Transnational activities of immigrant organizations in the Netherlands: Do Ghanaian, Moroccan and Surinamese diaspora organizations enhance development?


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1. Introduction

Globalization is commonly assumed to have important implications for development processes, including opportunities for poverty alleviation. Globalization connects people and places that are distant in space but linked in such ways that what happens in one place has direct bearing on the other (Giddens 1990, 64; also Harvey 1989). According to Appadurai (1996, 192), globalization creates landscapes of translocalities:

Such localities create complex conditions for the production and reproduction of locality in which ties of marriage, work, business and leisure weave together various circulating populations, with kinds of locals to create neighbourhoods that belong in one sense to particular nation-states, but are from another point of view what might be called translocalities.

In a globalizing world, local development is increasingly played out in a matrix of links that connect people and places with people and places elsewhere.

An important driver for creating landscapes of translocalities is international migration. Increasing numbers of people around the world are on the move: it is estimated that there are currently between 175 and 200 million labour migrants (GCIM 2005; Farrant et al. 2006), representing 3 per cent of the world population. Although the majority of international migration takes place within the South (to neighbouring countries, the Gulf States, etc.), considerable numbers travel north to the classic immigration countries (the USA and Canada) and, more recently, a number of European countries (France, the UK, Germany, Spain and Italy). Between 2000 and 2010, nearly 14 million immigrants entered the USA, mainly from Mexico, India, the Philippines and China. In 2010, 9.4% of the total EU population comprised people who were born outside the EU (9.4% = 31.4 million people). According to Eurostat (2011), the largest absolute numbers of people born outside the EU were in Germany (6.4 million), France (5.1 million), the UK (4.7 million), Spain (4.1 million), Italy (3.2 million) and the Netherlands (1.4 million) (Eurostat 2011; see also Zoomers 2006).

Much has been written about the link between migration and development (e.g. de Haas 2006 and 2007; van Naerssen et al. 2008; MPI 2008; IFRI 2008; Adepoju et al. 2007),
focusing in particular on the importance of the transfer of various types of remittances (goods, money, ideas, etc.), which establish new connections between people in home and host communities. At the same time, studies in the field of diasporas and transnationality (Portes 1995, 1996; Basch, Glick Schiller & Blanc-Szanton 1994) have shown the importance of ‘new mobilities’, not as binary flows but as a new type of spatial and social configuration, that is, dispersed people being attached to various localities at the same time. According to Basch and colleagues (1994):

Transnationalism can be defined as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders.... An essential element is the multiplicity of involvements that transmigrants sustain in both home and host societies. We are still groping for a language to describe these social locations. (Basch, Glick Schiller & Blanc- Szanton 1994, 6 in: Portes 1996).

We refer to a diaspora when a considerable proportion of a country’s population lives outside its own territory; the population is dispersed, but maintains intensive and cross-border contacts via social, economic and political networks (Lucas 2004; Vertovec 1999). Sheffer (2003) made a useful distinction between different types of diaspora. He showed that some diasporas are state-less (such as that of the Gypsies) while others are state-linked. He also distinguished between historical and modern diasporas. Some diasporas are concentrated and others dispersed (Sheffer 2003, 241; Zoomers 2006).

Diasporas are formed from and include complex mixes of people who have arrived at different times, through different channels (e.g., labour migration, asylum, family union, for education, for professional advancement), through different means (legal entry, illegal entry, smuggling, overstaying. etc.) and with very different statuses (citizen, resident, student, ...). (van Hear 2004 et al.)

Populations increasingly affiliate themselves translocally, in other places and time (Shapiro 2000, 83; also Zoomers & van Westen 2011). We can speak in this connection of many new forms of non-territorial affiliation and solidarity (Appadurai 1996, 165).

In the migration literature, much attention is paid to exploring private, individual, person-to-person remittances. Less attention is paid to collective types of transfers. Even though ‘the extent to which migrants cluster can be seen as a measure of collectively expressed and collectively ascribed identity’ (Schrover & Vermeulen 2005, 824), the study of migrant organizations is a relatively new field. ‘The character, number and size of organizations indicate the extent to which immigrants want to profile themselves as being different or how they are seen to be different by others’ (ibid.), but little is known about
migration as an organizational field, namely the factors that play a role in shaping these organizations, and their relationship with process of integration, transnational engagement and development.

Concerning the link between transnational engagement and integration, recent studies counter the dominant view that migrants who have close ties with their countries of origin are not integrating in their countries of settlement. A MPI study (2008) shows that migrant organizations in the USA, besides stimulating migrants’ transnational activities, offer all kinds of services to help their members integrate into American society. The findings of Portes and colleagues (2008) are in line with these results. At the European level, research on the contribution of migrant organizations to the integration of transnational migrants in Europe is still in its infancy. Studies focusing on the integration of individual migrants show the same results as the American studies on migrant organizations, in that migrants’ transnational activities are not a barrier to political incorporation. Snel and colleagues (2004 and 2006) argue that those migrant groups that are generally less integrated (e.g. Moroccans, Antilleans) are not engaged in more transnational activities, nor do they feel a stronger identification with their countries of origin than better integrated groups of migrants.

Empirical knowledge on the contribution of migrant organizations to development in the countries or regions of origin is still relatively scarce, in both the USA and Europe. Studies by Portes and colleagues (2007; 2008) and MPI (2008) show that migrant organizations make a fair contribution to development in the regions of origin. According to Portes (2007), who initiated research on migrant organizations in the USA, these collective efforts played important roles in generating local development in Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Colombia, making a differentiation between different modalities and types of development. Also within the European context, some studies pointing towards the transformative role of migrant organizations (see also Beauchemin & Schoumaker 2009, 1910; Østergaard-Nielsen 2009 and 2010; Lacroix 2011).

