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**Ghanaian migrants' double engagement:
a transnational view of development and integration policies**

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Global Commission on International Migration

In his report on the 'Strengthening of the United Nations - an agenda for further change', UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan identified migration as a priority issue for the international community.

Wishing to provide the framework for the formulation of a coherent, comprehensive and global response to migration issues, and acting on the encouragement of the UN Secretary-General, Sweden and Switzerland, together with the governments of Brazil, Morocco, and the Philippines, decided to establish a Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM). Many additional countries subsequently supported this initiative and an open-ended Core Group of Governments established itself to support and follow the work of the Commission.

The Global Commission on International Migration was launched by the United Nations Secretary-General and a number of governments on December 9, 2003 in Geneva. It is comprised of 19 Commissioners.

The mandate of the Commission is to place the issue of international migration on the global policy agenda, to analyze gaps in current approaches to migration, to examine the inter-linkages between migration and other global issues, and to present appropriate recommendations to the Secretary-General and other stakeholders. The Commission's report was published on 5 October 2005 and can be accessed at www.gcim.org.

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Introduction¹

Development in the Third World and the integration of migrants in industrialised countries are treated as separate issues in academic and policy debates. In academia, migration is either seen as a development issue and studied by developing area specialists (development economics, development studies), or as an area related to issues of integration and social exclusion and studied by people of different disciplines focusing on the developed world. Policymaking is subject to a similar distinction. While development often falls under the mandate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, integration is an issue dealt with by the ministries concerned with the national economy such as the Ministry of the Interior, of Education, and of Justice. This paper argues that treating development and integration as separate issues leads to an incomplete view of the benefits and costs of migration and ultimately to ineffectual policies. A transnational perspective can help to bridge this divide and lead to a more complete understanding of migrant livelihoods and to better policy. This paper takes the case of Ghanaian migrants based in The Netherlands and their networks with people back home to illustrate this point.

A transnational perspective highlights the fact that people are simultaneously engaged in their home country and the receiving country, which results in the back and forth movement of people, goods, money and ideas between nation-states. While this phenomenon is not new¹, authors using a transnational perspective argue that new technologies (airplanes, telephones, satellite technology, faxes, and computers) make movement and communication between large distances possible with much greater frequency, speed and regularity and in larger numbers than was possible as recently as fifty years ago. As a result, social, economic and cultural phenomena relevant to migrants are not all located within one physical location, the nation-state. Rather, a transnational scale needs to be adopted by studies which aim to understand migrants' lives, the first step for designing effective policies.

Much has been theorised about transnationalism (for overview articles see *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1999 22(2) and Vertovec 2001), yet empirical studies are still burgeoning. The popularity of the concept of transnationalism has led to some abuse of the term, which is often used merely as a synonym of the term 'international'. In the first section of this paper I specify the use of the concept in a program on transnational networks of Netherlands-based Ghanaian migrants. Very few studies on migrants in The Netherlands focus on new migrant groups (exceptions are Nimako 1993; Kraan 2001). Ghanaian migration to The Netherlands is of recent origin, beginning in the early 1980s. Section two therefore discusses Ghanaian migration and why it is different from the (more studied) migration of guest workers and those from the ex-colonies. Section three presents an analysis of Ghanaian migrant livelihoods

¹ This paper reports on results of a collaborative research program between the University of Amsterdam (AGIDS), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (AOE), Amsterdam Institute for International Development (AIID), and African Studies Centre Leiden, in The Netherlands and the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), in Ghana entitled 'Transnational networks and the creation of local economies: Economic principles and institutions of Ghanaian migrants at home and abroad' www2.fmg.uva.nl/ghanatransnet (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO) grant number 410-13-010P). The author would like to thank Luca Bertolini and the members of the 'Transnational links and livelihoods' group for valuable comments leading to this paper.

from a transnational perspective in order to look at two questions: 1) how do Ghanaian migrants contribute to the development of their country and 2) how are they engaged in the Dutch economy? The paper concludes with some possible implications of a transnational perspective for studies evaluating the impact of migration, as well as for the integration and development policies of developed countries.

