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# Diaspora and Transnationalism

*Concepts, Theories and Methods*

RAINER BAUBÖCK & THOMAS FAIST (EDS.)



AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS

## Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods

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*edited by Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist*

IMISCOE Research

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## Preface

The success of concepts in the social sciences is often measured by the number of academic publications referring to them, by their capacity to cross the boundaries of disciplines and by their penetration into mass media and wider public discourses. If, however, we take qualitative criteria such as the explanatory power of a concept and its precision in distinguishing different social phenomena as indicators for its usefulness in social theory and research, then successful proliferation may diminish academic value. This diagnosis seems to apply to the concepts of transnationalism and diaspora. Both have become extremely popular since the 1990s and are today applied to much broader classes of phenomena. This widening of empirical scope has also led to increasing conceptual overlap so that diaspora and transnationalism have become increasingly difficult to distinguish from each other. Yet even in their multifaceted contemporary meanings, each concept still shows the birthmarks of distinct imaginaries, research puzzles and disciplinary styles of reasoning. The danger is that the broadening of conceptual scope will not only result in conceptual inflation, but also in conceptual flattening in the sense that concepts lose their capacity to drill deeper and connect the multiple layers of socially constructed realities in ways that enhance our understanding.

The goal of this book is not to settle once and for all the conceptual debate by proposing coherent and authoritative definitions. We have instead come to the Wittgensteinian conclusion that the meaning of transnationalism and diaspora must be inferred from their actual uses. This pragmatic attitude suggests also that the best test for the present academic value of these concepts lies in their capacity to trigger new research perspectives and questions. This is the test that we wanted to apply in this volume. And we think that the result is positive.

The chapters of this book are grouped loosely into three sections. In the first part, the emphasis is on the variety of interpretations of the two concepts (chapters 2 – 5). The second part deals with new theoretical approaches and research questions (chapters 6 – 10). And the third part addresses methodological problems and innovations with respect to the study of boundary-crossing activities and affiliations (chapters 11 – 14). The book is framed by an introductory essay that connects the



strands of the debate (chapter 1) and concluding reflections on how empirical research perspectives may enhance our understanding of the evolution of transnational membership norms in democratic polities (chapter 15).

A multidisciplinary book project like this one always risks ending up as a compilation of disconnected essays. We have attempted to reduce this danger by engaging all authors in an intensive process of debate during an initial conference as well as in subsequent rounds of elaboration and revision of the chapters. The project started with an IMISCOE theory conference hosted at and co-organised by the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence from 10-12 April 2008. A call for papers was launched within the IMISCOE network and the EUI, and was eventually also circulated within other networks. Altogether 40 extended outlines of papers were submitted. A programme committee involving seven IMISCOE members invited 28 scholars to submit full versions of their papers at the conference. Apart from Nina Glick Schiller's chapter 6, all contributions in this book were presented in initial draft versions at the conference. And all essays, apart from Valentina Mazzucato's chapter 11, are original contributions that have not been published before. A full draft version of the book was reviewed by three anonymous peer reviewers, whose detailed suggestions were extremely helpful for the last round of extensive revisions. This project has also resulted in an IMISCOE policy brief 'Ties across borders: the growing salience of transnationalism and diaspora politics' by Rainer Bauböck, which is available at [www.imiscoe.org/publications/policybriefs](http://www.imiscoe.org/publications/policybriefs).

Apart from the authors and editors, several other persons have been involved in this project and have contributed to its successful conclusion. Listing them and their locations shows how producing this book on transnationalism was itself a transnational process. Wiebke Sievers, based at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and long-term administrator of the IMISCOE thematic cluster on migration and citizenship, was pivotal in the administration of the conference and its follow-up. At the EUI in Florence, Eva Breivik provided secretarial support and Eduardo Romanos' editorial assistance was crucial for preparing the book publication. In Toronto, Edith Klein carefully edited the manuscript for book publication. The IMISCOE Network Office in Amsterdam and the IMISCOE Editorial Committee, spread across Europe, have consistently supported the project. Karina Hof's patient assistance and professional advice deserve to be specially mentioned here. The Amsterdam University Press team (Erik van Aert, Jaap Wagenaar and Christine Waslander) has also been very supportive. We are grateful to all of them.

*Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist*

## Chapter 14

# Transnational links and practices of migrants' organisations in Spain

*Laura Morales and Laia Jorba*

### 14.1 Introduction

Recent scholarship on transnationalism has focused primarily on practices of individuals, to the extent that some argue that the individual is – or should be – the proper unit of analysis (see Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 1999). Yet, the literature is vastly populated with research on whole communities and migrant groups. In particular, a number of scholars place migrants' organisations and organisational networks at the core of their definitions of transnationalism. For example, Faist (2000a: 189) broadly defines transnationalism as the 'sustained ties of persons, networks and organizations across the borders across multiple nation-states, ranging from little to highly institutionalized forms'; meanwhile Portes (2001: 186) emphasises how the notion of transnational activities should be restricted to initiatives by members of civil society, be they 'organized groups or networks of individuals'.

From these perspectives, migrants' organisations and their networks are not just privileged actors in the web of transnational practices and fields, but they also crucially shape access to social capital and patterns of network embeddedness that allow us to understand individuals' transnational practices more clearly (Vertovec 2003; Portes 2003). Most notably, migrants' organisations are afforded a special role in the processes that structure transnational political practices; to the extent that their transnational activities are often equated with political transnationalism per se (Portes et al. 1999; Itzigsohn 2000; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003c).

In contrast to this core placement of migrants' associations in the study of transnationalism, there are still only a limited number of empirical studies that systematically address the transnational engagement of a wide range of organisations in several contexts.<sup>1</sup> This chapter is a modest attempt to contribute to filling this gap in the literature. Our study aims to provide a systematic analysis of the transnational practices of migrants' organisations in three Spanish cities, with

information on more than 200 associations of migrants of multiple national and regional origins. In doing so, we favour a methodological approach that combines the advantages of studying ‘several groups’ in the same context and ‘one group in several’ contexts (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003b: 772), while also avoiding the severe limitation of sampling on the dependent variable – in this case, transnational engagement (Portes 2001).

In this regard, we have chosen to study multiple locations within the same country because we share with other scholars an intuition that the place of settlement is of primary importance (see e.g. Bloemraad 2005; Martiniello & Lafleur 2008). And, though the primary focus in the past has been on national contexts, research in this field is pointing increasingly to the critical role of subnational politics in moulding socioeconomic and political opportunities for transnational practices to emerge and be shaped (Bauböck 2003).

Our research focuses on migrant associations in three Spanish cities: Barcelona, Madrid and Murcia. This study<sup>2</sup> is part of a larger European project called LOCALMULTIDEM. It has been designed in such a way that all active associations of migrant groups are listed (and included as the target population) and later contacted for interviewing.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, because our information was gathered through structured interviews with the leaders of these organisations, we can address the issue of how widespread transnational practices are within the migrant associational field and what factors are associated with transnationalism. Hence, our chapter addresses some of the main questions that remain unanswered when studying the transnational practices of migrants’ associations: how many organisations actually engage in transnational fields? What kinds of practices prevail? Which organisations are more likely to become ‘transnational’? How does the settlement context impinge on migrants’ transnationalism?

## **14.2 Transnational practices of migrants’ organisations: Conceptual and methodological considerations**

Studying transnational activities of migrants has served to emphasise the multiplicity of identities and roles that shape the daily experiences of immigrants and their descendants. Transnationalism – in some of its early definitions – encompasses a wide range of activities, and has been defined broadly as ‘the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement’ (Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994: 7).

