

# Mapping Social Remittances and ‘Segmented Development’ in Central and Eastern Europe

## Introduction

Migratory remittances are inseparable components of development. At the same time, both these concepts are contested, with less than clear contours (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2009); development in particular is based predominately on ‘an assumption that something is moving from a lower, less differentiated status to a higher, better and more differentiated one’ (Hammar and Tamas 1997: 18). This includes the belief that some societies are the least, some less, and some the most developed or advanced (Hammar and Tamas 1997). In this sense, migration plays a key role as one of the symptoms of development.

Development is very often put in a nexus with migration, economic development and remittances, which are sometimes framed as the key ‘glues’ of this chain. Remittances are even sometimes termed the ‘new development mantra’ (Kapur 2010), although this places in question their impact on sending countries where there is no infrastructure (both technical and human capital) to receive them in the medium and longer terms (de Haas 2005).

The issue, however, is that the ‘migration–development nexus’ with remittances as one of the key components is associated with migration within regions of unequal economic performance, most often from the ‘poor South’ to the ‘wealthy North’. The studies on all kinds of remittances mostly focus on migration flows from Latin America and the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa and Western Asia to North America, Western Europe and Australia and Oceania. The whole area of Central and Eastern Europe after the dismantling of the Soviet Union seems not to be included in these discourses. Why? Is it due to the lack of clear differences in developmental measures, or standardised economic criteria, such as the Human Development Index (HDI): GDP *per capita*, life expectancy at birth and educational achievement? Or because the discourse on the migration–development nexus has covered only countries with diverse economic performance (Grabowska and Garapich 2016)? What about countries which are in the same migration system, such as the European Union (EU), but display more qualitative, social and cultural differences other than the HDI?

Social aspects of development were observed and analysed by Peggy Levitt (1998 and later), who coined the term *social remittances* to describe all non-financial migratory social and cultural aspects which are transferred and circulated in migratory transnational social spaces (Faist 2000). She categorised them into values, norms, practices, skills and social capital, and we use this conceptual toolkit here to observe developmental issues within the enlarged EU. The aim of this special issue is to discuss the social and cultural aspects of the migration–development nexus in the new context of the enlarged EU, and therefore post-communist countries. Is, however, the term ‘migration–development nexus’ suitable for the part of the world covering Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and its post-communist remnants?

### **‘Segmented development’ in post-communist countries**

But first, let us ask a fundamental question: is ‘migration–development nexus’ an appropriate concept to describe what has been happening for the last thirty years in CEE, where some countries also acceded to the EU in the two enlargement rounds of 2004 and 2007? Is there any paradigmatic alternative to this term to discuss the role of migration and remittances in this region of the world?

Although the migration–development nexus framework is adopted by some scholars writing about South-Eastern Europe (e.g. Careja 2013; Miluka, Carletto, Davis and Zezza 2010 for Albania; Rotilă 2008 for Romania), in many respects linking migration and development seems, according to Anne White (in this volume), an inappropriate conceptual framework for understanding the impact of migration on most CEE countries (see, however, Thaut 2009 on Lithuania). This is because both Western and most Central and East European countries have high or very high Human Development Indexes (HDI), so CEE as a region can hardly be conceptualised as improving in terms of ‘development’ from migration. Individuals of course may find their opportunities for self-fulfilment – ‘development as freedom’ (Sen 1999) – much improved as a result of migration.

However, in many instances ‘development’ may be used through a lack of alternatives and as a ‘black box’, more connected to a ‘change’ as a less value-loaded concept (Hammar and Tamas 1997). But still the links between migration and development-generated change in the enlarged EU are of great significance in this special issue.

Starting from a broad understanding of development, connected also to a part of the world omitted in earlier discourse, Central and Eastern Europe, we avoid here a narrow definition constructed for the purposes of relations between countries with huge discrepancies in HDIs. We agree with Hammar and Tamas (1997) that development should be considered as a multidirectional, dynamic process with a ‘broader cluster of non-quantifiable social and political dimensions’ (1997: 19).