A transnational research program

Transnationalism is an increasingly important concept in migration studies. It was first put forward in the early 1990s to counter the dominant trend in migration studies of the 1970s and 1980s that conceptualised migrants either as people who completely assimilate to the culture of the receiving country or, having failed to assimilate, who eventually return to their home country (Rouse 1995)². As van Amersfoort (2001) points out, the main focus of migration studies had previously been on the participation of migrants in the host country society, whereas transnationalism draws the focus to the institutions and identities that migrants create by being simultaneously engaged in two or more countries. Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc (1992) were some of the first to theorise about the concept of transnationalism. What sets their analysis apart from previous approaches to the study of migration is that they focus on migration within a globalizing economy and draw into question the role of the nation-state in regulating the activities that migrants engage in and the identities that they create.

In the Ghana TransNet³ research program, the simultaneous engagement of migrants in two or more countries is directly taken into account in the methodology (Mazzucato 2000). The lives of migrants are researched by simultaneously studying migrants and the people they transact⁴ with, who are located in various nations, and may include friends, family and colleagues, among others. By virtue of this interaction, institutions⁵ guiding the economic behavior of migrants both in The Netherlands and in their home communities are created, adapted or maintained. The program seeks to understand how institutions are affected by these transnational interactions by studying migrants' transactions in eight domains that are important in their lives: housing, business, funerals, church, healthcare, education, communication and community development projects. The program is composed of three projects based in three important nodes of Ghanaian migrants' transnational networks: Amsterdam, where most Ghanaians in The Netherlands reside; Accra, the capital city of Ghana where most migrants have lived or passed through; and rural to semi-urban villages in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, to which many migrants trace their roots. The projects investigate how transnational networks affect economic activities in each of these locations.

The program consists of two phases. First, a network survey based on 17 name-generator questions was conducted among 100 Ghanaians living in Amsterdam, from which a sample of 34 networks was selected based on individual characteristics of the migrant (sex, age, wealth and education) and network characteristics (size and density). There exists no baseline survey of Ghanaians in The Netherlands and a large number of migrants are undocumented. The survey was thus conducted by randomly selecting migrants encountered through different gateways (church, community leaders, home town associations, randomly encountered migrants in markets or at the

workplace). The diversity of gateways helped to ensure the randomness of the sample. The second phase consisted of various research methods employed simultaneously with the members of the 34 selected networks who reside in the three research locations. This resulted in a total of 139 respondents. First, a transaction study recorded all transactions on a monthly basis conducted in the eight domains mentioned above during the period July 2003 to June 2004. Second, in-depth interviews were carried out on the eight domains. Third, life histories were recorded, focusing on the changes in people's social networks throughout their lifetime. Fourth, observation and participation in social events were employed in Amsterdam from June 2002 to February 2005 and in locations in Ghana from May 2003 to August 2004.

Ghanaian migrants

The focus on Ghanaian migrants partially fills an important gap in studies on migrants in The Netherlands because these latter studies have almost exclusively focused on guest workers and people from former Dutch colonies. Both of these groups have a much longer history of migration in The Netherlands. However, new groups are increasingly migrating to The Netherlands (van Kessel and Tellegen 2000) and exhibit different dynamics and face different contextual factors than these older migrant groups⁶. Ghanaians are an important group amongst the new migrants. In 2003 there were around 18,000 Ghanaian migrants recorded in The Netherlands (<http://statline.cbs.nl>) but, because there are also a large number of undocumented migrants, this number is highly underestimated⁷.

Ghanaian migrants provide a case study of economic migrants which is distinct from the case of the 'guest workers' of Moroccan and Turkish origin invited to The Netherlands in the 1960s to help the country deal with a labor shortfall during a period of economic boom. Guest workers exhibit different dynamics than do new migrant groups entering The Netherlands. First, the guest workers faced different conditions when they arrived: they were given official status upon arrival and were part of the state system from the very beginning. Second, they are now of pension age, make use of the Dutch welfare state, and have children already of working age who form the second generation.

The main difference for Ghanaian migrants, and for all new migrant groups entering The Netherlands since the 1980s, is that they need to contend with a state that from the beginning, albeit to varying degrees, has wanted to keep them out. They started arriving in the 1980s when the economies of Ghana and Nigeria, where many were working, were experiencing an economic downturn. Most migrants are still in their prime working years, the group consists of both women and men and the eldest of the second generation are now reaching high school completion. Furthermore, due to the stringent migration policies of The Netherlands, a large number of Ghanaian migrants have 'illegal' status. The facts that they are a relatively 'young' group and that many do not have legal status also mean that they make relatively little use of the Dutch welfare state.

