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Abstract

The paper analyses how identities and obligations operate within the spaces of transnational communities and how this affects development. Within spatially diffuse communities identities are fluid and overlapping, as are the obligations to multiple others - be that kin, ethnic group or nation – in different localities. The paper is concerned with the institutions through which these identities are formed and obligations are realised. These include families, clans, hometown associations, and religious organisations, which link people 'abroad' to people 'at home'. I understand these spaces as a form of public sphere involving a 'deterritorialised' citizenship, which has been termed 'embedded cosmopolitanism'. In this way obligations are not legally defined but operate as part of the moral universe of those concerned. The case study is based upon recent fieldwork on Ghanaians in the UK and their connections to other Ghanaians outside Ghana and to those at home. Research reveals how these complex networks of affiliation operate as well as the ways in which the state seeks to 'capture' support from them and how migrants selectively redefine both ethnic identities and family boundaries.

Embedded cosmopolitanism and the politics of obligation: The Ghanaian diaspora and development[i]

1. Introduction

There is a proverb in Ghana that "Whenever the trap is loosened it will go back". The implication is that migrants, whether within Ghana or abroad, who have been 'loosened' from their homes will eventually return, even if that is to be buried. There is clearly a strong moral and social obligation amongst migrants to connect with and support 'homes'. This paper seeks to analyse the politics and geographies of these obligations in the context of transnational social fields and to assess their impacts on development. It needs stating at the outset that these diasporic networks are largely elite-based, reflecting both the higher level of involvement by elites in, and methodological issues of snowballing through, formal organisations.

I begin by examining how migration forces us to think about development and territory in new ways. This leads to a consideration of debates around cosmopolitanism and the complex dynamics of diaspora as a form of transnational community, which sets the parameters for the range of obligations we find within them. These obligations centre on forms of citizenship incorporating a variety of norms and values, which are (re)negotiated as circumstances change and may be backed by sanctions. Having established these general forms of obligation I turn to the case study of Ghanaians in the UK and hometown associations in Ghana. Evidence suggests that diasporic support is important in development 'back home' but that, not surprisingly, the understanding of these obligations and their impacts are neither static nor conflict free. One of the key findings was how the internationalised Ghanaian state seeks to capture the energies and resources of migrants for national development. I conclude by drawing out the implications of studying diasporas for political and development geography more generally.

2. Rethinking migration and development

The focus of this article is the relationship between transnational belonging and different understandings and practices of development. My understanding of development is broad and I start this section by clarifying how I view the linkages between migration and development. In doing so I distance myself from studies of migration that are overly economistic and structuralist, focusing largely on international labour market drivers and rationalistic reciprocity (Papastergiadis, 2000). While undoubtedly important, such approaches often ignore the complex interplay of structure and agency, particularly how cultural questions of identity and belonging shape developmental obligations and flows. In doing so it is vital to rethink the connections between the apparently stable territories of states, which have largely been seen as the 'containers' of development, and those dynamic and differently territorialised networks in which migrants exist.

In examining the links between development and migration I follow Hart (2001) who distinguishes between 'D' and 'd' development, wherein the former is purposive development interventions and the latter refers to the uneven unfolding of capitalism. She sees a Polanyian 'double movement' linking the two in which commodification generates a counter-tendency seeking to contain social dislocation. As Cowen and Shenton (1996) argue, for much of this time the state was the vehicle for managing this protective D-development role, wherein citizenship was located in processes of national welfare. The purposive deepening of capitalist relations of the past 30 years has served to challenge both the centrality of the state's role in D-development, without negating its protective functions. Burawoy (2003) suggests transnational society, including but going beyond diasporic groups, can thus be seen as a response to the commodification of land, labour and money, which impels people to migrate.

This tying of development to nation-state has been challenged in a number of ways, which are germane to our consideration of migration and development. First, for states in Africa in particular any national identity was compromised by the artificial boundaries of colonial balkanisation. While D-development came to function as a unifying doctrine, these political communities were largely mosaics of more localised belonging, wherein various forms of 'self help' operated, such as hometown associations (McNulty and Lawrence, 1996). I discuss in more detail later the linkages between development and these voluntary associations. Second, the failure of the post-colonial, developmental state has resulted in people moving outside of their states, creating what has been termed the 'neo-diaspora' (Koser, 2003). Third, the neo-liberal turn has not only deepened insecurity for many, but has seen an attack on the state and revivified development as being based on individual energies, civil society, and the market; thus blurring the D/d distinction. Much of this has seen a turn towards localism (Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Hart, 2001) that largely ignores the ways in which communities operate extra-locally (Bebbington, 2000). As Trager (2001: 8) notes "despite an increasing interest in development circles in community-based, local, grassroots development, there has been little attention paid to the role of those from a community but not currently residing in it" (Trager, 2001: 8). These combined forces have greatly complicated the linkages between migration and development (Mohan, 2002; Mohan and Zack-Williams, 2002).

