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The Migration and Development Nexus: Reflections and Empirical Evidence from a Contested Social Field

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INTRODUCTION

Migrant diasporas are currently considered by Governments and International Agencies actors of development towards the countries of origin due to the social, cultural and monetary involvement of migrants towards the sending contexts. The increase of transnational relations set up and maintained by migrant groups (Orozco 2005; Foner 2003; Brettel and Hollifield 2000; Levitt, 2001; Portes *et al* 1999; Portes, 1997) and the corresponding new attention scholars and policy makers have been giving to the transnational social fields (Faist 2010; Faist and Fauser 2010; Levitt, Glick Schiller 2004; Nyberg-Sorensen *et al* 2002), has produced both an international conceptual interest and a practical engagement on the issue. The relationship between migration and development has been reshaped and positively adapted to migrants' transnational activism and their willingness to contribute to the improvement of their communities "here", in the context of residence, and "there" in the home country. A specific field of actions and reflections, generally called "migration and development" or "co-development", has been created and is currently celebrated as a significant and promising sector within international relations.

In this paper three major issues concerning the Migration and Development nexus are discussed, based on a review of the literature on the theme, as well as on empirical experience, on a specific co-development programme, the Fondazione4Africa-Senegal Initiative, carried out between Italy and Senegal, from 2008 to present.

First of all, the relationship between the phenomenon/perspective of transnationalism and the migration and development nexus, such as it is currently declined, shall be discussed. Secondly the main findings/results of the Fondazione4Africa initiative shall be analysed, discussing some critical issues such as the impact of co-development on the dynamics of integration in the local contexts of destination, and the level of participation and sustainability of the project. Finally, in the third part of the paper some critical observations shall be put forward regarding elements which hinder the potential effects of migrants' involvement in international cooperation as well as perspectives which would instead further enhance co-development.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSNATIONALISM AND THE MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

In this section an attempt to unravel the relationship between development, co-development and transnational activities is presented. In the transnational approach or 'perspective' (Levitt, Glick Schiller 2004; Levitt, Nyberg-Sorensen, 2004; Levitt, DeWind, Vertovec 2003; Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 1999; Vertovec 1999; Vertovec & Cohen 1999; Glick Schiller, Basch, Szanton Blanc 1992) migrants are seen as engaged in multi-stranded relations in more than one national context and participating in transnational communities, dislocated in different and distant places continually crossed by people as well as by material and immaterial resources. Transnationalism consists in the capacity of migrants to create and maintain social, affective and instrumental relationships with different significant environments, and is a multi-dimension phenomenon, sweeping from the social and political fields to the economic and financial ones, including cultural, religious, symbolic and emotional fields. Today migrants' lives are seen by many scholars as constructed in the interplay of different environments and characterised by the possibility of participating and taking initiatives simultaneously in different societies.

Transnationalism is often associated with the term 'diaspora', being the latter a transnational formation by definition and the former a consequence of a diasporic status. Transnationalism and

diaspora, defined as ‘awkward dance partners’, are often used interchangeably even if the two terms reflect different intellectual genealogies (Faist, 2010). The sense and the use of the term diaspora has changed through the last two or three decades, moving to a larger and more inclusive meaning. The revival of this term has led to a wide vulgarisation, that includes a developmental meaning, currently utilised by governments, international organisations and various cooperation and co-development actors. Diasporas are now postulated as collective actors acting in transnational fields which produce, from a ‘long distance’, forms of belonging and economic, social and political mobilisation oriented towards the development of the country of origin. Insofar the mainstream use of the term ‘diaspora’ means not only being emotionally connected with the homeland and collectively engaged in the creation of a differential identity from the context of destination, but even, and especially, being actively involved and politically situated in favour of the development of the home country (Ceschi 2011)

Transnationalism and diaspora are strongly affecting the migration & development paradigm (Castles, Delgado Wise 2007). Evidence of the possible convergence of the transnational/diasporic and migration and development approaches is easy to spot. On the one hand, the observation of the heterogeneous and bi-directional flows and of the multi-local spheres of action and presence of migrants led to considering a set of transnational practices, effectively oriented towards development or at least indirectly linked with improving social, economic and political conditions of the home country. On the other hand, in an era of increased circulation, temporary returns, skills and knowledge circulation as well as other forms of transactions across borders – have moved the centre of attention of migration and development mechanisms. Further, transnational perspectives and migration and development studies share a crossing border and multi-sited eye, a grassroots approach and the consideration of the centrality of migrants’ in contemporary phenomena of connectivity, as well as the awareness of the effects that migration entails both in sending and in the destination contexts. These approaches are therefore running in parallel and have a mutual influence on one another.

