

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, ROMANIA



UNIVERSITATEA BABEȘ-BOLYAI
TRADIȚIE ȘI EXCELENȚĂ

BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY

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MIGRATION, DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRANTS-STATE OF ORIGIN

RELATIONS

THE CASE OF REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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CONTENTS OF THE SUMMARY

Table of contents	4
Presentation of the doctoral thesis' subject and of the fundamental theoretical principles ...	7
Some research questions, assumptions and premises	9
Details on the empirical study and personal contribution.....	10
Some clarifications on the research results	13
References	19

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TEXT BOXES

Introductory remarks

Several research questions, assumptions and premises

PART I

CHAPTER I

Migration processes: theoretical clarifications

1.1. International migration: short theoretical and historical notes

1.2. Theory of migration: main relevant theories for the debate on the migration-development nexus

1.2.1. Neoclassic economic approach towards migration: neoclassic economic theory, pull-push factors theory and theory of the segmented or dual labor market

1.2.2. Historical structural approach towards migration: world systems theory and network theory

1.2.3. Other theoretical approaches: New Economics of Labor Migration, theory of transitional mobility and system theory of migration

An individual model of decision-making regarding migration

Does this field of study have a common theoretical framework? Several conclusions

1.3. Transnationalism: a recent theoretical explanation of migration

CHAPTER II

Migration and development: theoretical framework for analysis

2.1. Migration-development nexus: context and evolution

The role of international organization in outlining the significance of the migration-development nexus

2.2. The dynamics of the migration-development nexus. Remittances: a magic bullet for underdevelopment?

Positive effects of remittances

Negative effects of remittances

Briefly about social remittances

CHAPTER III

Diaspora: normative conceptualizations and approaches

3.1. Diaspora: a disputed concept? Definitions

3.2. Diaspora: characteristics and conceptual vulnerabilities

Characteristics of the 'classic' diaspora

Several conclusions and a warning

CHAPTER IV

Migrants, development and migrants-state of origin relations: role, involvement and contributions

4.1. Interpretations of the favorable contexts for the discussions about migration, migrants, diaspora, transnational communities and development

4.2. Migrants, diaspora and transnational communities: potential agents of development for the origin state?

Resources and types of migrants' power as agents of development of the origin state

Some modes for integrating migration and migrants in the national and local strategies of development

Migrants – an irreplaceable human capital? Some conclusions

4.3. Migrants-state of origin relations. Policies, (in)actions and strategies aimed at harnessing the development potential of migrants

Instead of a conclusion

PART II

CHAPTER V

Migration, development and migrants-state of origin relations in Republic of Moldova: past, present and future

5.1. Trends of migration processes in Republic of Moldova

5.1.1. Premises and characteristics of migration processes in Republic of Moldova

5.1.2. Main social and economic effects of migration in Republic of Moldova

5.2. Migration and development in Republic of Moldova. Migrants-state of origin relations: from theory to empirical evidence

5.2.1. Legislation, action plans and national strategies in the field of migration and development

5.2.2. Membership of Republic of Moldova to the Global Forum on Migration and Development. Projects implemented in Republic of Moldova related to migration and development

5.2.3. Policies of remittances capture for economy: 'PARE 1+1' program

5.2.4. Diaspora Conventions – reunions of persons of Moldovan origin residing abroad

5.2.5. Bureau for Diaspora Relations – BDR

5.2.6. Moldovan migrant organizations – visibility and involvement

CHAPTER VI

International migrations of Moldovans: implication of migration for development and migrants-state of origin relations. Empirical study

6.1. General framework for analysis

6.2. Research design and objectives

6.2.1. A plea for a qualitative research design

6.2.2. Presentation and description of the sample, levels and units of analysis

6.2.3. Description of the data collection process

6.3. Analysis and interpretation of interviews conducted with migrants. Are Moldovan migrants potential agents of development for Republic of Moldova?