Here I sketch out what are the key linkages between a less economistic reading of migration and an understanding of the interplay of D/d development. Here I found Gibson-Graham's project of diversifying 'the economic' helpful, since she argues for "unhinging notions of development from those of growth and especially of capitalist expansion" (2004: 411). What is most interesting for me is how she reveals the ways in which different development logics operate simultaneously. First, kinship-based support is developmental insofar as migration may be a survival strategy for families. Talking of Africa, commentators note that "what is new is that making use of kin overseas is becoming an essential strategy for survival and improving life for some populations" (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000: 134). Migration can also increase capabilities in the sense that Sen (1990) uses it, by either enabling the migrant to improve their own education or by funding their family's schooling through remittances.

Second, in terms of development action, migrants straddle and blur the D/d divide, since some of their activity is a form of petty capitalism (Portes, 1997; Watts, 2003), which draws strategically on ties of kinship, ethnicity and nationality and can include innovation and entrepreneurship (Ong, 1993). Other action involves community self-help on the basis of religious, hometown and other group affinities (McNulty and Lawrence, 1996; Woods, 1994; Honey and Okafor, 1998; Trager, 2001; Orozco, 2003). Of particular interest for this paper are hometown organisations, which link the ancestral town or birthplace of migrants to a partner organisation in their place of resettlement and are largely development oriented (McNulty and Lawrence, 1996; Orozco, 2003). Barkan *et al* (1991) see these organisations as fulfilling various roles including being reservoirs of 'civil virtue', as a shadow state, as bulwarks against state power, as local growth machines, as brokers between state and local society, and as ways of reaffirming attachments to place.

Third, while purposive, state-based development has been challenged, states remain important actors in shaping migrants' opportunities, identities and commitments to development (Olwig, 2001). In addition to hometown associations forming an important element of civil society in rural areas we shall see how states actively seek to capture migrants' resources. Goldberg (1998) terms these 'extraterritorialised states' as they pursue state-building projects beyond the national borders. In this way states benefit due to the burden of D-development falling on families and communities, by encouraging migrant inward investment, and by political parties seeking diasporic support. Either way, the activities of migrants act as a means of averting rationality and legitimacy crises.

3. Diasporic citizenship, cosmopolitanism and developmental obligations

The foregoing discussion suggests that in order to understand migration and development we need to reconceptualise the relationships between political community, territory and obligation. To a large extent this entails decentring, but not discarding, the state as the nexus of development. It is here that I build on theories of cosmopolitanism as a way of unpacking the different and overlapping forms of developmental obligations outlined above.

3.1 Embedded cosmopolitanism and the dynamics of diaspora

Cosmopolitanism usefully focuses attention on political community beyond national borders. One possible implication of this is to valorise a "moral community made up by the humanity of all human beings" (Nussbaum, 2002: 7). Although posited against defensive nationalisms, or a less charged patriotism this 'impartialist' cosmopolitanism (Erskine, 2002) is problematic, because it can abdicate responsibility for specific care behind a discourse of abstract and universal love. As Parekh (2003: 12) argues

> "Cosmopolitanism ignores special ties and attachments to one's community, is too abstract to generate the emotional and moral energy needed to live up to its austere imperatives, and can also easily become an excuse for ignoring the well-being of the community one knows and can directly influence in the name of an unrealistic pursuit of the abstract level of universal well-being"

So, in rejecting the bounded territory of the state as the pre-eminent political community, they replace it with a non-geography of universalism; what MacIntyre terms 'citizens of nowhere' (1988, cited in Erskine, 2002: 461). In analysing diaspora and development I want to probe the roles played by less abstract 'emotional and moral energy' and its implications for the multiple senses of development outlined above.

This can, in part, be addressed by starting with an ontology of multiple identities, most of which exceed or defy national boundaries. If identities are malleable and indeterminate then the boundaries that supposedly contain them become less stable and absolute. O'Neill calls for "a less exaggerated view both of boundaries and of (national) identities, which acknowledges that both can be permeable and variable" (1996: 301). This means that there may be a decoupling of membership of political community from territory as well as the likelihood of belonging to multiple such communities. Erskine (2000; 2002) calls this 'embedded cosmopolitanism', which

> "…offers an alternative to a strictly state-centric or spatially bounded interpretation of the morally constitutive community by combining an account of the moral agent as embedded in particular ties and loyalties with a powerful critique of the communitarian penchant for invoking associations with borders, set territories and given memberships" (Erskine, 2000: 575).

These communities are territorialised in a dynamic way, which sees multi-local networks bound, however partially and temporally, by a shared morality and attachment to 'home'. As Byfield (2000: 2) argues "the creation of diaspora is in large measure contingent on a diasporic identity that links the constituent parts of the diaspora to a homeland". This suggests a reworked and dynamic relationship between territory, identity and community.

Such reworking is captured in Amin's (2002: 386) call for a "topology marked by overlapping near-far relations and organisational connections that are not reducible to scalar spaces". As Yeoh *et al* (2003: 212 & 213) note "Transnational identities, while fluid and flexible, are also at the same time grounded in particular places at particular times…identities are constantly (re)worked, not in a freewheeling manner but through simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society". Hence, it is crucial to conceptualise transnationalisation as a long, multi-

stepped and often inter-generational social process that produces proliferating and overlapping communities. Seen thus places become "nodes in relational settings, and as a site of situated practices" (Amin, 2002: 391). My comparison of London and a new town, Milton Keynes, attempts to analyse the difference that place makes to the construction and operation of diasporic networks.