How do Ghanaian migrants contribute to development in their country?

This paper investigates, from a transnational perspective, a question that is often posed by development specialists: do remittances lead to development? The importance of remittances from migrants to their home countries is gaining increasing recognition internationally. The IMF estimates that 'official' worker remittances to developing countries amounted to US\$72.3 billion in 2001 (Ratha 2003). Estimates for Ghana range between US\$500 million to US\$1 billion in 2003 (Addison 2004). These figures underestimate the full extent of remittances, since much of what comes from migrants is brought through the hands of travelers and goes unregistered. Mazzucato et al. (2004b) estimate that unregistered remittances coming into Ghana can amount to 65 per cent of total remittances sent. This estimate concurs with worldwide estimates by Choucri (1986) and Russell (1986). It is thus likely that remittances coming into Ghana from migrants overseas is closer to US\$3 billion, or more than 40 per cent of Ghana's GDP.

The importance of remittances for home country economies raises the question of how these remittances are used, in order to understand the ways remittances contribute to the economy. Results from the Ghana TransNet research program indicate that most remittances are used for business (33 per cent), housing (16 per cent) and funerals (6 per cent). Business and housing investments are the most obvious contributors to the home country economy and those that are most investigated in the literature on migration (for an overview see Taylor 1999). Business investments provide services or goods, employ people and generate income while investments in housing increase real estate values and create jobs in the construction sector. In the sample of respondents, half had completed or were in the process of building a house in Ghana, while one quarter invested in a business in Ghana.

This section will focus on remittances sent for funerals because these remittances are substantial yet usually ignored by studies of the economic effects of migration. In many cultures in the developing world, funerals constitute a large spending item. Funerals are considered a very important rite of passage and many financial and material resources are dedicated to them. The Akan⁸ in Ghana are no exception. The more money people have, the more they spend on funerals; thus families with members who are migrants overseas are reputed for having the most grandiose funerals. Indeed, the two cases from our sample where a migrant had to organise the funeral of a close family member showed that considerable amounts are spent on funerals. One migrant spent four times, and the other seven times, their monthly income. Other cases encountered in the Ghanaian community in Amsterdam confirm these findings.

This kind of spending is not taken into account in migration studies that calculate the benefits of migration for the home country (Black *et al.* 2003; Russell 1986; Taylor 1999). Spending on funerals is considered wasteful because it channels potentially productive resources into conspicuous consumption items such as expensive clothing and lavish coffins. Funeral spending is also criticized in policy debates. Both the official government as well as the Akan traditional leader, the Asantehene, have condemned this kind of spending as wasteful. In the rhetoric against funeral spending, the argument is often made that the amount of money currently spent on

funerals should be spent on the education of the deceased person's children or grandchildren to improve the future of young generations, rather than spent lavishly on the dead.

However, before one can pass judgement on funeral spending, it is important to see how money on funerals is spent. Through the transnational approach of the Ghana TransNet program, it was possible to conduct a multiplier analysis of funeral spending to assess in what sectors and in which locations funeral money enters the economy. One funeral, of a migrant who experienced the death of an important aunt, was studied in detail. The migrant, based in Amsterdam, comes from a rural village in the Ashanti region, where the funeral was held, and has members of the extended family based in Accra (the capital), Kumasi, (the provincial capital) and in the rural village itself. A researcher was present in all of these locations.

Mazzucato et al. (2004a) show that virtually all the costs of the funeral were borne by the migrant in The Netherlands, who spent approximately Euro 6,500, or seven times her monthly income, on this event. The largest amount, 40 per cent, went to businesses based in Accra such as a printing press, T-shirt factory, mortuary, coffin maker, ambulance services, dancing company, paint seller, undertaker, video production company and transport company. A further 20 per cent went to businesses in Kumasi, such as a chair and mattress rental company, tailors, liquor stores, cement sellers and transport services. Twenty percent went to village businesses such as a bar, vegetable and meat sellers, and local brewers. Although the amount spent in the village was the smallest, given the context, it had the largest effect. The local bar, for example, earned the equivalent of its average yearly income on the funeral weekend. Importantly, one fifth of the money spent on this rural funeral went to businesses in Amsterdam or to national and multinational companies such as Vlisco, KLM, Guinness, Coca Cola and calling card companies (more will be said on this in the next section).

