational, and community-driven development.

This chapter continues with an overview of the main theories on diaspora and development, supported by a review of HTAs in the African context, an assessment of their role in education, and a discussion of enduring limitations and the literature's unanswered questions.

2.2 Diaspora and Development

Diaspora has become a significant concept in studies of development, particularly over the past 20 years, as scholars and policymakers now recognize the growing function of transnational communities in influencing social, economic as well as political change in their countries of origin. Once viewed as inactive or something disconnected from development, diasporas are now recognized as active change agents (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Riddle et al., 2011).

Cohen (2008) pointed out the core features of diasporas which are collective memory of the homeland, a sense of marginalization in host societies, the idealization of return, and ongoing involvement in homeland affairs. Wayland (2004) also stresses the diaspora communities' permanence abroad and their engagement with national politics, identity, and development.

Diaspora has made various contributions to development and they include:

- **Remittances**: financial transfers to relatives (World Bank, 2016);
- **Knowledge transfer**: which is done through returning professionals or skills exchange (Newland, 2010);
- **Political advocacy**: for instance, promoting human rights or democratic reform (Vertovec, 2009);
- **Institutionalized initiatives**: HTAs that coordinate community development projects (Mercer et al., 2008).

Brinkerhoff (2008) and Riddle et al. (2011) focused on the strategic value of engagement of the diaspora in bridging the gap between international opportunities and needs of the local communities, often with more carefulness and flexibility regarding the culture of the people than many formal aid institutions.

However, there are also challenges that the initiatives of the diaspora face. Newland and Patrick (2004) note tensions that are associated with development agendas that are led by the state, while a lack of effective coordination can lead to duplication or inefficiency (Sinatti & Horst, 2015). Many initiatives remain minor to strategies of national development, thereby relying on voluntary labor and informal financing (Horst, 2018).

Irrespective of these limitations, institutional support is expanding. The African Union has chosen the diaspora as the continent's "sixth region," and organizations like the World Bank, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have developed platforms to incorporate diaspora resources into development planning (IOM & UNDP, 2017).

In Cameroon, the engagement of the diaspora is increasingly organized through HTAs, associations rooted in village, ethnic, or regional affiliations. These groups gather resources, preserve cultural identity, and coordinate targeted interventions mostly in education, healthcare, and infrastructure (Milusheva, 2012; Nyamnjoh & Page, 2018). As this thesis explores, Cameroonian HTAs may provide a model of development that is driven by the community which responds to the limitations of conventional aid systems.

2.2.1 Critiques of Conventional Aid and the Emergence of Grassroots Actors

Research on international development has long emphasized on the persistent weaknesses of state-centered as well as aid programs that are led by donors, mainly their inability to foster genuine and long-term transformation in local contexts. Scholars argue that this type of intervention often focuses on the visibility and accountability of donors to funders rather than being visible and accountable to the communities they are supposed to serve (Easterly, 2006;

Moyo, 2010). This has led to projects that are not properly made to adapt to local realities and often not sustainable once the external funding ends.

One of the major criticisms that is associated with the top-down nature of conventional aid is that it tends to exclude local actors from planning and decision-making. According to Chambers (1997, 2017), he emphasizes that this type of approach leads to a "blueprint mentality," whereby experts and donors impose external models of progress that dominate the priorities and knowledge of the local communities. Similarly, Korten (1990) argues that depending on aid and procedures of bureaucracy creates obstacles to genuine participation of the community. Because of this, many programs for development have failed to empower local populations or to build capacity meant for independent growth.

As a result of these limitations, there is a shift toward alternative, participatory, and bottom-up models of development. Banks, Hulme, and Edwards (2015) pointed out that civil society and organizations that are based on community, which include groups that are based by faith and groups led by the diaspora, are increasingly being recognized for their ability to work more flexibly, build trust, as well as respond directly to the needs of the local people. Organizations like these operate outside the rigid frameworks of donor bureaucracy and are therefore placed in a better position to design specific context interventions that reflect the real situation of those they serve.

Within this changing environment, HTAs that are based in the diaspora have gained particular attention as actors for innovative development for the grassroots. Unlike traditional aid agencies, HTAs combine both local cultural knowledge as well as the transnational resources, thereby creating a hybrid form of development practice that is rooted socially and connected globally (Mercer et al., 2008; Page & Mercer, 2012). Their efforts challenge the hierarchical notions of development by placing communities, instead of the external donors, at the center of the change.

With this, critiques of conventional aid have not only revealed the weaknesses of development that is led by donors but have also opened intellectual and practical space for a more inclusive, participatory, and transnational approaches. HTAs, as examined in this study, represents this paradigm shift by showing how diaspora communities can transform remittances, solidarity, and social networks into sustainable tools for both educational and social development

2.3 Hometown Associations (HTAs) as Diaspora Development Actors

HTAs are among the most organized and visible forms of diaspora engagement. According to Orozco (2003), HTAs are voluntary associations that was formed by migrants from the same locality, with the aim of preserving cultural identity and contributing to the socio-economic development of their home communities.
Within Africa, HTAs are mostly significant because of the strong bonds they have with their communities and the need for alternative strategies for development in the midst of weak state capacity. Milusheva (2012) observes that HTAs from Mexico, Nigeria, and Ghana have raised large funds for collective initiatives such as scholarships, healthcare facilities, and infrastructure projects.

Far from personal remittances, HTA contributions are collective and are directed toward public goods, thereby positioning them in the development literature as grassroots, non-state actors working "from below" to fill the gaps that were left by underfunded or ineffective government services (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Mercer et al., 2008).

While HTAs from Ghana and Nigeria have been the focus of considerable academic attention (Ammassari & Black, 2001; Brinkerhoff, 2009; Mercer & Page, 2010), research on Cameroonian HTAs is more limited. Nevertheless, a few studies have provided valuable insights: for instance, Nyamnjoh & Page (2018) discuss about Cameroonian migrants' associative practices in Europe; Ndongko (2015) looked at the diaspora contributions to education in the South West Region; and Tchouassi (2012) focuses on the development potential of Cameroonian remittances and collective projects. These publications form the basis on which this thesis is built, particularly in relation to initiatives of education in the Fako Division.

This study centers mainly on the ACAD, which serves as the regional HTA's umbrella. The activities of such organizations indicate an evolving model of development cooperation that is transnational and community-rooted at the same time.

2.4 Diaspora, Education, and Development

Education is generally viewed as a cornerstone of sustainable development, and diaspora communities target this sector more and more in their homeland initiatives. Adepoju (2006) and Brinkerhoff (2009) highlight the relationship between education and long-term socio-economic empowerment, thereby making it a key location for diaspora investment.

In Cameroonian areas where there are low resources, particularly in rural areas like the Fako Division, state provision of education is restricted by limited budgets, weak infrastructure, and constant political instability (Tambo, 2003; Tchombe, 2014). Studies on African diaspora engagement in education according to Mercer et al. (2008), Tchouassi (2012), Nyamnjoh & Page (2018), show how migrant associations have assisted in building and rehabilitating schools, funding scholarships, supplying learning materials ,as well as supporting skills-training centers.

Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark have with the same attitude, identified education as a priority, with several contributing to the construction of primary and secondary schools, the provision of textbooks and other learning resources as well as the establishment of vocational training centres in Fako villages. Their initiatives are inspired both by members' personal experience of the transformative role that education has played in their own lives and by a collective desire to extend such opportunities to others (Mercer et al., 2008; Tchouassi, 2012; Nyamnjoh & Page, 2018).

Irrespective of these interventions, much existing literatures on diaspora contributions to education (e.g., Brinkerhoff, 2008; Mercer & Page, 2010; Riddle et al., 2011) has managed to focus on outputs such as the number of classrooms that are built or scholarships that are awarded rather than outcomes, that includes improvements in literacy, retention, or access for marginalized groups. There is also a notable lack of qualitative research that explores how HTA

efforts are perceived by local communities, how they cope with broader development priorities, and the challenges that are encountered in implementation.

Through qualitative fieldwork, such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation, this study tackles these gaps by taking a look at the efforts of HTAs that are focused on education in Fako, in order to assess both the scope and effect of their contribution to the local communities. It also involves broader theoretical debates that have to do with the alternative development models, thereby positioning HTA interventions against the hierarchical frameworks that are based on dependency, which are often rooted in traditional aid (Frank, 1969; Wallerstein, 1974). By building on Dependency Theory and World-Systems Theory and in connection with grassroots and participatory approaches, this analysis places Cameroonian HTAs within the literature of how power relations help to shape development practice.

Given that studies have found that HTAs often support scholarships or infrastructures for education, there is a lack of focus on how these initiatives are seen locally or sustained in the long run, most especially in the context of Cameroon. This thesis responds to these gaps through the in-depth qualitative analysis of HTA projects that are carried out in the Fako Division.

2.5 Unresolved Issues and Theoretical Implications

While development that is led by diaspora is often celebrated for its innovation and community orientation, literature reveals that there remains several gaps and unresolved issues:

- **Perceptions of Success**
  Few studies examine how local communities assess the importance and effectiveness of diaspora interventions. Research tends to prioritize measurable outputs over outcomes that are defined by the community (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Mercer et al., 2008). Questions remain as to whether HTA projects tackles needs or risks that are locally articulated that fosters new forms of dependency (Horst, 2018).
- **Organizational Sustainability**
  Many HTAs are run by volunteers, and they face leadership turnover, limited funding, and constraints of capacity. Studies of West African associations (e.g., Ammassari & Black, 2001; Lacroix & Levitt, 2022) have shown how fragile governance or shifting migration patterns can weaken continuity, yet little attention is given to sustainability strategies emanating from the newer diaspora contexts like Denmark.
- **State–Diaspora Relations**
  The literature also notes that there are complex interactions between migrant associations and home-country authorities (Riddle et al., 2011; Page & Mercer, 2012). In Cameroon, legal registration and local regulations compliance are preconditions for organisational legitimacy, but many HTAs lack formal status, or they rely on informal networks, limiting their access to state partnerships or donor resources (Nyamnjoh & Page, 2018).
- **Representation and Voice**
  Much existing research centers on diaspora motivations while giving less attention to the perspectives of the recipients of the aid (Sinatti & Horst, 2015). Without including

community voices, analyses risk the reproduction of assumptions about what "development" means and for whom it is intended.