The situated practices involved in constructing transnational communities include "intellectual creativity, diasporic quotidian culture, subjective consciousness, and political action" (Werbner, 2000: 6). For example, Amit (2002) tells of how a low level of transnational community consciousness evolved out of parents taking their children to the local athletics club in suburban Canada. By sharing this everyday, parental activity names were put to faces and relationships developed out of "what is held in common by members rather than in terms of oppositional categories between insiders and outsiders" (Amit, 59). This is a very different form of collective identification compared to the ascribed communities that migrants might be expected to belong to on the basis of some pre-existing tie. In reality both forms of identification - the ascribed and the more intimate - feed into one another and cannot be maintained by appeals to an imagined community, but often through co-present interaction (Urry, 2004).

3.2 Diasporic obligations and development
What the preceding discussion of embedded cosmopolitanism and political community shows is that obligations can only be specified and analysed within the moral universe of the community under investigation since "different categories of members…stand in different kinds of relationship to and have different kinds of obligations to their polity" (Parekh, 1996: 266). I also argue, following Gibson-Graham (2004), that different logics can co-exist simultaneously even if for heuristic purposes I have differentiated them in what follows. The question of obligation within current discussions of development (UNDP, 2000) tend to stress legalistic rights, which oblige certain institutions to deliver public goods and reflect more general debates focusing on obligations as obeyance of the law (Parekh, 1996).

A more open understanding of obligations are "social actions that the moral agent ought to undertake and his failure to do which reflects badly on him and renders him liable to social disapproval" (Parekh, 1996: 264). Conceptualised in this way, obligations may not require sanctions - legal or social - and even where they do, the existence of sanctions presupposes the existence of autonomous obligations. Obligations, according to Parekh, are acquired in various ways. First, they are acquired by engaging in specific practices such as making a promise or entering a contractual arrangement. Such practices tend to make obligations relatively concrete and unambiguous. Secondly, obligations may be acquired by voluntary or involuntary membership of an organisation, group or community, like the hometown organisations we mentioned earlier and analyse below. These organisational obligations are more general, not easily catalogued, open to personal interpretation and subject to well-defined sanctions. Third, obligations may be acquired by virtue of being human and are considered to be inherent in our humanity. Such obligations are necessarily vague, shaped by morality and are easily overlooked; those which are at the centre of the impartialist cosmopolitanism mentioned earlier.

Now I want to examine the specific moral community of diaspora to flesh out the generic forms of obligation identified by Parekh. Werbner (2002) terms diasporic politics as one of 'co-responsibility' both within place and across space. But given that we have different diasporas and different sources of obligation it is important to specify more clearly what these are, even if in practice - as we shall see below - these forms of obligations bleed into one another.

A starting point is work on households and remittances. From early theories about migrants acting atomistically there has been a move to situate the migrant within the decision-making

unit of the household (de Haan and Rogaly, 2002). From this, migration becomes a means of spreading risk, increasing income and investing in human capital. By this reasoning the migrant is then strongly obliged to send money back with a great pressure on them to 'succeed'. The logic is partly one of rational reciprocity since the obligation is a way of 're-paying' the family. By such logic "remittances may be repayment for the cost of migrant education and transportation" (Agarwal and Horowitz, 2002: 2034). Other forms of calculative obligations are those of informal social security in which migrants support housing, infrastructure and the welfare of kin as a means of ensuring support in old age and retirement (Arhinful, 2001). While this literature foregrounds utility-maximising decision-making it is less able to explain group action and/or overcome the potential free-rider problem.

These more rationalistic analyses can be enriched by work on the role of socialisation, kinship, and gender in transnational networks (Silvey, 2004). These networks may be based around cultural affinities, but these are by no means static and are differentially exploited depending on market and political opportunities; what Ong (1993) refers to as 'flexible citizenship'. Ong demonstrates how socialisation into family norms enables and constrains both men and women. As one of Ong's informants states "I think it is very important for sons to carry on the family business, something that has been built up by your father. To me that is the number one obligation" (ibid: 756). Such analyses help us explain household and kinship dynamics as well as their linkages to other forms of socialised action such as loyalty to ethnic group, clan, or nation.

In order to move beyond the household and kin group some studies utilise social capital. These show how trust within ascribed ethnic groupings creates mutual exchange of resources and information. Ammassari and Black (2001) relate social capital to other forms of capital, but they fail to specify upon what social relations this trust is founded beyond appeals to family and community. The lesson is that theories must specify the source of trust that effects obligation rather than simply identifying its presence. Radcliffe (2004) argues that such 'black box' views of social capital undertheorise social relations and she urges researchers to be more specific about the types of norms and networks that exist. In my study, as I will detail below, the UK migrant networks were largely elite-based, with an emphasis on building cultural capital in the context of racism. By unpacking the black box we get a more nuanced understanding of process, with Lyon (2000) observing that the sources of obligations are found in "reputations, sanctions and moral norms" (2000: 665). Alongside questions of respect and status this forces us to consider gendered roles and relations as well as the effect of sanctions, either actual or threatened, which bolster the obligations (Goldberg, 1998; van der Geest, 1998). For example, MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga discuss *lusolo* which is a Congolese belief that "success in commerce is a gift that is inherited in the family and that the wealth it brings belongs to the family and should be shared among them" (2000: 126). These 'pressures for redistribution' are strong and move us away from the rational choice logic of those studies of reciprocity outlined above.

