

Re-orienting the Diaspora–Development Nexus

Abstract

Since the 1990s diasporic communities have increasingly been recognized as agents of development, with states, citizens, and the global development community keen to harness their knowledge, skills, and economic capital. Approaches to the ‘diaspora option’ tend to be rooted in the discourses, practices, and products of neoliberal globalization. Yet the most recent decade of the 21st century has witnessed a backlash against this cosmopolitanism. This paper pushes for a re-orientation of the diaspora-development nexus that looks to respond to the contemporary realities of (and the backlash against) neoliberal globalization: (re)bordering, European and North American ethnonationalism, nativist politics, and anti-migrant discourses. Thinking through a post-diasporic lens foregrounds the interconnected geographies, the complex temporalities, and the (racialized) inequalities within the diaspora–development nexus. The paper concludes that through a post-diasporic lens the diaspora–development nexus can be centred on everyday social, cultural, material, and political circumstances and experiences and feelings of belonging through multiple locales, re-orienting the nexus to advance the everyday socio-economic, cultural, and political liberation of diasporic communities.

Keywords: Diaspora; Post-diaspora; Global development; Transnationalism; Migration; Belonging

Introduction

‘There wasn’t much UK media response. “I saw no Dominican pictures, I saw no Dominican people.” She was left wondering how a natural disaster on a commonwealth island, which left over 90% of inhabitants without roofs over their heads and claimed many lives in the process, could pass under the radar in the UK...

Bristol’s response to [hurricane] Maria was solidarity: from bucket collections at church choir performances in St George to fundraisers at the Watershed, celebrating Dominican culture and raising awareness...

Marie-Annick explains that this “material tie” is part of the diasporic identity, and it connects Dominicans and other migrants to their home countries.

There are also “spiritual ties” amongst the community: a sense of belonging “over there” or “back home”. “I always saw it as being astride two worlds. For me it was actually three.” she says. “When you are made to feel different, you look for your anchor somewhere else”.

“But the interesting thing is that when I would go back to Guadeloupe, I would again be made to feel different, because I didn’t master the Creole, and you do things differently.”

Sherrie explains: “growing up in the UK you are loved and accepted, but not necessarily loved and accepted. There can racism and often there isn’t – so where do you fit in?”

Jemal Toussaint and Georgia Edwards, *The Bristol Cable*, 15

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Since the 1990s increasing attention has been paid to the ways in which diasporic communities can shape development processes, both in their country of heritage and of residence¹. This has been considered through a variety of intersecting scales and spatialities, including the nation state, the global development community, grassroots and community organizations, and on a personal and family level. The comments by Marie-Annick and Sherrie in the excerpt from the newspaper piece above about their experiences while responding to hurricane Maria articulate the liminality, the interconnected temporalities, the racialized inequalities, and feelings and politics of belonging that shape the nature of diasporic engagement in development processes and humanitarian responses.

Dominant discourses of the diaspora–development nexus focus on diasporic communities from the ‘global South²’ residing in the ‘global North’ and frame the relationship as one based on the potential of diasporic communities to transfer (entrepreneurial) knowledge, skills, and investments, often in order to offset the global inequalities premised by and accentuated in an increasingly neoliberal world model (Tan et al., 2018; Trotz and Mullings, 2013). Driven by Northern scholarship and multi and bilateral aid organizations, the ‘diaspora option’ was crafted in a context of increasingly rapid and intense neoliberal globalization, conceptually founded on theories of migration developed in the global North and viewed through an international development paradigm in which Southern countries are the recipients of Northern aid (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020; Horner, 2020; Tan et al., 2018). Conceptually, the ‘diaspora option’ is built on limited articulations of diaspora, with understandings premising diasporic attachment to a static and immutable (Southern) homeplace, of diasporic (neoliberal entrepreneurial) success in their (Northern) country of residence, and facilitated by the ease, speed, and intensity of transnational connections (Ho, 2011; Jons et al., 2015). Yet, the most recent decade of the 21st century has witnessed unevenly increasing resistance to (aspects of) neoliberal

¹ Terms such as country of origin, country of heritage and residence can present a problematic binary, I use them carefully here to think about the multiple locales associated with diasporic engagement.

² Whilst there is multiple ‘Souths’ (and Norths), the employment of the term in development discourse equates the global South geographically to countries and regions of Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Pacific, but can also be used to connote ‘countries that have been marginalized in the international political and economic system (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020; Medie and Kang, 2018: 37–38).

globalization, particularly evident in the popular discourses of the Brexit vote in the UK and the election of Donald Trump in the USA. This is juxtaposed by calls for scholarly work on migration and mobility to be theorized from the South, a paradigm shift in development to foreground the global over the international (Horner, 2020), and conceptual shifts in how diaspora are thought about. The aim of this paper is to consider what more recent theorizations of and debates about diaspora may mean for our understandings of diaspora-centred development.

Responding to concerns about how diaspora can be theorized in the contemporary context, recent interrogations of the idea of diaspora have resulted in the development of post-diasporic theorizing, which aims to move ‘conversations about place, time, belonging and displacement into a new conceptual space ‘beyond diaspora’” (Scafe, 2019: 96; Rollins, 2010: 246). These scholarly developments in understanding diaspora as a concept are significant for understanding the diaspora-development nexus in the context of changing articulations of globalization and migration. The paper begins by providing an overview of the rise of diasporic-centred development in the context of neoliberal globalization. It will then move on to examining conceptualizations of diaspora and post-diaspora, contending that engaging with more recent post-diasporic theorizing foregrounds the interconnected geographies, the complex temporalities, and the (racialized) inequalities within the diaspora–development nexus. By thinking with post-diasporic theory, the diaspora–development nexus becomes centred on everyday social, cultural, material, and political circumstances, and experiences and feelings of belonging through multiple locales, re-orienting the nexus to advance the everyday socio-economic, cultural, and political liberation of diasporic communities. The paper concludes that through this articulation approaching diasporic-led development by way of post-diasporic theorizing can interrogate the relationship between global development and ‘domestic’ immigration policies, offering opportunities to resist increasing ethnonationalism and hostile environment policies through the lens of global development and articulates the wider need to consider the racialized logics and inequalities that are reproduced via discourses and practices of development.