Migrants thus have an important effect on their home country economy through investments in housing and business, but also, importantly, through funeral spending because of the spin-off effects on a large number of businesses that are involved in funeral ceremonies.

Migrants' double engagement

Migrants' contribution to their home country economy is beginning to be viewed positively by Dutch institutions dealing with development policy. Various attempts are being made by the Ministry of Foreign affairs, Dutch bilateral funding agencies (medefinancieringsorganisaties) and international organizations (such as the IOM and UNDP) to see whether development interventions can be channeled through migrants, given their more direct linkages with their home communities. On the other hand, however, policy makers of national issues of integration have negatively perceived migrants' contribution to their home country. The argument is made that migrants are oriented towards their home country and therefore invest little in their lives and their surroundings in The Netherlands. But does a migrant's involvement in her home country necessarily preclude an interest in conditions in The Netherlands? The transnational view and set-up of the research program has allowed us to follow

migrants' investments in both their home country and in The Netherlands. What follows is an analysis of Ghanaian migrants' objectives and their resulting spending patterns in The Netherlands.

Dual objectives

What objectives do Ghanaian migrants have? Virtually all Ghanaians have come to The Netherlands with the aim of earning enough money to build a house and start a business in Ghana. Most Ghanaians we have spoken with say that if one has a house and a business in Ghana, life there is of a much higher quality than in The Netherlands. As noted in the previous section, migrants invest frequently and large amounts in housing and business.

Another aspect that orients Ghanaians towards their home country, as for all migrants, is care for their family back home. Coming from a society in which economic circumstances are difficult and the risks associated with daily life (such as illness and death) are high, the migrant finds himself having to cater to the frequent requests of family back home. Migrant spending patterns show that of all the remittances sent in one year, 41 per cent are sent for the wellbeing of those back home.

While these various objectives orient Ghanaians towards their home country, things happen in the course of a migrant's stay in The Netherlands that lead to a double engagement. First, they may not be able to earn the necessary capital in the short time they had anticipated. Difficulties in getting work permits, low paying jobs and high prices paid for getting papers can all lengthen the time it takes to earn the necessary capital to build a house and start a business in Ghana. Second, many Ghanaians come to The Netherlands in their late 20s and 30s and during their stay here start a family. The children acculturate, get used to the Dutch way of life and do not want to leave The Netherlands permanently, or the parents feel that a Dutch education may serve their children well in the future. Both of these considerations make Ghanaian parents stay in The Netherlands longer than anticipated. Slowly, therefore, and although they may continue to say that they want to go back to Ghana, their actions, as viewed in terms of their spending patterns, become doubly oriented: they engage in investments both in Ghana and in The Netherlands.

Three main typologies can be distinguished in the way migrants juggle the different commitments resulting from their double engagement. There are those migrants who are struggling to make ends meet and therefore cannot help their families back home. Thus, while their objectives are oriented towards Ghana, their actions are focussed on making a living in The Netherlands. A second type of strategy is a 'play-it-by-ear' strategy. Migrants do not make plans but will help their family back home when they have some extra money, or invest in a house. In an emergency situation, such as in the case of illness of a family member, a migrant will give what he has but is set back in his personal objectives, whether they are oriented towards Ghana or The Netherlands. The third type of strategy is to finance a business for the family, the income from which can be used to support the family back home, or to finance the trip of a family member to a developed country. In this latter case, it is the new migrant who takes over the responsibility for the care of the family back home. In both cases,

the migrant 'earns' the right to focus on her own personal objectives, having cared for the family. These personal objectives are often multi-sited.

David⁹ provides an illustration of how migrants can have personal objectives that are oriented in both The Netherlands and in Ghana, and of how they create space for these personal objectives while juggling extended family responsibilities.

David is constructing a house in Ghana, and aims to become an important leader in his church in Amsterdam South East. His activities to become a church leader take much of his time and money. His mother in Kumasi is taking care of his two 12-year-old daughters. She is in ill health and cannot engage in her trading activities anymore. David sends her money for her upkeep and that of his daughters. Recently, she asked David for money to invest in a trading business. Despite the fact that she is his mother, one of the most important family members in Akan matrilineal society, David refused his mother's request because he had already helped her to set up a business but she had apparently mismanaged the activity. Because of his previous help, David could now refuse his mother's request without incurring any social sanctions.