Considering these limitations, this thesis seeks to contribute to theoretical conversations on development that is led by diaspora through the integration of the perspectives of both HTA members in Denmark and beneficiary communities in Fako. Looking at how transnational initiatives are designed, experienced and challenged critically it improves the understanding of grassroots agency and its relationship to broader political and economic structures. These insights interconnect with the theoretical orientation of this study, which critically engages with Modernization, Diaspora and transnationalism as well as World-Systems theories while stressing on alternative, bottom-up approaches that examine hierarchical and models of development that are laden by dependency.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodological framework that is used in this study and how it supports the general aims and objectives of this research. As was mentioned earlier, the primary purpose of this study is to analyze the role that Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark play in the development of their home communities through education.

In other to achieve this aim, this chapter will discuss the following: philosophical foundation of the study, which includes its ontology and epistemology. Subsequently, the methodological approach, research reasoning, case study design, research design, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations as well as limitations of the study will be discussed.

The chapter concludes by summarizing how these elements ensure that the research is rigorous, credible, and aligned with the study's theoretical and practical objectives.

3.2 Ontology and Epistemology: Foundations of the Study

The ontology and epistemology will help provide the philosophical base that will shape how this study understands reality and knowledge.

Constructivism is the ontological viewpoint of this research. It relies on the assumption that social reality is not fixed but socially constructed through the experience and interaction of humans (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).This perspective agrees that concepts like "development," "progress," and "success" do not exist objectively but are differently defined by the individuals and communities involved.

Epistemologically, the viewpoint of the study is interpretivist, which stresses understanding over measurement. Rather than looking for generally accepted truths, the aim of the research is to interpret how participants can describe their experiences with development that is led by the diaspora. As Schwandt (1994) opined, interpretivism places value on participants' meanings and situates them within their cultural and social contexts.

This orientation agrees with the research aim which is to explore how members of Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark and community beneficiaries in Cameroon view and experience initiatives of educational development. The constructivist/interpretivist foundation therefore, provides a coherent philosophical base for the use of qualitative methods that incorporates lived experience and multiple perspectives.

3.3 Methodological Approach

Putting the exploratory nature of this study into consideration, a qualitative methodological approach was adopted. Qualitative research gives room for an in-depth understanding of social realities and also emphasizes the meanings, interpretations, and experiences within specific contexts (Myers, 2013; Creswell, 2014).

Among qualitative traditions, this study agrees most closely with a constructivist and phenomenological orientation. It seeks to understand how people experience and interpret development rather than focusing on the measurement of its outcomes quantitatively. A phenomenological approach is therefore suitable because it focuses mainly on lived or personal experiences of the participants in this case, such as how HTA members and local actors view and experience diaspora-led educational initiatives.

Simultaneously, the study tries to incorporate hermeneutic principles of interpretation by recognizing that understanding is shaped through context and dialogue between the researcher and participants (Gadamer, 1975). This approach therefore ensures that participant's narratives are analyzed not as isolated accounts but as socially and culturally rooted expressions of meaning.

This methodological orientation is thus appropriate for the goals of this study, which is to explore how and why Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark are involved in educational development and how these efforts are locally perceived.

3.4 Research Reasoning: Inductive and Abductive Logic

The study mainly follows an inductive reasoning approach, where patterns, categories, and insights are obtained from empirical data rather than established hypotheses (Thomas, 2006). Thematic patterns were obtained from interviews, focus groups as well as field observations, thereby leading to the development of interpretations that are grounded in the perspective of the participants.

However, this research also focuses on elements of abductive reasoning (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012), mainly when it connects theoretical frameworks to empirical insights. Abduction reasoning, on the other hand gives room for movement between data and theory with the use of Modernization Theory, World-Systems Theory, as well as Transnationalism, not as rigid models, but as interpretive tools to help connect with the experiences of the participants.

The combination of inductive and abductive reasoning helps to strengthen the analytical process by making sure that findings are both built on empirical evidence and theoretically informed evidence.

3.5 Research Strategy: Case Study Design

This study makes use of a qualitative case study design because it enables a clear examination of the role that Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark play as actors of transnational development. The case study approach is mainly suited for the understanding of complex social phenomena within the real-life context of HTAs (Yin, 2014; Stake, 1995).

The chosen case of the Cameroonian diaspora in Denmark shows a clearly defined and bounded unit of analysis. This case connects the lived experiences of diaspora actors with those of local beneficiaries in the Fako Division of Cameroon, thereby showing how transnational engagement can translate into tangible community outcomes.

While the research focuses on a single comprehensive case, it also merges comparative elements, as the fieldwork was carried out in two interconnected contexts, which are Denmark, where HTAs operate and mobilize resources, and Cameroon, where their projects are being implemented. This double location design aligns with mixed qualitative research that follows people, ideas as well as practices across different geographic boundaries (Marcus, 1995).

In addition, the study draws upon the principles of narrative inquiry, which prioritize the stories and meaning of the participants (Riessman, 2005). Narratives center on how the individuals interpret their own experiences of change, thereby showing the human aspect of transnational development.

The case study design that is supported by comparative and narrative elements makes sure that there is methodological consistency with the constructivist and interpretivist viewpoint of this study, and also provides a holistic understanding of how Cameroonian HTAs plan, implement as well as sustain projects that focus on the development of education in Cameroon.

3.6 Research Design

This research adopted a qualitative and descriptive research design, which explores how Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark organize, mobilize as well as implement their projects on education in Cameroon, and how the local communities experience and perceive these efforts. This case study design focuses on the activities of HTAs in Denmark, highlighting their interventions in the Fako Division of Cameroon.

This research makes use of primary sources of data (which are obtained from interviews, focus groups, and participant observation) and secondary sources of data (obtained from books, articles, and official reports). Primary data offer insights that are specific to the context (Pienta et al., 2010) on the other hand, secondary data provide the background and comparative perspectives (Silverman, 2016).

3.7 Data Collection Methods

3.7.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation was used in other to understand the environments in which HTAs operate as well as the impact of their development activities. It should be noted that fieldwork occurred in both Denmark and Cameroon.

In Cameroon, observation took place in a few villages within the Fako Division: Bokova, Bonduma and Bokwango, all linked to HTA projects. In Denmark, observation occurred mainly in Copenhagen, at a meeting and event place for ACAD.

This method allowed the researcher to observe and identify community dynamics, participation, and communication that exist between diaspora actors and local beneficiaries, as well as challenges and successes of their ongoing projects.

3.7.2 Interviews

A semi-structured interview was conducted in order to collect detailed insights. A total of eight interviews were held:

- **In Cameroon,** five interviews were conducted with a local resident, a school authority, a community leader, a student and a government official in the Fako Division.
- **In Denmark,** three interviews were conducted with ACAD executive members and other community participants.

The conducted interviews were done in informal settings to ensure comfort and trust. No recordings were made, only notes in order to preserve participants' confidence.

Interview topics included the role of HTAs in education, how they view development, and the sustainability of their initiatives. Participants in Denmark were more generally open than those in Cameroon who were cautious as a result of political sensitivities.

3.7.3 Focus Group Discussion

A focus group of six participants in the Fako Division provided different perspectives of the community. The discussions addressed the role that HTAs play, the relationship that HTAs have with local authorities, as well as suggestions for improvement. The participants consented to audio recording with the promise that their identity will not be disclosed.

This method provided a collective insight and allowed the comparison between individual and shared perceptions of the community. According to Creswell (2014) and Silverman (2016), focus group discussions are useful for conducting qualitative research because they allow participants to interact and build upon the ideas of other, showing shared norms, differences in opinion, as well as collective understandings that might not come out through individual interviews.

3.8 Data Analysis: Narrative and Thematic Approach

The data generated from the fieldwork were analyzed with the use of narrative and thematic analysis**.**

Narrative analysis: This part focuses on the stories and experiences of the various participants (Riessman, 2005). These narratives show how individuals perceive HTAs contribution to education and how these changes are fully achieved in the community.

Thematic analysis: This method facilitates the identification of themes and patterns in a common storyline (Greenhalgh et al., 2005). Themes for thematic analysis included the effectiveness of HTA projects, perceptions of progress by the community, not forgetting challenges that they face in implementation.

By combining these two approaches, the study connects stories of individuals with broader social patterns, thereby producing a complex understanding of how development that is led by the diaspora operates in practice.

3.9 Ethical Considerations and Reflexivity

All the participants were informed of the reason for the study, their right to withdraw as well as the confidentiality of their information. No names are disclosed. Sensitive issues, especially opinions that concern politics in Cameroon were treated with care.

As a Cameroonian researcher that is based in Denmark, the author occupied positions as both an insider and an outsider**.** This dual position helped in building trust, but it also required reflexivity in oder to avoid bias and ensure that the voices of the participants were represented authentically.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

Every research project has its limitations that shape its process and findings. Acknowledgment of these limitations is essential for the understanding of the scope, reliability, as well as applicability of the results of the study. This research faced several limitations that are related to the scope, linguistic and cultural dynamics, as well as the political environment in Cameroon.

1. Scope and Representativeness
As a result of time constraints and financial resources, the fieldwork was only conducted in selected villages within the Fako Division. They are Bokova, Bonduma and Bokwango. These areas were chosen as a result of their active involvement with projects of the HTA, as well as their accessibility to the researcher. However, this focus caused a limitation to the geographical and demographical representation of the findings.
The result from the study therefore, shows the realities of these particular communities and may not capture differences that exist across other parts of Cameroon. Nonetheless, by concentrating on one division of Cameroon with strong engagement of HTA, the study was able to gain a deeper insight on the context that would have been lost in a broader, less focused investigation.

2. Language and Barriers in Communication

An additional hurdle that the study faced was differences in language. Cameroon is a country with multiple languages of over 200 local dialects. As a result, not all participants could speak English language fluently. In order to bridge this gap, the researcher conducted most of the interviews in *Pidgin English,* which is a lingua franca that is widely spoken in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon.