Transnational activities, diasporic sentiments and development purposes are considered as parts of the same whole and are currently used to support the framework within which migrants are the new ‘soldiers’ of medium/low income countries’ development and feed the global positive discourse about international migration and the rhetoric of ‘globalisation from below’ (Portes, 1997). The relationship between transnationalism and M&D is often perceived as natural and consequential, being migration & development an oriented and ‘applied’ version of the transnational approach, that does not need to be explained or discussed in detail. Nonetheless, it is very important to keep clear the constructed nature of this intertwining, in order to avoid the identification between transnational activities and diaspora interests as totally “development oriented” fields. Three types of selective appropriations operated by the migration & development nexus towards the wide, complicated and contradictory phenomenon of transnationalism and diaspora can be observed:

a) The migration and development mainstream generally deals exclusively with the economic side of transnational exchanges. Both the socio-cultural and the political domains are much less targeted as developmental spheres. The level of cultural and social changes, affected by what have been called ‘social remittances’ (Levitt, 1998) is too volatile and unsizeable for the M&D policy oriented discourse; on the other hand, political transformations are very controversial, unpredictable and to be seen case by case, not allowing their full inclusion in a positive vision of transnational effects. The only domain that can be conceptually caught and managed without any risk and operatively supported ‘in the name of progress’ is the economic one. Therefore the migration and development paradigm insists upon a set of activities undertaken by migrants that present a socio-economic impact, such as family remittance transfers, demand of services (telecommunications, consumer goods or travel), capital investments, home town associations initiatives, brain circulation and professionals’ knowledge networks, as well as the celebrated (mostly rhetorically than operationally) ‘circular migration’, seen as a means for improving useful forms of mobility and development circuits. Further, in the present development paradigms the nineteenth century

perspective constructed by western ideology and based on modernization theories and strategies of power and control appears still hegemonic (Escobar, 2005). Insofar migration and development approaches run the risk of being oriented by a mainstream economic framework and categories with little attention for plurality, diversity, autonomy and migrants' agency.

b) Secondly, migration & development builds its strategies on the postulate of migrants' development responsibility: people abroad are imagined and celebrated as already contributing to development and willing to further bettering their contribution. The official and widespread adoption of the term 'diasporas', intended as aware and organized collectivities engaged in the positive transformation of the source contexts, witnesses the construction of a new actor in international relations and cooperation, which is generally appreciated when politically neutral, little or not at all vindictive, economically active and community-oriented. The developmental conception of diaspora claimed by international organisations is purified by disruptive political meanings and consequences, and filled with highly wishful economic effects. Diasporas are therefore seen as aware people, sharing a common origin, with a specific and a-political mission: by means of their permanence abroad they give impulse to grassroots globalization and develop their country of origin. Differently from the political and sociological debate, there is no space for groups with different loyalties, refusing to assimilate and with strong emotional attachments to the homeland (Huntington, 1996; Anderson, 1998), nor for new forms of weak (Soysal 2000), plural and multi-sited identities escaping from the logic of national and cultural boundaries (Gilroy 1993; Hall 1991). In this vision migrants' transnational ties tend to be seen as beneficial when they concern development cooperation, but often regarded suspiciously by emigration and immigration states when they enter the political field. More open and dynamic agency tend to be denied, as well as the complexity and the changeability of migrants' involvements. We know, instead, that choices and attitudes of migrants towards social ties, peoples and places and their recognition in a broader collectivity can oscillate continuously and represent a contested and unstable field. Migrants' agency can be limited from one side and very inventive on the other, and may produce different outcomes than those undertaken by diasporas consciously and stably concentrated on development purposes.