Other than setting up a business, another form of income-generating activity is the purchase of state bonds. Ivan bought the bonds and specified his mother as the beneficiary. His mother automatically withdraws money for her daily upkeep as well as for her health bills. In this way Ivan has freed himself from having to remit regularly and has been able to purchase a home in The Netherlands.

Ghanaian migrants thus have objectives oriented towards The Netherlands, but what do their spending patterns show about their participation in the Dutch economy? In many discussions of whether migrants support the neighborhoods and cities of The Netherlands in which they live, the focus is on whether they start their own businesses or buy their own homes. However, migrants, like any inhabitant, can support the neighborhood, city or country in which they live in many different ways. The major non-remittance spending of Ghanaian migrants is analyzed to see if and in what ways they support the economy of The Netherlands. Table 1 presents the major spending items and their geographic destination based on the transaction study conducted with 30 Ghanaian migrants over a one-year period.

Table 1. Geographic destination of largest non-remittance expenditure items of Amsterdam based Ghanaian migrants

Neighborhood	Netherlands		International
	Amsterdam	Other	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school fees • church/association donations • food shopping • liquor (for celebrations of rites of passage) • services (child care, telephone call centers, money transfers, travel agencies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • house purchase (real estate agencies) • rent (housing corporations) • car purchase (2nd hand stores) • housing and household refuse taxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dutch wax cloth (Vlisco) • income taxes • health care taxes • <i>lawyers</i> • <i>foreign police</i> • “<i>connection men</i>”¹ • <i>Dutch embassy in Ghana</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • international phone calls • electronic appliances • airline tickets • shipments via sea freight • “<i>connection men</i>”¹

Source: Transaction study 2003-2004.

Notes: characters in italic indicate items that represent non-productive investments.

¹Connection men refer to those persons who facilitate the process of obtaining travel or residency papers in exchange for a payment.

The non-remittance spending reported in Table 1 shows that many expenditure items contribute to businesses and services that are offered at the neighborhood, city and national level. Not all of the spending, however, leads to growth in the formal economy. A lot of money is absorbed into the formal and informal economies of identity papers (see italic items in Table 1). Substantial amounts are spent on lawyer’s fees. Some of these lawyers are of very low quality, not having specialised in migration law, and can cause delays and ultimately the denial of a visa request due to improper handling of the application procedure (pers. com. head of visa office, Dutch consulate, Accra, March 26, 2004). Fees charged by the Dutch embassy for the legalization of documents and for visas can also lead to substantial spending. Legalization alone cost Euro122 in 2002 and, due to the highly stringent procedures, a person may have to pay the fee several times before succeeding. A detailed verification process, conducted by the embassy, of the information provided by migrants leads them to hire people to oversee the verification procedure. Such people charged, in 2003-4, around Euro2,000. The immigration police have raised the fees for staying and for permanent residency permits eight and four fold respectively in two years (Table 2). For some migrants, this amounts to costs equivalent to their monthly income. One of the most substantial spending items of all, after spending on the purchase or construction of one’s own house, is the cost of obtaining papers in the informal economy. When it proves to be impossible to obtain a visa via legal means, a migrant will search for someone with papers who is willing to marry or adopt them. In 2003-4, the going rate for such a transaction was between Euro10,000-15,000. This does not take into account the loss of money due to deals gone wrong. The other major cost is that of using other people’s papers to work. The unwritten rule is that the owner of the papers keeps 30 per cent of the net salary earned by the

undocumented migrant. Finally, there is the cost of the lost opportunity of decent work when someone cannot obtain a working permit. Many of the jobs available in the informal economy are physically stressful, such as cleaning jobs in which people inhale strong cleaning solvents all day or have to repeat the same movement for large parts of the day. Ironically, in a few cases we have studied, migrants spent approximately 10 years acquiring legal status, during which time they worked two cleaning jobs a day and when they finally achieved legal status, had too many physical ailments to continue working and ended up receiving welfare payments from the Dutch state.