6.3.1. Migration and the determinants of settlement in Canada

- 6.3.2. Migrant expectations towards migration
- 6.3.3. Networks of Moldovan migrants in Canada: support for newcomers
- 6.3.4. Adaptation and integration of Moldovan migrants in the destination state: between low social mobility and an indistinguishable discrimination
- 6.3.5. Identity orientation and return perspectives
- 6.3.6. Social transnational activities: communication, co-presence, information and fluxes of social remittances
- 6.3.7. Economic transnational activities: remittances, translocal donations and adverse context for investments and entrepreneurial behavior in the origin state
- 6.3.8. Political transnational activities: participation to elections and claims for political rights
- 6.4. Analysis and interpretation of interviews conducted with the representatives of Moldovan migrant organizations in various states of destinations and with the key-informants
 - 6.4.1. Migrants organizations: different or alike?
 - 6.4.2. Migrants organizations difficulties: participation, involvement and representation
 - 6.4.3. Priorities, plans and projects of migrants' organizations
 - 6.4.4. Migrants organizations and state of origin relations: partnership, conflict or opposition?

Conclusions and final remarks

References

Annexes

- Annex 1.1. Roles, sources of power and strategies of origin states
- Annex 1.2. Specific contributions and actions of origin states
- Annex 2. Characteristic of economic migrants from Republic of Moldova
- Annex 3. Volume and origin of remittances (by country) in Republic of Moldova (2010-2015)
- Annex 4.1. Survey I
- Annex 4.2. Survey II
- Annex 5.1. Social and demographic description of the first category of respondents – economic migrants from Republic of Moldova
- Annex 5.2. Description of the second category of respondents – representatives of Moldovan migrant organizations in various states of destinations

Presentation of the doctoral thesis' subject and of the fundamental theoretical principles

The doctoral thesis analyzes the migration processes that take place in Republic of Moldova, against the backdrop of the latest discussions about the relationship between migration and development, and the development potential that economic migrants and their organizations from different destination countries might have for their origin country. Hence, the main three topics that constitute the core of the paper are: (1) migration and the dynamics of the migration-development nexus, (2) insights regarding the role and the contributions of migration to the development of their country of origin and (3) the relationship or the rapports that migrants coming from Republic of Moldova have with their country of origin. All three aspects have been analyzed and interpreted through the theoretical glances provided by the academic literature on diaspora and transnationalism.

The first part of the paper systematizes the available academic literature to facilitate the contextualization and understanding of the theoretical framework of the topics discussed in the next sections. The paper starts with a chapter presenting a description of the theories about migration processes, also including several newer and innovative theories from the literature in this field such as the neoclassical paradigm on migration with several of its main approaches, including the neoclassical economic perspective, the theory of pull-push factors and the dual or segmented labor market theory; the historical-structural paradigm on migration with the world systems theory and the migrant network theory; the new economics of labor migration, the transitional mobility theory and the migration systems theory. Several criticisms and additions concerning the most significant theoretical perspectives have been included in this chapter, in order to differentiate the epistemological inconsistencies encountered for decades by the members of the scientific community interested in studying the migration phenomena. Moreover, I chose to discuss briefly about transnationalism in a separate section of the first chapter, because this concept had a profound applicability in the paper and facilitated, to a certain extent, the coherent understanding of the relationship between migration, development and the migrants. This was also confirmed by the endeavors of other authors who have analyzed the migration processes around the world and placed them into the theoretical context provided by transnationalism (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc, 1994; Faist, 2000b; Portes, 2001; 1996b; Vetovec, 1999). I considered it important to put an emphasis on the transnationalist approach because, in my perspective, the explanations regarding this recent approach are likely to facilitate the later understanding of the interactions and flows between migrants and the origin country – in this case, the Republic of Moldova. In other words, with the help of the theoretical assumptions prescribed by transnationalism, I was able to set an adequate theoretical framework for the explanations concerning the role migrants have or could have in development, whichever way we define the term, and the way they interact or could interact with the

country of origin within the structure of opportunities (or constraints) created by the migration process itself, together with other international macrosocial processes (such as globalization, changes in government and governance models, the powers of capitalism and free market). In addition, a large part of the authors who have studied transnationalism have also studied the diaspora, another important topic discussed in the paper. Therefore, as opposed to other paradigmatic models, transnationalism has a greater applicability for the case discussed in the thesis.