The Creation of Diasporic Development Agents

States, the development community, families, and individuals have become concerned with how the movement of people (and less tangibly resources) shapes ‘D/development,’ and how this mobility can be leveraged to be mutually beneficial (Gamlen et al., 2019). Whilst the idea of what development is remains contested, this paper is led by Wilson

(2012 :4) who conceptualizes development as ‘understood broadly as incorporating the whole complex of unequal material relationships and processes which structure engagement between the Global South and Global North, as well as the primary discursive framework within which these relationships have been constructed for over 60 years.’ This conceptualization foregrounds varied inequalities in our understanding of D/development, as well as articulating that global development, and its associated industry, is created within (and sustains) these relations.

The migration–development nexus considers the impact of migration on various scales of development through the intersecting lenses of socio-economic position, gender, race, and labour value, and conversely of development on migration. A key feature of the nexus is the development of the diasporic subject, a group of people outside of their country of origin who are actively connected to and invested in it in some way (Tan et al., 2018). While there are many historical and contemporary examples of diasporic mobilizations ‘from below’, this paper will focus on how diasporic communities have been made into agents of development by multi and bilateral institutions and nation states, with these agencies looking to harness, shape, develop, and reproduce organic processes of transnational engagement often based on obligations and affective connections (Boyle and Ho, 2017). The rise of the diaspora as agents for development must be understood contextually, shaped by the inequalities of contemporary neoliberal globalization, digital technologies, and international travel, yet also embedded within racialized labour exploitation, colonial pasts, and coloniality in the present (Trotz and Mullings, 2013). Engaging diasporic communities in development rhetorically aims to respond to critiques of whiteness, power imbalances, ownership, and participation levelled at the global development industry (Ademolu, 2021; Boyle and Ho, 2017; Mohan, 2008; Wilson, 2019).

In the development arena, diasporic-led development policy has become more visible over the last 20 years, part of a shifting trend that attempts to invert the previous brain drain discourse. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, key thinkers recognized that diasporic communities continued to be influential in their homelands in numerous ways, from the transfer of professional skills from Silicon Valley to developing professional scientific networks (Meyer et al., 1997; Nyberg-Sorenson et al., 2003; Saxenian, 2007). This placed diasporic-led development firmly in the international development paradigm, with diasporic communities in the global North seen to have a role to play in ‘developing’ the global South. This echoes wider dominant scholarship on migration in which the North is positioned as a ‘magnet for Southern migrants’, minimizing the developmental impact of internal and south–south migration (Chikanda and Crush, 2018; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Daley, 2018: 9; Pisarevskay et al., 2020). Alongside

this linear geography, realization that the quantity and resilience of remittances are often key for accessing education, healthcare and other social welfare, pushed the diaspora into being potential agents for (Southern) development in the eyes of states and multi and bilateral institutions.

These insights coincided with a policy environment shaped by the good governance agenda, ideas of social capital, , and a shift towards partnerships and skills development, with the World Bank describing diasporas as like discovering ‘an untapped pool of oil’ (Trotz and Mullings, 2013: 162), a discursive reminder of the diaspora as human capital who can repair the damage done by macro-economic reforms (Boyle and Ho, 2017; Mohan, 2008). Drawing on experiences from Israel and China, the World Bank was an early and vocal advocate for the diaspora option, with diasporic communities positioned as having a comparative advantage through their intimate local knowledge, flexibility, and ability to transcend a (potentially) corrupt and bureaucratic state (Brinkerhoff, 2011; Pellerin and Mullings, 2013). With this promotion of the potential of diasporic communities as agents of development bilateral institutions such as USAID, DFID, and GIZ³, developed and funded diaspora–development programmes, reinforcing narratives of diasporas as forms of mobile human capital to be leveraged towards development outcomes in the global South.

Multi and bilateral institutions have engaged with diasporic-led development to enhance and facilitate the (neoliberal) logic of their enterprises (Trotz and Mullings, 2013). These activities have predominantly been based on understandings of continued diasporic attachment to a static and immutable (Southern) homeplace, of diasporic (neoliberal entrepreneurial) success in their (Northern) country of residence, and facilitated by the ease, speed, and intensity of transnational connections (Ho, 2011; Jons et al., 2015). Nation states themselves have also become increasingly engaged with their diasporic communities as they attempt to survive (and thrive) within the global neoliberal order, termed by Gamlen (2019) ‘human geopolitics’ (see also Agarwala 2016). The exponential rise of diaspora strategies, infrastructures, and ministries in many nations across the world since the 1990s reflects both the importance of nation-building and the extra-territoriality of the nation state and acts as an opportunity to increase competitiveness in the global economy (Boyle and Ho, 2017; Gamlen, 2019; Mullings, 2011). Diaspora engagement includes facilitating channels for remittances, ease of economic investment and property purchase, political

³ USAID: The United States Agency for International Development; DFID: Department for International Development (UK), merged with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in 2020; GIZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development agency).

interventions, and changes in citizenship regulations (Agarwala, 2016; Dickinson, 2017; Ho, 2015). These more tangible channels are supported by state investment to enhance social, affective, and cultural connections between diasporic communities and the nation state, for example through homeland tourism and investment in new religious architecture overseas.