c) The third aspect of the selective process operated by migration & development over transnationalism revolves around the frequency of cross-borders activities. Some scholars (Portes *et al.* 1999; Portes, 2003) agree upon the fact that only a minority of contemporary migrants can be considered transnationals, and that transnationalism takes place when migrants are engaged in frequent, regular and sustained over time activities linking two different national societies. Similarly, the selective approach of migration and development concentrates its analytical and operational interest on a set of actions set up by single or organised migrants not only primarily economic and driven by developmental responsibilities, but also sociologically evident and tangible, quite quantifiable, sustained and well established. In this sense, the M&D vision of migrants' trans-borders activism tends to correspond to the conceptualisation of transnationalism given by Portes and other scholars: activities through borders carried out frequently, regularly and for a long time and, we may add, with durable effects.

These features of the mainstreaming migration and development paradigm, based on the selective choice over the wide sphere of transnational activities, tend to create a specific vision of migrants' engagement and a specific field of relationships and actors, often called co-development. This transnational field can gather different stakeholders, such as governments and local authorities of both sending and destination countries, international institutions and NGOs, associations and other civil society organisations, private economic and social bodies (foundations, banks, clubs of enterprises), and involves migrants' organisations generally as 'partners' or co-producer of development actions, targeting local communities as the final beneficiaries. In this sense, on the one hand we can consider co-development as a relatively autonomous field of action, with its own logics and its social and symbolic capital, system of migrants' accreditation as subjects 'adapt' for this particular mission; on the other hand, the involvement of specific groups and organisations of

migrants in co-development is the result of the broader process of integration at the local level, and reflects the degree of social and institutional insertion within the territories of residence. In both cases, co-development engagement seems to produce relevant effects on migrants' participation in both contexts. Rescaling the intervention from the general level to a specific experience of co-development, trying to verify if and how the selective appropriations described above are reflected on specific co-development projects, in the next section empirical evidence is offered concerning the different dynamics implied by a multi-actor transnational initiative of cooperation, namely the Fondazioni4Africa Initiative.

THE FONDAZIONI4AFRICA INITIATIVE: EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD

The Fondazioni4Africa-Senegal is a 3 year programme, initiated in 2008 and entirely funded by four Italian bank foundations, with an overall budget of 3 million Euro¹. The programme aims at promoting innovative development initiatives in support of the rural population in Senegal, trying at the same time to make the most of the role that Senegalese migrants' associations in Italy can play, both in Italy and in Senegal. The initiative is run through the partnership of several actors which include four Italian NGOs traditionally working in Senegal, a research think tank and Senegalese migrants' organisations (initially two and subsequently three other organisations have become equal partners in the course of the years). The originality of the project stands in its bottom up approach and participatory governance, combining research and action, and in the direct involvement of migrant groups. The programme, articulated through a multi-sectorial approach, includes activities in Italy and in Senegal with the collaboration of migrant organisation and is, in this sense, a "co-development" programme.

In Italy, activities take place in four regions and are directed at: multicultural education (with initiatives in schools managed by Italian NGOs, directly involving also migrants and their associations); capacity building activities differently designed according to the specific needs and requests that emerged from each migrant association (i.e. international cooperation, project cycle management, associations' institutional reinforcement, etc.) In fact one key action of the entire programme consists in the concrete professional support offered by Italian NGOs to diaspora organisations in co-development actions these can carry out in their home country. Training but more so capacity building programmes have been designed for diaspora organisations with the idea of empowering organisations and their leaders, with the ultimate scope of fostering their ability to further establish and maintain new institutional partnerships both in Senegal and in Italy.

In Senegal the initiative is directed at rural development, reinforcing and extending previous activities run by the Italian NGOs involved, in certain regions in Senegal (i.e. microfinance, mango cultivation, fishery, milk production, etc.). Most of these activities in Senegal take place through the involvement of Italian NGOs and local organisations (i.e. rural saving banks, local producers, farmers, women cooperatives etc), and in some cases migrant associations partner of the F4A Initiative are also directly involved with their local counterparts.

