

## **EXPANDING THE FRONTIERS OF CULTURE IN A GLOBAL VILLAGE: CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Culture has always been considered as energy, inspiration and empowerment for groups and individuals and profoundly contributed to their social development. Most recently, in order to face the new challenges deriving from globalization, many studies were promoted in order to ascertain beneficial links between culture, environment and development. This paper seeks a multi-cultural approach to the prevailing socio-economic challenges in West African Sub-region. Employing both historical and comparative tools of analysis, it argues that putting divergent cultures into strategic use or as a driving force for social reforms will enhance regional integration and sustainable development among countries of the sub-region through the instrumentality of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

**Keywords:** Cultural diplomacy, Development, Regional integration, Culture, Sustainable Development.