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## Migration and development: Rethinking recruitment, remittances, diaspora support and return

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# Including the Debate on Migration-Development in the Post-2015 Millennium Development Goals: An Editorial Introduction

by NINNA NYBERG SØRENSEN (Danish Institute for International Studies, DIIS)

In September 2000, world leaders came together at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting a series of time-bound targets – with a deadline of 2015 – that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The eight MDGs to be achieved by 2015 did not include goals and targets related to migration basically, some might argue, because the hype around the migration-development nexus was not yet established in the international policy agenda-setting fora. Since 2003, when the Global Development Finance Annual Report took formal notice of remittances to developing countries, increasing attention to the migration-development link ensued: First in migrant-receiving states such as France, Belgium, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark, and later in the international fora, such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). Since then, studies, policy analyses, international forums and recommendations on migration have aimed to work for policy development in practical ways, including efforts to include migration concerns in the post-2015 development agenda.

Interestingly, national development processes existed in some developing countries well before the international community took on the task to “establish the link”. These processes attempted to strengthen the involvement of migrant populations living abroad. In 1994 Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc noted that, in the mid-1980s, the political leadership

of post-colonial states such as Grenada, St. Vincent, Haiti and the Philippines began to engage their migrant-populations living abroad in new de-territorialized processes of nation-state building. They did this by constructing the image of migrants as loyal citizens, encouraging them to maintain multiple ties to their homelands, and expecting assistance in developing local agriculture and industries, either directly or through encouraging their relatives at home (Basch, Glick Schiller and Scanton Blanc 1994). Even when initially deprived citizenship rights in their countries of origin – as was the case for many Central Americans fleeing political persecutions during the 1980s – some migrants found that their home country governments began to fight for their residency rights in the United States in order to secure the continuous flow of remittances. In the case of El Salvador, migrant participation in cross-border community, family and political networks led to formal recognition of political rights as Salvadoran citizens (Mahler 1995; Popkin 2003). In other migrant-sending countries, governments began to take an active role in encouraging and formalizing cross-border action by granting dual citizenship rights and introducing policies to facilitate migrant participation in national development efforts (Smith 1998; Guarnizo 1998; Baker-Cristales 2008).

Linking migration to development is not a new topic for the international community but has, in the words of Hein de Haas, swung back and forth like a pendulum since the post-World War II period: from modernist development optimism to brain-drain pessimism, towards neo-optimistic brain-gain and remittance euphoria, ever

since the dawn of the new millennium (de Haas 2012). Whether viewed positively or negatively, perceived migration pressures challenge social cohesion and, combined with burdened humanitarian and development aid budgets, these tensions may partly explain the post-2000 heightened interest in attempts to formulate migration-development policies (Vammen and Mossin Brønden 2012). To reiterate a few numerical facts: In 2013, one out of every seven people in the world was a migrant, either internally or internationally, voluntarily or involuntarily. It is estimated that 232 million people currently live outside their country of birth, of which 60 percent are to be found in more developed countries and 40 percent in developing countries. Of these, some are persons with legal status in the countries of settlement. Others are in irregular situations and try by various means to regularize their status. Refugees account for a relatively small proportion of global migrants; they are estimated at 15.7 million, comprising about seven percent of all international migrants. Nearly nine out of every ten refugees in the world are to be found in developing regions (OECD-UNDESA 2013).

Remittances have played an important role in establishing migrants as important development agents. Viewed from a purely financial point of view, remittances to developing countries indeed constitute a considerable source of external resource flows. It is estimated that these remittances exceeded \$72 billion U.S. dollars in 2000, reaching \$336 billion in 2008 (declining slightly with the global financial crisis but getting back on track with \$404 billion in 2013). These figures are expected to rise to \$516 billion by 2016. Remittances not only represent a large proportion of financial flows but also are substantially more than global official development assistance, capital market flows and foreign direct investment in many countries (World Bank 2014).

Remittances' potential for development – and their resistance, or even their capacity to be counter-cyclical to economic recession – surely explains why they stand at the centre of the optimistic discussions at international institutions like

the World Bank, the regional development banks, United Nations agencies such as the Development Programme (UNDP) and the Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the inter-governmental International Organization of Migration (IOM) (Faist 2008). The financing model underpinning the original MDGs focused largely on domestic resource mobilization and official development assistance (ODA), whereas the relative importance of ODA vis-à-vis remittances has declined (Greenhill and Prizzon 2012), which further illustrates this global situation.

In this special issue, Philip Martin argues that migration has contributed significantly to the achievement of the MDGs in areas such as poverty reduction, increasing education and improving child and maternal health. With reference to the global policy interest in the field, Martin also finds that international interest in migration has been decisive in promoting global partnerships for migration. Based on previous analysis of the “unsettled relationship” between migration and development (Papademetriou and Martin 1991), Philip Martin argues that three major migration-related processes of recruitment, remittances and return can contribute to development in migrant-sending areas. As significant international cooperation already has been put into reducing the transfer costs of sending remittances, the primary aim of the article is to argue that governments can cooperate to reduce the costs of migration by reducing the recruitment costs paid by the migrants themselves. Moving workers across borders may be a \$10 billion global business, which means that substantial sums could be redirected towards development if costs were reduced. A positive side effect of better migrant worker protection may follow from cost-reduction efforts.

From the mid-2000s onwards, international efforts to link migration to development through remittances have increasingly realized the private and family-based nature of individual remittances. These efforts have thus begun to focus on collective remittances transferred by hometown

associations or diaspora groups. Unlike family remittances, collective remittances tend to be targeted towards community-development projects in infrastructure or other communal areas, such as health care and educational provisions. Despite the fact that collective remittances represent a smaller share of the overall remittance flow, they are perceived to have a larger impact on local development, with potentially large multiplier effects on the local economy.

Three case studies focusing on migrants' collective participation in development are brought together in this special issue. The first article by Joan Lacomba and Alexis Cloquell discusses the various claims made by national and international institutions with regard to the role of migrant associations in home-country development. Based on a comprehensive, comparative study of the associations of eight migrant nationalities in Spain – including Algerian, Moroccan, Malian, Senegalese, Colombian, Ecuadorian, Bulgarian and Rumanian associations – the authors note the heterogeneity of migrant associations as well as the fact that not all migrant associations take on a transnational behaviour. Whether they do or not is narrowly related to the migrant groups' incorporation in the country of reception, the level of ethnic solidarity within the national group, the external assistance each group has been able to mobilize from Spanish NGOs and other alliances established with Spanish civil society and development agencies, the vitality of civil society in their country of origin, and the availability of material and human resources within the associations. The study concludes that migrant engagement cannot be a substitute for state or private investments in home-country development. To understand why some migrants engage in associational practices of a transnational character, researchers and policy makers need to be clear on the units of analysis we select. In the country of origin context, attention should be paid to issues such as political situation, social conflictivity, economic stability, and cultural identity. In the country of destination, migrants' labour market incorpora-

tion and economic and social integration plays a major role.

Lothar Smith, Fabio Baggio and Ton Van Naerssen expand the analysis of transnational migration-development initiatives beyond bilateral country of origin / country of reception arrangements. Their article is based on engagement with the multi-stakeholder TRANSCODE programme, aimed at providing a platform for cross-fertilisation of experiences and ideas between migrant organisations of various national and geographic origins as well as other actors such as NGOs in migrant-sending countries, local and national governments, policy makers, practitioners, representatives of the business community, and academics. So far, the programme has built bridges between participants from the Philippines, the Netherlands, Ghana, Italy and Burundi. It has also fostered lessons learned in terms of identification of best practices as well as enhanced engagement and cooperation between transnational community organisations and other actors. The programme also has met, however, a number of persistent obstacles, such as a weak representation of the private sector and the creation of hierarchy as well as competition among actors for funding and along generational lines. A main obstacle is located in the policies and practices of funding development agencies that still seem to think along the lines of nation-states and partner-countries in consideration of the merits of projects and shortlisting.

European development agencies have also pursued migration-development initiatives under the heading of diaspora-cooperation. These initiatives are often directed towards areas that formal development actors find difficult to access due to conflict and other security problems. Based on a larger study of diaspora contributions to development and reconstruction in fragile situations, Nauja Kleist sets out to analyse the understandings of diaspora that underlie development agencies' engagement with diaspora groups. The analysis outlines three dimensions of how diaspora groups are perceived and approached in European develop-

ment cooperation: First, as collective development agents serving as bridgeheads or brokers between the established development industry and local actors; second, as security threats or long-distance nationalists whose distance make them unaccountable or prone to affiliation with the wrong local actors (the fundamentalists, the terrorists); and, finally, as any other civil society actor in development cooperation that just needs to be mainstreamed. Concrete activities funded either by the European Commission or national European donor agencies are found to cluster around three types of support, namely mainstreaming, particular diaspora schemes and network support. Capacity building and matching fund schemes are the two common ways of support. No matter the type and practicalities related to support, the diaspora project landscape is extremely volatile. Donor countries furthermore display a lack of policy coherence between their migration and development policies by not linking projects concerned with development in countries of origin to integration efforts in countries of reception. When selecting projects for funding, donors tend to merge quality with value assessments and select only those diaspora projects that are in line with their own priorities. Selection of partners is thus a very political process.

Following the recruitment-remittances-return logic adopted by various international institutions involved in the migration-development field leads to the assumption that migrants will contribute to development when they return to their country of origin. When returning to post-conflict countries, this contribution is seen to have a peace-building effect. The contribution by Marieke van Houte and Tine Davids addresses the question under which conditions this might be the case. Their analysis focuses on experiences with “Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration” programmes that, at this point, have taken up a substantial part of European migration-development policies and budgets. Within this policy domain, the return migration of refugees, failed asylum seekers and undocu-

mented migrants is considered both as a movement *back to normal* that restores pre-conflict natural and social order and a movement *forward to change* in which returnees contribute to development and peacebuilding. There are several problems involved in this assumption: First, that few assisted returns are, in fact, voluntary. Second, many assumptions pertaining to returnees – that they bring skills, capital, new ideas and access to transnational networks – do not apply to migrants currently returned to countries such as Afghanistan. And third, only those returnees with access to continued mobility (those having obtained citizenship elsewhere) have the necessary room to maneuver and engage in peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict states suspicious to “foreign influence”. There is, in other words, a mismatch between the assumptions on which migration-development policies are based and the fact that most resources are put into assisting involuntary returnees.

Conceptual confusion and a mismatch between enactments in policy and migrant realities inform several debates. The article by Ninna Nyberg Sørensen and Ida Marie Vammen sets out to discern the understandings of the family in two (often intermingled) debates concerned with the effects of migration on development: Firstly, the largely state and policy driven discourse on the potential benefits of migration on economic development and, secondly, the largely academic transnational family literature focusing on issues of care and the micro-politics of gender and generation. The authors discern two standard accounts in policy discourses around migrants and their families. The first posits that remittances potentially benefit migrants and their families by lifting individuals and families out of poverty, often leading to increased female participation in employment and, by implication, empowerment of women and changed family relations. At the other end of the spectrum, disconnections are emphasized: Family separation leads to family disruption; has emotional, psychological and social costs; distorts care regimes; and causes a plethora of

social problems ranging from school dropouts and teenage pregnancies, to societal decay and the breakdown of social norms. These accounts rarely specify the family situations that circumscribe migrant families prior to, during and after migration. The academic literature around transnational motherhood, fatherhood, childhood and global care chains suggests a more complicated picture of gains and losses. The authors argue that in understanding whether families fall apart after migration or succeed in transnationalizing their existence, researchers might find a better explanation in global macro-politics than in family micro-dynamics.

The last article in the issue by Thomas Faist takes the issue of the relationship between academic knowledge and policy dynamics a step further by debating the public role of social scientists in the migration-development nexus. Faist advances the proposition that policy and academia indeed have been coupled in migration-development debates, not least through a high degree of commissioned research around issues such as return-to-develop, brain drain, co-development, diaspora entrepreneurs, etcetera, which are all related to particular macro-political changes. He then distinguishes between two types of knowledge: instrumental knowledge oriented toward the means to achieve a goal, and reflexive knowledge geared toward (normatively desirable) ends. Should migration-development research aim at producing expert knowledge to political organizations? Should we take sides and advocate for social justice, equality, or migrants' human rights? Or should we rather pursue the role of the public intellectual who seeks to change the perspective of the debate by supporting the better argument? Since academic knowledge may serve legitimizing, substantiating and symbolic functions for policy and decision-making, these are important questions. They imply that social scientists active in the migration-development field should consider which role we wish to occupy in the post 2015 MDG migration-development debate: as advisors to politicians or as agenda setters in the public debate?

If the latter choice is made, an important task of migration-development academic research is to see through ideological statements made in migration policy. New research should highlight interdependent functions in the construction of the policy field, beginning with pointing out that much policy talk about migration-development is, in reality, serving migration control functions.

The full set of articles included in the issue expands the basis on which to make migration issues an integral part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda succeeding the Millennium Development Goals. The original MDGs briefly mentioned the respect for and protection of migrants' human rights but largely ignored broader migration-development issues, both those concerned with making migration work for development and those understanding migration as an integral part of global development processes. Numerous policy inputs from stakeholders around initiatives such as the Global Commission for Migration and the Global Forum on Migration and Development have sought to promote a more coherent, comprehensive and global response to migration issues".<sup>1</sup> A UN High Level Dialogue on International Development has debated the multidimensional aspects of international development in order to identify appropriate ways to maximize its development benefits and minimize its negative impacts.<sup>2</sup> Yearly meetings of the Global Forum on Migration and Development have sought to establish "a new global process designed to enhance the positive impact of migration on development (and vice versa) by adopting a more consistent policy approach, identifying new instruments and best practices, exchanging know-how and experience about innovative tactics and methods and, finally, establishing cooperative links between the various actors involved". After the first constitutive meeting in Brussels, discussions have included protection and empowering of migrants for development (Manila 2008), integration of

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.gcim.org](http://www.gcim.org)

<sup>2</sup> See [www.un.org/esa/population/migration/hld/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/population/migration/hld/index.html)

migration policies into development strategies (Athens 2009), migration-development partnerships (Mexico 2010), issues of coherence, capacity and cooperation (Switzerland 2011), migration and human development aspects (Mauritius 2012), and establishing partnerships on international migration (Sweden 2013). The results of several years of intense debate have led to achievements on the remittance front, first and foremost lower transfer fees and easier access to sending and receiving remittances. On the policy alignment front, however, there has been less convergence (Glick Schiller 2012). While there has been increasing policy attention to promoting return of irregular migrants and failed asylum seekers, there have been fewer attempts to actively include migration concerns in development policy.

The current Outcome Document from the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals confirms this picture by having only the following to say about migration: Goal 10: reduce inequality within and among countries ... by facilitate[ing] orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation and well-managed migration policies.<sup>3</sup> A key message emerging across the issue is that any formulation of migration-development goals and effective implementing of policies in the area must consider the adverse effects of tighter migration control. If prevented from mobility, how would some of the world's most disadvantaged people be able to contribute to development where public policy and official aid programmes have failed?

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

**Note on the Author**

NINNA NYBERG SØRENSEN is a senior researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). She has worked on migration-development issues for most of her career and published widely on transnational migration, conflict and gender, for example *Work and Migration* (London 2002), *The Migration-Development Nexus* (Geneva 2003), *Living Across Worlds* (Geneva 2007), and *The Migration Industry and the Commercialization of International Migration* (London 2013). Her recent work explores undocumented migration of Central Americans, the insecurities migrants encounter and the consequences of massive deportation on local communities and sending states.



# Lower Migration Costs to Raise Migration's Benefits

by PHILIP MARTIN (University of California at Davis)

## Abstract

Every year up to 10 million workers leave one country to work in another. Most are guest workers and enter the destination country legally, sometimes paying \$1,000 or more to recruiters, governments, and other agents who facilitate their employment abroad. Helping over five million workers a year to move across borders for jobs may be a \$10 billion global business, and reducing migration costs could increase remittances and speed development in the workers' countries of origin. This may also improve worker protections, since migrant workers who arrive abroad in debt may be vulnerable to exploitation. Governments have cooperated to reduce remittance costs. They could further reduce worker-paid migration costs by implementing a wide range of policies, from negotiating free-movement regimes to sending workers abroad only via government agencies. The highest worker-paid costs arise in complex systems that involve recruiters in both sending and receiving countries. Reducing recruitment costs is an important key to ensure that migrant workers are protected. This would also increase the rate at which development occurs in migrant-sending countries.

**Keywords:** international labor migration, recruitment costs, recruiters

## Introduction

The eight Millennium Development Goals ([www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)) to be achieved by 2015 do not mention migration. However, reforming international labour migration could speed the achievement of many of the MDGs, including reducing extreme poverty and hunger, increasing education and improving child and maternal health, and promoting global partnerships for development.

Migration can facilitate faster development. Reforming the development framework on migration and increasing flows of workers from poorer to richer countries could help more workers to achieve a better quality of life in their destination countries. The three major migration-related processes that can contribute to development in migrant-sending areas are recruitment, remittances, and returns.

- Recruitment deals with those who migrate. Are migrants persons who would have been unemployed or underemployed at home, or key employees of business and government whose departure leads to layoffs and reduced services?
- Remittances to developing countries exceed \$1 billion a day. Can the volume of remittances be increased if more migrants cross borders? How can the cost of transferring small sums between countries be further reduced? Once remittances arrive, are they spent to improve the education and health of children in migrant families, or do they fuel competition for fixed assets, as when land or dowry prices rise?
- Returns refer to migrants who come back to their countries of origin. Do returning migrants bring back new technologies and ideas and

stay, do they circulate between home and abroad, or do they return to rest and retire?

The impact of these 3 R's on the differences between migrant-sending countries varies widely, which is one reason why the link between migration and development is often described as uncertain or unsettled (Skeldon 2008, 1997; Papademetriou and Martin 1991). Economically motivated migration can set in motion virtuous circles, as when young workers who would have been unemployed at home find jobs abroad, send home remittances that reduce poverty and are invested to accelerate economic and job growth, and return with new skills and technologies that lead to new industries and jobs. The result is a convergence in economic conditions and opportunities between sending and receiving areas.

There has been significant international cooperation to reduce remittance costs, and circular migration and diaspora development aim to ensure that migrants contribute to their countries of origin. There is a need, however, for more cooperation to reduce recruitment costs. Reducing recruitment costs was a theme of the UN's High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in October 2013 ([http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=3892\\_0\\_5\\_0](http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=3892_0_5_0)), and is a focus of KNOMAD ([www.knomad.org](http://www.knomad.org)) efforts to measure recruitment costs.

Understanding recruitment costs and the efforts to reduce them requires a brief discussion of labour markets, which have three major functions: recruitment, remuneration, and retention. Recruitment matches workers with jobs, remuneration, or the wage and benefit system, motivates workers to perform, and retention identifies the best workers and develops methods to promote and keep them employed.

The primary goal of labour markets is to match workers to appropriate jobs, oversee that the work is performed adequately, and provide monetary wages and work-related benefits in exchange for their workers' time. Unlike many other market transactions, this work is unusual because it requires a continuous relationship between employer and employee. Employers

and workers interact constantly in the workplace, as supervisors assess employee performance and workers consider their satisfaction with the job. Employers may terminate unsatisfactory workers, and dis-satisfied workers may quit their jobs.

National borders can complicate the three-R labour market processes. For example, if jobs are in one country and workers are in another, language differences, variance in training and occupational standards, and varying definitions of skills and occupations can make it harder to match workers and jobs efficiently. Employers may have to rely on intermediary recruiters to find workers, and governments in both sending and receiving countries may have to approve employer job offers and check the health and skills of workers selected by recruiters before they cross borders to fill jobs.

The other two R-functions may also be complicated by national borders. For example, it is harder to determine appropriate remuneration when employers do not share the language and culture of their employees, leading to misunderstandings and disputes about employee responsibilities and performance, especially if low-skilled workers sign contracts that they do not fully understand. Productivity can be affected by the expiration of work visas that require workers to return to their countries of origin.

In labour markets, asymmetric information is exchanged (Akerlof 1970). Employers are most knowledgeable about the jobs they offer, and workers know more than employers about their abilities and competencies. Employers have developed a variety of strategies to screen and hire the best workers, including setting minimum education and experience requirements, asking current workers to refer qualified friends and relatives, and advertising or using recruiters to find qualified workers. Meanwhile, workers may signal their abilities to employers by earning credentials and certificates and gaining experience that demonstrate they will be good employees. Screening and signalling has been a core concern of labour economics (Riley 2001).

When workers and employers do not share a common language or don't have experience with the same education and training systems, they often rely on intermediaries to facilitate worker-job matches (Autor 2009). Recruiters who understand the job requirements find and screen workers to fill them. When low-skilled workers face a high turnover in employment, recruiters may act as the port of entry into a business, as all new hires enter the workplace via recruiters. Workers sometimes access these recruiters via temporary help firms. If these workers prove to be satisfactory after a probationary period, they may make the transition to work as a regular employee of the firm.

National borders add more layers between workers and jobs and often complicate the recruitment process. Employers may turn to recruiters in their own countries to find workers in other countries. These local recruiters may recruit foreign workers directly or transmit employer job offers to recruiters in countries with workers, where local recruiters can proceed to seek out and screen workers. In other words, national borders offer opportunities for recruiter investment and specialization that can make the process of filling vacant jobs more efficient *or* prompt rent-seeking that raises migration costs, as when recruiters act as gatekeepers and charge local workers seeking higher wage-jobs abroad. There is a spectrum of recruiters, from those who rely on word-of-mouth to find workers to those who advertise for and screen interested applicants.

International borders should *increase* employer investment in recruitment to ensure good worker-job matches, but in practice, employers often invest little to recruit low-skilled foreign workers. In addition, they sometimes charge foreign workers to be hired in their companies. If employers can charge workers to be hired and pay them low wages, they may have an incentive to hire too many workers. This may benefit their narrow, short-term economic interest, but can lower productivity and ultimately make them less competitive over time.

### The UN and Migration Costs

Developing a framework that protects migrant workers but does not lead to unwanted social costs would give most migrants the economic opportunities they seek. The UN's High-Level Dialogue on migration and development ([www. iom.int/cms/hld2013](http://www.iom.int/cms/hld2013)) in October 2013 noted the unfairness of worker-paid migration costs rising as worker skill levels fall, so that low-skilled workers pay a higher share of their foreign earnings to recruiters and others than high-skilled workers. Therefore, the UN has pledged new efforts to develop policies that can reduce migration costs.

The HLD's concluding statement laid out five priorities, beginning with the need to integrate migration into the global development agenda, making migration a catalyst for development by protecting the rights of migrants and lowering migration costs. The second HLD priority is to improve lives and work for migrants by lowering remittance costs and improving the recognition and transfer of skills over borders. Third is to develop plans to help migrants in crisis, and fourth is to collect more data on migrants moving within the various migration corridors, including their characteristics as well as migration and remittance costs. The fifth HLD priority is to develop a strategy to achieve the first four priorities, and to have the strategy endorsed by governments.

International cooperation has reduced remittance costs and called attention to the return and reintegration of migrant workers, while the citizens abroad, the diaspora, speed development at home. After the 9/11 terrorist acts, governments cooperated to make it easier to send small sums over borders via regulated financial institutions, and their revised policies plus technology have reduced the cost of sending \$300 from one country to another from 15 percent or \$45 to 10 percent or \$30 over the past decade.

The World Bank projected that remittances to developing countries would surpass \$435 billion in 2014, up eight percent from \$404 billion

in 2013.<sup>1</sup> The average cost of remitting funds was 8.4 percent of the amount transferred, typically \$200 to \$300, down slightly from 2013. The World Bank's 5x5 program aims to reduce remittance costs by another five percentage points over five years. That is, to lower average remittance costs to less than five percent. Technological innovations, including remittance transfers via cell phones, may help to achieve this goal.

Another potential migration-related spur to development in migrant-sending countries is the diaspora of citizens abroad. Migrants from developing countries who live in high-income countries have an estimated \$500 billion in savings in the countries in which they are living. Since they know the conditions in their countries of origin, the diaspora is often first to invest when opportunities appear. Their savings as well as links to investors and firms in the high-income countries can economically help developing countries.

### Recruiters and Migration Costs

Wage gaps between countries motivate labour migration. Most workers will not give the entire wage gap to recruiters, but they will pay more than the typical one month's foreign wages that some governments specify as the maximum amount private recruiters should charge to help workers find foreign jobs. If workers have a two-year contract, one month's foreign earnings are 4.2 percent of foreign earnings; on a three-year contract, one month's earnings are 2.8 percent.

Recruiters who match workers and jobs over borders are paid for their services. Employers generally pay some or all recruitment costs for highly skilled workers, including managers, health care professionals, and engineers, because there are relatively few workers with these qualifications and the consequences of

a poor worker-job match in these areas can be costly to the employer (Sundheim 2013). However, there are often more workers than jobs in low-skilled occupations such as domestic service and construction labour, making some workers willing to pay high fees in order to move to the front of the queue of workers seeking foreign jobs. Even if low-skilled workers know they are paying higher-than-government-set fees for foreign jobs, they may not complain if they get what they want: a foreign job that offers a higher wage.

If worker-paid migration costs are low and the process of matching workers with jobs is satisfactory, this can result in satisfied workers and employers and good outcomes for governments in both migrant-sending and -receiving countries. Low migration costs allow migrant workers to receive most of the wage wedge that motivates international migration.<sup>2</sup> Low migration costs can help governments to manage migration by reducing the need for them to deal with dissatisfied, terminated, and runaway workers.

High migration costs can have the opposite effects. High costs can prompt migrant workers to seek jobs for which they lack necessary skills in a quest to earn higher wages, to take second jobs while abroad to repay migration debts but then become irregular by working in a job for which they do not have a visa, or overstay their visas to achieve their savings goals. Employers may be dissatisfied with the performance of workers who are worried about repaying recruitment debts as well as workers sent by recruiters that were more interested in collecting recruitment fees than in making optimal worker-job matches.

Given the benefits of good rather than poor worker-job matches, why do high migration costs and poor worker-job matches persist? There are many reasons, including false incentives recruiters may employ to attract workers. Employers and

<sup>1</sup> India received \$70 billion in remittances in 2013, more than was earned from software service exports, followed by China, \$60 billion, Philippines, \$25 billion, Mexico, \$22 billion, and Nigeria, \$21 billion. Remittances were 52 percent of GDP in Tajikistan in 2013, 31 percent in Kyrgyz Republic, and 25 percent in both Nepal and Moldova ([www.worldbank.org/projects/migrationandremittances](http://www.worldbank.org/projects/migrationandremittances)).

<sup>2</sup> Wage differences can manifest themselves as efficiency wages, as when employers pay more than the market wage to workers who are hard to monitor in order to encourage them to work, since loss of their job would result in the worker having to accept a lower-wage job.

recruiters may not care about *who* is recruited if their major business is selling job offers that result in the issuance of work visas, as under the kafala sponsorship systems of some mideastern countries. Recruiters may see low-skilled labourers as homogeneous or interchangeable, giving them little incentive to invest to screen and find the best workers. Finally, migrants in countries that offer few routes for upward mobility and who have few opportunities to migrate to higher wage countries may see recruiters as a way to cross otherwise closed borders.

Easy access to migrant workers may have unwanted effects. If governments routinely approve employer requests for the migrant workers, and their wages are low, the readily available migrant labour may slow productivity growth in migrant-receiving countries. For example, employers may switch to labour-intensive production processes and hire more workers, as in countries with high shares of migrants in construction, manufacturing and other sectors.<sup>3</sup> In some countries, labourers paid \$200 a month are kept on standby in case they are needed to meet unanticipated peak labour demands, as at airports that handle freight.<sup>4</sup>

Recruiters can be more than entities that match workers and jobs. In some countries, public entities receive government funds to help displaced, unemployed, and low-skilled workers to improve their skills and find jobs. Most workforce intermediaries that receive public funds for

both training and placement do not move workers over national borders.

### Recruitment and Migration Costs

There are three major steps in the international labour migration process that affect migration costs: learning about foreign jobs and receiving a job offer, having sending- and receiving-governments approve the job offer and check the migrant's health status before departure, and travel to the foreign job and go to work. Each of these processes, viz, job offer, government approvals, and travel, can lead to migration costs that are passed on to workers.

### Foreign Job Offers

Most countries have "employer-driven" labour systems, meaning that workers are recruited to fill jobs after governments agree with employers that foreign workers are "needed." Employers begin the process by requesting permission, usually from a Ministry of Labor, to recruit foreign workers to fill particular jobs.

Governments have a wide range of responses to employers that are reflected in their temporary foreign worker programs. Some governments bar the entry of low-skilled workers, as in Japan,<sup>5</sup> while others establish quotas on the number of migrant-workers who can be hired by industry, as in Korea, by industry and firm, as in Singapore, or by industry and region, as in Spain.

Other governments establish an overall quota on the number of work visas available, as with the U.S. H-1B program, but do not require employers to try to recruit local workers before hiring migrants, while others have no quota, as in Germany and Australia-New Zealand for seasonal workers, but require employers to try to recruit local workers while offering at least a minimum package of wages and benefits before granting them permission to hire migrants. Some governments use expert commissions to set

<sup>3</sup> In Singapore, economic growth averaged five percent while productivity growth averaged one percent between 2000 and 2010, a decade in which the number of foreign workers almost doubled, from 612,000 to over 1.1 million. The Ministry of Trade and Industry's Economic Survey for the 2nd quarter of 2013 asked: "Are Low-Skilled Foreign Workers Substitutes for Machinery?" and concluded that the answer was yes, that is, the influx of foreign workers slowed productivity growth ([www.mti.gov.sg/MTIInsights/Pages/Singapore's-Missing-Capital---Are-Low-Skilled-Foreign-Workers-Substitutes-for-Machinery.aspx](http://www.mti.gov.sg/MTIInsights/Pages/Singapore's-Missing-Capital---Are-Low-Skilled-Foreign-Workers-Substitutes-for-Machinery.aspx)).

<sup>4</sup> Hundreds of Bangladeshi workers paid \$200 a month are housed in dorms near the Dubai airport and called to work as needed to deal with surges in air freight.

<sup>5</sup> Japan allows employers to hire foreigners to fill low-skilled jobs as trainees or as foreign students who are allowed to work part time while they are studying.

and change quotas, while others fix temporary foreign worker quotas in law (Martin and Ruhs 2011).

Most governments have a hire-local-workers-first policy. Employers usually post job vacancies for which they are requesting foreign workers on local employment exchanges and try to recruit local workers for at least several weeks before they receive permission to recruit foreign workers (Larsen and Vesan 2011). In many cases, government approval or certification to employ foreign workers is a “reward” for the employer’s failure to recruit local workers. If employers prefer foreign to local workers, then trying to recruit local workers is a going-through-the-motions exercise that governments are not well suited to second-guess (Cappelli 2012). There are many reasons to prefer foreigners, including the fact that they tend to be more “loyal” to their employer because they generally lose the right to be in the country if they lose their jobs.

Few governments have labour market information systems (LMIS) that provide timely and detailed data on local labour supply and demand (Stigler 1962). This means that, if employers fail to recruit local workers within a week or two, they have passed the “economic needs test” and receive permission to recruit foreign workers. Since most governments approve virtually all employer requests for foreign workers, most employers are confident that they will be certified to hire foreign workers when they request permission to recruit and employ migrant workers.

The fees that employers pay to be certified are generally paid by employers and not usually recharged to workers, but the levies that some countries impose on employers to discourage them from hiring migrant workers may be passed on to migrants, especially in countries that do not have minimum wages. The wages paid to migrants can be lowered by several hundred dollars a month due to employer-paid levy charges.

Once approved to hire foreign workers, employer job offers are transmitted in various ways to workers who can fill them. There are sev-

eral transmission mechanisms, including directly from the employer or a current employee to (potential) migrant workers in other countries, from one government employment exchange to another, and/or from the employer to a recruiter in the country of origin or in the country with workers.

Just as there may be tension between government desires to have employers hire local workers and employer preferences to hire migrant workers, there may be tension between employers, as well, who want to hire the “best and brightest” in global labour markets, while sending-country governments want to retain native talent and send jobless and inexperienced workers abroad. These tensions were evident in Germany’s guest worker program with Turkey, where many skilled Turkish construction workers left for Germany and the Turkish government for a time in the early 1970s tried to prohibit skilled Turkish craftsmen from leaving (Martin 1991). This Turkish regulation was not very effective at preventing out-migration because skilled Turkish workers could leave as tourists and, once in Germany, find an employer to give them a job offer that would lead to a work and residence permit issued in Germany.

Migration costs paid by workers often rise with the involvement of recruiters. Economic theory suggests that migration costs should decline over time as employers rely on networks of current employees to refer friends and relatives to fill jobs. Current employees know the requirements of the job and the capabilities of their friends and relatives, and can be ideal “recruiters” who bring only qualified workers into the workplace and often orient and train the newly hired workers. Using networks of current employees to find new workers should lower migration costs (Martin 2014).

Network hiring has lowered worker-paid migration costs in many migration corridors, as from Eastern Europe to Spain or Mexico and Central America to the United States. But worker-paid migration costs to move from South Asia to work as Gulf oil exporters remain very high for

several reasons. First, Gulf employers and Gulf-based recruiters often charge recruiters in South Asian countries \$1,000 or more for the kafeel or sponsorship that most Gulf countries require of foreigners, an up-front cost that is usually passed on to workers. Second, South Asian governments often restrict or prohibit foreign employers from recruiting their citizens directly, ensuring that most migrants must use local recruiters and thus pay their fees. Third, many Gulf employers who act as sponsors request more workers than they can employ, selling sponsorships as a way to supplement their income. Recruiters may offer these "free visas" to South Asian workers as a way to work for any employer once abroad, but many migrants are vulnerable because, if detected while employed for an employer who is not a sponsor, they are deemed illegal and subject to deportation.<sup>6</sup>

If recruiters are not involved, migrant workers may pay to be placed on recruitment lists from which employers select workers. Workers who want to be selected by Korean employers under the Employment Permit System must first pass a Korean-language test. They may, therefore, incur costs to learn Korean. In many migrant-sending countries, information about foreign jobs is received in capital cities and transmitted via layers of agents and subagents to low-skilled workers in rural areas. These agents may be compensated by city-based recruiters after migrants pay them for contracts. Many agents accompany rural migrants to visit recruiters in urban centres, and some accompany migrants as they undergo health and other pre-departure checks.

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<sup>6</sup> Saudi Arabia had about nine million foreign residents in 2013, but began a campaign to arrest and deport unauthorized foreigners in November 2013. During the first five months of the campaign, 370,000 foreigners a month were deported, many of whom had so-called free visas. The Saudi government ordered the 600 Saudi recruiting agencies to form 18 mega associations to obtain visas for the foreign workers requested by Saudi employers, making the mega association rather than the sponsor-employer responsible for the welfare of the migrant worker. See [http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=3907\\_0\\_3\\_0](http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=3907_0_3_0)

The cost of job matching, of linking a potential worker in one country with a job in another, is the first cost in the three-stage recruitment procedure. The migration costs in this first phase that culminate in a contract for a worker to fill a particular foreign job can include both monetary as well as opportunity costs, as workers spend time that they could be working to learn about foreign job offers and complete the paperwork to go abroad.

### **Securing Government Approvals**

Obtaining a foreign job contract is usually the first step to go abroad and work, followed by government permission to leave one country and to enter another to work. Many low-skilled migrant workers going abroad for the first time must obtain passports, visas and work permits for the country in which they will work, and they must also undergo health and other checks before departure. Satisfying these procedures in order to go abroad often involves visits to different agencies and facilities, and sometimes takes several days in a place far away from the migrant's home. Some countries, notably the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, have developed one-stop shops that enable migrant workers to apply for required documents and clearances in one building in one day (Abella, Martin and Midgley 2004).

Obtaining a first foreign work contract procures a passport into which a work and residence visa can be inserted. However, before the worker can obtain the visa, he/she must usually undergo a health check and submit a police clearance certificate. In some countries, only specified health facilities can provide the health check, necessitating a trip to that facility.

Contracts provided to workers are often checked by a government agency before workers receive final approval to go abroad to ensure that they offer any specified wage required by the sending country, such as \$400 a month for domestic workers leaving the Philippines. In some countries, workers are asked about any recruitment fees they paid, but the answers are

often not reliable, since recruiters often coach their client-workers to say they paid no fees or no more than government-set maximums.

For migrants whose contracts have been approved, some governments issue a photo ID, as in Bangladesh and the Philippines. These cards, which may be subsidized by local banks hoping that the migrant will use the card to make remittances, can serve as an ID to receive consular services abroad, but are not usually recognized by host-country governments as official identification.

### **Traveling Abroad and Working**

Migrants with approved contracts normally go abroad soon after receiving contracts and work visas. Some migrant-sending countries require migrants to undergo pre-departure orientation, typically a half-day or day-long session that can be held at a government agency that approves worker contracts. Other migrants undergo training that can last from a few days to a few weeks. For example, Sri Lanka has training facilities near its major international airport that provide several weeks of training to domestic workers before departure.

Most migrant-sending governments have final checks for departing migrants at airports, where passports, visas, and contracts are checked a final time to spot deficiencies that, if detected, can lead to the worker being denied the right to board the plane. These pre-departure checks are generally established by sending governments to protect migrant workers, but are sometimes put in place at the request of migrant-receiving governments who worry about the arrival of workers with false documents who must be repatriated. Recruiters often advise migrants that airport checks the final obstacle to get what the migrants want: a foreign job.

The cost of air travel and the share of travel costs borne by workers vary widely. With remittances ranging from five to ten percent of GDP in many countries, national carriers might be expected to offer cheap airfares to migrants going abroad, but these are rare. Instead, some

migrant-receiving countries require migrant workers with two- or three-year contracts to arrive with round-trip tickets, which often increase travel costs.

Migrant workers usually pay a package price to recruiters that include most migration costs, from passport and visa costs to travel and recruiter fees. For this reason, it may be hard for workers or researchers to understand how much of the fee covers airfare and other elements of the package.

### **Regulating Recruitment**

The recruitment industry that moves workers from one country to another is believed to be large and growing, but reliable data are scarce (Kuptsch 2006; ILO 2007). Several things are clear. First, most recruiters send few workers, often less than 100 a year, abroad. Most recruiters operate in only one corridor, as with those who send Filipinos to Saudi Arabia or to Hong Kong, but not both. Many recruiters specialize in one type of worker, domestic helpers or seamen or accountants, but not all three types of workers.

Second, many recruiters are linked closely to the governments that regulate their activities. In some countries, a significant share of recruiters are members of Parliament or their relatives, and some may see recruitment fees as one means of extracting monies from low-skilled workers who typically do not pay income taxes on their local or foreign earnings. Third, regulating recruiters effectively has been difficult, in part because most enforcement systems rely on workers to complain, and workers are unlikely to complain if they get what they want: a foreign job offering high wages.

International conventions call for employers to pay all of the recruitment costs of the migrant workers they hire (ILO 2006, 2008). However, ILO conventions 97 and 143 are not widely ratified, and not always enforced in countries that do ratify them (Ruhs 2013). The U.S. government has not ratified ILO conventions 97 and 143, but has laws that prohibit employers from charging migrants recruitment fees, so that employers must pay

all costs, including passport and visa costs, for low-skilled farm and nonfarm workers admitted under the H-2A and H-2B programs. Other governments that have not ratified ILO conventions 97 and 143 specify maximum worker-paid fees, as with the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. However, unless there are complaints, it is often hard to detect the payment of (excessive) worker-paid fees.

Both workers and recruiters report that recruitment costs are often higher than government-set maximum fees. Governments normally embrace a three-step procedure to regulate recruiters and the fees that they charge, viz, require recruiters to identify themselves by registering, have them establish financial security by posting bonds or making similar financial guarantees, and rely on a complaint-and-investigation system to detect violations of recruitment regulations.