While this gave room for the participants to easily express themselves more comfortably, it also introduced an additional issue with interpretation, as some important information may have been lost or altered during the translation and transcription process. The researcher was able to overcome this limitation by making sure the notes were cross-checked immediately after interviews and also clarify statements that are hard to understand with participants whenever possible.

3. Political Sensitivity and Participant Caution

Considering the ongoing conflicts in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, some participants were not eager to speak about governance openly, policies of development, or the performance of the government. This atmosphere that requires caution occasionally served as a limiting factor for the depth of certain discussions, particularly those that are related to institutional accountability and the relationship that exist between the state and diaspora.

In order to address this, interviews were then carried out in informal settings where participants felt safe. Also, the researcher did not make use of recording devices in order to improve trust and confidentiality. Although this approach reduced the risk of personal bias, but it meant that some data depended heavily on written notes rather than transcription from the direct voice of the participants, which could affect the richness of direct quotations.

4. Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

As a Cameroonian researcher who is based in Denmark, the author occupied the position of both *insider* and *outsider* throughout the process of the research. In Denmark, the shared cultural background and familiarity with the workings of diaspora networks helped the researcher to have access and connection with the participants. In Cameroon, the ability for the researcher to reside abroad sometimes positioned her as an "outsider," especially among participants in the locality who associated the diaspora with privilege or distance from the realities of everyday life.

This double position needed ongoing reflexivity in other to ensure that personal beliefs did not influence the interpretation of data. Field notes, personal experiences, as well as group discussions with colleagues at school were all used to manage potential bias and improve credibility.

5. Data and Methodological Constraints

As a result of the fact that qualitative research emphasizes depth over breadth, the sample size of the study was intentionally chosen to be small. While this approach helps to enable a rich and detailed understanding of the experiences of the participants, it reduces the ability to give a general finding to all HTAs or all Cameroonian communities. Also, there was rescheduling or cancellation of some planned interviews in Cameroon as a result of logistical and challenges related to weather which slightly reduced the number of local voices that were captured.

Irrespective of these limitations, the data that were gathered remain strong and perceptive. The triangulation of multiple methods such as interviews, observation of the participants, and focus group discussions helped to strengthen the validity of the findings. The limitations that are recognized here do not weaken the contribution of the study, rather they clarify the contextual boundaries within which the conclusion of the study should be interpreted.

3.11 Summary

This chapter has discussed the philosophical foundation, methodological approach, as well as research design of the study. It supported the use of qualitative, constructivist as well as narrative methods for understanding the role that Cameroonian HTAs play in development that is focused on education.

By adopting a case study design that is supported by the observation of the participant, interviews, as well as focus groups, the study captures the personal realities and experiences of both diaspora actors together with the local beneficiaries. Narrative and thematic analyses further made sure that findings reflect the real experiences of the participants and also reveal the broader significance of development that is led by the HTA within international and local contexts.

The next chapter, which will focus on the Theoretical Framework, builds on the foundations of these methodologies by centering on the theoretical bases of Modernization Theory, World-Systems Theory, as well as Transnationalism, through which the findings will later be analyzed.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

4.1 Introduction

This chapter centers mainly on the theoretical foundations that will guide the analysis of HTAs in Denmark and the contributions they have made towards the development of education in Cameroon. Continuing the analysis of the problem that was identified in Chapter 1 and the literature that was discussed in Chapter 2, this chapter looks at how development is understood, practiced as well as contested through initiatives that are led by diaspora.

This chapter utilizes two main theories which are Modernization Theory and World-Systems Theory, which bring together contrasting yet complementary viewpoints on development. According to Modernization Theory, development is seen as a process of internal transformation that is achieved through education, institutional reform as well as socio-economic progress. World-Systems Theory, on the other hand, positions these processes within global systems of inequality, illustrating how historical and structural inequalities can shape development outcomes in postcolonial societies like Cameroon.

In addition, the studies of Diaspora and Transnationalism are used as tools for analysis in other to understand how HTAs operate across borders, that is how they maintain connections between Denmark and Cameroon. These views emphasize transnational connection, identities, as well as networks that help HTAs to act as links between local communities and global opportunities, thereby facilitating the flow of ideas, resources as well as social capital that strengthen their educational initiatives.

These theories together outline a structure for the understanding of the double position of Cameroonian HTAs, such as acting as actors who try to modernize their communities through education as well as being participants in an international system that continues to duplicate dependency. These theories therefore enable a deeper analysis of whether the initiatives for education that are led by HTA stand for a sustainable and participatory alternative to traditional top-down aid models.

4.2 Justification of Theoretical Choices

The decision to choose Modernization Theory and World-Systems Theory as the tools for analysis of this study is because of the research objectives and the realities of the context of the engagements of the Cameroonian diaspora. Each of these theories brings different yet complementary ideas that help have a complete understanding of development of education that is led by diaspora.

Modernization Theory was selected as a result of its ability to communicate the internal dynamics of social change and the major role that education plays in promoting development and progress. HTAs in Denmark often declare faith in education as the avenue to uplifting the community. This is in line with the assumption of modernization that social transformation starts from the transfer of knowledge, skills development as well as improvement in institution. This

theory enhances the focus of this study by analyzing how local actors develop and advance development through practical initiatives that are driven by education.

However, World-Systems Theory was used in other to analyze the efforts of the HTAs within the larger political and economic context. This theory provides a structural view that places the activities of the HTA within the international hierarchies of power, trade and production of knowledge. This theory gives room for the understanding of how the historical patterns of colonialism and international capitalism continue to affect the possibilities as well as the limitations of development that is led by diaspora.

By combining these viewpoints, the study serves as a link between agency and structure, thereby recognizing the power of local actors to bring about change while acknowledging the fundamental obstacles that affect their actions.

The researcher's deliberate omission of Dependency Theory comes from its conceptual overlay with World-Systems Theory. While Dependency Theory remains influential in highlighting unequal North–South relations, World-Systems Theory offers a more comprehensive and dynamic model for the analysis of global interconnections. Also, its ability to capture the transnational positioning of diaspora actors as mediators between core and peripheral zones makes it mostly suited to Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark, which is the focus of this study.

Ultimately, the choices of these theories reflect the need to connect individual and collective agency (as seen in HTA activities) with global structural realities, thereby helping to provide a robust framework for analyzing diaspora-led educational development.

Additionally, the Diaspora and Transnationalism concepts are included as complementary analytical lenses. These perspectives help to explain how HTAs maintain social, economic as well as emotional connections across borders, and how these transnational networks influence patterns of development. Diaspora and Transnationalism present the migrants' agency as actors who belong to and operate within multiple social spaces at the same time, mobilizing resources, identities and knowledge between Denmark and Cameroon. Their inclusion helps to strengthen the theoretical basis of this study by linking international structures with local practices, thereby offering insight into how diaspora actors shape the development of education through sustained cross-border engagement.

4.3 Modernization Theory

Modernization Theory started in the 1950s and 1960s as an effort to explain the pathways through which societies transition from traditional to modern systems of production, governance, and social organization. It regards development as a linear and internally driven process, one that progresses through industrialization, technological advancement, urbanization, as well as education (Rostow, 1960; Lerner, 1958).

At its core, the theory's assumption is that poverty and underdevelopment stem primarily from internal barriers like traditional values, limited infrastructure, and change resistance. According to Walt W. Rostow's Five Stages of Economic Growth *(1960)* the clearest understanding of this

view, is by describing development as a progression through identifiable stages: (1) traditional society, (2) preconditions for take-off, (3) take-off, (4) drive to maturity, and (5) age of high mass consumption.

Education is key in this framework. It is seen as the mechanism through which societies cultivate the skills, values as well as knowledge that are needed for economic growth and modernization (Inkeles & Smith, 1974). In this regard, education is not only an outcome of development but also a driving force behind transformation, thereby producing a more skilled, informed as well as population that is civic-minded.

This theoretical perspective agrees with the activities of Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark. Their projects, which include the construction of schools, provision of scholarships, and support for vocational training, express the modernization ideal that education leads to social mobility and progress. Many HTA members, having had experience of upward mobility through education and migration, seek to bring these opportunities for others in their communities of origin.

Modernization Theory, therefore assists in the explanation of the dimension of motivation of HTA interventions: a belief that progress can be achieved through the transfer of knowledge, skills as well as institutional models from modern to traditional contexts. However, as chapter two discussed, such efforts happen within international institutional barriers, a dimension that Modernization Theory alone cannot fully address. These limitations warrant engagement with a more critical, systemic perspective, that is to say, World-Systems Theory.

4.4 Diaspora and Transnationalism as Analytical Lenses

The concepts of Diaspora and Transnationalism deliver meaningful tools for analysis in other to understand how Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark are actively involved in the development of education across borders. While Modernization and World-Systems theories explain the contextual background dimensions of development, Diaspora and Transnationalism shed light on everyday practices, motivations, as well as identities that sustain the initiatives across different borders.

The theory of Diaspora focuses on the joint identity, memory and attachment of geographically distributed groups who maintain connections to their homeland (Cohen, 2008; Safran, 1991). It discusses how communities of diaspora, despite distance between locations, retain emotional, cultural, as well as economic attachments that shape their feeling of accountability and solidarity with their places of origin. For Cameroonian migrants who are in Denmark, these bonds are shown through participation in HTAs, which serve as both cultural anchors, as well as platforms for engagement in development.

Transnationalism, according to scholars such as Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc (1994), focuses on the multiple social, economic as well as political ties that migrants endure across national borders. Practices of transnationalism include remittances, visits, communication, and the organization of projects that link sending and receiving countries. In this context, HTAs can be seen as transnational social fields that help connect Denmark and Cameroon through networks of exchange and cooperation.

Looking at HTAs through these analytical viewpoints show how migration brings about new forms of agency for development. Unlike traditional development actors, members of HTAs are equipped with resources and skills that are received from abroad with local knowledge, as well as cultural legitimacy. Their ability to draw from both their host and home societies helps them to create initiatives like construction of schools, scholarship schemes as well as vocational training that are relevant in the Cameroonian context.