Reciprocity, social capital and socialisation theses tend to promote views of obligations as the product of factors internal to the community under consideration. But clearly communities are relational so we need to look at how obligations emerge from shared 'bonds' produced by, amongst other things, ethnic and racial intolerance amongst 'host' communities. Movements such as Garveyism have generally emerged from the diaspora (Howe, 1998) and sought to link black people on the basis of skin colour and racialised exploitation. While these bonds were often legitimated by claims to racial essence (Gilroy, 1993) their contemporary relevance is that a common sense and/or experience of exploitation is an axis of solidarity and support. For example, MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga show how Congolese illegal migrants form a shared identity around 'la debrouillardise', meaning to fend for yourself in order to survive. At a wider scale political-military struggles have fashioned a strong sense of resilience and respect with the Eritrean

diaspora pulling together, in part, as a result of "a shared sense of pride in having won an independent homeland" (Al-Ali *et al*, 2001: 595).

The linkages between diaspora and development are oriented around kinship, community and the state. Embedded within these are multiple obligations that have their sources in different experiences and relationships. As I have tried to stress while we can make an analytical distinction between forms of obligation, in practice they are not exclusive. Rather, to understand the totality of these relationships requires qualitative examination of migrants' experiences and the nature and effects of multiple connections of presence and absence.

4. Methodology
In seeking to understand the overlapping nature of obligations within a diasporic community I adopted a constructivist methodology in that I wanted the members of the Ghanaian diaspora to identify and 'map' their diasporic networks. This entailed a 'multi-site ethnography' (Marcus, 1995 in Vertovec, 1999: 457) in which the activities of transnational communities were traced from familiar sites in the UK back to organisations and individuals in Ghana. Given the emphasis on hometown organisations I began with these and, as far as possible, tried to elicit how the people defined development (Trager, 2001) by asking a series of open-ended questions about what 'support' was provided to those at home, either individually or collectively.

In the UK I focused on Ghanaians in Milton Keynes, a new city in the South, and contrasted them with those in London. The reasoning being that for many movement to Milton Keynes, mainly from London, was relatively recent and I wanted to see whether this re-location, and the embourgeoisement that it potentially signalled, affected their relationship with the Ghanaian diaspora(s) and support of home. I used semi-structured interviews with members of the organisations and built up an organisational web through these informants. Most of the Ghanaians in the UK were involved in a multi-stepped process of transnational migration. The overwhelming majority had left Ghana from Accra or another large city rather than their ancestral hometown and thus had ties to a number of locations in Ghana. Most of the informants are well established with a range of non-Ghanaian affiliations particularly based on church membership.

The Ghana fieldwork was largely with organisations from the Kwahu region of Southern Ghana as well as their Accra-based organisations. Those from Kwahu are highly migratory, both internally and internationally (van der Geest, 1997). I conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives of hometown association, local government, 'traditional authorities', as well as umbrella organisations representing a wider Kwahu constituency. Those interviewed were the opinion leaders and tended to be male and middle- or old-aged.

The problems with the fieldwork were, first, in using formal organisations as a way into these networks, I tended to meet quite prosperous migrants, who were a self-selecting group. Work elsewhere (Lentz, 1994; Woods, 1994) suggests that activism within these groups is a way of expressing and cementing status, which means that their standpoint on diasporic relationships must be taken as partial and particular. It also tended to focus responses around inter-organisational flows as opposed to things like entrepreneurship. Related to this was the use of semi-structured interviews and autobiographies in order to capture the totality of migrants' journeys (Thompson and Tyagi, 1998). Since life stories "tend to conform to established conventions concerning what sort of life is credible and socially acceptable" (Olwig, 2001: 14; see also Fine, 1994) my questioning sought to probe respondents' value judgements about self and other. Another problem with working within a transnational field is that the routes you follow are not necessarily the ones you envisaged. Schein (1998) terms this 'itinerant ethnography', which "is siteless, and lacks any fixed duration" (p.294). The result of following networks through those involved leads into circuitous routes that require patience and reflexive analysis of where you are and why. What proved difficult was tracking

precisely the connections between the UK and Ghana, so that rather than straightforwardly picking up contacts identified in the UK, I ended up with almost an entirely new network. Ideally itinerant ethnography also requires flexibility to trace multiple connections, but I had neither the time nor resources to do this and, instead, traversed the more obvious routes between reasonably well-defined sites. In my case this was the metropoles of the former colonial power, the hometowns of migrants and their branches in Accra.