Table 2. Cost (in Euros) of formal and informal economy of identity papers, The Netherlands 2001, 2003

	2001	2003
Staying permit ^a	56	430
Renewal of staying permit ^a	0	285
Staying permit for unlimited time ^a	227	890
Legalization of birth certificate ^a		122
'Help' with legalization procedure ^b		2,000
Marriage partner ^b		10,000 – 15,000
Use of other person's work permit ^b		30% of salary earned
'Typical' immigration lawyer fee ^b		1,000
Prison stay for two months ^b		4,000

Source: ^awww. ind. nl/NL/verblijfwijzer and de *Volkscrant* October 2003

^bfieldwork

This formal (lawyers, embassies, immigration police) and informal (connection men, marriage partners, illegal jobs) economy that arises around identity papers leads to both benefits and costs. Who benefits and who loses? Benefits accrue to the Dutch embassy as well as to the immigration police through the high fees charged for visas. Lawyers, both competent and incompetent, gain many clients in the thousands of Ghanaian migrants seeking to legalise their stay. Connection men in Ghana and in The Netherlands gain from the fees they charge for helping migrants obtain identity papers. Finally, people with working permits, be they foreigners or Dutch nationals, gain from the fees they charge for a marriage or for 'lending' their papers. For the most part, these monies go either to the Dutch state apparatus of identity paper documentation or enter the black market of identity papers.

Who loses? The answer is clearly the migrants, who have to disburse so much money for things that are not directly related to their objectives either in The Netherlands or in Ghana. The second loser is the Dutch state, because much of this flow of money is not registered and therefore escapes taxation. Furthermore, the long periods that people have to wait to acquire legal status also end up costing the Dutch state, in terms of the welfare payments it needs to make to care for those people who work in sub-standard conditions for many years while illegal. Finally, a third loser is the

Ghanaian economy, which receives fewer remittances from its migrants when their resources are absorbed by the economy (both formal and informal) of identity papers.

In summary, we can conclude two things. Firstly, the engagement of migrants in their home country does not prevent them from also being engaged in the host country economy. In fact, most migrants have a double allegiance, both to the country from which they come and the country in which they reside. They develop strategies to enable themselves to attain objectives both in The Netherlands and in Ghana. Secondly, from a productivity point of view, much money is wasted on the informal economy of identity papers. The current spending patterns of migrants leads us to believe that, were these resources not taken up by obtaining identity documents (visas, passports, work permits), they would be spent in ways that contribute to the Dutch economy at the neighborhood, city or national level, to multinational corporations, and to the local economies of the cities and villages of Ghana.

Broken dreams, missed opportunities: a lose-lose-lose situation

It should not be assumed that the double engagement of Ghanaian migrants towards The Netherlands and Ghana described above will always exist. The hardening policy towards migrants of the last few years in The Netherlands can lead to embittered feelings and ultimately the departure of some for greener pastures (often the UK, but we have also come across people going to Belgium and Italy). It could therefore be argued that the policies are having the right effect; after all, they aim to make migrants leave or prevent them from entering. While there is no proof that policies are achieving the latter aim, there are many cases amongst Ghanaian ‘illegal’ migrants in which the migrant decides to leave The Netherlands. However, the analysis of spending patterns from a transnational point of view raises the question of whether this is a desirable outcome. On the one hand, a migrant’s ability to contribute to her home country’s economy is set back by the efforts that it will take to integrate into a new country and the resources that this will absorb. On the other hand, it is those who have a higher chance of making it elsewhere, i.e. those who are educated and have papers allowing them to travel, who leave. These people represent lost opportunities for the Dutch economy. Joy illustrates this lose-lose situation.

Joy was a community nurse in Ghana. She had practiced her profession for ten years before coming to The Netherlands in 1995 to join her Ghanaian husband. She became pregnant before regularizing her stay. She had complications during her pregnancy and had to receive specialised care. Her medical bills rose rapidly to a total of about Dfl. 2,000 (approximately Euro 900) of which she was only able to pay a fraction. The doctors who assisted her, knowing her situation, decided to overlook the remaining costs and mentioned their solidarity with her as a fellow health worker. Joy was extremely grateful for this act of kindness and was very eager to begin her life in this hospitable country. Within two years she was able to regularise her stay and find a job in elderly care. I met Joy for the first time when she was making her last attempts at getting her Ghanaian nursing certificate validated in The Netherlands, after working for six years in the lowest ranks of elderly care. The agency charged with this task had already rejected her request once but said that, if she could produce more certificates, documents and exam scores from Ghana, they would reconsider their decision. I was involved in carrying some of the documents to Ghana so that