Moreover, the perspectives of Diaspora and Transnationalism disagree with the notion that development is a unidirectional process that comes from the "developed" to the "developing" world. Instead, they stress on circularity and reciprocity that is to say that development passes through networks of migrants who steadily negotiate belonging and responsibility across borders. These frameworks also concur with the primary objective of this study which focuses on looking for alternative, bottom-up development models, where actors of the community rather than external donors set priorities and strategies.

In the case of the Cameroonian HTAs that are in Denmark, Diaspora and Transnationalism show how identity and mobility connect together with practice of development. The projects for education that are initiated by these groups does not only address material needs but also raises a sense of joint identity, pride and transnational citizenship. By rallying across two social spaces Denmark and Cameroon, HTAs illustrate how diaspora communities can transform migration into a resource for local development, thereby bringing fresh ideas of what participation and progress mean in a world that is globalized.

Together, Diaspora and Transnationalism offer a comprehensive framework that will help understand the motivations and mechanisms behind HTA activities. Diaspora theory explains the emotional and cultural motivations that drive Cameroonians in Denmark to "give back" to their community, while Transnationalism tries to explain the practical and structural processes that make such engagement possible. Using these two perspectives allows this study to examine not only *why* HTAs exist, but also *how* they function as actors of development that connect two different social contexts.

Relating to the broader research objectives, these frameworks also complement the theories of development that were discussed earlier in the chapter. While Modernization and World-Systems theories position development within the structure of global and historical path, Diaspora and Transnationalism bring attention to agency, identity, as well as actions that are based on community. They therefore expand the theoretical scope of this study through the linkage of international with the local and by showing how migrants cope with these scales through their development work.

4.5 World-Systems Theory

World-Systems Theory by Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) provides a macro-level framework for the understanding of the impact of global capitalism on inequality. It also views the world as a single economic system that is divided into developed, developing, as well as underdeveloped. Developed countries dominate global trade, technology, and finance, while peripheral countries like Cameroon supply raw materials and cheap labor. Development and underdevelopment are

therefore two sides of the same global process, that are shaped by unequal distribution of power and resources.

In this view, the postcolonial development trajectory of Cameroon cannot be understood solely through internal modernization but must be placed within its historical and economic dependence on global centers of power. Structural factors like trade dependency, limited industrial capacity, as well as external debt, limit the state's ability to deliver social services, including education.

World-Systems Theory also provide an insight into development led by diaspora. Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark operate within the global system as actors who gather resources from Denmark to support development of Cameroon. This dual positioning offers both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, the HTAs transnational networks as well as remittances can easily complement the state's efforts by addressing local educational needs. On the other hand, their dependence on voluntary funding and informal organization shows how the developmental efforts in the periphery remain shaped by global structural inequalities.

This theoretical perspective agrees closely with the critiques of traditional aid models that were discussed in Chapter 2. Like donor-driven programs, diaspora initiatives exist within the same global hierarchy that gives privileges to Northern institutions and financial systems. Yet HTAs challenge these structures by fostering a bottom-up approach, to promote educational forms of development that are rooted in local knowledge, participation, and shared identity. World-Systems Theory shows how HTAs navigate and resist the inequalities that are rooted in international systems of development.

Practically, this theoretical viewpoint will aid in the analysis of Chapters 6 and 7 by showcasing how Cameroonian HTAs position themselves within and how they respond to the international inequalities that shape their efforts of development. For instance, World-Systems Theory will be used to interpret how the reliance on resources from Denmark by HTAs captures the broader patterns of economic dependency, while their emphasis on education initiatives that are based on community in the Cameroon shows attempts to negotiate and partially defeat these structural obstacles. This approach will also help to analyze how global hierarchies influence the sustainability of the projects, access to funding, and the perception of success among both diaspora members as well as local beneficiaries. In this way, the theory provides a lens for studying the tensions between empowerment and constraint that underpin educational development that are led by diaspora.

4.6 Critical Reflections and Relevance to the Study

A combination of these two key concepts; Modernization and World-Systems theories provides a comprehensive framework for this study. Modernization Theory focuses on the agency of local actors and the transformative potential of education, while World-Systems Theory positions this agency within structural obstacles that are being imposed by international power relations.

There are four key purposes why the combination listed above is particularly relevant for the understanding of diaspora-led development and they include:

1. Bridging Agency and Structure: This captures the conflict between the aspiration of HTAs for progress as well as the systemic limitations they face within global hierarchies.
2. Explaining Motivation: This explains why education is the major focus of HTA interventions, which is seen as a personal value and a perceived driver of modernization.
3. Contextualizing Practice: It places the activities of the HTA within the historical and structural realities of postcolonial Cameroon, where the inefficiency of the state and global dependency necessitate community-led initiatives.
4. Linking Theory to Empirics: It provides the conceptual foundation for the analysis of data in later chapters, mostly how HTA members and local beneficiaries interpret and experience educational development.

Critically, the integration of these theories also reflects a broader debate within development studies between *progress-oriented* and *structure-oriented* explanations. HTAs embody both perspectives: they act as agents of modernization promoting education and innovation, still they operate within and against global inequalities that reduce their transformative potential.

In addition to this, the analytical lenses of Diaspora and Transnationalism further enrich this framework by laying emphasis on the social and emotional dimensions of development. They highlight how transnational connections, mobilization of resources, and construction of a sense of belonging that transcends borders are sustained by HTA members. These perspectives are crucial for the understanding of how Cameroonian migrants in Denmark transform personal experiences of mobility and education into collective strategies for the advancement of their communities. By linking individual motivation with global systems of exchange, Diaspora and Transnationalism complement the development theories that were discussed earlier and provide a deeper understanding of how the functions of the HTAs include acting as both cultural and developmental bridges between Denmark and Cameroon.

In this sense, the theories do not only guide the interpretation of the initiatives of HTA but also mirror the central argument of this thesis: that development that is led by diaspora represents both a continuation of and a challenge to traditional models of aid and progress.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has discussed the theoretical framework that guides the study. Modernization Theory explains in detail how education and internal transformation are seen as ways to progress, thereby shaping the expectations of Cameroonian HTAs. World-Systems Theory positions these efforts within the international structures that sustain inequality by explaining the external obstacles that influence local outcomes of development.

Together, these theories were selected and justified for their complementarity. They provided the conceptual lens through which this research studies how Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark engage in the development of education in Cameroon: as grassroots actors that seek to modernize their communities while they negotiate the enduring legacies of global dependency.

Additionally, by including Diaspora and Transnationalism as analytical lenses, it helps to deepen this theoretical framework by foregrounding the human and relational aspects of development.

These perspectives stress on how HTA members maintain cross-border connections, mobilize resources, as well as translate personal experiences of migration into collective community action. The study also includes the multi-scalar nature of initiatives that are led by diaspora, thereby connecting the global structures with local agency, and showing how the development of education is both a social and spatial process that is shaped by movement, identity, and belonging.

Chapter 5: Contextual Background

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the background understanding of the environment within which Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark operate and contribute to the development of education in Cameroon. It positions the study in the larger socio-economic and transnational realities that link the Cameroonian diaspora in Denmark with their communities of origin.

This discussion focuses on the demographic and organizational characteristics of the Cameroonian diaspora, thereby highlighting how shared identities and social ties have evolved into formal structures of collective engagement. Particular attention is given to the emergence of HTAs and their central body, the ACAD, which coordinates a range of community initiatives, including projects that focus on education in Cameroon.

This chapter also examines how these associations have grown from primarily cultural and social support networks into transnational development actors that mobilize resources, knowledge, and networks to address local needs. By exploring these dynamics, this chapter links HTA organizations' practical realities to the theoretical perspectives that were discussed in Chapter 4 , specifically, the ways in which grassroots actors in peripheral contexts navigate global inequalities while looking for modernization goals that are locally defined.

In the long run, this contextual overview will provide the foundation for the subsequent analysis of initiatives that are led by HTA. It explains how diaspora organization, motivation, as well as transnational collaboration, shape the development of interventions for education in Cameroon, in particular within the Fako Division of the Southwest Region.

5.2 The Cameroonian Diaspora in Denmark: Demographic and Social Overview

Movement of immigrants from Cameroon to Denmark is relatively a recent phenomenon when you compare it to larger diaspora movements of Cameroonians to France, the United Kingdom or Germany. This migration began gaining visibility in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which was influenced largely by opportunities for education, employment, as well as family reunification. Field interviews and previous research indicate that Cameroonians arrived in Denmark through multiple pathways, such as student visas, professional recruitment schemes, and family-related migration, as well as under the now-discontinued *Green Card Scheme*, which once attracted skilled workers from non-EU countries (Nyamnjoh & Page, 2018; Christensen & Krawatzek, 2021; Statistics Denmark, 2023).

Although they are small in number when compared to other African communities, the Cameroonian diaspora in Denmark is known for its strong sense of cohesion and shared identity (Adepoju, 2006; IOM, 2020). Estimates suggest that hundreds of Cameroonians currently reside in major Danish cities such as Copenhagen, Aarhus, and Aalborg, with smaller communities spread across other regions (Statistics Denmark, 2023; Mberu, 2010). Many of them are professionals, students or entrepreneurs who maintain strong emotional, cultura,l as well as financial ties with their country of origin (Nyamnjoh & Page, 2018; IOM, 2020).

Socially, the Cameroonian diaspora in Denmark captures the ethnic and linguistic diversity of Cameroon itself, which covers Anglophone and Francophone groups, with a particularly visible presence of people from the Southwest Region, which includes the Fako Division. This regional composition has affected the formation of diaspora organizations, where village and regional identities play an important role in group formation and collaboration (Mercer et al., 2008; Tchouassi, 2012; Mazzucato & Kabki, 2009).

The development of means of communication and transnational networks has made it easier for members of the diaspora to maintain regular contact with their families and communities that are in Cameroon. These continued connections have contributed to the development of various forms of transnational engagement, which include remittances, knowledge transfer as well as and the creation of cooperative initiatives such as HTAs.