5. Migration, obligation and development in the Ghanaian diaspora
Earlier I discussed how migration and development could be addressed by complicating the relationship between political community and territory. This involves examining how displacement and relocation affects identity and how the proliferation of communities continually reworks the relationships with homes and the forms of development activity this entails. I characterised these around kinship, hometown and voluntary associations, and the state. In this section I address each of these in turn, though it is clear that in the practices of those concerned such divisions are less meaningful.

5.1 'When it spoils the town, it spoils us': respect and civic pride
The key axes around which obligations are constructed and negotiated are kinship and community. In both cases respondents talked about respect (van der Geest, 1997; Sennett, 2003) as a way of capturing a constellation of emotions and practices that define what it means to be a 'good' citizen. Such shared values do not imply consensus, more a common currency or frame of intelligibility so that negotiations can occur. Gaining respect within the kin group and community is not fixed, but key elements include securing the well-being of the extended family and contributing to the welfare of the community (van der Geest, 1998). It is important that the kin group is provided for, that future generations are given an education, and that physical infrastructure is in place to symbolically mark ones success and provide assets.

Security, civic pride and memorialisation
Most respondents in Ghana mentioned that overseas relatives had built or were building a house, but were less certain if there had been any support for the town. While accumulating money is valued, the collective does not know how much one has whereas a house is a public statement of success whose value can be more easily acknowledged. Van der Geest (1998) discusses house building in the Kwahu hometown as simultaneously providing shelter for matrilineal kin, demonstrating one's success and status, providing an asset, ensuring welfare support in old age, and acting as a reminder of your life after death.

For the Ghanaians in Milton Keynes the main obligation was to support family and to a lesser extent friends at home. In many families, obligations were extended over generations particularly in cases where a single son was educated using all the resources of a family on the basis that they will support their parents, siblings and crucially the education of nephews and nieces. All the migrants we spoke to are in the process of constructing homes back in Ghana, but usually in Accra rather than the hometown.

> "Most of us have got it in mind that one day, we'll be going home, and therefore we're building houses. We are sending money for the house to be built for us. We live in an extended family. The family doesn't stop at your wife and your children. It goes beyond that and therefore most of us, like in my family, if they are able, will live in a big house". ('Grace', Milton Keynes)

This hints at a contested obligation for them to allow members of the extended family to reside in these homes. Some more wealthy members have avoided disputes by constructing a home in the city for themselves and their immediate family and one in the village for more distant relations.

The question of supporting parents was described as a 'tradition' and, therefore, impossible to dishonour, but the boundaries of the family go beyond them and are renegotiated by migrants.

> "it's our culture that we have a saying *'your parents look after you to grow your teeth, you look after them to loose theirs'* so it's our culture and you cannot do anything about it, it's like it's a must you have to do " ('Elizabeth', Milton Keynes).

However, while much of the discourse and practice was kin-based, there was also a sense of 'civil virtue' (Barkan et al , 1991) in which a well developed town was an important backdrop for personal investment. This pride was discussed in moral and ethical terms with regular exclamations that an underdeveloped town was an 'embarrassment' and 'disgrace'.

> "Those of us in Accra and abroad have to assist the development of our hometown because we have our parents and other relatives resident in the town who needs such facilities to survive. Also if we do not assist to develop the town and some of our friends from other towns visit Pepease for some purpose only to find our town in a mess we will be ashamed. If we do not help to develop the town we will be happy in Accra and abroad but not in our hometown" (Chief of Pepease citizens in Accra)

Such sentiments not only saw infrastructure and beautification projects, but also fuelled inter-settlement competition. While some towns clearly had well-organised support from within Ghana and abroad, other towns were aware that migrants only supported kin.

> "Their participation in developmental projects has not been effective because they seem to be less concerned about what happens in Nteso. They are of the opinion that since they don't live in the town its development may not impact on them significantly" (President of Nteso Civil Action Club)

As Goldberg (1998: 173) notes "Conflicts over projects a hometown organization will support...are central to ongoing processes for claiming community membership and altering the services and infrastructure – and accompanying status – of these home-community one claims membership to". In this way there is an elision between individual and community status.

The pursuit of respect is also tied into a sense of place (McNulty and Lawrence, 1996) and memorialisation. Obligations towards home are not simply calculations about respect and future gain, but about deep seated attachments to place (Lentz, 1994). Funerals are centred on celebrating the strength of the kin group as opposed to simply remembering the dead, so that well-organised funerals in the hometown are a crucial part of securing respect. As Lentz (1994: 159) observes death and funerals "forms the nucleus of any discourse about one's 'roots' and being 'indigenous'". In this way supporting home reflects a process of ensuring that one is well looked after in death.

Respondents in both the UK and Ghana discussed the importance of funerals. One respondent in Ghana stated that "When the bird dies in the skies its feathers come down", implying that returning to the hometown for burial was important. Some hometown associations in Ghana helped with funeral expenses so long as you were a member. In Milton Keynes the Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes (AGMK), founded by an elite group, originally intended that it would provide mutual support to the bereaved but would not make financial contributions. However, this was rebuffed by the membership and the leaders were forced to back down.

Excessive obligations and renegotiating the family

The obligations to kin and hometown among migrants elicited mixed responses. While most were building houses in Ghana for family and/or to retire to, some also complained about the burden of obligations.