Even beyond the debate on the overall scope and extension of transnational activities (for a summary see Portes 2001), this initial notion of

transnational practices has been contested frequently, as it prevents researchers from focusing on clearly defined boundaries of the phenomenon under scrutiny. In this sense, Portes and his colleagues (Portes et al. 1999; Portes 2001; Guarnizo, Portes & Haller 2003) have proposed to limit the notion of transnationalism and transnational practices to those organised by non-institutional actors and across national borders, which take place outside the realms of state regulation and control. Thus, more recent conceptualisations of transnationalism have focused on civil society actors and individual migrants as the main units of analysis, and some scholars are strongly advocating a focus on transnational 'practices' as a more restricted and useful notion for empirical research (Martiniello & Lafleur 2008: 651).

Civil society actors – and, in particular, migrants' organisations – should thus be privileged agents in transnational practices because they provide the networks and the infrastructure to facilitate and sustain various forms of transnational engagement by individuals and communities (Faist 1998: 214), most notably civic and political transnationalism. Thus far, however, the systematic and quantified analysis of organisational transnational practices has been limited to very few studies (Orozco 2003a; Portes et al. 2007), which is not to say that scholars have in the past ignored the organisational dimension of transnational practices altogether (see Rex, Joly & Wilpert 1987; Soysal 1994; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003c; Cano 2004; Bloemraad 2005, 2006; Koopmans, Statham, Giugni & Passy 2005; Dumont 2008; Itzigsohn & Villacrés 2008).

Still, in most cases, organisational studies present a number of shortcomings that limit their usefulness in producing generalisations to go beyond the case studies analysed. Frequently, these studies are based on ethnographic methods that – while extremely useful for generating hypotheses and providing 'thick descriptions' – are ill-equipped to evaluate the scope and extension of transnational practices. In other cases, studies suffer from a serious selection bias, as they 'sample on the dependent variable' if the selection of the organisations has been made on the basis of their actual involvement in transnational practices. The latter problem is very common, for example, in studies that restrict attention to hometown or international cooperation and development associations. Hence, the results of these works can hardly provide insights about the extent and nature of organisational transnational activities. Overall, there are extremely few studies that attempt to overcome these limitations by casting the net wider through including all reachable organisations of a number of ethnic or migrant communities (a notable exception is Cordero-Guzmán 2005).

Similarly, past studies have tended to study only specific ethnic groups or communities (e.g. Turks, Italians or Dominicans), thus

placing a special stress on ethnicity as the main category for the social organisation of migrant communities. We are unconvinced that this is an adequate methodological approach. While acknowledging that a vast proportion of transnational practices is structured along ethnic lines, transnational alliances and practices that transcend the most immediate and restricted ethnic identities should be afforded due consideration. In particular, we are interested as well in exploring the transnational practices that revolve around broader identities: regional, religious or 'positional'. Hence, when studying migrants' organisations we should not restrict our attention to those of co-ethnics, but broaden the scope to all associations formed primarily by migrants and their immediate descendants, regardless of whether they identify themselves around a specific ethnic identity or choose to rally around religious, regional or professional identities.

These methodological considerations are relevant because, even if engaging in transnational practices is often regarded as a 'natural' inclination of migrants and their communities (Sayad 1975), a number of studies have shown that transnationalism is far from generalised and substantially decreases with second generations (see e.g. Portes 2003).<sup>4</sup> Hence, when studying the transnational practices of migrants' organisations, one of our first goals should also be to determine the scope and extension of these practices as well as their correlates. Indeed, Portes et al. (2007) suggest that a number of factors are relevant to understanding the different types of transnational practices by organisations: in particular, national origin and type of membership.

A final conceptual consideration before proceeding to describe in greater detail the methodological aspects of our own research is the connection between our study and the analysis of political transnationalism. Some scholars would regard all or most transnational practices by migrants' organisations as expressions of political transnationalism even when these associations are not *prima facie* 'political' in their aims – as with hometown associations and committees (see e.g. Portes et al. 1999; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003b). Though migrants' organisational activities almost by definition belong to the public realm, not all of their activities either at the receiving or sending country are politically oriented, nor should they be considered expressions of political transnationalism *per se*. Otherwise, we risk stretching unnecessarily and excessively the notion of 'political' transnationalism. Equally, and unlike Martiniello and Lafleur (2008), we favour a notion of political transnationalism that does not automatically include every form of political activity in the country of residence but, rather, one that only considers those truly linking migrants with the political realm of their countries of origin. This conceptual clarity is important if we want eventually to assess the analytical and empirical connection between transnational

practices and activism and migrants' capacity and inclination to become actively engaged in political mobilisation in the receiving country.

#### 14.2.1 *The context*

Spain has experienced a sudden immigration flow that has resulted in a rapid change in the social outlook and composition of its major urban centres. The strong and sustained growth of the Spanish economy during the first half of the 2000s, together with its ageing population structure, has favoured the inflow of migrant workers mostly from Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Maghreb. This has resulted in a steep surge, from little more than 2 per cent of a foreign population in 2000 to more than 10 per cent in 2007.<sup>5</sup> The longitudinal trends and the migration structures in the cities of Barcelona, Madrid and Murcia resemble, for the most part, those of the whole country. The crucial difference is that the proportion of migrants in these three cities is somewhat higher than the national average – a pattern common to the major urban areas in Spain.<sup>6</sup> Some differences exist, though, between the three cities in terms of the national composition of their migrant populations. First, Romanian and Bulgarian citizens are settling down in Madrid much more than in Barcelona and Murcia; Argentineans are more numerous in Barcelona than in Madrid or Murcia; the proportion of Ecuadorians living in Madrid and Murcia is double the size of that same group in Barcelona; and, while the most numerous national community in Barcelona and Madrid is the Ecuadorian, Moroccan citizens outnumber them in Murcia; finally, non-Chinese Asians – primarily Pakistani – are a much more sizeable community in Barcelona. Second, the cultural – and in particular, religious – diversity of the migrant population is higher in Murcia than in the other two cities, as the proportion of migrants from countries where the majority of the population is of Islamic religion is higher in the former (30 per cent) than in both Barcelona (14 per cent) and Madrid (9 per cent).<sup>7</sup>

Similarities in the overall structure and trends of immigration should not lead us to conclude that the local context for migrants is the same or very similar in the three cities. First, the patterns of urban segregation differ in important ways. Migrants are much more spatially concentrated in Barcelona than in Madrid and Murcia. A second important difference in the local context that migrants encounter in the three cities is related to the policies towards immigration and immigrants designed by the respective municipal and regional governments. Even if the major elements of immigration policy – entry, permits, nationality, voting rights<sup>8</sup>, conditions for family reunification and socioeconomic rights – are defined by the national government, regional and local governments can have a substantial impact on migrants' daily lives through

their policymaking. Spain is a quasi-federal state, and most of the powers related to the implementation of welfare-related policies – health care, education, housing, social services, etc. – are assigned to regional governments. Frequently, moreover, local governments complement this policymaking with their own budgetary and regulatory authority. This means that local governments can leave an important imprint on the nature and direction of the welfare policies that affect migrants' integration into the host society. In Barcelona, left-wing parties and coalitions have been governing the city since the first democratic local elections of 1979 whereas, in Madrid and Murcia, the centre-right Partido Popular (PP) has been in control of the local government since the early 1990s. And, as we shall see, this has resulted in very different approaches to migrants' integration and migrants' participation. Specifically, Barcelona has a much more developed and structured policy of citizen participation and consultation than Madrid or Murcia, as well as a more open and transparent practice of selecting associational representatives to the participation bodies.