In Denmark, HTAs have become an important key area for the culture preservation, social support and mobilization of resources. HTAs help Cameroonians in Denmark go through the challenges of integrating into the new environment while ensuring that they maintain a strong link to their cultural heritage. In addition to their social role, HTAs have progressively continued on their development functions, thereby serving as a channel through which their members mobilize financial and material resources for joint projects in Cameroon.

The diaspora engagement in development reflects a growing awareness of shared responsibility that is needed to help address local challenges back home. As will be shown in the next section, this consciousness has manifested through the formation of voluntary associations of HTAs that organize within specific hometown or regional affiliations, with the ACAD serving as an umbrella body for coordination and outreach (Mercer et al., 2008; Page & Mercer, 2012; Nyamnjoh & Page, 2018; Tchouassi, 2012; IOM, 2020).

5.3 Emergence and Organizational Dynamics of Hometown Associations (HTAs)

HTAs have emerged as a leading expression of diaspora engagement within the Cameroonian community in Denmark. Rooted in shared hometown, ethnic, or regional identities, these associations provide a structured framework through which diaspora members maintain social cohesion as well as contribute collectively to their communities of origin (Mercer et al., 2008; Orozco & Rouse, 2013; Nyamnjoh & Page, 2018).

Many HTAs were originally developed to serve cultural and welfare purposes, helping new migrants to settle in Denmark, offering mutual assistance in times of crisis, as well as preserving cultural traditions through their events and community gatherings (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Tchouassi, 2012). Over time, these associations have changed to assume developmental roles, mobilizing the resources and networks of members in order to address critical needs in their hometowns, particularly in sectors like education and healthcare (Page & Mercer, 2012; IOM, 2020; Mazzucato & Kabki, 2009).

The ACAD stands as the main coordinating body for these efforts. It functions as an umbrella organization bringing together multiple regional and HTAs that are based on the village operating across Denmark. Each of their affiliate maintains autonomy in managing its own

specific hometown projects although they benefit from the shared structure, visibility, and network that ACAD provides. This arrangement of the organization improves the coordination of initiatives for development, facilitates information sharing as well as strengthens accountability in the use of funds and implementation of projects in Cameroon (Nyamnjoh & Page, 2018; IOM, 2020; Mercer et al., 2008).

The structure of leadership within HTAs is typically voluntary and democratic, thereby reflecting both the collaborative community spirit of self-help as well as their members' professional expertise. Executive committees often include presidents, secretaries, treasurers as well as project coordinators who make sure that there is transparency in financial management and communication between Denmark and Cameroon. Regular meetings and digital communication platforms (such as WhatsApp and Facebook groups) have helped members to make joint decisions and also maintain engagement despite geographical distance (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Page & Mercer, 2012; Horst, 2013).

Mobilization of resources still remains a central feature of HTA activity. Members make contributions through monthly dues, special fundraising events as well as voluntary donations. Some groups also build cooperations with other diaspora groups that focus mainly on development in oder to support interventions on a larger scale. These activities show how HTAs operate as hybrid actors who combine informal social networks with formal strategies of the organization that agree with broader goals for development (Orozco & Rouse, 2013; Tchouassi, 2012; Mercer et al., 2008).

The method of operation of Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark indicates what can be described as *grassroots development that is driven by the diaspora*, wherein immigrants assume an agency role in solving issues that the traditional assistance programs have struggled to solve. From a conceptual term, this evolution is in line with the emphasis of Modernization Theory on social transformation that is centered on local initiative and education, as well as with the view of World-Systems Theory on peripheral actors operating in a global system to maintain agency and influence (Mazzucato & Kabki, 2009; Page & Mercer, 2012; Horst, 2013).

In this way, HTAs do not only sustain cultural unity but also represent a form of development that is driven by community participation, which challenges traditional top-down systems. The following section looks at how HTAs have used the strength of their organization to produce tangible interventions of education in Cameroon.

5.4 HTAs as Educational Development Actors in Cameroon

Education has long been accepted as a pillar of sustainable development and social transformation (Adepoju, 2006; Brinkerhoff, 2009; UNESCO, 2020). In Cameroon, there has been a continued problem due to lack of infrastructure, scarce teaching materials as well as unequal distribution of resources that continues to weaken its access and quality, particularly in the rural areas of the Fako Division, Southwest Region of Cameroon (Tambo, 2003; Tchombe, 2014; World Bank, 2021). Despite many years of aid from government programs and international bodies, these problems still linger, showing the shortcomings of top-down and development models that are externally driven (Easterly, 2006; Moyo, 2010; Banks et al., 2015).

In response, Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark have arisen as key actors for grassroots development that contribute to the improvement of education in their communities of origin. Tapping into their international networks and the commitment they share to advance the community, HTAs have started projects that address the immediate needs of education while promoting capacity building for a long-term (Mercer et al., 2008; Page & Mercer, 2012; Nyamnjoh & Page, 2018).

Among their most notable impacts are the construction and renovation of school buildings, the provision of materials for learning in school, such as textbooks and laboratory equipment, as well as the sponsorship of scholarships for less privileged students in Cameroon. In some cases, HTAs have also supported vocational training initiatives that is aimed at preparing young people with skills needed for employment (Tchouassi, 2012; IOM, 2020; Mazzucato & Kabki, 2009). These achievements, while they are few and modest in scale, often have a more lasting and sustained effect when compared to state or donor programs, because they are rooted in local knowledge, social trust as well as participation of the community (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Horst, 2013).

ACAD and its regional affiliate bodies play an important role in coordinating these efforts. Through joint fundraising, social events, as well as contributions of members, they direct their resources to targeted projects that are discovered and agreed upon through discussion with leaders of the community and local schools in Cameroon. This joint decision making ensures sure that interventions correspond with priorities that are mainly needed and expressed by the local community rather than agendas that are imposed externally (Mercer et al., 2008; Page & Mercer, 2012; IOM, 2020).

From a theoretical point of view, initiatives for education that are led by HTA can be seen through interdisciplinary methods. First, Modernization Theory helps to explain how education functions as a medium for social progress and modernization. This belief is deeply rooted in the motivations of many diaspora actors who attribute their personal advancement to opportunities gotten through education (Rostow, 1960; Inkeles & Smith, 1974; Kutor, 2014). The projects they carry out reflect an eagerness to follow this pathway to progress within their communities of origin.

Second is World-Systems Theory, which sheds light on the structural positioning of these initiatives within the international development hierarchy. While HTAs operate mostly in underdeveloped regions, they involve inter-country relationships with institutions and networks that are in developed nations, thereby adapting to unequal systems of power and resources. By so doing, they challenge the notion that development must come from the top down. They also show how undeveloped actors can exercise influence and generate a different approach to progress (Wallerstein, 1974; Smith & Wallerstein, 1992; Mahler, 2001).

Also, the involvement of HTAs in education has resulted to what scholars like Chambers (1997, 2017), Korten (1980), and Banks et al. (2015) describe as "bottom-up development." emphasis is laid on the participation of the local people, community ownership, as well as cultural sensitivity. These attributes do not only improve the legitimacy of the initiatives that are led by HTAs, but

they also contribute to a transformative approach, which is in line with critiques of conventional aid that were discussed in earlier chapters.

Basically, Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark function in cultural and developmental links between the diaspora and communities in Cameroon. Their efforts in education reveal the potential of diaspora organizations to help address enduring inequalities through strategies that are focused on the community, which combine modernizing their aspirations with that of local realities (Nyamnjoh & Page, 2018; Orozco & Rouse, 2013). These contributions, also led to important questions about scale, sustainability as well as and institutional support issues that will be explored further in the following chapter for analysis and discussion.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has provided the basic principles that are necessary for the understanding of the role that Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark play as transnational actors in the development of education in Cameroon. It started by discussing the evolution of the Cameroonian diaspora in Denmark, focusing on its most recent formation and its formation from informal social networks into organized associations that are driven by community. The discussion then looked at how these groups, particularly under the umbrella of the ACAD, have developed their structures for mobilizing financial, material, as well as human resources in order to support projects in their communities of origin.

The analysis shows that HTAs, although they are small in scale, play a meaningful role in linking local needs with global opportunities. Their interventions in education, from the construction of schools and scholarship programs to training for skills acquisition, show how diaspora actors bring transnational solidarity into tangible development for the community. By working through joint mechanisms, as well as direct engagement with beneficiaries from the local communities, these associations carry an alternative model of development that is different from the hierarchical, externally driven frameworks that are often associated with conventional aid.

This chapter also joins these dynamics to the perspectives of the theories that were discussed in Chapter 4. Through the ideas of Modernization Theory, initiatives of the HTA can be seen as a plan to improve progress and transformation of the society through education. At the same time, World-Systems Theory discusses the structural obstacles these associations face as actors that operate from underdeveloped regions of the global system, yet are able to create change and generate new forms of modernization for the local people.

In general, the chapter shows that the understanding of the demographic, organizational, as well as motivational parts of the Cameroonian diaspora in Denmark is important for the interpretation of their role in development. The basic ideas that are presented here form the foundation for the next chapter, that will look at the analysis of the empirical data from fieldwork in both Denmark and Cameroon. That analysis will explore how projects for education that are led by HTA are carried out, experienced as well as viewed by members of the diaspora and beneficiaries from local communities.

CHAPTER 6: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings that were obtained from the fieldwork, which was conducted in Denmark and Cameroon. The purpose is to look at how Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark mobilize for the development of education in their home communities, the nature and scope of their initiatives, as well as how these efforts are seen by both members of the diaspora and beneficiaries in the local communities.

This analysis is in line with the thematic and narrative approaches that were outlined in Chapter 3. The voice of the participants and their personal experiences are the focus of the discussion, thereby shedding light on the motivations, strategies, as well as obstacles that shape the development that is led by HTA.

The four key themes that emerged from the data are:

1. HTA Mobilization and Motivation
2. Nature and Scope of Educational Interventions
3. Community Perceptions and Local Experiences
4. Challenges and Constraints Faced by HTAs

This chapter concludes with cross-case insights by comparing findings from Denmark and Cameroon, a summary of key outcomes, as well as a discussion linking the empirical results to the theoretical perspectives that were outlined in Chapter 4.