### Conclusions

Migration costs for low-skilled workers who cross national borders can be high, which lowers remittances, makes migrant workers more vulnerable abroad, and reduces the positive impacts of migration on development. Reducing recruitment costs could improve protections for migrant workers and allow labour migration to speed development in migrant-sending areas.

There are four major phases in the migration process that can lead to worker-paid costs.<sup>7</sup> First, employers in migrant-receiving countries can pay governments for permission to hire migrant workers, a cost that can be passed on to migrant workers. Second, potential migrant workers may pay recruiters and sub-agents to learn about foreign jobs, especially low-skilled migrants in rural areas where recruiters are in major cities. Third, migrants often pay recruiters to obtain contracts for foreign jobs, especially if the recruiter has paid the foreign employer or foreign recruiter for

the job offer. Fourth, migrants may incur costs for passports, visas, and other documents, health and security checks, and pre-departure training and orientation. Migrants may pay internal transportation costs to get to recruiters and government offices, and pay international transportation costs as well.

Once abroad, legal migrants with contracts should receive the wages and benefits stipulated in the contract. However, some migrants are confronted with a new contract once they arrive abroad that offers lower wages, fewer benefits, or different work, and they may feel compelled to accept different terms if they arrived abroad in debt. As the end of their contract approaches, migrants may not receive all of the wages due to them or certain benefits such as end-of-service benefits if they must leave when their contract expires. Migrants typically return and reintegrate or prepare to go abroad again.

Learning more about worker-paid migration costs, and especially how they vary by migration corridor and worker level of skill, could increase the benefits of migration for the development of migrant-sending countries and enhance migrant worker protections. International labour migration is a journey of hope and fear: hope for higher wages and more opportunities abroad, and fear of the unknown and exploitation. Reducing worker-paid migration costs and uncertainty for migrant workers can improve protections for them and speed development, pushing recruitment reform to a higher place on the international agenda.

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<sup>7</sup> Migrant workers may also incur opportunity costs as they travel to recruiters, government agencies, and training centres, costs that governments may not consider if the assumption is that most migrants are jobless at home.

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# Migrants, Associations and Home Country Development: Implications for Discussions on Transnationalism<sup>1</sup>

by JOAN LACOMBA (Universidad de Valencia) and  
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## Abstract

The extent to which migrants participate in development projects has gained increasing prominence in the field of migration studies. In keeping with the interest of national and international institutions which promote the involvement of migrants in the development of their home countries, social research has begun to question how this phenomenon has grown (on the migrant or transnational civil society level), the nature of the organisations that drive such actions (transnational organisations) and the implications on the latter (transnational development). Many studies have seen migrant organisations as new actors in the transnational field; when not seen as emerging players, they are perceived as figures that can shape the transnational field. In order to assess the impact of migrant associations in debates of transnationalism, this article investigates the characteristics of migrant organizations located in Spain, as well as their practices aimed at development in the countries of origin.

**Keywords:** migrants, associations, development, countries of origin, transnationalism

## Introduction

Since the late 1990s, coinciding with the States and international organisations' renewed emphasis on the positive role of migration in relation to development, migrants have been the subject of particular attention: First, their role as individuals sending remittances, and later, the role of their organisations and function as a collective. By recognizing the capacity for these individuals and organisations to solve social problems in civil society – once the state and market acknowledged their own weaknesses and limitations – migrant activity has been seen

as unexplored territory with significant potential. This new political approach coincided with the rise of the transnational perspective in academia, in which the idea that the new fields created by migration and discussed across boundary lines brought about a shift in thinking about social relations. These ideas and discussions contribute to a deterritorialised framework. In conjunction with discussions on transnationalism, the study of migrant organisations has helped to expose one of the factors that serves as a basis for the very transnational paradigm. The consolidation of transnationalism as a new approach to the study of migration – and this is perhaps one of its main merits – has allowed one to see migrants as agents. However, migrant agency continues to face many obstacles, including those imposed

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by States in terms of international mobility and the difficulties faced by the migrants to achieve positive integration within new borders, as Roger Waldinger has emphasised in various works (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004; Waldinger 2010). In this context, critically considering the role of migrants as transnational agents of development is especially relevant, because, its organisational weakness often contrasts with the role attributed to them, both in host countries as in the countries of origin. This is true especially by states that have reduced public contributions to international or national development, then transferring this responsibility to the migrants themselves.

Considering all these factors, this article aims, firstly, to shed light on the differences between various national migrant groups, starting with their organisational characteristics, available resources and fields of activity, going beyond the tendency to portray migrants as a homogeneous body in their behaviours. Secondly, the key question we ask is to what extent migrant associations, who participate in development projects in their home countries, can actually be considered as transnational development organisations.

Employing a survey of 206 migrant associations from eight countries (Algeria, Bulgaria, Colombia, Ecuador, Mali, Morocco, Romania and Senegal) settled in Spain, we aim to illustrate the diverse dynamics that different groups apply in the field of development and international solidarity. Our main hypothesis is that not all national groups are involved to the same extent or in the same manner; we thus challenge the notion of generalised transnationalism. From our point of view, transnational development led by migrant organisations not only responds to a minority of them – as already noted by Waldinger (2010: 34) – but rather fits, to a greater extent, certain national groups and organisations within them. These groups have either been able to take advantage of the opportunities created by the States of settlement and origin, or have been able to utilise community ties among those who migrated and those who remained back home.

### Discussions Concerning the Role of Migrant Organisations in a Transnational Context

The volume of studies on transnational migrant organisations and their role in the home country development has expanded considerably in recent years. Facilitated by initiatives taken by organisations such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development, and by the renewed interest shown by various national and international organisations, studies on migrant associations have acquired relative momentum. They have, in most cases, been primarily linked to remittances and their impact on development. In 2006, the International Organisation for Migration published a report on political agendas of development called the Migration Incorporation (*Incorporación de la migración en las agendas de políticas de desarrollo*). This report warned that, even though cooperation with Diasporas had become a topic of general interest, there had not been any research on the subject in Europe at that time. This is, the report indicated, something indispensable when promoting the participation of migrant communities<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, studies that focus on the form taken by these organisations, and the logic that lies behind their creation and maintenance over time, continue to be scarce. In the same way, the most common pattern emerges in corresponding case studies<sup>3</sup>, while studies of a comparative

<sup>2</sup> However, we should mention previous studies, such as the OECD's work entitled "The contribution of migrants to the development of their country of origin" published by Libercier and Schneider in 1996. (In this investigation, a total of six migrant communities were studied simultaneously: Cape Verdeans in the Netherlands, Haitians in Canada, Italians in Switzerland, Malians in France, Tunisians in Italy and Zairians in Belgium.) Similarly, we should refer to the work of Christophe Daum (*Typologie des organisations de solidarité internationales issues de l'immigration*, 2000) and of Elodie Millet (*La place des associations de migrants dans la solidarité internationale*, 2005), that detected the existence of more than a thousand migrant associations in France, oriented towards international solidarity.

<sup>3</sup> The question of migrant participation in the development of their home communities has been addressed by various authors with studies focused on several countries with a significant prevalence

nature between different national backgrounds are less frequent<sup>4</sup>.

The international literature reviewed in our research has allowed us to identify a number of criteria, which comprises part of the debate on migrant organisations and their participation in the development of their home countries. The first of these concerns the transnational dimension of the migrants' actions in the context of the discussion on the same transnational perspective. The second theme, closely related to the previous one, revolves around the definition and conceptualisation of the organisations themselves. The third refers to the relationship between migrant organisations and other actors involved in the field of development (such as home and host countries and market and civil society organisations concerned with development). The fourth theme is related to the constraints that migrant organisations face in terms of resources and capabilities, in contrast to the high expectations associated with their role.

The anthropologists Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc provoked a minor revolution in the study of migration in 1994, with the publication of the book *Nations Unbound: Transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments and deterritorialised Nation-state*. Transnationalism has since been at the centre of numerous intense theoretical and methodological debates. In its initial formulation, transnationalism was defined

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of international migration. For example, in El Salvador (Landolt 2003), the Philippines (Asis 2010), Mali (Daum 1993; Gauvrit and Le Bahers 2004), Morocco (Daoud 1997; Lacroix 2005; Mernissi 1998), Mauritania (Yatera 1997), Mexico (Escala 2005; Lanly 2002; Moctezuma 2005), Nigeria (Odaman 1990) and Senegal (Quiminal 1991; Conde and Diagne 1986).

<sup>4</sup> We placed a special emphasis on those works which display a comparative or general character, or present compilations of studies realised within different countries, such as those by Portes, Escobar and Walton (2006), Sørensen (2007), Merz, Chen and Geithner (2007) or Van Naersen, Spaan and Zoomers (2008). The aforementioned papers highlight migration's role in the development of societies of origin, but they also accentuate the limitations and doubts generated by the participation of migrants, both individual and collective, as transnational development agents.

as "the set of processes by which immigrants create and maintain multidimensional social relations which link societies of origin and destination". The three authors supplemented this definition by stating: "we label these processes transnational, to emphasise that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders" (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994: 7). In contrast to methodological nationalism, the transnational perspective made the growing bonds connecting migrants and non-migrants visible, through transfers of money, goods, ideas, values, and new behavioural patterns (including political and organisational conduct). It thus became possible to speak of creating new transnational fields as a result of the convergence of all these forces and their transformative potential. The very participation of migrants in organised development projects within their home countries was taken as an indicator of transnational behaviour. A good example of this is the study by Levitt (2001), which concerns organisations of Dominican migrants in the United States and their impact on the society of origin.

In *The Transnational Villagers*, Levitt shows us how the action from outside the Dominican migrant organisations – properly classified as transnational organisations – provokes both positive results and conflicts in the development of their home communities. These actions also affect the lives of those who did not emigrate, which is a trend that is pointed out in what Levitt terms the transnational community development. Subsequently, Levitt's thesis that migrants contribute in creating new transnational fields by means of social remittances (the latter including political connections and migrant development projects), has been supported by several authors (e.g. Goldring 2002), nuanced (e.g. Portes, Escobar and Walton 2006) or questioned (e.g. Waldinger 2013).

Authors such as Goldring have delved deeper into Levitt's suppositions to reinforce the idea that the actions of those referred to as "transmigrants", through the various ways by which they

connect with their home communities (remittances, political activism, social philanthropy), facilitates the structuring of “transnational social fields”. Portes also largely accepts the existence of transnationalism – not only as an analytical perspective, but also as fact. He, however, connects it with his thesis of compatibility through the assimilation of migrants into the host society. According to Portes, the study of transnational organisations of Colombian, Dominican and Mexican immigrants in the United States allows one to see the existence of different patterns in the forms of transnationalism that they adopted. These patterns are influenced by the respective human capital and also by the increasingly more active policies of both their home and host country’s governments (Portes, Escobar, Walton 2006: 13). In contrast, other authors (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004) are sceptical regarding the scope of transnationalism and migrants’ ability to create transnational fields or influence States in formulating new policies (Iskander’s thesis regarding the cases of Mexico and Morocco). Waldinger (2013) posits that international migration inevitably creates connections and generates bonds between both sides of the border, but he believes it to be an exaggeration to speak of migrants’ actions as transnational. From Waldinger’s perspective, borders remain a major constraint on migration and a clear limit to the transnational nature of migration and the migrants themselves. This point is made with Fitzgerald’s (2004) proposal of limiting to the use of the term transnationalism.

The second topic of debate concerns migrant organisations involved in projects in their home countries. Within this debate, the international literature shows various denominations and, on occasion, refers to different distinct realities. For example, Portes, Escobar and Walton (2006) and Levitt (2001) use the term “transnational migrant organisations” while Goldring (2002) speaks of “transmigrant organisations”, although they only share an indistinct notion of the term, which would include multiple bodies and initiatives with varying degrees of organisation and formal-

sation. In fact, in Portes’ work, an explicit definition of transnational organisations of migrants that goes beyond considering them as collective organisations of immigrants that promote projects in their home countries and communities, is not listed. However, in the subsequent analysis of the practices, both government initiatives and initiatives from civil society, such as foundations, non-governmental organisations, associations or clubs interchangeably, are included. In other studies, such as that of Roberts, Reanne, Lozano-Ascencio (1999), the term transnational migrant communities is used, enabling the inclusion of both organised activities that rely on coverage at an institutional level as well as other more informal activities that can meet the challenge of accomplishing more or less concrete commitments between those who left and those who stayed. Indeed, if we move to the other side of the Atlantic, we find that in France, Daum (2000) coined terms like “Organisations de Solidarité Internationale issues des Migrations” (OSIM) – translated as International Solidarity Organisations emerging from Migration, and sometimes likened to Anglophone “Immigrant transnational organisations” – but in reality encompasses both migrant associations and other organisations of solidarity that can incorporate a significant number of immigrants, although they were not necessarily created by the latter. This overview of conceptual dispersion is further complicated if we include other denominations that respond to more local realities, such as the case of the Home Town Associations (HTA) in the U.S. or *los clubes de oriundos* in its Mexican version.

The discussion on the relations between the different actors involved in the field of transnational development is not an unresolved debate. For some authors, this remains a problematic issue; they see the emphasis on transnational migrant organisations as an attempt to relegate the obligations of States. Faist (2005), in his article “Transnational space and development: an exploration of the relationship between community, state and market”, agrees that the ideas relating to the role of communities in develop-

ment and communities against other principles of social order, such as the market and the state, merit our attention. However, he also asserts that the great interest in the role of Diasporas and transnational migrant organisations, in many ways, reflects conceptual changes in development. These same changes guide national and international institutions and NGOs in matters of public policy (Faist 2005: 5). In this way, the relationship between migrant associations and NGOs is also questioned. Thus, the study conducted for the OECD by Libercier and Schneider (1996) concluded that migrants' contribution to the development of their home communities is not highly valued, which limits their participation to completing small local projects. They are, therefore, not recognised in their protagonist role when it comes to designing and carrying out the cooperation projects in their communities of origin. The OECD highlights how the NGDOs (Non-Governmental Development Organisations) themselves, as incontrovertible players for development cooperation, do not have an equal relationship with migrant associations. Besides a few exceptions, however, they only intervene in favour of these associations to provide them with intermediary service or to obtain financing. However, the same study emphasises and has proven, how, compared to the international cooperation NGDOs, migrant associations have the advantage of knowledge of their home countries and a closer relationship with the local population; furthermore, the immigrants' dual social belonging bestows upon them an important quality to act in a transnational environment. Finally, the fourth area of discussion critically examines the potential of migrant organisations in relation to the challenges of development. A study by Kirstin Schuttler (2008) delves further into this issue, in which she analyses the cases of Mexico, Morocco, the Philippines and Turkey. After showing what impact migrants' collective remittances in these four countries have, she arrives to the conclusion that "migrant organisations contribute to income-generating activities in their countries of origin through collective

donations, collective investments and collective savings. Each type of activity has its respective potentials, challenges and constraints (...) The potential of collective remittances should not be overestimated as a panacea for employment generation and development. Migrants' engagement cannot be a substitute for state or private direct investment. Moreover, for governments trying to foster these collective activities, interaction with migrant organisations can be difficult, and the transactions costs are high: the organisations are dispersed across recipient countries and their activities are based on voluntary work, therefore reaching operational limits" (Schuttler 2008: 27-29). So, compared to common positions in major international organisations and development agencies, who often see migrant organizations as emerging players in international development, one must call into question their actual ability to meet challenges of this magnitude, and the interests that operate behind such exaltation (Faist 2008).

We are, in other words, far from reaching a consensus on the proper transnational character of migrants' associations and actions (on occasion we highlight the confusion between the transnational nature of the organisations and the transnational nature of their practices). We also have not identified the role they could or should play in the development of their home societies.

### **Methodology of Study**

The empirical evidence on which we base our argument stems from a research project carried out in Spain over the last three years, entitled *Diasporas and co-development from Spain: The role of immigrant associations in the development of their home countries*. This project used secondary sources in the initial exploratory phase, followed by primary data collection, which utilized various quantitative techniques<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> The research also has a qualitative dimension that has developed into a second phase by interviewing fifty associations with programs in their home countries and gathering information about their projects, but this information is not used in this text.

In order to develop a comprehensive map of migrant associations established in Spain, and faced with the impossibility of preparing a record that conforms fully to reality and does not overestimate the size of the migrant population, an inventory of associations was established. We did this by comparing the data with that of official records (The Ministry of Justice's National Register of Associations and the Regional Associations Records), as well as various directories in order to complete and contrast some of the data (Directory of immigrant entities in Spain, La Caixa Foundation and other directories specific to the field of immigration and the third sector). Thus, when establishing the amount of migrant associations (852 associations), all of those organisations which do not constitute an ethnic base (mixed associations with the presence of immigrants, but where the majority are non-immigrant partners), which do not clearly correspond to one of the national groups under study (there may be some immigrants from selected countries, but also from other countries which are outside the study) or those which group together several associations (federations and confederations) were dismissed.

The primary data used in our analysis employs a quantitative methodology, based on a statistical analysis of the results from a structured survey aimed at leaders and representatives of migrant associations<sup>6</sup>. The questionnaire consisted of five thematic sections: 1) Details of the association; 2) The association's activities in Spain; 3) The association's activities in the country of origin; 4) Activities in the country of origin with a direct relation to development; 5) Activities in the country of origin defined specifically as co-development<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> The survey was carried out between November 2012 and February 2013.

<sup>7</sup> In the questionnaire, we referenced the activities in the country of origin, such as home-country development, as well as the activities in the home countries as those defined specifically as co-development. This distinction allows us to work separately with: Firstly, home-country and global actions; Secondly, with actions directed in a more determined way towards local development with a transnational focus; Thirdly,

On the other hand, the difficult access to the associations, due to their geographic dispersion and the low response rate – which, from a methodological view point of view, are reflective of several studies that one way or the other have addressed migrant association movement over the last decade in Spain (Aparicio and Toros 2010; Morell 2005; Martín 2004) or in certain Autonomous Communities (Cloquell 2012; Albert, Moncusí and Lacomba 2011; Veredas 2003) – has forced us to come up with an alternative approach to the associations without an a priori calculation of the sample size.

The fieldwork was divided into several phases: First, we sent a letter of introduction and an invitation to respond to a questionnaire on the Internet to all associations included in our study population who had access to this method of communication (62.7% of the organisations). This letter, sent via email, presented the study and stressed the importance of participation and the value of the associations' collaboration in order to highlight their work. An access code was attached so they could complete the questionnaire via a website set up for this purpose. This website also had the ultimate goal of exhibiting the project and highlighting the actions of migrant associations<sup>8</sup>. After realizing that many associations had problems when answering the questionnaire through this system, we decided to send it electronically via e-mail. Still, only 57 associations responded through both procedures. It should also be noted that 3.1% of the emails sent were returned due to incorrect email addresses. Secondly, considering the low response rate obtained, and with the aim of achieving a better representation of the associative map in Spain, we chose to administer the survey by telephone. To do this, we called all of the associations that had not responded to the questionnaire through the above procedures and also appeared in the registers consulted for this method of contact (78.7% of all organisations).<sup>9</sup>

to identify how the term co-development is utilized in said actions.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.diasporasycodesarrollo.org>

<sup>9</sup> In 164 cases the available number does not match that of the association or had stopped working.

Through phone interviews, we obtained responses of 153 other associations. However, we faced certain drawbacks, such as the association's legal representative or president's unavailability to respond to the survey, as well as recent policy changes in the organizations, which subsequently led to a lack of organizational knowledge as to how to answer some of the required information. The most challenging aspect, though, was the migrant organizations' distrust and discouragement to participate in these kinds of studies, due to the saturation of research centred on migrant associations and general lack of return feedback on the information they provided. All of these issues acted as major barriers for our research.

Despite the aforementioned difficulties, 206 out of 852 migrant associations were surveyed, although the differences in response rates were significant between the various national groups and according to the total number of associations per country (from 223 associations identified in the case of Ecuador to 29 in the case of Mali)<sup>10</sup>.

### The Results

As noted above, one of our main objectives was to show to what extent migrant associations are involved in development activities in their home communities, and the differences between their organisations and other national groups. From the outset, the profiles of the eight national study groups showed the diversity that exists among them, both in relation to their numeri-

<sup>10</sup> Sampling error in a finite population for an accuracy level of 95% and in which P and Q were equal to 0.5. We can say that the sampling error obtained (6%) is within acceptable statistical standards.

$$e = k * \sqrt{\frac{N-n}{N-1} * \frac{PQ}{n}} = 2 * \sqrt{\frac{852-206}{852-1} * \frac{0,5 * 0,5}{206}}$$

**Table 1: Size and number of associations by country**

Country	Number of associations	Number of interviewed associations	Percentage of interviewed associations
Algeria	36	7	19,4
Bulgaria	57	18	31,6
Colombia	124	26	21,0
Ecuador	223	55	24,7
Mali	29	16	55,2
Marocco	95	34	35,8
Romania	177	23	13,0
Senegal	111	27	24,3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>24,2</b>

Source: Author, developed on the basis of research findings.

cal weights and their evolution (Figure 1), and in terms of their arrival dates, skill levels and social and economic insertion in context of their reception in Spain and associative participation<sup>11</sup>.

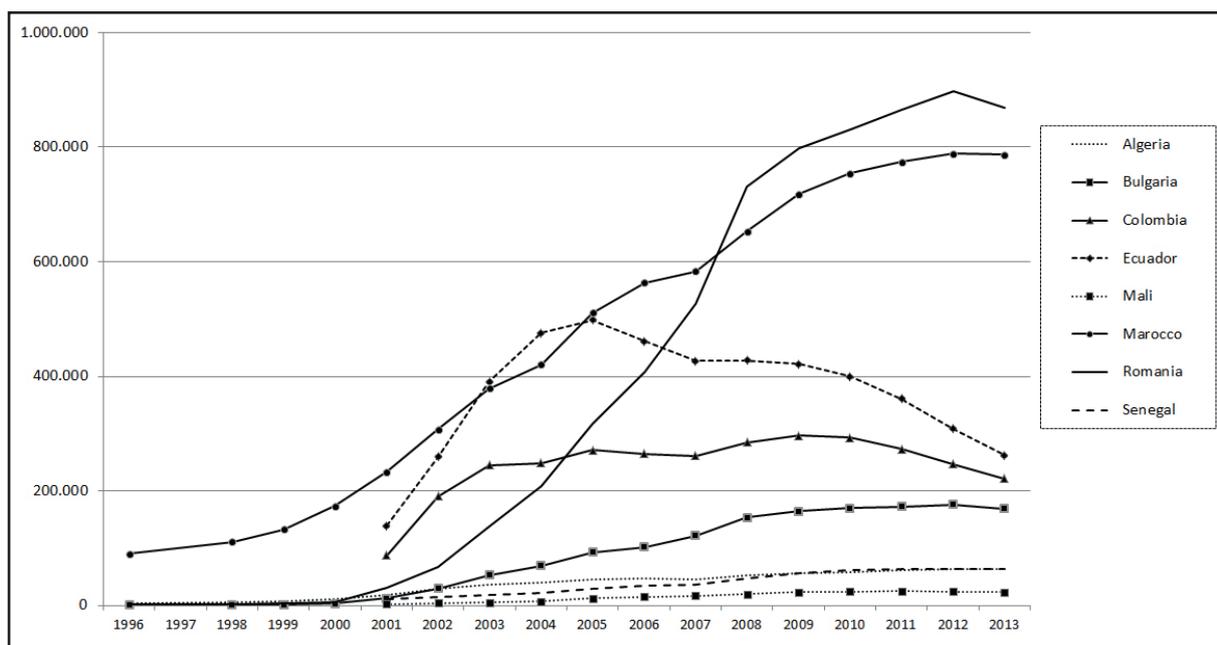
First, according to the results of the survey, it is noteworthy that the organisations involved in different activities in the country of origin<sup>12</sup> represent more than half of the 206 associations that are part of the study (115, or 56% of the total). This percentage drops to 49% (101 associations) when referring to activities specifically related to development in the countries of origin<sup>13</sup> – those that focus on our interests –, and

<sup>11</sup> The rates of association, according to the number of associations identified by country and the number of migrants in Spain in 2013, are as follows: Algeria 5.6 associations per 10,000 migrants; Bulgaria 3.4; Colombia 5.6; Ecuador 8.5; Mali 12.2; Morocco 1.2; Romania 2; Senegal 17.4. The average rate for the whole country would be 3.5 associations per 10,000 migrants.

<sup>12</sup> The activities included in the survey were: youth projects, unaccompanied minors projects, prevention of irregular migration, support for reintegration upon return, psychosocial support for migrant families, promotion of their own culture (ethnicity, indigenism), religious activities, sports activities, arts activities, claiming political rights (voting), human rights defence, research and media (newspapers, radio, television).

<sup>13</sup> Activities that were considered in the questionnaire were: educational projects, health projects, infrastructure projects (water, electricity), rural development projects (agriculture, livestock), solidarity tourism, social welfare, humanitarian/emergency

**Figure 1: Evolution of the population of the eight sample populations**



Source: Author, on the basis of data from the municipal registration, National Institute of Statistics (INE).

further still to 29% (60 associations) when asked about those activities defined among the latter, such as co-development<sup>14</sup>.

Comparing the involvement in development activities in home countries with that of the associations' provenance of origin, we observed significant differences. This can be seen in the way that the associations of North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa are involved to a greater extent (63.4% and 58.1% respectively) than the organisations in Latin America (46.9%) and Eastern Europe (29.3%). In this way, if we focus on national origin, differences in the degree of participation is further emphasised among the groups studied, those with a higher percentage of implementation of development projects in the country of origin are the organisations originating from Mali, Morocco, Colombia and Senegal, in that order (Table 2). In the case of Roma-

nia and, to a lesser extent, Ecuador and Bulgaria, a significant drop occurs when moving from the activities in their home countries to the activities related to development.

**Table 2: Participation in general activities and activities related to development in the country of origin.**

Country	Associations with activities in country of origin	Associations with development activities in country of origin
Algeria	3 (43%)	3 (43%)
Bulgaria	8 (44%)	7 (39%)
Colombia	16 (62%)	15 (58%)
Ecuador	28 (51%)	23 (42%)
Mali	12 (75%)	12 (75%)
Marocco	25 (74%)	23 (68%)
Romania	9 (39%)	5 (22%)
Senegal	14 (52%)	13 (48%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>115 (56%)</b>	<b>101 (49%)</b>

Source: Author, developed on the basis of research findings.

aid (natural disasters), environment, gender equality (female), fair trade, microcredit, co-operatives and investment remittances.

<sup>14</sup> In the last decade, co-development in Spain was understood as a form of cooperation for the development of countries of origin, carried out by the migrants themselves, and was largely driven institutionally.

In the same way, in order to further explore the dynamics of participation, we proceeded to draw an organisational profile of the associations involved in development projects in the countries of origin, using the Chi-squared test. Thus, in a first analysis, we compared the relationship between participation in such activities, focusing on structural and organisational variables relative to the migrant associations that we have studied in the survey (Table 3).

**Table 3: Results of the Chi square test of the variable “participation in development activities” and other structural and organizational variables**

Organizational characteristics	p-value
Region	,010*
Nationality	,009*
Autonomous region of residence	,102
Year of Founding	,108
Membership in umbrella association	,732
Ownership of a community place	,070
Geographic scope of implementation	,000*
Provision of personal contract	,000*
Own funding	,262
Funding from Spanish sources	,002*
Funding from international sources	,003*
Funding from country of origin	,147
Number of members	,771

\*p < 0,05

Source: Author, developed on the basis of research findings.

As we can see, the region of origin and the nationality of the organisations make up the combination of structural and organisational variables related to participation in development projects in the country of origin. Some of these variables are, for example, the provision of a room for meetings and activities, the geographic scope of implementation, and the provision of contracted staff and the acquiring of Spanish and

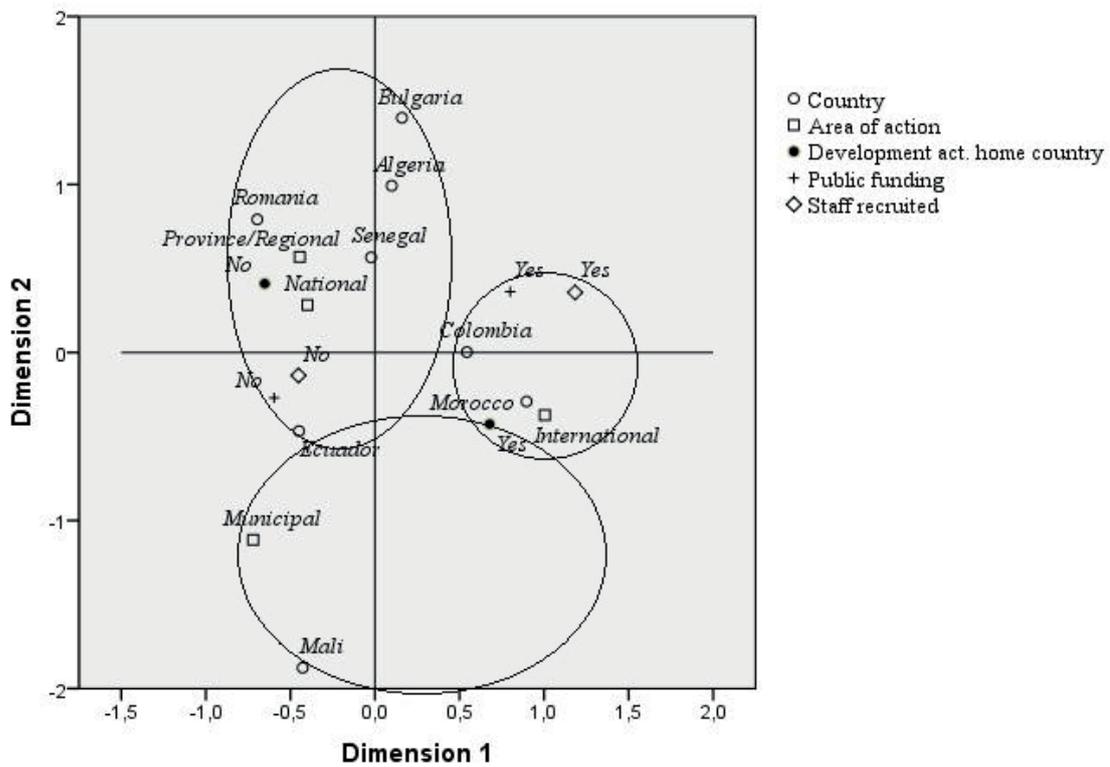
International financing (public funds). Taking this into account, through the analysis of multiple correspondences, we can identify the elements that characterise the associations involved in such activities from those that are not.

Given the data shown in Figure 2, the organisational profile of the associations involved in development projects in the country of origin consists mainly of organisations that are internationally established, have hired staff, and have acquired public funding, and are mostly made up of Colombian and Moroccan migrants (these associations are also the same that have agreed, to a greater extent, on public projects). With regard to the profile of the associations that are not involved in development activities within the countries of origin – that are implemented at national or regional level – these organisations have no public funds nor contracted staff. Finally, they are mainly composed of immigrants from Ecuador, Bulgaria, Romania, Senegal and Algeria<sup>15</sup>. However, associations of Mali are an exception, as they respond more to the latter group profile, which is characterised mainly by their degree of implementation at a local level and lack of resources. However, they show the highest degree of participation in development projects in their home country.

Analysing the type of development activities carried out in the home societies by the associations of the eight countries, makes evident that the majority of the initiatives pertain to: the field of education (remodelling and expansion of schools, provision of computer equipment, donation of educational materials), promoting gender equality (education and training of women), the construction of local infrastructure (development and electrification of streets, paving roads and highways, water treatment, sanitation and well building) the establishment of co-operatives

<sup>15</sup> It can, therefore, be specified, and should not be confused with the fact that a given group is represented in one profile or another. As we have seen in Table 2, each of the profiles obtained here consist mostly, but not entirely of all nationalities that are involved in varying degrees in development activities in the countries of origin.

**Figure 2: Results of the multiple correspondence analysis for the variable “participation in development activities in country of origin” and other structural and organizational variables, related by Chi square test**



Source: Author, developed on the basis of research findings.

(agricultural, livestock and textiles) and the promotion of social economy (see Table 4).

When referring to the type of activity and the group that is responsible, we observe several distinct realities, but which maintain one certain regional pattern. On the one hand, Malian and Senegalese organisations (Sub-Saharan Africa) present a very similar behaviour, focusing their projects on humanitarian or emergency aid, facing, for example, natural disasters and the construction or renovation of infrastructure at a local level, like health projects and rural development. Similarly, Ecuadorian and Colombian associations (Latin America) also share much of the variety of development projects in their countries of origin. They have focused on gender, cooperatives, environment, solidarity tourism and microcred-

its, to which, in Colombia's case, we could add fair trade. In between these two regional groups would be the case of the Moroccan associations, which fundamentally share projects in the areas of infrastructure, rural development, health and education with Mali and Senegal – while projects of an economic nature, like remittances and cooperatives – are more in line with those of Ecuador and Colombia.

In contrast, as seen in Figure 3, although the Algerian, Bulgarian and Romanian groups appear inactive in the Cartesian diagram in any area of intervention; this does not mean to say, however, that they do not engage in projects within their home countries. Rather, the initiatives that they support, actually being few, are very heterogeneous in character.

**Table 4: Type of development activities carried out in the home societies by the associations of the eight countries**

Type of activity	%
Educational projects	57,6
Gender	40,2
Infrastructure	31,5
Establishment of cooperatives	30,4
Rural development	28,3
Health	23,9
Solidarity tourism	18,5
Environmental projects	17,4
Emergency assistance	16,3
Welfare	14,1
Remittances	10,9
Microcredits	9,8
Fair trade	9,8

\*Multiple answers

Source: Author, developed on the basis of research findings.

### Discussion of Results

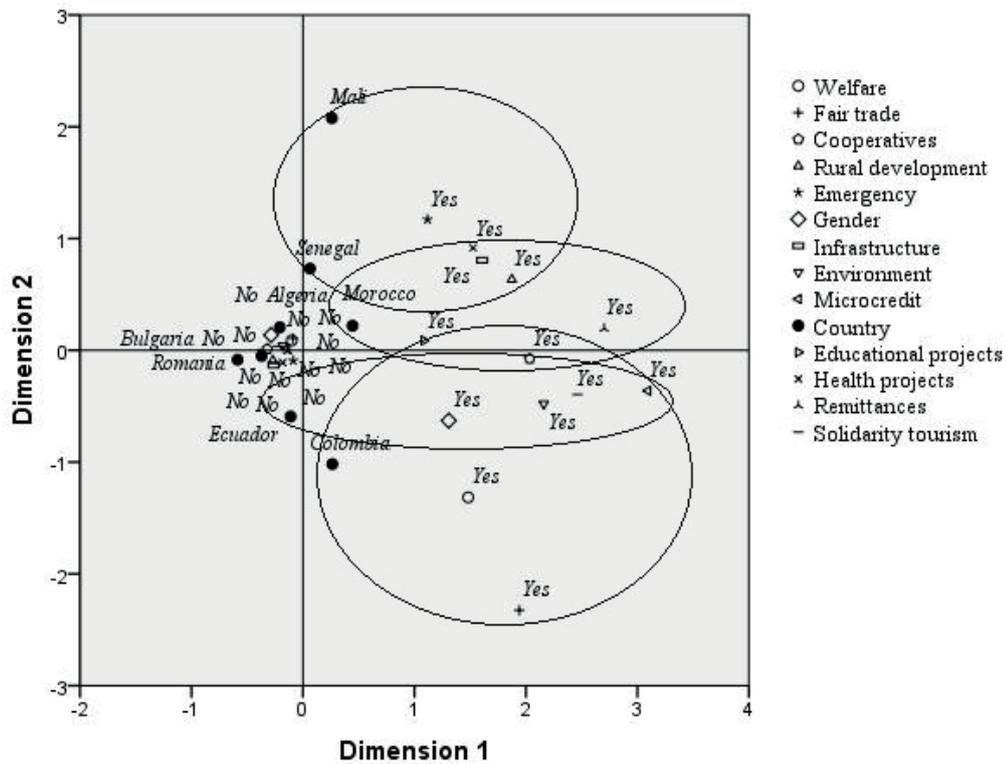
The results from the survey show varying as well as common elements and behaviours among migrant associations. At the level of structural characteristics of the associations (age, financial and human resources), they illustrate an important distinction between those who are active in their country of origin and those who do not. In this sense, the associations that represent more established collectives, and thus have had more time to structure themselves (Moroccan and Colombian institutions), would be more likely to engage in development activities in their home countries. This contradicts the idea that the assimilation of migrants involves the disconnection from their societies of origin, an idea that Portes, Escobar and Walton (2006) already has questioned, and that Moctezuma further underlines by stating that “migrants, whilst they adapt and participate in new social circumstances, are also capable of maintaining ties and commitments geared towards their organisation and

communities of origin” (Moctezuma 2008: 101). However, there may also be exceptions or, at least, early cases in which the involvement of the communities of origin takes place from the outset, thus surpassing the transition expected from social networks to subsidiary communities and from the latter to organisations of transnational migrants (Moctezuma 2008: 99). The latter would be the Malian migrant associations, which, despite the recent arrival of migrants and corresponding recent creation of associations, have managed to carry out a significant number of projects in their country of origin. This forces us to take into account other variables that may be critical for some of the collectives, including the influence of the ethnic root’s local solidarity (many of the Malian associations’ names carry references of regions or towns from which their members originate), but also other factors, such as the external support received. In fact, Malian associations actively participated, in recent years, in a program aimed at strengthening co-development driven by the Spanish NGO MPDL (Movement for Peace, Disarmament and Liberty). A of a number of associations’ involvement in Mali in the aforementioned program would not have been possible without a prior community agreement. One of the effects of their participation has been the acceleration of the process of formulating projects in the countries of origin, which has not occurred in groups that have not had such extensive support<sup>16</sup>. Consequently, both the pre-existence of strong ethnic ties and community solidarity, as well as established alliances with civil society organisations in their host countries, may be able to accelerate the appearance of certain associations with increased transnational projections.

Similarly, we should not overlook the vitality of civil society in the sending countries. This is a critical component in the success of the activi-

<sup>16</sup> A similar case to that of Catalonia would be the Senegalese group, which for some years also relied upon a program of associative strengthening and co-development that was driven by the Catalan Fund for Development Cooperation.

**Figure 3: Results of the multiple correspondence analysis for the variables “national background” and “type of activity”**



Source: Author, developed on the basis of research findings.

ties in the country of origin, because without an associative network that acts as a counterpart in the country of origin, it is difficult for the projects to be successful. These differences in support among countries at this level are notable: Morocco and Colombia demonstrate very dynamic emerging civil societies, with an extended associative network, while weakness is greater in the cases of Algeria, Bulgaria, Romania and Senegal, or is supplemented by international development NGOs in the case of Mali. The synergy between these two variables – partnerships within the destination’s civil society and support from a civil society active in the country of origin – can ensure, to a large extent, the success or failure of philanthropic projects and the constitution of associations and organisations capable of influencing the country of origin.

Likewise, the material conditions underlying the associations revealed important differences in regard to their shift toward projects in the

country of origin on a regular basis. The adoption of cross border initiatives is made enormously difficult without having certain conditions in place, such as a minimal infrastructure (a place to meet and plan projects), economic means (sources to fund projects) and human resources (the possibility of hiring contracted staff with some technical skills). However, in this area there may also be exceptions and alternative strategies such as those shown within the Malian or Senegalese collectives (substituting, for example, the lack of an official meeting place for association meetings in members’ homes or by using collective donations to offset the lack of external financing) or Ecuadorian collectives (organised sports leagues to finance projects in their country of origin).