Three further activities are part of the programme, presenting distinct transnational aspects: the first one for the promotion of sustainable tourism through the involvement of a migrant association and an NGO, foreseeing initiatives in Italy and the reinforcement or building up of tourist trajectories and services in Senegal; the second one for the promotion and reinforcement of partnerships, at different institutional levels in both countries. This activity includes aspects of decentralised

¹ Funders decided to extend the programme for 2 extra years (until October 2013). The total amount of the programme will be of 4.5 € millions.

cooperation, institutional relationships between municipalities and local authorities in Italy and Senegal and migrant associations. Finally the third transnational and cross cutting component is research, supervised by the think-tank CeSPI2. Research has been undertaken in order to provide operative suggestions for activities in all of the project's components. Research areas include: 1) the role of migrant associations as actors of development and the need to build and reinforce their capacities and competences – for promoting development in migrants' country of origin and integration in the country of residence (Mezzetti, 2009); 2) channelling migrants' remittances into job generating activities in Senegal, especially towards micro-finance institutions (Ferro, Frigeri, 2009; 2011); 3) the consumption of typical Senegalese food products abroad and the role of Senegalese women in relationship with food consumption and distribution (Ceschi 2009; Ceschi 2010); 4) a comparative analysis of policies and a multi-sited research on migrants' personal plans of return, with particular attention to the possibility/capacity to treasure competences acquired abroad (Ferro: 2010; Gelpi, 2011).

As the initiative is still ongoing it is too early to advance a clear and technical evaluation. However the initiative has represented an interesting observatory, which allows to put forward some preliminary cross cutting considerations.

The first consideration is that beyond the scopes of the initiative, a possible virtuous relationship between migrants' integration and transnational behaviours has been observed. The evidence/hypothesis presented here is that F4A, by fostering co-development activities both in Italy and in Senegal, de facto is opening new open opportunities for diaspora organisations' (and more so for their leaders') engagement in transnational politics. What is interesting to note is that co-development and M&D policies and practices don't seem to contain explicit reference to politics or political and translocal engagement. Migrants are in these schemes pictured as agents of development and change and are not referred as rights' holders, claims makers in a vindictive or contentious manner. "Co-development" practices, given this apparent a-political nature, while fostering circular returns towards the homeland, may legitimate not only greater involvement of diaspora members in local development, but potentially also their re-integration in the local political spheres in the country of origin. As in one example described below, a similar use of co-development has also allowed to enter the public sphere in the local context of residence (Mezzetti, 2011).

The diaspora organisations involved in the programme, in particular two partner organisations *Stretta di Mano* (based in Italy in the city of Mantova) and *Trait d'Union* (based in the city of Turin) have been both working in Italy for migrants' integration, several years before the beginning of the project. This element is essential in shedding light on the relationship between integration and transnational engagement, allowing to comprehend the shifts of trajectories these two organisations have been undergoing over the years, from integration issues to development at home.

Stretta di Mano (SDM) for example is a small organisation created in 2002. The President of the organisation is a Senegalese lady, who previous to the creation of SDM was an active member of the larger Senegalese provincial organisation in Mantova. She decided to create a professional organisation, namely SDM that would be undertaking concrete projects and initiatives, and that would not just be based on voluntary work, but with and through salaried professional figures. The way forward was the creation of a mixed membership organisation, including both Italians and Senegalese. The organisation would in this way make the best of Italian members, by "exploiting" their expertise, linguistic understanding, relationships, while maintaining also contacts with the Senegalese migrant population, including also migrants of different origins. The first project SDM ever managed was directed at the creation of a cooperative of women offering services for the integration of migrants in the city of Mantova (linguistic mediation, translation and assistance to

² www.cespi.it/africa-4fond.htm

administrative and bureaucratic procedures)³. The project received funding through an open call for projects of the Fondazione Cariplo, the institution which in Lombardy funds highly innovative and sustainable projects in various domains, including in the social sector with the objective of covering areas which are underfunded by the public and private sectors. The funds received through this first project “certified” SDM as a professional organisation, with the consequence that when the F4A initiative was launched, Fondazione Cariplo – which is among the donors together with 3 other Italian bank foundations – called SDM to become one of the initiative’s formal partners, together with very few other diaspora organisations and NGOs.