Discourses on diasporic-centred development arose within the context of neoliberal globalization and a migration–development paradigm that gives primacy to the global North (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020; Tan et al., 2018). Theorization about the role of diasporic communities in development processes has primarily been done in and from the perspective of the global North, reflecting the problematic geopolitics of knowledge production and the uneven nature of academic scholarship, with approaches to understanding diaspora-centred development dominated by theorizations of diaspora as a unified group of migrants tied together by shared ancestry, social and cultural values, and sense of nationalism, oriented to an immutable homeland (Brah, 1996; Rollins, 2010; Tan et al., 2018). The idea of diaspora can then (re)produce binaries between ‘home’ and ‘host’, essentializing the homogeneity of diasporic communities and idealizing their connections to home (Beckles-Raymond, 2020; Rollins, 2010).

While these perspectives have been critiqued by cultural and sociological scholars (Alexander, 2017; Brah, 1996; Brubaker, 2005), they have continued to dominate development discourse and policy. Building from more complex deployments of diaspora, which include engaging with diaspora as a category of practice to reveal its ‘critical and political potentialities’ (Alexander, 2017: 1547; Brubaker, 2005), invoking diaspora as a conceptual trope to disrupt racialized claims about the feelings and politics of (national) belonging and discourses of ‘fixed origins’ (Brah, 1997:180; Hall, 2017; Gilroy, 1993), and using diaspora to explore the historically contingent ‘migratory grooves’ and capital that shape diasporic experience (Alexander, 2017: 1553), shows there is a need to think about how theorizations of diaspora-centred development can respond to patterns of resistance to globalization, changing geographies and temporalities of migration, and scholarly calls to theorize migration from a Southern perspective. As Trotz and Mullings (2013) argue, notions of diaspora have moved a long way from ideas of exile and the impossibility of return, and as Jons et al. (2015: 113) comment, ‘Recent geographical studies have thus stressed how diasporas are socially, culturally and materially constructed and constituted by identities that are dynamic and often “in-between”’. The next section of this paper explores the potential of the concept of post-diaspora for further theorizing the diasporic experience.

Post-diaspora

Diaspora as a concept has mutated, been reconfigured, and revolutionized since its original deployment, and the recent emergence of theorizations of the post-diasporic are responding to concerns about how diaspora can be employed in the contemporary era marked by increase in and velocity of globalization and transnationalism (Alexander, 2017; Brubaker, 2005; Dunn and Scafe, 2020) with conceptualizations of a post-diaspora or post-diasporic communities and politics increasingly employed to theorize the positions, mobilities, and entanglements within a world in (constant) motion (Lascelles, 2020; Pearce, 2020). Drawing predominantly, but not solely, on scholarship referencing the Caribbean, post-diaspora draws attention to the geographical fluidities, temporal complexities, inequalities, and emancipatory potential that the current mobilizations of diaspora, particularly those employed within development discourse, may lack.

By interrogating the dominance of roots and routes, engaging with post-diaspora does not dispense with the idea of diaspora, rather it acts as an extension, a way of going beyond previous invocations of diaspora (Scafe, 2019; Rollins, 2010). Post-diaspora is not a rejection of the idea of diaspora, but rather trying to find a way to ‘extend the boundaries to enable inclusion of new responses to new realities and new ways of being’ (Spencer, 2019: 125). In its attention to the new realities of globalization, post-diaspora provides a space to attend to the specifics of contemporary neoliberal globalization and responses to it. This globalization has taken place, as Yuval-Davies et al. (2019: 10) comment ‘under the hegemony of neoliberal and political economic order’ serving to further entrench inequalities and uneven development whilst also increasing economic interdependency. Responses to this neoliberal globalization and the ‘migration and refugee crisis’ have seen the second decade of the 21st century marked by calls for deglobalization (Bishop and Payne, 2021). This includes processes of rebordering, with controlling national borders repositioned as an act of resistance to globalization, and increasingly nativist political discourses and practices in which the cosmopolitanism of neoliberal globalization is reconstituted to include increasingly restrictive border regimes and racialized hierarchies of mobility (Fraser, 2017; Yuval-Davies et al., 2019). These transitions are juxtaposed by theorizations of development that have moved from the international to the global, reinforcing relational understandings of development that think of the planetary system as an interconnected whole, alongside scholarly attention that has emphasized the need to decentre northern perspectives on migration (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020;

Horner, 2020). It is in this context that post-diaspora becomes more relevant for exploring a new conceptual space beyond diaspora.

Post-diaspora is, as Dunn and Scafe (2019: 3) write in their introduction to a special issue *African-Caribbean women: Migration, Diaspora, Post-diaspora*, ‘neither a departure, nor a continuation of contemporary uses of diaspora: rather the “post” signals a new future, by focusing on mobility both as a defining feature of Caribbean identities and a route to self-fashioning for African-Caribbean women’. The term post-diaspora has been deployed to extend academic imaginations into a variety of aspects of more-than-diasporic life, including as a way of articulating engagement with second- and third-generation migrants (Chapman, 2004; Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, 2011), processes of assimilation (Laguerre, 2017), conceptualizing a return to the homeland (Stewart, 2019), and the conscious or forced distancing of an emigrated population from their country of heritage (Laguerre, 2017). Three key features of post-diasporic theorizing, first the fluidity of the migratory and diasporic experience, second the interconnected temporalities, and finally the inequalities engendered by diaspora and the emancipatory hope of the post-diaspora, will each be explored in turn.