*As development takes place in time and space, the difference over time and the speed of change registered for a country is often more significant than the static level or point of departure from which the change originates. A low but growing GDP or HDI may thus be assumed to affect migration differently than stagnant levels (Hammar and Tamas 1997: 19).*

In this context it is important to stress that the debate on the role migration plays in system transformation has been framed in CEE countries as ‘migration and modernisation’ discourse (e.g. Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008; Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski 2009; Okólski 2012 for Poland; Sandu 2010 for Romania), where different aspects were raised from in the global development discourse but asking the same research question: what is the role of migration in development/modernisation of sending countries? While global developmentalists focused mainly on all kinds of remittances, scholars from CEE countries put forward the argument of the ‘migration hump’ (Martin 1993; Martin and Taylor 1996) (and ‘crowding out effect’ (cf. Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008), which in short means that especially post-accession migration has helped to diminish local labour market pressures of the surpluses of labour which have been growing dramatically as a result of transformation of the post-communist labour market, combined with the accession of the increasingly educated generation of baby-boomers of the 1980s into the Polish labour market. But again the modernisation discourse focused on ‘the standardised measures’, relating mostly to the demographic and economic conditions mentioned earlier. The danger of transition and modernisation theories is to think that ‘development and demographic change automatically leads to certain migration outcomes or that transitions are inevitable or irreversible’ (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2009: 49).

Another strand of theory substituting development with other developmental discourse lines crucial here is the debate on ‘convergence/divergence issues’ between less developed/underperformed and most developed/well-performing countries, particularly highlighted in the context of the Republic of Ireland in the 1990s (Krugman 1997; Barry 2000), where migration processes played a significant, if not vital role. An underdeveloped line of argument here relating to the social and cultural aspects of development/modernisation/convergence in CEE is the context of EU enlargement, where specific processes simply accelerated as a result of developmental opportunities. But one should consider two areas of research: (1) post-communist countries which were in the past mainly satellite countries of the Soviet Union and joined the EU in the two rounds in 2004 and 2007, and (2) Eastern European countries which remain outside the EU and used to be member states of the Soviet Union. In this special issue, we focus more on the first group, although there are some literature elaborations on the latter group too (economic aspects, e.g. Kureková 2011; social and cultural aspects, e.g. Vlase 2013 for Ukraine; Bobova, in this volume, for Belarus).

Certain CEE countries, such as Poland, the Baltic states, Lithuania and Romania, joined the EU in May 2004, and their migratory outflows accelerated as a result. Some scholars say that joining the EU completed the system transformation, and since May 2004 we have been talking about a different stage of development. As we agreed in this introduction that development is not a process which includes stages and levels but is a multidirectional, dynamic process penetrating different spheres of life, the accession to the EU has opened up new avenues for analysis. There are still arguments for not totally putting aside the developmental perspectives to understand the changes which EU post-communist societies are undergoing. In that sense, we call not for dropping this point of view altogether, but rather for a more nuanced, fine-grained and context-dependent analysis taking into account not just the differences between countries, but diverse path development and takes on modernisation *within* them.