6.2 Overview of Fieldwork and Data Sources

The fieldwork was conducted in both Denmark and Cameroon in oder to capture perspectives from the diaspora and their communities of origin.

In **Denmark**, data were mainly collected in Copenhagen, where the ACAD and several other affiliated HTAs meet regularly. The participants included executive members, ordinary association members, and other community actors.

In **Cameroon,** fieldwork was undertaken in three villages within the Fako Division and they include Bokova, Bonduma and Bokwango, where educational initiatives that are supported by the HTA were ongoing. Participants included community leaders, teachers, students, parents, as well as a local government official.

The data sources comprised:

- **Eight semi-structured interviews** (three in Denmark, five in Cameroon),
- **One focus group discussion** with six participants in Fako Division, and
- **Participant observations** conducted in both field sites.

The combination of these methods provided a rich qualitative material, that enabled triangulation of data and a more comprehensive understanding of the contribution of HTA to educational development.

6.3 Themes Emerging from the Data

6.3.1 HTA Mobilization and Motivation

One of the key drivers of the engagement of the HTA is a strong sense of duty and emotional attachment they have to their hometowns. Many participants said that their involvement comes from gratitude for the opportunity that education brought to them, which enabled their own success and therefore, they have a strong desire to "give back" to their hometowns.

A participant in Copenhagen explained:

"We cannot just sit here and watch our villages remain behind. Education gave us the chance we have to be where we are today, so helping to build schools or support students back home is our own way of giving back."

Exposure to the well-functioning educational system of Denmark further served as a motivation for HTA members to replicate similar standards at home. One respondent shared:

"When you see how things work here, the schools, the discipline, the opportunities, you just wish our children in Cameroon could have even a fraction of that."

These explanations are in line with the premise of Modernization Theory that education functions as an avenue to progress and transformation in the society (Rostow, 1960; Lerner, 1958). As was discussed in Chapter 4, Modernization Theory states that individuals who are exposed to modern institutions often desire to transfer those experiences and values they have gained to their home country as a means of bringing about progress. The belief of the participants that educational investment can "modernize" their hometowns directly aligns with this theoretical idea.

At the same time, Transnationalism offers a complementary lens as it explains how migrants maintain and extend connections across borders (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). As discussed in Chapter 4, transnational practices involve the circulation of ideas, skills, as well as resources between host and home societies. The desire of the participants to reproduce aspects of the educational culture of Denmark in Cameroon illustrates this dynamic transfer of values and practices.

HTA mobilization, therefore, emerges as both emotionally grounded and structurally informed, which is rooted in a moral obligation to uplift the home community and a transnational orientation that is shaped by exposure to alternative systems of education and governance.

6.3.2 Nature and Scope of Educational Interventions

Education emerged as the major focus of HTA engagement. Findings showed a range of initiatives, which include the construction and renovation of classrooms, provision of school furniture and textbooks, sponsorship of students, as well as the establishment of vocational training opportunities.

A community leader in Bokwango stated:

"Before, our children used to study under leaking roofs. Today, thanks to support from our brothers and sisters in Denmark, we have new classrooms, benches, and textbooks."

A teacher in Bonduma shared similar sentiments:

"The school has become more attractive now. Enrolment has increased because parents now see that their children can learn in a good environment."

These interventions show bottom-up development principles that focus on participation, collaboration, as well as ownership of the community. As discussed in Chapter 4, such approaches fall in line with the arguments of Chambers (1983) and Korten's (1990) that development is "centered on people", where local actors define their priorities and drive change through joint initiatives rather than depending on external donors. The reliance of HTAs on consultations of the community with the village education committees and local authorities in oder to identify their needs shows this principle of participation, which is in line with Banks et al. (2015), who state the importance of engagement of the citizens and local ownership in achieving sustainable development outcomes.

From the perspective of the World-Systems Theory, these initiatives also signify a *reverse flow* of resources and ideas from the "developed" (Denmark) to the "underdeveloped" (Cameroon). As Chapter 4 has outlined, Wallerstein's (1974) model discusses the underdeveloped as being structurally dependent on the developed. However, HTA interventions show a resistance in which the diaspora actors share material and symbolic capital with their home regions. In doing so, they challenge the traditional hierarchies that are associated with the recipient and donor method by changing migrants who were historically seen as underdeveloped and provided cheap labour, into agents of autonomous, grassroots development.

Moreover, the cross-border dimension of these projects brings back the idea that diaspora communities operate across different social fields. The simultaneous engagement of members of the HTA in Denmark and stakeholders of the community in Fako shows what Faist (2010) terms "transnational social spaces," where mobility, remittances, as well as knowledge exchanges merge in oder to create a mixed form of practice of development.

In summary, the Cameroonian HTA's interventions on education show how local participation and transnational linkages work together**,** thereby producing tangible improvements that are driven by a community that helps in advancing the type of self-reliant, bottom-up development

that is championed in the contemporary development thought (Chambers, 1983; Korten, 1990; Banks et al., 2015).

6.3.3 Community Perceptions and Local Experiences

The views of the community on interventions of education that is led by HTA were greatly positive. Most participants in the Fako Division have described HTAs as *development partners that are reliable,* whose efforts have directly improved the condition of learning, school attendance, and local morale. Beyond the infrastructure that is seen, many of the respondents emphasized the social and psychological effect these initiatives have, which encouraged a renewed sense of hope and belonging within their communities.

A resident of Bokwango said:

"When we see new classrooms or school benches sent from Denmark, we feel proud. It shows that our people abroad have not forgotten us."

This emotional connection strengthens the transnational dimension of development, whereby social, emotional, as well as material exchanges steadily to maintain a continuous link between migrants and their communities of origin. As was discussed in Chapter 4, transnationalism stresses how migrants' continued engagement through remittances, communication as well as coordination of projects creates what Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) call *"transnational social fields"* that bridge everyday life between the diaspora and their homeland. In this context, the interventions on education serve not merely as infrastructure but also as symbols of identity and teamwork.

Community members also stated that projects of the HTA encourage participation and responsibility of the local people. A teacher in Bokova stated:

"They don't just send money. They ask us to take part in the work, to monitor the projects, and make sure the materials are used well."

With respect to this type of collaborative participation, it is quite clear that that it falls in with bottom-up development principles**,** pointed out by Chambers (1983) and Banks et al. (2015), development that is effective is that one that is rooted in collaboration, empowerment as well as joint accountability between external actors and local communities. The efforts of the HTA are thus seen not as top-down interventions but as shared collaborative efforts that help to strengthen local capacity and pride.

Some participants however expressed concerns about the distribution of specific projects, how often they receive support and the fact that they have to depend on external remittances.
A village elder in Bonduma stated:

"The supports sometimes comes only once, and then we have wait a long time before hearing from them again. Honestly, we need continuity."

This observation connects to World-Systems Theory, which focuses on the enduring structural inequalities that exist between the "core" and "periphery" (Wallerstein, 1974). While HTAs momentarily reverse these flows by directing resources homeward, systemic barriers like bureaucratic delays, economic instability, as well as weak institutional frameworks still continue to constrain long-term sustainability (Rodney, 1972; Banks et al., 2015).

Overall, the perceptions of the community reveal both appreciation and caution. While initiatives that are led by the HTA are celebrated for their visible educational benefits and emotional resonance, there remains awareness of their fragility within broader political and economic systems. These mixed views show the dual nature of development that is led by the diaspora, which is transformative yet vulnerable, deeply centered on unity but depends on the continued commitment of transnationalism. (Faist, 2010; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004).

6.3.4 Challenges and Constraints Faced by HTAs

Despite their remarkable achievements, HTAs encounter several structural and operational limitations that reduce the scope, sustainability as well as the institutionalization of their interventions. These challenges show the complex realities of cross-border development work and show broader tensions that were discussed in development theory.

1. Financial Constraints

HTAs depend primarily on the free will contributions of the members as well as periodic fundraising events, thereby making the inflows of finance unpredictable and often insufficient. As one of the ACAD members explained:

"We do what we can, but sometimes it's difficult. People have family responsibilities here too, so contributions are not always regular."

This reliance on informal unity networks shows the weakness of bottom-up development initiatives when there is no external funding. As stated by Korten (1990) and Banks et al. (2015), such approaches that are driven by the community often face challenges of sustainability because they lack institutional support for the long term. From the perspective of World-Systems theory, this also mirrors the structural dependency of underdeveloped regions on external flows of capital and remittances despite the efforts of the HTAs to reverse this direction through initiatives of the grassroots.

2. Logistical and Bureaucratic Barriers

Another hard and expensive process is materials transfer or funds to Cameroon. The inefficiencies of bureaucracy, customs delay as well as inconsistent local cooperation often stand as a barrier to smooth execution of project.
These barriers highlight the gap that exist between initiative of the diaspora and infrastructure of the state, thereby bringing to limelight how grassroots actors must deal with institutional weaknesses that reflect broader governance challenges in the Global South. Within the framework of Modernization Theory, such limitations stand as the continuus institutional

bottlenecks that hinders progress and frustrate efforts made for reform, even when the local initiative is strong.

3. Limited Institutional Collaboration

Although HTAs frequently stand in the gap of government efforts in education, formal partnerships with local councils or education departments are still hard to come by. This lack of structured collaboration weakens the sustainability and scaling potential of their interventions. From a theoretical point of view, these dynamic focuses mainly on the tension that exist between top-down and bottom-up approaches to development. As was discussed in Chapter 4, Chambers (1983) and Korten (1990) center on the need for "linking" strategies that connect initiatives that are based on the community with formal institutions. The absence of such integration in HTA projects risks creating isolated successes that lack far-reaching effects.

4. Generational Continuity

Several participants expressed concern about the reduction in engagement among younger diaspora members. One elder member reflected:

"The younger ones born here in Denmark don't feel the same connection. If we don't involve them now, the associations may not last."

