EDITORIAL NOTE

Identity formation and preservation have become pressing issues citizens across the globe are confronted with as they move from one place to another in search of better life opportunities. Specifically, citizens across the globe have battled with preserving some of their core identities, ranging from religious, ethnic, national, cultural, and even regional identity. Though maintaining these forms of identity has proven much more difficult for migrants or settlers, either due to some formal or informal rules, citizens across the globe have continued to rely on songs, music, dance, language, religion, cultural values, dressing, and other things to show their distinctiveness as well as maintain and preserve their identities. While this process appears easy for the older generations, children born in the Diaspora have persistently struggled with maintaining their inherited identity due to the growing influence of peer groups, the environment, socioeconomic factors, and other emerging factors.

Amidst these growing challenges, the importance of identity preservation cannot be overemphasized. This is because identity formation and sustainability help create a high sense of belonging among people, uphold cultural values and belief systems, guarantee personal identity, social cohesion, and community perseverance, and support self-expression. In recent times, the rise of digital media has further transformed the way identity is shaped, maintained, sustained, preserved, and even contested across borders, and this continues to inform the identity discourse between settlers, migrants, and citizens. These emerging identity challenges have necessitated further engagement among scholars, experts, and researchers, necessitating this special journal issue.

For instance, through critical historical analysis, Oji Nyimenuate Ngofa examined how Africa's colonial past and subsequent neo-colonial interventions have shaped its sense of self-identity in its engagement with the global community. Ngofa concludes that Africa's engagement with the international community has been largely influenced by a desire

to assert sovereignty and redefine its image. This often results in complex and sometimes contradictory foreign policies. Similarly, Usen E. Inyang & Preye Rachael Hamilton relied on postcolonial theory and dependency theory and secondary sources in probing the possible impact(s) of neocolonialism on the African identity crisis and its implications for economic independence and leadership. They pointed out that the African identity crisis, driven by a clash between traditional values and external influences, significantly affects the continent's economic independence and leadership capabilities. Preye Rachael Hamilton relied on the identity theory and secondary sources in interrogating how the diverse experiences and identities of the African Diaspora have shaped the continent's self-concept and its portrayal on the global stage. Hamilton observed that growing connections with ancestral roots, vast backgrounds, and knowledge among African diasporas played a significant role in shaping Africa's self-identity, and this is despite the strategic manipulations and politicization of diaspora identities across the globe.

Furthermore, Amechi Nwafor deployed dependency theory and secondary sources to examine how economic interactions and trade relations influence Africa's self-concept and global image. Nwafor's research revealed that Africa's self-identity crisis was closely linked to its economic engagements with the international market. Hence, its historical and current trade relationships often exacerbated dependency and shaped global perceptions of Africa. Utilizing a multi-disciplinary approach that combines international relations theory with digital anthropology, While,Havilah Susan-Inatimi Gamage explored the challenging dynamics of identity politics and its likely impact(s) on Africa's self-identity crisis within international relations. Central to Gamage's findings is that identity politics played a pivotal role in shaping Africa's self-perception and external relations. Specifically, ethnic, cultural, and religious identities were often instrumentalized by political leaders to garner support, resulting in a complex web of alliances and conflicts.

Accordingly, while the discourse on identity, human interaction, and global expectations remains an unending one, the works in this special issue have been able to successfully reengage this discourse with a view to proffering possible solutions and alternatives to the several challenges confronting identity formation and preservation across the globe, particularly Africans. Undoubtedly, these works will further enrich the discourse and provide policy options to individuals, governments, and countries across Africa.

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