The first argument still relates to economic development. As scholars have noted (Hammar, Brochmann, Tamas and Faist 1997; Castles, de Haas and Miller 2009), the most effective development processes happen between high-income and medium-income societies where there is still some space for improvement and some infrastructure to absorb all kinds of developmental remittances. De Haas (2005), for example, points out that the positive ‘remittances euphoria’ is questionable due to the lack of ‘local infrastructure’ preventing the migration potential from being fully realised. The same message is given by Castles (2016; Oxford keynote), that migration alone cannot support development. The improvements, such as reduction of corruption and investment-friendly climate, need to be implemented beforehand. Several reviews of rich empirical material, both qualitative and quantitative (e.g. Papademetriou and Martin 1991; Taylor, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Massey and Pellegrino 1996; Ozden and Schiff 2005; Agunias 2006; Katseli, Lucas and Xenogiani 2006; de Haas 2007; UNDP 2009) show that despite some positive impacts of migration, migration itself cannot remove general structural development constraints. Therefore social remittance-induced changes are not always positive. What is remitted can be both enabling pro-social and anti-social behaviours such as different attitudes towards diversity or being more or less prejudiced (pending on one’s experience abroad) (Grabowska, Garapich, Jaźwińska and Radziwinowiczówna 2016). Therefore social remittances should be discussed in a more nuanced, non-obvious, non-bipolar ‘positive–negative’ way. This is because the notion of change is also not that clear. Especially as resistance towards social remittances could become the first best strategy at both individual and collective levels (Garapich 2016; Grabowska *et al.* 2016). The call for more nuanced approach to social remittances is also connected to uneven distribution of migratory costs and rewards across families and communities, as well as to informal and legal activities brought by and as a result of migration (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2013). There is also the very important factor of time to consider. Once transferred, social remittances and their individual and societal outcomes do not need to last forever. There is, as identified by Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2013), an ossification effect, which means that migrants might romanticise and

as a result freeze the developmental opportunities of sending locations, which are a ‘bastion of traditional values and culture’ (Levitt 2007), or once brought, social remittances have unclear unintended social consequences (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2013).

This special issue aims at bridging these gaps in conceptual awareness by connecting the developmental and transformation paradigms – we term this approach as a form of ‘segmented development’. In our understanding, segmented development means that in some parts of society the social transformation is completed, such as public infrastructure (roads, public buildings, local airports, aqua parks and other sport facilities), but other segments usually connected to social and cultural aspects of human capital lag behind and do not allow for the migration-generated change to take root and embed itself more deeply.

Reich, Gordon, and Edwards (1973) developed the concept of ‘segmentation’ to describe how different rules of operation within a company governed different ‘cells’ (a segment of a grouping). These segments would have different characteristics. These descriptions might also apply to a society which is composed of different segments/cells governed by different rules and stimulations, which therefore develop and transform them unevenly. In this special issue we claim that some segments of CEE societies are governed and stimulated through the system transformation, and as a result of the EU accession are in a better position than the others, hence there is still some room for migratory impacts. It is claimed here that modernisation through European funds (mostly infrastructural) and cultural diffusion through global media are not enough to impact on the development of human capital. In this space, there is a clear need for recognition of the human factor needed to accelerate social change, also connected to migration processes. The aim here, however, is not to distil the role of migration from other developmental factors but to show its complementary function. This might be especially visible in specific spatial contexts which involve ‘spatial contingency’ (Samers 2010: 131) but also ‘social contingency’. It might involve all kinds of spaces such as a city, a neighbourhood, an NGO, a workplace, a school, a café, but also in a social sense a family, a peer-group, a faith community, a hobby community, etc.

In this context, some scholars point to the issue of the mismatch between funding-generated structural change and the slower one that takes place in people’s minds, noting that Central Europeans soon became used to ‘good roads and local airports’ but forgot about values, norms and practices, especially connected to civic society and social trust, which in the Polish case seems to be rather low (Sztompka 1993). Described as ‘soft modernisation’, that is social and cultural modernisation (Makowski 2016), it is the outcome of the interplay of exogenous and indigenous factors, and it is clear that migration-generated processes, social remittances included, seems to be the space for bringing at least some of the lacking aspects of soft modernisation where some segments of society need further developments. In the case of Central and Eastern European societies, it relates to human capital and social capital connected predominantly to civic society and understanding for social diversity, but also to gender roles and general family life. Migrants can and do act as insider–outsider agents (‘mid-siders’), addressing best the local dynamics of development. And it is through social remittances, and careful sociological analysis of their range, impact, receptivity, resistance and ossification and the general processes of remitting, that we may examine the process of change on a micro as well as macro scale (Grabowska *et al.* 2016). In this special issue we therefore aim to bring together various perspectives and empirical case studies that offer a more nuanced and context-dependent view of these processes. This covers numerous social segments and spaces of human interaction where we witness sometimes contradictory development: workplaces, (trans)local communities, family and home, and well-being.