A transnational paradox is being introduced by the generational gap. As the first generation is emotionally and culturally tied to Cameroon, the younger generation prefers to identify more closely with the society of Denmark than Cameroonian society. As chapter 4 discussed Transnationalism, it was noted that keeping cross-border engagement alive requires continuous renewal of identity and belonging across generations. Without a deliberate inclusion of different generations, the usefulness and continuity of HTAs as transnational actors in the long run may weaken.

In summary, these obstacles indicate that the operation of HTAs is within a complicated web of emotional, institutional as well as structural limitations. Their personal experience shows the general situation of development that is led by the diaspora**,** where creativity and commitment often exist together with division and uncertainty. To address these issues, it will require partnership with institutions, different methods of raising funds, as well as active efforts to pass transnational identities and responsibilities to the next generations.

6.4 Cross-Case Insights: Denmark and Cameroon

The findings gotten from Denmark and Cameroon have shown how the activities of HTAs are conditioned by a strong transnational connection. The work that was done in Denmark and the outcomes that are seen in Cameroon are linked together, thereby bringing about one continuous process of development that crosses national borders.

HTAs in Denmark: Mobilization and Organization

In Denmark, HTAs like the ACAD are structured well and are democratic in nature. Members meet regularly to plan, raise funds as well as monitor their projects. The approach which they adopted regarding their organization shows what they have learnt from living in Denmark, a place where transparency, record-keeping, and joint decision-making are greatly valued.

As one executive member of ACAD stated:

"We have learned from how things work here. We plan properly and make sure every contribution is recorded. This helps people trust us."

This finding supports ideas that are rooted in Modernization Theory, which states that being exposed to new systems and new practices can influence a positive change when it is adapted to local needs (Rostow, 1960; Lerner, 1958). However, in the case of HTAs, this process happens from the bottom up rather than through large external aid programs, "modernization from below" that resonates with Chambers (1983) and Korten's (1990) emphasis on locally driven, participatory development.

Communities in Cameroon: Implementation and Local Ownership

In Cameroon, projects that meet local needs are facilitated by members of the community. HTAs usually work together with local leaders, teachers and parents in order to decide which schools or projects need support. In this way, priority is targeted towards the right projects.

 A teacher in Bokova stated:

"They don't just send money from abroad. They ask us what we need most, and then we work together to make it happen."

This shows how the projects that are handled by the HTA encourage participation and ownership, which is a major element of bottom-up development. Communities prefer to be active participants and partners of a project for sustainability rather than being just passive recipients, a principle that is in line with Banks et al. (2015)**,** who stated that participation of the community improves legitimacy and sustainability in processes of development.

Connecting Denmark and Cameroon: A Shared Effort

The connection between Denmark and Cameroon is more than money. It involves exchanging ideas, values and experiences. Through WhatsApp communication, constant meetings, as well as regular visits keep the connection between both sides active.

From the perspective of Transnationalism, this connection fills a gap between the two countries, a space where people, ideas, as well as resources flow in both directions (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Faist, 2010). This idea also challenges traditional patterns of aid that were described by World-Systems Theory, where development usually flows from the "donors" in the developed

countries to "recipients" in the underdeveloped nations (Wallerstein, 1974). Instead, HTAs show that immigrants can actually act as agents of change that bring new skills, new perspectives as well as direct support to their own communities.

In summary, when you compare Denmark and Cameroon, it will clearly show that HTAs act as bridges that link these two countries together. In Denmark, they gather resources and ideas based on their experiences in their host society; in Cameroon, on the other hand, communities adapt to these contributions as they apply them to local realities. Together, they create a model of transnational development that joins international exposure with local participation, thereby showing how ordinary people, instead of institutions, can connect international and local efforts for a meaningful change in the society.

6.5 Summary of Key Findings

The findings from this study show that Cameroonian HTAs that are in Denmark play an important role in the promotion of the development of education in their home communities. Through their actions, they link two different countries together by combining ideas, resources, as well as experiences they have gotten from Denmark with the needs and aspirations of their people in Cameroon.

Key insights include:

- **Motivation:**
  Members of the HTA are moved by a strong mentality of moral duty, gratitude, as well as the emotional attachment they have to their hometowns. Their exposure to a well-organized system of education in Denmark also helped to inspire them to improve the opportunities of education in Cameroon. This shows the ideas of Modernization Theory (Rostow, 1960; Lerner, 1958), which focuses on education as a foundation for progress and social change.
- **Organization:**
  The associations are structured, democratic in nature and highly participatory. Members contribute financially and also take part in joint decision-making. Their approach follows the values of accountability and cooperation that they learnt from their host country, which is in line with Chambers (1983) and Korten (1990), who support the participatory development models that centers on people.
- **Impact:**
  The projects of the HTA have led to improvements that can be seen in schools, such as new classrooms, better equipment, as well as an increase in the enrolment of students. These results show how small-scale efforts that are carried out by the community can bring real change when they are guided by a shared vision and joint participation (Banks et al., 2015).
- **Challenges:**
  Despite their achievements, HTAs still face ongoing challenges that are related to low finances, slow logistics, as well as weak collaboration with the government institutions. These challenges affect the sustainability of their work in the long run and point to the

need for a stronger partnership and continued engagement of the community (Korten, 1990; Banks et al., 2015).

Taken together, these findings bring to light, the fact that HTAs are more than just social organizations, they fill the gap between the diaspora and the homeland. Their work is in line with the idea of transnational development, where immigrants become active agents of change who connect international experiences with local realities (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Faist, 2010).

In general, the study demonstrates that HTAs represent a form of bottom-up, people-centered development, which contributes to education and community growth in ways that complement, rather than replace, state and donor efforts (Chambers, 1983; Korten, 1990).

6.6 Linking Empirical Findings to Theoretical Frameworks

The findings presented in this chapter are closely connected to the theoretical perspectives that were outlined in Chapter 4. Together, they help explain how and why Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark engage in educational development, and what this means within broader development debates.

Modernization Theory helps to explain the motivations behind the engagement of the HTA. Many members of the diaspora view education as a pathway to progress, just as Modernization Theory suggests that knowledge, skills, and human capital drive social transformation (Rostow, 1960; Lerner, 1958). Their desire to "give back" through building of schools and supporting students represents a belief in education as a tool for the modernization of their communities. However, unlike traditional modernization models that are often top-down, initiatives of the HTA initiatives are led by the community, thereby making them a more inclusive version of modernization from below (Chambers, 1983).

World-Systems Theory provides insight into the structural challenges faced by HTAs. It shows how unequal international relationships continue to shape the outcomes of development (Wallerstein, 1974). Although HTAs operate from the "core" (Denmark) and send resources to the "periphery" (Cameroon), their work challenges the usual flow of aid that positions African communities as passive recipients. Instead, HTAs represent active agents who use their position in the global system to redirect resources, knowledge, as well as influence toward their home communities (Rodney, 1972; Banks et al., 2015).

Finally, **Diaspora and Transnationalism** explain how these activities occur across borders. HTAs create networks that constantly act as a bridge between Denmark and Cameroon through the exchange of money, ideas as well as values (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Faist, 2010). Their transnational nature, therefore allows them to act as bridges connecting local needs with global experiences. These ongoing connections also shape how development is imagined and practiced, showing that it can emerge from personal relationships and collective effort rather than formal institutions alone.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that educational projects that are led by the HTA combine elements of modernization, transnational engagement, and structural negotiation. They reveal

how ordinary migrants are transforming development practice by linking the global and local, the structural and personal, and the modern and traditional, challenging older models of aid while offering a new vision of transnational development that is community-based (Chambers, 1983; Wallerstein, 1974; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004).

As the next chapter discusses, these findings will be further interpreted through the theoretical framework and existing literature, thereby highlighting their broader implications for projects that are diaspora-led and community-driven.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

As discussed at the end of the previous chapter, this present discussion will interpret the empirical findings through the theoretical and conceptual lenses that were presented in Chapter 4. This analysis will focus on how the activities of Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark contribute to the development of education in their communities of origin, and what this signifies about the nature of diaspora-led, bottom-up development.

This chapter links the findings to three key theoretical perspectives, which are Modernization Theory, World-Systems Theory, and Diaspora and Transnationalism and also discusses how these frameworks help explain both the potential and the limitations of initiatives that are led by the HTA. It also examines the broader implications for sustainability, legitimacy, and community empowerment, placing HTAs within current debates on grassroots and diaspora-driven development.

7.2 Modernization from Below: Education as a Pathway to Progress

The findings in Chapter 6 revealed that education is central to how members of the HTA imagine development. Participants described education as the main tool for "moving their communities forward," reflects the beliefs that are strongly linked to Modernization Theory (Rostow, 1960; Lerner, 1958) which states that education produces human capital development and fosters progress, discipline, and innovation that are key traits for national advancement.

However, unlike the classical modernization models, which assume that progress must come from state-led or externally financed interventions, the case of HTAs therefore demonstrates a form of modernization from below (Chambers, 1983; Korten, 1990). Here, ordinary citizens not governments or international donors drive development by using their experiences, skills, and resources to improve schools and learning environments within their hometowns.

Exposure to the efficient educational system of Denmark shaped the members of the HTAs perceptions of what quality education entails. They embraced values such as transparency, community responsibility, as well as effective management and merged them into project planning and execution. This aligns with Lerner's (1958) ideas that the contact with modern institutions will help to foster new attitudes toward participation and progress, although, in this case, it operates through a voluntary action that is based on community rather than state reform.

This way, HTAs embody a grassroots reinterpretation of modernization, one that merges traditional solidarity and local belonging with practices of modern management. To them, education is not just about going to school but about empowerment, moral duty as well as the creation of future citizens who are capable of sustaining development.

7.3 Negotiating Global Inequalities: Insights from World-Systems Theory

While the HTAs demonstrate agency and creativity, their work also brings to light the structural limits of local with initiatives that are led by the diaspora. As World-Systems Theory (Wallerstein, 1974) explains, worldwide inequalities shape how resources, power and opportunities flow between the "core" which are the (wealthier nations) and the "periphery" that is, the (developing regions). In this study, Denmark stands as the core from where diaspora members access the economic and institutional capital, while Cameroon represents the periphery, to which such resources are limited.