If we turn our attention to the specific policies towards migrants' integration and participation, important differences emerge between the three cities. A first crucial difference relates to the overall approach to migrants' integration. The policy orientation in Barcelona starts from the assumption that migrants' integration should be approached from a general perspective of combating social exclusion and promoting equality of treatment, just as it is for the mainstream population. Other than specific actions that must be undertaken for assuring the adequate initial settlement of newcomers to the city, migrants' integration is viewed as a 'natural' process that will emerge from migrants' equal access to all social welfare and services provided by the city, which are based on the same principles and requirements than for pre-existing residents. In sharp contrast, the local and regional policies in Madrid have, in a very short period of time, been explicitly designed to address migrants' integration through services specifically catering to migrants at the district and neighbourhood levels. And an important feature of the approach to integration policies, especially by the regional government, is the emphasis on national origin as one of the main axes around which some integration services are organised. This is evident in the creation of 'national centres' or 'houses' on the basis of national origins – Bolivian, Ecuadorian, Colombian, Dominican, African, Moroccan, etc. – that are conceived as spaces where migrants of specific national origins can gather for social activities as well as to obtain vocational training and general counselling and orientation. Finally, in the city of Murcia, the municipality embraces openly the concept of social integration for immigrants, but rather than setting up parallel networks of assistance and support for migrants, the city has incorporated all information and

support initiatives within the general structure of the local social services. Nevertheless, the local government of Murcia has been much less active than that of Madrid in accommodating any special needs of the immigrant population.

This differential approach to migrants' integration is also clearly reflected in local governments' approach to calls. The local government of Madrid has set up separate calls for granting subsidies to migrants' organisations, and has created spaces for participation exclusively concerned with representing migrants – the Madrid Forum (Foro Madrid de Diálogo y Convivencia) and the district boards for dialogue and coexistence (Mesas de Diálogo y Convivencia Distritales). Meanwhile, the local government of Barcelona intentionally funds migrants' organisations within the general call for subsidies to all local associations, and has avoided setting up participation mechanisms that are specifically addressed to migrants.<sup>9</sup> The local government of Murcia does not have any separate funding for migrants' associations either, but this is quite consistent with its lack of well-developed policies towards migrants and towards participation more generally.

In summary, the context of settlement in Madrid is much more welcoming for migrants to organise around ethnic and national identities than in Barcelona and Murcia, if only because there is explicit policy by the regional government to promote the self-organisation of immigrants along those lines. Furthermore, the accommodation and promotion of migrants' separate organisations through specific calls for funding in Madrid should result in more economic resources being available for engaging in sustained transnational practices.

#### 14.2.2 *The study and the data*

The data employed in this chapter were collected by a joint team of researchers at the University of Murcia and the Autonomous University of Barcelona following the same methodology between 2003 and 2008. The final dataset combines information gathered through a pilot study done in Madrid and Murcia in 2003-2004 – which was updated during 2007-2008 in both cities<sup>10</sup> – and a full new study in the city of Barcelona also done in 2007-2008.

In every city, the data collection was organised in two different stages. First, we elaborated a census or list of all existing migrant organisations – as no reliable single list was available. At a second stage, we organised interviews with organisational leaders and administered a face-to-face structured questionnaire of approximately one hour and fifteen minutes in duration. For the pilot studies in Madrid and Murcia, interviews took place between October 2003 and September 2004,<sup>11</sup> while the updates and the new study in Barcelona were conducted between May 2007 and



July 2008. All stages of the process and the three cities combined, we interviewed 218 distinct associations.

#### 14.2.3 *The definition, location and selection of migrants' associations*

As Moya (2005), Vermeulen (2005, 2006) and Recchi (2006) have correctly pointed out, there are a number of significant difficulties that we are confronted with when studying migrants' organisations. Among them, those of definition, location and selection of the organisations stand out as being most critical for the research process.

Two definitions were thus crucial in our selection of organisations. First, we consider an association to be 'a formally organized named group most of whose members – whether persons or organizations – are not financially recompensed for their participation' (Knoke 1986: 2). This definition allows us to distinguish associations from other social and political institutions such as the family, groups of friends and other organisations frequently encompassed in notions of the 'third sector' or 'civil society'. In this regard, associations are considered to be distinct from other organisations, such as foundations or government agencies, in that very few individuals receive payment for their activities in the former (Knoke & Prenskey 1984). Additionally, associations are different from economic organisations such as companies in that they are institutions seeking solutions for individual or collective problems distinct from those of the market (Knoke 1990: 5). And Knoke's definition also excludes kinship groups that are not open to outsiders, while including groups or clubs of migrants that are not fully institutionalised, as long as they have a name and some minimal visibility to outgroup individuals.

Second, we defined an association as a migrants' organisation when at least nearly half of its members or half of its board members (i.e. its leadership) were of migrant origin (either foreign-born themselves or having at least one foreign-born parent), thus including first and second generations. We thus used a relatively wide definition of the term 'migrant' – in order to include other EU citizens<sup>12</sup> – though we did not include associations mainly devoted to work with or for migrants but, rather, those mostly composed of Spanish natives. However, we did include associations – whether founded by natives or by migrants – of mixed memberships as long as approximately half of the members or the leadership were of migrant origin.

Other important aspects of our case's definition of 'migrant association' contrast with that of Vermeulen (2005, 2006). We included only those organisations that are, directly or indirectly, membership-based, though we did not require the organisations to signal in any specific way that they were 'ethnic-based'.

Turning to the crucial issue of 'detectability', our mapping census of migrants' associations of all origins was created by combining the available information from various official registers, embassies, privileged informants (NGOs, trade unions, etc.) and systematic searches on the internet.<sup>13</sup> We then sifted these initial lists by considering ineligible those organisations not formed by migrants themselves – e.g. pro-migrant organisations – as well as by excluding those that had disappeared in previous years. Table 14.1 summarises this multi-stage field process.

An important point to make is related to mortality and response rates. Unfortunately, official registers and directories in Spain are not regularly updated; that is, associations must register in order to gain legal status, but they are not obligated to update their information regularly, nor do public administrations set any registration 'expiry' date so as to keep information up to date. This means that initial lists are always problematic, as they include many associations that no longer exist, but also fail to capture a substantial portion of the real associational

**Table 14.1** *Summary of the fieldwork process*

	<i>Barcelona</i> (2007-2008)	<i>Madrid</i> (pilot study 2003-2004)	<i>Madrid</i> (2007-2008 update)	<i>Murcia</i> (pilot, 2004)	<i>Murcia</i> (2007-2008 update)
Associations in the initial list	707	215	540	33	114
Sifted list without known ineligibles (i.e. native and/or not membership-based)	465	172	417	31	74
Sifted list with only confirmed active associations	223	147	199	16	17
Confirmed not active	34		24		13
Mortality rate*	13.2%	14.5%	10.8%	48%	43.3%
Interviewed associations	100	67	96	12	18
			20+43(+33)		3+8(+7)
Response rates	44.8%	45.6%	40.7%	75%	76.5%
Registered eligible associations	388		312		47
Sifted list only with confirmed active associations	186		139		13
Confirmed not active	26		15		3
Mortality rate	12.3%		9.7%		18.8%

*Source:* Survey of Immigrants' Associations in Madrid and Murcia (2003-2004); Survey of Immigrants' Associations in Barcelona, Madrid and Murcia (2007-2008)

\* Mortality rate is computed to include only those fully confirmed as inactive. For Madrid and Murcia, the first figure of the interviewed associations indicates the re-interviewing of those that responded in 2004; the second figure is for organisations interviewed for the first time in 2008; the last figure is that of associations interviewed only in 2003-2004. For the Madrid and Murcia update figures, response rates are computed by including in the calculation only those associations interviewed in 2003-2004 that are still active: eighteen for Madrid and two for Murcia.

field that is not recorded in official registers because it is less institutionalised (see lower section of Table 14.1). We could, however, estimate how many associations were no longer active when attempting to locate them for an interview: between 10 and 15 per cent of migrants' associations have disappeared in Barcelona and Madrid, while the mortality rate is much higher for Murcia. Nevertheless, we should note that this mortality rate includes only organisations for which we have clear confirmation of being no longer active. For a large number, we could get no confirmation though we suspected inactivity. In fact, out of the 67 associations interviewed in Madrid in 2003-2004, ten (15 per cent) were no longer active in 2007. For an additional six we could get no final confirmation, though they were also suspected of being inactive. When these aspects are taken into account, our response rates thus result in much wider coverage of truly active associations in the three cities.<sup>14</sup>

#### *14.2.4 Overall description of the associations targeted and interviewed*

The organisations targeted vary substantially in terms of their self-definition and country or area of origin. Some of them will primarily identify as associations that defend immigrants –or a specific subset of immigrants, e.g. Latin Americans – while others gather around their specific national origins or some functional status (e.g. professionals, artists, doctors). Our data collection process allows us to record at least the country and regional origin even for those organisations not interviewed and to draw a comparison with the results. The subset of organisations we were able to interview indicates that there is no substantial bias by origin in our dataset.