As for the type of projects implemented in the country of origin, there are significant differences between the groups in this study. Such differences may be explained by considering the needs in each of the countries of origin, such

as the case of Mali and Senegal, who lack infrastructure, as well as the identifications that these migrant groups conduct from a distance. This is seen particularly in the priorities established by public calls that fund the projects. The cases of Ecuador, Morocco and, to a lesser extent, Colombia, have notable differences in the activities of associations, which could be attributed to the effect of access to public calls in the extensive search for funding, combined with the needs, identifications and the various requests received from the communities of origin.

On the other hand, the types of projects undertaken definitely have a direct relation with the degree of maturity of organisational structures (Moctezuma 2008). The same associations may even have different levels of formalisation or adopt different strategies and organisational interests (Escala 2005). In fact, especially in the cases of Colombia and Morocco, most organisational maturity has expanded the scale and scope of its activities in the countries of origin. Ecuador presents both organisations with a high degree of formalisation, as well as informal groups that have been able to implement small projects in their communities of origin. Mali and Senegal present some exceptions because, in many of their projects, the weakness of their formal structures has been substituted by the vitality of their bonds and community networks. Bulgaria and Romania disagree with structuring a broad associate network, which is considered as unrepresentative and, above all, thought to meet the social and cultural needs of the group rather than to influence the development of the country of origin. Finally, Algeria is a complex case in which a significant proportion of the surveyed associations claim to carry out development projects in the country of origin<sup>17</sup>, although in reality none of these classify as co-development but rather as welfare or humanitarian projects.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> In any case we would be talking about a very small number of both organisations surveyed (seven) as well as associations with projects in the country of origin (three).

<sup>18</sup> The assistance provided in situations of natural disasters such as earthquakes registered in the country.

Our study found that the Algerian collective has largely detached itself from their home countries' development. This detachment makes sense when considering Algeria's recent experiences of political trauma, but that can also be explained by the lack of integration of Algerian migrants in Spain.

### Conclusions

As this study shows, not all migrant groups necessarily adopt the same associative behaviour in relation to the development of their societies of origin.

In the Maghreb, Algerian associations actually represent a very small number in the survey, but what is significant is the contrast between the associations of that country with those of Morocco in regards to their involvement in the development of their home countries. It should be noted that almost three quarters of the associations in Morocco carry out activities in the country, and more than half have developmental actions themselves. The difference between the two countries cannot be explained without reference to the home countries' internal stability and political conditions, the dynamism of its civil society (much more evident in the case of Morocco) and the political cooperation and co-development which their host States launched in recent years (by France and Spain, towards the Moroccans but not the Algerians).

Ecuadorian associations, which are very prevalent in Spain, only carried out development activities in their country of origin in 42% of respondents' cases. (The percentage drops to 18% when you specifically ask for co-development activities; however, there are highly significant examples classified as co-development and initiated from Spain by Ecuadorian associations.) In contrast, Colombian associations reached a percentage of 58% of development activities in the country of origin and 46% in co-development activities, which may be attributable to the impact of its increased organisational culture. This higher percentage is also a result of the long conflict in Colombia; there was an important and qualified

Diaspora that generated changes from abroad. Co-development policies promoted from Spain had Ecuador, and not so much Colombia, as one of its priority countries.

Eastern Europe is where we find some of the lowest percentages of associations with development projects in their countries of origin (22% in Romanian associations surveyed and 39% in Bulgarian associations). Here the parallels are quite narrow, and the influence of associations on the development of their home countries does not appear to be among their priorities. This could add a high degree of mistrust in relation to public sector management, in both political and economic aspects, within the origin countries. Furthermore, if we add to this the exclusion of the two countries as beneficiaries of official government cooperation programs for development, it is easier to understand the distancing of both from the sphere of transnational development.

Finally, the countries in sub-Saharan Africa – and, above all, Mali – represent a relative exception in two ways: Firstly, they present a trend of highly active participation in the development of the origin country, and secondly, they show similar behaviour in their projects. Both Mali and Senegal are characterised by high percentages of associations with development activities in their home countries (75% in the first case and 48% in the second), also closely coinciding with them are actions defined as co-development. Its main feature is that the Diaspora closely links them to the country of origin and generates very transnational behaviour, which is collectively organised abroad and directs its activities towards the towns of migrants based on community and ethnic bonds. On this basis, the orientation of official co-development policies and non-governmental programs towards the two countries, both from Spain as well as from France in collaboration with the States of origin, have had leverage on the dynamics of migrant participation in local development in recent years.

Overall, the study of migrant associations from eight countries shows that they tend to redirect their activities towards their country of

origin while simultaneously achieving consolidation and strength, although not all do it to the same degree or at the same time, and there may be significant differences. To understand the differences between various groups, one must refer to variables such as the age and size of their organisations or sources of funding and available resources, but also other factors such as the nature of the migratory flow itself (economic, labour, political) and the impact of policies aimed at promoting their participation, together with differentiated organisational logics, in which solidarity commitments and ethnic and cultural ties with their home communities play an important role. Similarly, the conditions for integration into the host country (economic-employment, social integration, immigration and cooperation policies) and the characteristics of current affairs in the country of origin (political situation, social unrest, economic stability, cultural identity) have a fundamental impact on the dynamics of participation.

In the literature on transnationalism, the involvement of migrant organisations in the development of their home countries has usually been taken as an indicator of their transnational behaviour. However, distinctions have not been clearly established between organisations that are considered transnational and those that are not, as well as differences between transnational development practices and development practices of a national character. Our study of migrant associations in Spain and their participation in development in their countries of origin leads us to lower our expectations regarding their transnational dimension. A significant number of associations play a praiseworthy and important role in development from a distance, although this role varies widely between countries. A few of them go further in connecting home and host communities, but that is not necessarily enough to be considered transnational. Speaking of transnational development organisations, it is assumed that we are at least supposed to have migrant associations with stable complex organisational structures articulated between here

and there, which would include both migrant and non-migrant participation. Speaking in regards to transnational development practices, we would need these to be programmed and implemented with the joint participation of those who emigrated and those who remained, and that they would respond to shared interests. In either case, in order to consider migrant associations as transnational, we need to rely on precise indicators. Furthermore, to classify these associations' actions as transnational, we also need to know which elements are actually international development projects. This is the challenge that we will consider in future works.

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# Exploring the Value of a Transnational, Reciprocal and Multi-Stakeholder Approach to the Migration-Development Nexus. Case Study: TRANSCODE Programme

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## Abstract

There is a prevailing bias, even amongst the actors directly involved, to consider activities falling under the migration-development banner as bipolar engagements, i.e. activities linking a country of origin of migrants to their country of present residence. Such conceptualisations assume the nation-state as the default frame of reference. Whilst progress has certainly been made towards a necessary sophistication of migration related issues in policy thinking and related academic research, the migration-development nexus remains something still often considered as essentially something to approach within a singular or bipolar nation-state framework. This can be seen in studies of potential policy interventions related to transnational flows such as human capital transfers, remittance flows and community development projects initiatives. Taking the case of the Transnational Synergy for Cooperation and Development (TRANSCODE) Programme, and focusing on empirical insights gained with this programme in relation to its conceptual underpinnings, we explore alternative modes of incorporating migration and development. This article thus seeks to provide insights in opportunities for alternative initiatives resulting out of cross-fertilization of experiences and ideas between migrant organisations and other actors engaged in migration and development efforts.

**Keywords:** transnational development, multi-stakeholder initiatives, migration & development

## Introduction

In June 2010 a five-day workshop was held in Tagaytay City, The Philippines under the banner of the TRANSCODE programme. TRANSCODE stands for Transnational Synergy and Cooperation for Development<sup>1</sup>. During the workshop 35 participants from The Philippines and The Netherlands met together to have a series of intensive debates, brainstorm sessions and field visits. These different activities had the endeavor

our to learn from each other practices in the field of international migration and to critically discuss the migration-development nexus from a multi-stakeholder perspective. The Scalabrini Migration Institute (SMC) in Manila, the Global Society Foundation (*Stichting Mondiale Samenleving* or SMS) in Utrecht and the Geography Department of the Radboud University (RU) in Nijmegen took the initiative for this workshop. The first is a research centre studying international migration and policies in Asia, the second came forth out of a desire in the Netherlands

<sup>1</sup> Also see: [www.transcodeprogramme.org](http://www.transcodeprogramme.org), [www.simiroma.org/transcodeRome.html](http://www.simiroma.org/transcodeRome.html) and [www.facebook.com/pages/transcode-Programme](https://www.facebook.com/pages/transcode-Programme)

amongst refugee associations to establish a support organisation, and the third is an academic institution that, among others, focuses on globalization issues. The majority of the Philippine participants represented migrant NGO's, local governments, national government agencies and the private sector. The Dutch delegation also had a varied composition albeit more in terms of their origins, as they represented diaspora organisations based in The Netherlands with roots in the various continents of the Global South, including countries such as Burundi, Ghana, Somalia, Turkey and Indonesia. By mere virtue of being part of such an amalgamous body the participants at the Tagaytay 'learning and linking' event already felt they had a real opportunity to communicate across the usual divides. What brought further innovation to this event, however, was its setup. Rather than bringing diverse actors together for an afternoon, or even a full day to hold a workshop, here a 'live in' setting was created. This meant the (social) need to engage with each other not only in a conference setting, but also outside this, namely over dinner and during leisure time, this for a whole five days. According to the participants such a prolonged time of sharing of one space, which implied a mixing in of formal and informal moments, helped to create a feeling of shared commitment, more than would be the case in more structured setting of limited duration. Indeed, some of the participants even spoke of the emergence of some kind of TRANSCODE 'spirit' during those days, and this became a term used affectionately and instrumentally at subsequent TRANSCODE gatherings.

Beyond the merits of such a live-in happening and the kind of commitment this evoked, the event also provided another interesting insight. When the delegates from The Philippines itself arrived at the venue and added their names to the registration list, they found out, much to their surprise, that the names of delegates from The Netherlands already on the list did not look typically Dutch. Instead these names appeared have their origins in all sorts of other countries. Their surprise is significant in reflecting a general ten-

dency, or perhaps bias, to consider activities falling under the migration-development banner as bilateral engagements, i.e. as linkages between two countries: the country of origin of migrants and the country of current residence, rather than a much more diverse set of actors, assorted also by the particular qualities they bring rather than their nationality. Such a bilateral view basically assumes the nation-state as the default mode of identity and most relevant frame of reference. In other words such a view is based on certain 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002).

The Philippines delegates at the Tagaytay event cannot be faulted for coming to the event with such a view however, when this view still has a general following, also in academic research (particularly that which has an applied political nature). This perspective all too often still conceives development cooperation opportunities through migration as taking place within the framework of the framework of a bipolar nation-state to problematize, conceptualize and study the migration-development nexus. This is for instance the case with studies looking at the impact of migration on human capital transfer (brain drain/gain/regain), studies focusing on remittance flows between two countries, and studies exploring the meaning of community development projects through migrant support. (Smith and van Naerssen 2009; van Naerssen 2008)

Of course we recognize that various programmes have been initiated which have given attention to a wider set of actors than just migrants and their organisations in migration and development initiatives. Yet, in most cases the ultimate focus remained on meeting a national agenda, usually of the country in the Global South. This is for instance the case with the diaspora-oriented projects organized under the banner of the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) programme of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI) of the European Commission and the Swiss Agency

for Development and Cooperation. From a more conceptual viewpoint empirical examples can also be found in scholarly work focusing on transnational spaces created by diasporas (Brah 1996; Lampert 2012), and the potential for development these generate (Mohan 2002; Mazzucato and Kabki 2009; van Naerssen, Spaan and Zoomers 2008) and on the nature of co-development modalities (Riccio 2011). Conceptually these studies again pay tribute to more fundamental underlying theoretical notions such as that of social remittances (Levitt 1998) and collective remittances (Goldring 2004).

What the composition of the Dutch delegation to The Philippines really gave, as an eye-opener, was that their diversity, as representatives of all kinds of migrant associations had an interest in learning from the experiences of Philippine migrant related institutions and civil society organisations to reconsider their own role and the shape of their migration and development programmes and projects. To illustrate this we return with the specific example of the project proposal led by the Burundian Women for Peace and Development (BWPD) later on in this article.

In this article we provide an overview of the activities and initiatives of the TRANSCODE programme and an explanation of its conceptual underpinning in order to support a more general discussion on good practises in the migration-development field<sup>2</sup>. In essence the TRANSCODE programme queries the premises on which conventional approaches to collective initiative development in the global South are often conceived, as also reflected in the Millennium Development Goals signed in 2000 (see also the Introduction by Sorensen). Also, and perhaps more fundamentally, it explores opportunities for alternative initiatives that result from cross-fertilization of experiences and ideas between migrant organisations of various geographical origins, as implemented in locations around the world. This builds on work already done in this very direction (see for instance Faist 2000;

Goldring 2004). This article thus seeks to set out the societal and policy rationale for initiatives in the development arena that take a reciprocal, transnational and multi-stakeholder approach.

### **The Mainframe of Migration and Development**

In the last five years, the discussion on migration and development has taken momentum, not least due to the rising awareness of the sheer volume of remittances sent by migrants to their countries of origin, as Sorensen has set out clearly in the Introduction of this special issue. Following the first publications by the World Bank on the flow of hundreds of billions of Dollars from migrants to their home countries, an amount quickly surpassing official development assistance provided to these same countries in the Global South, but also the volume of foreign direct investments, discussion amongst governments quickly zoomed in on the options available to capitalize on these migrant remittances to make them of benefit to the whole nation. Such “mythicisation” of remittances, e.g. entertaining the idea that remittances are the panacea for all the development issues of migrant-sending countries, is conceptually flawed (García Zamora 2009; de Haas 2005). However this essentially functionalist and somewhat simplistic line of reasoning was taken by many countries in the Global South, when adopting or reinforcing national programmes encouraging the export of labour, seeing this as a clear development strategy.

A second misinterpretation relating to the migration-development nexus concerns the relegation of development responsibilities to migrants and diaspora groups (Márquez-Covarrubias 2010). This emerged out of an understanding that individual remittances comprise only one of various channels through which migrants contribute to the development of their home countries (van Naerssen, Spaan and Zoomers 2008). Another channel is formed with so-called “collective remittances”. These follow out of philanthropic donations to collective savings, or by supporting the collection of certain goods (in kind). Once these were considered to be suf-

<sup>2</sup> All three authors are currently involved in the programme.

ficient in volume, they were sent to their communities of origin.

A third issue concerns the fact that the focus on financial flows from migrants to their home countries often ignores many kinds of knowledge transfers of overseas workers, immigrants and returnees to their countries, at both individual and collective levels. These are seldom registered as remittances<sup>3</sup>. This transfers insights in new skills, technologies and professional expertise gained abroad to home countries. It is only with the general acceptance of the term “social remittances”, coined first by Peggy Levitt, that this kind of input by migrants has come to be better recognized (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). These “social remittances” also include the transfer of new norms and values, particularly when women migrate (van Naerssen forthcoming). Finally, there are also examples of international cooperation aid undertaken through diaspora groups, as in the case of transnational development practices promoted by some receiving countries (Giménez Romero et al. 2006).

In terms of development, all these migrants’ contributions constitute a huge potential. Indeed, policy makers would make a big mistake to ignore or underestimate their value. Nevertheless, also according to various recent studies, the precise development impact of international migration in many sending countries provides a ambivalent insights (Asis and Baggio 2008; Castles 2007; de Haas 2008; Delgado Wise and Guarnizo 2007; García Zamora 2009). The unleashing of the development potential of migration is not automatic or linear and all benefits generated may be overshadowed by the costs incurred. Indeed, these gains and losses are to be considered not only in the economic sphere as they also extend to the social, cultural and political realm.

Policies and programs aiming at enhancing the benefits and reducing the costs of migration and

the remittances that follow may help to reduce this ambivalence, but they should not be governed by an instrumentalist understanding of the link between migration and development. In many cases immigration and emigration policies seem to respond more to economic – and unilateral – concerns rather than to ethical and/or humanistic principles. When benefits derived out of migration are the result of abuse, exploitation and discrimination of migrants elsewhere, then they are surely most questionable. Moreover, the interests of receiving countries and sending countries generally do not coincide, and this lack of correspondence has negative implications on the effectiveness and consistency of migration policies and regional dialogues.

The discussion on the migration-development nexus should include the principle of co-responsibility in the development of the whole human community (Baggio forthcoming). Grounded on the universal destination of the earth’s goods, this principle calls on countries to go beyond the concept of national sovereignty, acknowledging everybody’s right to have access to resources where they are. Moreover, the same principle dispels the myth of the ‘generosity’ entailed in the international cooperation promoted by the more industrialized countries, recalling the duty of sharing to those who have more resources. Another ethical principle that should be considered in the discussion on the migration-development nexus is the principle of subsidiarity. Grounded on the respect of the autonomy of local communities and institutions, this principle should be considered in the initiatives for international cooperation undertaken by receiving countries – in other words, promoting sustainable development should be respectful of local history and culture (“incultured” development). The inclusion of the principle of democracy in the discussion on migration-development nexus is also crucial. According to this principle, the discussion leading to the elaboration of migration policies and programs should include all the stakeholders through duly recognized representatives.

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<sup>3</sup> For instance many small scale and informal entrepreneurial activities exist which are created and/or supported by migrants. For an in depth account of such an activity by (permanent) migrants, see Maas (2005).

No political exercise can neglect the centrality of the human being understood in his/her individual and collective dimensions. The clear identification of the main beneficiaries of migration and development policies and programs reaffirms the inviolability of human rights beside visas and passports. The defence and promotion of human dignity cannot be jeopardized by economic or security concerns.

Strategically speaking, the reflection on the migration-development nexus should always consider the bottom-up approach, since a lot has already been done at the grassroots level and migrants and migrant associations have been learning from their own experience. Their inclusion in the debate may result highly beneficial. Then, when translating reflection into practice, spirit and trust should be always connected to achieve a sustainable and effective empowerment. The trust is to be built among all the stakeholders of the migration and development exercise with no ground for competition and no dependence from governments.

### **Tracing the Origins of TRANSCODE**

Based on the conviction that migration has development potentials beyond remittances, in 2007, the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC) decided to develop a project proposal for submission to the European Union. The proposal was tendered as a response to the 2007 call of the Aeneas Programme, which focused on financial and technical assistance to third countries in the field of migration and asylum. In November 2007, the project proposal was approved and in December 2007 SMC started implementing the project titled "Migrants' Associations and Philippine Institutions for Development" (MAPID). The project aimed at building and strengthening the partnership between government institutions in the Philippines and migrant communities, particularly through migrants' associations, in Italy and Spain. Being a three-country project, SMC decided to partner with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas in the Philippines, the Foundation for Initiatives and Studies on Multi-ethnicity

(ISMU Foundation) in Italy and the University of Valencia in Spain.

The MAPID project had two overall objectives: (1) to advance the understanding of the migration-development nexus among migrant associations and in Philippine institutions as a key factor contributing to national and local development; and (2) to promote cooperation between migrant associations and national and local institutions in the Philippines. Through the action 44 migrants' associations and 60 Philippine institutions (national agencies and local government units) acquired knowledge of the development potential of migration, examples of good practices and models of cooperation. More migrants' associations and Philippine institutions (but also other stakeholders) were reached through MAPID research, training and dissemination activities undertaken between 2008 and 2010 such as free distribution of reports and training materials in the three countries, and the availability online of various materials. All in all 87 migrant leaders participated in the MAPID training programs in Italy and Spain and acquired skills to serve as focal points/advocates/mediators between their members and Philippine institutions. Furthermore 116 Filipino policy-makers, development and migration officers attended the training programs in the Philippines and thereby acquired a better understanding of the migration-development nexus, particularly the transnational dimensions of development. Finally, MAPID also had the effect of creating or fostering the linkages between Filipino migrant associations in Italy and Spain and Philippines based institutions (Baggio 2010).

The final assessment of the activities undertaken within the MAPID project led the implementers to highlight some lessons learnt. In the first place, the success of the measures and actions for development in the countries of origin cannot be *a priori* defined, since it depends to a large extent on the 'quality' of a territory, i.e. those characteristics that render it more or less receptive to the contribution of migrants. This does not only mean material and infrastruc-

tural features but also other factors such as the rootedness of democracy, the presence of an enlightened ruling class to lead incentives, and the vitality of civil society as a way of enabling stratification for individual mobility. All these were of strategic importance for determining the impact of initiatives promoted by migrants and helped to recognize and overcome certain unfavourable contexts and institutional hurdles to initiatives taken. Thus it emerged that the involvement of local authorities but also locally based civil society organisations in countries of origin is of strategic importance for readying those local contexts to become true receptacles and co-investors for investment projects of migrants.

Secondly, the impact of return migration cannot be interpreted merely through economic measures, as this would underestimate the contribution that migrants and former migrants can make to the perspective of a development in the wider sense. Particularly attention to the cultural impact of migration and return migration is of importance. In this context it can be seen how significant the MAPID project was, and notably its training initiative aimed at empowerment as a keystone to engaging local actors in actions of transnational development.

Thirdly, although traditionally the idea of migrants as agents of development of their countries of origin above all focuses on those classified as temporary migrants with clear intentions to return home, attention through MAPID efforts has also shifted to other actors engaged with migration. This provides for a more complete, albeit also more complex, picture of all kinds of actors, including diaspora members, permanent expatriates, citizens who are clearly well integrated in their host countries and younger populations abroad, i.e. second and third generation migrants. In fact, when considering the diaspora, their knowledge of things such as market opportunities, the most appropriate distribution channels (including first hand information about customs and laws of countries involved with their trading activities), but also their ability to communicate fluently in two or more lan-

guages, can give great impetus to commercial flow, investments and the creation of businesses, the transfer of new technologies, the circulation of expertise and other forms of cross-cultural fertilisation.

Lastly, the success of the process of adaptation to the host society, including the crowning achievement of naturalisation, is not enough to erode the attachment of migrants to their country of origin, but rather turns them into strategic actors of its modernisation. Increasingly, this is acknowledged by national governments that are setting up special ministries or departments to deal with their compatriots, former citizens and second-generation emigrants. The transnational identities and the development potential of migrants and their associations have also attracted the attention of researchers (van Naerssen 2008; Smith and van Naerssen 2009; Agunias and Newland 2012) and international organisations (Sharma et al. 2011; IOM 2013).

#### **Defining the Key Objectives and Principles of TRANSCODE**

The TRANSCODE programme expressly built on the foundations laid out with the MAPID programme, seeking to extend its activities to other countries and migrant populations. One of its key objectives is to provide a platform to enable the creative and structural engagement of various actors, understanding these as stakeholders with certain common, but also with divergent interests as related to their basic approach, scale and location of implementation, their resources and their operational timelines. TRANSCODE thus sought to bring together NGOs in migrant-sending countries with migrant organisations in destination countries for migrants, commercial actors, local and national governments, traditional authorities (ethnic leaders, religious institutes) sharing potentially similar interests.

The overall objective of this programme is to engage different stakeholders in realizing the potential of migration and development and to provide a forum for transnational (North-South and South-South) exchanges of innovative ideas

for local development initiatives. This general objective translates to a focus on enhancing the level of engagement and collaboration between transnational community organisations (TCOs) and other migration and development actors. The latter include actors situated both in the Global North and South such as migrant-related NGOs and home-based organisations. Thereby it was also expected that a certain set of best practices with development projects would emerge to then replicate elsewhere. Following onto this field of practise dimension the TRANSCODE programme then envisioned identifying areas of cooperation and thereby also designs for transnational projects, the so-called *TRANSCODE spin-off projects*, in order to also search for funding. Finally, the TRANSCODE programme sought to disseminate the results and outcomes as learning tools for capacity building and shaping of policies to promote the development potentials of migration.

While the first connection with The Netherlands was more or less accidental, based mainly on personal relations between the initiators of the MAPID programme and one Dutch researcher, the choice for SMS (Global Society Foundation) as a partner was deliberate. As a service and support organisation for migrant organisations in The Netherlands, SMS had an extensive network linking the TRANSCODE initiative to programmes of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various development funding agencies. SMS also cooperated closely with ten migrant organisations that formed the Dutch Consortium of Migrant Organisations (DCMO) platform. DCMO, among others, included an umbrella organisation of Moluccan forced migrants and their descendants. They brought in forty years of experience with small-scale development projects in East Indonesia. Another member organisation of DCMO is the Joint Muslim Aid Organisation (SMHO). This is of Turkish Dutch origin and is primarily engaged in educational and relief programmes in African countries. For these migrant organisations TRANSCODE offered a substantive opportunity to exchange insights with other

organisations, for instance at the first event in The Philippines.

Obviously migrant organisations are only one of various actors involved in TRANSCODE activities. Yet we give them special attention in this article, as, by and large, they remain the principal actor to initiate activities in the field of migration and development. Furthermore they also take up a particularly complex position, as they are involved with developments in their country of origin, thereby becoming enmeshed through social networks with local actors, whilst they are simultaneously also serving local interests in countries of residence, e.g. dealing with societal perspectives on integration. They are thus directly responding as much to so-called immigration processes as to prospects for being part of the migration-development nexus. To understand the connections between these two, and their different settings, we prefer to use the term: *transnational community organisations* (TCOs). This concept then helps to understand new kinds of transnational spatial configurations taking shape through families, churches, communities, etc. TCOs then also include organisations that might otherwise be classified as Diaspora, as migrant or refugee led, when these have a firm embedding in a country of origin.

TRANSCODE is thus an effort to explore the role of TCOs to further the discussion and understanding of the migration-development nexus and, at the level of implementation, to learn from each other and co-operate in the programmes and projects. In this, specific features are promoting the involvement of multiple stakeholders and fostering cooperation across transnational contexts. The *multiple stakeholder approach* gives recognition to the need for engagement between civil society, governments and private sector, i.e. for them to work together. To that end the academics involved in this initiative also made sure not to take the limelight in the discussion on the direction TRANSCODE and its various activities should take. As the participants of the first workshop elected a steering committee mainly comprising academics (the authors of this

contribution included), this committee was careful that it limited its role to the continuity of the overall programme, staying well outside decision-making over individual activities and the direction which projects were taking. As we will discuss in the reflections part of this article, the endeavour to take a reflexive rather than defining or stipulating role was at times hard to maintain not only because of the personal engagement of the committee members with some activities, but because some of the other actors, and notably the TCOs, readily sought their support in formulating their proposals to secure funding for their projects. Nonetheless, beyond the slight concerns with the nature of the steering committee, given its original representation, overall TRANSCODE has always been seen as a real 'bottom up' endeavour and has been able to sustain a strong interest the TCO, but also from grassroots organisations and local government representatives.

#### **TRANSCODE Programme of Activities**

In conjunction with the above objectives the TRANSCODE programme of *activities* was then divided into the following:

- Interface meetings through workshops, conference, reflection sessions and field trips – face-to-face meetings to enhance maximum linking and learning and forging of partnerships;
- TRANSCODE spin off projects: Transnational multi-stakeholders projects enhancing the positive contribution of migration in development, and,
- Research: publications and documentation to disseminate information for capacity building, share learning processes to ensure the sustainability of results.

#### *International workshops*

Returning to the chronology of events. In TRANSCODE 1 (2010), two workshops were held, one in *Tagaytay City* (Philippines) in June and the second in *Soesterberg* (The Netherlands) in October. The workshops brought together participants representing different stakeholders involved in migra-

tion and development issues in the Philippines and the Netherlands: TCOs, local and national government agencies, private companies, the academe, and development organisations. Both workshops explored the possibilities for collaborative engagements to tap the development potentials of the participating organisations.

Project ideas on collaborative and transnational projects were prepared by the participants, which were then presented at the workshop in *Soesterberg*. The participants unanimously recommended that the initiative be continued. To this end the organizers proposed an expanded TRANSCODE, by opening up the initiative to participants from a new set of origin and destination countries: Ghana and Italy. Ghana was chosen because: (1) it is an African country with an emerging migration infrastructure; (2) it has a sizable Diaspora in Europe; and (3) there are existing links between academics based at the Radboud University and academic institutes in Ghana, The Centre of Migration Studies most particularly. The choice of Italy was also based on several considerations: (1) the existence of various TCOs in Italy, itself an emerging global south derived migrant destination; (2) the clear participation of (local) government(s) in migration and development projects; and (3) the strong links between the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC) in The Philippines with the Italy-based institution Scalabrini International Migration Institute (SIMI) facilitating research related activities.

In 2011, soon after the first two workshops had been held, the Global Society Foundation, as one of the initiators of the TRANSCODE programme, had to close its doors because of financial issues. This did not impact the initiative too much since the Steering Committee (SC) continued. To ensure that its role would not be too coercive and/or influential an Advisory Board was also set up. The members of this board came from the full range of actors already involved with initiatives under the TRANSCODE flag. Later on the Steering Committee changed its name in *TRANSCODE Programme Board* (TPB) and, more significantly, also revised its composition to bet-

ter reflect the multi-stakeholder representation that is so strongly envisioned in TRANSCODE.

Two TRANSCODE workshops were held in 2012: the first took place in Elmina (January) with the second workshop organized in Rome (April). With the assistance of RECOGIN, an umbrella organisation of Ghanaian diaspora organisations based in Amsterdam, and the TRANSCODE secretariat, the Centre for Migration Studies (Ghana) organized the first 2012 workshop. The selection of participants responded to the multi-stakeholder criterion and practically all the key sectors were represented. All the attendees showed clear knowledge and interest in the main topics related to the migration and development nexus, with an enriching variety of approaches towards these. Particularly noteworthy was the presence of representatives of the Ghanaian and Philippine governments for the entire duration of the workshop. The second workshop in Rome, Italy, was organized by SIMI. The selection of participants again responded well to the multi-stakeholder criterion. However, unfortunately, and this despite reiterated efforts, the organizers were not able to secure representatives from the private sector. At the same time representatives of the Ghanaian, Philippine and Italian (national and local) governments attended the introductory section providing clear messages of commitment.

#### *TRANSCODE Spin off Projects*

In TRANSCODE meetings held in Elmina (January 2012) and Rome (May 2012) the criteria for projects were set out and discussed with participants. For all TRANSCODE projects three specific and one overall criteria was discerned:

*Multi-stakeholder approach:* Projects were expected to pay much attention to the role of different stakeholders in their design and implementation. For one the workshops revealed that local governments could play a key role. Also the involvement of the private sector needed critical appraisal, for instance in choosing certain terminology in proposals that would appeal more (e.g. return to investment) or less (e.g. develop-

ment aid, poverty alleviation, communal ownership) to this sector. Sustained effort at engaging openly with various sectors should be seen as an important objective for the principal actors of a certain project.

*Cross Transnational engagement:* For TRANSCODE the inclusion of a transnational dimension in the design of proposals needed to be more thought through than the typical bilateral ties of a certain TCO, linking a country of origin with a country of receipt of migrants. Instead the expertise of similarly minded other TCOs and their partners should be sought where possible, also to take heed from the lessons learned there. Additionally the attention to such linkages could also help to fortify South-South relationships, for instance through further engagement between local governments involved.

*Bi-directionality:* The project should have a positive impact on both the Northern and Southern partners involved. In essence this point calls for a discerning perspective on power relationships and the need to understand and essentially minimize unequal investments in projects between partners, especially between the global North and South, to avoid different levels of involvement and associated sense of ownership (and thus sustained commitment) to projects initiated.

*Expected development impact (beneficiaries):* The sustainability of projects is a criterion quite common with all development cooperation oriented projects, and under TRANSCODE it is seen as being important and legitimate too, notably in relationship to the prior three more specific criteria. This fourth criterion would then also help to more easily satisfy potential donors. Thus it was recommended to the authors of project proposals that they would give special attention to questions such as: What are the problems that need to be solved? What are the indicators for the expected development impact? To this end a logical framework was considered to be an important integral component of all proposals.

The transnational development projects are conceptually complete but, at this moment, still

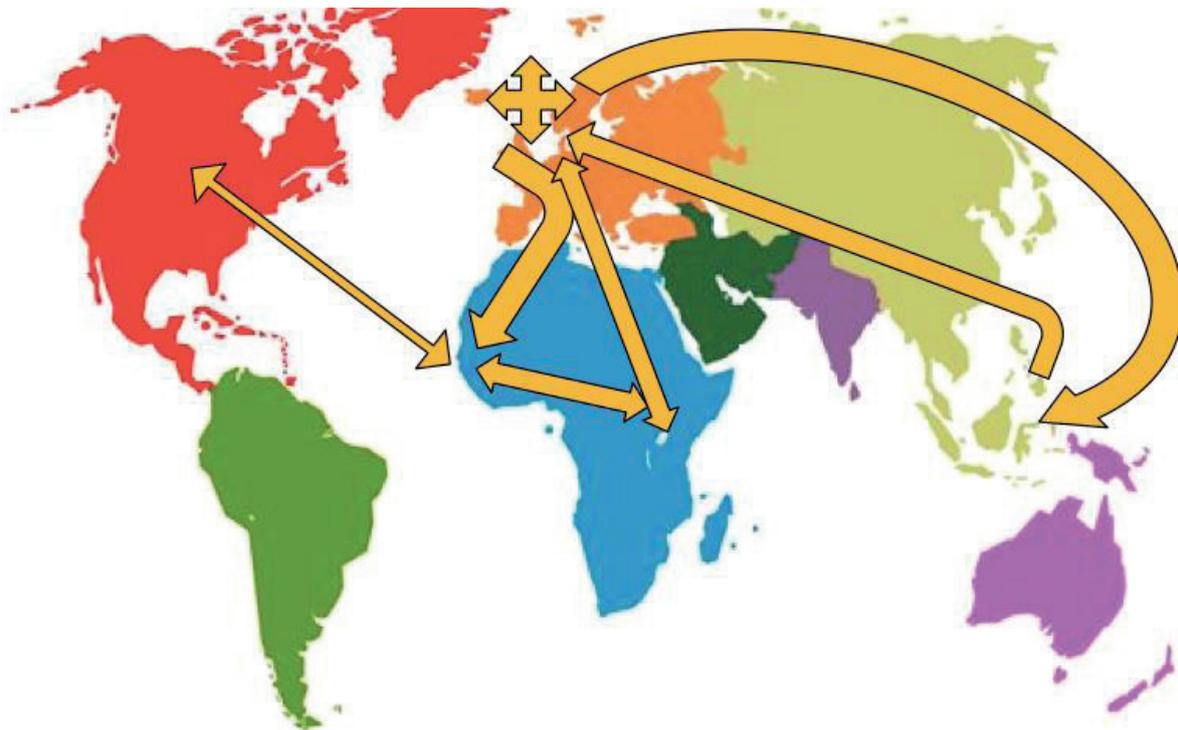


Figure 1: Illustration of communication exchanges during the project proposal phase of the Burundian Women's Post-Conflict Resilience Project

under review with regard to funding. In two cases this might be explained by their scale and ambition. Thus the project "Transnational Partnership in Return Migration and Human Development" aims to encourage Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands to invest in food security in Ghana and to establish small farmers cooperatives in three districts. The major partners are RECOGIN from the Netherlands and ADRA, a relief organisation in Ghana.

The second project concerns the "Burundian Women's Post-Conflict Resilience Project". Its principal objective is to build and enhance the livelihood capacity of 120,000 Burundian women and men in the province of Kirundo, Burundi. One of its activities is income-generating sewing and weaving programmes. To ensure that this is set up properly the Netherlands based Burundian Women for Peace and Development (BWPDP) will cooperate with the Philippine based return migrants NGO Development Action Women Network (DAWN), drawing on their methodology and many years of implementation experience even if provided in a different. This project is a

prime example of how transnational exchanges can lead to new inspiration and ideas. During the first TRANSCODE workshop in Tagaytay, BWPDP had the opportunity to visit DAWN offices and witness its so-called healing and empowerment programme for traumatized female migrants returning from Japan. The BWPDP programme will include hands-on training in sewing and weaving in its BWPDP Peace and Reconciliation Centre in Kirundo. This provides women, many widows, who have survived the civil war and are returning from refugee camps in neighbouring countries to the region of Kirundo with an activity that is both therapeutic and income generating. Thus these traumatized women can regain their self-esteem, gain social footing in the region and manage to make a living.

The name of the "Pasali Farm Machinery Pool" speaks for itself. The project is relatively small scale with the total budget required anticipated to remain below 100,000 Euro. PASALI is a Philippine migrant organisation with branches in the Netherlands and the Philippines (Mindanao). Unfortunately, partnership with another non-

Philippine organisation, which had seemed quite keen to fund this project as the endeavour fitted well with its own ideology, failed. Now alternative funding is being sought.

### **TRANSCODE as a Process**

Besides initiating and supporting the above-mentioned spin off project proposals, the TRANSCODE programme also produced a platform to ensure more continual engagement and collaboration between TCOs and other stakeholders in the field of migration-development in various sending and home countries. To that end it may be noted that all kinds of spontaneous bilateral exchanges have arisen between actors who have come to know each other through TRANSCODE initiatives, of which we have only learned of some, also contingent to the stage of development of ideas that they are in. Examples are a spin-off from the 2010 workshops in which a Philippines based local government contacted the migrant NGO Athika to start a migrant house in the municipality; the initiative of Applied University Rotterdam's Department of Water Engineering sending interns to the municipality of Infanta, The Philippines to support local water-related developments there; and DCMO, which has started several initiatives based on core TRANSCODE principles.

Whilst the above list of activities might seem to suggest remarkable progress, which in many ways would be a justified conclusion, it is important to also dwell on a number of critical points, notably also as lessons learnt from which other programmes might also profit. To start, the programme did not manage to equally involve all envisaged actors in its programme and various projects. In particular the private sector remained weakly represented, which may be attributable not so much to the nature of activities pursued, but rather to the way they had a strong developmental character, as opposed to having a more outright entrepreneurial sense.

Where the commercial sector was then somewhat under involved, the knowledge institutions by contrast appear a little overrepresented, par-

ticularly in the more processional phases. The effect of this is twofold: First, whilst the role of non-academic actors is, without any real exception, perceived as enduring and engaged throughout project design and implementation, that of the academics is less clear. Second, while the academics certainly readily contributed their insights in discussions of the projects of others doing so in a form that might almost be considered 'action-research' (and we also speak from personal experience here). On the other hand they also maintained a certain distance towards project initiatives started under the TRANSCODE flag, notably at the stage of project proposal design. This points to a preference to keep certain objectivity, and thus also distance, to these projects, with the argument that this was key for generating ownership. At the same time however the question arises whether they are not also one actor amongst the various involved, and that an exceptional role would thus be a misfit. To date no consensus has been reached on this.

Moreover, none of the actors could be involved in initiatives on a full time basis. In practice, this led to the situation that the knowledge institutions are not so only facilitative or supportive to the project proposals but became also involved in project formulation and lobbying. This has certainly also to do with capacities and capabilities of project proponents. From the TRANSCODE workshop held in Rome (2012) it emerged that there are clear coaching needs for the groups involved with the projects. This relates to project formulation, and how the proposal can comply with needs of funders.

Most participants do have experiences with local kinds of projects and their implementation. That was also the reason why they were invited to participate in the programme in the first place. Our premise thereby rests on the achievement of sustained transnational levels of engagement, notably between migrants and counterparts in their country of origin, but also in partnership with other related local partners both abroad and in the countries of origin. This adheres well to the argument of Faist (2000: 191) argues

that when studying 'transnational social spaces' researchers must be careful not to conceive of these spaces as 'static notions of ties and positions' but rather as 'dynamic social processes'. In his view:

Cultural, political and economic processes in transnational social spaces involve the accumulation, use and effects of various sorts of capital, their volume and convertibility: economic capital, human capital, such as educational credentials, skills and know-how, and social capital, mainly resources inherent in or transmitted through social and symbolic ties.