> "How can you request this sort of money when you are leading this sort of life you know, so we said oh no you are taking us for granted you think that the money is just lying in the street so we said no" ('Elizabeth', Milton Keynes)

> "did you ask me where am I going to get it from? Am I OK? Have I eaten? Have I clothed myself but you just phone me, hi how are you are you all right? Oh it's only I need about £100 you didn't even ask me do you have it. They think England is pot of gold you've been there everything is easy as soon as you walk in money is everywhere" ('Mary', Milton Keynes)

As Clark (1999: 81) observes Ashanti kin groups, who like the Kwahu are part of the Akan, "still honour blood kinship while feverishly renegotiating its obligations". Despite these protestations among migrants they never apparently reneged on their obligations, even if this meant foregoing investment in the UK. So, like the Dagara elites in Lentz's (1994: 158) study, the respondents in my study present "themselves as victims of exaggerated demands" from kin. While largely fulfilling their obligations, at the same time they seek to 'educate' their kin about the changed definition of family, which often manifested itself in heated conflicts about who could legitimately reside in the house being built by the migrant.

5.2 The hometown, its organisations and their activities
In the Ghanaian towns there is a rich associational life including the chieftancy structures, town development committees, women's' organisations, youth movements, churches, and organisations representing the wider ethnic community. In Accra, most towns had a hometown association, which were important in transnational activities, acting as a conduit both in and out, but not as central as church-based networks. Given that the Accra-based leaders were generally professionals they were well connected both socially and physically so that requests and information flows to the diaspora generally passed through them.

Both the UK and Ghanaian organisations were quite formalised with a management structure, regular meetings, and a portfolio of activities. As stated, the UK organisations were largely elite driven, with core members being men, educated to senior school or above, and from either professional or entrepreneurial backgrounds. In terms of belonging to the hometown many mentioned that it was the 'ancestral' home so that even if one never lived there your allegiance – where you were from – was the ancestral home. When talking to people in the Kwahu hometown associations many used the term 'citizen' and even 'patriot' for those who honoured their obligations. However, for some 'citizenship' was open to anybody who lived in the town, but when it came to formally benefiting from the organisation I found that only those who joined and paid dues were eligible.

> "Everybody can join the association, both citizens and non-citizens. Apart from emergency cases those who are not part of the association do not get any help from the association" (Chairman of Adukrom Development Committee)

With public projects there was clearly a free-rider issue, but certain other benefits such as funeral expenses were only for those who formally became members and paid their dues.

One of the key features, which links kin and community, is visibility insofar as private acts do not register with the wider social group.

> "We all assist in the development project for fame. For instance the person who built the school structure for us has named it after his own mother and he

(benefactor) is happy that his mother has such dignity in the town". (Chairman of Pepeaseman Nkoso Kuo)

Werbner (2002) finds similar practices in her study of Pakistani migrants in Manchester and supports Sennett's (2003: 59) assertion that "mutuality requires expressive work. It must be enacted, performed". This commingling of respect and visibility within Kwahu society is reflected in both housing and funerals mentioned earlier, but also development projects for the wider community.

In most cases once a project had been agreed upon then funding was sought. This usually involved an appeal to the local government, levies on local residents, and levies on Accra-residents. These levies were on a sliding scale with Accra residents usually paying twice that of local residents. Levies were collected at funerals so there was a high degree of visibility and a strong social pressure since failure to pay would result in any funeral in that family being held up until payment was received. This threat of stigmatisation provides a powerful onus to pay. It was acknowledged that poorer local residents could often not afford the levy and so could contribute in the form of communal labour.

In London we identified a large number of hometown and ethnic associations compared with only one hometown association in Milton Keynes although many of the informants were or had previously been members of London based hometown associations. The hometown association in Milton Keynes was new and focused on mutual support such as rotating credit and although individual members had supported development in the town the association had not been involved in this. Most informants were unaware of its existence and suggested that there were no hometown associations, because of the small number of people from each town and most importantly the fact that the majority of migrants had been born away from the ancestral hometown and had relatively loose ties to it. One migrant remarked "Why have a hometown association when all you know is your family house and little more. We don't have an identifiable community because we did not grow up there" ('Kwesi', Milton Keynes). This suggests that for some migrants the pull of the ancestral hometown can be an imagined tie, which orientates their social world, but is rarely acted upon in concrete terms, while for others it has very little meaning.

Most of the activities of the hometown association involve public goods and tend to fill the gap either never filled by the state or vacated by it following neo-liberal adjustment (Barkan et al, 1991). The vast majority are infrastructure related including road building, hospital upgrading, construction of school buildings, sinking of boreholes, or market construction. In very few cases were there projects that sought to raise productivity, something which Latin American hometown associations seem more willing to engage in (Orozco, 2003). However, an important set of functions were welfare oriented and covered such things as funeral expenses and loans during exceptional times of hardship.