they could be legalised by the Dutch embassy. Considerable coordination is necessary between Ghana, a country in which documentation is not easy to come by, and The Netherlands in order to produce all the documents necessary. This can often lead to frustration for a migrant who needs to rely on someone back home to take the time from his or her daily occupations to travel to the capital city and wait in long lines. Reaching the necessary people in Ghana via telephone is also not always straightforward. Due to the numerous transactions necessary to get her documents legalised, Joy missed the deadline to have her nursing certificate officially validated. She thus had to continue at the lowest rank of the elderly care in which she essentially cleaned people's houses. 'Cleaning windows, cleaning windows, this is not what I studied for!' In my subsequent visits in the year that followed, Joy complained with increasing frequency about her dissatisfaction with what she was doing and how that affected her self-esteem.

At the same time Joy's daughter, Angelina, by now seven years old, was encountering difficulties in elementary school. She had to repeat one year and her teacher insisted that Angelina go to a speech therapist. Joy and her husband did not feel their daughter needed speech therapy but they followed the teacher's advice. After a series of visits, the therapist concluded that Angelina did not have a learning disability. The teacher rejected this conclusion and insisted that Angelina continue to go to therapy. At this point Joy and her husband were extremely annoyed. The therapist suggested that they change Angelina's school because even she found the teacher's behavior out of proportion.

These two encounters, one with a Dutch state that imposes virtually impossible conditions for someone from a developing country to satisfy in order to gain accreditation and the other with what she perceived to be a racist teacher in the public school system, brought Joy to the conclusion that there was no future for her and her family in The Netherlands. She confessed that, at 45 years of age and after all that she had invested in creating her life in The Netherlands, she did not feel like moving to another country and having to start all over again, as though she were a young adult. She had been through that and knows how much energy it takes. Nonetheless, she decided to try her lot in the UK where, she has heard from fellow Ghanaian nurses there, it is possible to have one's Ghanaian nursing diploma recognised by the authorities. She used all her savings to make the move and has temporarily stopped financing a nephew's education in Ghana.

Joy's story is a progressive disillusionment with Dutch society. It begins with her gratefulness towards The Netherlands for the medical help she received, her eagerness to practice her profession once she got her staying permit and ends with her having low self-esteem and being disillusioned about her daughter's future here. Ironically, this was taking place in a period when The Netherlands was experiencing a shortage of nurses and began a policy of bringing over nurses from South Africa. Joy's story is about broken dreams for her, a missed opportunity for the Dutch state to make use of resources already present in the country and one less educated person in Ghana: a lose-lose-lose situation.

Conclusions

A transnational view of migrants' livelihoods, that is, looking at migrants' lives simultaneously from the point of view of the home and the host country, highlights that migrants have a double engagement. This paper has argued that the largest remittances of Ghanaian migrants are spent on housing, business and funerals. These investments contribute to the development of the Ghanaian economy. While housing and business investments are covered by migration literature, funerals are often not considered. However, funeral ceremonies sustain a diverse range of businesses and services adding to the economic activities and employment possibilities in Ghana. At the same time, while migrants invest in their own country, they are also engaged in creating their lives in The Netherlands. This leads them to various types of spending and investment that benefit the Dutch economy at different levels, the neighborhood, the city and the nation, as well as the global economy (through their consumption of internationally provided goods and services). This attests to migrants' engagement in two or more economies and shows that engagement in one country does not preclude engagement in another.

The bi-focal view of migrants' lives adopted in this paper leads us to two policy recommendations. The first concerns analyses of the benefits of migration. These analyses need to consider the effects migrants have on both home and host economies. This implies that more data needs to be collected on migrants living in The Netherlands with regard to their expenditure and the final destinations of that expenditure. Only then can a true evaluation of the benefits and costs of migration be made. Furthermore, data needs to be collected for the rapidly increasing 'new' migrant groups present in The Netherlands. Currently, as for example in the recent policy document published by The Netherlands Bureau for Economic and Policy Analysis entitled *'Immigration and the Dutch Economy'* (Roodenburg et al. 2003), the costs and benefits of migration are based on the only statistics the Dutch government collects, namely those pertaining to guest workers and migrants from the ex-colonies. Because new migrant groups, such as Ghanaians, exhibit different trends and face different contexts from guest workers and migrants from the ex-colonies, any costs and benefit calculations based on statistics from these latter groups are bound to be inaccurate. National data collection exercises thus need to be broadened beyond the 'traditional' migrant groups so that policies can be based on current trends rather than on the dynamics of groups facing the consequences of Dutch policies from more than half a century ago.