This kind of conceptualization of interventions as a principle also held in TRANSCODE initiatives, does call for quite comprehensive, multi-sited (countries) approaches, sometimes through various concomitant interventions, which not all actors may feel sufficiently well equipped for. This relates to financial means and other forms of investments, but also to their human capital, a required level of expertise, for instance in writing proposals in a manner relevant for funding agencies or at least the way they perceive it. To try and solve this apparent issue close friends were approached, and many of these were the academics involved in TRANSCODE. Whilst their conceptual knowledge does not stand to question here, the point is that such insights may not be the most required ingredient for these proposals. As was also stated earlier, the matter of trust with the academics involved in the programme in steering further proposal developments seems to prevail in the choice to call on them for assistance first. Needless to say this led to certain delays as these academics were then required to play intermediary or catalytic roles vis-à-vis others to provide more relevant, direct technical assistance.

Every organisation that took part in one of the TRANSCODE workshops is considered to be member of the 'TRANSCODE family'. The term family, like thinking 'Transcodely', or in the spirit of Transcode, is important, as it denotes a sense of long-lasting commitment and a mutual commitment to meeting a shared set of needs. And,

as in just about every family, there may always be some conflict at certain times. This was also the case here, as an internal conflict between Dutch participants was also taken into the discussion space of one of the workshops. This not only caused certain delay but also produced some confusion with other participants about the reasons for bringing this up at that occasion, also because the underlying issues were not clear. The value of that moment of crisis was that it showed up two things: First, it highlighted the role of power and hierarchy, which a horizontal, bottom-up platform approach like that of TRANSCODE did not automatically resolve. Second, and related to the first point, funding opportunities for projects play out an element of competition between actors, notably between TCOs, for as long as this funding is not primarily own resources, when there are clear limitations in the funds available from external donors, such as supporting governments of countries of destination.

TRANSCODE has a clear endeavour to achieve transnational modes of collaboration involving various actors (stakeholders) in activities that are mainly based in the South. Usually the approach taken is one of collectives, of mutual and consensual approaches between various actors. What needs to be recognized in this is the fact that some activities were also considered as enabling for migrants, namely to allow them to become involved in activities that would actually facilitate a financially sustainable return to their countries of origin.

Another matter that came out of the Rome workshop, was the question of representation, notably from the angle of generations. At the Rome event a few second-generation migrants had been invited to join the occasion. Whilst overall they enjoyed the occasion, and felt they had learned a lot, they also stated how as a generation they felt somewhat underrepresented, and also a little subdued in the presence of senior members of their migrant organisations. Furthermore, and perhaps more significantly, they also felt that the proposed projects were a bit "old-

fashioned” and traditional in approach, focusing on rural communities, on agriculture, and generally not bringing in new technologies, virtual spaces and such. This point is being addressed with a particular project that is initiated by the second generation.

Last but not least, funding of the workshops and proposed projects is a continual challenge, particularly since the European economic recession is felt in both Italy and the Netherlands. In the latter, the government budget for development cooperation has seen major cuts, which has also heavily affected the development organisations involved with, and supportive of, the TRANSCODE programme. To this we can add that one of the principal challenges remaining at this moment concerns the friction between the conceptual approach of TRANSCODE, which is essentially transnational, multi-scalar and multi-stakeholder, thereby embodying through activities it generates not only bilateral North-South (N-S) engagements but also the possibility of S-S, N-S-S, configurations, etc., versus the geo-political context it is part of. Whilst the workshops of TRANSCODE have clearly shown up the legitimacy and value of such variations in approaches, development-funding organisations seem still to primarily be organized along the lines of nation-states, and then in N-S constitutions, or in regional formations (for example sub-Sahara Africa, Southeast Asia) in their consideration of the merits of projects proposed to them.

### **Discussion: Lessons Learned**

When considering what lessons we have learned from the TRANSCODE initiative, we need to immediately ask: lessons for, and by whom? For TRANSCODE this is an important and critical observation, given the fact that we do not give precedence to one or the other actor in goals to achieve. At the same time, as also argued earlier, the involvement of TCOs is crucial in the overall programme as they are the principal bearers of migration and development programmes. Many of these organisations have already gained experience in small-scale development projects, e.g.

in the field of education and health. Considering the needs and requests from the communities of origin and more in general the immense problems remaining in many migrant sending countries, TCOs feel the pressure to broaden their programmes and upscale their development efforts. In this respect, TRANSCODE can be instrumental in bringing TCOs in contact with each other and with other developmental actors in order to achieve this endeavour without thereby overextending themselves. In that vein the TRANSCODE programme has already proved to be quite valuable.

A multi-stakeholder approach is complicated and time consuming, certainly in the defining stages, however we anticipate that there will be a positive return to investment in the course of time, defined more precisely through the implementation of various TRANSCODE projects, but also by achievement of a sustained and active community of *Transcodians*, that embodies representatives for various actors who are willing to exchange and share ideas and perspectives, because they understand the added value of this for all involved. Indeed, from personal interviews held with various participants at workshops it emerged that participants were struck by the amount of information and debates they could pick up through the TRANSCODE events. They particularly noted the value of some similarities in the way transnational developments were achieved at local levels in various countries of the global south. Given the value of such exchanges it is also important to give more emphasis to the importance of institutional changes taking place over time.

As for the balance between the several actors in a multi-stakeholder approach, a case to the point is provided with the process that has been taking place within TRANSCODE in the relationship between its Programme Board and the Advisory Board. Where the TPB was envisaged as guiding team for the setup of various components under TRANSCODE, with input in those components limited to an overall role, the members of the Advisory Board took a more critical

perspective, asking why the Steering Committee seemed to only comprise academics, asking how this then reflected the overall multi-stakeholder approach of TRANSCODE. Beyond the question of practicalities, which *would* favour a small core steering team with few direct own interests, this question is, of course, legitimate.

In 2015 TRANSCODE will be formulating its second Five Year Plan. While maintaining the essential principles of a multi-stakeholder, transnational approach, more attention will need to be given to the mechanics of multilateral cooperation. Furthermore we want to give specific attention to original, out-of-box activities that are not already enmeshed in policy orientations. Among such initiatives, a capacity building process through educational E-learning programmes, but also the start of a TRANSCODE youth programme, are some of our priorities.

Temporal dynamics in the field of migration and development also relate, logically, to actual levels of mobility, a relation that from a policy perspective remains uneasy at best, especially in the migrant receiving countries. In conceiving development prospects as enabled through investments that come forth out of migration, we consider human mobility as a core value. This needs to then also reflect the long-term engagement through various activities of TRANSCODE.

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# Understanding Diaspora Organisations in European Development Cooperation – Approaches, Challenges and Ways Ahead\*

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## Abstract

This article examines how Northwestern European development aid agencies support the development activities of diaspora organisations, especially in fragile situations. The article interrogates the perceived relationship between diaspora involvement and development, and how this perception is reflected in the ways in which development agencies collaborate with diaspora organisations through mainstream funding schemes, special diaspora initiatives and network support. Three tendencies are identified: a high emphasis on technical fixes; a tension between perceptions of diaspora organisations as special development agents and a mainstreaming ideal; and, finally, that diaspora organisations appear as particularly risky recipient groups to some development professionals because of their personal involvement in the country of origin. The article further argues that policy incoherence as well as underlying notions of development as planned, professionalized and based on a sedentary bias contribute to the marginal role diaspora organisations currently play in the professional development field.

**Keywords:** development cooperation, development policies, diaspora, diaspora organisations, migration-development nexus, policy incoherence

## Introduction

Since the early 2000s diaspora organisations have come to the attention of European development aid agencies as implementers of and partners in development cooperation. In contrast to the private and often family-based nature of remittances – the main focus of the global migration-development debate – collective remittances from diaspora organisations generally focus on the local community level or are intended to benefit broader parts of the population through support to social service provision, infrastructure, or civil society. Likewise diaspora organisations

are sometimes perceived to constitute linkages between Western societies and their homelands in some development circles (BMZ 2014; Turner and Kleist 2013). They have therefore emerged as actors in the migration-development nexus.

This article aims to contribute to the debate on the development potential of collective diaspora contributions by focusing on diaspora organisations<sup>1</sup>. It examines how European development aid agencies engage with diaspora organisations as potential agents of change. I use the term diaspora organisation to refer to organisations based on origin in a particular place or country of personal or ancestral origin that do not coin-

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<sup>1</sup> Parts of the article have been published in an earlier version in Kleist and Vammen (2012).

cide with the country of settlement and whose leader and membership base primarily consists of persons identifying with this origin. Diaspora organisations thus include a wide range of organisations, including hometown associations, branches of homeland political parties, cultural associations, migrant youth associations, and many more (Sinatti and Horst 2014; Orozco and Rouse 2007). Their activities span social service provision, humanitarian assistance, advocacy work, political lobbying, or civil society involvement in the (ancestral) country of origin as well as cultural events and integration-related activities in the country of settlement. Contributions to development, relief and reconstruction are thus just one aspect of what diaspora organisations do, and they often go hand in hand with activities focusing on the country of settlement (Kleist 2007; Hammond 2013; Lacroix 2013).

In this article, I interrogate the perceived relationship between diaspora involvement and development and how this perception is reflected in the ways development agencies collaborate with diaspora organisations. I focus particularly on small and medium-sized diaspora organisations that contribute to and are involved in development or relief processes in their (ancestral) country of origin, especially in relation to fragile situations. Three questions structure the article: First, how do European development aid agencies perceive the role of diaspora organisations and their development potential? Second, how do they support and collaborate with diaspora organisations as part of their development cooperation activities? And third, what are the underlying assumptions and dilemmas in the ways that diaspora organisations have been incorporated in migration and development activities?

My approach to these questions is inspired by the anthropology of public policy (Wedel et al. 2005), exploring “underlying ideologies and uses” (2005: 34) of public policies, in this case of diaspora support. The empirical material for this exploration consists of policy documents, such as evaluations, reports, and studies on diaspora organisation support initiatives funded and

established by Northwestern European development aid agencies, primarily in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, UK, Germany and the Netherlands. It is supplemented with interviews with representatives from professional development NGOs in Denmark, conducted in 2011 as part of a larger study (Kleist and Vammen 2012) and in 2014.

The article is further inspired by Bourdieu’s notion of field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). I approach the perceptions and practices of diaspora organisations and how these are reflected in diaspora support models as part of a professionalized development field in which different actors interact. The field is guided by implicit and explicit ‘rules of the game’ – such as underlying notions of development, bureaucratic set-ups that reproduce and circumscribe development interventions, and ideals of proper implementation and professionalism. According to Bourdieu, all actors in a field recognize the existence of the ‘rules of the game’ whether they take them for granted or contest them. Understanding development in this way implies that the ways development aid agencies support and interact with diaspora organisations not only reflect explicit intentions or value judgements (though these certainly play a role) but also convey underlying notions of how diaspora organisations *can* be perceived within the professional development field and how certain practices may not be recognized as ‘proper’ development, falling outside the field. However, there are different positions within a field, and in this article I pay special attention to these positions and the tensions between them.

The article is divided into five parts: perceptions of diaspora organisations as agents of change; diaspora support models in current European development cooperation; lessons learnt from these models; a case study; and policy-related implications. Three tendencies are identified: First, emphasis on technical fixes, expressed in the widespread use of and attention to capacity development when supporting diaspora organisations. Second, there is a tension between perceptions of diaspora organisa-

tions as a special kind of development agent and the predominant mainstreaming ideal. Third, I suggest that though diaspora organisations and other small development NGOs may face many similar challenges vis-à-vis development aid agencies, diaspora organisations may appear as particularly risky and problematic recipient groups because of their (possible) personal and transnational involvement in the country of origin. Such involvement might disturb ideals of development engagement as neutral, professionalized and based on sedentary notions of the good life, widespread in current development thinking (Bakewell 2008b).

### **Diaspora Positions**

The term diaspora derives from Greek and means 'the scattering of seeds' or to 'sow over' (Cohen 1997). Originally a term referring to the expulsion and scattering of Jews and other expelled groups such as Armenians and Greeks, the diaspora category started to become more widely used in social science, anthropological and cultural studies in the 1990s (e.g. Cohen 1997; Safran 1991; Tölölyan 1991; van Hear 1998), broadly understood as referring to transnational communities, dispersed from an original homeland. This notion of the diaspora category – in more or less well-delimited versions – has deeply resonated in academic, policy and public discourse (Brubaker 2005). Today the diaspora category is employed by academics, development aid agencies, international organisations, political actors, and migrant groups and their descendants who make claims or frame expectations in the name of the diaspora (Kleist 2008a), often related to moral obligation and political or humanitarian agency. The category has thus moved from being primarily research-oriented and has entered the world of policy.

The wide proliferation and elasticity of the diaspora category has made some researchers suggest that the diaspora category is more usefully approached as a category of identification (Axel 2004) or mobilization (Kleist 2008a, 2008b; Sökefeld 2006; Werbner 2002) than referring to

actual communities. It can be argued that the analytical value of the term is eroded when used in so many different ways (Faist 2010). However, the elasticity and vagueness of the term may also be one of its strengths insofar as it lends itself to different modes of identification and mobilization (Dufoix 2008; Tölölyan 1996; Kleist 2013) that can be attributed to different actors, actions, and perspectives. Nevertheless, the academic discussion on the theoretical particularities or (lack of) usefulness of the diaspora concept is generally not reflected in policy usages. Indeed, as Sinatti and Horst argue, European development actors understand diaspora as referring to actual communities with particular traits (2014: 2) rather than as a category of mobilization or identification. Below, I outline two central positions in how diaspora organisations are perceived in European development cooperation: as transnational agents of change and as long-distance nationalists.

The perception of diaspora as referring to collective and transnational agents of change which contribute to development in their ancestral homelands started to proliferate in international development aid circles in the beginning of the 2000s. Because of (actual or perceived) affiliations with and involvement in both the country of origin and residence (and possibly more places), some diaspora groups are seen as bridgeheads between the established development industry and local actors and contexts in developing countries. In these usages, the diaspora category is mostly employed exclusively with reference to highly skilled groups living in Western countries, ignoring large migrant and refugee groups in neighbouring countries (Bakewell 2008a) as well as low-skilled migrants and persons in irregular situations. A key characteristic of this diaspora position is the (expectation of) acquired skills through 'exposure' to Western countries as well as involvement and knowledge of the local cultures and languages (see Orozco 2007). Living in the West but maintaining relations to the country of origin, diaspora groups are perceived to hold potential resources for local and national

homeland development (Mohamoud 2005). This position is found among international development organisations, such as the International Organisation for Migration<sup>2</sup>, the African Union<sup>3</sup>, sending governments (Turner 2013; Kleist 2013), and indeed diaspora organisations.

At the other end of the spectrum is an understanding of diaspora groups as security threats or, as Benedict Anderson (1998) has formulated it, as long-distance nationalists. In this understanding, the migrant's distance to the erstwhile homeland results in lack of accountability. In the wake of 9/11 and the subsequent terrorist attacks in London and Spain, the fear of migrant long-distance nationalism has increased. In Western countries, the fear of attacks and of so-called home-grown terrorism (Byman et al. 2001) has resulted in a securitization of migration where migrants and diaspora groups are perceived as potential terrorists through organising, financing, or conducting terrorism (Demmers 2002; Collier 2000). While the securitization of migration – or the migration-security nexus – is not the main focus of development cooperation activities, it may still shape development aid agencies' collaboration with diaspora groups through anxiety of supporting radicalized groups. The implication is that diaspora organisations, if they are not ruled out completely, may be at least considered problematic or risky recipient group or partners for development aid agencies.

### Diaspora Support Models

In the following section I examine how Northwestern European development aid agencies support diaspora organisations. Several European development aid strategies mention support to migrant and diaspora development activities as part of their portfolio, including Germany (BMZ 2014), Norway (Erdal and Horst 2010), the UK (Thornton and Hext 2009; Vammen and Brønden 2012; DFID 2014), and the Netherlands (Dutch MFA 2008). Likewise so-called co-development policies are part of French, Spanish

and Italian development cooperation policies (Nijenhuis and Brokehuis 2010) but these are not included in the scope of the article.

Table 1 below identifies three diaspora support models employed by European development agencies to support development contributions by diaspora organisations: general co-funding schemes for development NGOs, special diaspora initiatives, and support to networks. The three models often co-exist and their activities may overlap. As the table shows, capacity building activities and matching fund schemes are the two most common ways of supporting diaspora organisations. I examine these approaches in more detail below, followed by discussion of the lessons learnt and dilemmas associated with these approaches. I thereby wish to interrogate the underlying notions of diaspora organisations and their development potential.

### Mainstreaming

One of the most common ways that Northwestern European development aid agencies support diaspora organisations is through large funding schemes targeting small and medium-sized development NGOs. Such grant schemes are often administered by large NGOs or umbrella organisations, rather than development aid agencies themselves. Financial support usually requires self-funding, sometimes with the opportunity of self-funding 'in kind', such as equipment or self-coverage of per diem. In some cases diaspora organisations are mentioned as one of the primary target groups, like the British Common Ground Initiative which explicitly states that it is open to "both small and diaspora organisations to create real and sustainable change"<sup>4</sup>. However, it varies from initiative to initiative whether special support is offered to diaspora applicants.

In addition to matching funds, capacity-building activities for diaspora organisations (and other small development organisations) to develop their capacity in relation to propos-

<sup>2</sup> <http://diaspora.iom.int/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://pages.au.int/cido/pages/diaspora-division>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/international-development-funding/common-ground-initiative-cgi>

**Table 1: Development aid agencies' support to diaspora organisations (DOs)**

Principle	Characteristics	Examples
Mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to matching fund schemes on equal terms with other development NGOs</li> <li>- Capacity building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society in Development (Danida), 1996-</li> <li>- Oxfam Novib Linkis (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs), 2004-2011</li> </ul>
Special diaspora initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to matching fund schemes for DOs only</li> <li>- Capacity building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Diaspora Programme (Danida), 2010-2015</li> <li>- Pilot Project Pakistan (NORAD), 2008-2010</li> </ul>
Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish DO networks and platforms</li> <li>- Facilitate collaboration between DOs</li> <li>- Facilitate collaboration between DOs and other development NGOs</li> <li>- Capacity building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EADPD<sup>5</sup> (European Commission (EC) with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Dutch MFA, and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)), 2010-2013; (SDC), 2014-2016</li> </ul>

als and project management is a common feature. Specific objectives may include up-scaling of projects, strengthening the quality of proposals, enhancing participation in policy decision-making and public debates on development, and enabling common platforms of understanding. Courses offered as part of capacity-building cover a great range of fields, such as civil society, organisational development, project cycle management, leadership, proposal writing and fund-raising capacity, procurement, financial management, etc.

#### *Special Diaspora Initiatives*

In contrast to the mainstreaming approach, some development aid agencies have established initiatives exclusively targeting diaspora organisations, also consisting of matching funds and capacity development. There is a tendency that such funding schemes delimit their target group to organisations focusing on selected countries, offering context-sensitive programmes and activities. They are often pilot projects, expected to show quick results and with the objective of

making the involved diaspora organisations able to participate – and compete – in regular programmes and funding schemes. Furthermore, they usually target larger migrant or refugee groups originating from states that receive substantial development or humanitarian aid. Like mainstream funding schemes, they are often administered by a large professional NGO. Examples of special diaspora initiatives include the Norwegian Pilot Project Pakistan (PPP), a three-year NORAD-funded project running between 2008 and 2010 (Erdal and Horst 2010) and the Danish Diaspora Programme, funded by Danida and run by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). I return to the DRC Diaspora Programme later in the article.

#### *Networks and Umbrella Organisations*

Finally, the promotion and establishment of networks between different diaspora organisations and between diaspora organisations and other development NGOs constitute a significant trend. Networking activities aim at fostering coordination, cooperation and partnerships between organisations. Network support can be divided into two overall approaches: the promotion of networks as an added bonus and the establish-

<sup>5</sup> European-wide African Diaspora Platform for Development, <http://ae-platform.org/>

ment of diaspora organisations networks and platforms.

Network as an added bonus can be promoted through capacity training or other activities with different kinds of participants, such as other development NGO representatives, policy makers and development professionals. This kind of network promotion is broad in scope and may range from mutual inspiration to the formation of formal collaboration between diaspora organisations and other development NGOs. Explicit network support takes place through the establishment of or support to diaspora organisation platforms, networks, and umbrella organisations by development aid agencies (or their implementing partners). In addition to more general networking benefits, such initiatives may also aim at providing an overview of diaspora organisations through membership registration and mapping exercises. Indeed, the issue of whether diaspora organisations 'represent their diasporas' or which spokesperson or diaspora organisation is the 'most representative' is sometimes brought up (Ars Progetti 2007; GTZ 2009). However studies and evaluations show that externally supported networks and umbrella organisations rarely have legitimacy within their target groups and are not sustainable without external support (Ars Progetti 2007; Horst et al. 2010; Thornton and Hext 2009).

### **Priority Areas in Diaspora Support**

Northwestern European development aid agencies have been supporting diaspora organisations through general development NGO funding schemes from the middle of the 1990s and special diaspora initiatives from the middle of the 2000s. While some evaluations and studies highlight the positive potential and opportunities in collaboration with diaspora organisations (Erdal and Horst 2010; Horst et al. 2010; JMDI 2011), others point to mixed results (de Haas 2006), or conclude that it is still too early to say much about their effect (Newland 2011). There is thus no overall agreement of the development potential of existing diaspora organisation support

models. Nevertheless, four priority areas can be found in most external evaluations and migration policy research on the topic: capacity building, adequate selection criteria, local anchorage, and a participatory approach.

### *Capacity Building*

Capacity building is a central part of all three diaspora support models, as shown in Table 1. Capacity building is employed as a means to improve the development effect of diaspora involvement in developing countries as well as to ameliorate the capacity of diaspora organisations more generally. Capacity building activities may range from training courses to tailor-made support to proposal writing, project management, monitoring, and accounting etc. It is widely recommended in evaluations and studies as it may create "a level playing field" (de Haas 2006: 100), perceived as a good and valuable activity.

However, capacity building also reflects power relations between development aid agencies and diaspora organisations. The ability to build capacity is placed in the hands of donors (or implementing partners) while diaspora organisations are the ones whose capacity needs to be developed. This understanding both reflects perceptions of diaspora organisations and of the nature of development (cf. Sinatti and Horst 2014). Many smaller diaspora organisations – like other small development NGOs – are run by volunteers with ensuing constraints on their time and resources. This means that diaspora organisations' approach to development projects may be different from development aid agencies and other parts of the professional development industry who may find or fear that they lack capacity to engage effectively and professionally in development cooperation; for instance, in relation to demands on financial and project management. According to Sinatti and Horst (2014), European development agencies work with a rather narrow understanding of development as the change generated by "the planned activities of professional development actors" (Sinatti and Horst 2014: 6). This has implications for smaller

diaspora organisations because it “inevitably leads to the conclusion that diaspora organisations – in similar ways to many other small civil-society organisations – lack the technical skills to compete in the official development world” (ibid). The emphasis on capacity building can be seen at least partly in this light, accentuating the hierarchical relationship between the professional and the amateur in the development field as well as a belief in technical fixes.

### **Adequate Selection Procedures**

Good selection criteria constitute another key priority in matching funding models for diaspora organisations and other organisations alike. The question of whether special funding should be made available for diaspora organisations is at least partly linked to the question of the quality of applications, and hence to selection criteria. On the one hand, selection may be viewed as a technical issue – e.g. as a question of formulating a convincing project proposal, showing ability to comply with procurement, accounting and reporting demands, etc. On the other hand, it relates to a value assessment, selecting diaspora organisations whose objectives are in line with donor priorities and, not least, avoiding funding organisations that finance conflicts or terrorism. This is, of course, as it should be. However, the political aspects of selection are sometimes downplayed. Selection is not only a technical issue but also a political process, not least in relation to fragmented diaspora groups operating in fragile situations (Horst et al. 2010). As James Ferguson (1994) has famously argued, development projects may turn into an anti-politics machine where development is understood as technical solutions to technical problems; hence, development becomes a technical fix rather than a deeply political process. The tendency towards depoliticisation can also be found in relation to diaspora involvement (Turner and Kleist 2013; Horst 2013). The political aspects of selection criteria may thus be downplayed or disguised.

### **Local Anchorage**

Local anchorage is a third cross-cutting priority area employed by development aid agencies to assess the quality of diaspora organisations’ development potential. Local anchorage in relation to development projects is generally understood as close collaboration with partners based in the area of reception and that the development project in question is based on local needs and requests. It thus refers to a close connection between development partners and a locality. Local anchorage constitutes a basic condition for obtaining funding in both mainstream and special diaspora support schemes (JMDI 2011). In relation to diaspora organisations, there are often expectations that ‘the local’ coincides with the community of origin of the diaspora organisations involved. However, just as the concept of diaspora is flexible in its geographical scale and localisation of origin, ranging from continents to quite specific localities (Kleist 2013), expectations to ‘the local’ may be flexible too. Nevertheless, it tends to be related to notions of origin and expectations of close social relations and networks.

The emphasis on ‘the local’ as a connection between people and locality may also reflect the sedentary emphasis in much development thinking. As Oliver Bakewell has argued, much contemporary development thinking is interventionist in nature and based on “an underlying assumptions that development is about enabling people to stay home” (Bakewell 2008b: 1342). In this understanding, migration constitutes a deviation to be corrected and controlled through different kinds of interventions; migration is perceived as a crisis symptom and development is seen as one of the ways to fix it. The notion of diasporas as development agents based on belonging to a particular homeland, desire, or even a sense of obligation to contribute to its development, simultaneously feeds into this discourse as well as it challenges it through the emphasis on mobility and transnational belonging.

### *A Participatory and Consultative Approach*

Finally, long-term engagement and a participatory approach is mentioned in several policy documents (BMZ 2014; Danish MFA 2014; Dutch MFA 2008) and consistently called for in the major guidelines and studies (de Haas 2006; Horst et al. 2010, JMDI 2011) as well as in several evaluations (de Bruyn and Huyse 2008; Erdal and Horst 2010; Thornton and Hext 2009). This approach accentuates the importance of mutual learning processes in development aid agencies and diaspora organisations, establishing mutual interests, objectives, and monitoring procedures throughout the process. Likewise, policy consultation is highlighted: rather than existing as merely implementing projects, diaspora organisations are included in policy-making processes with the opportunity of actually shaping policies. A consequence is thus to dissuade a top-down approach where diaspora groups are perceived as 'tools' to be mobilized or 'tapped', according to a pre-conceived agenda – or as possible 'political messengers' (Englom and Svensson 2009). Comparing NGO involvement in development cooperation with diaspora organisation engagement, Jennifer Brinkerhoff warns against the dangers of co-optation and instrumentalization. She concludes that "if donors and governments seek to maximize diaspora development contributions, rather than rushing to instrumentalize diasporas, they would do well simply to embrace diasporans as independent partners, not extensions of their own agendas" (2011: 47; cf. de Haas 2006).

The emphasis on a participatory approach in development thinking is not new but goes back to Robert Chamber's work in the 1980s. The aforementioned emphasis on local anchorage can also be seen as an aspect of this tendency. However, there is a potential tension between the participatory approach and the emphasis on (especially standardized) capacity building and technical criteria. While the former approach emphasises flexibility and mutuality, the latter relies on professionalised, planned, and hierarchical notions of development. This is not to

say that the two approaches cannot co-exist, let alone that development aid agencies (and their implementing partners) do not engage in a participatory approach. Rather, my point is that that the overall model of planned and professionalised development frames what is seen as good development engagement.

### **A Case Study: Between Mainstreaming and Special Diaspora Initiatives**

To examine the tendencies outlined above in more detail, I now turn to a case study on Danida support to diaspora organisations. The case focuses on a respectively mainstreaming and special diaspora initiative: Civil Society in Development (CISU) and the DRC Diaspora Programme<sup>6</sup>.

CISU<sup>7</sup> is a union of more than 280 Danish civil society organisations (CSOs). About 15% of the member organisations are diaspora organisations, many with focus on Somalia but also on Congo, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. CISU has received Danida funding since 1996 to support civil society involvement in developing countries and administers the Danida-financed Civil Society Fund to support civil society projects conducted by Danish CSOs in partnerships with local CSOs in developing countries. All Danish CSOs – including diaspora organisations – can apply for funding.

CISU started receiving an increasing number of inquiries from diaspora organisations in the late 1990s (Frederiksen 2007), and from 2005 a consultant was employed to strengthen diaspora organisations and to extend their membership in CISU. Activities included training courses and seminars, the establishment of networks, and proposal writing assistance. No special funding was made available. The inclusion of diaspora organisations thus evolved through membership demands but was further strengthened by organisational initiatives – a development also

<sup>6</sup> The case study is based on interviews with employees at CISU and the DRC Diaspora Programme in 2011 and 2014 as well as on their websites and documents.

<sup>7</sup> [www.cisu.dk](http://www.cisu.dk)

found in other funding schemes, e.g. the Dutch Oxfam Novib Linkis project (de Bruyn and Huysse 2008).

In 2010 CISU delimited its support to diaspora organisations. An external evaluation (NCG 2010) pointed to ambivalent results of the diaspora initiative: while CISU had been successful in increasing the number of diaspora organisation members, it had not necessarily increased diaspora organisations' ability to conduct development aid projects according to CISU objectives. The suggested reason was that most of CISU's diaspora member organisations focused on fragile and conflict areas, prioritizing reconstruction and social service, rather than civil society development. The demands from diaspora organisations and CISU services thus did not match each other (NCG 2010: v). Therefore, the evaluation recommended developing a separate diaspora funding initiative outside CISU auspices. This recommendation was realized with the creation of the Diaspora Programme as a pilot project in 2010, administered by the DRC and funded by a Danida grant. Diaspora organisations can still apply to CISU on similar terms with other Danish-based development NGOs, given their projects focus on civil society development.

The DRC Diaspora Programme offers matched funding and capacity building to Somali and Afghan diaspora organisations – two groups that are among the largest refugee populations in Denmark and whose home countries are significant recipients of Danish development aid. Eligible projects can focus on social service and civil society development alike and must adhere to a range of criteria including local needs, sustainability, measurability and capacity<sup>8</sup>. A board with representatives from Somali and Afghan diaspora organisations as well as CISU and DRC members “function as ambassadors between their respective diasporas and the DRC<sup>9</sup>”. Likewise, field officers from DRC or DACAAR (Danish

Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees) support and monitor the projects in Somalia or Afghanistan. The final decision of approving or rejecting funding applications rests with the DRC. The Diaspora Programme thus exemplifies the policy tendencies outlined above, including a (relatively) consultative approach and a transnational programme design.

A midterm evaluation of the programme from 2014 showed positive results: The evaluation concluded that the majority of Diaspora Programme funded projects have a visible impact for the beneficiary communities and states that “[t]he Diaspora is perceived as an extremely important actor for the development of countries of origin [...] thanks to the common origins that donors and beneficiaries share” (Saggiomo and Ferro 2014: 4). It thus highlighted the position of diaspora organisations as transnational development agents.

Though demonstrated in different ways, both CISU and the DRC Diaspora Programme express an understanding of diaspora organisations as (potentially) special development agents. In the words of a CISU employee, the aim of CISU's mainstreaming approach is to strike a balance so that diaspora organisations can “use their advantage without preferential treatment”<sup>10</sup>. This advantage refers to knowledge of culture and language in the country of origin in line with the perception of diaspora as development agents. Their special position should not be particularly supported, though. This indicates that in spite of ideas of a ‘special advantage’, CISU's underlying ideal is that diaspora organisations behave and are evaluated like other Danish development NGOs. Such ideals are also found among other development aid agencies, such as in the case of the before-mentioned NORAD-funded Pilot Project Pakistan. In spite of a very positive evaluation, this project was discontinued, as NORAD found it was too costly and ineffective (Molde 2011). This shows that though donors and implementing agencies may want the ‘diaspora advantage’, they may not want it enough to devote the

<sup>8</sup> <https://drc.dk/relief-work/diaspora-programme/looking-for-funding/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://drc.dk/relief-work/diaspora-programme/meet-the-team/>

<sup>10</sup> Interview, May 2014.

necessary resources or adjust their programs accordingly.

From the point of view of diaspora organisations, this is bad news as several studies show that many diaspora organisations have comparatively low success rates when applying to general development NGO funding schemes (Erdal and Horst 2010; Trans and Vammen 2008; de Bruyn and Huyse 2008), including CISU (Frederiksen 2007; NCG 2010). The mainstreaming strategy may thus be less advantageous for diaspora organisations. Furthermore, while special diaspora initiatives may offer flexibility in terms of project criteria, the financial support is often lower<sup>11</sup> and short-term, programmes tend to be time-limited and support is often delimited to few diaspora groups. Or, in other words, there is a tension between mainstreaming and 'special advantage' approaches where the former is the most prioritized. In the Danish case, this is also reflected in the fact that the new Danish Civil Society Strategy only mentions diaspora once in relation to remittances (Danida 2014: 12) and does not mention diaspora organisations at all. Diaspora organisations still do not seem to be recognized as proper actors by some development aid agencies, at least not by those writing the policy strategies. This also indicates that there are different opinions within the development field and some initiatives may become invisible.

### **Institutional Barriers and Challenges**

The recommendations and priority areas presented above apply to small development NGOs and diaspora organisations alike (cf. Brinkerhoff 2011; Sinatti and Horst 2014). Likewise, both types of organisations may face similar institutional barriers and challenges vis-à-vis interaction with development aid agencies. In the following sections, I go through some of the institutional barriers that have been identified in the literature and evaluations of diaspora sup-

port programmes. I argue that though many of these challenges are of a more general nature, diaspora organisations seem to appear as a particular problematic target and recipient group in the eyes of some development aid agencies.

#### *Short-Term Commitment and Lack of Continuity*

The volatile and short-term nature of many diaspora support programs is identified as a significant barrier for diaspora organisations' access to support and for developing successful projects. As Table 1 indicates, there is a high degree of pilot projects, changed programs, and funding opportunities, constituting an extremely volatile program landscape. Studies and evaluations emphasize that successful collaboration with diaspora organisations requires trust, confidence and knowledge that can only be obtained over long time (e.g. Ars Progetti 2007; Thornton and Hext 2009). This is especially so in relation to fragile situations where conflict may have created fragmentation and where development and reconstruction projects are difficult to conduct due to lack or weakness of local institutions, insecurity etc. The fact that many diaspora organisations focus on fragile situations – and special diaspora funding schemes often have fragile states as target countries – emphasises the importance of long-term collaboration. While the problem of short-term funding opportunities may apply to diaspora organisations and other small development NGOs alike, special diaspora initiatives are characterized by a very high degree of pilot projects.

#### *Donor Scepticism*

The understanding of development interventions as 'planned' activities and the focus on local anchorage shapes the engagement and funding opportunities for development NGOs more generally, as indicated above. Nevertheless, some parts of the development industry seem to worry particularly about diaspora organisations, especially in relation to their involvement in their countries of origin that takes place outside the professional development sphere and its frequent grounding in local, family and per-

<sup>11</sup> The maximum grant size for CISU projects is 5 million DKR (approx. 670.000 Euros) compared with 400.000,- DKR in the DRC Diaspora Programme (approx. 54.000 Euros).

sonal relationships (Horst et al. 2010; Brinkerhoff 2011; Sinatti and Horst 2014). Some development professionals may be anxious that migrants and diaspora groups lack a 'professional distance' to development problems and thereby risk being too emotionally or politically involved in development projects in their homelands. In these cases, the diaspora position as special development agents may appear as an impediment to adequate development engagement.

Worries about lack of professional distance may be further aggravated in relation to diaspora groups who, due to conflict in the country of origin, are fragmented and divided. Development aid agencies may fear that diaspora groups act as long-distance nationalists who fund or spur conflict or political instability in their countries of origin. Donor support to such groups would cause political scandals. As the amount of development aid is much contested in the current political climate in Northwestern Europe, few development aid agencies can afford such scandals. Diaspora organisations may therefore be perceived as a particularly risky recipient group, discouraging some development professionals from engaging with them. Furthermore, political fragmentation may result in a high number of internally competing diaspora organisations, possibly with different political agendas, and proclaimed leaders claiming to represent the diaspora. Such situations may make collaboration with diaspora organisations time consuming and demanding, especially if donors' development ideals are based on notions of professional distance and apolitical involvement (cf. Horst 2013).

#### *Policy Incoherence*

Finally, policy incoherence constitutes a serious institutional impediment to diaspora organisation engagement. Policy coherence refers to "the nexus between various policy sub-systems" (Carbone 2008: 324) and how these systems effect or contradict each other. The need for policy coherence in relation to migration and development was pointed out more than a decade ago (Sørensen, van Hear and Engberg-Pedersen

2002), and remains especially relevant in relation to the relationship between migration, development and security where political emphasis and priority of the latter – e.g. the migration-security nexus – overshadows and delimits migration-development efforts (Lavenex and Kunz 2008; Sørensen 2012; Isotalo 2009). Though the migration-development nexus has been celebrated in some policy circles, it tends to be subordinated to security-related aspects of migration, such as migration control and migration management. Furthermore, migration-development initiatives, including diaspora support activities, are rarely accompanied by substantial budgets (Sørensen 2012), perhaps because of their relative low importance in overall political priorities.

Another challenge in relation to policy incoherence is the relationship between diaspora organisations' possible engagement in both development and integration activities. Many diaspora organisations have multiple and simultaneous activities in the country of (ancestral) origin and settlement, and sometimes other locations too (Kleist 2007; Hammond 2013; Lacroix 2013; Cordero-Guzman 2005; Layton-Henry 1990). However, development and integration are usually treated as separate policy realms without relevance to each other. Studies show that the relationship between processes of integration and transnational involvement is complex (Erdal and Oeppen 2013; Erdal 2013) but engagement in both processes can be mutually reinforcing (Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002; Portes 2003; Levitt and Schiller 2004). Indeed, the midterm and an earlier internal evaluation of the DRC Diaspora Programme emphasised that participation in the programme can cause feelings of recognition in *Danish* society among some participants (Saggiomo and Ferro 2014) as well as create "a motivational benefit amongst peers and communities in Denmark, Somalia and Afghanistan" (Choudhury 2012: 5). The propensity of dual or multiple engagements in country of residence and origin is one of the areas where diaspora organisations may differ most from other development NGOs, but also constitutes an area with

opportunities for policy development across policy realms.

### Concluding Discussion

The examination of European development cooperation activities to support diaspora organisations paints a somewhat ambiguous picture. Diaspora groups are mentioned in a range of policy documents on development, implying that the diaspora rhetoric is still important in European development circles. However, though many European development agencies support matching funds schemes that diaspora organisations can apply to, special support programmes are characterized by relatively low budgets and by being pilot or temporary projects. Diaspora support thus seems to have low political priority, especially after the financial crisis in 2009 when a range of diaspora support initiatives fizzled out and were replaced by emphasis on mainstreaming and network approaches – though there are exceptions, such as the DRC Diaspora Programme. This tendency may also be reinforced by the subordination of development aspects of migration to the securitization of migration on (inter)national political agendas. Diaspora organisations thus seem to be perceived as relatively unimportant development actors in the eyes and institutional setups of development aid agencies; they are considered marginal players, though tensions and disagreements persist within the professional development field.