The distributions very much reflect the stocks of migrant groups in each city. Latin American organisations are more abundant due to the relative size of the groups of migrants from this region. Across national origins, however, associational formation is not necessarily strictly proportional to the relative size:<sup>15</sup> there is a clear over-representation of Peruvian associations as compared to their population sizes both in Barcelona and in Madrid. This is probably due to their longer period of settlement in Spain (since the 1980s), as compared to Ecuadorean migrants (who mostly arrived in the 2000s). Similarly, non-Moroccan African organisations are also much more numerous than would be expected from the size of the populations in all three cities. Thus, there seem to be relevant differences in organisational capacity depending on the regional and national origin of migrants.

In the remaining part of this chapter we will focus on the transnational activities and engagement of the organisations we interviewed. Our study of immigrants' organisations in three Spanish cities – Barcelona, Madrid, and Murcia – is ideally suited to address the

research questions around the extension, nature and covariates of organisational transnationalism, as well as to address some important methodological shortcomings in past research on transnational practices.

### **14.3 The scope and nature of transactional practices among migrants' associations**

To what extent are migrants' associations in these Spanish cities engaged in transnational activities? What is the nature and variety of transnational practices? What factors account for the fact that some organisations do engage in such practices and others do not? In this section we approach these questions in a fundamentally descriptive fashion and leave the more systematic account of correlates for the following section.

Most theoretical accounts of migrants' transnationalism reflect on the multidimensionality of transnational practices and fields (e.g. Portes et al. 1999; Faist 2000a). While this multidimensionality is usually referred to as different arenas of the public space – economic, socio-cultural and political – it is undoubtedly also related to the multiple forms transnational exchanges can take. We focus our analysis first on the several ways in which migrants' associations can engage in transnational practices, paying special attention to 'how' they act transnationally, with 'whom' and for 'what'. Consequently, we differentiate between: 1) different forms of ordinary transnational activity – the 'how'; 2) the various other organisations with which they establish transnational alliances – the 'with whom'; and 3) a specific area to which transnational engagement by migrants' associations is commonly oriented, the political arena – the 'what for'.

In all these instances, we are looking for sustained and recurrent patterns of transnational exchange and linkage, rather than sporadic or circumstantial activities across national borders. For this purpose, most of our questionnaire items are phrased to uncover regular, as opposed to sporadic, exchanges and links. We are thus tapping both information exchanges and reciprocity patterns. Overall, these items will allow us to provide a more or less complete picture of the nature of the transnational practices of migrants' organisations in these three Spanish cities.

Table 14.2 presents the general outlook of the extension and nature of the transnational practices of migrants' associations. The results of our survey in Barcelona, Madrid and Murcia indicate that – although transnational activities are quite common – a substantial number of migrant organisations (between 20 and 40 per cent, depending on the city) do not engage in transnational practices at all. By a wide margin, political transnationalism is the least common of cross-border

**Table 14.2** *Transnational engagement by migrants' associations, in % of all associations in each city*

<i>Type of transnational activity</i>	<i>Barcelona (2007-2008)</i>	<i>Madrid (2004 &amp; 2008)</i>	<i>Murcia (2004 &amp; 2008)<sup>1</sup></i>
Ordinary transnational activity			
Undertakes activities in other countries (other than Spain)	15	25	11
of which are...			
in homeland country	13	20	6
elsewhere overseas	5	9	0
both homeland and elsewhere	3	4	0
Regular contact with any public administration of the country of origin, past two years	24	35	12
Gets any funding from country of origin, last year	2	6	6
Have arranged meetings with homeland TV journalist, past two years	23	30	11
Have arranged meetings with homeland newspaper journalist, past two years	35	38	22
Organisational transnational alliances			
Association is a member of an international organisation, federation/confederation	16	12	28
Regular contact with any organisation in homeland country, past two years	42	38	33
Regular contact with any organisation in any other overseas country, past two years	22	32	17
Political transnationalism			
Regular contact with politicians or political parties of the country of origin, past two years	15	19	6
Any member has been a candidate in homeland country elections	0	13	0
Summary indicators			
Any transnational activity (any of the above)	71	82	61
Ordinary transnational activity	56	59	39
Organisational transnational alliances	55	56	56
Political transnationalism	15	27	6
Number of cases	100	96	18

*Source:* Survey of Immigrants' Associations in Barcelona, Madrid and Murcia (2007-2008)

exchanges that migrants' associations engage in, thus contradicting the common view that most transnationalism of migrants' organisations is political in nature.<sup>16</sup>

In general terms, migrants' associations do not commonly engage in transnational practices that require their continued attention. For

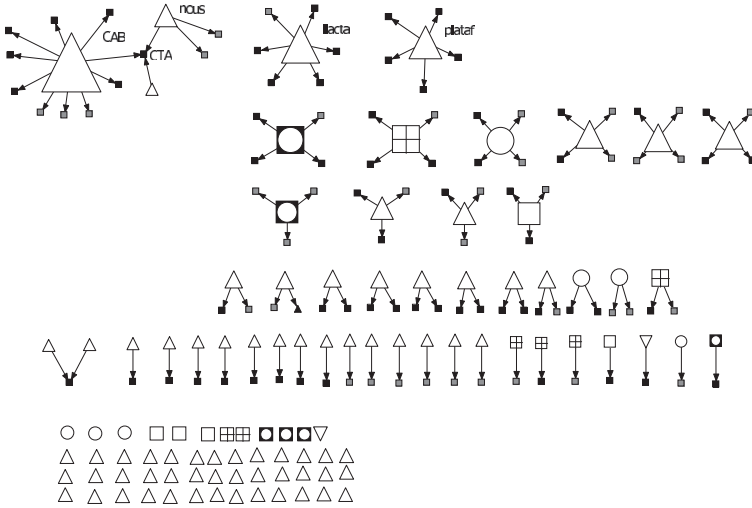
example, the proportion of organisations undertaking activities in other countries is relatively reduced, between 10 and 25 per cent, and this is largely limited to activities in the home country. Similarly, fewer than one third have frequent contact with public administrations in their countries of origin, and only a tiny minority gets any funding from the sending-country authorities. More common, though, is the less demanding exchange of information with homeland TV and press journalists. In most of these cases, we notice a substantial gap in levels of transnational engagement among the three cities, especially between Madrid and Murcia.