## **Workplaces**

In looking at various social spaces or segments, we begin with Mateusz Karolak's examination of individual social remittances in the sphere of employment, against the background of the changing employment patterns and increased flexibility of work arrangements. Through an analysis of the life stories of post-accession return migrants from the UK to Poland, it investigates the ways in which returnees' work experience gained abroad impacts on their perception of employment standards in general. The differences revealed are understood as 'potential social remittances', i.e. the discrepancies acknowledged by returnees between the realities experienced during emigration and after their return (in this case to Poland). The author argues that the realisation of 'potential social remittances' depends on return migrants' coping strategies as well as on the institutional and structural settings in the returnees' home country. The four main distinguished strategies are: re-emigration, activism, adaptation and entrepreneurship.

Looking at the similar social context of work, Mike Haynes and Aleksandra Galasińska explore the workplace experience of migrants and argue that attention to work as an element of the migrant experience needs to go beyond pure economic and occupational gains. The complexities of both the range of migrants' ideas about their work and the analysis of internet-based newspaper comment sites as a form of public communication are the key focus of the paper, demonstrating how the workplace acts as a social and cultural exchange space, in consequence generating change.

## **Migration (sub-)cultures**

Another range of articles in this issue discusses social remittances in a more reflective manner, as ways with which migrants absorb and understand change they have experienced. Anne White, for instance, in her paper discusses the research of the impact of migration on social change in sending countries, and the need to pay greater attention to the lives of 'stayers'. A comprehensive approach to the impact of migration in her view begins by using mainstream sociological research to identify overall social trends in the origin country, before considering migration as one determinant of change. White writes that social remittances are understood to include not just foreign ideas, but also those resulting from migrants' reflections on their own changing lives. One way to investigate how such social remittances 'scale up' to create cultural change is to consider the meso-level of regional migration culture. Taking the example of changing gender roles, she discusses Polish sociological and migration scholarship before presenting her own quantitative and qualitative data on stayers' opinions about maternal migration. She shows how stayers in regions with high levels of migration can become persuaded to condone maternal behaviour which is at odds with traditional views on gender roles and the importance of the extended family.

In a similar tradition, Dumitru Sandu considers remittances as part of the life worlds of immigrants in multiple interactions with return intentions and communication with those left behind. This is an alternative view to the standard approach to remittances as a possible source of development or as a variable to be explained by family solidarity, investment projects or the reasons for return. The key dependent variable is the home orientation of immigrants as a function of remittances, return intentions and communication behaviours, measured in quantitative and typological terms. This typological analysis of home orientation diverges from the standard approach, which is in terms of high or low intensity of cross-border activities of remitting or communicating between immigrants and those they have left behind. It argues for the fact that cross-border activities combine in different ways to generate specific social types of remitting practices. The remitting behaviours of migrants are, in this approach, multidimensional, encompassing economic, social and cultural content.

Looking at norms and values from the perspective of social remittances, Izabela Grabowska and Godfried Engbersen explore the unintended consequences of temporary migration from Poland by combining Merton's functional analysis with Levitt's work on social remittances. As they argue, in addition to economic remittances, Polish migrants have been bringing norms, values, practices and social capital to their communities of origin since the end of the nineteenth century, hence in fact there is nothing radically new here. The article presents a juxtaposition of the non-material effects of earlier migration from Poland, dating from the turn of the twentieth century, with those of the contemporary era of migration from Poland since the 1990s. The analysis shows that some aspects, such as negotiating gender roles, the changing division of household labour, individualistic lifestyles, new skills and sources of social capital and changing economic rationalities, are constantly being transferred by migrants from destination to origin communities. Contemporary digital tools facilitate these transfers and contribute to changing norms and practices in Polish society. The article demonstrates that migration fulfils specific functions for particular sections of Polish society by replacing some functions of the communist state (e.g. cash assistance and loans from communist factories, factory and post-coop cultures) and by facilitating their adaptation to changing conditions (e.g. changing gender relations, new models of family, job aspirations and social mobility).