From the point of view of diaspora proponents, the current state of affairs indicates a huge and unexploited potential for further collaboration with and support of diaspora organisations. Diaspora groups are seen as holding a distinctive and competitive development potential that development aid agencies have not fully realized. This potential both relates to strengthening and ameliorating existing programmes and to develop new approaches and partnerships that take lessons learnt into consideration, not least in relation to policy consultation and overcoming policy incoherence. The relationship between development and integration activities consti-

tutes another area of possible collaboration and policy development, though this may arguably be difficult in the light of current policy incoherence between these two fields. Conversely, diaspora sceptics may argue that the relative lack of attention to diaspora organisations reflects their ambivalent or questionable role as development agents. Furthermore, they may argue that diaspora support initiatives are too expensive, risky or time consuming.

These different perceptions reflect underlying notions of diaspora groups as special kinds of development agents: as either transnational agents of change, long-distance nationalists, or a mix of both. However, they may also illuminate a tension between a perception of diaspora groups as particular agents (whether good or bad) and an ideal in which diaspora organisations do not differ from other development NGOs, and thereby do not deserve or need preferential treatment vis-a-vis to 'native' development NGOs in the country of residence. Any 'special advantage' is only rewarded if it is competitive vis-à-vis other development NGOs and does not require any additional support to be realized. This ideal is central in mainstreaming approaches and is mentioned as an objective in some diaspora support schemes.

The mainstreaming tendency that emphasizes the particularity of diaspora involvement constitutes a risky outlook for diaspora organisations. I have previously suggested that the diaspora category has political resonance for diaspora groups (Kleist 2008a). However, this resonance seems to be quite delimited within European development aid agencies when looking at actual modes of cooperation. This is because development aid agencies tend to perceive diaspora organisations as ambivalent and potentially risky recipient groups and partners, and also because most available diaspora support is based on an underlying ideal that diaspora organisations should become mainstream development agents over time. In this way, opportunities for extending and rethinking the nature of development and of development actors are lost.

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# Moving Back or Moving Forward? Return Migration, Development and Peace-Building

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## Abstract

This article addresses under which circumstances migrants returning from European to (post-) conflict countries are willing and able to contribute to development and peace-building in their countries of origin. Based on comparative research in six countries world-wide and an in-depth study in Afghanistan, we explore (1) the heterogeneity of the post-return experience, (2) the complex meanings and motivations of return migration, and (3) the expectations of the characteristics of migrants, on which the link between return migration, development and peace-building is based. Based on these findings, we (4) explore return migrants' potential to be agents of change. We find that while the expectations on which migration and development policies are based only count for a small minority of returnees, this is not the group that is targeted by policy. In order to formulate adequate policies that do address the needs and potential of returnees, we propose two modifications to current policy: First, *de facto* voluntary and involuntary return should be redefined into more relevant terms that cover the matter. Second, we propose to re-evaluate and disentangle the different goals that inform migration and development policies.

**Keywords:** return migration, migration and development policies, return motivation, embeddedness

## Introduction: The Rise of Return Migration as a Multi-Tool for Policy

'When migrants return to their country of origin, they will contribute to development and peace building'. This optimistic mantra in current European national policies (ICMPD and ECDPM 2013) is the result of a changing political discourse over the past 25 years with regard to migration. In this globalizing world, the interdependency of development, security and mobility has become common ground. As a result, industrialized host states have started to see modern migration movements as instruments for policy, which (1) need to be managed, controlled and regulated in order to (2) defend domestic security and welfare and (3) promote international

development and peace-building (Skeldon 2008; Raghuram 2009).

Efforts by host states to manage these three overlapping goals have led to the formulation of migration and development policies (see Figure 1). Within this policy domain, return migration evolved from being 'the great unwritten chapter in the history of migration' (King 2000: 7) to a multi-tool to encompass all these goals at once (see Skeldon 2008). Gradually, return migration came to be considered as both a movement *back* to normal that restores pre-conflict natural and social order as well as a movement *forward* to change in which returnees contribute to development and peace-building (Koser and Black 1999; Faist 2008).

Although discussions on the link between migration and development globally have focused on successful economic migrants, countries throughout the European Union<sup>1</sup> have expanded this link to also encompass the return of refugees, failed asylum seekers and undocumented migrants (ICMPD and ECDPM 2013). In these European countries, asylum and immigration policies and so-called 'Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration' (AVRR) programmes have now taken up a substantial part, if not the bulk of, migration and development policies and budgets. These programmes are financed by, on average, three to nine per cent of Official Development Assistance (ODA) (*ibid*). Other programmes that promote the link between return and development facilitate the temporary or circular return of high skilled migrants<sup>2</sup> (*ibid*).

Although allowed by the ODA reporting system managed by the OECD, several scholars argue that 'Assisted Voluntary Return' programmes are heavily motivated by an interest to manage and control migration movements in a way that is financially and politically less costly than enforced removal. (Black and Gent 2006; Faist 2008; Zimmermann 2012; ICMPD and ECDPM 2013; Castles, De Haas and Miller 2014). Scholars wonder why and how some of the world's most exploited people should contribute to development where official aid programmes have failed (Castles and Miller 2009: 58).

This article explores return migration within the migration-development-peace-building nexus. We explore (1) the heterogeneity of the post-return experience, (2) the complex meanings and motivations of return migration, and based on that, (3) interrogate the expectations of the characteristics of migrants, on which the link between return migration, development and

peace building is based. Based on these findings, we (4) explore return migrants' potential to be agents of change. This exploration centres on the question of under which circumstances migrants returning from industrialized countries are willing and able to contribute to change with regard to development and peace-building in the (post-) conflict country of origin.

We explore these questions by focusing on the life courses of return migrants, while building on two methodologically complementary research phases. The first phase is a comparative study of 178 returnees from industrialized countries to six countries across the world (Sierra Leone, Togo, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan and Vietnam) conducted in 2007-08. In each country, data was gathered through a structured survey, semi-structured interviews with returnees and key informants, and participatory observation. The study shows remarkable trends as well as context-specific differences. The second phase builds on the first with an in-depth case study from 2012 among 35 Afghan return migrants who returned to their countries of origin. They mainly returned from Western Europe, and particularly from the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany and Scandinavia. The autobiographical narrative was the core of the data collected, which helped to obtain a holistic understanding of the role of migration in individuals' life courses. In addition, group discussions and key informants helped to understand the complexities of return migration (Van Houte 2014).

After providing a brief historical background of the changes in political and social discourse during the past 25 years with regard to migration in general and return migration in particular, we present the main findings from these studies. They highlight that return neither is a movement back to normal, nor is it easily a movement forward to change. We find that the only returnees who could potentially contribute to change are voluntary returnees, which questions the adequacy of migration and development policies.

<sup>1</sup> Notably Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Spain. See ICMPD and ECDPM (2013) for a systematic analysis of 11 European countries' Migration and Development policies and how it often includes Assisted Voluntary Return programs.

<sup>2</sup> Notably Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands (ICMPD and ECDPM 2013).

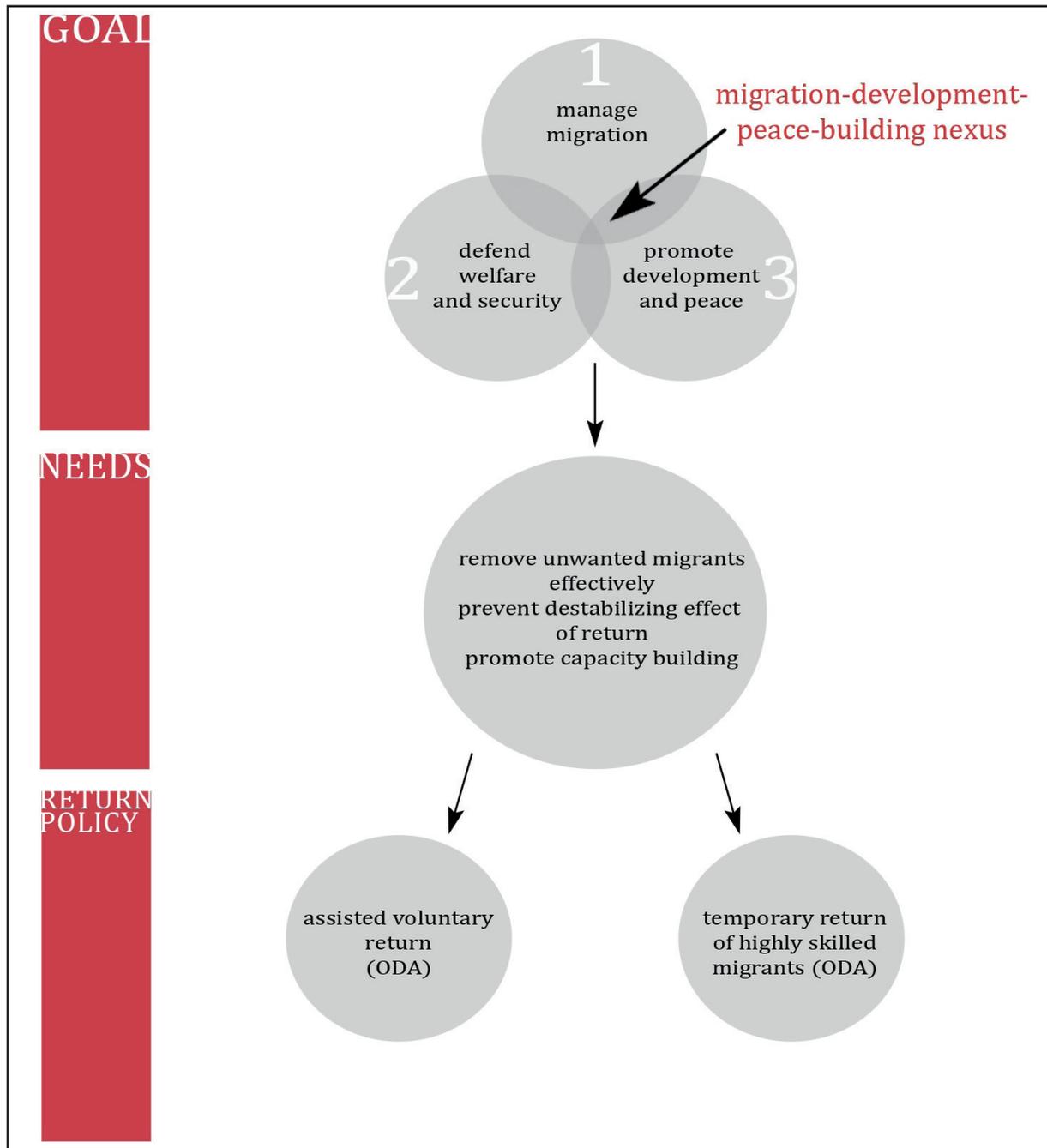


Figure 1. Return, development and peace-building goals, needs and policies

**From Cold War Protection to Return Migrants as Agents of Change**

Historically, three durable solutions to the ‘refugee problem’ have been recognized: local integration in the host community, resettlement to so-called third countries (i.e. other than the country of origin and the original destination country), and repatriation to the country of origin. The end of the Cold War set in motion a number of changes in the industrialized states

from the beginning of the 1990s onwards. These changes led to a gradually shifting discourse from integration to return as well as a shift from viewing migrants as victims of rival regimes to agents of change in their countries of origin.

The first consequence of the end of the Cold War was an increasing reluctance to accommodate asylum seekers. Protecting refugees from rival regimes had previously been a powerful source of political propaganda and, at the same

time, the non-departure regime of the Iron Curtain had kept refugee levels manageable. After the end of the Cold War, protecting refugees lost its geopolitical and ideological value for Western states. In addition, fading national and international boundaries, growing inequality and increased civil conflicts in the post-Cold War period caused increased numbers of refugees and asylum seekers to migrate (Castles, De Haas and Miller 2014).

Along with these increasing immigration flows, the notion emerged that large volumes of migrants might threaten the social cohesion, welfare and security in destination countries. This resulted in a growing public and political resistance in the industrialized states against immigration in the 1990s. The events of 11 September 2001, which linked migration to issues of security, conflict and terrorism, led to further decreasing tolerance towards non-Western, Muslim and/or immigrant groups (Skeldon 2008; Raghuram 2009; Castles, De Haas and Miller 2014: 226, 324). Finally, the interest in managing migration increased in the context of the economic recession in Europe over the last five years (ICMPD and ECDPM 2013).

The perceived need of host countries to contain migration changed policies that were designed to welcome Cold War refugees into regimes meant to exclude unwanted or unproductive migrants (Duffield 2006; Castles, De Haas and Miller 2014: 226, 324). Obtaining refugee status became more difficult (Koser and Black 1999; Black and Gent 2006) and the act of leaving one's home and seeking asylum was progressively criminalized (Duffield 2006). New legislation aimed at the eventual return of asylum seekers, such as temporary protection regimes instead of permanent refugee status (Castles, De Haas and Miller 2014: 226).

A second trend after the collapse of the former superpower hegemony was a discourse change towards individualization, which also appeared in the field of migration, development and conflict. In migration policy, individualization meant that returning back 'home' after conflict

to restore the natural and social order became portrayed as a basic human right. Since the early 1990s, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other international bodies have promoted and facilitated return as the most desirable of all solutions for refugees (Hammond 1999; Omata 2013). In practice, however, a strong interest in returning unwanted migrants to their countries of origin led host countries to reject asylum seekers and pressure them to return much sooner than that the migrants themselves found feasible through financial inducements or with a threat of deportation (Black and Gent 2006).

In the context of the growing significance of civil conflicts, the limited success of classic development institutions and decreased budgets on aid and defence, the discourse of individualization led to the search of alternative grassroots actors for development and peace building (Zunzer 2004; Duffield 2006). Governments and international agencies became attracted to ascribing migrants the moral responsibility for development and peace-building in their places of origin<sup>3</sup> (Sørensen, Van Hear and Engberg-Pedersen 2002; Faist 2008; Skeldon 2008; Raghuram 2009).

### **Return Migration, Development and Peace Building**

Without theoretical and empirical foundations, the discussion on the relationship between migration, development and peace-building risks being reduced to a merely political and ideological issue (Raghuram 2009) that produces inadequate policies (Bakewell 2008). Scholars highlight the limited and contradictory evidence found in research as well as the complex and heterogeneous linkages between return, development and peace-building (Cassarino 2004; De Haas 2010). The paradoxical expectations of return migration as both a movement back to normal

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<sup>3</sup> Policies aimed at stimulating the link between migration and development usually contain elements promoting remittances, skilled migration, circular migration, the engagement of diasporas and return migration (Skeldon 2008, ICMPD and ECDPM 2013).

and a movement forward to change need to be explored (Koser and Black 1999; Faist 2008). In addition, an important question is *which* categories of returnees are expected to contribute to *what* kind of change.

#### *Return as Restoring Order: is Return Going Home?*

The argument that return means a restoring of natural and social order in the country of origin implies that when the initial reasons for migration have disappeared, return equals going 'home' to the pre-conflict and pre-migration life. Return after conflict is seen as a means to undo the negative consequences of conflict, embodied in refugee flows. The expectation of return as going 'home' has made reintegration a key issue on the international humanitarian agenda, which envisions the disappearance of 'any observable distinctions which set returnees apart from their compatriots' (UNHCR 1997: 9).

Despite the political and humanitarian logic, the academic debate is now beyond the point of seeing return as the end of the refugee cycle where everything goes back to normal. First, return is not necessarily the best option or the most logical move in the lives of migrants (Monsutti 2008; Omata 2013). Migrants' decision to move is often part of dynamic life strategies that aim to seek a better future in holistic terms, including security, but also political, economic, social and cultural aspects. The financial, physical and emotional investments in migration imply that migrants have a lot to lose by going back, even if the conflict is settled and the country is considered safe. In addition, opportunities or gains achieved in exile can be a factor that may delay (or deter) migrants' decisions to return (Zimmermann 2012).

A second line of research highlights that reintegration is not evident, as the post-conflict moment is a new phase in a dynamic and ongoing process rather than a return to the pre-conflict situation (Hammond 1999; Cassarino 2004; Faist 2008). Return may increase tensions in the society of origin and hinder the transition from

war to peace for different reasons. First, large-scale repatriation movements can stretch the resources in the society of return. Second, returnees may be associated with former ethnic and political (*élite*) structures. Third, distrust and resentment regarding questions of loyalty between returnees and those who stayed in the country can form a new line of conflict (Zunzer 2004; Chan and Tran 2011).

In addition to socio-political and economic challenges of return, a third line of research highlights the tension between return, identity, home and belonging. First, 'home' has changed as the post-war economic, social, cultural and political situation in the society of origin is often very different from what people have left (Ghanem 2003). Second, the notion of the homeland as a 'purified space of belonging' (Ahmed 1999) no longer fits in the experience of migrants who construct multiple and hybrid forms of belonging. In addition, protracted refugee situations lead to second-generation migrants who were born outside of the country of 'origin', which further complicates notions of 'home' (Hammond 1999; Faist 2008; Monsutti 2008; Raghuram 2009). Return migrants need to both negotiate belonging to the community of return as well as the distinctiveness of their identity (Chan and Tran 2011).

The wealth of literature on the dynamic and multi-local notion of home and belonging suggests ambiguity and variety as to what 'home' means; this concept needs to be taken into account in order to produce empirically and theoretically valid insights on return migration (Hammond 1999; Black and Gent 2006).

#### *Return as Change: Contributing to Human Capital and Peace or to Inequality and Conflict?*

In contrast to the 'restoring of order' argument that implies the disappearance of differences between returnees and the local population, the 'return as change' argument highlights the potential of such differences (King 1978; Bakewell 2008). First, as migration to industrialized countries is a privilege of a relatively wealthy minority, these migrants are considered as the higher educated,

wealthy, entrepreneurial and strongly networked élite. Second, they are expected to have acquired skills, capital and ideas while abroad. Third, they are believed to adopt an in-between position between the host country and the country of origin, which enables them to mediate between cultures and negotiate change (King 1978; Sørensen, Van Hear and Engberg-Pedersen 2002).

Despite these specific expectations on the characteristics of returned migrants as agents of change, a number of gaps remain insufficiently explored (Raghuram 2009). First, the increasing significance and benefits of mobility and access to transnational circuits makes inequalities with regard to the right or capacity to migrate an important dimension of social stratification (Carling 2002; Sørensen, Van Hear and Engberg-Pedersen 2002; Faist 2008; King 2012). Such increased socio-economic differences caused by migration can induce conflict rather than contribute to stability (Zunzer 2004). The study of migrants' contribution to development should therefore recognize the hierarchization of peoples' right to migrate (Castles, De Haas and Miller 2014: 75-76).

A second knowledge gap is that there is limited and contradictory evidence on the extent to which migrants are willing and able to change existing (social, cultural, economic or institutional) structures in the country of origin. If they have gained new ideas for development and peace-building, how can they negotiate these changes within the society of return (Faist 2008)? Will their in-between position make them relatively independent from the constraints of structures (Sørensen, Van Hear and Engberg-Pedersen 2002)? Can they overcome the institutional constraints to which they themselves are subject, or is change only possible within an enabling institutional and economic framework (Castles, De Haas and Miller 2014: 78)?

Third, migration-development-peace-building policies do not only assume the ability of migrants to contribute to change, but they also have specific, yet under-defined expectations on the type and direction of such change (Bakewell

2008; Faist 2008; Raghuram 2009). Implicitly, the notion of change is tied to socio-economic modernization in which migrants insert innovation, a sense of progress, justice, democracy and human rights into the society of return (King 1978; Raghuram 2009). In addition, change is expected to take place within existing (political) frameworks. Power shifts, political unrest, religious-based opposition and illegal activities are not the kind of change policy makers are hoping for. Especially since the events of 11 September 2001, and recent news of young Muslims traveling from Europe to Syria and Iraq to join Jihadist movements, there is a heightened awareness that migrants may also contribute to the 'wrong' kind of change (Raghuram 2009; Castles, De Haas and Miller 2014: 79). The idea that migrants' actions can and should be directed raises ethical and practical questions (Raghuram 2009).

#### *What Kind of Returnees? Meanings and Motivations of Mobility*

The tension in return as a movement back to normal versus a movement forward to change touches upon more fundamental questions about the meaning of mobility in the lives of migrants. The perception of return as going back to normal conceptualizes mobility as a disruption of life, with migrants as the victims of this disruption, while return is considered to restore a 'normal', sedentary life (Bakewell 2008). In contrast, the perception of return as change comes forward from the expectation that migrants increasingly benefit from their 'hyperglobal' (Carling 2002) and 'hypermobile' (King 2012) lives.

Although this understanding of migrants as either victims or agents informs dichotomies between voluntary and forced migration, the reality is more complex and heterogeneous. Scholars highlight that the motivations and meanings of migration and return are the outcome of a mix of migrants' choices and constraints to stay or move (King 1978; Cassarino 2004; Bakewell 2008; Monstuti 2008; Zimmermann 2012). Migration can be considered as a livelihood strategy through which people can adapt to constantly changing

circumstances (Monsutti 2008). Even wartime migration, although associated with disruption and loss, is argued to be less disempowering than involuntary immobility (Carling 2002).

With regard to return, it is argued that the motivation for return defines an important part of the post-return experience (Cassarino 2004). Cerase (1974) argued that migrants who return out of failure will be reabsorbed into society as if they had never migrated, while successful migrants who return with the ambition to start a new life, could potentially be a source of innovation. Although recent studies show a more nuanced image, going beyond dichotomies of success and failure and taking into account a wider variety of migrant profiles, they recognize similar processes (Cassarino 2004; De Bree, Davids and De Haas 2010; Cassarino 2014). Several authors argue that legal status is an important factor that shapes the meanings and motivations of migrants' return. (Carling 2004; Black and Gent 2006).

### **Moving Back or Moving Forward?**

In the following sections we provide an answer to the questions raised above based on the main findings from the 2007-2008 comparative study and the 2012 Afghan case study.

#### *Determinants of Post-Return Embeddedness*

We first investigated whether the use of Official Development Assistance for 'Assisted Voluntary Return' programmes of rejected asylum seekers and undocumented migrants is justified (i.e. contributing to development) (see Van Houte and Davids 2008; Ruben, Van Houte and Davids 2009). Based on the 2007/2008 comparative study, we analysed the factors that influence post-return embeddedness, which is defined as an individual's identification with and participation in one or multiple spaces of belonging (Van Houte and Davids 2008; Ruben, Van Houte and Davids 2009), including return assistance, migration cycle experiences and individual characteristics. The results highlight the overall difficulties for rejected asylum seekers and undocumented

migrants with regard to building a sustainable livelihood, establishing social networks and having a sense of identity and belonging in the country of return. Our data suggests that returnees were often worse off in terms of access to independent housing and income compared to their pre-migration situation.

The process of post-return embeddedness is determined by a wide range of factors. The study showed context-specific factors as well as remarkably strong general trends across the six highly heterogeneous countries of return. First, the obstacles and opportunities faced by returnees are directly related to previous experiences in the migration cycle. The living circumstances in the host country and the motivation for return to the country of origin are of critical importance for post-return embeddedness. Years spent in restricted circumstances that constrain freedom of movement and limit possibilities for employment and education, thus making migrants dependent on social welfare, are factors that damage migrants' self-esteem, survival skills and social networks. Their damaging effects cannot be compensated by the limited return assistance that is provided. Apart from business assistance, the return assistance therefore has limited or even negative effects on all dimensions of embeddedness.

These findings show that it is unjustified and even misleading to suggest that 'Assisted Voluntary Return' programmes may promote development. While the intention is expressed, and budget assigned, to make this type of return migration contribute to development, this intention is undermined by restrictive migration policies. In contrast, we found that returnees faced deprivation rather than benefits from their migration experience. As achieving sustainable return for the individual returnee is thus already a challenge, returnees cannot be expected to contribute to development. Rather, the opposite is true; returnees are often a burden on their relatives' household budgets and put higher pressure on already limited employment, health care and education facilities in the country of return.

*Meanings and Motivations of Return*

Here we focus on the 2012 Afghan case study. First, the findings that return motivation, more than return assistance, is of crucial importance for post-return embeddedness, which called for a more thorough analysis of the meanings and motivations of return. In policy terms, return is called voluntary as long as it does not take place with physical force. We proposed to deconstruct return as a complex decision-making process to find an alternative for this unsatisfactory terminology. A better understanding of the meanings and motivations of return can help to better address the needs and potential of returnees through improved policies.

We took a closer look at the mechanisms that decide how much agency people have over their migration decision by taking into account structure, desires, capacities and agency of migrants concerning their decision to return. We found that there is no clear-cut boundary, but rather a gradual scale from voluntary to involuntary return (see also Monsutti 2008), and that almost all migrants could claim some degree of agency over their return.

The analysis, furthermore, shows that mobility entails an essential capacity *and* desire in the lives of return migrants, leading to strong empirical differences in the post-return experiences of those who are transnationally mobile after return and those who are not. Returnees who were unable to match desires of mobility with their capacities, because of their lack of legal status in the former host country and stricter migration policies, experienced involuntary immobility (Carling 2002). On the contrary, returnees who had permanent legal status in the host country returned while knowing that they would be able to re-emigrate if needed. This continued transnational mobility gave these returnees a sense of security and comfort, and allowed them to take advantage of geographical differences (Carling 2002).

We therefore challenge the current policy-oriented categories based on the use of force by defining the same categories in a more adequate

and meaningful way. While pleading to take into account the complexities of return, a distinction that captures the large empirical differences in the post-return experience, which is therefore more relevant for policy and research on migration, should be based on post-return mobility. Practically, this categorization is based on legal status in the host country: return of migrants with a legal alternative to stay permanently in the European country of residence is the basis for calling return voluntary, while return of migrants without such legal alternative is defined as involuntary (see Van Houte, Siegel and Davids, forthcoming).

*Interrogating the Expectations of the Characteristics of Return Migrants*

This categorization was used to interrogate the expectations of the characteristics of return migrants, which inform the debate on the linkages between migration, development and peacebuilding. First, other than the assumptions that underlie migration and development policies, we showed that not all migrants are élites, not all returnees benefit from their migration experience and not all strongly participated in and identify with multiple places of belonging. Rather, the opportunities migrants have to accumulate skills, knowledge and savings in the host country, which they may invest after return, are unequally distributed among different types of migrants.

The majority of voluntary returnees in this study were members of the Afghan élite. They were able to leave their country at an early stage of the conflict and, because of their high profile, they were often granted refugee status and, eventually, citizenship of the country of residence. These refugees were able to participate in the new society of residence and had access to education and opportunities to learn the language and employment. Voluntary returnees returned to Afghanistan when they, given their individual circumstances, felt this was the best option (Cassarino 2004). They returned while maintaining strong and multi-local ties and continued transnational mobility.

Involuntary returnees, on the other hand, were of more modest descent and left later or stayed in transit countries for several years to save money for the rest of the trip; they therefore took up to nine years to reach Europe. Having arrived in European countries at a later stage, they claimed but never received refugee- or permanent asylum status. Their legal status did not allow them to fully participate in the host society. Contrary to voluntary return, involuntary return felt like a step back rather than an improvement. If involuntary returnees succeed economically, this was despite rather than thanks to their time abroad. The uneasy feeling of being 'stuck' in Afghanistan because of their involuntary immobility, and their relative failure compared to successful returnees (Carling 2004), made them feel impoverished, disempowered and frustrated.

Our findings show that previously existing socio-economic differences are reinforced by the migration experience, which results in strongly differentiated patterns of post-return multi-local embeddedness and transnational mobility. This finding restricts expectations of return migration and development.

Second, we focused on the expectations within the migration, development and peace-building debate on returnees' potential to mediate between cultures and negotiate change as a result of their multi-local ties and hybrid identities (Van Houte and Davids, forthcoming/b). We explored how Afghan migrants returning from European countries negotiated belonging to one or multiple spaces of belonging through their expressions and practices of marriage, sexuality and gender norms.

While the migration experiences strongly determined returnees' capacities, returnees also displayed a variety of desires. The findings show that all returnees can be seen as agents in an attempt to match their desires and capacities, although agency takes place through a variety of strategies. Involuntary returnees often choose to comply with the limits of the structures they are confronted with. Voluntary returnees, on the other hand, are embedded in multiple structures

between which they are transnationally mobile. This means that they have increased room to manoeuvre, and can form hybrid identities, which allows them to apply creative responses to new situations in their personal lives (see also Bakewell 2008).

Despite the fact that all returnees can display agency over their personal choices, they do not always want to, are not always able to, or do not feel the need to mediate between cultures and negotiate structural change in Afghan society. The expectation that returned migrants can mediate between cultures and negotiate change in existing structures (Sørensen, Van Hear and Engberg-Pedersen 2002) is therefore overstated and should be carefully formulated in policies on migration and development.

#### *Return Migrants' Potential to be Agents of Change*

Last, we explore the expectation that return migrants can be agents of change in development and peace-building (see Van Houte, forthcoming). We built on the previous findings to answer the main question. We took an emic perspective to explore the ways returnees identify with the conflict and what kind of 'change' they could potentially bring in the migration-development-peace-building nexus.

The only returnees who could *potentially* live up to any of the expectations raised in the migration, development and peace-building debate are voluntary returnees. They return while maintaining ties with the European country of residence. Their participation in and identification with multiple places of belonging (in the country of origin, the European country of residence and, often, the international expatriate community) and transnational mobility gave them the confidence that they could protect themselves from generalized violence and at the same time keep their dependants safe in the Western country of residence. While ethnic or other pre-migration security issues were remarkably absent in their narratives of security, their strong affiliation with the West and their sometimes high profiles

as successful returnees created a risk for them, both with regard to common criminality and kidnapping, and targeted anti-Western violence. Younger voluntary returnees found a sense of belonging in the Afghan society by taking that risk and are pioneers who take advantage of the opportunities of a market with limited competition because of the physical and financial risk involved.

Many voluntary returnees were driven by ambition and chose to return to Afghanistan despite the expected post-2014 turbulence. They returned with optimism, energy and proactive attitudes, which was a new input into the conflict-ridden Afghan society. They adopted a discourse of modernization in which they saw their knowledge, skills and attitudes from Europe as an asset they could offer to Afghanistan. However, although they tried to negotiate in-between practices of Western modernity in an Afghan context, any 'foreign' ideas were regarded suspiciously. Implementing them required patience and social skills, which made few of these efforts to change existing structures successful. Voluntary returnees constantly re-evaluated their decision to stay or move, and they were likely to re-emigrate in the face of the post-2014 changes. However, this very mobility also enabled them to take the risk to be 'different' from dominant society, and to advocate controversial opinions that go against the current discourse, through creativity, innovation and improvisation, as Hammond (1999) defined social change.

In contrast, involuntary returnees, who returned without having any legal alternative to stay, were in no way a potential to Afghan peace-building and development. Most of them were of modest background and returned further impoverished and frustrated rather than enriched by their migration experience (see Van Houte, Siegel and Davids 2014). Being weakly embedded in Afghanistan and involuntarily immobile, involuntary returnees felt exposed to generalized violence, as they did not have enough means to protect themselves and their dependants. However, their lower profile made them less of a tar-

get of violence compared to voluntary returnees. Having lived but never really participated in the former host country, they did not pick up many skills or ideas and rather leaned to the conservative and traditional side as a strategy to negotiate belonging to the Afghan society (see Van Houte and Davids, forthcoming/b). Having lived in constant insecurity for much of their lives, the expectation of increased insecurity after 2014 affected their mental health. Being unable to maintain ties with the host country in addition to their lack of embeddedness in the Afghan space, furthermore, made them angry and disappointed which compelled them to retreat from, rather than bring change in society.

Two main conclusions can be drawn from these results. First, more than economic impacts, the human dimension of returnees' involvement in the country of origin is the most important potential contribution to change. Voluntary returnees' creativity, resilience and innovativeness, along with their entrepreneurial mentality and their intellectual skills, are important input by these returnees. Nevertheless, these aspects are relational and have proven to be extremely difficult to negotiate change in a society that is suspicious of returnees and 'foreign' involvement. In contrast, the human dimension of returnees who are impoverished and frustrated by their migration experience, and the role of the Afghan government and their European host country, can also have a negative impact. This negatively feeds the already present anti-Western sentiments in their return environment.

Second, while the international community sees repatriation as the ultimate proof of peace that represents the restoring of normalcy, it is rather continued transnational mobility that could be the basis for Afghan migrants' contribution to change in Afghanistan (Black and Gent 2006; Monsutti 2008). There is no such thing as a return to 'normalcy' in the context of Afghanistan, as the conflict and migration movements over the last 35 years have shaped the reality of today (Monsutti 2008). In the explosive environment of today's Afghanistan, continued transna-

tional mobility has become a strategy of migrants to become more independent from national structural constraints and ensure their own safety. Transnational mobility is, therefore, their strongest asset to overcome their constraints and carefully negotiate change; rather than a weakness, their mobility is therefore their strongest asset that may facilitate their most valuable contribution. Policies aimed at stimulating the migration-development-peace-building nexus should therefore release the focus on putting migrants 'back in their place' (Bakewell 2008).

### Conclusions

Return is neither a movement back to normal nor is it easily a movement forward to change. When migrants return to their country of origin, they do not automatically contribute to development and peace-building. The relationship between migration and development is too complex for easy generalizations. Rather, the policy and practice of migration would benefit from highlighting the complexities of migration. By unfolding the meanings and motivations of return migration, and comparing the experiences of voluntary and involuntary returnees, this article identified contradictions in return migration policies.

First, we highlighted that return is more complex than going 'home' and introduced the concept of multidimensional embeddedness as a holistic approach to the post-return experience of migrants beyond 'reintegration'. We analysed the determinants of post-return embeddedness, showing a number of remarkable trends across six heterogeneous countries under study. The strongest findings showed the limited or even negative impact of return assistance, and the significance of the migration cycle experience and in particular the return motivation.

We therefore first focused on the meanings and motivations of return. We deconstructed return as a complex decision-making process that goes beyond dichotomies of voluntary and involuntary mobility. We furthermore highlighted the importance of post-return mobility, which we proposed to centralize in the study of

return migration as an indicator for voluntary or involuntary return.

Next, we interrogated the expectations of the characteristics of return migrants, that returnees are (1) positively selected, (2) benefit from their migration experience, and (3) form hybrid identities to negotiate change upon return. We found that these expectations are too easily formulated and strongly differ between voluntary and involuntary return, in which transnational mobility is the strongest differentiating factor. The findings therefore highlight the limitations of the applicability of return and development policies.

Last, we projected these insights on returnees' identifications with conflict. We highlighted that policy makers' idea that migrants' actions can and should be directed raises ethical and practical questions. With regard to the main question of this article on the circumstances under which return migrants are willing and able to contribute to development and peace-building, we highlighted the importance of the human dynamics and transnational mobility.

Overall, this article showed that return migration is a complex process to which contemporary policy is responding inadequately. Next, we discuss the policy implications of these conclusions.

### Policy Implications: Humans as Policy Instruments?

Return migrants have come to be seen as a threefold multi-tool in which their actions and movements can be controlled to meet their host governments' overlapping goals. Policies and budgets on return migration and development are considered as instruments to:

1. *Manage, control and regulate the movements of migrants* who are economically and politically superfluous by returning them to the country of origin and relieve the burden of the host state;
2. *Defend domestic security and welfare* by relieving the burden of immigrants on host states while preventing destabilizing effects of return migration, which may initiate

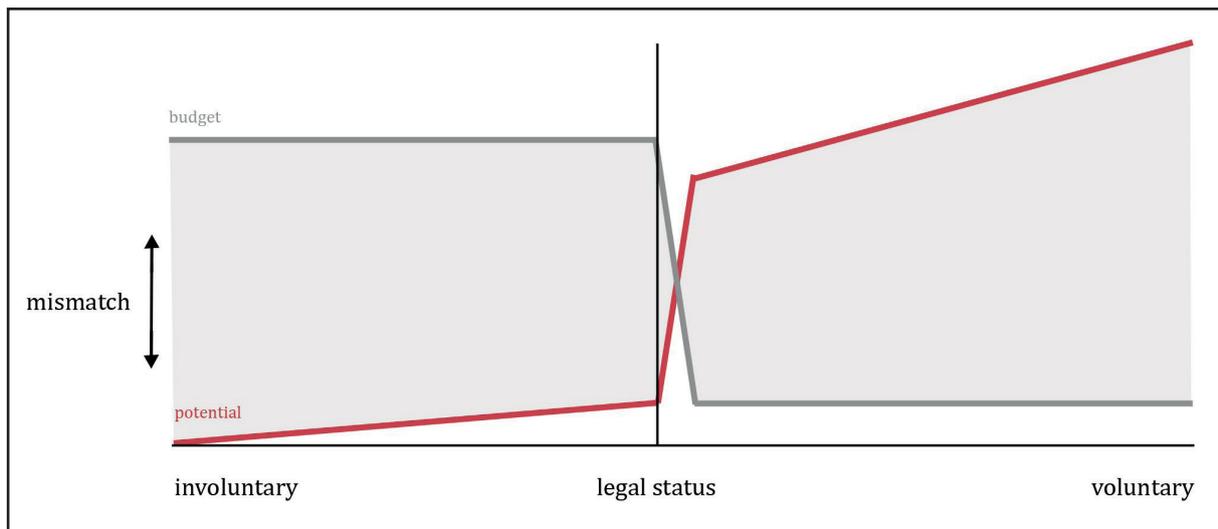


Figure 2. Development potential and development budget for returnees

new migration movements or be otherwise harmful for the host society;

3. Shift the responsibility of *development and peace-building* to migrants and give a positive connotation to their return, while controlling and preventing the 'wrong' kind of change, such as revolution, religious-based opposition or political unrest, which may be a threat to the second goal.

In order to combine these goals into one policy, host governments choose to ignore and blur the understanding of the heterogeneity of these returnees, who include failed asylum seekers as well as high-skilled economic migrants. European countries assign substantial parts, if not the bulk of their Migration and Development policies that are paid out of Official Development Assistance budgets, to asylum and immigration policies and 'Assisted Voluntary Return' programmes (ICMPD and ECDPM 2013).

#### *Ineffective Return and Development Policies*

While the expectations on which migration and development policies are based only count for a small minority of returnees, this is not the group that is targeted by policy. Though the bulk of budgets of policies promoting return, development and peace-building go to de facto involuntary returnees, they are unable to contribute to

development in any way. This simple but ironic finding is visualized in Figure 2.

#### *Why is this a problem?*

The way migrants are seen as instruments for fulfilling the goals of the host state dehumanizes them, because it fails to see them as purposive actors whose actions are part of dynamic life strategies, ambitions, values and visions (Omata 2013). Governments representing liberal democracies should pay more attention to the individual lives of people without assuming that they can control migration (Skeldon 2008; Castles, De Haas and Miller 2014: 318). Rather than being used as an instrument for development, migration should be taken into account as an encompassing aspect of development and conflict. If migration is to contribute to development and security, migration should be facilitated rather than contained.

Both policy makers and civil society organizations have, however, been pragmatic about the mismatch between policy and reality. First, the current policy on return migration and development is intentionally misguided. Several reports have questioned the development potential of return assistance programmes (Van Houte and De Koning 2008; Frouws and Grimmus 2012). However, policy makers have not been respon-

sive to arguments about the limited evidence on return and development and the need for careful wording and definitions regarding the nature of mobility. They are aware that using a vocabulary of 'voluntary return' and 'return migration and development' makes it easier to explain a politically sensitive topic to the public, and that framing the policy in this way enables them to use budgets assigned for development assistance for the return of unwanted migrants. For host country governments, this is a multiple win situation.

Second, non-governmental organizations whose primary goal is the wellbeing of migrants have now been incorporated into the migration and development discourse. NGOs who became involved in return assistance, as a way to 'do something for those who have to return', now have to comply with the terms of the governments' return policies in order to receive funding, which basically means that they have to produce a target number of returnees. While NGOs oriented towards migrants have an image of independence in society and among migrants, they are in fact implementing government policy for removing unwanted migrants. The pressure to market their product, in what has been called the 'migration industry' (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sørensen 2012), leads to claims that they contribute to sustainable return or even to development. Such claims may, in turn, be used by governments to further legitimize their return policies.