The aim of our research is to contribute to a better understanding of migration as an organizational field by analysing whether and, if so, how migrant organizations contribute to development. Instead of exploring private, individual, person-to-person remittances, we focus on collective types of transfers carried out by migrant organizations in the Netherlands. When analysing the link between the diaspora and development, we follow Mohan’s (2002, in van Haer 2004) distinction between three types of development, namely development in the diaspora (how people within the diasporic communities use their connections to secure economic and social wellbeing ‘in place’ (i.e. integration into the ‘host area’), development through the diaspora (how diasporic communities utilize their networks beyond the locality to facilitate economic and social wellbeing (development through trade relations etc.) and development by the diaspora (how diasporic flows and continued connections ‘back home’ facilitate the development of these ‘homelands’). According to van Haer (2002), these three forms of development are interdependent.
The present paper analyses migrant organizations in the Netherlands, with a specific focus on Ghanaian, Moroccan and Suriname migrant organizations, which constitute approximately 40% of all migrant organizations in the Netherlands. The Netherlands is home to 3.4 million migrants, who make up approximately 20 per cent of the country’s total population. Half of these migrants are second-generation migrants (CBS 2011); that is, they were born in the Netherlands. Immigration to the Netherlands gathered pace from the 1950s onwards, starting with the arrival in 1951 of Moluccan men who had served in the Royal Dutch East Army and were thus entitled to emigrate with their families to the Netherlands. They were followed in the 1950s and 1960s by a huge number of Indonesian Dutch people, who were repatriated following Indonesia’s independence from the Netherlands (Rath 2009), and migrants from the Antilles and Suriname. They in turn were followed by low-skilled temporary migrant workers from Italy and Spain (and later, also from Morocco and Turkey), in the context of migrant worker programmes and subsequent family reunification (Lucas 2004). After this flow ceased in the mid seventies, immigration to the Netherlands was increasingly composed of refugees and asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq and Iran. Only recently has the Netherlands been confronted with economic opportunity seekers from Africa, Latin America and Asia, who mainly enter the EU via Spain and Italy, which are now immigration countries. The most recent inflows have comprised people from eastern European countries (Poland, Rumania, etc.), particularly since 2007.

In this paper, we look at the extent to which migrant organizations can be seen as important and powerful instruments of change ‘here’ (encouraging integration in the Netherlands), ‘there’ (development and poverty alleviation in the areas of origin) and ‘in between’ (bridging/expanding networks to third destinations). This is based on extensive fieldwork we carried out in the Netherlands in 2010 and 2011, during which we interviewed the 60 most important migrant organizations. We then carried out further fieldwork in Morocco, Ghana and Suriname.

We first describe the methodology (2), and then present an analysis of the ‘context of exit’ and the ‘context of reception’ (3). After this, we provide a typology (4), and give an in-depth description of the size, age, focus, etc. of the 20 most important migrant organizations of each group. This is followed by an analysis (5) of their activities in the country of origin, an assessment (6) of their contributions to development, the conclusion (7) and final reflections (8).

2. Study design: selection of migrant organizations from Suriname, Morocco and Ghana

We first selected representative migrant organizations in the sense that they both represent a large part of the Dutch migrant community and show the diversity of the various groups. We decided to focus on migrant organizations run by people from Suriname (former colony – Dutch speaking/Dutch nationality; no major integration problems), Morocco (ex-guest worker programme – temporary workers + family reunion; integration problematic) and
Ghana (more recent groups of spontaneous labour workers, mostly low skilled). Together, these groups represent 38% of all non-Western migrants in the Netherlands (CBS 2011).

We then made an inventory of these migrant organizations in the Netherlands since the 1980s by consulting several databases¹ and inventories (van Heelsum 2002 and 2004; van Naerssen 2006). For our three groups, we found a total of 1789 migrant organizations.

From these 1789 migrant organizations – focusing on those that were still operational² - we selected those that maintain relations in transnational space (i.e. we omitted migrant organizations that focus only on the Netherlands and do not develop activities in their respective home countries). We only considered formal migrant organizations, that is, those that were registered as foundations or associations at the Chamber of Commerce.

For each of the three groups, we selected the 20 top organizations using a multiple entry points approach, through existing inventories, interviews with experts and leaders of migrant organizations/umbrella migrant organizations and the consulates/embassies of the respective groups. Two additional criteria guided this selection: an organization must have been founded by migrants and it must have existed for at least three years.

The selection of the 20 most important organizations per group was a challenge, first because despite the presence of inventories, it was difficult to contact certain organizations³. Second, not all the organizations in our preliminary selection were involved in transnational activities, or they had been involved but long ago. Third, and this applied in particular to the Ghanaian and Surinamese organizations, we encountered a certain ‘point of satisfaction’ at which the multiple entry points approach no longer rendered new organizations. We therefore limited the number of organizations to 20 per group.

We interviewed the representatives of these organizations – generally the leader or, in three cases, one of the other board members – in order to gain a better understanding of the origin of the organizations, their activities in the Netherlands and in the countries of origin, and their views on development. Each interview lasted 1–1.5 hours; in some cases, two meetings were held, in order to discuss additional matters.

After these interviews, we collected data in the countries of origin of the three migrant groups, in order to gain a better understanding of the activities of the organizations, the partner organizations and the development impact. We selected a sub-sample of seven partners per migrant group, covering a varied group of organizations, at different locations in Morocco, Ghana and Suriname. Over a period of 4–6 weeks per country, we visited the project sites of each of the 7 case studies and interviewed leaders, staff and members of the partner organizations and other local stakeholders, such as the beneficiaries, the local government and the traditional authorities. This implied that the researcher spent a few

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¹ See also the CGM database on migrant organizations in the Netherlands: https://collab.iisg.nl/web/migration_organisations/database-about
² We carried out a more detailed check on the 759 Moroccan migrant organizations that we had in our inventory: approximately 640 organizations were still traceable.
³ Not all organizations do have up to date websites, and phone numbers were sometimes no longer in use.
days at each location, and was thus also able to make some observations with respect to the activities implemented.\textsuperscript{4}

The analysis of the data was carried out using NVivo for the qualitative information. More factual information was stored and analysed through an Excel database.

3. Migration from Suriname, Morocco and Ghana: different contexts of exit and reception

In analysing the functioning of the migrant organizations and the dynamics of the organizational field, we first wanted to explore the ‘context of exit’ and the ‘context of reception’, to see whether these play decisive roles. We looked at the extent to which these backgrounds play a role in the functioning and role of the selected migrant organizations.

The outflow of migrants: contexts of exit

For a long time, Suriname itself was an immigrant society: its population originated from Ghana, China, Indonesia and India.\textsuperscript{5} Outmigration to the Netherlands started under colonial relations and reached its peak around 1975, when Suriname gained independence. Migration continues today, not only to the Netherlands but now also to Miami, the Antilles and India, etc. If one includes second-generation migrants, the majority (over 70\%) of the Surinamese population now live abroad. The diaspora is very fragmented in that it is made up of various ethnic groups (Creoles, Maroons, Javanese, Hindustanis, Chinese, etc.). Relations are mainly maintained through families; each ethnic group has its own network. The Surinamese government has not been active in reaching out to its diaspora, and regards with some distrust Surinamese people who live in the Netherlands. Until recently, the Surinamese government had shown hardly any interest, either positive or negative, in the diaspora, and migrants were considered deserters rather than heroes. Last year, however, President Bouterse said in a speech about the Surinamese diaspora that ‘We should change the way we deal with them and they will change the way they deal with us’ (Dev.sur, 2011). In December 2011, the VHP (progressive reform party) expressed the wish to help develop a national diaspora policy (Stabroek News, 18 December 2011).