The activities of the HTAs challenge this imbalance by overturning traditional aid flows by transferring money, ideas, as well as materials from the North to the South through informal networks rather than institutional channels. Yet, this "overturning flow" remains restrained by structural realities such as limited funding, high transaction costs as well as inefficiencies of bureaucracy in Cameroon. These barriers reflect the arguments of Walter Rodney (1972) that development in Africa continues to be shaped by the historical dependency and weak institutions that were inherited from the colonialism.

Moreover, the reliance of HTAs on members voluntary contributions shows the tension between zeal and stability. HTAs projects only succeed on a small scale as it struggles to expand due to the lack of support from external bodies or government institutions. This therefore aligns with Banks et al. (2015), argues that grassroots actors often face structural obstacles that restrict their ability to scale or bring about changes. Thus, while HTAs fight against dependency by creating development that is initiated by individuals, they also remain rooted within international inequalities that limits their impact on the long-term.

In this context, HTAs operate as both agents of transformation and subjects of limitations, showing the double reality of development that is led by diaspora within the modern international system.

7.4 Transnationalism and Belonging: Connecting Two Worlds

These findings also showed that HTAs work as transnational communities of practice, which maintains strong ties between Denmark and Cameroon through communication, fundraising, as well as cultural solidarity. As Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) have explained, transnationalism shows how migrants sustain their social, economic, and emotional relationships that cross national borders. These relationships become what Faist (2010) calls "transnational social spaces," where ideas, values as well as resources circulate continuously.

In this study, the interactions of the HTAs are shown. Their work depends on both emotional attachments as well as organizational structures that serve as a link between members abroad with their communities at home. The ability to have a regular communication through digital platforms like WhatsApp, as well as time to time visits ensure that development remains relational and built on trust and general accountability.

For the local communities, engagement of the HTA stands for more than assistance of material things; it is a spirit of belonging and recognition from those who have migrated that they are still part of their hometown. This emotional dimension helps to add depth to transnationalism by bringing to limelight that development is also about maintaining identity and standing for each other.

However, the sustenance of this transnational engagement is faced with challenges, especially as younger generations who are in Denmark grow up with weaker emotional ties to Cameroon. This reflects Levitt and Jaworsky's (2007) observation that second-generation migrants often change their sense of belonging, sometimes they put the host country as their top priority over homeland engagement. In order to address this, there is a need for deliberate inclusion of youth in activities of the HTA so as to ensure continuity and the preservation of transnational identities over time.

7.5 Legitimacy and Sustainability of Diaspora-Led Development

Another important issue that is revealed from the findings is the question of sustainability and legitimacy. While HTAs deliver outcomes that are visible, such as renovation of schools and enhancement of learning conditions, their efforts are mostly short-term and rely heavily on the motivation of members. The absence of HTA's formal collaboration with local government structures reduces the institutional integration of their work.

This agrees with Korten's (1990) and Banks et al.'s (2015) argument that for grassroots initiatives to achieve a lasting impact, they must establish "linking" mechanisms that will exist between community action and formal institutions. Without these linkages, successful projects have the risk of becoming withdrawn and unsustainable once the passion fades or there is a change in leadership.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, the legitimacy of HTAs as actors of development remains high among members of the community. As shown in Chapter 6, local residents perceive the efforts of the HTA as genuine and trustworthy, mainly because of the identity that are shared and collective ownership. This differs sharply from public fear toward state projects or projects that are led by donors, which are often linked with corruption or political manipulation. Thus, HTAs show that legitimacy in development does not always come from formal authority, it can also come from cultural groups, transparency, as well as mutual trust.

7.6 Rethinking Development: From Dependency to Partnership

The overall picture that originates from this study proposes a shift from projects that are based on dependency to development that is based on partnership. HTAs in Denmark and their partner communities in Cameroon represent a developing model of reciprocal development, where both sides contribute ideas, labor, as well as commitment.

This model agrees with Chambers (1983) and Banks et al. (2015), who argue that for development to be sustainable, it must put participation, local knowledge, as well as shared ownership as top priority. By merging resources of the diaspora with community input, HTAs foster a sense of co-production rather than just reception of aid.

Together, HTA's initiatives challenge the deterministic view of peripheral dependency of the World-Systems Theory. Although there are inequalities, HTAs demonstrate that agency and innovation can come out from within these structures. Through those projects that are focused on education, they change migration into a tool of empowerment rather than a means of underdevelopment, a finding that adds to the ongoing debates on the positive role that African diasporas play toward the development of their communities.

7.7 Summary

This chapter has explained the empirical findings through the use of relevant literature and theories. It has also shown that the activities of Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark stand for a hybrid form of development; that is, their activities are rooted in modernization ideas, limited by international structures, as well as being kept active through belonging to transnational networks.

HTAs contribute to community education and empowerment while also reassessing what development actually means, shifting it from top-down interventions that are led by external bodies to grassroots partnerships that are carried out by the community. However, their weaknesses can be interpreted as a reminder that transnational unity alone cannot take the place of institutional capacity or policy integration in the long-term.

In essence, this discussion proves that HTAs have the capacity as *agents of change in bureaucratic* organizations that help to connect different countries, challenge dependency on government or external institutions, as well as focus on development as a combined effort that is rooted in identity, reciprocity and hope.

The next chapter will continue from what has been said in this chapter by discussing the summary of the general conclusions of the study, and by looking at the contributions it brings to the field of development led by the diaspora.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter brings together the main ideas from the study and calls draws attention to a wider significance in oder to help understand diaspora-led development in Cameroon. It also summarizes the major findings that were presented in previous chapters, reflects on how HTAs contribute to debates on development at the grassroots level, as well as examines the potential and limitations of Cameroonian HTAs as actors of development. The chapter also provides suggestions for future study as well as the practical implications for policy and community practice.

8.2 Summary of the Study

The study examined how Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark contribute to the development of education in the Fako Division of Cameroon. It also looked at:

- How these HTAs coordinate funds and come together collectively
- The different types of initiatives for education that they carry out
- How these communities view their interventions from HTAs
- Limitations and obstacles faced by HTAs
- How these findings fall in line with the theories used in this study.

The study showed that HTAs are impactful grassroots actors who link local needs with worldwide encounters through transnational institutional structures, with the use of qualitative methods such as focus groups, interviews and participant observation.

8.3 Summary of Key Findings

1. Motivation and Mobilization

Members of the HTA are strongly driven by their moral duty, gratitude for past educational opportunities and emotional attachments they have to with hometowns. Exposure to efficient systems of Denmark helps shape their desire to transfer ideas, values, and practices back home. This reflects elements of Modernization Theory, especially the belief that education is a pathway to progress.

2. Educational Interventions and Community Impact

The support provided by HTAs are implemented through their assistance to schools; provision of infrastructure, materials for learning, scholarships and vocational training. All these efforts are extensively acknowledged and considered as practical remedies for the community. They reveal the strengths of collaborative, bottom-up development, as discussed by Chambers and Korten.

3. Transnational Links

HTAs sustain their work though communication and collaboration across national borders. Digital tools, social networks and family ties help to create active "transnational social fields" that link Denmark and Cameroon together. This affirms the relevance of transnationalism for the understanding of diaspora-led development.

4. Structural Barriers and Sustainability Issues

Irrespective of the accomplishment, HTAs encounter financial constraints, administrative delays and inefficient government cooperation. These limitations highlight themes from world-system theory, which shows how actors on the margin remain affected by international and national structural inequalities

5. Community Perceptions

HTAs are seen as reliable and dedicated, but concerns have also been raised about unequal distribution of projects, sustainability, and dependence on funding from diaspora. These perceptions show a vulnerable but relevant nature of development that are directed by the diaspora

8.4 Conceptual Contributions of the Study

There are three major scholarly contributions that this study makes to developmental debates:

1. Modernization From Below

The study shows that modernization does not only happen through the reforms that are led by the state or projects that are driven by donors. HTAs demonstrate grassroots modernization, where individuals transfer skills, values, as well as knowledge across borders through lived experience rather than formal programs.

2. Rethinking Power in Development

Through the combination of ideas from World-Systems Theory with empirical evidence, the study shows how diaspora groups can challenge bureaucratic aid structures. It is true that it is still limited by international inequalities, HTAs create new pathways for development that originate from within their own communities.

3. Transnational Development in Practice

This thesis shows how transnational ties operate daily through communication, fundraising, as well as identity. It helps to deepen the understanding of development that is led by the diaspora by revealing that development is not only material but also social, emotional and relational.

8.5 Practical Implications

For Diaspora Organizations (HTAs)

- Build stronger partnerships with local councils, school boards, and NGOs
- Develop long-term financial plans to reduce dependency on voluntary donations
- Engage younger diaspora members to ensure continuity of activities

For Local Communities in Cameroon

- Continue to participate actively in project planning and monitoring
- Strengthen village education committees to support HTA projects
- Promote transparency and open communication with diaspora partners

For Policy and Government Institutions

- Recognize diaspora associations as important development partners
- Create simplified procedures for donating materials and coordinating projects
- Provide technical support or small grants to help scale community initiatives

8.6 Limitations of the Study

Like all research, this study has its limitations. First, fieldwork covered only three villages in the Fako Division and involved only a small number of participants. Second, some interviews were affected by political tension, which made people cautious. Finally, financial and time constraints also limited the depth of comparative analysis across different HTAs.

However, these obstacles did not weaken the contributions of the study. Instead, they show the need for more research across different regions, HTA structures, as well as diaspora contexts.

8.7 Concluding Reflections

This thesis shows that Cameroonian HTAs in Denmark play an important and growing role in the development of education in their communities of origin. They act as links between two worlds by changing personal experiences of migration into joint strategies for social improvement.

While their work faces hurdles, their commitment, cultural legitimacy, as well as approaches that are centered on community provide valuable lessons for reevaluating development beyond traditional state and donor frameworks. HTAs show that development can be local and transnational simultaneously, which is rooted in solidarity, pride, and shared responsibility.

In essence, this study is an eye opener into how African diasporas have been redefining development pathways in more significant, novel and community-oriented ways.

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