After reviewing the published literature, the second chapter attempts to capture a part of the theoretical ambiguities that have emerged in the last decades concerning the relationship between two macrosocial processes highlighted in the paper: migration and development. Apart from the dilemmas raised by the meaning of the relationship between the two processes, the controversies concerning the migration-development nexus also arose from the difficulty of determining to what extent migration is a catalyst for development, both for the migrants' origin and destination countries. As remittances have a major role within the studies on the economic consequences of migration, within this chapter, I made a collection of opinions about the role migrants have in the dynamics regarding the relationship between migration and development. Alongside the importance and positive effects of remittances on migrants and communities, I also summarized the negative effects of remittances to illustrate the fact that the remittance-based model of development is obsolete in terms of its applicability, being affected by a profound economic determinism and according to the published literature, models such as 'diaspora' or 'brain gain/ brain circulation/ brain trust' could bring more benefits to the origin country in terms of economic, social or political development (Newland and Patrick, 2004; Larner, 2007; Meyer and Brown, 1999; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003).

Given that a large number of authors consider that the concept of 'diaspora' has various meanings, in the third chapter of the paper I included a series of conceptual clarifications regarding the initial and current connotations of the term. At the same time, these explain the simultaneous and sometimes indiscernible use of two categories of actors within the thesis: migrants and members of diaspora, and two categories of communities: the transnational and the diasporic one. The selection of terms and operational definitions in this paper was made taking into account their value and methodological utility (Bauböck și Faist, 2010), and also the fact that most of the policy-driven literature directly refers to diaspora when the potential of migrants for development is analyzed.

In order to consolidate the analytical framework of the thesis, the fourth chapter of the theoretical part returned to the issue of the migration-development nexus discussing the role of migrants and members of diaspora as agents of development for their countries of origin. Therefore, I enumerated and clarified the means and contexts in which migrants and members of diaspora take

part in political, economic, social, cultural or organizational transnational activities that are explicitly or implicitly designed to contribute to the development of the origin country or to trigger social changes in the region of origin. With regards to the relationship between the countries of origin and migrants, the main types of policies and strategies used to capitalize the potential for development of migrants and members of diaspora found in the international literature are mentioned and explained in this section.

In the second part of the paper, by means of a brief description of the main socio-economic characteristics, trends and effects of migration from the Republic of Moldova, all included in the fifth chapter, I made an attempt to clearly and eloquently reconstitute the descriptive and numerical migratory profile of Moldova. I sought to present the evolution of the migration processes from Moldova to be perfectly understandable even for people who are unfamiliar with the geopolitical, social or economic context of this state. To this end, I used both national and international relevant and credible statistics concerning the volume and profile of migrants, remittances, the accounting of the positive and negative consequences of international mobility of Moldovans etc.

As I mentioned before, in this paper I systematically and originally studied a series of topics related to the decision of Moldovan citizens to voluntary emigrate, by formulating findings, descriptions as well logic, objective and valid explanations. Therefore, I made an attempt to explore with an integrated viewpoint the three main subjects that constitute the core of the paper: (1) migration, the dynamics regarding the relationship between migration and development, (2) perspectives on the migrants' role and involvement in the development of the origin country and (3) relationship or connections between migrants and the country of origin, The Republic of Moldova, all subjects interpreted with a theoretical view stemming from transnationalism and diaspora. In the undertaken analyses I explored, on one hand, the nature of the relationship that is established in time among the émigré and the origin state she/ he has left and, on the other hand, the possible implications of the individual and collective contributions of the Moldovan economic migrants on the social change and development in Republic of Moldova. In this thesis the above-mentioned contributions are underlined by the transfers of remittances, models of behavior, practices, ideas and values of migrants, as well as all the fluxes, activities and practices that are transnational in character.