Post-diaspora highlights the liminality, rhizomatic, and liberatory nature of diasporic experience and the complex geographies of migration (Lascelles, 2020; Scafe and Dunn, 2020). In her reading of Zadie Smith’s *Swing Time* through a post-diasporic lens, Scafe (2019) sees the production of a post-diasporic space that complicates the triangular Black Atlantic. While the novel explores the geographies of the Black Atlantic, the post-diasporic entanglements develop new spaces from which to speak, spaces through which the characters are both constructed yet also separated from (Scafe, 2019). For Scafe (2019), post-diaspora then sees the building of identities through fleeting, ephemeral moments that are historically contingent and shaped by gender and generational divides. Fluidity and liminality run through conceptualizations of post-diaspora, it is about, for Spencer (2019: 126) ‘the formation of a community of people who have now begun to embrace notions of difference while at the same time charting a course of and for unity and togetherness, regardless of the “away” space they occupy’. These fluid geographies are exemplified in Pearce’s (2020) reading of Nicole Awaï’s ‘Black Ooze’, with the viscosity of the ooze in Awaï’s pieces representing the interconnected timescapes of the post-diaspora, the ongoing adjustments of boundaries, and way that aspects of place adhere to diasporic communities. Post-diaspora then moves away from defined origins and singular destinations to enable further explorations of fluid geographies, ‘post-diaspora points to a liminal space which is multiplicitous and

“rhizomatic” (Dunn and Scafe, 2019: 3), and possibly more liberatory, allowing readers to reimagine diaspora productively” (Lascelles, 2020: 228).

Post-diasporic theorizations also mark a temporal juncture with theories of diaspora, not in the sense that the diasporic moment has ended but rather that diasporic life can be explored through the local conditions that came after movement and the experiences of living with the legacy of movement(s) (Noxolo, 2020). Post-diasporic theorizing accentuates the interconnectedness of diasporic temporalities, exploring the past as it shapes the contemporary moment (Scafe, 2019), and of reading the past, present, and future together, understanding them as interwoven (Spencer, 2019). The post-diaspora does not mark an endpoint rather it can be used to explore ongoing diasporic entanglements and understand them to be historically situated (Alexander, 2017; Noxolo, 2020). As Noxolo (2020:136) comments ‘the post-diasporic community is defined in terms of the local conditions that come after movement, the longer process of settling, building, looking back to the “homeland” and looking forward to life in the “hostland”’. This highlights the intertwined temporalities of settling and looking forward, whilst also looking back (Noxolo, 2020). The interconnected temporalities engendered through post-diaspora are also echoed by Scafe (2019) with the mother’s Black feminist political stance in Zadie Smith’s *Swing Time* reflecting a post-diasporic politics of Black internationalist politics of the past in the present.

Post-diaspora has also been used to emancipate and extend the spaces of diasporic activity to reflect a potentially emancipatory ideal, with Laguerre (2017) mobilizing the term to reject the inequalities inherent in defining the diaspora and using the term to actively oppose the reductive contours of diaspora (Scafe, 2019). Laguerre (2017) understands diaspora to be a mode of marginalization, both in the country of heritage and of residence, with diasporic communities often subjugated in both spaces. Diaspora then reproduces inequalities and the subordinate position of migrants within many societies, reproducing hegemonic constructions of white identity with diaspora inferior to those racialized as white (Beckles-Raymond, 2020). Using a citizenship lens, Laguerre (2017) argues for transnational dual citizenship in which individuals are able to fully participate in the host and homeland, with notions of citizenship based on rights, duties, and obligations rather than more fluid theorizations of citizenship founded on lived experience. In the context of South Africa, Lee (2009) ponders if post-diasporic considerations can reposition Africa centrally, rather than at the edges of the Black Atlantic, challenging global geographies of power. The progressive potential of post-diaspora also extends to notions of gender with scholars considering how engaging with post-diaspora

interrogates our understanding of diasporic women, engendering emotions and intimacy in diasporic theorizing (Beckles-Raymond, 2020; Scafe, 2019;). In using post-diaspora to mark a return to a country of heritage, Stewart (2019) mobilizes the concept to explore the home as foreign, the feelings of fracture and exclusion from the homeland, and the inequalities experienced as a female academic situated in both the transnational spaces of host and homeland.

As Spencer (2019: 125) articulates ‘post-diaspora as a concept contains the foundation seeds of the concept of diaspora but extends the boundaries to enable the inclusion of new responses to new realities and new ways of being, within a space that continues to transform and evolve’. The aim of post-diasporic theorizing is to extend conceptualizations of diaspora to respond to the experiences of contemporary neoliberal globalization. In doing so, post-diaspora highlights three key features: first the fluid geographies of the migratory and diasporic experience, second the interconnected temporalities, and finally the inequalities engendered by diaspora and the emancipatory hope of the post-diaspora. This paper will probe each of these areas in the context of the diaspora option in global development, aiming to (re)draw attention to three hitherto neglected dynamics of the diaspora–development nexus.

Postdiasporic Theorizing and the Diaspora–Development Nexus

The fourth section in this paper applies post-diasporic theorizing to the diaspora–development nexus, considering how the insights detailed above may shape our understanding of diasporic engagement in development processes. Diasporic engagement with global development can occur at multiple interconnected sites, including the development community, the nation state, through civic space, and in everyday social practices. Development discourse is predominantly based on instrumentalized and reductive understandings of diaspora, with theories of post-diaspora offering an opportunity to respond to the challenges of contemporary neoliberal (de)globalization. Bringing post-diasporic theorizing into conversation with the diaspora option in global development highlights first, the rhizomatic entanglements through which diasporic engagement with development occurs beyond the home/host binary, second its shifts the temporalities of the diaspora–development nexus to articulate the connections between diasporic-centred development and (post-diasporic) feelings and politics of belonging, and finally post-diasporic theorizing foregrounds how racialized inequalities are reproduced through the diasporic-centred development and the emancipatory potential of the diaspora–development nexus.

