

## **Engaging the Francophone/Anglophone Divide in Social Science Research of Africa: the Contributions of CODESRIA**

Omobolaji O Olarinmoye<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Oxford University, Global Economic Governance Programme, Oxford, United kingdom

ololade001@gmail.com

One of the major obstacles confronting the actualisation of the goal of the development of a social science responsive to the needs of African societies is the tyranny of language expressed most graphically in the form of the Francophone-Anglophone divide. At a time when what is needed is a concentration of intellectual energies on the resolution of the key problems of poverty, democracy and development in Africa, what is on ground in African social sciences are parochial, inward looking, fiercely competitive, weak academic communities that look towards epistemic communities in the former metropole for leadership and sustenance. Africans social scientists have recognised the limitations imposed by the linguistic factor and have been working hard to overcome such through CODESRIA, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research. This paper presents and assesses the various efforts of CODESRIA since its inception in 1973 to overcome the burden of the language divide in social science research and training in Africa. It argues that CODESRIA's efforts, especially in the last ten years has gone a long way in creating a common forum where in linguistic divides have been bridged and common purpose achieved on how to address African developmental issues. The uniqueness of the CODESRIA approach is that dialogue has been achieved not at the expense of the uniqueness of the discourses and histories born out of and associated with the languages of the various academic communities.