Some research questions, assumptions and premises

I was interested in finding an answer to the following general interrogations, even though I did not specify them as research questions or objectives but rather considered them objects of curiosity or assumptions of personal nature. Moreover, it was not my intention to formulate answers regarding the direction and strength of the relation between indicators and variables as it was not my

intention to test hypotheses. Among others, this is also confirmed by the fact that the research methodology is based on qualitative research methods.

- Starting from the social-political and current economic reality of the poorest and weakest state in Europe, what is or could be the role of migrants in the development of the Republic of Moldova?
- How do migrants imaginarily and/or conceptually relate to the Republic of Moldova? Can we highlight the type of loyalty developed by Moldovan migrants during their migratory experience? Is this loyalty conflictual or does it aim both the country of origin and the country of destination (*hybrid identity*) (Rother and Nebe, 2009)?
- As regards the Republic of Moldova and its expatriate citizens, can we talk about the emergence of a diaspora or/and of several transnational communities (or at least some that have a diasporic consciousness), as described by renowned authors in this field, also taking into account the fact that migration processes from the Republic of Moldova are relatively recent? (Kuznetsov, 2006; Buga, 2011 *apud* Tajeda, Varzari and Porcescu, 2013; Moşneaga, 2014; Schwartz, 2007). To what extent the transnational activities, transfers, practices and initiatives from the social field that transcend the borders of national states contribute to the creation of a transnational community?
- Which are the most frequent ways of transnational involvement that can be observed at Moldovan migrants and what real and anticipated impact could these have on the political, cultural, social and economic development of the Republic of Moldova?
- Is the ‘diaspora model’ a feasible option for the Republic of Moldova aiming to mitigating some of the negative social, economic and demographic effects of migration in the medium and long term? (Larner, 2007; Meyer and Brown, 1999; Tajeda and Bolay, 2010; Patterson, 2006; Nyberg-Sørensen, 2004)
- To what extent the official discourses and public policies regarding the remittance-based development model and return migration could be replaced by new approaches stemming from the development model based on the relationship with migrant communities and diaspora? To what extent the subsequent evolution of a state whose main resource is the human resource would be enhanced by the transnational attitudes, practices and activities of migrants which derive from the migration process itself? (Newland and Patrick, 2004; Nyberg-Sørensen, 2004)

Details on the empirical study and personal contribution

To a certain extent, the paper has a prospective dimension, the empirical study *per se* being of exploratory nature by analyzing some neglected phenomena in their early stage and trying to

anticipate their evolution depending on the behavior of several individual or collective actors – migrants and their families, state authorities, decision-makers, Moldovan migrant organizations and transnational communities. It is well known that migration does not always lead to the long term settlement of migrants in the regions where they settle and in case migration becomes permanent, only some individuals will maintain their distinctive identity and will eventually establish a diaspora. Therefore, one of the emerging phenomena that I mention is related to the establishment of communities abroad made up of current Moldovan migrants.

I shall mention the fact that, during the drafting of the thesis, a series of insurmountable constraints and methodological limitations were caused by the fact that migration and its adjacent phenomena cannot be easily measured. This reality brought about a series of difficulties concerning the determination and collection of relevant data for a qualitative empirical research. Referring to the case of the Republic of Moldova, the main aspect that made the analyses and empirical study difficult was the lack of data, the number of studies and analyses dedicated to the topic being relatively low. Even when I could find them, these turned out to be quantitative, focusing on the volume and impact evaluation of remittances. The limited number of articles on the migration from Moldova with a qualitative design stirred me into choosing a complex and profound qualitative method consisting of conducting interviews with various categories of research subjects that allowed me to capture the ‘inside’ of the migration process characteristic to the Republic of Moldova. One of the first general conclusions formulated following the research is related to the awareness of the fact that, in order to understand migration from Moldova, there is no need to supplement the existing explanations, but to enhance the comprehension level of the phenomenon. For this reason, I believe the analysis in this paper accurately and originally explores the nature of the connection between migration, development and the migrant relationship with the country of origin, the Republic of Moldova, and the results of the empirical study fill in some knowledge gaps concerning the characteristics and consequences of migration from Moldova. The interpretation of the interviews conducted with types of respondents was made in connection with transnationalism and the empirical analysis consisted of the interpretation, description and evaluation of transnational practices, activities and initiatives of Moldovan migrants from Canada and Moldovan migrant associations from various countries of destination. In the context of the discussions concerning the connection between migration and development at local, regional and international level, this primarily aims to highlight the current or future meanings, implications, valences and influences of the migrants’ transnational actions and not necessarily measuring the impact of transnational behavior on the country of origin – the Republic of Moldova.