Fluid geographies

‘I always saw it as being astride two worlds. For me it was actually three.’

Jemal Toussaint and Georgia Edwards, *The Bristol Cable*, 15

March 2019

A key tenet of post-diasporic theorizing is the fluidity of diasporic experience, of moving beyond a single place of origin and destination, to focus on rhizomatic connections, geographies, and entanglements (Lascelles, 2020; Noxolo, 2020). This more relational approach is articulated by Tan et al., (2018: 3) in their understanding of diasporic interventions as everyday transnational social practices, where ‘transnational social spaces are the multiple interlocking networks that cross borders through which transnational actors operate, sustained and continuous ties, different institutions, made up of relations (economic, social, familial) and symbolic identities (feelings of belonging) and participation (actual activities e.g., voting)’. This spatially more expansive sense of a diasporic community can also be thought of as webs that connect people to others and to particular (unsettled) localities. Thinking through these webs emphasizes diverse linkages and mobilities beyond the economic, paying more attention to the everyday social, cultural and political connections, flows, and pathways that are constitutive of and articulate transnational relationships (Ho, 2017). By engaging with the ideas of the post-diasporic, diasporic engagement in development can be then thought of as a series of entanglements, a way of conceiving of ties to different unsettled locales (Noxolo, 2020; Tan et al., 2018). This brings two points to the fore: first the importance of thinking of the relational geographies of the diaspora–development nexus and second the entanglements beyond the tangible, particularly the importance of emotions, intimacy, and care for diasporic-centred development.

Attending to these rhizomatic post-diasporic spaces of the diaspora-development nexus is important for understanding remittances in the contemporary context. It is widely recognized that remittances are a key aspect of the diaspora–development nexus, contributing to personal and familial development, particularly in the spheres of education, housing, and healthcare (Adugna, 2018 Hammond, 2013). Remittances have been conceptualized as reciprocal affective investments, a form of (unsettled) diasporic agency within the globalized economy, with money inextricable from guilt, responsibility, yearning, attachment, and other cultural, social, and political practices (Burman, 2002; Page and Mercer, 2012). Understanding remittances not solely as a financial transfer between people in different settled locales neglects the geographical fluidity of these connections, with migration, and subsequent remittances understood as part of transnational family and community strategies to improve the quality of life and as a reciprocal

relationship with the remittee, as a flow of goods between (transnational) migrants and their (transnational) families (Adugna, 2018; Social Scientists Against the Hostile Environment (SSAHE), 2020). Remittances are then intimate transnational entanglements, which are situated in historical patterns of exploitation, migration, and contemporary racialized global capitalism (Bhattacharya, 2018, unsettling the artificial binary between the mobile migrant and those who remain at home and articulating the fluid geographies of diasporic engagement. At the scale of the nation state the complexity and intimacy of remitting has been reflected in the ways in which more recent diasporic engagement does not overtly centre on remittances, but rather on (strategically) engendering a sense of recognition, connection, and belonging between diasporic communities and the nation state and the creation of a ‘diasporic identity’ (Abramson, 2019; Agarwala, 2016). The importance of nationalism within this diasporic engagement is countered by arguments that a reliance on patriotism may produce limited engagement, with states and others instead primarily acting as facilitators to diasporic participation (International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 2021).

The liminality and fluidity highlighted by post-diasporic theorizing is also integral to understandings of diasporic civic space and associational life. Scholarship on hometown associations has considered how to theorize diasporic associational life beyond the host/home dichotomy (Mercer et al., 2008). Notions of liminality must not be restricted to an in-betweenness between a country of residence and one of heritage, rather liminality allows for exploration of the multiple connections between different diasporic communities in different locales (Bada, 2015; Lamba Nieves, 2018; Strunk, 2014. Fluidity also shapes the formation of diasporic associational life, as Mercer et al. (2008: 7) comment, ‘the performance of Bali dances in London and the collection of money to improve health care in Cameroon are simultaneous and inseparable manifestations of the diasporic condition’, with these more fluid conceptualizations of diaspora engagement in development becoming even more relevant when thinking about the digital spaces of diasporic-centred development (Bernal, 2018; Dickinson, 2020). This brings to the fore the interconnected geographies of the diaspora-development nexus, highlighting that development is not just something that happens in the global South (Horner, 2020; Jones, 2000; Potter, 2001), as Willis (2005: 16) comments ‘This distinction [between global North and South] fails to recognize the dynamism of all societies and the continued desire by populations for improvements (not necessarily in material goods). It also fails to consider the experiences of social exclusion that are found within supposedly “developed” countries or regions.’

The return to the more unsettled geographies of diasporic engagement in development processes emphasized by post-diasporic theorizing, can also be seen in the desire of some nation states to engage diasporas living in the global South. Having previously centred people of Jamaican heritage living in Canada, the USA, and the UK, in 2020 the Jamaica government re-formulated and expanded its global diaspora council to include people of Jamaican heritage living in China, Antigua, Chile, Kuwait, and Namibia amongst others. This shift from facilitating diaspora engagement solely from those residing in the global North is also evident in India's 2021 Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (Diaspora Day) convention, the Know India programme, and the first Girmitiya Conference held in September 2021, all emphasizing the importance of engaging with the Indian diaspora in Girmitiya countries (countries that Indian-indentured labourers were forcibly moved to under colonial rule, such as the Caribbean islands, Mauritius, Fiji, and Guyana). This emphasis on South–South and intra-continental diasporic engagement unsettles the traditional scholarly and imaginary geographies of both migration and development studies, echoing work that emphasizes the reshaping of development imaginaries through critical engagement with the contemporary role of non-Western actors, showing that solidarity, shared experiences, and identities are important constructs in South–South development, but that these commonalities can exist in tandem with (new) hierarchies of power (Laurie and Baillie Smith, 2018; Mawdsley, 2014).