In the case of Moroccan people who left their home country to become guest workers in various European countries (Germany, France, the Netherlands etc.), the situation is very different. The majority of these emigrants were poor farmers, predominantly from the mountainous Rif region; the immigrants were initially mainly males

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Special thanks go to Annelien Meerts, who carried out the fieldwork in Morocco, Suriname and Ghana, as well as large part of the interviews in the Netherlands.
\item In addition to the indigenous population (who comprise only 3\% of the total population), there is a mix of various immigrant groups: the Creoles (33\%) came to Suriname from western regions of Central Africa, for example Ghana, as slaves in 1621–1818. The Hindustanis (35\% of the population) migrated from India to become labourers (in 1873–1916). Other groups include the Chinese (who settled as early as 1853) and the Javanese (who arrived in 1890–1939).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
who left their country temporarily to work as guest workers (Van Amersfoort and Van Heelsum 2007). After some time, however, many of these guest workers decided to stay, even though a considerable proportion did return home\(^6\). Morocco is currently experiencing rapid economic growth and the opportunities for upward social mobility are rather positive in comparison to earlier periods.

The Moroccan government plays an active role in reaching out to the diaspora, obliging people to keep double citizenship and maintain relations. In the 1970s and 1980s, the main objective of the Moroccan government was to control its citizens abroad: it wanted to prevent integration in the host societies, as it feared a reduction in the remittances. Moroccan migrants often did not feel welcome in Morocco, as they were faced with corruption, distrust and a lack of protection (de Haas 2007). Since the late 1990s, there has been a shift, with increasing efforts to reach out to the diaspora, as is also formulated in diaspora engagement policies. For this purpose, several programmes and institutions have been established. With respect to Moroccan diaspora engagement policies, two main observations can be distilled from the literature. The first is a lack of coordination among the several institutions, and as such an overlap between the activities offered (Bilgili & Weyel 2012). Second, despite the rise of diaspora engagement policies in which the diaspora is granted the status of an active economic and social actor, the Moroccan state continues to control the diaspora. In this regard, de Haas refers to a transition from ‘hard’ to ‘soft’ control mechanisms applied by the Moroccan government (de Haas 2007).

Finally, looking at the context of exit in the case of Ghanaian outmigration, we see that Ghana has had to deal with enormous outmigration since the early 1980s, initially mainly to neighbouring West African countries, such as Nigeria. In the 1990s, this flow was accompanied by a large outflow of Ghanaians to long-distance destinations, such as the USA and the UK. Due to a relatively large number of people with an irregular status it is difficult to give a precise number of Ghanaians living abroad, but estimates range from 1.5 million (8% of the total population, see Mazzucato 2009) to 4 million (20% of the total population).

Ghana too is currently experiencing rapid economic growth and rapid urbanization. The Ghanaian situation contrast sharply with the Moroccan situation, however, as Ghana has hardly any diaspora engagement policies. Until the 1990s migrants were considered deserters and political opponents. In 2001, the Ghanaian government organized a Home-coming Summit, in which individuals and organizations based abroad also participated, and discussed how to tap and mobilize migrant resources for development (Kleist 2011). But although the 2010 budget foresaw the establishment of a formal national migration policy, this was not realized. Interest in the diaspora seems to have waned over the years. However, Ghanaian embassies and consulates in the UK and Italy are quite active in the channelling of information to the Ghanaian community (Vezzoli 2010).

\(^6\) In Germany, over 9 of the 12 million guestworkers who migrated to Germany between 1960 and 1993 returned home (Faist 1997).
The inflow of migrants into the Netherlands: contexts of reception

The Surinamese, Moroccan and Ghanaian migrants arrived in the Netherlands in very different periods and under very different conditions and policy regimes. When the Surinamese arrived, the ‘context of reception’ was rather favourable: the majority did not have language problems, since the Surinamese are Dutch speaking, and there were no restrictions with respect to legal status. Most of them settled in Amsterdam’s Bijlmer district. Surinamese migrants are relatively highly educated, particularly in comparison to other migrant groups (CBS 2011). According to some authors, most of the highly educated Surinamese now live in the Netherlands, since the fragile social and political system in Suriname means that it is risky for them to work there (van Heelsum & Voorthuysen 2002; Bureau Jansen 2011). Although the majority of the Surinamese in the Netherlands can be considered integrated, their labour participation is relatively low, particularly among youngsters (Bosma 2009), and unemployment rates amongst young Surinamese, especially among the Creoles are high. In general terms, when migration from Suriname took place, the Netherlands was a rather hospitable country, and integration went relatively smoothly.

The flow of Moroccans into the Netherlands (which started in the 1960s, replacing earlier migration flows from Italy and Spain, and ended in 1974) took place in the context of guest worker programmes, which were initiated in the 1960s. The guest workers were provided with hardly any facilities, as the majority were supposed to return to their home countries at the end of their contracts. No effort was initially made to promote integration, and interventions by the Dutch government were mainly to prevent exploitative relations. It was only in the 1970s and 1980s, when it became clear that the temporary workers were here to stay, that new policies were made for family reunification. Being confronted with a large inflow of poor (Berber) people from rural zones who were generally low skilled or unskilled, had a Muslim background and lacked language skills, the Dutch government became increasingly involved in developing new tools to facilitate integration (alphabetization, ‘inburgering’, etc.). Another field of action was that of trying to stimulate return through development programmes, such as the REMPLOD programme (Reintegration of Emigrant Manpower and Promotion of Local Opportunities and Development), initiated in the 1970s in Morocco. However, the results were disappointing, since only few people returned and the development impact was small, mainly due to the lack of infrastructural services. Today, this Muslim group is increasingly seen as a problematic group, with high unemployment rates and relatively high rates of criminality, and emphasis is increasingly given to restrictive policies and how to stimulate ‘return migration’.