Therefore, the research in this paper was based on a sample consisting of three types of research subjects, each type representing a distinct unit or level of analysis: **(1)** economic migrants born in the Republic of Moldova (country of destination Canada); **(2)** representatives of voluntary associative structures of Moldovan migrants from the countries of destination (associations, groups of initiative, formal or informal communities) and **(3)** key informants from Canada and other countries of destination, key informants from the Republic of Moldova.

For the first category of respondents, the two geographical points of reference were the country of destination - Canada and country of origin – the Republic of Moldova. The choice of the first category of subjects was not done accidentally. The existing statistical data show that Moldovan migrants, who chose to migrate to Canada, are a more homogeneous group than, for example, those in Italy or Russia. They tend to have a higher level of education than the rest of migrants (whether we refer to the training they have gained in Moldova or to the studies they have pursued in Canada after emigrating), to be part of the middle-income category (emigration to Canada may be a real ‘long-term investment’ for migrants) and have emigrated with the whole family. The imposed emigration conditions create an emigration regime where the country of destination ‘singles out’ newcomers according to previously established characteristics (Culic, 2010), therefore I assume that the social and economic lifeworlds of Moldovans from a state like Canada are in a more advanced stage of training and are clearly different from Moldovans from other countries of destination that might be more vulnerable on account of the status of irregular/ illegal migrants or due to discrimination or status inconsistency, etc. (Mazzucato, 2011). Regarding this category of subjects, I was interested in highlighting the types of daily transnational practices and activities specific to the Moldovan migrant communities in Canada. In this case, I started from the assumption that a part of the transnational behavior of migrants is due to several common factors that we would certainly find in other countries of destination as well and to unique, context-specific factors. The discovery of all these things was the challenge and novelty of the paper as well as a research effort. For the first category of subjects, migrants and their families were the research units. I analyzed the transnational practices and activities of the interviewees [economic, political and socio-cultural (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt, 1999)], which have an explicit or latent significance in the context of the discussions on migration and development and their identity orientation, a construct that helped me assess the valences of the relationship of Moldovan migrants with the country of origin.

Although the approach for the second category of respondents is, by nature, more diffuse, since the interviewees represented the organizations established by migrants from a large number of different destination countries, also in this case, the actions, practices, attitudes and perceptions that have a direct or indirect link with Moldova were analyzed, thus maintaining the dual context of

analysis, again prescribed by the transnationalist approach. In the case of migrant organizations, the unit of analysis was the migrant organization, association or initiative group from a relatively large number of destination countries. Finally, the last category of subjects interviewed consisted of a number of key informants. This relatively small group of subjects consisted of other people who could provide information to outline a clearer picture of the analyzed issue.

As far as the research process is concerned, the data used for the empirical part of the paper were collected for four months, between December 2016 and March 2017, through semi-structured interviews. For the selection of the respondents in the first category, I used the ‘snow ball’ sampling, this type of sampling being the most appropriate and easier to use when the individuals constituting the researched population cannot be easily identified or reached (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). As such, I could say that the data collection stage was an endeavor and a challenge, but at the same time provided enough intrinsic rewards.