Expressing these expectations in policy papers, statistics and other communications is, however, not harmless, as it affects our thinking and debating about, and communication with, migrants. Civil servants in charge of convincing migrants to return tend to become frustrated with migrants who are not willing to leave. In their optimistic frame, migrants who do not cooperate with 'voluntary return' are unwilling to take responsibility for their own lives (Kalir 2013) and for the development of their 'home' country. These expectations, raised by both policy makers and NGOs, strain communication with migrants before return and foster anger and disappoint-

ment among returnees who find that the story is not as bright as was presented to them. Their discontent may have a destabilizing effect after their return, which then undermines the goals of migration and development policies.

#### *Undoing the Mismatch*

It is therefore both for moral and pragmatic reasons that NGOs and policy makers should acknowledge the real impact of return programmes on individual migrants and development in the country of origin, and to re-evaluate their roles in this process. To undo the mismatch between policy and reality, and in order to formulate adequate policies that address the needs and potential of returnees, we propose two modifications to current policy. First, to avoid further conceptual confusion, *de facto* voluntary and involuntary return should be redefined into more relevant terms that cover the matter. Second, it is time to re-evaluate and disentangle the different goals that inform (return) migration and development policies. This is displayed in Figure 3 and described below.

Although these goals do have overlaps, they imply different needs in relation to return migration. The first goal to regulate, prevent and reduce migration implies the need to remove unwanted migrants effectively. Since deportation is both financially and politically costly and ineffective, an effective way is to provide a return incentive by means of financial or in-kind compensation. Second, the goal to ensure domestic security and welfare implies the need to prevent any destabilizing effects of return through a 'safety net'. Both these goals and their needs can be met through policies of return assistance for unwanted migrants. The third goal to promote development and peace-building in the country of origin implies the need for an investment in human capacity of migrants and continued transnational mobility. Policies promoting the development and peace-building potential of migrants should ensure both needs.

Considering the discussion above, it becomes clear that these goals are not complementary

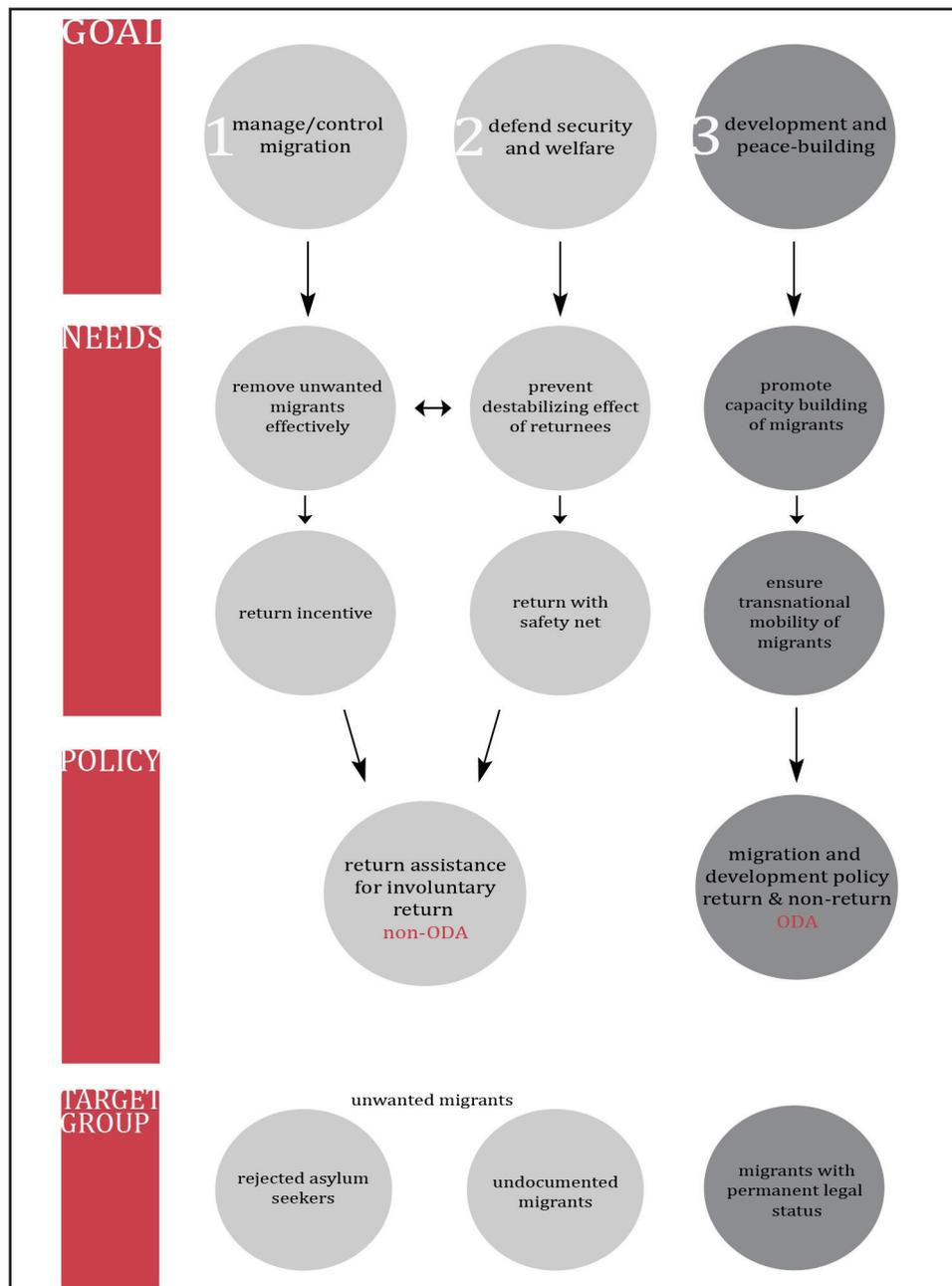


Figure 3. Disentangling return, development and peace-building goals, needs, policies

but rather serve different needs, call for different policies and target different types of migrants. While the first two goals aim at putting unwanted migrants back in their place, the third goal highlights the need for continued transnational mobility, which does not even require migrants to return. In addition, while the first two goals only meet the needs of the destination countries, the third goal would mainly favour development and peace-building in the countries of origin and

in the lives of the individual migrants, if they would be allowed to increase their capacities through rights to employment, education and freedom of movement in the host country.

The different goals and needs therefore imply the use of different budgets: if return is to regulate migration and ensure domestic security and welfare, this is a matter of home affairs and security budgets. Only if return occurs under the condition of continued transnational mobility and

strengthened human capacity, it may meet the goals to promote development and peace-building, which justifies funding from Official Development Assistance budgets.

Migration will always be part of people's survival strategies in times of conflict and crisis. Instead of trying to manage and contain these migration flows, a way forward in the migration and development debate should be how we can facilitate the resilience and determination of people to find a better life. Further policy-oriented research is needed to look into how transnational mobility can be fitted better into current migration and development policies.

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# Who Cares? Transnational Families in Debates on Migration and Development\*

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## Abstract

International migration sets in motion a range of significant transnational processes that connect countries and people. How migration interacts with development and how policies can promote and enhance such interactions have, since the turn of the millennium, gained attention on the international agenda. The recognition that transnational practices connect migrants and their families across sending and receiving societies forms part of this debate. The ways in which policy debate employs and understands transnational family ties nevertheless remains underexplored. This article sets out to discern the understandings of the family in two (often intermingled) debates concerned with transnational interactions: The largely state and policy-driven discourse on the potential benefits of migration on economic development, and the largely academic transnational family literature focusing on issues of care and the micro-politics of gender and generation. Emphasizing the relation between diverse migration-development dynamics and specific family positions, we ask whether an analytical point of departure in respective transnational motherhood, fatherhood or childhood is linked to emphasizing certain outcomes. We conclude by sketching important strands of inclusions or exclusions of family matters in policy discourse and suggest ways to better integrate a transnational family perspective in global migration-development policy.

**Keywords:** migration, development, transnational family relations, gender, global care chains

## Introduction

International migration sets in motion a range of significant transnational processes that potentially contribute to development. Over the past decade, transnational interactions conducive to development have received considerable attention in global policy papers, international forums, and dialogues (Sørensen, Van Hear and Engberg-Pedersen 2002; Sriskandarajah 2005; de Haas 2005, DRC 2009, UNDP 2009). Within this policy

field, reference is routinely made to 'migrants and their families': Migration potentially benefits migrants and their families; remittances lift individuals and families out of poverty; migration leads to increased female participation in employment and, by implication, empowerment of women and changed (gender) relations. At the other end of the spectrum, disconnections are emphasized: Family separation potentially leads to family disruption; has emotional, psychological and social costs for children, spouses and the elderly; disrupts family care regimes; and causes a plethora of social problems ranging from school dropouts and teenage pregnancies,

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to societal decay and the breakdown of social norms. Policy discourses rarely specify the family situations that circumscribe migrating subjects prior to, during and after migration. Rather, family relations are taken for granted or attributed particular normative qualities, predominantly conceived of on the basis of nuclear families or single unit households (Mazzucato and Schans 2011).

It is our contention that migrants remain understood as individual actors in the migration-development debate. They may be approached as individuals of particular sexes, colors and classes, but seldom as relational subjects embedded in larger social structures. Yet migration research has demonstrated how migration decisions, choice of destination, adaptation and incorporation, and transnational relations are linked with family ties and bonds, although not necessarily in harmonious or tension-free ways. The decision to send one or more migrants may be taken within the family and the financial costs involved found by pooling family resources. The motivation behind migration decisions may involve the need to be able to provide for family members, and family members – in both source and destination countries – may remain key sources of economic and emotional support throughout the migration process. However, in other instances, family-based conflicts and family-induced violence motivate movement, a clear warning against taking the primacy of family relations – or the moral sensibilities informing policies around families – for granted.

Early debates regarding the migration-development policy largely overlooked the impact of gender. A perceived increase in independent female migration – often termed the ‘feminization of migration’ – led to policy studies concerned with the specific forms female migration may take, such as migration for domestic work (e.g. produced by the ILO Global Action Programme on Domestic Workers and their Families<sup>1</sup>), the trafficking of women for sex work (e.g.

produced by the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women<sup>2</sup>) or organized migration for marriage (Kawaguchi and Lee 2012). However, as several decades of gender studies have shown, whether women and men migrate or not, gender identities are characterized by fluidity, multiple social positioning, movement and transformation (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Anthias 2000; Pessar and Mahler 2003). Throughout the migration process, ideas about appropriate gender roles become the lens through which desirable social change (the object of development policy) are expressed. The pressure exerted on migrating subjects often departs from idealized notions of family relations where everyone – and women in particular – acts according to societal expectations (Parreñas 2005; Abrego 2009). In almost all societies, gendered notions of appropriate travel, occupation and living conditions circumscribe female migration to a larger extent than that of men.

Basic research and policy studies have disparate traditions of categorizing social reality and gendered transitions; the diverse and complex case-based research in academia and the policy makers’ inclination towards operational solutions creates a complicated dialogue between the two disciplines. This article sets out to discern the conception of the family in two (often intermingled) debates concerned with transnational interactions: The largely state and policy-driven discourse on the potential benefits of migration on economic development and the largely academic transnational family debate focusing on issues of care and the micro-politics of gender and generation. A few recent articles have reviewed the transnational family literature from different angles, examining research on immigrant families (Glick 2010), the effects of transnational family life on children (Mazzucato and Schans 2011) and other central themes related to transnational parenthood (Carling, Menjivar and Schmalzbauer 2012). We supplement these contributions by focusing explicitly on what the lit-

<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/projects/WCMS\\_222567/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/projects/WCMS_222567/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.catwinternational.org/>

erature engaged with transnational motherhood, fatherhood, childhood and global care chains can tell us about migration-development dynamics. In addition, we bring in considerations of the consequences of macro-politics on the transnational family, a topic often given insufficient attention in research concerning family-related migration. We conclude by sketching out important strands of inclusions or exclusions of family matters in policy discourse and suggest ways to better integrate a transnational family perspective in global migration-development policy.

### **Migration, Development, and Family Matters**

The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the two High Level Dialogues (HLDs) have maintained migrant family matters high on the international policy agenda since 2006. Supporting positive migration outcomes, a special Working Group on Human Rights, Gender and Migration was established under the Global Migration group (GMD) in late 2012, paying particular attention to the promotion and protection of the human rights of all migrants and their families. The GFMD 2013-14 Concept Paper states that “Migrants often bring higher income and more opportunities to their families and communities” but also communicates that the downside of migration may include “dependencies and social tensions within families and societies” (GFMD 2013). In a similar vein, the 2013 HLD on International Migration and Development makes ample reference to migrants and their families “who rely on migration to improve their livelihoods” but “too often face high costs and risks”, including “family separation”.<sup>3</sup> The 2013 Human Development report also points to the “profound human costs of forcibly prolonged family separation” (UNDP 2013), a concern shared by ILO who states that “little attention is paid to the social costs of family separation and impacts on families left behind”.<sup>4</sup> The IOM World

Migration 2013 Report nevertheless makes reference to a smaller sample of recent migrant family studies and concludes that these studies come up with various findings: in some contexts emotional costs of family separation is found, in particular among children left in the care of other family members. In other cases, the benefits of remittances may bring higher levels of well-being among migrant families (IOM 2013).

Engaging in this dialogue, transnational studies suggest that migrant parents may “leave children and other dependents behind” in a physical sense, but often migration is grounded in one’s sense of responsibility to the family. Most seek to retain their family relational status, e.g. by carrying out fatherhood or motherhood in new ways, challenging conventional notions of family life as defined by geographical proximity. The costs and benefits of family separation are not fixed; rather, they vary according to the micro and macro-level contexts in which they occur (Zentgraf and Chinchilla 2012). The transnational family research field has grown extensively during the last 5-10 years, and a number of topical questions have been raised, particularly relating to care and parental roles. Most studies are concerned with migration from the Global South to the Global North, reflecting the general tendency in migration research to focus on the period after migration and processes of adaptation and integration to the host society (Nawyn 2010). Far less attention is given to South-South migrations.<sup>5</sup> Migration from Latin America and Asia and subsequent transnational family development are the predominant regions of investigation. Lesser attention is given to African migrations. Transnational family studies involving European migrants are beginning to emerge, as are comparative studies. Apart from a few exceptions, family dynamics of sub-Saharan migrants have been

<sup>3</sup> See [www.un.org/esa/population/mmeetings/HDL2013/documents/Roundtable\\_1-paper.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/mmeetings/HDL2013/documents/Roundtable_1-paper.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> See [http://www.ilo.org/migrant/publications/specialized-publications/WCMS\\_222913/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/migrant/publications/specialized-publications/WCMS_222913/lang-en/index.htm)

<sup>5</sup> The focus on migration from developing to developed countries are misleading in comparison with current international migration flows in which only 37 percent of global flows move from developing to developed countries, 60 percent moves either between developing or between developed countries (UNDP 2009: 21).

only scarcely researched and have often been related to other topics,<sup>6</sup> but authors are beginning to take an interest in how South-South and interregional migration affects the involved families. These research interests include comparative studies focusing on the effects of internal, regional and international migration (i.e. Illanes 2010; Carrasco 2010; De Regt 2010).

In the following section we highlight two thematic trends: Firstly, we analyse family reproduction and issues of transnational motherhood, transnational fatherhood, and transnational (or local) childhood. Secondly, we focus on reproduction to production through the concept of global care chains. Our categorization in family or chain relationship is not indicative of mutable exclusive debates, but rather suggests a catalogue of themes that seems to form part of current trends in research on transnational families.

### Transnational Family Relations

The academic transnational family literature addresses the multifaceted and asymmetric character of relationships between family members and how these relationships transform by being subjected to spatial separation. Perhaps the most significant effort to develop a theory regarding transnational families was made in 2002, in Bryceson and Vuorela's edited volume 'The Transnational Family: New European Frontiers and Global Networks'. Building on the work of Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc (1994), Bryceson and Vuorela defined transnational family life as social reproduction across borders. They further understood transnational families as families that live separated from each other for some or most of the time, yet still remain together and create a feeling of collective welfare and unity, a process they term 'familyhood across national borders'. Transnational families, they argued, have to cope with multiple national residences,

identities and loyalties. Like other families, transnational families are not biological units *per se*, but social constructions or 'imagined communities' that must mediate inequality amongst their members, including differences in access to mobility, resources, various types of capital and lifestyles (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002: 3-7).

In transnational family research, continuity in social family networks across borders is generally seen as conducive to human development and often underlies the formation of transnational institutions that can further economic development in the countries of origin (Oso and Ribas-Mateos 2013). At the other end of the continuum we find case studies emphasizing the high emotional tolls on individual family members, potentially leading to family breakdown and ultimately to the breakdown of the social fabric of entire local communities. Such findings will generally point to negative migration-development outcomes (UNICEF 2007). The contradictions between often idealized notions of family ideology and concrete lived experiences of differing but workable family configurations beg the question of whether breakdowns in the family occur naturally or as a consequence of migration. Often, female migration is a consequence of male abandonment of family responsibilities, leaving women in charge of both emotional and financial family needs (see e.g. Sørensen and Guarnizo 2007). Another question relates to the conditions and constraints within which migrant families maneuver; in particular, how the state and state migration and family policies play out in the life of migrant families (Boehm 2008). In the following paragraphs we take a closer look on what the transnational family literature has to say about particular family positions and whether an analytical point of departure in respectively transnational motherhood, fatherhood or childhood is linked to emphasizing particular outcomes.

### Transnational motherhood

Almost two decades ago Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) drew attention to how female Latina domestic workers in the United States

<sup>6</sup> For example, Nigerian migrants often figure in the literature on human trafficking, sex work and international crime but are absent in studies of transnational families (motherhood and multi-local households) (Kastner 2010: 18).

creatively rearranged and reconstructed themselves as mothers to accommodate spatial and temporal separation from their children. They termed these emerging cross-border care relations “transnational motherhood”, a term largely adopted in later literature. Drawing on social constructivist and feminist notions of family and gender roles, subsequent studies of transnational motherhood highlighted how family reconfigurations, on the one hand, are deeply rooted in and mediated by social stratification factors (Lutz 2008), and, on the other hand, how migrant women tackle the practical and emotional challenges of mothering from a distance in a context of socially defined moralities (Åkesson, Carling and Drotbohm 2012).

Transnational motherhood analyses the pressures of culturally-specific gender norms. Firstly, women’s migration for wage work – and ability to send home remittances – challenges local gender ideologies of male breadwinners and female caretakers (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parreñas 2010, 2005; Dreby 2006; Gamburd 2008; Abrego 2009; Bernhard, Landolt and Goldring 2005). Secondly, social imaginaries of emotionally close mother-child relationships are challenged by women’s migration (Dreby 2006; Horton 2009; Parreñas 2010; Illanes 2010; Boehm 2011), potentially fostering myths of mothers abandoning or putting their children at risk and subsequent family breakdown (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova and Louie 2002; Boehm 2008). Preoccupations expressed in public discourse in receiving societies may not always reflect historically established child-rearing practices involving extended family members, as Olwig’s (2012) research on Caribbean and Åkesson, Carling and Drotbohm’s (2012) research on Cape Verdean child fostering practices demonstrate.<sup>7</sup> Such

<sup>7</sup> Examples of more fluid child fostering practices and by implication broader definitions of what transnational motherhood entails have also been reported for Latin American (Leinaweaver 2009; Sørensen and Guarnizo 2007; Madianou and Miller 2012); Africa (Al-Sharmani 2006; Drotbohm 2010; Filho 2009; Mazzucato and Schans 2011; Poeze and Mazzucato 2014); and Asia (Huang, Yeoh and Lam 2008).

preoccupations may also overlook how modern forms of low-cost communication enable migrant mothers to fulfil important maternal responsibilities (Tungohan 2013). While a sense of enhanced co-presence is produced under certain conditions as texting, chatting and skyping become part of the social fabric of transnational motherhood (Madianou and Miller 2011, 2013) this may not prevent migrant mothers from feeling insufficient, guilty and distressed (Horton 2009; Parreñas 2010). Enhanced communication can increase discontent, grunges, insults, arguments, and avoidance as much as it contributes to binding families together (De Bruijn, Brinkman and Nyamnjoh 2013).

The ways in which female migrants leave traditional gender roles behind and become economically independent and empowered by migrating to more ‘egalitarian’ societies also remains an open question (Barajas and Ramirez 2007). Rather than reconfiguring gender roles, a range of studies point to the inertia and conservative nature of gender systems. Rachel Parreñas’ (2010) work on Philippine transnational mothering indicates that fathers rarely take over child-rearing responsibilities when mothers migrate. Instead, other female kin step in, risking becoming overburdened with such responsibilities. As parental expectations to female migrants may not decrease, migrant mothers attempt to make up for emotional distress and social stigma by remitting as much of their income as possible, often irrespective to their economic situation (Lim 2009; Peter 2010). Moral expectations of motherly responsibilities and self-sacrifice may limit migrant women’s socio-economic integration in the receiving country and, in some cases, lead to a life in chronic poverty (Abrego 2009). When single mothers leave their first children in the countries of origin and later have new families and children in the migration destination, their dual breadwinning role may further limit the realization of social and economic independence (Kastner 2010).

Studies of transnational motherhood have mainly looked at family and gender relations

after migration and only rarely compared migrant and non-migrant families in the sending context (Mazzucato and Schans 2011). We therefore are unsure as to whether families were on the breach of falling apart due to national structural barriers and inequality prior to migration. We also lack knowledge regarding local transformations in gender relations and family norms. Finally, we lack analysis concerning the changing and dynamic nature of motherhood over the life course. Life stage clearly influences both family constructions, migration patterns and the respective mothering functions (Singh and Cabraal 2013; Bonizzoni and Boccagni 2014; Wall and Bolzman 2014); hence, an analytical framework of circulation might be one way forward to capture the dynamic and structurally diverse forms of family formations, care relations and relational motherhood (Baldassar and Merla 2014).

### Transnational Fatherhood

To counter-balance the predominant focus on transnational motherhood, a small but growing body of literature addresses the migration of fathers from a gendered perspective. This literature partly comes from a critique of equating attention to gender with attention to women (Pribilsky 2004; Waters 2009), and for incorrectly positioning men as the deviant 'other' who either abandon the family upon migration or who cannot or will not take over reproductive labour when mothers migrate (Datta et al. 2009; Abrego 2009; Alipio 2013; Mazzucato and Schans 2011). This literature underscores how masculine identities change during different stages of the migration process.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, it pays atten-

tion to diverse effects related to whether fathers leave mothers and children behind, or stay put when women migrate. Finally, it connects fatherhood to remittance practices and family welfare (Schmalzbauer 2005; Dreby 2006).

We detect two separate sets of effects on family wellbeing related to respectively paternal or maternal absence. Studies concerned with the household division of labour upon paternal migration explain fathers' reluctance to rearrange household labour and provide emotional childcare as embedded in dominant notions of fatherhood and paternal inclination to infuse respect and not care (Parreñas 2008, 2010; Ryan et al. 2008; Tungohan 2013). Pribilsky's study of Ecuadorian migration to New York shows a possible alternative outcome in which migration becomes a window into domestic work for male migrants, who after having had to cook and clean become more appreciative of women's work in the country of origin. In addition they experience more freedom to transcend traditional gender roles from their new position in the U.S., including the establishment of more affective care relations with their children (Pribilsky 2012). Studies concerned with stay-at-home fathers also find that they are willing to not only care for their children but also for their migrant spouse's wellbeing (Fresnoza-Flot 2014; Waters 2009). Some men strive to become different fathers than their own (Kilkey, Plomien and Perrons 2014).

Transnational fatherhood analysis contributes a nuanced understanding of 'parental abandonment'. Paternal abandonment may be due to disadvantaged socio-economic and legal positions, such as unemployment or lack of proper documentation (Pribilsky 2007; Abrego 2009; Coe 2011). A middle position is found among migrant fathers whose long and/or irregular working hours provide a challenge to maintain regular contact with their children. Thus working conditions, rather than essentialist masculine identities, may explain abandonment. Finally, abandonment may be temporary as contact may be reestablished when the social and economic situation improves. Yet other studies focus

<sup>8</sup> Other transnational literature links male migration to stages in the life course: In parts of the world where access to local work opportunities are scarce or no longer can provide a proper livelihood, migration may present the only way to become a "man" (Ahmad 2008; Pribilsky 2012; Christiansen, Vigh and Utas 2006; Vigh 2009). In such contexts, male migration should be understood as a prerequisite to realize the masculine potential of entering into a familial union and begin to father children; in short, become an adult.

attention to complications stemming from alcohol, drug abuse and the establishment of new affective relationships in the migration destination, resulting in complicated relations with the family-members in their country of origin (Dreby 2006; Worby and Organista 2007). While such behavior may result in 'social death' in the countries of origin (Peter 2010), it seems that men are less likely than women to be socially sanctioned for defaulting on family responsibilities (Dreby 2006; Abrego 2009; Carling, Menjivar and Schmalzbauer 2012).

Gender powerfully determines labor market opportunities and is therefore believed to shape remittance behavior. Although male migrants generally have access to better paid jobs than women, it is often assumed that women not only send home a higher proportion of their income but also remit more frequently and continuously (Sørensen 2005). In her study of Salvadoran transnational families, Abrego (2009) finds that transnational fathers generally send less money home than migrant mothers. As male migrants are less burdened by normative expectations of self-sacrifice, they tend to spend more of their earnings on personal needs with the result that many 'father-away' transnational families barely manage to survive. Such findings are not universally applicable, as other case studies provide evidence that remittances from male migrants support families quite well, especially when managed properly. To the extent that whole families become dependent of migrant fathers' remittances, family reunification may become more difficult or prolong the transnational family arrangement (Pribilsky 2004).

The relationship between fathers' whereabouts and family welfare cannot be limited to a question of migration, as parental absence might be due to divorce or death, as well. Recent findings from Malawi indicate that concern about the welfare of left behind migrant children might be exaggerated. Paternal orphans and children of divorcees are significantly disadvantaged compared to otherwise similar children who live with their father or whose father has migrated.

In the latter case, remittances benefit child welfare by strengthening household finances, reducing child labour, and contributing to cover the costs of education, healthcare and other welfare related expenses (Carling and Tønnessen 2013).

### **Transnational Childhood**

Parents' transnational migration practices affect children. Whether staying with a parent or another care-giver in the country of origin, becoming reunited with family members in the migration destination or migrating on their own to support their families, children take an active part in creating and maintaining transnational family configurations (Uehling 2008). The transnational family literature frequently focuses on children but often through the lens of their parents (Mazzucato and Schans 2011). This might explain the tendency to see children as acted upon rather than being actors in their own life. However, recent literature has started to adapt a more child-centered approach (Dreby and Adkins 2012), giving voice to children's own notions of family, gender and mobility, as well as emphasizing children's agency.

Age seems to be a significant variable when considering how children are affected by migration (Carling, Menjivar and Schmalzbauer 2012). Age also structures how migrant children are treated politically, e.g. as eligible for child-centered development programmes in the countries of origin (Carling and Tønnessen 2013), as dependants eligible for family reunification (Bernhard, Landolt and Goldring 2009), or as unaccompanied minors (Uehling 2008).

When children stay behind, migrating parents sometimes disclose the difficulties involved in migration. This can lead to misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations (Schmalzbauer 2008). Perceptions of parenting and childhood are shaped by societal norms, which partly explain the conflicting findings of problems related to feelings of 'abandonment' (Parreñas 2005; Bernhard, Landolt and Goldring 2009) or family relations based on acceptance of separation (Poeze and Mazzucato 2014). The quality

of care-giving arrangements is important, as difficult relationships with new care-givers create tensions between the child, the caregiver, and the migrant parent(s) (Parreñas 2010, 2008; Schmalzbauer 2006; Dreby 2007; Haagsman and Mazzucato 2014).

Due to their parents' migration, children benefit economically and get access to better health and education, which has diverse developmental effects. Several studies find that better economic family situations does not necessarily translate to higher human development for children (Schmalzbauer 2006; Dreby 2007; Parreñas 2008, 2010), as emotional strain may impact negatively on health and school performance (Kandel and Massey 2002). The extent to which transnational family arrangements under certain circumstances might strengthen children's sense of membership to their family is an understudied topic (Dreby and Adkins 2012).

Children who migrate to be reunified with their families adjust to their new family setting over time. This adjustment, however, can be a challenging one (Phoenix and Seu 2013). Disappointment with their new living arrangement and a desire to return to their former situation can occur, indicating that reunification with one family member might signify a loss of close relationships with others (Bonizzoni and Leonini 2013). Familial divisions of labour in country of origin contexts are rearranged when one or both parents migrate, but this is also the case when children reunite with their parents in the migration destination. Children with working parents may be put in charge of caring for younger siblings, which again might intensify the family's transnational identity (Lee and Pacini-Ketchabaw 2011; Øien 2010). Second and third generation youth remain a part of transnational social fields that influence their practices, values and ideas (Fouron and Glick Schiller 2002; Levitt 2009; Reynolds 2006; Mand 2010). A child's involvement in transnational social fields also influences mobility, as parents may choose to send them back to their country of origin in order to avoid the 'bad influence' of the destination country

(Carling, Menjivar, and Schmalzbauer 2012). In some immigration contexts, states even facilitate such returns in the form of re-education camps for diasporic youth (Turner 2014).

Children are not just moved but also move independently for a variety of reasons, including escaping from fragile situations, human rights abuses, gang violence, or because of the breakdown of care arrangements. Others seek education, access to better paid jobs and economic opportunities (Terrio 2008; Hess and Shandy 2008; DRC 2009). Perhaps more than any other family category, the independent migration of children or 'unaccompanied minors' reveals the complex relationship between political impulses to protect children (e.g. from becoming victims of smuggling/trafficking networks) and protect the receiving societies from rising immigration pressure. Uehling (2008) describes this paradox by juxtaposing 'Childhood at risk' with 'Children as risk'. Recent studies of deportation and its effects on migrant communities underscore that 'childhood at risk' involve children's fear that one or more adult family members might get deported. The threat of a family member's detention and deportation demonstrates that, compared to the stresses of their initial migration, the risk of family disruption may be higher after the family is settled in the destination country (Boehm 2008; Dreby 2012).

### **Transnational Care**

In 2000 Arlie Hochschild coined the term 'global care chain' to describe how migrant domestic workers are employed by professional working women in the global North, which in turn leaves a care deficit, or care drain, behind with regarding their own families (Hochschild 2000). The discussion of global care chains within the migration-development debate include Rachel Salazar Parreñas' work on 'the international transfer of caregiving' and 'the international division of reproductive labour' (Parreñas 2000, 2001), as well as various related studies compiled in the edited volume 'Global Women' (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003).

Inspired by global value chain analysis, care chain analysis asserts that economic globalization is inextricably linked to the globalization of social reproduction. The conceptual framework attempts to illustrate/explain the processes in which several phenomena – e.g. neoliberal globalization and the feminization of migration – interact with gender relations, transnational families and cross-border care arrangements (Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck 2012). The care chain calls attention to the commodification of care work among women, how the economic value of care work diminishes as it gets passed along, and how economic and social inequality is maintained on a global scale. The care chain metaphor undoubtedly uncovers a variety of gendered economic push-pull dynamics (Nawyn 2010) and illustrates the interdependence between people in different positions across different places quite well (Escrivá 2004). Yet, this approach has been criticized for reifying that only women do care work, for insufficiently taking local inequalities into account, for ignoring institutionalized/professionalized care work chains involving trained migrants as doctors and nurses (Parreñas 2012; Raghuram 2012), and for remaining embedded in gendered and asymmetrical morality regimes that “risks underestimating migrants’ endeavors to provide care even under adverse conditions” (Boccagni 2014: 231; Zentgraf and Chinchilla 2012).

The changing nature of global care economies has expanded the thematic orientation to include men’s reproductive labour, care for the elderly left behind, and children’s work as caregivers and as such acknowledged not only relations but also generations. In relation to the question of men, various scholars have attempted to ‘add the other sex’ to the care chain discussion by looking at the entrance of male migrant workers in care work, particularly how male domestic workers practise and reconstruct masculinity by underlining their traditional roles as the family head and breadwinner (Bartolomei 2010; Näre 2010; Sarti and Scrinzi 2010). Other studies have paid attention to the structural factors

that affect male migrants’ access to the labour market, leaving work in the care industry one of few open options for e.g. undocumented migrants (Sarti 2010). The function of children in care chains is only just emerging in the literature (Lee and Pacini-Ketchabaw 2011; Olwig 2012), while studies on transnational care for the elderly have attracted attention for quite some time (Baldassar and Baldock 2000; Baldassar, Wilding and Baldock 2006; Izuhara and Shibata 2002). New amalgams of care between children and the elderly may emerge, as suggested by an interesting multigenerational case study of care in Peruvian transnational families, where migrants fill ‘care slots’ by leaving the children to live with their grandparents in arrangements where the two generations take care of each other (Leinaweaver 2010).

Global care chain analysis has expanded in a number of important ways. It has applied a ‘transnational political economy of care’ perspective (Williams 2011). It has also revealed the role of the global migration industry in the production of particular chains (e.g. global domestic care chains, global nursing care chains), the huge profits made by international corporations in facilitating certain chains, and how global care chains are produced and facilitated by the intersection of government policy in the areas of migration, welfare and health with actors involved in recruitment, brokerage, training and travel (Yeates 2009).

Apart from attracting attention across academic fields, the global care chain concept has found a place in policy discussions. This particular response to global care chain conceptualizations are found in part in the unwearied rights-based advocacy efforts of feminist scholars and women’s organizations, which have broadened the policy debating tables over the past ten years. In 2005, Nicola Yeates introduced the concept and its usefulness to the Global Commission on International Migration (Yeates 2005). In 2008 UN-INSTRAW suggested that the formation of global care chains embodies the broader process of globalization of care and provides a

valuable position from which to examine the interrelationship between migration and development, culminating in the 2010 publication of 'Global Care Chains: Towards a Rights-based Global Care Regime' (Orozco 2011). The fourth meeting of the Global Forum for Migration and Development, held in Mexico in 2010, made explicit reference to transnational families and highlighted that "Global Care Chains are a 21st century development issue with major implications for gender and family" (but yet not a priority for development policy).<sup>9</sup> A final example of policy interest in the global care chain concept is the European Commission funded ILO Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers and their Families (2013-16), with the objective of "developing and strengthening national labour laws, migration policies, and recruitment regulations and practices that are oriented towards achieving decent work for migrant domestic workers across global care chains".<sup>10</sup>

### **The Impact of Macropolitics on the Family**

Early transnational studies are often criticized for romanticizing transnational family life. These studies have emphasized the continuity of social networks and institutions across borders while largely overlooking the macro-political structures limiting the mobility of individual family members within such networks (Bernhard, Landolt and Goldring 2009; Goulbourne et al. 2010). Studies on transnational families have likewise been criticized for privileging de-territorialized notions of family-care arrangements at the expense of analyzing the state policies and international regulations within which transnational families are situated (Baldassar 2008; Kilkey and Merla 2014). While we found examples of such 'celebratory', often under-theorized, research in our review, it should be stressed that the seminal work in transnational migration studies such as 'Nations Unbound' (Basch, Glick Schiller and

Szanton Blanc 1994) and the early work by Roger Rouse (1995) indeed underlined that transnational families have to be understood within a world of nation states.

Migration scholars have generally explained migration-policy making in terms of a rational balancing of economic interests, electoral pushes and judicial constraints. More recent studies have focused attention to the construction of collective identities and value systems by discussing migration policy in relation to issues such as social cohesion, national identity, the limits to multiculturalism and the alleged failure of integration (Bonjour and de Hart 2013). Within transnational family research, scholars have pointed to how complex factors deriving from family and migration policies contribute to the systemic production of transnational cross-border family arrangements. It is, in other words, politics, and not the exotic foreign family forms and child-rearing practices, that explains the current global extension of transnational families. Transnational family research has highlighted that international migration law doesn't necessarily serve the interests of all individuals equally (migrant mothers, fathers, single mothers, dependent children and the elderly). While formal equality between native men and women may be reached in national family law, substantive inequalities may persist in emigration and immigration law (Van Walsum 2009). Regarding emigration, some sending countries may restrict or ban the emigration of women based on either age or sector of employment (e.g. for domestic work or entertainment in certain countries, but not for nurses, doctors and engineers, (see Oishi 2005), often in attempts to protect nationals from known exploitation. In regard to immigration, transnational family arrangements may be built into the very structure of immigration policy, e.g. by installing temporary worker programs for particular and gender-specific sectors that are tied to long-term restrictions on acquiring permanent residence, family reunification or social benefits in the receiving country (Bernhard, Landolt and Goldring 2009),

<sup>9</sup> See [gfm\\_d\\_mexico10\\_rt\\_2-2-annex\\_en%20\(1\).pdf](#)

<sup>10</sup> See [http://www.ilo.org/migrant/capacity-building-and-technical-assistance-on-labour-migration/projects/WCMS\\_222567/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/migrant/capacity-building-and-technical-assistance-on-labour-migration/projects/WCMS_222567/lang--en/index.htm)

a constraint strongly underscored by care chain analysis.

Feminist and actor-oriented research has equally underscored the contradictory nature of gender-specific migration. A case study of Mexican women employed in the highly masculinized temporary migration programmes in Canada by Preibisch and Grez (2013) found that even if acquisition of Canadian citizenship was out of the reach for these women, they expanded notions of citizenship in other ways, e.g. by being able to acquire land, property and capital in Mexico that in turn produced greater respect and social status from families and neighbours. Yet, while migration allowed these women to expand certain dimensions of their citizenship, they remained subject to “punitive labour-immigration regimes in the global North, to repressive gender systems embedded in both arenas of their transnational lives, and to the structural realities of the contemporary global political economy” (Preibisch and Grez 2013: 799).

Another line of studies has focused on the ways states divide families by defining and regulating family and kinship in numerous ways. State policy and migrant families may interpret and understand family in multiple and contradictory ways, leading to ongoing tensions over criteria for who actually constitutes a family member. It is exactly through definitions of who qualifies as a legitimate migrant that state power is particularly strong in disrupting family life (Boehm 2008). New post-Fordist migration management systems exclude an increasing number of people from the global circuits of legal mobility by disconnecting increasing numbers of individual transnational family members from the promises of globalization (De Genova 2002). Even when transnational families have ‘succeeded’ in dividing their productive and reproductive labour across borders (Schmalzbauer 2005, 2010), their strategies become increasingly vulnerable.

The recent increase in deportation has led migration scholars to focus on deportation, deportability and deportees (see e.g. De Genova and Peutz 2010; Juby and Kaplan 2011; Brotherton

and Barrios 2011; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). In these studies, deportation is examined as a global mechanism of state control, deportability (the protracted possibility of being deported) as the real effect of internalized migration policies and practices. In this process, deportees arise as members of a new global diaspora consisting of “people who had to leave one home only to be forcibly removed, often years later, from another” (Kanstroom 2012: ix). Some attention is paid to how these mass deportations affect migrants in the sending countries, for example by Hagan, Rodriguez and Castro (2011). These include both the termination of the ability to send remittances upon deportation and the additional pressures on local labor markets with high unemployment rates, adding yet another level of development problems to poor migrant sending countries.

Our analysis underscores the importance of understanding transnational families and cross-border family arrangements as always situated within broader macro- and geopolitical contexts. It highlights how current destination country deportation policies tend to undermine long-standing family reunification principles and pose dire social, economic and psychological costs for transnational families in both countries of destination and origin (Hagan, Eschbach and Rodriguez 2008). The threat of deportation is particularly poignant for families of mixed status (Brabeck, Lykes and Hershberg 2011), who, in the incidence of deportation of individual family members, become subjected to the ‘disruption of family ties’ that not only is an undesirable outcome of their initial migration, but ironically also the subject of much public concern.