As SDM started getting involved in the F4A initiative and more so in development towards the homeland, the focus of its’ activities has been shifting from migrants’ integration in Italy to local development in Senegal. Together with the activities, also the President of the association, bringing along with her the associations’ decision-making processes, physically transferred from Mantova to Senegal. In the course of her own migration experience, the President of the association built her own individual process of legitimisation, becoming the “reference” person in Italy for the Ministry of the Senegalese Abroad. This ability to develop and maintain institutional relationships, occurring at the transnational level, is the manifest sign of the increased capability of diaspora associations’ leaders to emerge, gain visibility and legitimisation, which allows them to engage into trans-local politics in the country of origin.

A similar developmental trajectory can be observed for the “Associazione Culturale Trait d’Union” (ACTU), based in Turin. The organisation was created in 1995, mainly by Senegalese members (but including also Italians and members with other nationalities) with the aim of offering socio-cultural mediation services to public institutions working to assist migrants residing in their territories⁴. The organisation received funding both from an OIM Programme (MIDA) in 2006, as well as from the F4A Initiative (from 2008 to present), and has since continued to shift the focus of its’ activities from integration-mediation to development/responsible tourism in Senegal. Both the MIDA programme and the F4A Initiative, two co-development funding schemes, have “certified” the organisation as an actor professionally working for development in Senegal, contributing more or less directly to the establishment of new and significant institutional partnerships not only in Turin and in the domain of migrants’ integration, but also towards actors typically working in development cooperation as well as with partners and institutions in Senegal. It must be noted that a long standing partner of ACTU has been the NGO Cisl, traditionally operating both in Senegal and in Turin. The NGO’s support served as an intermediate legitimising actor, guarantying for example towards the OIM and the bank foundation working in Turin (Compagnia di San Paolo), over the credibility of the ACTU organisation and its’ leadership to work as an agent of change and for development in Senegal.

It is however the F4A initiative which boosted ACTU’s activities in Senegal, and which similarly to what occurred for SDM, fostered the mobility and the return of the associations’ leader (Mezzetti, 2011). The F4A programme has been designed with the idea that NGOs would offer technical assistance to those diaspora organisations - members of the partnership managing the entire programme - that started working towards development in the home country. Insofar the initiative itself became an incentive for the further professionalisation of diaspora organisations, fostering the territorial mobility of the organisations’ leaders, responsible for the success of the organisations’ activities in Senegal. Insofar as the F4A initiative contributed to transferring the barycentre of the organisations’ - ACTU and SDM - activities (and their leaders) from Italy to Senegal, the same organisations’ leaders started living more often and for longer periods of time in Senegal. The initiative legitimised these diaspora organisations as actors able to contribute to local development, while representing also an incentive for the permanent returns of the diaspora organisations’

³ For more information on the specific project see:

<http://www.strettadimano.org/Progetti/donneimmigrate/relazione/rendiconto.htm>.

⁴ For more information visit the following website: <http://www.actuweb.org/>.

professional leaders. These leaders, while investing in local development, are also becoming visible actors, attractive on behalf of local political institutions for the simple fact that they are diaspora representatives, who gained expertise through their migration process and relational capital which goes from Italy to Senegal. At the same time these leaders are starting to be potentially interested in the political spheres in those local contexts in which they are investing time, energies and resources.

A complementary example to the two described above is represented by another Senegalese association based in Milan (Sunugal)⁵ which through its progressive accreditation at the Italian local level as an actor of co-development, has been gaining new spaces and formal recognition in the destination context, becoming a reference point for the migrant population and as a consequence accessing the public sphere and having a say on matters relating to decentralised cooperation or migration policy issues (Mezzetti, 2011).

It is interesting to underline that while the F4A initiative sustains as well described in the previous section mainstream activities mostly related to the economic and developmental domain, it is contributing - beyond the objectives of the Project - to the creation of new openings for diaspora members in the local political spheres as well as into transnational politics. In this sense co-development may come to represent a mechanism of virtuous circularity, within which integration and transnationalism (or re-integration in the country of origin) are reciprocally reinforced.

The second consideration has to do with the partnership of the initiative, which is particularly original. The initiative presents a diversified and composite group of organisations which normally are not used in collaborating together, and which include: NGOs, a think tank, bank foundations; migrants' associations. One of the challenges of the project has been to experiment the possibility of working together and to upgrade through this new relationship all stakeholders involved, opening up new project ideas, initiatives of collaboration, etc. In the initiative migrant organisations are organically part of the project, acting as peers along with other parties.