Thinking with a post-diasporic lens then has the potential to provide insights into how the geographically fluid entanglements that span social, political, cultural, and emotional ties to multiple locales unsettle the binary between home/homeland and North/South, with diasporic-centred development embedded in and the product of globalized relations. Understandings of the diaspora-development nexus cannot solely be through flows of resources from North to South, rather the nexus is influenced by historical and contemporary global hierarchies of power, shaped by experiences in both global North and South, and reflects connections to multiple locales.

Interconnected temporalities

'how a natural disaster on a commonwealth island...could pass under the radar in the UK.'

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One of the main abilities of post-diaspora is its ability to shift the temporal focus of the diaspora-development nexus. Whilst diaspora is traditionally associated with movements, journeys, and looking back, post-diaspora marks a temporal transition. At its simplest ‘post’ conveys the after, but it is important to understand the post in post-diaspora as not solely an endpoint or a period of time that occurs after (re)settlement, but as more complex temporal entanglements that bring together the past, present, and future (Noxolo, 2020). Post-diasporic theorizing shifts the tempo-scape of the diaspora-development nexus to emphasize the ‘conditions that come after movement’, and the intertwined processes of settling, looking back, and looking forward (Noxolo 2020:136). This is an integral, yet under-recognized, aspect of the diaspora–development nexus, and particularly crucial at a time of increasing nativist politics and anti-migrant sentiment in much of Europe and North America.

The implications of the local conditions after movement are crucial to the ways in which diasporic communities engage in development process, with associational life deeply reflective of and connected to experiences of organizing at home and dependent on the local conditions after movement, with the economic and social insecurity experienced by many migrants integral to their engagement with hometown associations, with networks of reciprocity constrained by the marginalized position of many migrants (Bada, 2015; Mercer, et al. 2008; Strunk, 2014; Lamba Nieves, 2018; Smyth, 2017). Conditions after movement also shape forms of diasporic civic engagement, with associational life shaped by the host nation, as recently documented in popular culture by Steve McQueen (2020) through the police violence directed towards Black community organizers in his film *Mangrove*. The temporal interconnections that shape diasporic engagement in civic space and development are demonstrated by Chaudhary (2018), who contends that diasporic engagement with development concerns is linked to historical and contemporary processes of settlement, with post-colonial ties stimulating the development of diasporic development organizations through legal status, familiarity, and kinship ties, as well as greater orientation to the homeland through the discursive position of the former colonizer. London is a key locus for diasporic organizations through both its connections to its former Empire and as its contemporary role as a major site of the global development industry. This produces an environment in which the doing of development is normalized and facilitated, with Chaudhary (2018) commenting that some diasporic organizations are setup by individuals who have previously worked with other NGOs in the city.

The post-diasporic lens then draws attention to the way historical and contemporary migration and migration governance shape the diaspora–development nexus. This is particularly pertinent due to the increase in hostile Anglo-

American and European immigration regimes over the last 20 years. This increasingly inhospitable environment for migrants has paradoxically coincided with celebrations of the diaspora–development nexus (Wilson, 2012; SSAHE, 2020). In Great Britain, for example, while the hostile environment terminology is relatively new, the violence directed towards immigrant populations by the British state is rooted in colonial imaginaries and immigration laws from the late 1940s onwards designed to restrict immigration to Britain from many of its (racialized) colonies, conflating Britishness with whiteness, with diasporic communities, the racialized other (El-Enany, 2020; Reddie, 2019; Wilson, 2012). This problematizing of migration contributes to the ongoing denial of the violence and exploitation of colonialism (and contemporary coloniality), and the links between colonialism, racialized global capitalism, and contemporary migration (SSAHE, 2020; Gutierrez Rodriguez, 2018; Mayblin and Turner, 2021), with the discourses and policies associated with the hostile environment increasing the insecurity, discrimination, and marginalization felt by racialized communities living in Britain regardless of their immigration status (El-Enany, 2020; SSAHE, 2020).

The interconnected temporalities of the post-diasporic lens can reveal how colonial and post-colonial links, and the denial of this violence, are shaping both the global inequalities which the diaspora-development nexus is trying to respond to and the migration patterns through which the diaspora–development nexus is formed. Considering practices of remitting in the context of local conditions after movement emphasizes the connections between race, insecurity, and global development, as Mohan (2008: 472) comments ‘demands from family...as ignoring the real hardship people have to endure in terms of low incomes, racism and general insecurity’. This is not to demonize the financial and other demands families may place on diaspora members, rather it is to highlight the paradoxical nature of their lives, of presumed wealth, and also hardship. As diaspora members remit to their families and wider communities in the name of development, they are a part of historical and contemporary relations based on coloniality. Similarly, migrants and refugees, while coping with the hostile environment in the UK, continue to engage with development in their country of heritage, for example through remittances, political activism, or civic participation as members of rhizomatic post-diasporic spaces (Bekaj et al., 2018; SSAHE, 2020). Whilst transnational engagement continues in precarious, marginalizing, and discriminatory conditions, research has argued that diasporic engagement in development activities is greater when diasporic communities experience greater stability in their country of residence (Kleist, 2014; Mohan, 2008). Yet this stability should be understood transnationally, with Hammond (2013) contending that for some diasporic communities feeling settled and being able to access welfare, housing, and education is seen as a way of driving transnational engagement rather than mobilized as a form of integration into the ‘host’ nation. Greater stability

is pursued, not for the purposes of integration into an unwelcoming culture, but rather as a way of facilitating transnational activities (Hammond, 2013). The post-diaspora then situates the diaspora–development nexus within the global inequalities formed through slavery, exploitation, and colonialism, which underlie much of contemporary migration and formation of contemporary racialized capitalism (Bhattacharya, 2018; SSAHE, 2020). This shifts the temporality normally seen in theorizations of the diaspora–development nexus from an emphasis on journeys, movements, and extra-territorial transnational experiences to approaches that include the more distant legacy of moving and the conditions after movement.