These gaps are much smaller when we focus on organisational transnational alliances. Around half of all migrant organisations in the three cities are connected to organisations overseas, and around one fifth have stabilised these links by joining international federations or confederations. Yet, in sharp contrast, explicitly political transnational practices are much less frequent. Typically, fewer than 20 per cent of the organisations have regular contacts with politicians or political parties in the countries of origin, and only in Madrid can we find any organisation whose members have recently run as candidates in homeland elections.<sup>17</sup>

A more detailed analysis of the patterns of transnational organisational alliance of migrants' associations in our three cities reveals very interesting findings (Figure 14.1).<sup>18</sup> The use of formal social network analysis (SNA) is useful because it preserves the original information on interactions and exchanges, and is a methodological approach mostly absent from analyses of transnationalism (see Vertovec 2003). Because of how the information is retrieved, these are, by necessity, ego networks with asymmetrical connections, thus reducing the overall connectivity. Yet, SNA depictions allow us to analyse several factors that condition transnational practices in a single snapshot. On the one hand, our results indicate that Latin American associations accumulate a larger number of transnational links with organisations in their homelands and elsewhere overseas. On the other hand, the results in Figure 14.1 show that – even if usually more associations have contact with at least one homeland organisation than with at least one such organisation elsewhere overseas – the extension of non-homeland-based transnational links is quite wide. Indeed, many Latin American associations have contacts only with transnational organisations that are not based in their homelands, especially in Madrid. In this sense, there is an interesting contrast between the configuration of transnational networks of Latin American associations in Barcelona and Madrid, as the former are much more likely to restrict transnational contacts to homeland organisations. And it is interesting to see that even Latin American associations in Murcia are very poor in transnational contacts as compared

**Figure 14.1** Structure of the organisational transnational alliances of migrants' organisations

Barcelona



Madrid

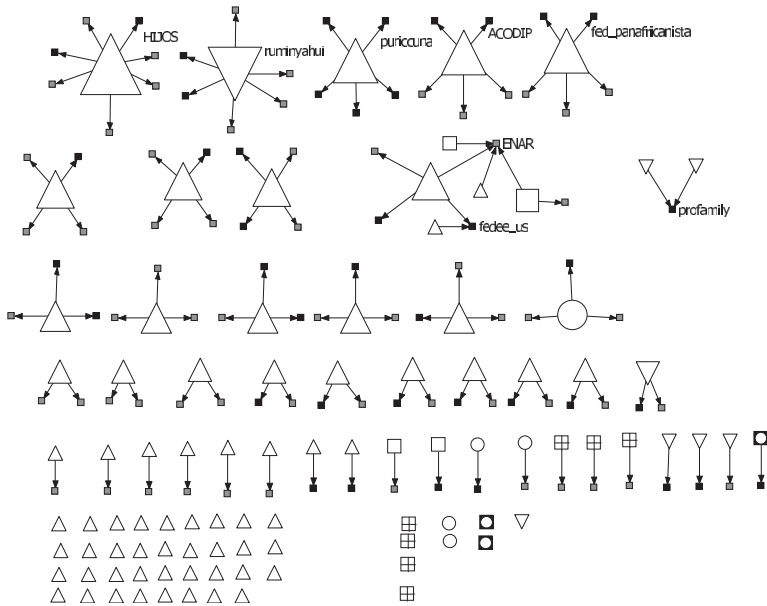
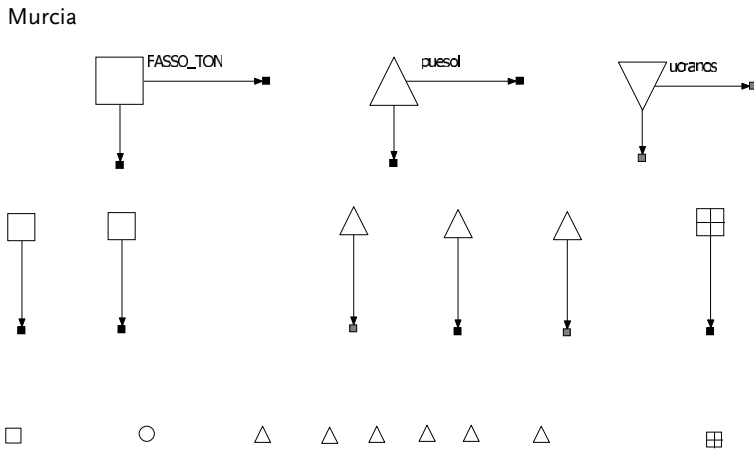


Figure 14.1 Continued



Legend

- Named homeland organisation
- Named other overseas organisation
- Sub-Saharan African (interviewed)
- △ Latin American (interviewed)
- Maghrebian (interviewed)
- ▽ Eastern European (interviewed)
- Asian (interviewed)
- ▣ Mixed origins (interviewed)

to their counterparts in Barcelona and Madrid. Finally, although ego networks are not particularly suited for the study of overlapping links within networks, we do find that some homeland organisations spontaneously ‘connect’ several local associations through common transnational alliances. For example, Argentinean Workers Central (Central de los Trabajadores Argentinos, CTA) is a common transnational contact for three different local associations in Barcelona, two of which comprise Argentineans, but a third is composed of people of mixed Latin American origins. Equally, in Madrid, four organisations – two sub-Saharan African and two Latin American – are linked in their transnational alliances through the European Network Against Racism (ENAR).

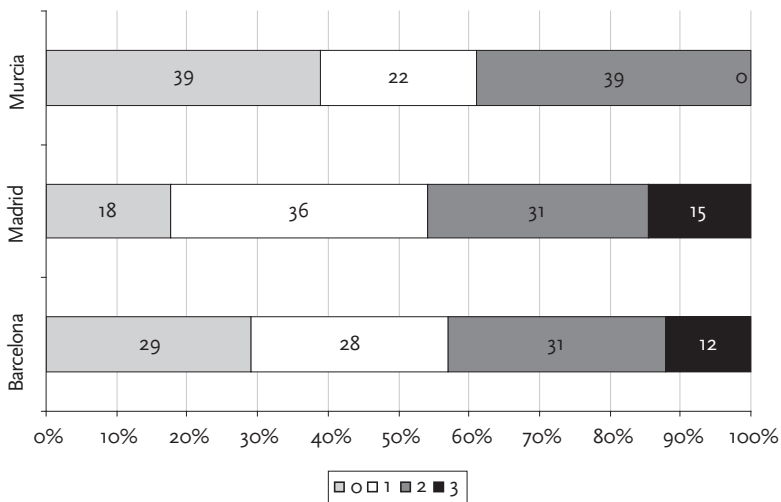
Hence, the SNA of the transnational alliances of migrants’ organisations provides us with valuable additional information on the patterns of transnational interaction of migrants’ associations in our three Spanish cities. The contribution that formal SNA can make to the study of transnationalism should thus not be underestimated, and it is a methodological innovation in this field that we feel should be embraced.



One final aspect worth exploring relates to the distinction between ‘comprehensive’ and ‘selective’ transnational practices (Levitt, DeWind & Vertovec 2003). Comprehensive transnational practices cut across different arenas or domains, while selective practices are restricted to one or only a few. Figure 14.2 shows the distribution for each of our three cities of the number of types of transnational activity – as classified in Table 14.2 – in which migrants’ associations become engaged. When an association engages in ordinary transnational activity, in organisational transnational alliances and in political transnationalism, it gets a score of 3. Clearly, the majority of migrants’ associations are ‘selective’ in their transnational practices, but a substantial proportion is engaged in two or three domains simultaneously, especially in Madrid and Barcelona. If we apply an even more stringent notion of ‘comprehensive’ transnationalism – and require that an association undertake activities abroad, have regular contact with a public administration and have regular contact with any organisation in their homeland or overseas – then only a tiny proportion of migrants’ associations can be regarded as practicing comprehensive transnationalism: 9 per cent in Madrid, 6 per cent in Murcia and 2 per cent in Barcelona.

Two illustrative examples can provide further insight on this. One of the associations in Barcelona that qualifies as comprehensively transnational is a large Moroccan association created more than ten years ago.

**Figure 14.2** *Comprehensive vs. selective transnationalism: Number of types of transnational activities of migrants’ associations*



It is well connected with platforms and networks of autochthonous organisations, describes itself as an immigrants' association (rather than a Moroccan association), is primarily active in issues related to Moroccan migrants in Catalonia, but does not often engage in protests related to international or homeland politics. It is also one of the largest Moroccan associations in Barcelona, with a significant number of staff and volunteers and a large budget. Another of the comprehensive transnational organisations – this time based in Madrid – is an Ecuadorian association that is also more than ten years old, has multiple connections with Latin American and autochthonous organisations, is active in all of Spain in addition to Ecuador, also defines itself as mainly an immigrants' organisation (rather than solely an Ecuadorian association), is primarily active in issues related to politics, but also does not often engage in protests related to homeland politics and is, again, one of the largest Latin American associations in Madrid, though its budget is much more modest. These are only two examples, but they are illustrative of the resources required to be 'comprehensively' transnational, in a context where migrants' associations have fairly limited technical, economic and human resources.