The majority of the Ghanaian migrants entered the Netherlands in the 1980s/1990s, seeking economic opportunities. A large proportion of this group settled in Amsterdam’s Bijlmer district, similar to the Surinamese, and to a lesser extent in The Hague. Although part of the Ghanaian community is medium or high skilled (belonging to the medium class in Ghana), the far majority is employed in the lower segments of the economy, such as

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7 Few Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands can be considered as a political migrant.
cleaning and the hotel sector, which can be traced back to their relatively low proficiency in Dutch. A minority can be found in the entrepreneurial sector. Overall, the Ghanaian community is considered a relatively close and well organized community in the Netherlands, with a strong visual presence, in the form of Ghanaian churches, shops (food, video, clothing), radio broadcasts and magazines. Ghanaians are not explicitly mentioned as a target group – nor as a ‘problematic’ group - within the framework of Dutch integration policies, and as such there are hardly any specific governmental programmes or projects aimed at integration.

Linking ‘exit’ and ‘reception’: the emergence of co-development policies
The Netherlands changed from a rather hospitable country offering all kinds of facilities to enable the integration of migrants (housing, subsidized language courses, etc.) into a country with an emphasis on restrictive measures. Migrant groups are increasingly forced to meet requirements for integration (e.g. language requirements), but there is less and less support, government subsidies to support integration and/or possibilities for family reunion are becoming more restrictive, and it is increasingly difficult to stay. The Dutch government plays an important role in the process of integration, a role that Rath (2009, p. 679) labels ‘neo-etatism’. This is also expressed in the attempts of the Dutch government to establish ‘umbrella entities’, such as the Surinaams Inspraak Orgaan (SIO; the Surinamese consultation body) and SMN (the Moroccan equivalent) to represent all migrant organizations in encounters with the Dutch government. As such, immigration management has become increasingly important, following EU policies in this field.

Parallel to this tendency towards more restrictive policies, there are attempts to align the migration and development agendas, resulting in the formulation of co-development policies. This policy is a consequence of the ‘fear of invasion’ (and the limitation of multicultural society) and a reaction to the discovery of remittances as a source for development (as an alternative to ODA). However, a close look at these policies and their budgets reveals that migration management policies, via circular and return migration programmes, continue to dominate (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010; Nijenhuis & Broekhuis 2010). Nevertheless, some funds are available to migrants and their organizations to finance their development activities in their countries of origin. Some of these funds are managed by co-financing agencies (development NGOs), which receive money from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs to fund activities in the South. An example is the Linkis initiative, which is a joint effort between several large co-financing agencies to facilitate the low-threshold funding of private actors (citizens). A third of this funding is made available to (collective and individual) immigrant initiatives (Linkis 2010).
Table 1: Characterization of migration into the Netherlands and contexts of ‘exit’ and ‘reception’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Suriname</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of migrants in the Netherlands</strong></td>
<td>344,734</td>
<td>355,883</td>
<td>21,376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Ethnic diverse – high skilled – well integrated</td>
<td>Temporary guest workers – low skilled – some integration problems</td>
<td>Economic migrants – low skilled - entrepreneurs – some integration problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diasporic dispersion</strong></td>
<td>Netherlands and Miami/Caribbean</td>
<td>Concentrated in Europe (France/Spain/Germany/Italy)</td>
<td>Globally dispersed, mainly USA/UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size diaspora as share of total population</strong></td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8 – 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational density (no. org/no. migrants*1000)</strong></td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perception of emigrants in country of origin</strong></td>
<td>Negative: emigrants as deserters</td>
<td>Positive (remittances and family reunion)</td>
<td>Rather positive - remittances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outreach by the government</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes – double citizenship and various programmes to link up with the diaspora</td>
<td>Hardly, few initiatives recently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dutch policies</strong></td>
<td>Stimulation establishment SIO (consultation body)</td>
<td>Various programmes aimed at integration. Governmental programmes aimed at sustainable return and development</td>
<td>Access to co-development programmes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: IOM, 2009; CBS, 2011
4. Migrant organizations: towards a typology

Here, we present the basic characteristics of the migrant organizations and divide them into four groups. We then present an analysis of their main activities ‘here’ (in the Netherlands), ‘there’ (in the home countries) and ‘beyond’ (linking up with global networks).

Table 2 shows the basic characteristics of the organizations, all of which are registered at the Dutch Chamber of Commerce. Overall, they are relatively young organizations: 53 per cent were established in 2000–08. The large majority are located in the Randstad area, the Netherlands’ main urban agglomeration, comprising the cities of Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht. These cities are also home to the majority of the migrant group studied for this research.

Migrant organizations are led by a board of approximately five members, generally all with a migrant background, although some boards have a mixed composition, with some autochthonous Dutch or another migrant background. The reasons for such ‘mixed’ boards differ, although pragmatic reasons seem to dominate. One reason mentioned is that it is not always easy to find board members who are willing to invest time in the organization, or who possess specific skills that are needed in the organization, such as the skill to maintain the organization’s website. In other cases, the board is mixed because a mixed-race couple are on it.

Although all the organizations have a board, in practice there is often one person who can be considered the ‘engine’ of the organization. This of course makes the organization very dependent on one person, and therefore vulnerable. Most of these chair persons are highly skilled males, with a professional or academic background. Only 21% of all organizations are led by a woman; this ‘female leadership’ applies in particular to Surinamese organizations.

Table 2: Main characteristics of the organizations interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number organizations interviewed</th>
<th>60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year of establishment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Before 1990</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 1990–99</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 2000–08</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Board’s educational background</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Low (primary/uncompleted secondary)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Medium (secondary/tertiary uncompleted)</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- High (professional/academic)</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender of board leaders</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Male</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Female</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salaried employees (in the Netherlands)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the main focus, activities and budget of the organizations, we divided them into four categories (see also table 3):

- **Charitable organizations**: these function as fundraising organizations that aim to realize charities ‘there’, often with the help of migrant voluntary labour. Activities are focused on realizing development in their countries of origin (there);
- **Civic organizations**: the focus is on the Netherlands (here), by representing the interests of their group in the Netherlands and offering services to the immigrant population; however, at the same time, the civic organizations implement activities aimed at development in the countries of origin;
- **Home town associations**: these are relatively often membership organizations. Typical of these organizations is that the focus is on a certain locality (village, community, the ‘home town’) and activities are focused on supporting a group of directly involved people (the people with roots in this locality). Activities are focused on either here (integration) or there (charities)
• Developmental organizations: these aim to be more professional and are closely linked to official funding agencies, such as the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and/or co-financing agencies, NGOs, etc. Along with the discovery of remittances as a source of funding development, in the Netherlands new initiatives have been taken to stimulate co-development (programmes for capacity building, return migration, etc.).