The second policy recommendation is that development and integration should not be seen as separate issues, as they are currently formulated in most policy debates. Development and integration fall under the mandates of different ministries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is concerned with development in the countries from which most migrants come, while the Ministries of Justice and of the Interior are concerned with keeping migration to a minimum and with migrant integration. From a development perspective, migrants are potential new partners for bilateral funding agencies conducting development projects in the Third World. From a Dutch national perspective, migrants are seen as a potential threat to the Dutch economy.

This paper argues instead that migrants' simultaneous engagement in both their home and host countries means that development and integration are highly related.

Ghanaian migrants contribute to the Dutch economy in a variety of ways, even when some of their objectives are oriented towards Ghana. Policies that impede migrants from legally participating in the Dutch economy are creating the largest impediment for migrants to integrate within Dutch society and at the same time they hamper migrants' possibilities to foster growth in their home country's economy. Furthermore, they create a perfect breeding ground for an exploitative informal economy built around the market for identity documents.

Is it possible to change this lose-lose-lose into a win-win-win situation? Migration and integration policy should be based on the reality that migrants have a double loyalty: migrants are just as interested in the wellbeing of those back home as in creating lives for themselves in The Netherlands. Policies that facilitate their living in The Netherlands would increase their ability to juggle this double engagement. Such policies would create space for more investments in their home economy while facilitating their more active participation in the host country economy, with less waste of resources into the informal economy.

Policies should be designed to allow the Dutch economy to make use of the human capital that it has in the country while allowing migrants to lead more satisfactory lives. This means, for example, having visa and diploma equivalency procedures that are more in tune with the bureaucratic realities of the countries where migrants come from. They should not be based on unrealistic levels of documentation from these countries. Ironically, assisting migrants in their double objectives, including allowing them to be loyal to their home country, and helping them to lead more satisfactory lives in The Netherlands, fosters feelings of engagement towards The Netherlands.

Endnotes

¹ Some authors (Pries 2002, Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999) give examples of transnational phenomena that pre-date the revolution in information and communication technology: 17th and 18th century artists, scientists and aristocrats in Europe whose existence entailed travelling constantly throughout Europe; transnational networks of Muslim scientists in the 18th century; Venetian, Genoese and Hanse merchants throughout medieval Europe; and enclaves of commercial representatives engaged in international trade for Portuguese, Dutch and English in successive stages of the European colonization of Africa and the Americas. However, a critical and historical assessment of different waves of migration in New York (Foner 1997) argues that although the phenomenon is not only of a recent nature, new processes and dynamics are in place.

² Interestingly studies before the 1970s had a more transnational perspective. The Manchester studies of the 1940s, for example, document the back and forth migration that characterised the Copperbelt in southern Africa (Gluckman 1942; Wilson 1941, 1942).

³ www2.fmg.uva.nl/ghanatransnet.

⁴ Transactions are defined as communication (through telephone, post, cassettes, physical travel, or computer) or movement of goods or money.

⁵ Economic institutions are those commonly held categories such as rules, laws, or norms of conduct that guide economic action and define the structure of economies.

⁶ In 1995 these new migrant groups amounted to 435,000 'legal' migrants in The Netherlands coming from the Third World and Eastern Europe, as compared to 280,000 from Turkey, 233,000 from Morocco, 287,000 from Surinam, and 95,000 from the Antilles (SCP 1998: 241).

⁷ A reliable estimate of total Ghanaians in The Netherlands in 2000 is 40,000 based on Ghanaians in The Netherlands who registered to vote for the presidential elections in Ghana in 2000.

⁸ One of the major ethnic groups in Ghana that comprises the most numerous group amongst Ghanaian migrants in The Netherlands (Nimako 2000).

⁹ All personal names have been changed to protect the privacy of respondents.

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