In summary, systematic differences in the transnational inclinations of migrants' associations are apparent between organisations based in Barcelona and Murcia and organisations based in Madrid. Almost every indicator points in the direction of the organisations in Madrid as being much more transnationally focused than those in either of the two other cities. Furthermore, ordinary transnational activities and organisational transnational alliances are much more common than political transnationalism regardless of the context. And Latin American associations are particularly inclined to accumulate many transnational organisational contacts and, for the case of Madrid, quite often with organisations that are not based in their homelands. In the next section, we analyse in greater detail what causes might be driving transnational practices as well as the cross-city variations.

#### *14.3.1 What drives transnational practices? The organisational correlates of transnationalism among migrants' associations*

Some scholars have past reflected on factors that drive migrants' transnational practices, both at the individual level and the systemic or macro level. For example, Faist (2000a) discusses the systemic or contextual elements that are linked to transnationalism and mentions the saliency of ethnicity as a factor that could contribute to the development and extension of transnational practices. He also discusses how obstacles to migrants' integration or the denial of acculturation can foster transnationalism. Portes (2003) agrees that hostile contexts of reception

also foster transnational practices, but he also mentions other relevant properties of the sending and reception contexts: for example, highly concentrated communities are likely to show more intense patterns of transnationalism.

At the individual level, Portes et al. (1999) point to additional factors related to transnational practices: access to technology, the economic and human capital stocks as well as the distance to the homeland. Hence, more resources and longer times of settlement are more conducive to engaging in transnationalism (Portes 1999; Guarnizo et al. 2003; Portes & Rumbaut 2006).

There is, however, much less scholarship on what factors we should expect to be related to transnationalism when we focus on migrants' associations. Nevertheless, in one of the few systematic studies of organisational transnationalism, Portes et al. (2007) show that transnational engagement is determined by the country of origin and related to the degree of formalisation and form of creation. Furthermore, if we extend the hypotheses put forward at the macro and individual levels, we should also expect the following types of organisations to be more likely to engage in transnational practices: 1) those formed by migrant groups that face greater hostility in Spain – e.g. Maghrebis and Africans, generally; 2) those that define themselves along more restrictive ethnic categories – thus making ethnicity more salient; 3) those with greater access to technological, economic and human capital; and 4) those based in cities with greater spatial concentration of the migrant population, i.e. Barcelona.

In Table 14.3, we explore the relationship between transnational activity and the origin and identity of the organisations, while in Table 14.4, we analyse the covariation between certain organisational attributes and transnationalism.<sup>19</sup>

Although estimates are unstable, and statistical significance is rare due to the number of cases, some patterns emerge, especially with regard to self-identity of the organisations. There is mixed evidence with regard to the impact of 'hostility' towards the group in the settlement country: African and Muslim organisations are somewhat more likely to engage in transnational activity, but more so in Madrid than in Barcelona, and the difference is not statistically significant. Furthermore, associations that define their primary identity along territorial lines and a single country of origin are more likely to maintain transnational activities or links, but associations whose primary identity revolves around functional or ascriptive social categories (e.g. women, immigrants' or professional groups) are equally oriented towards transnational contacts. These results contrast with Koopmans et al.'s (2005: 129-135) finding that groups that organise around status-related identities (such as 'immigrants' and 'foreigners') are less likely to make

**Table 14.3** *Transnational engagement by origin and identity of organisations, Madrid and Barcelona (% with any transnational activity)*

	<i>Barcelona</i>	<i>Madrid</i>
Total	71	81
<i>Region of origin</i>		
Latin American	71	81
African	70	100
Eastern Europe	(100)	(100)
Other regions	(63)	(67)
Mixed regional origins	(71)	60
Muslim	(100)	(100)
<i>Type of primary self-identity of the organisation</i>		
None	54*	84
Functional and/or ascriptive	87	83
Territorial – regional	40*	(86)
Territorial – single country	84*	80
Religious	(67)	(100)
Ethnic – non-territorial	(100)	–
Total number of cases	(100)	(96)

*Notes:* Values are row percentages for each column. The asterisk \* signals a percentage that is statistically different from the total value for all organisations for  $p \leq 0.05$ , as indicated by adjusted residuals. Chi-square tests confirm the existence of a statistical association between primary self-identity and transnational engagement only for Barcelona. In brackets we signal those percentages that are computed from a row category with fewer than ten cases. The – sign indicates that there are no cases in this category.

**Table 14.4** *Transnational engagement by organisational characteristics*

	<i>Barcelona</i>		<i>Madrid</i>	
	<i>Any transnational activity</i>	<i>Value for all organisations (number of cases)</i>	<i>Any transnational activity</i>	<i>Value for all organisations (number of cases)</i>
% of female members	51	50 (81)	49	49 (81)
% of income derived from public subsidies from Spanish institutions	15.9*	11.8 (86)	20.9*	18.8 (93)
Total annual budget (in €)	28,838*	22,254 (90)	54,657*	48,853 (87)
Total number of members	957 *	709 (87)	1,401*	1,227 (88)
Degree of organisational formalisation (0-1 scale)	0.55*	0.51 (100)	0.58	0.58 (96)
Number of years since its creation	7.5	7.3 (100)	9.4	9.2 (99)

*Notes:* Values are average figures for each row attribute for each column. The asterisk \* signals a value that is statistically different from the value for organisations with no transnational activity/links for  $p \leq 0.10$ .

transnational claims than groups that organise around ethnic and national identities.<sup>20</sup> We have found, however, that the former groups are as likely to become engaged in transnational practices as those that identify along more restrictive (national) ethnic categories. The findings are not necessarily contradictory, but they indicate that transnationally oriented 'claims-making' is just a particular form of transnational engagement, possibly with dynamics different from other transnational activities. Hence, different types of transnational practices are likely to be differently related to identity construction processes, and we should not conclude that only ethno-national identities are conducive to heightened transnationalism.

In general, differences in the inclination to act transnationally across identity-based categories are more pronounced in Barcelona than in Madrid. This is probably related to the fact that the context in Barcelona is generally more hostile than in Madrid towards the acceptance of ethnicity as a valid category for public engagement. Thus, migrants' associations that avoid any clear identity as 'immigrants' or that embrace wider regional identities – e.g. Latin American – refrain more from engaging in practices that link them to narrow ethnic identities.

The findings that economic and human resources contribute to transnationalism are valid not only for individual transnational practices but also for organisational ones. Again, in spite of the limited number of cases, we can safely say that larger organisations (in terms of the number of members) with more formalised structures, larger budgets and larger proportions of public funding are invariably more likely to engage in transnational activities. In contrast with other hypotheses developed with individual-level data, feminisation and the time passed since settlement, which is of course highly correlated with the 'age' of the organisation, are not related to transnational practices.

In recent times, increasing attention is being paid to the link between transnational practices and development promotion in the sending countries. Hence, we should expect that migrants' associations that describe themselves as organisations primarily devoted to humanitarian aid, human rights or cooperation, or that are active in these areas – regardless of whether they prefer to describe themselves as a more generally oriented association – will be more inclined to engage in transnationalism. Tables 14.5 and 14.6 explore this connection.

Our evidence generally supports these expectations. Migrants' associations that define themselves as humanitarian aid or human rights organisations or that are active in these areas, in community development or in international cooperation are indeed more likely to be engaged in transnational activities. This is more the case in Barcelona than in Madrid, however, where generally higher levels of transnationalism make these distinctions less relevant.