From the UK end we found a relatively limited number of development activities in Ghana facilitated by Ghanaians. The leadership of AGMK has used its contacts with the local hospital to get access to unwanted medical equipment, which they shipped to Ghana. The association has also partnered church based groups to send old clothes and school books to Ghana. What seemed more important was what could be termed 'cultural capital'. For example, an important focus for AGMK is providing support in gaining the cultural skills deemed necessary for migrants and their children to succeed. A leading member stated "Our ethos is to improve ourselves. We have many well qualified people who can't get good jobs as they need interpersonal skills which you get through meeting people and showing them what you can do" ('Arthur', Milton Keynes). This approach could be a reaction to the specificity of racism in Milton Keynes, which many informants suggested, was as much related to culture as skin colour.

Renegotiating ethnicity

In terms of respect and obligation the pressure for migrants to succeed, whether in order to repay kin for their support or to save face, can affect their relationship to the hometown (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000). As one Ghanaian respondent noted

> "It all depends on how successful they are in the cities. If they are successful they come back often to see their families" (Linguist to Mpraeso chief)

For those who have gone abroad this distancing is compounded. Relocating to Milton Keynes from London involved re-negotiating and loosening their relationships with the Ghanaian communities in the UK. They emphasised their desire to avoid pressure to participate in ethnic and clan based associational and cultural life and to not be identified through their family or clan. One respondent said his motivation for leaving London was to "get away from the Ghana crowd" ('Kwame', Milton Keynes). Due to their relatively small numbers and the recent influx they tended to characterise the Milton Keynes' Ghanaian community as nationally-based in contrast to the London Ghanaian communities which they characterised as ethnically based.

> "so far as you are a Ghanaian you know it doesn't matter whether you come from the North or you are a Ga or Ashanti or you know, no its not, no there is no segregation in it, every Ghanaian can join, which is good..,.. Yeah the clans yes, yes. The London one yes is always like the Ga Association, the Ewe Association, but no in Milton Keynes it doesn't matter whether you are Ashanti, Akan we are all one. Which I love it that way" ('Grace', Milton Keynes)

So, the move saw an apparent weakening of ethnic identity although most still participated in ethnic life, though on a more selective basis. This is not dissimilar from Werbner's (2002) analysis of the Pakistani migrants in Manchester who simultaneously belong to, but also hop between, clan affiliations, a Pakistani identity, and a more amorphous 'South Asian' cultural diaspora.

5.3 State and civil society

Studies of the linkages between diasporic politics and the state tend to focus on 'long distance nationalism' and support for the (re)construction of a homeland (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2001). But this captures only some of the linkages between diasporic politics and development of homes (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2001). Most countries receiving migrant funds are waking up to this potentially huge source of finance, although West African states seem to only recently have considered this potential (ECOWAS, 2000).

In the past, many Ghanaian diaspora associations were closely linked to opposition forces as they were formed by the various waves of migrants who left because of political persecution or associated economic uncertainty. For example, the Ghana Welfare Association founded in London in the late 1970s was explicitly hostile to the Rawlings' regime with its formal activity being the processing of asylum claims from those expelled by his government. Currently, the state under the New Patriotic Party (NPP) has made a conscious effort to strengthen and institutionalise its relationships with diaspora communities and particularly with associations. Indeed, it is widely rumoured that the latest election victories were bankrolled by migrant Ghanaians.

In his inaugural address of January 2001 President Kufour stated

> "I must acknowledge the contributions made by our compatriots who live outside the country. Currently you contribute a third of the capital flow into the country. Many of you do more than send money home, many of you have kept up keen interest in the affairs at home and some if you have even been part of the struggle of the past

twenty years. I salute your efforts and your hard work and I extend a warm invitation to you to come home and let us rebuild the country. Those of our compatriots who have made homes beyond our shores, I make a special plea for your help; we need your newly acquired skills and contacts, we need your perspective and we need your capital" (www.Allafrica.com/stories)

The High Commissioner regularly meets with Ghanaian associations across the country and the President recently met with Ghanaians in London. The associations such as the Ghana Union disseminate information from the High Commission to the Ghanaian communities via its affiliates. The government also recently implemented dual citizenship and a Non-Resident Ghanaians Secretariat, which are clearly part of a strategy to harness the resources of the diaspora and help prevent a legitimacy crisis.

Another important strand of inquiry was the role played by hometown associations within the more general and growing sphere of decentralised governance. Studies elsewhere in West Africa suggest that these associations can and do function as elements in civil society (Barkan et al, 1991). However, civil society is a contested arena, despite the relatively consensual gloss given to it in mainstream development discourses (Mohan, 2001). One part played by hometown associations as civil society organisations is the welfare delivery role we have already mentioned. These organisations have always had a community development function (McNulty and Lawrence, 1996), but under the present development regime 'self-help' is an important resource in shifting the burden for social services away from the overburdened state. A second civil society function is in strengthening local governance by both empowering local organisations and enhancing the responsiveness of the state. Hometown Associations are important here, as their remit is seemingly apolitical. They provide developmental support without asking difficult questions. A potential corollary of this is the selective (ab)use of such associations to cement ethnic rule at local and national levels. As Woods (1994: 467) observes a key function of hometown associations in Côte d'Ivoire was "the utilisation of ethnic associations by elites to consolidate their own economic and political position in the post-colonial state" (see also Trager on Nigeria). This suggests that as political entities migrant-linked organisations may fulfil developmental functions without challenging the power structures that require the development assistance in the first place.