### **Conclusion and Ways Forward**

Our findings point to a tendency to think in binary oppositions – women versus men, adults versus children, staying put versus migrating, staying connected versus breaking family ties – when discussing transnational families. We also detect a tendency to locate social concerns in a moral economy of emotions rather than in a political

economy of human mobility. These tendencies are more pronounced in policy debates but also traceable in academic contributions.

We find that policy debate generally has reacted inclusively to academic insistence on acknowledging diversity. This is perhaps not a surprise, as scholars often are contracted to produce policy inputs by international organisations. Attention to specific potentials, problems and risks facing migrant mothers and children (and only to a limited extent migrant fathers) increasingly appears in these papers, as does reference to the importance of more encompassing perspectives that consider the wellbeing of the entire transnational family. However, an acknowledgement of diversity in migrant experiences does not necessarily include attention to the structures that produce this diversity.

Awareness of the importance of migration policy was at the forefront of transnational migration theory (in particular the influential work of Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). In contrast to the rather simplistic belief that migrants are agents of change, this literature insists that 'positive gains' and 'negative costs' of migration always must be weighed against state policies, leading to an understanding of transnational families within – and not beyond – a world of nation states (Goulbourne et al. 2010). State policies either facilitate or constrain how 'fluid' or 'continuous' family contact and other exchanges can be maintained. Gains and costs are almost always closely connected to legal status, making the legal status of each individual transnational family member a key axis of differentiation (Piper 2005) and thus one of entanglement with migration and development policy. We therefore insist that the critique of reproducing a rather seamless image of transnational family arrangement – e.g. by focusing on the developmental impact of family remittances without emphasizing the conflicts these remittances give rise to and the state neglect they make up for – rather should be directed at migration-development political practice than at trans-

national scholarship (Delgado Wise and Márquez Covarrubias 2007; Sørensen 2012).

We find that focusing solely on transnational motherhood, fatherhood or childhood obscures other central caregivers in transnational family arrangements and neglects the central role of the state in the lives of transnational families. As stated by Boehm, transnational family positions are "indeed riddled with difficult decisions, ambivalent emotions, and multiple negotiations in the face of limited options" (Boehm 2008: 788). Future studies of transnational family positions would benefit from turning attention towards the conditions and constraints within which migrants and migrant families maneuver. Paying attention to the ways in which motherhood, fatherhood and childhood are shaped by state power would lead to more nuanced and less normative assessments of transnational family arrangements.

In our view, attempts to connect individual migrants and migrant positions to larger global structures can be found in the literature on global care chains. The application of global care chain analysis to the migration-development policy field has uncovered the tendency to find market-oriented solutions to the vacancies in care functions in the global North by relaxing immigration policy towards people with certain skills in times of need (e.g. health workers in the 1960s and 70s, domestic workers in the 1980s and 90s) while using moralizing arguments in favour of return or extending only time limited labour contracts (families will suffer less emotional stress if the separation is short term). While we note a high policy responsiveness to the global care chain concept, we nevertheless ask whether this responsiveness is due to a rather linear image invoked by the chain metaphor, constructing easily defined victims (care drained families and care deprived children in the global South) to whose rescue social workers, religious institutions and NGOs (based in or paid by the North) can turn (Raghuram 2012)<sup>11</sup>, or to whom restric-

<sup>11</sup> For a parallel discussion of the schism between political efforts to rescue victims of trafficking and a

tive migration policies in the form of time-limited contracts can be constructed as beneficiary?

To find a balance between the extreme ends of the global care chain and regulate in a more just manner the burden of the costs, risks and investments currently falling on migrants and developing countries, some kind of global governance is clearly needed (Yeates 2012). The rights/treatment of migrant care workers is a strong human rights issue that often sits uneasily between migration and development policies. It also highlights the asymmetrical power balance in the debate between northern and southern partners. Extending labour rights to migrant domestic workers runs somewhat counter to current return and temporary migration scheme efforts in the migration policy field. Pushing for access to civil and social rights in both sending and receiving countries seems a more radical way forward. As recently argued by Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck (2012), neither the academic nor the policy oriented care chain discussion has hardly taken into account the citizenship situation of care workers, in particular the fact that care workers often fail to obtain citizenship rights in the countries of reception. At the same time, they are harshly reminded of their social citizenship obligations – which maintain an emphasis on migration-development on the remittance sending potential – in their countries of origin.

We agree with many of the policy recommendations made by our colleagues. Surely there is a need for policy development to support safe mobility for children, women and other perceived vulnerable migrant groups, and surely such policy development needs to recognize that both access to and experience with migration is highly gendered.<sup>12</sup> We also agree that the welfare of children and parents alike can be improved by avoiding stigmatization, preventing false promises, and providing support and stability for family members left behind to further maximize the

rights-based approach to sex work, see (Agustín 2007; Plambech 2014).

<sup>12</sup> See [http://www.migrationdrc.org/publications/misc/Making\\_Migration\\_Work\\_for\\_Development.pdf](http://www.migrationdrc.org/publications/misc/Making_Migration_Work_for_Development.pdf)

benefits of migration (Carling 2013). To move the migration-development policy agenda forward, we nevertheless insist that policy makers need to recognize the role played by policy making in the global North and South in generating and maintaining transnational family arrangements (Bernhard, Landolt and Goldring 2009; Mazzucato and Schans 2011). To support such efforts, transnational family research needs to bring the state into any analysis concerned with difference-producing family relations.

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# The Public Role of Social Scientists in Constituting the Migration-Development Nexus<sup>1</sup>

by THOMAS FAIST (Bielefeld University)

## Abstract

Academic and public debates on the migration-development nexus often raise the question whether and in what ways social scientific research may form a basis for rational political decisions. The main thesis of this article is that such a question is ultimately misleading. Social scientific research may offer crucial information for describing, understanding and explaining the migration-development nexus. The most important role of social science is not to give policy advice but to offer concepts and patterns of interpretations – based on empirical research – which can guide political debates in the public sphere. This means that sociological analysis should go beyond focusing on research-policy links, and bring the social scientists' role in the public sphere in a much more forceful way.

**Keywords:** international migration, development, public sphere, knowledge, public role of social scientists

## Introduction

Considering remittances as instruments for economic development, and the idea that international migrants have the capacity to drive forward economic growth, have not been central tenets of the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015). Nonetheless, during the past decade and a half, attention to the potential of migrants' remittances for development has increased tremendously (Sørensen et al. 2002), and it is quite plausible that migration for development will play a prominent role in successor schemes and programmes to the Millennium Development Goals (cf. UNDP 2009). Experts and researchers have held a key function in the renaissance of

the idea that migration plays a central role for economic and human development. They have established a link between migration and development via remittances, and have convinced governments and international organizations to implement improved measurement techniques in order to record remittance flows (Bakker 2014). While this claim could be disputed, the question is which role social scientists, among other actors in the public sphere, have played in linking basic and applied research. The latter has often been conducted in the context of policy changes, which have touted migrants' remittances as a development tool.

More specifically, there is an often-mentioned gap between research in the social sciences, on the one hand, and social action and praxis on the other. This alleged disjuncture is particularly pertinent in the migration-development nexus. At

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first glance, this may seem astonishing because migration studies and development research—both fields being interdisciplinary in nature—are characterized by a high degree of commissioned research. This kind of research is often politically motivated. For example, one of the main motivations to sponsor economic development via remittances is to reduce international migration from the global South to the global North. To illustrate, over recent years politicians across Europe have often claimed that higher levels of economic development (measured by per capita income and/or increased human development symbolized by lower infant mortality and higher rates of literacy) would eventually lead to a decrease in international migration (European Commission 2002). Academic analysts of migration, however, insist that—while this expectation may be borne out in the long run, considering demographic transitions and economic transformations—increased economic development correlates highly with increased international migration, expressed in concepts such as the ‘migration hump’ (Martin and Taylor 1996). Moreover, while the policy world may be concerned with adhering to more efficient means of migration control, ranging from border controls to development cooperation, academic researchers often insist on those endogenous dynamics of international migration, which escape blunt efforts at control, such as irregular migration.

Thus, even in these fields of migration and development, which seem to be strongly immersed in public policy issues and public debates, both practitioners and academic researchers heatedly debate the difficulties of mutual exchange. At its core, this gap hypothesis raises the following question, which has been debated as long as social science research has existed: Would social science knowledge be more useful if it could be more easily applied instrumentally? In other words, would we desire a state of affairs in which political action could be systematically based on knowledge about calculable causal relations, as the term ‘evidence-based policy’ instead of ‘dogma’ would suggest

(Boswell 2009)? While this may be a fruitful question to begin with, it is ultimately misleading. John Maynard Keynes already pointed out in the 1930s that finding the link between the intellectual and the political world may be difficult to achieve, pointing to the crucial role of economic ideas: “Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slave of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling the frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back. Not, indeed, immediately, but after a certain interval” (Keynes 1970: 361).

This proposition indicates that there is indeed a strong coupling of the two worlds of policy-politics and academia, albeit not through direct application of knowledge, but rather through ways of thinking and representation in the public sphere. It is in this way that social scientists are brokers bridging ‘structural holes’ (Burt 1992), which are not simply due to the absence of social ties but from different systemic dynamics as well. The function of academic knowledge in the public sphere goes beyond the ‘enlightenment’ role (Weiss 1979) because it designates a ‘place’ for public debates to occur. Thus, social science knowledge, on the one hand, and the system of public policy, on the other hand, are not only two very different worlds; they are linked in the realm where ideas are exchanged and arguments occur in publicly accessible forums that range from mass media to small circles of debate. The worlds of academic research and public policy are based on different assumptions. These assumptions, in turn, provide for different views about the function of knowledge. While academic research is more geared toward the function of knowledge to understand migration and development processes in a critical perspective, public policy tends to prioritize the instrumental use of knowledge. The social sciences do not so much produce social technologies, but offer worldviews and lenses which help to categorize observable social facts and make it possible to arrive at interpretations. The world of public policy-making, by contrast is

structured by its own dynamics in which political interests aim to shape social life. Policy-makers use social science knowledge when it serves the internal dynamics of policy-making, although in fact, quite often, it may not serve this function, as when electoral pressures trump expert knowledge. Politicians are often driven by political exigencies and in such circumstances end up ignoring evidence where it fails to support electorally appealing courses of action—especially in areas susceptible to populist styles of action such as migration. At any rate, the social sciences, not only including sociology but also political science, anthropology, and economics, have delivered such lenses galore, in the form of concepts dealing with human and economic development.

The very fact that the social sciences usually do not have direct impact on decision-making but are able to influence at best the lenses through which ‘social problems’ are viewed, make it all the more important to look not only at the interaction of social scientists and policy-makers in governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, social movement organizations, and the like, but also at their role in the public sphere. If it is true that social scientists can usefully provide lenses through which to view and identify issues, topics, and problems and not so much be prescriptive, the direct linkage to policy and thus decision-making should not be overrated. Yet the discursive impact then assumes an ever more crucial role. And it is in the public sphere that such lenses are debated. And it is, above all, in the public sphere that political decisions in democracies, no matter how particularist the interests behind them are, can usually be seen to make and to have been legitimated by reference to both universal norms and plausible conceptual beliefs. The ubiquitous references in policy debates to meta-norms such as human rights, or the almost undisputed gospel of economic growth, are examples that come to mind.

This proposition can be explicated in three issue areas. The first concerns public policy and research agendas, social order, and the organization of research in the specific field of migration

and development. In this area we are basically concerned with the (mutual) conditioning and conjunctures of academic research and policy paradigms. The second issue area deals with knowledge production in the social sciences and the public role of social scientists. Finally, the third issue area addresses social science knowledge and its uses in public policy and in the public sphere. But before plunging into these issue areas, however, it is necessary to question the standard account of why the worlds of academic research and public policy supposedly talk past each other.

### **The standard account: the gap hypothesis and its deficiencies**

A deficit or gap argument is at the core of standard debate, which states that given the large stock of academic knowledge in various fields of societal life, the de facto usage of this kind of knowledge in politics, state, and non-state policy-makers is widely insufficient. In the field of migration and development, we claim to have knowledge about how financial remittances ameliorate or increase social inequalities in regions of origin and destination of migrants. This knowledge, as the argument goes on, is only insufficiently applied to policies by the respective national governments or international organizations. In this perspective, much more could be done to facilitate the transfer of money by reducing transaction costs in offering channels alternative to Western Union and MoneyGram, or even to ‘illegal’ viz. informal routes, such as the Hawala system. Hence, no publication on the subject of remittances fails to mention the Mexican government’s ‘3 for 1’ program in which each ‘migradollar’ is complemented by an extra dollar from the federal and regional government. The fact that only a fraction of remittances is channelled into this program is rarely mentioned (Castles and Delgado Wise 2008).

Usually, three reasons are advanced to account for the allegedly deplorable gap between the plentiful store of research knowledge and its application in decision-making. The first pos-

its that social scientists simply do not yet know enough about certain causal relationships or mechanisms of behaviour. In the case of financial remittances, this refers, for example, to the question how—if at all—remittances sent to family members in regions of origin aggregate from the family level to local communities or even to the national economy. So far, social scientists know very little about these processes of aggregation. The second reason offered relates to the transfer of results from the social sciences to *praxis*. Each of the two worlds uses its own language and particular jargon. One could argue that social scientists write in barely intelligible ways and should strive for greater clarity. This insight suggests that a simple one-to-one transfer is not possible. Instead, the processes and tasks involved could be better described as the mutual translation of different codes characteristic of the social sciences and public policy, respectively. Thus, it is not surprising that policy-makers establish expert commissions—such as the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) convened in 2005 by the then Secretary General of the United Nations (UN), Kofi Annan—not only to legitimate decisions or delay them, but also to translate actual research results. We can observe a similar pattern of knowledge translation in the run-up to the latest International Migration Report (UN 2013). A third explanation of the gap suggests that those who apply social science knowledge are thought to lack the capacity to interpret research results correctly, or that their readiness to learn is, moreover, also limited. If so, a change in the style of thinking among this group would be warranted. This third argument is highly questionable because we find that many policy-makers in fact have a social science background. While one may quibble with the fact that among social scientists in the field of development, those with an economics background predominate; one may also plausibly argue that economics as a field has been buoyant and imperial, and perhaps less reflexive about the transfer problem. It is still true that the staffs of national and international organizations are filled by aca-

demically trained persons, and policy-makers are certainly capable of being influenced.

This standard account needs to be questioned in a fundamental way because of its rationalist prejudice. This mode of thinking is based on a purely instrumental model according to which the social sciences are to be used in applying generalized findings to particular, concrete situations. In abstract terms, this perspective says: if A then B, or B as a function of A. The policy-maker then seeks to change B or produce B, and so forth. This formula seems to be rather short-sighted, not least because all knowledge needs to be translated, for example, to consider *ceteris paribus* conditions. When talking about the effects of a policy, one cannot simply say, when A then B, etc. but one needs to know about consequences of specific and complex sets of factors. Yet such knowledge is not simply stored in the warehouse of the social sciences. There is also no recipe-like knowledge in the form of easy rules to follow (Luhmann 1992). For example, it is plausible to argue that financial remittances may result in the economic improvement of regions of origin. Yet the number of *ceteris paribus* conditions affecting this formula are legion, and it would take a great deal of specific knowledge other than academic knowledge—such as tacit, ‘everyday,’ and local knowledge—to appreciate the conditions under which financial remittances make a particular impact (on various ideal typical ways of modelling the boundaries between science and policy, see Hoppe 2005).

Even more important is that all social science knowledge is value-bound, even derived under the ideal of value-free objectivity. Concepts have direct and strong relations to values, such as development, evolution, exploitation, social progress, social integration, and social inequality. With these notions in mind, social scientists produce something of a worldview of selected parts of reality, which also implies an urge to act in a certain way. For example, the notions of economic development and human development suggest somewhat different policy action regarding the use and desirability of financial

remittances. Notions of economic development would emphasize the investment character of remittances, e.g., into education, health, or manufacturing. By contrast, notions of social development, such as Amartya Sen's (1984) capability approach, draw upon the idea that persons have a choice in how to employ remittances in aid of certain objectives, for example, geographical mobility, which constitutes one of many possible elements in the individual's well-being and quality of life.

### **Issue area 1: public policy, social order, and research**

This issue area concerns a host of questions revolving around how research and policy agendas are set and potentially interact, and especially how public policy agendas impact actual research that is undertaken: how have public policies, foundations, and other actors influenced research on the migration-development nexus, and in what ways—e.g. what are the mechanisms of influence, such as funding and hiring? How have institutions such as the World Bank and state governments set the migration-development agenda? Since the concept of development achieved prominence in the late 1940s, how have issues of economic growth and political order been bundled over time? What premises have been underlying policy research agendas, such as neo-liberal or grass-roots perspectives and orientations? How did these agendas reflect the changing or even transformed relationships between principles of social order—that is, state, market, civil society/community? In which institutions has research been undertaken—e.g., in universities, independent research institutes, or in international research institutes and organizations?

While it is impossible even to begin addressing these questions here, it is helpful to place them into a discursive-institutional context. In other words, one needs to identify how the research and policy interests in the migration-development nexus have coincided in three consecutive cycles or phases (Faist 2008), and what

exactly the (counter-)paradigmatic strands were. The first and the third phases were undoubtedly stimulated by public policy interests—the first in the 1950s and especially the 1960s by the OECD. The third and on-going phase has taken off after the World Bank placed migrants' financial remittances at the core of its annual report (World Bank 2002). Other agents, national governments and international organizations included have followed suit. In the second phase, one also finds a correspondence between public policy interests in the South and the North, and academic concepts—a 'strange bedfellow' arrangement of both restrictive migration control on the one hand and a critical analysis of underdevelopment through reference to such deleterious mechanisms as the 'brain drain' on the other hand. In all three phases, research knowledge was and still is scrutinized for its applicability to development, based on different theoretical assumptions and slightly different policy priorities.

In phase 1, during the 1950s and 1960s, with spin-offs into the 1970s, economic policy-makers and most representatives in the economics discipline in the global North held that migration contributes to the development of sending regions.<sup>2</sup> In fact, most research was actually undertaken after restrictive migration policies had been implemented in the early 1970s (e.g. Penninx 1982 on Turkey). Following the 'recruitment stop' in Western Europe, public policies aimed to encourage migrants to 'return' to their regions of origin. Financial incentives were allotted to those returning. By and large, the theoretical underpinning of the recruitment drive in the global North of the 1960s was based on social modernization theory. International migration, quite apart from the much more massive internal migration in the South, was meant to siphon off excess labour and transfer it to the North, where it could—accord-

<sup>2</sup> Ironically, theories with a perspective from the global South on economic development in the 1950s and 1960s focused on import substitution industrialization and thus did not consider international migration, albeit migration in the latter part of this period began to take off (again).

ing to the OECD (Kindleberger 1967)—fill labour gaps in labour-intensive industries. In this way, international South-North migration (East-West was curtailed by the Iron Curtain) could both contribute to development in the South and the growth of GDP in the post-war reconstruction economies of the West. Although modernization theories covered a great deal more terrain than economic development *per se*, an economic lens heavily dominated the focus and terminology of the migration-development nexus. From a wide array of complex theoretical components in modernization theory, only the economic perspective was chosen to justify public policy choices. Up until the late 1970s, when the first studies were published on the effects of remittances, social scientists and governments alike saw migration as a solution to development obstacles in emigration regions. Empirical results, however, painted a different picture, often concluding that there was little evidence that remittances boosted local, not to mention national, economic development (Lipton 1980).

Whereas in phase 1 causal reasoning went from international migration to development, social science thinking during phase 2 largely reversed causality: the line now ran from underdevelopment to migration. Still rooted in modernization theoretical assumptions, dependency and world systems theories questioned the impact of economic modernization on developing regions, now cast to the peripheries. Coinciding with such theoretical underpinnings, policy debates also highlighted the deleterious consequences of migration, especially the 'brain drain' of professionals. The debate reached a climax in the context of discussions of the 'New International Economic Order' in which many southern states in the United Nations system raised their voices. It was then that international migration as a policy solution became problematic; it turned into the problem in this reformulation of modernization theory, leading to the conclusion that migration as such contributes to structural economic heterogeneity and ever increasing social inequalities between South

and North and between centres and peripheries within these regions. Needless to say, there was little policy impetus in the North to challenge such assumptions. After all, restrictive immigration policies, implemented in virtually all states in the North/West since the early 1970s, were not accompanied by alternative means to promote development, such as international trade. Thus, restrictive migration controls and the brain drain rhetoric nicely complemented each other in portraying international migration as a social problem. In the research carried out in phase 2 the emphasis lay even more forcefully than in phase 1 on an economic perspective, this time with a counter-hegemonic political economic drive.

Phase 3 in policy clearly took off with the wake-up call by the World Bank in its report on development finance (2002). Now, concepts such as increasing competitiveness, hunting for the 'best brains,' and other key notions dominated the policy debate. In tune with globalization talk, concepts such as 'circularity' assumed greater importance (GCIM 2005), in addition to efforts at tapping into the benefits brought about by return migrants. Now terms such as 'brain gain,' later modified to 'brain circulation,' came to replace 'brain drain.' The European Union (EU) itself now declared its aim to compete on par with the United States in attracting the so-called highly skilled. In addition, the second demographic transition in most immigration states renewed discussions about attracting migrants to make up for a shrinking labor supply and an increase in the number of pensioners over the coming decades. As a legitimizing strategy to engage in attracting the 'best and brightest' (Kapur and McHale 2005), this development policy for the North was placed in the context of helping countries in the South to develop their economies—and, again a direct demand by the EU—to build up their migration control infrastructure. This latter issue has been of particular relevance with respect to states such as Morocco and Turkey, bordering on the EU and being transit countries for migrants from further afar. At this point, this

linkage between securitized migration control and development cooperation has reached into countries far away from the Mediterranean, such as most West African states.

In all three phases mentioned there was a confluence of policy and research cycles on the migration-development nexus. This is not to say that there were one-way streets between science and policy or public debates. Nonetheless, it indicates that there were elective affinities or even mutual conditionings. What can be said with some certainty is that public policy drew upon research concepts when suitable, and that academic research provided suitable models which were later (indirectly) used to justify a renewed emphasis on remittances. For example, in the transition from the second to the third phase, in the 1990s, approaches such as the New Economics of Labour Migration in economics and the livelihood approach, originating in sociology and anthropology, focused on small collective units such as families and kinship groups as main decision-making sites and realms of action regarding (international) migration. The former approach looks at migration as a form of informal insurance against risks such as crop failure, whereas the latter views migration through the lens of ensuring a living in often adverse circumstances. These mid-range concepts constituted a decisive move away from analytical models that prioritized individuals as the main unit of analysis, as in neo-classical migration economics. The change of perspective from individuals to small groups, and from rational choice to social choice, led researchers to take a more nuanced look at the origins, the flows, and the consequences of financial remittances (Levitt 2001). For example, in the past, the use of remittances to pay bills for health and tuition fees or consumer products had been seen as unproductive. Yet a closer look at how some families or larger collectives pooled resources to cope with risks led researchers to realize that investments into the areas mentioned could be helpful in coping with diverse economic hazards and combating poverty. Now there was a proliferation of arguments that the

effect of remittances in the earlier literature and policies was underestimated. Though it would be difficult to trace the exact route these changing concepts from the social sciences took to find their way into the decision-making and planning of (inter-)governmental organizations, it stands to reason that the changes of analytical patterns used across the three phases of the migration-development nexus is no coincidence. In the third phase, in particular, academia-policy brokers of knowledge, such as authors of the reports by the intergovernmental International Organization of Migration (IOM), played an important role and thus tried to gain a prominent place among the spate of international organizations dealing with cross-border migration.

The very fact that a reappraisal of the migration-development nexus has been going on for some years now means that perceptions of negative effects of migration upon development, so prevalent in phase 2, have changed. Indeed, the change would not have been possible without a much broader transformation of the social order and the relationships among the underlying principles. Such a sea change can be identified on the discursive level and in institutional and policy domains. If, for heuristic purposes, we define three principles of social order as state(ness), market, and civil society or community, we can trace the shifting emphasis of public policy-making and research agendas over the past several decades, since development entered the lexicon of public debate in the late 1940s. Apparent are two discursive and policy shifts, both of them combinatorial forms including civil society or community. The overarching characteristic is a move away from the national state (apparatus) as an engine and coordinator of development. The demise of the national developmental state was accompanied not simply by a rise of the market, as critics of the so-called Washington Consensus would have it. Indeed, the first shift is a combination of stateness and civil society. The national state has not been replaced, but complemented by local state and international organizations. Terms such as 'government' have been

complemented by 'governance', and 'state' has been extended to 'stateness'. Obvious examples of combinations of local state and civil society are programs labelled *co-développement*, which often include local states—cities, municipalities—in immigration states and transnationally active migrant associations. The second move is the combination of market(s) and transnational civil society. In our case, this shift is best exemplified by the term diaspora. Both those who advocate the entrepreneurial market citizen, an individual migrant who is economically active across borders, and those who favour participatory approaches rooted in collectives, have used the term diaspora to indicate a new stage of either individual or civil societal involvement. Those who see diaspora as a form of entrepreneurial activity focus on the role of the 'highly-skilled' living outside their country of origin. These persons are thought to contribute to development via the transfer of knowledge. By contrast, those taken with the notion of cross-border civil society emphasize the role of hometown associations and other small-scale groups in providing collective goods for the regions of origin. Both approaches make far-reaching assumptions about diasporists as brokers. What can be stated with some certainty is that there has been an increasing co-optation of diaspora groups in policy-making and policy-consultancy and that it has been national state activities providing the policy infrastructure.

### **Issue area 2: knowledge production and the public role of social scientists**

The second issue area broadly concerns the kind of knowledge produced by academic social scientists and the role these scientists play in the public sphere. The public sphere is much broader than the world of public policy-making, and relates to the realm of public debate. The questions thus are: What role have social scientists played in the linkage of knowledge production and public policies through participation in the public sphere as experts, advocates, partisans, or public intellectuals? What have been the dif-

ferences among the various social science disciplines, such as economics, political science, and sociology? And what have been the differences, if any, between the interdisciplinary fields of migration research and development research? What kind of knowledge production has been propagated by social scientists, e.g., instrumental vs. reflexive knowledge? What has been the self-understanding of social scientists involved—professional, critical, or policy-based?

Again, this sketch may offer only a partial frame in which to consider these questions. To start with, knowledge gained from research in the social sciences can rarely be condensed into social technologies. The specific objects of the social sciences are not amenable to social engineering. Yet this technological deficit is not an outcome of the inability of most social sciences to devise ever more sophisticated techniques of observation and measurement, but is due to the specificity of the objects and the associated normative implications. In societies with high degrees of personal freedom and a high value on individual autonomy a premium is placed on social change. Progress is legitimized by the concept of 'modernity' or even 'post-modernity,' itself a cultural consciousness of the changeability of things. A direct consequence of this spirit of modernity is that scientific claims usually allow for various and diverging interpretations. There is a constant debate over results, based in the competing paradigms and the multiple normatively grounded belief systems underlying social scientists' claims. One does not need to adhere to a criticism of the 'strong programme of science' (Barnes 1974) and thus engage in a social reductionist interpretation of the social sciences to realize that the questions posed by social scientists and the interpretations of research results are guided by normatively bounded ideas. The migration-development nexus in general and the term 'development' as a short-hand for multifarious and even contradictory goals such as 'the good life', economic growth, and ecological sustainability lends at least suggestive support to the hunch that such normative ideas

need not be very specific and may even have passed their conceptual zenith—as the concept of development in fact has—but still serve as rallying foci.

The crucial point of departure is the linkage between knowledge and the public. Often, two types of knowledge are contrasted; namely, instrumental knowledge which is oriented toward the means to achieve goals, and reflexive knowledge, which is geared toward (normatively desirable) ends. This stark distinction is reminiscent of Kant's moral imperative, which argues against using persons as means rather than ends. Both forms of knowledge, instrumental and reflexive, can be found in the various self-understandings of sociology and sociologists. While sociology is selected here as exemplary of the social sciences, it stands to reason that similar distinctions could also be fruitfully applied to other social science disciplines such as political science. Michael Burawoy (2005) has devised a four-fold typology of sociology and its public role. He distinguishes between professional, policy, critical, and public sociology. First, in his view, professional sociology is heavily engaged in knowledge production along a positivist methodological perspective, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. We could classify many contributions to so-called mainstream journals and publications as professional. This kind of sociology has established clear-cut criteria for ranking the quality of knowledge, such as peer review. Second, policy sociology, quite simply, produces knowledge for a client. It is mainly engaged in carrying out commissioned research for government agencies or private end-users. Third, critical sociology incorporates both those researchers who are 'reflexive'—those who openly question the assumptions and underlying politics of the discipline—and people who are politically aligned activists, and who see sociology as a way of confronting injustice or power or elites. We may refer to C. Wright Mills as representative of this branch. Fourth, Burawoy's favourite type, public sociology speaks directly to 'publics,' that is, various kinds of groups, either randomly gathered (e.g. television viewers) or grouped by common

interest (e.g. experts working on the migration-development nexus). Public sociology engages diverse publics, reaching beyond the university to enter into an ongoing dialogue with these publics about fundamental values. However, such an approach needs to consider that the migration-development nexus is intimately related to the migration-security nexus through the "migration industry" which channels people across borders (Sørensen 2012). The possibilities for debate on the migration-development nexus are therefore severely circumscribed by the (sometimes implicit) linkage to security concerns. Restrictive, or more precisely, selective immigration policies of OECD countries are legitimized by pointing out the dangers of migration to national and/or welfare state security, thus severely limiting the development potential of migration.

There are also 'in between' positions, such as that of 'involved detachment,' as claimed by Norbert Elias, which is rooted in professional sociology but reaches out to public sociology. Elias remarked that the role of social scientists' engagement is an issue of 'how to keep their two roles as participants and inquirers clearly and consistently apart, and, as a professional group, how to establish in their work the undisputed dominance of the latter' (Elias 2007:84). Public sociology also shows some overlap with critical sociology but is not as openly dedicated to advocacy and partisanship as the latter. There are basically two types of public intellectual knowledge, in Antonio Gramsci's terms, 'traditional' and 'organic.' Traditional public sociology speaks to publics from on high as in such works in American sociology as Robert Bellah et al.'s *Habits of the Heart* (1985) and William Julius Wilson's *The Declining Significance of Race* (1978). In Europe, some of Pierre Bourdieu's later works, such as *La Misère du monde* (1998), may fit this pattern. These books generated public debate and raised public consciousness about socio-political and economic issues. They work through various media—radio, print, film, electronic—that easily distort the original message. Organic public sociology, on the other hand, involves an unmediated dialogue between sociologists and

their publics, taking place in the trenches of civil society. Here we find publics that are more local and more active—at any rate, in direct engagement with labour movements, minorities, prisoners, or even transnational NGOs.

The division of the four kinds of sociologies already gives an idea of the role of social scientists in public. Yet we need to go beyond the ‘intellectual’ typology and distinguish more finely the role of social scientists in the public sphere. Essentially, we may distinguish three main types or functions, since an individual social scientist may fulfil various roles successively: social scientists may act or function as experts, advocates, and intellectuals. A prominent function of the first type, the expert, is that of a consultant to political organizations. Expert hearings, commissions for all types of political issues (ethics, migration and integration, etc.) abound in democracies. Jürgen Habermas (1968) famously criticized this position of experts in that such politics leads to the division of labour amongst experts who are no longer able to understand the wider context of society. Migration policy, as other policy fields, abounds with experts. The ‘Independent Commission on In-Migration’ (*Unabhängige Kommission Zuwanderung*) in Germany (2000-2002), for example, consulted about a hundred academic experts in its comprehensive look at Germany’s immigration processes. The second type is the advocate. Advocates take sides. Their self-understanding may correspond to those of Burawoy’s critical sociologists who are politically aligned activists and envision their research as contributing to or strengthening the cause in which they are engaged. Not only is the area of migration and development fertile ground for debates on social justice, equality, human rights, and other fundamentals; it is also a field in which advocacy is coupled with research. Finally, the third type is that of the public intellectual. S/he corresponds to the image portrayed above of traditional public intellectual who seeks to change the perspective of the reader or listener by strength of the better argument. We may think of Jürgen Habermas’ interventions with respect to migration and

multiculturalism arguing against scapegoating of certain migrant groups. His morally demanding statements have been widely diffused in the western world (e.g. Habermas 2010). One may surmise that while direct input into public policy-making concerns social scientists, above all, as experts, the public sphere is primarily the realm of the advocate and the public intellectual. Needless to say, an overlapping of the three types is possible; for example, a mixed type, called partisan, which is a combination of advocate and public intellectual. S/he comes close to the organic public intellectual described above.

### **Issue area 3: knowledge and its uses in public policy and the public sphere**

The third issue brings together the concomitant production of knowledge and policy cycles from issue area 1 and the public role of social scientists from issue area 2: How have research findings made their way into public debates and political decision-making? Under what conditions has this transfer taken place? Which researchers and research institutes have been influential, directly or indirectly? What kind of knowledge was used and on which level of abstraction? Has theoretical abstraction left room for human agency? What has made a difference—direct knowledge, such as concrete research results and suggestions for policies, or indirect impacts, such as the spread of concepts, ways of thinking, approaches to problems from the social sciences outward? Which bodies of research, concepts/theoretical guidelines, empirical results, etc., have been picked up, which have been neglected or discarded, and on which occasions?

It is of utmost importance to start any analysis of linkages between research and public policy and the public sphere by considering the inherent systemic rationalities of the different worlds. Political decision-making has its own rationality. The instrumental application of social scientific knowledge does not by any means lie at the centre of political decision-making for public policy. Politically, knowledge derived from research is a tool but not necessarily an aid to or require-

ment for problem-adequate solutions. Academic knowledge may serve three functions for decision- and policy-making: a legitimizing, a substantiating, and a symbolic function.

First, social science knowledge may serve to legitimate decisions already taken or to delay decisions deemed undesirable. In this way, policy-making authorities in government can gain 'epistemic authority' in defining what the public knows, in our case, about migration and development. The fields of immigration and asylum are highly contested policy areas and are characterized by a high degree of methodological uncertainty, as can be seen most dramatically in the field of irregular migration. By definition, it is impossible to arrive at a reliable estimate of the number of irregular migrants. Expert estimates can sometimes show an enormous range: for instance, experts estimate that the number of irregular migrants in the U.S. lie somewhere between 5 to 20 million; with the most reliable figure of close to 12 million established by the Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project (<http://www.pewhispanic.org>). Clearly, and most importantly, there is a huge asymmetry in the usage of knowledge; political decision-makers may tap into social science knowledge at their will, largely unencumbered by the intentions of social scientists. Policy-makers can select a particular voice from the social sciences to listen to and endorse it. For example, in phase 2 of the migration-development nexus discussed above, a report by the International Organization of Labour (ILO), written by authors from the Hamburg Archive for World Economy (HWWA), drew on standard trade theory which argued that trade should substitute for migration (Hiemenz and Schatz 1979). That is, instead of migrating to work in garment shops in New York, Bangla Deshi workers should produce shirts in Dhakka to be exported to the Americas. In practice, this does not work since the rich countries usually keep protecting their own inefficient industries while forcing the developing countries to drop their import tariffs. Yet, precisely because the paper mirrored a standard economic argument

in migration policy, it could be used in such a way as to legitimate very restrictive immigration policies.

Second, academic knowledge may have a substantiating function in that it can strengthen the position of an organization, a political party, or politicians vis-à-vis rivals, contending parties, and positions. The World Bank, for example, emphasized the magnitude of financial remittances sent by migrants compared to Official Development Aid (ODA) in the early 2000s in order to position itself as a regulator of international financial flows. After all, in those days fewer and fewer developing countries were taking out loans from the World Bank. The World Bank thus drew upon the migration-development link to reposition itself among international players in the field of finance. In taking the lead among international organizations addressing the above-mentioned migration-development nexus, the IOM falls into the same category.

Third, knowledge sometimes fulfils a symbolic function by contributing to the credibility of politicians and public authorities. To illustrate, one has only to call to mind the spate of academic working papers commissioned or invited by organizations such as the United Nations, government agencies, ministries and other public agents active in the field both on the national and international levels.

Whatever the specific function knowledge from research plays in policy-making and public debates, political decisions have to be legitimated by referring to universal values and norms, although particular interests may guide them. For example, restrictive immigration clauses in the EU regarding asylum seekers are not simply legitimated by referring to potentially tight labour markets or the burden upon social welfare systems. Rather, such policies are discussed jointly with 'positive' normative goals, such as addressing the so-called 'root causes' of migration in the regions of origin—most prominently migration from African countries. Further, the EU has taken vigorous measures to link cooperation with African countries beyond clear exchange packages—

migration control in exchange for development aid, as in the case of Albania, Morocco, Senegal, and Nigeria.

Beyond looking at various instrumental linkages between social science knowledge and the world of policy, it is important to consider that as an academic discipline, the main self-declared task of the social sciences is diagnosis; guiding social action and generating remedies is not its goal. Social science knowledge may thus be most effective in publicly disseminating concepts, notions, and associated arguments. In this way, social science knowledge can make a difference in defining the relevant policy targets and the indicators to measure social problems. The use of knowledge involves attribution of meaning, interpretation of events, and (re)definition of situations. Where public policy in the public sphere is concerned, it is indirect influence that counts; that is, those crucial notions and concepts which guide societal perception and interpretation of societal processes and not the actual stock of empirical findings. The definitions of social—economic, political, and cultural—situations are highly relevant for defining and framing issues and questions, not decision-making as such. A prominent example is Amartya Sen's work with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in which he advanced his capability concept as an alternative to notions of development built solely around economic growth. Sen argued that the main criterion for development is the availability of choice for persons to pursue certain goals they regard as essential (Sen 1984). Moreover, Sen developed indicators which were then concatenated into the Human Development Indicator (HDI) currently used by the UNDP. In sum, the social sciences give ever-new concepts and meanings to the changes of objects in societies. Ultimately, this influence increases the reflexivity of societal conditions.

A decisive and close analysis of how social science concepts spread in the public sphere and in public policy-making necessitates a look at the secondary effects of social science knowledge and, more specifically, a study of feedback loops.

How sociological knowledge in the broadest sense is received depends very much upon structures of plausibility in public discourse. While social science concepts may be received favourably under certain conditions, these situations themselves may be propelled to keep changing, also as a result of the diffusion of sociological knowledge. The latest and third phase of the migration-development nexus re-emerged at a time when the development industry was casting around for new target groups, when international financial institutions, most prominently the World Bank, was searching for new areas of activity. The re-combination of statehood-civil society and market-civil society principles allowed for the emergence of a new development actor: migrants and migrant associations. Once the associated ideas of migrants as development agents started spreading across Europe, (local) administrations turned to the social sciences for help in framing issues. Thus, the transnationalist paradigm, for example, is now strongly embedded in various institutions in countries such as France and Spain (see Lacomba and Cloquell, this issue). Such imports from the social sciences prefigure the engagement of public authorities through the funding NGOs and migrant associations engaged in development cooperation with regions of migrant origin.

The proposition that the most important effect of social science knowledge is its potential for creating (a new) public perspective on social issues is borne out by the conclusions of researchers who look at the policy implications of the migration-development nexus (de Wind and Holdaway 2008). Virtually all studies conclude that it is the analytic (research to determine the impacts of policies) and the explanatory (research to explain why governments adopt the policies) functions that loom largest and are most effective, whereas the prescriptive function (recommendations, based on research, regarding policies governments should adopt to attain particular goals) is usually not very successful in finding direct entry into public policy.

