

Practising Religion across National Borders: A Study of Ghanaian Christian Churches in Amsterdam

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The paper investigates the rationale behind the multiplicity of cross-border relations of Ghanaian Christian churches in Amsterdam and the involvement of Ghanaian second generations in transnational religious discourse. It contributes to filling the empirical research gap in the transnational religious practices of Sub-Saharan African Christian churches in the diaspora. This study also contributes to the empirical literature on the intergenerational transnational religious activities of Sub-Saharan Africans in Europe. The study raises three main research questions: to what extent do Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam engage in transnational religious practices? In what ways do second generation Ghanaians engage in the transnational religious field? Is mission reverse or internal among Ghanaian Christian churches in Amsterdam? The paper adopts ethnographic research methodology of in-depth interviews with fifty second generation Ghanaians and nine Ghanaian Christian churches in Amsterdam, participant observation and informal interviews which occurred in Amsterdam from January 2014 until January 2015. The research concludes that inasmuch as some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam and some second generation Ghanaians engage in activities that strengthen their integration into mainstream Dutch society, they are also involved in transnational religious activities. The nation state poses structural constraints in the transnational religious field but some Ghanaian churches exercise agency to contest or re-define some of the restrictions. The study recommends that further research investigates gender relations in the transnational religious social field of the studied Ghanaian Christian churches in Amsterdam.