Foregrounds Inequalities and Emancipatory Hope

‘growing up in the UK you are loved and accepted, but not necessarily loved and accepted.’

Jemal Toussaint and Georgia Edwards, *The Bristol Cable*, 15

March 2019

The third insight from post-diasporic theorizing this paper will probe is how it foregrounds and makes visible inequalities within the diaspora–development nexus, and the emancipatory hope it offers. In Laguerre’s (2017) critique of diaspora, he articulates how diaspora is synonymous with racialized hierarches of belonging, boundary maintenance, and projections of deserving migrants. International agencies have engaged in various ways with diasporic communities, with for example Justine Greening, the then secretary of state for International Development in Great Britain stating in 2014:

‘There is no doubt that African diaspora are absolutely key to achieving this, the diaspora have played and will continue to play a huge role in Africa’s rise... I’ve said the diaspora play a fundamental role in developing their countries of origin. I believe this is because, quite simply, diaspora organizations thoroughly understand both the challenges and the opportunities in Africa. You have more natural links than any other organizations. You have the unique insights, perspectives and extensive in-country networks.’

Justine Greening, 18 June 2014

A key aspect of engaging with the post-diaspora is the attention it allows us to pay to the inequalities engendered through diaspora, encouraging a critical engagement with how the global development community mobilizes diaspora

groups. Diaspora initiatives, such as those governed by the World Bank, can be seen as oikonomic projects, attempting to modernize, civilize, and reproduce Western values in the global South (Boyle and Ho, 2017). The development of the diaspora–development nexus then can be understood as part of an extension of Western governmentality and biopower on to states in the global South, with the aim of civilizing and normalizing economies and polities that are seen as threatening and as a means through which to securitize development (Boyle and Ho, 2017; Hammond, 2013; Kleist, 2014; Wilson, 2012).

For international development agencies, their diaspora engagement programmes have the potential to reinforce diasporic inequalities and racial hierarchies, reproducing ideas of what it means to be a migrant, the contributions required to be a ‘respectable’ racialized person, and the desire to promote a (White) version of civility and modernity (Wilson, 2012; 2019). This is particularly the case for the Muslim community in Great Britain who are repeatedly given the job of ‘civilizing’ those at home and taking Western values with them, whilst paradoxically being further excluded from British society through schemes such as Prevent, and other Islamophobic rhetoric linking Islam to terrorism and gendered inequalities (Wilson, 2012; 2019). The racial logics integral to the diaspora–development nexus are perhaps more contradictory because the nexus itself has been positioned as an antidote to the whiteness of development, bringing racialized communities into the global development community, yet these attempts to engage the diaspora can also be understood as reproducing racialized hierarchies of belonging (Ademolu, 2021; Mercer et al., 2008; Wilson, 2012; 2019). Inequalities and hierarchies of belonging are also integral to the crafting of diasporic identity by nation states, with diaspora communities created on the basis of socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, and respectability (Agarwala, 2016; Ho, 2011; Jons et al., 2015; Dickinson, 2012; 2017; Wilson, 2012).

Whilst providing a space to attend to the inequalities reproduced by the diaspora–development nexus, post-diaspora also provides some direction for emancipatory hope (Laguerre, 2017; Lee, 2009; Scafe, 2019). In foregrounding inequalities, the post-diasporic lens encourages viewing the contemporary migration environment as a key facet of global development, acknowledging that increased interest with diasporic-led development has co-existed with enhanced anti-immigration policies in many countries of the global North, sustained at both national and supranational scales (Wilson, 2012; 2019). At the scale of the nation state and the global development industry, a post-diasporic lens draws attention to the potentially extractive nature of diasporic-led development. Responding to the conditions experienced by diasporic communities then becomes an important aspect of diasporic-led development, with Kamina

Johnson-Smith, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade in Jamaica explicitly connecting diasporic wellbeing with sustainable development in Jamaica's recent draft (version 11) of its diaspora policy:

'The policy embodies the commitment of the Government of Jamaica to the nation's development and the Diaspora's well-being. In particular, it addresses issues and concerns of the Diaspora while assisting them to live in harmony and to prosper in the countries where they and their descendants reside. Secondly, it seeks to optimize the Diaspora's contribution to Jamaica's sustainable development.'