### Outlook: production of orientation and meaning

We are now able to return to the original question: Would social science knowledge be more useful if it could be more easily applied instrumentally? In other words, would we desire a state of affairs in which political action could be systematically based on knowledge about calculable causal relations? The answer given here is: no. What applies to societies in general would also be true for the social sciences. There is a difference between formal and material rationality, between instrumental rationality and reason (Weber 1968). In other words, while knowledge about causal relations may make political action more rational in a formal sense, it may also be put to service to do normatively undesirable things. Eventually, social scientific knowledge is *'welt-anschaulich'* and thus has a function for producing orientation and meaning. These results suggest going further and examining the role of social sciences and social scientists beyond the realm of consultancy and policy-making. While much ink has been spilled over academics as consultants and advisors, less has been said about the role of researchers in the public sphere. Yet it is here that their functions in providing patterns of orientation and meaning have potentially the strongest impact—and, in the long run, on political decisions and public policies.

These considerations imply at least three points to be heeded in the post-2015 migration-development dialogue after the Millennium Development Goals. First, social scientists active in the field should see their role not primarily as advising politicians but as entering into a dialogue with the public. This would mean that social scientists should seek to speak to varied audiences in the global North and South, not just the representatives of government or organizations. Second, social scientists need to engage in setting the agenda of the debate, preferably by widening the scope and horizon of discussion. For example, the migration-development nexus is intimately connected to the migration-security nexus by border control and control of financial

flows across borders through state agents. Quite often, the rhetoric of the migration-development nexus occludes that certain migrant categories are subject to restrictive coercion, such as asylum seekers, whereas others are not only wanted but also welcome, such as those categories termed highly-skilled or talents. It is the very selectivity of migration policies which needs to be considered when calling into question overly optimistic 'win-win-win' situations; that is, gains for the emigration countries, immigration countries and the migrants themselves. Third, social scientists need to look behind the smoke and mirrors of ideological statements and speak in no uncertain terms about the construction of the policy field. For example, frequently, remittances to development schemes are presented as ideal types and model examples of 'market' solutions to economic and human development, pointing out that migrants are their own best development agents. Such statements overlook the fact that states enable mobility across borders in the first place, and that market solutions critically depend upon a public infrastructure of enabling and controlling mobility of persons, remittances and other resources across borders. This also implies to call upon the states in the global North and South to live up to the responsibility for residents within their borders and citizens outside. After all, the 'other' is already one of 'us'.

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# From 'Multiculturalism' to 'Interculturalism' – A commentary on the Impact of De-racing and De-classing the Debate\*

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## Abstract

Recent discourses surrounding the so-called death or decline of multiculturalism are characterised by a movement towards notions and practices of 'Interculturality', 'Interculturalism' and what have been called 'new frameworks' for diversity and race. The contemporary socio-cultural landscape is characterised by the persistence of racism, both institutionally and interactionally embedded, which is increasingly re-generated on the political European stage. In this paper I argue that more vigilance may be required before a wholesale acceptance of these 'new frameworks' is mobilised. The rise of Interculturalism in un-nuanced forms is underwritten by parallel processes of anti-multiculturalism, cultural racism, and the demise of the spaces within which the class-race dialectic can be articulated. Finally, the policy gaze has both racialised the debate on cultural difference using the focus on particular 'different' groups, and deemed other black and minority ethnic groups as officially less troublesome. I argue that this economically and politically expedient rendition of the sociocultural landscape leads to a distorted analysis of differential subjugation. In an apparently 'post-race' era of diversity, racialised experiences need to be articulated more richly and with more political weight than interculturalism may currently facilitate.

**Keywords:** multiculturalism, interculturalism, race, intersectionality

'Thank God the athletes have arrived! Now we can move on from leftie multicultural crap. Bring back red arrows, Shakespeare and the Stones...!'

Aidan Burley, (UK Conservative MP)

'To put it bluntly, most of us prefer our own kind'.

David Goodhart (Author)

## Introduction

Aidan Burley's remarks broadcast through Twitter during the 2012 Olympiad (Watt 2012) focus our attention on a number of issues in contemporary society, with the games as the backdrop against which nationalist and conservative political ideology is highlighted. This is set against the 'obituary' of 'multiculturalism' as

announced by political leaders such as David Cameron (BBC News Online 2011) and Angela Merkel (BBC News Online 2010). Contemporary debates offer a variety of analyses and formulations about citizenship, identity, belonging and difference. How the idea of difference is translated into both everyday encounters as well as institutional experience in society is a much debated spectacle. Often it reveals overt outright rejections of 'race', 'racism', and ethnicity based divides, as well as loudly indicating that well-

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worn tropes of racialised identity are never too far away from rhetoric and practice, as exemplified in the 'raciological meanings' of Cameron's 2011 speech (Gilroy 2012). The re-emergence of cultural racism framed as the politics of citizenship, rights and 'reasonable prejudice' of some far right groups, such as the English Defence League, has become a particularly problematic trope used in tandem by political parties such as United Kingdom Independence Party. Since the English northern disturbances in early 2001, then later in the same year, the terrorist attacks that constitute the '9/11' event, the nature of practical, political and symbolic processing of differences – religious, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and geo-political – have been the focus of media and government surveillance. Indeed, the constant focus on 'Muslims' in national policy and media is the topic of much academic debate, especially as related to perceived threats to 'security' – the securitisation of minority populations, and the securitisation of race policy (Fekete 2004, 2011).

In this paper, I do not intend to provide an exhaustive account of neither the rise of Islamophobia, nor reproduce the many detailed discussions of both multiculturalism and interculturalism. Rather, I intend to contextualise the current UK policy announcements and 'citizenship' based formulations of difference against the backdrop of a de-racing argument. By this, I mean that critiques of multiculturalism have moved away from the existence of the acknowledgment of enduring racialised experiences, towards 'new' ideas about diversity.

This paper aims to first briefly highlight some salient critiques of 'new' frameworks of diversity such as Interculturalism, which attempt to deal with the inevitability of cultural diversity (Parekh 2000a) against the scenery painted above. I will not provide a blow by blow account of the debate, but rather utilise the literature to frame my main critique. Several aspects of Interculturalism will be highlighted as items specifically moving away from what are known as intersectional analyses, and the resultant 'de-classing' and 'de-racing' tendency. Such moves are seen as expediently

justified in the face of new modes of neo-liberalised global capital and labour exchange but remain precariously perched on problematic race and ethnicity notions.

Secondly, as the shift towards political and policy interculturalism tilts towards citizenship and universalist values oriented discourse, so the debate moves to a more fixed, non-intersectional analysis of difference. I argue that, whilst not completely absent from the debate, intersectional analyses which utilise the complexity of class, race and gender (to name but three of many) have gradually been marginalised in intercultural framed work despite academic and activist attempts.

Thirdly, the paper attempts to identify the parallel yet thus far invisible process of some minority groups becoming more visible and 'problematized', while others seemingly perform a disappearing act, deemed 'correctly' or 'safely' integrated. This contrasts with other groups constructed as 'troublesome' or examples of 'poor' integration. This conspicuous absence is highlighted as having an impact on the landscape of multi-cultural negotiation, and forms an integral strand of the history of race politics. Recent negative, ideological constructions of Muslims in the UK (and Europe), as well as *much needed* reactions from academics intending to contest these negative constructions may have left their mark on the multicultural landscape in the form of homegenising and neglecting the existence of problems in these other, 'other' communities. These focuses for the paper are brought together in the service of raising some questions around the continued death-knell of multiculturalism, the wholesale and unquestioned acceptance of interculturalism as a framework for diversity, and the related co-opting and officialised acceptance of some forms of cultural difference rather than others.

### **Situating the Critiques of Multiculturalism**

As formulations about the nature of belonging and the negotiation of 'multiple identities' circulate within debates, highly politicised philosophi-

cal moves regarding duties, rights and responsibilities render this arena ever more complex. In this section, I want to outline interrelated areas of the critique of multiculturalism, development of community cohesion, and some of the problems with these entities.

The various attacks on multiculturalism are a feature of contemporary debates and neither new nor surprising, given the force of politically expedient shifts to the right. The critiques have been gaining momentum in recent years, but can be traced back to the reaction to the urban disorders in the UK cities of Bradford and Oldham, in 2001 and the 9/11 and 7/7 bombings in New York and London. The complex, prevailing and contested idea of 'integration', as Rattansi (2011) surmises was already on the wane, resulting in questions about who is to be integrated into what, and how this might be effected in egalitarian and fair terms. The multidimensional nature of 'integration', having spatial, structural and cultural levels to contend with resulted in numerous 'warnings' and reports, for example those commissioned by the UK Home Office (Cantle 2001). The perceived result of multicultural policies stemming back to the 1980s was identified as the lessening of integration between groups of collective identities. The assumption underlying this unravelling of cohesion was that culturally bounded groups would remain only within the social and psychological confines of their own group, and the reduced integration would cause more problems in society. The public disorders in Northern cities were seen as evidence of this new problematic (Hussain and Bagguley 2005).

However, the critique of multiculturalism as an approach appears a while before the current identity laden 'moral panics' that we see in the media and various policy formulations. As Kymlicka (2012) reminds us, in 2008, the Council for Europe generated and discussed the White Paper on 'Intercultural Dialogue' in which the preferred model for dealing with the so-called failures of post-war multicultural segregation would be 'interculturalism'. The focus in the White Paper is, as Kymlicka emphatically indicates the gener-

alised and vague notion that interculturalism may provide a platform for understanding diversity whilst maintaining a framework of universal values. So, the critiques of multiculturalism pre-date the current panic, and yet, as a variety of writers have argued (Meer and Modood 2012b; Kymlicka 2012; Werbner 2012; Lentin and Titley 2011), there appears to be an oversimplification of both multiculturalism and interculturalism, as well as an avoidance to explore fundamental similarities. Other writers have also pointed out that situating the two approaches in competing positions is neither helpful nor conceptually accurate since there are different versions of both approaches (Gomasasca 2013). I would like, therefore, to contextualise what Werbner has called the 'failure-of-multiculturalism' discourse (2012: 201). The ideological move away from constructing groups as bounded entities (a typically simplistic caricature of multiculturalism) to a more 'integrationist' model of sociality was overtaken by the 'community cohesion' approach, itself the result of a number of reports written in the wake of the urban disorders (Denham 2001; Cantle 2001). The reports proposed the notion of 'community cohesion' as a way of building bridges between groups who were said to be "sleep walking into segregation..." and living "parallel live" (Philips 2005). Trevor Philips's infamous, often cited and selectively employed observation of black, minority and white community interactions in the UK under so-called 'multiculturalism' both fuelled pre-existing fears (worked on partly by discourse surrounding the northern disorders of 2001) and gave rise to new, more powerful, and intuitively attractive discourses of difference. The healing solution was said, certainly by adherents and proponents of community cohesion, to be a common ground on which to unite social and cultural futures. As Rattansi (2011) has argued, this form of bridge building rests on three main drivers – communitarianism, Putnam's theoretical extension of 'social capital', and the experiences of the white working classes. The problems with these cohesion based underpinnings have been discussed in more detail else-

where (e.g. Crowley and Hickman 2008; Philips 2006; Amin 2002). These involve the complex and dynamic notion of 'community' being reified and rendered static; social capital mobilised as a subtle form of recycling culturalist arguments about prescriptive norms of integration; and the homogenised and simplified construction of the white working class experience, placed in contrast to the experiences of other minority communities. In a similar vein, Battercharya's critique contests the use of ethnicity 'as the source of antagonisms and differences that must be overcome', and instead suggests that 'ethnicity is itself multiple and changing and is unlikely to be a basis for articulating shared values' (2009: 4).

The European idea of 'Interculturalism' is viewed as a remedy for some of the problems which previous approaches seemed to be plagued by (James 2009). Before multiculturalism was embraced in the UK (noting the discursive and multiple constructions of this practice), the dominant counter hegemonic political resistance was driven by the machinery of 'anti-racisms', much of it mobilised by organisations such as the Institute of Race Relations and various grass roots organisations (Farrar 2004). This particular mode of resistance through representing and amplifying the voices of oppressed minorities was underwritten by the tacit identity agreement which combined the experiences of all racial and ethnic minorities. This political and practical unity, while not unproblematic (Modood 1994), served as a basis for both grass roots organisation of resistance, as well as representation in local and national politics (see Virdee 2010). As socio-economic and political landscapes shifted, so did official reactions to the 'diversity issue'. The caricatured identity-politics of 'crude multiculturalism', as it has been termed, came to replace the class-race conscious alliances with separate group identity movements (Lentin 2008). This movement should not be understood as linear and mutually exclusive segmentation, and is rather a dialectically tensioned position, as discussed by Farrar (2004). The spaces left behind by ideologies and conceptualisations of

racial difference and equality were filled in each era by these tensions; on the one hand, with resistance and activist movements, and on the other, with politically motivated discourse from the right. Interculturalism, therefore, appears to offer some form of relief to the political indigestion caused by unwanted, problematic 'others', certainly re-framing the problem of minority-majority culture.

The ubiquity of 'community cohesion' as state policy is evidenced in both the organisations charged with investigating public disorders in Northern cities as well as the various government backed 'cohesion' initiatives. The generalised 'trickle down' idea of culturalised capital-based deficit amongst affected communities appears to have facilitated a transition to 'new frameworks for race and diversity' (Cantle 2008) and the 'new era of cohesion and diversity' (Cantle 2012). Discussions around Interculturalism (Cantle 2001, 2012; Modood and Meer 2008; Rattansi 2011; James 2008, 2009), while relatively young in the UK, have traditionally had a variety of purchases in many countries, including Canada and Australia in varying guises, and employing differing social and psychological emphases. Certainly a key example of the national policy utilisation of an intercultural framework can be found in Quebec's approach to diversity situated in contrast to Canada's federal multicultural approach (Meer 2014). The sheer range and diversity of ideas within the broad label 'interculturalism' prohibits an extensive discussion here, but I will firstly select some defining features and then move onto discussing their implications.

In providing an extensive critical discussion of where interculturalism and multiculturalism overlap and differ, Meer and Modood (2012a; 2012b) initiate a welcome appraisal of the debate. I will draw on Meer and Modood's (2012a; 2012b) comparisons between the two approaches, since they have clearly defined the relevant parameters for engagement in this area. They outline four main issues in relation to this comparison that need tackling, as follows: communication and dialogue as a defining feature

of interculturality as opposed to multiculturalism; 'less groupist and culture bound', therefore more interactive; reinforces a stronger sense of national identity through cohesion; and, finally, that interculturalism is more likely to prevent illiberal practices within cultures. The authors go on in a number of publications to systematically tackle these issues. I will not rehearse the intricacies of Meer and Modood's exposition but will draw upon it to make my central points.

### Defining Interculturalism

A key feature of interculturalism, as defined by James, is '...its sense of openness, dialogue and interaction' (2008: 2). As critics of multiculturalism allege that it has stunted interactive diversity, interculturalism is framed as a way to reinstate the fluidity of culture. Indeed, a prominent feature of the move-on from the so-called corpse of multiculturalism towards interculturalism is the absorption of sociological and social psychological ideas. For James, there is something to be gained in using social psychological work in reducing prejudice through contact (the "contact thesis"), the principal idea being that contact, in various forms between different people and groups will, in 'optimal' circumstances, reduce prejudice and negative stereotypes (Hewstone et al. 2007). James (2008) summarises a number of important perspectives, including Parekh's (2000b) interactive multiculturalism, Gilroy's (2004) planetary humanism in a cosmopolitanised world, Brah's work (1996) on diaspora and space and Sen's (2006) wide ranging and multidisciplinary work within human rights and global conflict arenas. James identifies Sen's singular toxicity towards cultural theorists for being the drivers of a movement which ultimately extract real people, living real lives from their social action, and place them in preconceived categories of civilisation, thus ignoring all diversity within and between groups. Certainly, in multidisciplinary understandings of race relations and discrimination, such integrations of psycho-social frameworks are laudable and frequently used. Exploring the multifaceted and shifting nature of identity as a lived, dynamic

human sociality is integral. In addition, if notions of identity are to be underlined by a complex interplay of individual rights, responsibilities and communitarian agendas, then people should also equally be given the opportunity to opt out of intercultural dialogue. James's (2009) summary is a considered discussion of the pitfalls associated with creating policy in relation to culture, citizenship and collective egalitarian cooperation and that intercultural work of any kind needs to be premised on notions of identity, culture and difference which are not racialised.

One of the key functions of interculturalism is communicative and dialogic nature of its programme, but the dialogic and cultural exchange propensities of multiculturalism have been staunchly defended by writers, such as Meer and Modood (2012a; 2012b). The way in which multiculturalism has made dialogue and communication central to its concerns seems to have been ignored, and replaced by a caricature of multiculturalism as a static and separatist dividing force. As Parekh (2000b) asserted, there is an inherent value in different cultures coming across each other and experiencing both uncertainty as well as learning to identify those aspects of their cultures which are different and importantly *valued* differentially. This fundamental aspect of multiculturalism speaks to the embedded components of dialogue and communication, as well as the crucial aspects of what Taylor identified as respect and dignity (Taylor 1994). Similarly, as Gomarasca (2013) has pointed out dialogue is not the sole character of interculturality, but is part of every culture. The presence of intercultural dialogue playing a role in 'creative spaces' may not be quite enough to mitigate the ever persistent and hugely damaging issues of institutional and individual racism.

As I mention earlier in relation to Meer and Modood's work, one of the defining, citizenship fuelled drivers of intercultural frameworks, certainly as proposed by Cattle (2008; 2012), is the need to subscribe to a national identity, whilst acknowledging cultural and ethnic differences. Such uniting glue (Bourne 2007) would

then function as a way of bridging the perceived gaps and separations that appear to have been generated by people living in cultural silos. The problems with this are numerous (elaborated by Meer and Modood 2012a; 2012b), but focus on the assertion by authors such as Modood (2007) that multiculturalism has already been and continues to be at the forefront of allowing expressions of cultural identity; it also simultaneously advocates a series of national narratives which are inclusive, and not dependent on essentialising, nationalist notions of majoritarian belonging (CMEB 2000).

The charge of illiberality and relativism often circulates within the discourse of culture, citizenship and rights, and has forcefully emerged in relation to caricatured Muslim communities. This is contested through the example of Muslim claims being characterised as difficult to accommodate because of the perceived ways in which the faith imposes limits on individual rights. Meer and Modood (2012b.) argue that through this negative association between Muslim groups and 'illiberality', a sense of 'otherness' is perpetuated, one which invokes a variety of related misconceptions. For example, some practices which are perceived to be sourced in religious orthodoxy are actually cultural in their formation and origin (e.g. forced marriages, clitoridectomy), and would be more effectively eliminated using religion rather than condemning faith based practices. Similarly, the increasingly public issue of faith schools appears to have been carried along by the misconception that a community's needs for specific requirements to be met are '*cultural*', when in fact as research (Pecenka and Anthias 2014) indicates, these requests are more to do with securing future opportunities for young people within a community. From this reading, some consideration needs to be made in moving wholesale and uncritically from notions of multiculturalism to interculturalism. The contingent and shifting nature of the internal and external organisation of *ideas* of cannot be reduced to a single dialogic, intercultural space. Rather, it needs to be placed in the same intellectual and

policy equation as the persistent legacies of colonial and imperial histories.

One of the problems with the vague basis of intercultural framed interventions this is that it does not appear to specify the mechanisms of creating the *appropriate conditions* for change. The proposed shift in thinking about identity in this direction towards a nuanced, context rich and agency-structure informed analysis is something sociologists and political scientists have been focusing on for many decades. The dynamic complexities of identity, as well the enduring social, cultural, psychological and economic legacies of empire would need to be translated into radical modification in political representation and a connected redistribution of resources. Such vigilance against structural inequalities and connected discriminatory practices are necessarily connected to multicultural diversity, not separate. Interculturalism's focus on global, 'translocational' (Anthias 2001) identities as newly formed, liberating articulations of identity which can transcend prejudicial dispositions echoes the transnationalism and cosmopolitanism (Beck 2006) project. However, there is a persisting tension between these movements and the enduring nation-state fuelled ideas of difference and belonging. As Bulmer and Solomos (1998) have pointed out, border crossing and border challenging is often underpinned by inequalities, hostilities and conflict. Such conflicts are part of the complex backdrop of race and class, which require various levels of re-engagement.

#### **De-racing and De-classing the Debate?**

It seems that a major characteristic of the relationship between multicultural analyses, cultural sociological observations and interculturalism is precisely the *over culturalisation and de-politicisation of experiences*. Anti-racist discourse (accepting the diversity in 'discourses' and their political contexts) in the form sustained by, for example, the Institute of Race Relations continues to maintain a notable presence and vigilance against forms of race related discrimination. Authors such as Virdee (2010) articulate the need

to frame and redraw the multiculturalism and race debate along the lines of historical materialism and the continued impact of unequal economic relations. In engaging with 'debates on difference' in the contemporary era, there is an increasing importance in maintaining connection with a material analysis of experiences. Lentin (2008: 313) asks an important question of the 'positive turn' – the turn away from the perceived negativity of 'anti-politics' towards the 'celebration of diversity' – namely, what happens next? A similar question can be asked of the current debates and themes of this paper – where does the debate move to if this is a post-racial age but within which race is still an undeniably lived experience? The 'post-race-ness' stance within these frameworks of diversity may be side stepping crucial identifications of oppression and inequalities, hidden beneath the multiple layers of 'attitudinal surveys' (e.g. Department for Communities and Local Government 2011).

Interculturalism indicates that systems of globalisation, freedom of capital, and movement of labour (Cantle 2012) positively corrode insular, individualist notions of identity. This apparently leads almost magically to forms of cosmopolitan, international, hybrid allegiances which transcend outdated notions of 'race'. Interculturalism's defiant stance toward race thinking in a contemporary socio-political landscape riddled with populist political spinning (for example, with the moveable feast that is immigration), appears to be somewhat matter out of place. The weight of evidence which indicates current immigration discourse is still mobilising the ever present tropes of dangerous and economically / culturally draining foreigners is overwhelming (Grayson 2013; Burnett 2013). This, then, raises an important question about discourses around multiculturalism and 'interculturality' – where are 'they' located now and where might they be located in the possible future, given the changing national and global landscape in economic and psycho-social manifestation of reactions to different 'others'? These are pertinent questions given as current UK government policies

rapidly transcending the right of centre position, and populist parties such as UKIP take a stronger position in national politics. We necessarily need to raise concerns about the politicised reactions to 'others'. As Hall in his intellectual questioning of what a 'more profoundly inclusive British-ness' might require argued, 'unstable localisms, spaces of proliferating difference ultimately become communities in translation'. (2000: 217, cited in Jaggi 2000).

While Modood (2005) has already called for multicultural approaches that recognise and tackle multiple racisms and different forms of discrimination, there appears to be more room for an incorporation of Sivanandan's (1977) early arguments in anti-racism and trade union racism regarding the conditions he thinks would be absolute prerequisites for an 'inter-racial working-class agency'. In Sivanandan's early writings, there is a necessity for racialised, discriminated groups to raise their class consciousness through 'colour' consciousness, and for 'white' people, a recovery of class awareness through understanding and consciousness of racial oppression. In a contemporary multi-ethnic, linguistic, and culturally globalised world, clearly such stark binarism could not do justice to social complexity. And yet it redirects our attention to the idea of *consciousness of materiality* – and how this is played out against the backdrop of racialised differences. There appears to be some scope for a re-engagement with this modality, certainly in the way in which interculturalism defends its universalistic, intergroup dialogue driven emphasis. As Virdee (2000, 2010) has argued, independent, autonomous self-organisation was crucial in the gradual solidifying of class solidarity, importantly *involving* white organised labour. This mobilisation of political and practical unity was an invaluable, pragmatic tool in furthering race-class dialectical analysis in the context of understanding the world through a historical materialism that allowed for agency. The point I emphasise here is that whilst globalisation and transnational labour and capital movement makes the class-race relationship ever more complex, this should

not detract from the fact that racialised structural and economic inequalities endure in the UK. These perpetual mechanisms of exclusion will require more than locally acted and state driven versions of a national identity narrative, even less so one which is built on fragile conceptual ground.

It is the intersectionality and multiplicity of inequalities which have driven wedges between groups of identified ethnic and cultural unities, not the presence of multiculturalism as policy or practice (Rattansi 2011). Evidence for these structural inequalities is now well established and, in relation to cohesion (indicated by trust), there is also a well-established array of evidence to indicate that trust is lowest in the poorest areas (c.f. Crowley and Hickman 2008). So, whilst a plethora of empirical research and theoretical progress exists and continues to re-assert the importance of this multiple consciousness of structural contexts to racial and ethnic division, the populist sentiment as well as policy direction rests on the lack of cohesive glue between communities (Bourne 2007). Race as a modality of subjugated experience and divisive entity is still very much alive, enacted and operates through organised / institutionalised forms as well as unorganised and violent everyday action (Lentin and Titley 2011). We may very well be 'post-race', but as Lentin (2008) points out, socio-economic contexts continue to have a huge impact on racialised experiences. 'Post-race' does not, therefore, mean post-racialisation, and academic debates about race nomenclature do not prevent racist violence – practical or symbolic.

The links between apparently looking forward through globalised lenses towards interculturalism and dismissing the revolutionary and resistance movements which fought and won race and equality battles appear in relief. The gradual silencing of race under a 'new', analytical regime of contact, mixing, assimilationist integration is less challenging to state fuelled muscular liberalism than the presence of muscular dissidence. Indeed, "banal interactions" (Cantle 2012: 148) are identified as a significant component to

intercultural dialogue (exchanging greetings as 'chit-chat'). This may over-simplify many of the complex interactional and structural operations which might be involved in these frameworks of diversity. Cantle (2012), for example, contends that interculturalism, as contrasted against intercultural dialogue, 'involves wider community, structural and political processes' (2012: 157). The discourse in the area itself, however, consistently utilises these simple tropes (interactions between people via the newsagent, the local shopkeeper and the school gates). My critique is by no means without support – Meer and Modood are vehemently critical of this attempt to "...displace the political; to critique a political multiculturalism with an apolitical, local-encounters-based individualism". (2012b: 235). These tropes do not allow for the constant interplay of both 'old' and 'new' generations of racialised subjugation, the enduring and recycled legacies of colonialism, nor the stark realities of colourised and ethnicised markers of difference, such as skin colour, cultural and religious adornments and dress. As Sivanandan reminds us, some of us live with: "...racism that cannot tell a settler from an immigrant, an immigrant from an asylum seeker, an asylum seeker from a Muslim, a Muslim from a terrorist. All of us non-whites, at first sight, are terrorists or illegals. We wear our passports on our faces". (2008: xv).

This deficit then throws into question the ability of these frameworks to hold significant emancipatory purchase during a time of increasing turbulence throughout not only European but global political debates concerning immigration. The recent debacle around the UK Home Office immigration 'initiatives', which involved the placement of vans displaying threatening messages to would-be illegal immigrants, was enacted using official state machinery and all the apparatuses available at the time, including UK Border Agency and British Transport police staff (Grayson 2013). What Grayson calls the 'mainstreaming' and 'embedding' of racism into British politics is also part of the current ideological transition facing communities at the moment.

The sanitisation of racism, via various cultural, faith, security and immigration risk-tropes is really the *politics of reasonable prejudice*, and might not be fully contained, articulated or managed by interculturalist approaches in a manner which facilitate an understanding of both old and new forms of racialised oppression.

### **Intersectional Possibilities?**

In this section, I raise the question of where intersectionality can sit if interculturalism is charged with the resolution of problems related to a multi-ethnic UK. My principal point is that in the process of moving away from the race-class consciousness that *informed* multiculturalism (if not completely characterised it), there is a differential cost of omitting these layers of context for black and minority people. It is yet another missed opportunity to take strength from a fuller, radicalised and political questioning of policy, academic discourse and practice, which does not treat the intersectionality as trivial. Whilst I do not intend to exhaustively rehearse the well-established arguments in the field of intersectionality, a number of broad brush strokes to describe the approach may help in contextualising the impacts of neglecting it. Firstly, why do I invoke the area of intersectionality here? The answer lies in the sociological and anthropological insight that racism and racialisation (Miles 1989) are not limited to binary oppositions, nor is racial discrimination characterised *solely* by reference to race (Song 2014). Intersectionality brings into the debate not just the unreduceable facticity of cultural diversity (Parekh 2000a) but fully recognises the interlinking of subjugating experiences on a range of dimensions. Thus Anthias (1989) and Yuval-Davis (1997) have consistently articulated the importance of viewing social divisions through an intersectional lens. Rather than treating race and gender as epiphenomena – playing second fiddle to the ‘real’ issue of class relations ‘...classes are always gendered and racialised and gender is always classed and racialised...’ (Anthias 2010: 241). As Song (2014) reminds us, while there needs to be a vigilant

activism and discussion concerning structural, White hegemonic fuelled discrimination, especially in light of institutional racism (Pilkington 2011), a one-size-fits-all approach simply cannot do justice to the many ways in which dimensions of difference are interlinked. This reinforces one of the main aims of this paper, to emphasise that interculturalist based critique of multiculturalism is facilitated by a gradual reduction of racialised experiences to ‘diversity’ and ‘citizenship’ based debates. The implication of these reductions is a de-racing and de-classing pattern, which fundamentally undermines the ethos of interacting and cooperating diverse societies.

Regardless of whether we engage with the ‘new interculturality’ (Cantle 2012), racist attacks, racist verbal and physical abuse, and institutional racism all persist (IRR 2012). Importantly, as bell hooks (1994) has cogently and persistently argued the normalised, routinized, mundane acceptance (for all parties) of racialization of everyday social action is an eroding force in collective civil societies. There appears to be then a place for an interrelated and integrated approach to anti-racist, citizenship based ‘critical multiculturalism’ (Farrar 2012) at both policy and civic level which does not operate simply on the ‘*incident-based*’ reactive level. Rather, it works on the overwhelmingly evidenced existence of what hooks (1994), discussing North American values, has consistently called the ‘white supremacist capitalist patriarchy’. These networks of economic, material, and intellectual hegemonised racism perpetuate negative representations and resist any form of dissent activated from within subjugated racialised groups. This empowerment / resistance framework may be explicitly useful here because an integrated multi-disciplinary approach necessarily needs to look at the insights brought into focus by academics and activists working at the margins of discourse but at the centre of intersectionality. Such an approach facilitates a critical engagement with and between the practical and symbolic markers of difference – the lived and abstracted realities – as crucial for full cultural and political citizenship.

Although in terms of policy recognition there is widespread approval and utilisation of intersectional approaches (Anthias 2012), there is doubt about the level of criticality that approaches can engage in when one takes into account the relative activist-state positioning of research and interventions. In other words, if interculturalism purports to force through centralised policies of for example 'community cohesion', to what extent could those same policies allow for an internally critical gaze? State led formulations of 'national' identity would fundamentally need to be questioned.

In the case of Intersectionality and interculturalism, there is a sense that through gaining a national citizenship based unity through dialogue and communication, racialised and gendered subjugation become secondary and peripheral. Structures of subjugation rarely operate on one dimension so current discourse necessarily needs to be involved in analysis of several frames of experience simultaneously. Without a properly systematic and organised engagement with voices of resistance and empowerment, forms of internalised, habituated and embodied subjugation will be glossed over in favour of populist ideas which seem to corroborate the constructed need to '*citizenise*.'

### **Where are the Other 'Others'?**

As some minority groups become more visible and 'problematized', others appear to be performing a disappearing act, seemingly deemed 'correctly' or 'safely' integrated, as contrasted to other groups constructed as 'troublesome', or examples of 'poor' integration. I intend to highlight this seemingly conspicuous absence as having an impact on the landscape of multi-cultural negotiation. This leads me to ask if recent negative, ideological constructions of Muslims in the UK (and Europe), as well as *much needed* reactions from academics intending to contest these negative constructions, have left their mark on the multicultural landscape in the form of homegenising and neglecting the existence of problems in these other, 'other' communities?

Many of the issues focused upon to mobilise this new hybridised left/right political rhetoric – in the service of creating new symbolic, practical and political boundaries of tolerance have been about Muslims communities – people, practices and beliefs (Lentin and Titley 2011; Kundnani 2012; Ahmad and Modood 2007). This raises a question around those communities in Britain which, although traditionally were part of the mainstream focus of 'race relations' and ethnicity discourse (Ballard 1994), have now been relatively hidden from the spotlight. The attention seems to have turned away from the continued racialised experience of for example South Asian Hindus and Black African Caribbean populations, and shifted towards Muslim based discriminatory discourse. Moreover, simply because the mainstream academic focus has shifted does not mean we can assume that the everyday, lived experience of other groups in the UK does not continue to be characterised and punctuated by many different forms of subjugation. Kundnani (2012) perceives there to be a widespread (ideological and expedient) pessimism about '... resolving this supposed crisis of Muslim identity and liberal values through conventional democratic processes...' (2012: 158). Does this invisibility imply that other minority groups have now been successfully 'integrated' and therefore no longer pose a challenge to the neo-imperial and neo-colonial philosophical and political ontologies underpinning British democratic citizenship? Since relatively little material seems to be emerging in this debate around these groups (exceptions are Zavos 2009; Mawani and Mukadam 2012), it might be useful to maintain a critical resistance against the rapid transformation of racialised discourse into anti-Muslim discrimination. A continued examination of the burdens and dynamic tensions in people's lives when they are subject to what Back and Sinha call 'the social weight of racism' (2012: 13) would need to remain critical about this apparently differential integration into 'Englishness' or 'Britishness'.

This supposed differential 'Englishness' felt by different cultural, ethnic and religious groups

is interestingly evoked by Uberoi and Modood (2010: 312) and highlighted in an interview with David Blunkett (the then Home Secretary) in 2008, who stated: 'The Hindu community have managed not to be the focal point of bitterness and hatred...because there's very much a larger middle class, and wherever you have a larger middle class...then integration, social cohesion go hand in hand...'. Blunkett performs the function of reinforcing existing stereotypes about 'bad' migrants and 'good' migrants, and secondly manages to homogenise an entire range of groups differentiated by geographical and class origin, dialect, caste, and crucially material position. In many ways this raises the more general question about the 'absent presence' of *other others*, and more specifically about the unwillingness to acknowledge the continuity in adverse socio-economic positions among groups. As Kundnani summarises, '...the crises of multiculturalism discourse erases the complex histories of settlement and interaction which have characterised actual multiculturalism in Britain, and this discourse is stubbornly ignorant of the multiple meanings that multiculturalism has always had' (2012: 158). If we are to consider this seriously in light of recent academic moves in critical citizenship based multiculturalism and interculturalism, then we need to remain vigilant against over simplifying who it is that remains at the 'impact end' of these practices.

The politically, economically and ideologically expedient dismissal and somewhat mysterious disappearance of these other, non-Muslim groups from debate and discussion reflects attempts at a "unified discourse of identity" (Kundnani 2012: 159). The ideological hybridisation of left-wing, right wing, conservative and liberal ideas of citizenship and belonging, result in what Lentin and Titley (2011) call 'assimilationist integration policies'. This ultimately leads to the conclusion that new integrationist tendencies (to do ostensibly with culture and citizenship, rather than explicitly race and belonging) are part of the liberal struggles to attain rights in the arenas of sexual freedom, secular citizenship, and expression.

I make this point because there appears to be a similar, symbolic and practical move reflected in the focus on interculturality. Political rhetoric in this direction also implicitly accepts *some* minority groups (specifically middle class Hindu groups in the UK) who have been a feature of established migrant networks as a feature of the British landscape. Their 'integration' and 'assimilation' are *constructed* as complete therefore do not re-emerge as 'troublesome' in any symbolic or practical way. Cameron's 2011 Munich speech firmly asserting "Frankly, we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and much more active, muscular liberalism", was clearly not aimed at British Hindus when he visited a temple in North West London, as part of the 2013 annual Diwali festival. Indeed, in a speech given at this visit, he was instead aligning his idealised British, muscular liberalism with the beliefs, practices, and value of this group of accepted others, arguing that the values of the UK's Indian community should be "ever more involved" in shaping British life (Asian Image 2013). Such official and state sanctioned openness can be traced in the history of both modern British government (Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown as Prime Ministers all publically visited Hindu Temples in the UK) and colonial and imperial legacy (Suleri 1992).

The history of diversity in the UK proves that some groups have been in positions where mobilisation of networks, length of established settlement and the inherited economic, biographical and migration legacies have been favourable. How the state utilises its cultural and racial gaze will form part of the normalising, nationalist civilising gaze. These differential 'otherings' need to be located as examples of cultural racialisation; otherwise, the uneven shifts in cultural, economic, and political power lead to injustices to those groups who still occupy positions outside of and below this hierarchy. This automatically dismisses the continued differential advantages and disadvantages that can exist in the experiences of a diverse group of people, and negates the possibility that within

these non-Muslim groups there also exist political ideologies, expression and notions of counter liberal beliefs. These 'closed-chapter' narratives, exemplified by the state's congratulatory stance on Asian business development and 'contributions' to the UK (BBC News 2007), also fail to acknowledge the political, ideological and economic divisions which mediate associated relationships between caste and class. Recent research (Metcalf and Rolfe 2010) indicates that discrimination based on caste is an important positive *and* negative feature of many UK South Asian communities, further indicating that these particular chapters on assumed 'assimilation' or 'integration' are far from closed.

How, then, will progress in critical debates about difference take into account these shifting and temporal positions within a social and political landscape which itself appears to be in ideological and practical flux? The named 'crises of multiculturalism' has emerged as a practical and symbolic crossroads, brought together by new European integrationist liberal notions of citizenship, fully awake to a wide variety of geo-political fragilities (Kundnani 2012). These insecurities operate not just in processes currently within the academic and policy analysis discourses but also on an everyday, lived and embodied level (Back and Sinha 2012).

### Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that contemporary discussions regarding interculturalism's better fit for dealing with diversity is problematic and simplistically conceptualised. I have drawn on Meer and Modood's (2012a; 2012b) tackling of these comparisons. In discussing these issues, I assert that the interculturalist's critique of multiculturalism, especially the policy-backed directions, is particularly troublesome because it neglects some important considerations. The prominence of 'diversity' in all its forms, an emphasis on universality, forms of allegiance to constructed national identities, and the ubiquity of 'cohesion' policies have a de-racing and de-classing effect on the debate. Such impacts then hinder the

way in which enduring experiences of systematic racialised subjugation can be mitigated by intersectional analyses. The importance of multi-faceted approaches to the study of inequalities and intervention in the discursive processes of power relations cannot be underestimated. They can, however, be undermined by wholesale rejection of multiculturalism in favour of intercultural approaches. Finally, I raise a question about the processes of differential treatment of minorities as they become subject to varying politically expedient gazes. Some minorities are deemed acceptable, having achieved the prescriptive level of 'integration' or are regarded as more culturally malleable. Others such as the various Muslim communities in the UK have been deemed troublesome, and a threat to national British identity, public order and national security. These debates play out against a backdrop of critique railed towards the constructions of multicultural failures, and are part of contemporary, ideological power relations in the arena of race, diversity, culture and identity. The question remains focused on how the UK and its counterparts in mainland Europe can mobilise the political and ideological will to remain vigilant against the worst excesses of fear-fuelled conceptualisations of the 'other'. Continuing to reframe citizenship within an intersectional understanding of materiality, race and difference, within an understanding of inclusive citizenship requires a re-engagement with the success of multiculturalism. These observations and critiques raise some questions about the impacts of new frameworks of diversity and difference which may relegate notions of racism, class and differential othering to secondary importance.

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