Most (38 per cent) of the organizations are charitable organizations: they are predominantly focused on the country of origin, where they implement projects, generally on an ad hoc basis. 'Doing something good' is the main motive, and the majority of the activities are focused on fundraising. Funds are obtained in various ways. Giving lectures to the public, explaining the need for more funds and persuading the audience to make a financial contribution, is one of the most popular instruments, as is organizing cultural events and charity events, such as the annual soccer match organized by the Suriprofs, during which Surinamese soccer professionals – many of whom play at a high level in Dutch and European soccer competitions – play a benefit match. Most of their budget (average: 45,000\footnote{N=19, as four organizations could not/did not want to disclose their budget.} euros per year) is derived from donations and charity foundations.

The second largest group (one third) of organizations are civic organizations: these aim to represent the interest of their immigrant population in the Netherlands, but are also involved in activities in the country of origin (see Table 2). Also in this category are network organizations – such as the Ghanaian Recogin and the Moroccan NISM – whose activities are aimed at supporting self-organizations in the Netherlands, but that also carry out activities in the country of origin. These organizations carry out fundraising and other activities, most of which are focused on the social sector (e.g. homework supervision, the establishment of food banks, lobbying and advocacy, language courses, environmental education and advisory activities). The average annual budget of these organizations is 78,300\footnote{N= 16, as four organizations could not/did not want to reveal their budgets.} euros, which is derived from a large variety of sources: donations, local governments, co-financing agencies, the Ministry of Justice and private foundations.

Home town associations (HTAs) are the third category: these organizations direct their transnational activities towards a village or specific region or province in the country of origin. In this category, we distinguish between Ghanaian HTAs on the one hand and Moroccan and Surinamese HTAs on the other hand. The focus of Ghanaian HTAs, all membership organizations, is predominantly on the Netherlands. Examples of such organizations are the Okyeman Foundation, the Okuapeman Association, the Kwahuman Association, the Kwahu Youngsters and the Stichting Ghana–Haarlem. Their main aim is to support the respective communities in adjusting to Dutch society, by informing the members about such matters as the Dutch secondary school system, the introduction of the chip card for public transport, and national and local elections. These are generally membership
organizations, representing 20–70 households.\textsuperscript{12} They meet regularly, often every other weekend, and many hold a special end-of-year event. The bimonthly meetings are generally guided by an agenda, and are concluded with some drinks. Members pay a membership fee, ranging from 5 to 10 euros a month. These fees are used to rent the venue, to pay for the catering and for a credit fund for all kinds of specific – and urgent – lifecycle events: illness, funerals and weddings. Members who do not pay the monthly dues are still welcome at the meetings, but access to financial support via the credit fund is denied. Compared to the other organizational types, the budget of HTAs is relatively small (3,600 euros per year\textsuperscript{13}) and based mainly on membership fees and other donations.

The Moroccan and Surinamese HTAs differ from the Ghanaian HTAs in one important respect: although the former organizations also consist of a group of people from the same area of origin, their main focus is on the region of origin and their activities in the Netherlands are focused on fundraising. As such, integration of the migrant community hardly plays a role in the activities in the Netherlands\textsuperscript{14}.

The last category is composed of developmental organizations, many of which evolved from civic organizations. They are supported by considerable donor funds (average: 147,600 euros per year\textsuperscript{15}) from a wide range of sources: government ministries and co-financing agencies, as well as the EU, foundations and private donations, were mentioned. Ghanaian organizations are overrepresented in this category, which can be explained by the fact they – in contrast to the Moroccan and Surinamese organizations – have access to specific co-development programmes, via Dutch NGOs and other funding channels. They implement development projects on a relatively large scale, often have various projects at different locations, and in some cases also extend their work to other countries, such as Afro Euro and ASDA. A certain degree of professionalization is common among these organizations, which is also expressed in the number of paid employees (1-3) compared to the other types of organizations, facilitated by their larger budgets. They maintain up-to-date websites on which project summaries and annual reports are freely available.

\textsuperscript{12} All HTAs had noted a decrease (sometimes by as much as 50%) in the number of members during the previous 5 years. Economic problems, as well as migration to the UK (where they feel more at ease) were mentioned as possible explanations for this reduction.

\textsuperscript{13} N= 10, as two organizations could/did not want to disclose their budgets

\textsuperscript{14} Also they do not have a fixed group of members; they rather speak about donors. We put them in this category because they focus their activities on a sharply demarcated village or region in Morocco /Suriname, and not on an arbitrary location, and they do so in an organization that almost exclusively comprises people from this region.

\textsuperscript{15} N=5, as one organization could/did not want to reveal the budget
Table 3: Main features of the four types of organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Charitable</th>
<th>Civic</th>
<th>HTAs</th>
<th>Developmental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of all organizations</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Mainly Surinamese</td>
<td>Mainly Moroccan, some Ghanaian</td>
<td>Mainly Ghanaian, some Moroccan</td>
<td>Mainly Ghanaian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main focus</td>
<td>‘There’</td>
<td>‘Here’ and ‘there’</td>
<td>‘Here’</td>
<td>‘There’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main activities NL</td>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>Integration Fundraising</td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Fundraising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual budget (in €)</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>78,300</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>147,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples of funding agencies</td>
<td>Private (ad hoc) donations</td>
<td>Cordaid Wilde Ganzen Ministry Shell Rabobank Foundations NCDO Local governments</td>
<td>Membership dues</td>
<td>EU Ministry of Foreign Affairs HIVOS NCDO Local governments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We asked the organizations about their networks, such as contacts with other migrant organizations, NGOs, and the national and the local government. Although most organizations are part of a wider network, the intensity and frequency of contacts differ greatly. Three observations can be made in this respect. First, of the three migrant groups we studied, the Ghanaian organizations have most contacts with other, Ghanaian, organizations. Leaders of the HTAs explained that they invite other Ghanaian HTAs – including all the members – to funerals and weddings. Most Ghanaian HTAs and civic organizations are also members of RECOGIN, a Ghanaian umbrella organization based in Amsterdam.