One interesting aspect which has emerged along the programme is the delicate and not straight forward relationship between NGOs and migrant associations. NGOs are traditional actors of cooperation not necessarily used to working in partnership with migrants in developing countries. Clearly the two parties don't share the same competences and capacities (NGOs are professional and full time organisations, migrant organisations are primarily voluntary). While within the project the two are considered as "peers", in practical terms the relationship presents features of tutorship and assistantship. The same project has been designed to include capacity building activities to be transferred from NGOs to diaspora organisations through training, learning by doing methodologies, etc. In some cases, migrant associations have along the years expressed their determination in becoming "independent" from NGOs, but in rare cases their professionalisation has resulted in proficient and mature results allowing them to walk alone. The partnership is therefore inherently imbalanced and clearly asymmetrical: while NGOs and migrant associations are equal partners within the F4A initiative, in practical terms some parties are tutors while others are beneficiaries of this tutorship. What seems also very difficult to overcome is that while NGOs are professional organisations and their staff are salaried personnel, migrant organisations base their work almost entirely on voluntary work: the two actors in fact never face project activities with the same availability of resources, time, "equipments".

The switch from being partners and/or "beneficiaries" is therefore difficult, especially when it implies new activities or collaborations for migrant groups⁶. The relationship seems to function more smoothly when spontaneous and autonomous vocations of migrants are reinforced, treasuring

⁵ The Sunugal association is also part of the F4A Initiative. However the accreditation of the organisation occurred previously and especially through the Municipality of Milan and other local and international actors (i.e. OIM in Rome).

⁶ This happened in some cases when migrant associations started working with NGOs with whom they never exchanged or related before or were asked to provide/be trained in competences and capacities they never experienced and developed before.

their existing capacities. Another aspect emerged since the very beginning of the project, determining the creation of single associations' reinforcement paths, is that while the NGOs involved present the same levels of experience and resources, all migrant associations do not share homogenous competences and practices. This has created sometimes frictions and antagonisms among the more or less skilled migrant groups.

Despite competitions and antagonisms there is a shared awareness among all parties involved that the relationship between NGOs and migrant associations has large potentials both for development cooperation and for migrants' integration processes. At present the perspective that is under discussion between NGOs and migrant associations within the Initiative, goes in the direction of finding ways of collaboration, trying therefore to envisage patterns of sustainability after the initiative will come to an end. Migrant associations and NGOs are willing to establish long lasting partnerships. In order for these to become less asymmetrical, a clear division of labour and of roles needs to be defined. What needs to be preserved for example is the value added represented by migrant organisations, whereby a connection with migrant groups and communities, their needs, visions, project ideas and resources must be maintained. The best suited for guaranteeing this connection are in fact migrant organisations, that have become capable of comprehending development on the one hand and can translate ideas into realistic and feasible projects on the other. There is no need after all for migrant organisations to become development NGOs, which on the other hand instead of feeling threatened by migrant organisations can only take advantage of partners which becomes less "dependent". As a final and general remark this field of collaboration can successfully work, if sustained by specific resources and frameworks of action, that need to be grounded and sustained by institutional partners such as i.e. the Italian Cooperation, local authorities.

The third and final consideration is more general, bringing in a socio-anthropological perspective, which consists in questioning and finding out how this initiative could be transformed and able to open up into a broader dimension entailing processes of exchange and sustainability.

The creation of processes through projects is linked to the capacity of co-development initiatives to produce practises, tools and dynamics which can be reshaped in different contexts, generating a broader movement of actors and energies ensuring structural transformations and social changes, territorial exchanges, including immaterial dimensions such as culture, etc. on a global scale.

On the theme of remittances for example, the F4A initiative has been implementing a pilot phase directed at channelling remittances from Italy to microfinance institutions (MFIs) in Senegal. This has required the creation of a platform of governance between MFIs in Senegal and the Italian banking system in Italy. The latter will be able to offer to all Italian banks the possibility to link with MFIs and develop new "transnational" financial products and services (Ferro, Frigeri 2011). In order however to acknowledge that remittances are not just money transfers but have a developmental component, all actors involved must be made more aware and recognise several elements, such as for example: that remittances can be the bait for financial inclusion; that a climate of trust and familiarity towards the Senegalese financial system has to be built; that channelling remittances into microfinance institutions and productive and development activities has to be financially rewarding for all; that new markets and services must be created sensitive towards' migrants financial transnational behaviour (including i.e. saving plans, family and solidarity remittances, entrepreneurial and/or return projects).