Government of Jamaica, 2 March 2020

The policy goes on to detail particular host country challenges, the Windrush scandal in Britain, immigration legislation in the United States, and racially discriminatory carding in Canada. For Laguerre (2017), the emancipatory nature of the post-diasporic condition articulates the arrival of a (citizenship) status in which full participation in both the country of heritage and of residence is possible. This stance encourages states and bilateral and multilateral agencies to understand development beyond the leveraging of diasporic communities through remittances, knowledge transfer or homeland tourism, but rather as (full) participation in society, thinking about the ways in which peoples' social, cultural, political, and material circumstances may affect their experiences, and 'how people negotiate rights, responsibilities, identities, and belonging through (transnational) relations with others' (Kallio et al., 2020: 1). The diaspora–development nexus then becomes oriented to everyday social, cultural, material, and political circumstances, and experiences and feelings of belonging through multiple locales, articulating more readily with the idea of global development (Horner, 2020; Willis, 2005). The emancipatory hope engendered through post-diasporic theorizing can re-orient the nexus to contest the discrimination felt by diasporic communities in everyday social life and to advance the everyday socio-economic, cultural, and political liberation of diasporic communities in multiple unsettled locales (Laguerre, 2017).

It becomes then important to question what a post-diasporic approach to the diaspora–development nexus may do to conceptualizations of development. The argument put forward above, that a post-diasporic lens has the potential to understand development as the advancement of the everyday socio-economic, cultural, and political liberation of diasporic communities in multiple unsettled locales resonates with post-development theories in trying to shift development away from Western theories of modernization and recognizing the importance of everyday experiences, subjectivities, and materialities. In the post-diasporic–development nexus, development has the potential to become

about economic, political, and social inequalities and relations that intersect on a global scale, their histories, and contemporary resonances. This perhaps also resonates with some of the elements of degrowth theories, for example conviviality and wellbeing and of pluriversal scholarship (Escobar, 2015; Hickel, 2020).

Conclusion

This paper has considered how post-diasporic theorizing can reorient the diaspora–development nexus. Developed in an era of rampant neoliberal globalization, based on an international development paradigm and Northern theories of migration, the diaspora option has traditionally focused on how diasporic communities can be leveraged for development to offset the inequalities driven by racialized historical exploitation, global capitalism, and contemporary neoliberalism, with the nexus embedded in migration patterns that are driven by these inequalities. Dominant theorizations of the diaspora–development nexus, and those often mobilized within development discourse and practice have instrumentalized the diaspora, placing them as economic subjects oriented to an immutable homeland. This has led to constraints in the way diasporic-led development has been mobilized, neglecting the multiple spatialities and temporalities that constitute and reproduce the nexus.

In looking to respond to the new realities of contemporary neoliberal (de)globalization; (re)bordering, European and North American ethnonationalism, nativist politics and anti-migrant discourses, and shifts in migration and development studies that articulate the changing relationships between North and South, the concept of post-diaspora challenges the traditional emphasis on diasporic roots and routes. Post-diasporic theorizing attempts to respond to both the limitations of diaspora as a concept and the call to respond to rapidly shifting global contexts, by providing insights into three hitherto neglected dynamics: the geographical fluidity, the interconnected temporalities, and the inequalities that are part of the post-diasporic condition. Bringing post-diasporic theorizing into conversation with the diaspora option in global development articulates three key points. First, it accentuates the rhizomatic geographical entanglements through which diasporic engagement with development occurs beyond the home/host and North/South binary. Second, the post-diasporic shifts the temporalities of the diaspora–development nexus to articulate the connections between diasporic-centred development and (post-diasporic) feelings and politics of belonging. Finally, post-diasporic theorizing foregrounds how racialized inequalities are reproduced through the diaspora–development nexus. By articulating these inequalities, post-diaspora then leads to probing the emancipatory potential of the

diaspora–development nexus, articulating the way the nexus can be mobilized to further push for the full everyday participation of diasporic communities in multiple locales, articulating the ‘global’ in global development, and the need to theorize development relationally (Horner, 2020; Willis, 2005). The diaspora–development nexus then constitutes everyday social, cultural, material, and political experiences and feelings of belonging through multiple sites, and can be re-oriented to advance the socio-economic, cultural, and political liberation of diasporic communities in multiple locales (Laguerre, 2017).

Mobilizing the concept of post-diaspora in the context of diasporic-led development helps thinking on the diaspora–development nexus to respond to the challenges of (de)globalization, as witnessed by the rejection of free trade and movement of people and increasingly restrictive and exclusionary migration regimes. Thinking through a post-diasporic lens, diasporic-led development has the potential to bring everyday racialized life into conversation with global development and connect diasporic-centred development with historical and contemporary migration governance. By extending the usual temporalities associated with the diaspora–development nexus, post-diaspora connects diasporic life after movement with historical and contemporary injustices and considers how these acts of violence may shape the diaspora–development nexus. In the context of increasing Anglo-American and European ethnonationalism, post-diaspora, as the SSAHE (2020: 9) call for, has the potential to help in ‘unravelling the paradoxes between hostile national environments and their co-existence with other transnational paradigms around migration’.

This begins to develop a research agenda that asks about the diaspora–development nexus in the current context, including questions about how the contemporary and historical politics of migration intersect with diasporic contributions to global development, how engagement in development is shaped by the interconnected temporalities of emotional, social, political, and cultural entanglements, what the complexity and multiplicity of migration journeys and notions of return mean for development, and how is the colonial past and contemporary coloniality relevant for diasporic-led development? And how do colonial and racial histories and present-day logics order and shape global development? It also calls for further ‘researching up’, examining how states and the global development industry may reproduce racialized hierarchies of belonging and injustice through diasporic-centred development and critically engaging with the geopolitics of knowledge production on diasporic-centred development (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020; Pailey, 2021; Wilson, 2012). Post-diasporic theorizing interrogates the relationship between global development and

domestic immigration policies, for example how anti-migrant policies intersect with global development, articulating development relationally, and not just as something that happens ‘over there’. This offers opportunities to resist increasing ethnonationalism and hostile environment policies through the lens of global development and articulates the wider need to consider the racialized logics and inequalities that are reproduced through discourses of development.

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