Second, both Moroccan and Ghanaian organizations in particular participate in national level networks, some of the specifically aimed at Migration & Development, such as the Diaspora Forum for Development (D-f-D) and the Migrant Consortium. Also, Moroccan organizations participate in events organized by the Morocco Fund. Most well-established Moroccan organizations know the organizational picture quite well, and also have good contacts with the local government and certain government ministries. Surinamese organizations, in contrast, appear to have the least contacts: apart from contacts with
funding ‘channels’, only few meet with other Surinamese organizations, and most operate in a relative isolation.

Third, participation in international, or global, networks is relatively scarce among all organizations interviewed, except for one of the Ghanaian HTAs (the Kwahu Association), that is a founding member of Kwahu Europe, a network organization of six Kwahu organizations in Europe that was established in 2010.

5. Bringing development ‘back home’

A first glance at the type of activities promoted by the 60 migrant organizations in their areas of origin shows that most activities are focused on improving the health and the educational infrastructure, often in combination with the sending of goods. There are numerous examples of projects that support the construction of schools, health clinics, orphanages, etc. In addition, old school furniture, second-hand or unwanted clothing, and written-off computers and hospital equipment are frequently shipped to the home countries. A more detailed look reveals some interesting differences between the types of organizations with respect to the activities implemented, the approach and the institutional arrangements/partnerships set up.

Table 4 Main type of activities implemented in the country of origin, per type of organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Charitable organizations</th>
<th>Civic organizations</th>
<th>HTAs</th>
<th>Developmental organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social sector</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping of goods</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type of activities and partnerships
All the organizations collaborate on the implementation of their projects with local counterparts, but with different types of partners and in different intensities.
The focus of charitable organizations is more often on social sector activities, on shipping goods, and to a lesser extent on economic development oriented projects and capacity building. Compared to other organizations, they collaborate more with mirror organizations (26%), which are organizations in the area of origin that are established (by the Netherlands based organization) to facilitate the implementation of the project. Due to the distance and sometimes limited communication opportunities, the migrant organizations experience, or foresee difficulties in implementing the project. They need an executive organization at the local level to coordinate the project and communicate with local stakeholders, and to them establishing an organization appears to be the most appropriate strategy. Collaborating with a mirror organization in the country of origin is a common type of partnership, and applies to 17% of all migrant organizations we interviewed. An example is the Surinamese Laat een container varen (‘Let a container sail’), which established Laat een container komen (‘Let a container arrive’) in Suriname to facilitate the clearance and distribution of the goods. Other partners are local NGOs, as well as municipalities (e.g. the municipality of Dar El Kebdani, the partner of Twizafonds), and regional and national governments.

Civic organizations perform a wide variety of activities, with 60% of the activities focused on economic development, rights, capacity building and a large category of ‘other’ projects. This last category comprises activities in the field of network services and research & development. Examples of projects are the project of Muddawannah to support women that are left behind and the school feeding project of the Women in Concern Foundation (see table 5). Partners of these organizations are local NGOs, local, regional and national health and education institutions, and mirror organizations (15 per cent).

The HTAs exclusively focus their activities on the social sector and on shipping goods. The majority (58 per cent) collaborate with a mirror organization, such as the Friends of Tazaghine and the Stichting Ghana–Haarlem. The rest have rather extensive collaboration with local entities in the country of origin, such as a local hospital or school. Although their main focus is on the Netherlands, they also want to make a contribution to the village or region of origin. During a holiday visit to the region of origin, they visit schools or hospitals and ask these whether they need something. They then collect funds from their members to purchase the goods and pay for the shipping. The contact with the receiving entity as such is limited, although most organizations pay a visit a year later to see whether the goods are actually being used. The goods are acquired by contacting hospitals and schools in the Netherlands to see whether there are any ‘leftovers’. An example of such an HTA is the The Hague-based Kwahu Youngsters, who asked the staff of a local hospital whether they needed some hospital beds. The hospital indeed needed more beds, so the HTA arranged the shipping and, a year later, one of the board members visited the hospital to see whether the beds were in use.

Finally, developmental organizations are involved in a rather broad range of activities. Besides social sector activities, they have a relatively strong focus on projects aimed at economic development. The poultry project – an EU-funded project implemented
by Sankofa, a Ghanaian development organization – is a good example: women in rural communities are given 30 chickens, and they sell the eggs to generate additional income. Most developmental organizations collaborate with several partners in the countries of origin. During our fieldwork, we observed that most of their partners collaborate with and receive funds from other donors. In some cases, this means that the contribution of the Netherlands-based migrant organization is pooled with funds from other donors. In other cases, there are individual projects. The presence of several donors implies that these partners are less dependent on the Dutch-based migrant organizations.

Contrary to the migrant organizations, the partners often have paid staff, ranging from one part-time coordinator to nine full-time employees (AFDOM). This applies particularly to the NGOs, but is also observed in the case of mirror organizations, whose staff in some cases tend to receive a fee for their involvement. This is generally because incomes in the countries of origin are low, and to make things happen there needs to be a financial compensation, according to the Dutch-based migrant organizations.

**Table 5 Examples of projects and partners, according to organizational type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migrant organization</th>
<th>Project description</th>
<th>Partner in area of origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charitable organizations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surflandria (Suriname)</td>
<td>Distribution meals among poor children</td>
<td>Schools, local welfare organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daar et Atfaal (Morocco)</td>
<td>“Foster parents”: material and mental support to orphans</td>
<td>Orphanage and local NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civic organizations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muddawannah (Morocco)</td>
<td>Support to women that are left behind</td>
<td>Service office Berkane (mirror organization)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWOC (Ghana)</td>
<td>Construction school canteen and toilets for participation in school feeding program</td>
<td>Baranton Development Foundation (local NGO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HTAs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okuapeman Association (Ghana)</td>
<td>Goods (hospital beds, computers, TVs)</td>
<td>Hospitals, schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vrienden van Nickerie (Suriname)</td>
<td>Scholarships students, computers, support to elderly and disabled people</td>
<td>Vrienden van Nickerie Suriname/Win-group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development organizations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stichting Kantara</td>
<td>Environmental education</td>
<td>Local NGOs, Wereld</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutional links ‘there’

Besides the direct partners in the countries of origin, migrant organizations collaborate with other entities at both the local and the national level in the country of origin. Examples of such collaborations are other local NGOs, local governments, national governments and private companies. The type of collaboration varies: in some cases, it is limited to funding or the issuing of permits, but network activities were also mentioned, for example, for lobbying in the case of Moroccan NGOs. As for Surinamese organizations, they collaborate with the Surinamese government, with the objective of avoiding having to pay import duty on shipped goods, and to facilitate the distribution of goods. Some Surinamese partner organizations also receive partial funding from the Surinamese government. The government, for instance, pays part of the salary of the employees of one of the Surinamese organizations. However, there are also some organizations that merely inform the government about their development interventions. These organizations stated that they ‘passively cooperate’ with the government, because they have to. Government permission is needed to, for instance, build schools or other structures: ‘Who else is going to pay the teachers and donate a piece of land? We’re able to recruit teachers and build a school, but for the rest we need the government.’ Many organizations do not want to involve the national government as a stakeholder. According to these Netherlands-based organizations, the government works slowly and is corrupt and bureaucratic. Most importantly, though, there is no funding available. Some organizations avoid contact with the government and do not even ask for permission to, for instance, renovate schools, which is officially a government task.