At present this platform can be considered an experiment valid for Senegal. It should instead be considered not just an initiative valid for the project F4A but a model, replicable and transferable to other contexts with greater driving force, with different subjects involved, able to establish sustainable territorial partnerships (in migrants' country of origin and residence). In fact this same platform at present has been judged extremely interesting and one of the bank foundations has been willing to transfer it into a project in Ecuador. This country as compared to Senegal has a more "enabling" environment, whereby the banking system is for example more developed and best

suited for both connecting to MFIs as well as more receptive in developing services that are migrant-sensitive.

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

Coming back to the more general level of discussion, conclusive remarks on the impact and the perspective of migrants' involvement towards transnational development, discussing a few key final arguments are offered below.

The migration and development paradigm has been strongly supported by the international discourse through rhetoric and political celebration and a relatively important financial engagement, but the fascination of the theme is probably destined to fade away soon, while international attention will turn into a more sceptical approach. The "migration and development pendulum", as in Hein de Haas' (2011) expression to indicate the oscillation migration and development had in the literature during the last 60 years (switching between negative and positive considerations), is now shifting towards a more realistic approach, marked by the fall of expectations, growing awareness of the difficulties and the disappointment among "policy makers struggling to implement migration and development policies" (De Haas, 2011: 3). Experts and scholars are observing the limited impact of remittances towards the national development of low-medium income countries, and the weakness of diaspora engagement at the macro scale of global economy, institutional relationships and public policies.

Two major limits can be observed for M&D to be realised, so that diasporas' interventions are significant, contributing towards change in the countries of origin, while also fostering migrants' integration in the countries of destination: on the one hand it appears very clear that migration alone cannot remove structural development constraints, such as unequal global economic relationships and the unfair distribution of wellness, education, health and social protection among countries and world regions, the weakness of economic structures and investment environments in the sending countries, the lack of human capital and technology, bad governance and the heaviness of bureaucracy and corruption. On the other hand, migration and development initiatives are confronted with a dominant vision of immigration in the receiving societies as an issue of security and control, which face strong limitations to the circulation of migrants, and often must deal with incoherence among immigration, integration, international relations and development cooperation policies, as well as with obstacles to a full and enabling incorporation of migrants in the destination societies in terms of rights and citizenship.

While diasporas interventions - as it clearly appeared from the programme presented above - can be important and innovative, in order to sustain in the long run diaspora's efforts that may have an impact on development, broad and enabling policies must be envisaged and put in place. Without this commitment, diasporas' contribution are destined to remain invisible. Migrants may become protagonists, but economic and social policies that are receptive to their efforts must be already in place in order for these to have any impact.

Migration and development actions should be intertwined with a more complex political and international process of public policies aiming at fostering human mobility and grassroots exchanges and dealing positively with the transnational field. In this direction it is important to look for new means of dialogue with international migrations, supporting a full recognition of diasporas as important actors in international relations, not adopting the neo-liberal vision based on the idea that "migrants and market, not states, become responsible for bringing about development" (de Haas, 2011: 4). A process of recognition represents the first step of this complex process of democratisation of international relations, which must be articulated at three different levels which

include home countries, countries of destination and migrants themselves. In this vision home countries have to fully accept and take into account the participation of their citizens abroad in the making of public policies and of development strategies; destination countries and the different political and economic international bodies related to them (EU, WB, IMF etc.), should open up more decidedly channels for diasporas' inclusion, participation and voice; finally diasporas themselves are confronted with the challenge of better organising and empowering their actions as well as developing a critical and inclusive vision of democracy, governance and development not reproducing the status quo.

Only by means of such interrelated spheres of recognition, it will be possible for diasporas to become a key actor in the international arena and for migrant' interventions at present fragmented and scattered, to turn into a significant process of "globalisation from below". This term refers to a more equal world where human communities and territories cooperate and where the grassroots interchange among places is the basis for a planetary project of redemption that would replace the wretched globalization we are confronting today.

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