### **Receptivity and resistance**

One of the key questions on the mechanisms of remitting and the role individual decisions play in the process is *why* certain ideas, norms and practices are remitted, and *why* some take root in places of origins and others less so, or are overtly rejected. The theme of receptivity of social remittances is taken up by Nadya Bobova, who investigates the post-return experiences of highly skilled Belarusian professionals. She concentrates on the socio-cultural aspects of highly skilled migration and views returnees as carriers of new experiences, ideas, and practices by studying the ways in which they apply various socio-cultural remittances to the different spheres of their lives. In particular, she argues that the formation and transmission of socio-cultural remittances are strongly heterogeneous and selective processes, which manifest themselves to varying degrees not only in different people, but also in different aspects of people's lives. The analysis of several socio-cultural remittances in private and public spheres shows that in some cases the socio-cultural remittances display strong gender differences.

On the other hand, Laima Nevinskaitė deals with the issue of home-country receptivity towards social remittances from the professional diaspora. In her view, social remittances from the highly skilled depend on a favourable context for knowledge and skills transfer in their home countries, a context that could be summarised by the term 'country receptivity'. Her analysis reveals several groups of obstacles to successful knowledge and skills transfer that may be understood as issues of country receptivity: mistrust of government by diaspora members, expressed as a belief that it is not interested in results and thus involvement of the diaspora, but rather in pursuing particular political objectives; lack of openness towards other experiences (unwillingness of institutions at different levels and in various fields to open up to new opinions, approaches and experiences brought by Lithuanians from abroad); bureaucratic and institutional impediments (inability of institutions to adapt their procedures in the interests of cooperation; slowness and ineffectiveness when dealing with requests or reacting to initiatives from the diaspora); and a perceived negative opinion (unwelcoming attitude) in society towards Lithuanians from abroad.

At the other end of the receptivity scale, we encounter resistance; whether active or passive in some instances, this plays a fundamental role in social change generated by migration. Michał P. Garapich deals with resistance as ways with which migrants perform and articulate their culturally dependent attitude towards po-

tential change influenced by social remittances and the generalised process of diffusion. He offers some insights into the anthropology of resistance towards small, mundane aspects of human behaviour, which is the subject of conversations by both migrants and non-migrants in small-town Poland.

In similar spirit, Mariusz Dziegłowski in his article focusing on the situation of returnees, looks at the extent social change is possible in the context of various structural and cultural constraints. He argues that we need to look specifically at ways society opens up to possibilities of change due to norms and practices brought from abroad. Dziegłowski reminds us of the ideas embodied in the notion of Schütz's 'homecomer' bringing forward the paradoxes of migrants' re-adjustment connected to psychological difficulties in dealing with everyday situations back home such as perceived differences in mentality, or behavioural patterns and in the case of Poland, the outcome of these paradoxes is unfavourable for social change to occur. His analysis is a reminder of multilayered nature of social remittances and their diverse impacts on sending society.

The articles in this collection provide new ways of thinking and reflecting on how migration, development and social change intersect through a multitude of layers of structural and individual forces. As we began with macro-scale debates on the theoretical and empirical problems with the notion of development, we try to provide, from the viewpoint of segmented development, ways with which empirical studies can be understood and made meaningful. The multitude of diverse contexts we put forward defy our epistemological attempts to create a one-size-fits-all theoretical perspective with which to understand societies and the rapid scale of changes they undergo. In fact, this seems to be one of the attractive aspects of the concept of migration-driven social remittances – as it describes connections, diffusions, bridging and mutual influences across human societies. It has the same ability to reconsider and refine our own conceptual toolboxes with which to understand these processes.

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