Some clarifications on the research results

In the first section of the empirical study, which focused on the lives of migrants from the Republic of Moldova that moved to Canada, I analyzed their social, economic and political transnational activities. Moreover, I tried to determine to what extent the migrants in the analyzed country of destination are still attached to Moldova as their country of origin. The interviews with the Canadian migrants have shown that, to a large extent, the dual orientation and attempts to capitalize on their status in both places determine their transnational practices and activities. The fact that they do not feel excluded or marginalized in the society of destination contributes to that. This finding is in line with the statements of the authors Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999), which argue that the dual orientations of migrants are the basis for the transnational processes. The most obvious manifestations of the dual identity orientation are the following: migrants speak or understand several languages (Romanian, Russian, English, French), hold the citizenship of the Republic of Moldova and/or Canada (sometimes of Romania as well), they benefit from an increased mobility between two or more cultures (Russian, Romanian, Canadian), keep residences/properties or relate to a ‘home’ in both the country of origin and country of destination (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt, 1999; Faist, 2010; Foner, 2007), and last but not least, they carry out and simultaneously or alternatively engage in continuous/uninterrupted economic, social, political and cultural activities that take place in a social field/space between the Republic of Moldova and the places where migrants live. What preserves the dual orientation of those who left Moldova and the intensity of transnational activities is the personal attachment to the country, as well as the unfavorable and precarious situation of those who still need their help and remittances. For these reasons, I think migrants’ transnationalism will be manifested in various forms and degrees as long as those from

other countries will continue to support those who remain in Moldova. The interviews have also highlighted the fact that through social remittances, such as changes in mentality, attitudes, values, practices, habits and through direct communication with those left at home, migrants contribute to the onset and continuous maintenance of social change in the Republic of Moldova. While this type of activities and remittances cannot be monetized or expressed in figures, with no tangible or immediate effects, they are important because they contribute to the remodeling and reconnecting of social, political and economic contexts in which the social actors from Moldova, both migrants and non-migrants interact.

Regarding the economic practices and behaviors, the vast majority of those who left Moldova and currently live and work in Canada are used to helping their families and relatives by sending remittances whenever needed. From this point of view, one conclusion is that migrants from Canada and elsewhere will continue to send money to Moldova as long as the social relationships on which this behavior is based will continue to exist and will be fueled by feelings of obligation or altruism, as the case may be. Although remittances are an important contribution from those who left Moldova, they have an imprecise and difficult to detect impact, as we have seen, they rarely directly target development processes or social change. An investment and entrepreneurial behavior measured in the intention of migrants to allocate financial means for their own businesses or to support Moldovan businesses, is almost inexistent. In this respect, the conclusion is obvious, that is, the mistrust in state institutions and economic contexts in Moldova are the main factors undermining the entrepreneurial and investment potential of migrants. Therefore, any strategy or public policy aiming to attract financial or intellectual migrant resources should consider establishing a partnership between migrants and state institutions based on transparency and trust.

Although other studies carried out on migrant groups around the world demonstrate that donations are quite common among migrants, migrant philanthropy is currently in an early stage of advent among Moldovan migrants. The conclusion concerning the potential for knowledge and know-how transfer is rather clear. At present, there is a narrow perspective on transferring skills from highly qualified migrants, even if a willingness to engage and an awareness of such possibilities to contribute exist. In this regard, the state has or will have the task of attracting the professional potential of its citizens who live and work abroad. A general conclusion would be that in the context of migration and development in the Republic of Moldova, the most important position is taken by the flow of remittances, the flow of ideas and the transfer of knowledge from migrants being limited, as confirmed through the interviews. Until recently, this was obvious, because in the political speeches and agendas, the focus was on the financial contribution of migrants, and only in the last two or three years plans and programs about the potential for modernization that resides in the ideas,

skills and knowledge of migrants have been drafted (National Development Strategy ‘Moldova 2020’, 2012; National Strategy ‘Diaspora 2025’, 2016). The public rhetoric and the lack of vision on the part of political decision-makers considerably damaged the image of the migrants from the Republic of Moldova, both internally and externally, because more than a decade ago the role of migrants was defined only around remittances, other capabilities and their agency being frequently and intentionally overlooked. Therefore, from this point of view, the implementation of a ‘diaspora model’ as a model of development for the Republic of Moldova, for the moment, is only a goal. Although some of the steps taken by the Moldovan public institutions have recently resulted in the adoption of legal acts or strategic documents aimed at creating a favorable framework for communication and collaboration with migrants in order to capitalize on their potential and resources, they fail to produce the anticipated effects. Relevant examples in this regard are programs to support return migration, entrepreneurial behaviors, or those seeking to create successful precedents for knowledge transfer practices.