In Ghana, decentralisation has largely been a matter of deconcentrating central functions as opposed to more progressive local empowerment (Mohan, 2001). In Latin America it appears that decentralisation and social programmes have recently started to link formally with migrant associations, such as Mexico's '3x1' initiative with the state providing matching funds to voluntary associations (Orozco, 2003). In Ghana most hometown associations approached local government when a project needed support, although this seemed piecemeal and *ad hoc* and there was no evidence that it improved the performance or responsiveness of the District Assemblies. Moreover, as we have already seen, these associations have played a central role in elite power structures rather than holding the state accountable to the polity. Debate is starting about more formal linkages between local government and migrant associations (Dake, 2004), but this is also piecemeal and embryonic. However, given the national government's championing of the diaspora and the fiscal crises of most local governments in Ghana it looks set to become more important in the coming years.

6. Conclusions
This paper has examined the question of obligations within diasporic communities and sought to examine the implications of this for a broad understanding of 'development'. I argued that obligations were specific to a given socio-political community and were part of defining its citizenship in terms of what a 'good' member of that community should do.

However, the identities of any political community, but particularly diasporic ones, are highly fluid with multiple, overlapping and dynamic affiliations and obligations.

The role of migrants was significant for development in Ghana in terms of both household survival and public action as well as for the longer-term 'social security' of migrants, which link quite clearly to a broad understanding of development. Less tangibly was the importance of belonging and a 'sense of place', however distant and mythical. While the idea of 'embedded cosmopolitanism' captures the fluidity of these ties, the evidence shows that these are largely elite networks possessing different degrees of obligation. So while they are a part of a 'community of communities' they are also riven internally with divisions, which undermine claims regarding citizenship for all. As Smith (1998: 226) observes "transnational communities create public spheres in which differences in status and class, especially upward mobility or educational success of children, can be displayed, and in which they have special meaning". Such processes also give development a particular meaning, which takes it into the realm of the family and kin group. For many groups "it is their continuing capacity to improvise and negotiate that offers the best security imaginable" (Clark, 1999: 82). Diasporic development shows how discourses of tradition, ethnicity and home are continually reworked as resources with which to confront proliferating experiences while maintaining attachments to and survival for kin and community.

What this also shows is that while D/d development is indeed multiple and, at times, challenges capitalocentric readings (Gibson-Graham, 2004) of development this does not necessarily make it any less constraining than capitalism. Development activities linking places and the displaced, but organised through elite, largely male public spaces exert strong moral pressures and sanctions on people. So, while important in achieving D-development at the hometown level, as a form of citizenship hometown associational life does not challenge power structures, and thereby depoliticises development. Indeed, it can justifiably be argued that such activity strengthens forms of customary authority, which marginalises many - particularly women - from decision-making processes or accountability structures (Mamdani, 1996). Hence, we should be wary about championing all non-capitalist development activity as potentially liberating. Such depoliticisation is also important in countering Burawoy's (2003) speculation that transnational society can become a force against capitalism, although I agree with him that detailed ethnographies are a start in understanding if, how and why various institutional forms can become counter-hegemonic.

In terms of more recognisable development functions, one of the most important issues was how the Ghanaian state is so busy building up these forms of association. Whereas migration had largely been seen in terms of private transfers, sometimes berating the migrants as 'unpatriotic', they are now seen as key developmental and political resources, either collectively or individually. This discussion of the state, migration and development shows that focusing on the 'space of flows' can underplay the significance of territorialised spaces, particularly the purview of the state. The state is still an important, if not the pre-eminent, site of identity formation (Parekh, 1996) and transnational communities are linked to states in both imagined and material ways (Smith, 2001). As Radcliffe (2004: 523) warns "however decentred, fluid and mobile the state has become in neoliberal capitalist times, its position as key actor and power broker in questions of citizen participation and development remains highly significant". In terms of D/d development we are seeing a rescaling and reterritorialising of activity. Whereas civil society was viewed as something formed in relation to a territorialised nation-state we are seeing both an extraterritorialised state and a form of transnational civil society. However, unlike the high-profile issue-based campaigns around things like debt or labour, these transnational civil society networks are mobilised around the family and more place-based affinities so that they do not operate strongly as a bulwark against the overbearing state. Indeed, as we have seen, they are ideal as a benign form of civil society, which fills in for public provisioning without placing political pressure on the state.

Finally, the focus on hometown connections echoes Amin's analysis of the city as "a place of engagement in plural politics and multiple spatialities of involvement" (2002: 397). Small rural communities - perhaps the archetypes of the bounded and static place - are constructed from diffuse flows linking near and far and the present and absent. And in doing so we get a different slant on cosmopolitanism insofar as people and organisations can belong to cosmopolitan circuits without travelling. What the diasporic communities show is that submerged flows can become sedimented, while their embeddedness in a 'home' suggests that the goal of such flows may be the securing or supporting of territories, which brings us to a broader view of development in which D/d distinctions are blurred.

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