In the case of local governments, collaboration cannot be avoided as the organizations need permits to construct schools or health posts. However, contact with the government often appears to be mainly a necessary evil. Organizations in all three research locations were very critical about the role of the local and the national government: ‘Nothing happens until you give them some money. So in case we really need some things done, we give them some money.’ However, positive collaborations with the local government were also mentioned, such as the partnership of Twizafund with the municipality of Dar El Kebdni in Morocco, which coordinates the use of the garbage truck, and the distribution of other goods donated by the Twizafund.

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16 Interviews with Ghanaian organizations.
6. Development in, by and through the diaspora: what difference do migrant organizations make?

As stated in the introduction, much has been written about the link between migration and development at the individual level, but little is known about how individuals could benefit from transmitting ‘collectively’ by making use of migrant organizations. We looked at the extent to which migrant organizations can be seen as important and powerful instruments of change, encouraging integration (in the Netherlands), development and poverty alleviation (in the areas of origin), and/or expanding networks to third destinations.

By making a distinction between development in the diaspora, by the diaspora and through the diaspora, our analysis shows that migrant organizations contribute to development ‘in the diaspora’ by performing the role of broker: they facilitate the migrant’s access to services in the field of integration, and in some cases also provide these services. Examples of such activities are language courses, homework groups, day-care activities for the elderly and information meetings around elections. Some organizations, in particular the network and umbrella organizations such as RECOGIN, also perform the role of broker, by channelling information from the community to the local government, and vice versa. As such, they contribute to capacity building and the organization of civil society of the migrant groups concerned. However, the role of ‘broker’ is mainly performed by civic organizations and HTAs. Charitable organizations and developmental organizations are by the nature of their activities less focused on this role of ‘development in the diaspora’, and their fundraising activities contribute to integration mainly indirectly, by awareness raising, also for a broader public.

Second, activities in the countries of origin (‘development by the diaspora’) are the most important activities of a very large proportion of the migrant organizations. Of course, this is partly because these organizations were selected on account of their transnational activities. Nevertheless, a wide range of activities are implemented in the regions of origin. The desire to show solidarity with the country is the main driving force to collaborate/become active for most organizations.

Third, ‘development through the diaspora’ is hardly present among the 60 organizations we studied. There are hardly any systematic efforts to push Dutch diaspora in the direction of global connections, apart from the already mentioned initiative to establish a European Kwahu umbrella organization. We observed very few connections with similar diasporic groups in other countries. Overall, the contacts and networks of migrant organizations are mainly bilateral, and as such most are not well-integrated in global networks.

Making an assessment of the contribution of Netherlands-based migrant organizations to development ‘there’, in Suriname, Ghana and Morocco, we observed certain interesting elements. First, during our fieldwork we asked the partner organizations, target groups and other local stakeholders (such as local governments) how they value the activities implemented by the migrant organizations. Not surprisingly, we received very
positive feedback, although sometimes these were socially desirable answers. We heard only very few more critical comments with respect to the initiatives and role of migrant organizations.

Second, despite this appreciation, some critical comments can be made with respect to the activities of migrant organizations. Some interventions are paternalistic, with initiatives taken in the Netherlands, and as such implemented in a top-down manner. Ownership of the activities is in those cases completely with the Dutch-based migrant organization. This is particularly the case in those partnerships that involve a mirror organization, which is the case for approximately 17% of all migrant organizations.

Third, due to the limited collaboration with local authorities, the projects offered are not always in line with local priorities, and might conflict with existing government plans. However, most organizations point to the absence of the government in the provision of local services, and add that they only fill the gap created.

Fourth, many activities of migrant organizations seem to be rather ad hoc and do not address structural changes over time. This applies particularly to many of the charities whose purpose is to transfer ‘luxury goods’, namely leftovers/second-hand goods from the Netherlands.

Fifth, in those cases where migrant organizations collaborate with local NGOs, it is interesting that these partner organizations are sometimes more professional than the migrant organization (in the Netherlands). These NGOs often have a small paid staff and many also receive funding from other international NGOs, in addition to the support they receive from migrant organizations in the Netherlands, which makes them rather autonomous and not dependent on the Dutch funding.

Looking at our results in general, it is interesting that despite the many differences in the contexts of ‘exit’ and ‘reception’ of the Surinamese, Moroccan and Ghanaian diasporas, the transnational migrant organizations have much in common: there are relatively many migrant organizations and they receive relatively much support from Dutch NGOs and government facilities. In the Netherlands, despite the rapid transformation from a hospitable country (friendly to migrants) into a country with restrictive policies, where civil society is divided between xenophobic groups and migrant friendly citizens, migrant organizations are functioning in a relatively friendly environment with ample opportunities for government subsidies and fund raising, and the majority of migrants being in relatively favourable circumstances.

This is also reflected in the main challenges indicated by migrant organizations. Although some organizations mentioned a lack of funds as a problem, and most of them would appreciate more access to funds, there are other issues that are more important to them. This is in the first place the position of the second generation, the youth, in their organizations. Particularly the Ghanaian and Moroccan organizations said that it is hard to get young people involved, and they expect that this might impact on the organization in the longer term. Some Ghanaian HTAs have already implemented projects to involve the youth,
such as special events around Christmas, or a weekend at a campsite with all households. However, the majority of these HTAs were sceptical about the result of such activities.

Other issues mentioned by the migrant organizations are: they lack people who are willing to invest time in the organization, they do not have good venues for their meetings, they lack storage facilities (this applies to organizations that ship goods) and they do not have a good, reliable partner in the country of origin.