**Table 14.5** *Transnational engagement by primary self-description of association (% with any transnational activity)*

	<i>Barcelona</i>	<i>Madrid</i>
Immigrants' organisation	80	78
Cultural, musical, dancing, etc., society	65	82
Humanitarian aid or human rights organisation	90	88
Ethnic organisation	57	91
Charity or social welfare organisation	86	100
All organisations	71	82
Number of cases	92	93

*Notes:* Values are average figures for each row attribute for each column. No difference with the average for all organisations is statistically significant for  $p \leq 0.10$ .

**Table 14.6** *Transnational engagement by sectors/areas of activity (% with any transnational activity)*

<i>Active in...?</i>	<i>Barcelona</i>		<i>Madrid</i>			
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>		
Charity	82	↔	58	83	81	
Ethnic group concerns	83	↔	47	88	77	
Sports	71		71	89	78	
Culture	72		68	86	↔	70
Humanitarian aid	80	↔	59	89		78
Human rights	78	↔	57	83		81
Community development	83	↔	62	94	↔	76
Issues related to immigration	80	↔	48	83		81
International cooperation	83		57	90	↔	75
All organisations		71				82
Number of cases		100				96

*Notes:* Values are average figures for each row attribute for each column. The left right arrow ↔ signals a difference in the percentage of transnational activity between organisations active and inactive in a give sector/area that is statistically significant for  $p \leq 0.10$ . When no arrow is present, the difference is not statistically significant.

To conclude the analysis of the correlates of transnationalism among migrants' organisations, we assess the concurrent impact of the various factors explored in previous tables. Table 14.7 shows the results of three binary logistic regressions on the separate indicators of transnational practices: ordinary activity, organisational alliances and political transnationalism. Our goal is to examine whether different factors are relevant for the different forms of transnational activity that we have identified in the initial sections of this chapter.

Indeed, our results are noteworthy to the extent that they point to the existence of commonalities and differences in the correlates of transnationalism. Latino organisations are only more likely to engage in

**Table 14.7** *The correlates of transnational practices among migrants' organisations, logistic binary regressions*

	<i>Ordinary transnational activity</i>	<i>Organisational transnational alliances</i>	<i>Political transnationalism</i>
Intercept	-0.58 (0.24)	-0.49 (0.47)	-2.91 (0.53)
Latino organisation	n.s.	n.s.	0.76 (0.46)
African organisation	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Self-identity = territorial-single country	0.9 (0.32)	n.s.	n.s.
Self-description = Humanitarian aid or human rights organisation	1.6 (0.6)	n.s.	n.s.
Active in community development	n.s.	0.57 (0.33)	n.s.
Active in international cooperation	n.s.	0.75 (0.33)	0.81 (0.41)
Derives any income from Spanish public subsidies	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Annual budget (in 100s €)	0.001 (0.000)	n.s.	0.001 (0.000)
Number of members	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Degree of formalisation (0-1)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
City (ref = Barcelona)			
Madrid	n.s.	n.s.	0.63 (0.38)
Murcia	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Number of cases	193	193	193
Chi-square of model (degrees of freedom)	29.158 (3)	16.173 (7)	19.487 (4)
Nagelkerke R-square	0.19	0.11	0.15
Cox & Snell R-square	0.14	0.08	0.10
Hosmer & Lemeshow test Chi-square (degrees of freedom)	4.38 (8)	8.63 (8)	9.62 (8)

*Notes:* Beta coefficients with standard errors are in brackets. All coefficients are statistically significant for  $p \leq 0.10$ , and n.s. marks those that were initially estimated but removed from the model because they were not statistically significant and the number of cases calls for parsimonious models. All Hosmer and Lemeshow tests show a good fit of the models to the data.

transnational practices when these refer to the political domain. In contrast, African organisations – which represent the migrant groups facing greater hostility and discrimination in Spain – are not more transnationally oriented than the other organisations, irrespective of the form of transnationalism we scrutinise. Narrowly defined ethnic identities do promote greater engagement in ordinary transnational activities, but are not crucial for the establishment of transnational links with organisations abroad or for political transnationalism. Associations that are active in community development or in international cooperation are more inclined, by the nature of their own activities, to establish organisational alliances that are transnational but, interestingly enough, they

are also more likely to be active in political transnationalism. When assessing the role of resource mobilisation, only economic capital seems to have any significant impact: the number of members or the degree of formalisation is not decisive, surely due to its important correlation with budgetary capacity.

Finally, once we control for all these organisational attributes, the local context in itself seems to have a very limited additional impact. Migrants' organisations in Madrid are more likely to engage in political transnationalism. This is probably due to the fact that Madrid is the capital of the country, and thus is more often the focus of political mobilisation from homeland institutions and actors – such as the embassies and the political parties – but it could also reflect an endogenous process: migrants who were politically active in their countries of origin might be more likely to choose the capital city due to migration chains among political refugees. In any case, this should not lead us to conclude that the local context of settlement has little or no impact; rather, its impact is indirect: migrants' organisations in Madrid more frequently define themselves along narrow (national or local) ethnic lines, receive substantially more public subsidies, have an average budget that is roughly double that of associations in Barcelona and Murcia and have larger memberships. In sharp contrast, migrants' associations in Barcelona are more likely to be active in the areas of humanitarian aid, community development, human rights and international cooperation, hence partially offsetting their resource disadvantage. In other words, local policies and local contexts are relevant not so much because they directly promote (or fail to do so) transnational practices – which they do sometimes through subsidising policies – but primarily because they have a substantial impact on the type of migrants' organisations that consolidate and on the resources they accumulate.

#### 14.4 Discussion

Transnational engagement is by no means universal among migrant organisations in Spanish cities, but it is very common that a large majority of them will at least practice some form of transnationalism. Our chapter makes the point that the type and nature of transnational practices migrants' associations engage in is quite varied, and thus we should analyse different forms of organisational transnationalism separately. Migrants' associations in Spain are more often involved in ordinary transnational activity and frequently they establish alliances with organisations abroad, yet they more rarely engage in political transnationalism. Consequently, we reject the common view that migrants' organisational transnational practices are primarily expressions of



political transnationalism. We would encourage a less all-encompassing view of political transnational practices, or else we risk emptying it of real meaning.

On the other hand, transnational practices are certainly not restricted to links with homeland actors and social fields. We have found a considerable number of exchanges with overseas countries other than the countries of origin of the migrant groups. In particular, there is a significant connection with the United States for the Latino groups, and with European countries and organisations for migrants' associations of all regional origins.

Yet, the picture that emerges from our study is one of 'selective' rather than 'comprehensive' transnationalism. Comprehensive transnational practices are rather limited to a few organisations and are more frequent in Madrid than in the other cities. In general terms, while we also find smaller and more informal associations that are comprehensively transnational, when it comes to engaging in transnational practices in multiple domains and forms simultaneously another profile dominates. That is, the profile of large, resourceful and well-connected associations, which often also identify with the broader identity of 'immigrants' and are not necessarily explicitly concerned with homeland politics, but more with improving the situation of their co-ethnics in Spain.

In this sense, transnationalism is often driven by the identity of the organisation – when narrowly defined along ethnic lines – the area of activity – especially if it is active in community development and international cooperation – and the economic resources at its disposal. In this regard, the local context of settlement and the policies implemented by local and regional governments are especially relevant to the extent that they fundamentally shape the migrants' associational ecology. The impact of the local context and of local policies is thus both direct and indirect. Directly, they can incentivise transnational practices through their promotion of international cooperation and development activities of migrants' associations. Indirectly they can do so through their effect on the resources associations they accumulate and the collective identities they generate. Yet, local policies do not always operate in consistent directions to promote or hinder transnationalism, and our three cases illustrate the variety of effects we can find in real-life situations. On the one hand, the local policies and approach in Madrid foster the emergence and consolidation of associations that coalesce along narrow ethnic identities, whereas policies in Barcelona discourage the emphasis on ethnicity. Furthermore, in Madrid, migrants' associations can access a larger net amount of economic resources from different funding institutions, while in Barcelona and Murcia they grow cash-poor. Yet, local and regional policies in Barcelona are very active in promoting

international cooperation and development, and hence we find that migrants' organisations privilege these areas of activities in this city; and this offsets the limitations that smaller budgets impose on the transnationalisation of migrants' organisations. A lack of both cash and active international development policies in Murcia largely results in a much more limited engagement in transnational activity.