As far as transnational political activities are concerned, we could say that they are modest, sporadic and have a low visibility in the Moldovan public space. Migrants currently care a lot for several political rights, such as the right to vote, but we cannot be certain that their interest will be continuing over time. Even when diaspora is more vocal, the undertaken claims and positions are largely neglected by Moldovan political decision-makers, a situation which emphasizes the conflictual nature of the relationship between migrants and political actors or state institutions. Although Moldovan migrants are generally informed about various topics in the political and economic spheres related to Moldova, they are passive when they have to or can express their opinions and positions or to show their initiative and get involved in activities.

The conducted research revealed that the imaginary and the narrative of Moldovans are fueled by negative and unpleasant memories, perceptions and reactions with respect to the public space, but at the same time, they are positive and bright if we relate to the private space (personal or family space). Therefore, in terms of transnational activities carried out by migrants, I found that they are active only in the private space [for example, migrants send remittances and start to have a transnational philanthropic behavior (migrant philanthropy)], but not in the public space where their behavior is visible and could have an impact. Thus, the involvement in migrant associations’ activities, the investment or entrepreneurial behavior, their opposition or support by collective action or contacting the authorities from the country of origin are not part of the activities migrants are accustomed to or get involved in. As things are shaping up to at present, migrants’ cross-national capacities are limited and Moldovans’ transnationalism in Canada, possibly in other regions as well,

is linear [(the other two types are reactive transnationalism and resource-dependent transnationalism (Itzigsohn and Saucedo, 2002)].

Once in the country of destination, a small part of Moldovan migrants adhere or even take part to the establishment of migrant associations/ organizations. In 2012, the diaspora of the Republic of Moldova was structured in approximately 150 organizations in over 30 countries and in 2016 in over 90 voluntary associative structures, including various groups of initiative, informal organizations, cultural and artistic clubs, charitable organizations and professional foundations. The available information indicates that the majority of associations have been established in Ukraine, Italy, Romania, Russia, Portugal, France, the USA and Canada (National Strategy 'Diaspora 2025', 2016; Bureau for Diaspora Relations).

With the help of interviews and associations' webpages and Facebook pages, I have been able to highlight the fact that, so far, there are three types of Moldovan migrant associative structures abroad: (1) the first category is of those focusing primarily on the activities of ethno-symbolic nature, (2) the second type, the least numerous, is of those aiming only transnational or local activities of civic or charitable nature and, finally, (3) the third category includes the majority of the associations and comprises those structures that combine to different degrees, practices, initiatives and activities of local and transnational ethno-symbolic nature with the local or transnational activities of political or civic nature. The analysis revealed that the practices and activities of ethno-symbolic nature are local and are aimed at maintaining and sometimes creating an individual and collective identity, and the philanthropic activities and practices, political lobbying, consisting of transfers of know-how are transnational and are aimed at maintaining the connection with the country of origin, the Republic of Moldova, having at the same time, a greater relevance for those contexts in which it is assumed that migration contributes to development. Transnational practices and activities of Moldovan migrant associative structures are in fact a specific form of social organization maintained by material or immaterial symbolic ties and relations, and migrants' organizations are the product of migrants' attempt to preserve their national and cultural identity and, at the same time, to adapt to the conditions of the societies that welcome them.