The power of migrant organizations in the Netherlands to stimulate development in Suriname, Morocco or Ghana is rather fragmentary and project bound, and heavily dependent on fundraising and subsidies. However, in light of the total number of people who are directly or incidentally involved and/or the total amount that has been transferred for the purpose of various projects, the impact should not be underestimated. Starting from the average amount that was collected by the various organizations, an annual transfer of approximately 1 - 2 million euros to Suriname, Morocco and Ghana takes place. Rather than looking at the direct effect of the specific projects that have been implemented, it might be interesting to look at the more indirect impact: the fact that migrants groups collaborate in realizing projects, and the stimulating role that migrant organizations might play in enhancing civil society, not only there by, for example, funding local mirror organizations, but also ‘here’, by supporting their members to integrate in the host society, contributing to civic participation, and raising awareness among other stakeholders in civil society.

7. Conclusion

This contribution presented an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of migrant organizations in shaping transnational space, that is, helping migrants to transfer goods, ideas, capital, etc. for the purpose of development, here, there or beyond. We also tried to understand migration as an organizational field, to comprehend how the context of exit and reception play a role in the functioning of migrant organizations and the activities that are implemented.

This study showed that there are a considerable number of migrant organizations in the Netherlands even though two of the three migration flows concerned (i.e. from Suriname and Morocco) are relatively old. Most of these organizations are run by male professionals who are relatively well educated, well integrated and successful in Dutch society. This is very much in line with the situation in the USA, where Portes found a similar correlation (Portes 2007).

We made a distinction between four types of organizations, based on their focus, activities and budget, in descending order of importance: charitable organizations, civic organizations, home town associations and developmental organizations. Each can also be classified on the basis of its level of ‘transnationality’, focusing on either ‘integration here’ or ‘enhancing development there’, or both simultaneously. Most of the organizations are not linked only to particular home communities, are mainly focused on charity, are driven by voluntary workers and are dependent on fundraising.
When looking at the role of migrant organizations as an agent for change, and making a distinction between in the diaspora, by the diaspora and through the diaspora, we found some interesting differences between the different groups, and the corresponding contexts of exit and reception.

Most substantial is the contribution the diaspora makes by transferring good and funds to various kinds of charities in their home countries, so ‘development by the diaspora’. A wide range of activities and projects are implemented, varying from the shipping of goods, to the capacity building of nurses specialized in diabetes. While Moroccan organizations have the most varied portfolio of activities, and also include more complex interventions such as capacity building and lobbying, the Surinamese organizations mostly focus on social sector projects and the shipping of goods. This also applies to the Ghanaian HTAs, while the Ghanaian developmental organizations also add some other types of projects, driven by the agenda of the main donors in the aid sector.

The contribution to integration (‘in the diaspora’) is an important field for the Ghanaian HTAs, which help their members to integrate into Dutch society, and also for the Moroccan organizations. In contrast, it is very limited for the Surinamese organizations in our sample: the organizations are mainly oriented towards Suriname, which can be traced to the fact that Surinamese are already well integrated in Dutch society.

Finally, migrant organizations hardly play a role in enhancing development through the diaspora. Although most organizations participate in networks at the national level, involvement in international/global networks is not relatively low. A few initiatives were observed, with the establishment of a European Kwahu Association as most important element.

In conclusion, migrant organizations play an important role in keeping Netherlands-based migrant communities alive and linking them to the countries of origin, by raising funds in the Netherlands for their areas of origin. However, the diaspora’s development impact ‘on the ground’ is rather limited. The main critical comments were that many projects are not contributing to structural change, due to the relative fragmented presence of small projects, and the relative unfavourable context of reception ‘there’, with a local government that is not very open to initiatives from abroad, and a lack of ownership. At the same time, the sustainability of these initiatives will very much depend on whether second-generation migrants are willing to keep these initiatives going. During our research, we were often told that younger generations are not interested in supporting these initiatives.

However, analysing the total amount of funds being transferred and the willingness of people to contribute either money or labour, the potential ‘mobilizing power’ is considerable. There are some important leveraging effects, such as the contribution to civil society building – by the creation of mirror organizations and partnerships established for the implementation of the activities, awareness raising in the context of fundraising, their contribution to agenda setting, and the ‘role model’ of migrant organizations that developed into more professional developmental organizations, and considered as such as relevant actors in the aid industry.
8. Final reflections

In a global world, local development is increasingly played out in a matrix of links that connect people and places with places and people elsewhere; migration has some potential to bring/push new linkages to the places between areas of origin and area of destination. This study shows that diasporas are formed from and include complex mixes of people who arrived at different times, through different channels, with different intentions and with different statuses (van Haer 2004), and that migrant organizations have some potential to strengthen links and/or play a role in mobilizing funds and powers.

At the same time, however, defining transnationalism ‘as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement’, we observe that the involvement that migrants sustain in both home and host countries is considerable, but at the same moment also limited. To the extent that migrants are willing to invest time and/or money, involvement is rather symbolic, driven by people’s desire to help people in their home countries and coming from one side, the Netherlands. As such, the ‘multiplicity of involvements that transmigrants sustain in both home and host societies’ – an essential element of transnationalism – is rather limited.

In studies about transnationalism, the suggestion is made that ‘Increasingly, populations affiliate themselves translocally – in other places and time’ (Shapiro 2000:83; also Zoomers and van Westen 2011) and according to Appadurai (1996:165) ‘we can speak in this connection of many new forms of non-territorial affiliation and solidarity’. Based on our study, however, we see that rather than facilitating time–space compression (Harvey 1989), increasing mobility and/or reflecting a high level of interconnectedness, migrant organizations are ‘locking in’ certain groups and localities. Rather than ‘on-going series of cross-border movements in which immigrants develop and maintain numerous economic, social and cultural links in more than one nation’ (Portes 1995, 1996; Jackson et al. 2004), we see that migrant organizations mobilize funds and collective action on an ad-hoc basis and that their support is closely linked to one particular country. Migrant populations, becoming dispersed across the world, are supposed to ‘maintain intensive and cross-border contacts through social and political networks’ (Vertovec 1999; Sheffer 2003; Lucas 2004), but based on what we see in the Netherlands, activities of migrant organizations are rather unilateral. In this sense, it would be more appropriate to speak about translocal activities, instead of transnational activities. Rather than “acting in a ‘transnational space’, migrants operate in a network of different localities, each of which may very well be highly localised in nature” (Zoomers & Van Westen, 2011)
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