In conclusion, the local context powerfully shapes through direct and indirect paths the opportunities that migrants' associations face in taking on transnational practices. Further comparative studies of multiple ethnic groups across multiple cities should shed more light on the extent to which our findings may be more generally applicable.

## Notes

- 1 Some exceptions are Bloemraad (2005) and Portes, Escobar and Walton Radford (2007).
- 2 The Spanish project was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Education (grant SEJ2005-07733/CPOL) and by the Séneca Foundation of the Region of Murcia (grant 03007/PHCS/05). More information can be found at [www.um.es/capsocinmig](http://www.um.es/capsocinmig).
- 3 Multicultural Democracy and Immigrants Social Capital in Europe: Participation, Organisational Networks, and Public Policies at the Local Level, also known as the LOCALMULTIDEM project, was funded by the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Commission (contract CIT5-CT-2005-028802). Comprising a team of seven European universities and research institutes, it studied the cases of Budapest, London, Lyon, Madrid, Milan and Zurich. For more information see [www.um.es/localmultidem](http://www.um.es/localmultidem).
- 4 Portes also argues that the concept is only of some use if this is not an omnipresent phenomenon, i.e. if there is variation across individuals and organisations.
- 5 Nevertheless, there are sizeable migrant populations from sub-Saharan Africa and, most recently, from China. 'Retirement' migration from Western Europe is also substantial.
- 6 Some rural municipalities, however, have even higher proportions of migrants than the larger cities, especially in the Mediterranean regions and in Andalusia.
- 7 The size of the Muslim population is roughly estimated by adding all individuals born in countries that the *CIA World Factbook* lists as having populations that are 50 per cent or more Muslim in 2005.
- 8 Non-EU nationals cannot vote in any elections in Spain. Voting rights, even at the local level, can only be granted by the national level and, in most cases, they require modifying the Constitution. Although the issue of allowing all residents to vote in local elections has been raised on various occasions, the necessary political agreements between the two major parties (PSOE and PP) have never materialised into legal amendments in this direction.
- 9 This does not mean that in Barcelona there are no consultation bodies dealing with migration issues. Though there is a municipal sectorial council for immigration, it is not specifically designed to address migrant or immigration issues in particular but, rather, as an additional sectorial policy alongside many other issues – youth, gender, sports, homosexuals and transsexuals, housing, etc.

- 10 The update entails partially re-interviewing organisations included in the pilot study to analyse changes in their organisational activities and composition and interviewing organisations we were unable to interview in 2004 as well as organisations formed after the pilot was completed.
- 11 A more detailed description of the questionnaire and of the pilot studies can be found in Ortega and Morales (2006).
- 12 EU-15 citizens' associations (e.g. French, Italian, British), as well as those from richer OECD countries (e.g. US, Canada, Australia), have been excluded from the analyses and tables in this chapter to restrict our focus to the national origins that produce the bulk of 'economic' migrants in our three cities. The needs and activities of these two subpopulations differ too much to make their joint analysis meaningful for the purposes of this chapter.
- 13 Our searching methods in official registers and on the internet were systematic and thorough, and included a long list of word strings with various variants of the words 'immigrant' and 'foreigner' and the multiple countries and national qualifiers.
- 14 One might wonder whether, given this relative fluidity of associations, our results on transnational practices are likely to be stable over time. Of course, this can only be fully assessed by a proper longitudinal study, but if the over-time evolution of the few associations (22) that we were able to interview both in 2003-2004 and 2007-2008 in Madrid is of any indication, the inclination to engage in transnational practices seems quite stable. For example, only five associations that mentioned transnational links with associations overseas in 2003-2004 did not mention any in 2007-2008, and only two associations that mentioned any links in 2007-2008 had not mentioned any in the previous round of interviews.
- 15 See Schrover and Vermeulen (2005) for a discussion of this frequent mismatch.
- 16 In the 2007-2008 questionnaires, we included an item that enquired into the main specific protest or demonstration events associations had participated in over the previous two years. However, because this item was not posed to the associations interviewed only in 2003-2004, we decided not to include it in these analyses. Nevertheless, a close inspection of them leads us to conclude that 'transnational' protest is the exception rather than the norm, as barely fifteen associations out of over 100 that had participated in protests mentioned a 'transnational' cause being at stake. In fact, 'international' issues, such as the Iraq War, were much more common; and, by far, exclusively national or local issues dominate the scene. Among the few transnational protests, the most abundant were those related to violence in Colombia, political turmoil in Pakistan and support for victims of national disasters in the homeland.
- 17 Unfortunately, given the difficulty in tracking such a detail, our ability to establish whether these members ran for office once already in Spain is limited. However, having included an item that enquired into the date when these members ran as candidates, we found that all were in the 2000s, thus strongly suggesting that respondents report on only recent electoral contests and that this is indeed a valid indicator of political transnationalism.
- 18 Although the total number of cases interviewed in Murcia is too small for frequency statistical analyses to be meaningful, we have preferred to report them as an additional piece of information. Parallel to the study in the city of Murcia, we undertook an identical study in the whole region/province of Murcia, which resulted in 25 additional interviews (a total of 43). In terms of the transnational practices, the results are very similar for the whole region and, if anything, would indicate that the organisations in the city of Murcia are more transnationally oriented than those of the rest of the region.

- 19 These are all ego networks. The relative size of the interviewed organisations (in white shapes) indicates the number of transnational organisations they named, i.e. their outdegree.
- 20 In subsequent tables we do not include the case of Murcia because the limited number of cases renders it unsuitable for bivariate analyses.
- 21 These are self-defined identities that need not overlap fully with the 'legal' status of members of these groups. Koopmans et al. (2005: 126-127) identify three types of transnational claims-making: transplanted homeland politics (e.g. claims against the homeland regime), homeland-directed transnational claims (e.g. claims requesting the settlement country government to intervene in homeland politics) and country of residence-directed transnationalism (e.g. homeland resources mobilised to intervene in host country arenas).

Diaspora and transnationalism are widely used concepts in academic as well as political discourses. Although originally referring to quite different phenomena, they increasingly overlap today. Such inflation of meanings goes hand in hand with a danger of essentialising collective identities. This book therefore analyses diaspora and transnationalism as research perspectives rather than as characteristics of particular social groups. Its contributions focus on conceptual uses, theoretical challenges and methodological innovations in the study of social ties that transcend nation and state boundaries. Bringing together authors from a wide range of fields and approaches in the social sciences, this volume is evidence that studying border-crossing affiliations also requires a crossing of disciplinary boundaries.

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*“Diaspora and transnationalism have become buzzwords in popular debates. In this innovative work, Bauböck, Faist and their co-authors reclaim the concepts for social science by demonstrating their significance for contemporary migration research.”*

Stephen Castles, Research Chair in Sociology, The University of Sydney

*“A strong, elegant and very welcome map and compass for the concepts, theories, questions and methodological challenges that drive research on the global condition.”*

Peggy Levitt, Author of *God Needs No Passport* and Professor of Sociology, Wellesley College

*“An insightful and thought-provoking contribution to the theoretical and methodological debates. The chapters provide both fresh and authoritative perspectives on the key issues at stake and underscore the value of cross-disciplinary dialogue.”*

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*“‘Diaspora’ and ‘transnationalism’ have come to dominate migration studies over the last two decades. Compiled by foremost scholars in the field, this volume skilfully brings together compelling essays that examine concepts, theories and methods surrounding these two terms.”*

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