Moldovan migrant organizations are different in terms of size, purpose, level of formalization or institutionalization, resources, lifetime, communication and collaboration etc. The main features of migrant associations are heterogeneity, lack of stability, low resilience and a low capacity to adapt to the conditions of the countries of destination and origin. The orientation of the associative structures is diffuse and imprecise, many of them not being extremely open to cooperation or collaboration with various entities from the countries of destination, and, as far as the society of origin is concerned, the objectives and goals of the associations denote in many cases the desire to maintain

symbolic ties with Moldova. There were few descriptions on the internet mentioning objectives that refer to contributions, involvement, co-development, interventions, establishing forms of collaboration, partnerships, initiating projects, developing and diversifying activities by attracting local or international funding etc. The associations do not usually collaborate or collaborate very little with other organizations or with various local actors such as NGOs or local government. This is a great disadvantage because, in such a way, associations fail to diversify their activities, miss funding and co-development opportunities that could have an impact both on migrants from a society of destination and on Moldova, if the beneficiaries of the project or collaboration would be in Moldova. Cross-border and internal cooperation and working relationship between migrant organizations is essential as they generate social resources such as trust and mutual networks, the last being two of the productive political and economic elements for the current context (Faist, Fauser and Kivisto, 2011).

Despite the fact that most of the associations are still oriented towards the Moldovans in the countries of destination where they are established and that their activities contribute to the consolidation and reproduction of old social patterns characteristic of the country of origin and familiar to the migrants, lately, there is a recent trend towards the emergence of new and transnational social patterns consisting of volunteering, philanthropy, community involvement, the formation of knowledge transfer networks, lobbying, and many others, all of which are carried out by migrants and those in the diaspora. From another perspective, the gradual diversification of migrants' activities and the enhancement of their transnational character also contribute to changing the migrants' role, in general and within their organizations. In this paper, I have emphasized that the diaspora, made up of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova from outside the country and of the sum of the migrants and associative structures, begins to change its definition and transforms from an ethnic group located outside of its country of origin into a branch of the Moldovan civil society that extends across Moldova's borders. At the same time, part of the migrants and their most active and vocal organizations present in the media and on the internet seem to represent, from a certain perspective, a delocalized segment of the Moldovan civil society and certainly, their role becomes significant as social actors for Moldova.

The research showed that migrant associations want to promote social change and contribute to improving the socio-economic and political situation in their country of origin. However, at the same time, the diaspora is emerging as a new political actor and is placing itself in opposition in a moment when a deconstruction or massive erosion of the Moldovan political stage takes place.

Another aspect highlighted in the paper was the dichotomy *desire to engage-capacity to engage* (Al-Ali, Black and Koser, 2011) for migrants from the Republic of Moldova and the

organizations set up by them, the empirical reality revealing the predominance of the latter. Thus, one of the personal conclusions I formulate, but which may not be valid in a few years, is that as long as the ideas coming from migrant organizations are based only on the desire to contribute, their initiatives will not have a significant impact and a predominantly individual, sporadic character, without the potential for propagation. The extent to which associations can trigger changes in the communities from which migrants originate, along with the types of change, will depend on the quality and content of connections and social capital that is formed and consolidated between the individuals that constitute the migrant community or the diaspora on one hand, and on the other hand, between migrants and non-migrants (family, friends, relatives, neighbors, etc.), but also between migrants and the institutions from the origin country. This is particularly crucial for the associations because both migrants and their organizations cannot be agents of transformation or change on their own. On the contrary, in order to increase their potential, they have to communicate and collaborate with those organizations that are capable and have the resources to promote an institutional agenda prioritizing changes in the country of origin, because this is the only way in which migrant associations from the Republic Moldova will be able to address the paradoxes and opportunities that the complex links between migration and development imply. In the context of an increased interest for migrants and the diaspora, some authors warn that intentionally or not, several politicians or members of the scientific communities tend to place too much burden and responsibility on the shoulders of migrants and diaspora members with regards to their contribution to the development of the origin country, thus promoting and perpetuating a myth about the way in which development can be stimulated (Skeldon, 2008; Orozco, 2008; de Haas, 2010; Ionescu, 2006; Newland and Patrick, 2004). Therefore, taking into account the above considerations, it would be wrong for Moldovan migrants and their associations from different countries of destination to be held responsible for the development of their country of origin. In this respect, it is clear that migrants' desire to contribute to the modernization or development of the country of origin is complementary to a set of policies and strategies aimed at maximizing the benefits of migration.

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