

**INTERACT – RESEARCHING THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS’ INTEGRATION AS A THREE-WAY PROCESS - IMMIGRANTS, COUNTRIES OF EMIGRATION AND COUNTRIES OF IMMIGRATION AS ACTORS OF INTEGRATION**

***Maintaining national culture abroad  
Countries of origin, culture  
and diaspora***

**Sonia Gsir  
Elsa Mescoli**

INTERACT Research Report 2015/10



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**Researching Third Country Nationals' Integration as a Three-way Process -  
Immigrants, Countries of Emigration and Countries of Immigration as Actors of  
Integration**

**Research Report  
Conceptual Paper**

**INTERACT RR 2015/10**

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Countries of origin, culture and diaspora**

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## **INTERACT - Researching Third Country Nationals' Integration as a Three-way Process - Immigrants, Countries of Emigration and Countries of Immigration as Actors of Integration**

In 2013 (Jan. 1st), around 34 million persons born in a third country (TCNs) were currently living in the European Union (EU), representing 7% of its total population. Integrating immigrants, i.e. allowing them to participate in the host society at the same level as natives, is an active, not a passive, process that involves two parties, the host society and the immigrants, working together to build a cohesive society.

Policy-making on integration is commonly regarded as primarily a matter of concern for the receiving state, with general disregard for the role of the sending state. However, migrants belong to two places: first, where they come and second, where they now live. While integration takes place in the latter, migrants maintain a variety of links with the former. New means of communication facilitating contact between migrants and their homes, globalisation bringing greater cultural diversity to host countries, and nation-building in source countries seeing expatriate nationals as a strategic resource have all transformed the way migrants interact with their home country.

INTERACT project looks at the ways governments and non-governmental institutions in origin countries, including the media, make transnational bonds a reality, and have developed tools that operate economically (to boost financial transfers and investments); culturally (to maintain or revive cultural heritage); politically (to expand the constituency); legally (to support their rights).

INTERACT project explores several important questions: To what extent do policies pursued by EU member states to integrate immigrants, and policies pursued by governments and non-state actors in origin countries regarding expatriates, complement or contradict each other? What effective contribution do they make to the successful integration of migrants and what obstacles do they put in their way?

A considerable amount of high-quality research on the integration of migrants has been produced in the EU. Building on existing research to investigate the impact of origin countries on the integration of migrants in the host country remains to be done.

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## **Abstract**

Within the framework of the INTERACT project, this paper aims to shed light onto a specific facet of the role of sending countries in migrants' integration processes: culture. Culture is analysed as one of the tools that both migrants and countries of origin resort to in order to maintain reciprocal ties after migration. Following a brief presentation of the anthropological and sociological definitions of culture and the consequent notion of "cultural identity" on which the analysis builds, we study the concrete implementation of these dynamics. In particular, our attention is deployed at three levels: the level of migrants' everyday practices (including the use of the origin language); the policy level (pertaining to both diaspora and integration); and the association level (cultural centres in particular). Through the study of several transversal examples, we consider the broader issue at stake in this paper: the possible connection between migrants' performance in the culture of their country of origin and integration processes. We take into account the European legal framework within which both migrants and national governments function, and the influence it has on discourses and national and international policies addressing integration issues. We reach the conclusion that no causal or univocal link can be established between cultural practices and integration, for several reasons: a variety of factors are at play in integration processes within multi-cultural urban spaces, including socio-economic issues and power relations, which are crucial; culture itself is a changing and combined set of behaviours which determine dynamic and multiple belongings and which need a comprehensive approach; and identities shape the interaction among cultures – which is why we finally state the usefulness of the notion of "ethnicity".

**Key words:** culture, identity, cultural centres, country of origin, emigrants, diaspora

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## 1. Introduction

Governments and communities of origin try to maintain different kinds of links with their emigrants abroad. From this perspective, they may use a variety of tools. An important one is culture. Even though they may be aware that emigrants are, because of migration, evolving in another country and within another cultural environment, they consider the culture of origin to be important in order to maintain links with the country of origin; it constitutes a heritage that is shared with people and places left behind. In fact, if it is clear that the immigration process entails changes in people lives, which also develop at a cultural level, it is also evident that migrants carry with them a cultural capital (among others) which they may wish to maintain in some way, and whose impact on integration is assessed in this paper. In their country of origin, migrants have already had social, economic and also political positions – sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker – in a context whose cultural specificities were at least in part different from the destination country. These specificities shape migrants as cultural actors who, once abroad, may contribute to the cultivation of their culture of origin by undertaking various actions, and also by collaborating with other actors staying in their country of origin. In this paper we will analyse some of the actions implemented by migrants and by their country of origin in order to put into action such cultural capital. We will reflect on the role that these actions may occupy in migrants' integration in host societies, leading to the consideration that they are crucial in empowering migrants, giving them some useful transnational instruments to participate in the social context where they live.

Already in emigration policies and in particular in bilateral agreements organizing migration, countries of origin may include cultural provisions toward emigrants, such as specific terms to allow them to practice their religion or to celebrate national events (Gsir, Mandin, and Mescoli 2015). Besides emigration policies, countries of origin have progressively developed other policies targeting their diaspora settled abroad. These diaspora policies or “diaspora engagement policies” can be very diverse and concern various domains (Gamlen 2006). The common element is that they aim to engage diaspora abroad, to keep links with emigrants living henceforth in a new country of residence (*ibid.*). Countries of origin are mainly motivated by the prospect of attracting emigrants' remittances, opening markets, promoting development (de Haas 2005), controlling emigrants abroad (de Haas 2007; Escafré-Dublet 2012) or enhancing the defence or the representation of national interests in the host country (Portes 1999; Bauböck 2003). Policies and actions of countries of origin towards their emigrants allow them to retain or recreate links with their societies of origin. Countries of origin use different tools to operate: legal, political, economic and cultural tools. In the present paper, however, the focus is on culture.

By culture, we mean a set of changing practices, based on shared and negotiated values and norms. Following the work of several anthropologists and sociologists underlining the dynamism of this notion, we reaffirm that culture is not intended to be defined in fixed terms. By focusing on practices, we believe that we describe culture as an active belonging, which is potentially multiple and is constantly questioned. Also thanks to its dynamism, culture continues to have a pragmatic scope in the lives of individuals and groups, since they often shape and speak of a proper identity based on the combination of different cultural practices. We focus our attention on those cultural practices which are associated with migrants' country of origin. In particular, how countries of origin use culture to maintain or recreate links with their emigrants abroad and whether their efforts in this respect influence the integration process are the central questions of this paper (realized in the framework of the INTERACT project). This research project aims to understand how countries of origin may have an impact on migrants' integration in the receiving countries. It assumes that integration is a three-way-process involving migrants, receiving countries and countries of origin even though their relations are unequal. Indeed, we consider whether the destination country structures in a fundamental way immigrant integration processes through immigrant or integration policies, but also through diversity policy and through discourse on immigration and immigrants. The INTERACT project aims

to shed light on the dynamics of this three-way-process. Moreover, integration is considered through several dimensions. The intent of this paper is to provide the conceptual framework for one of the four specific tools defined in the project: culture. Through the promotion of the culture of the country of origin, the governments and communities of origin try to maintain links with their diasporas, which correlate with migrants' maintenance of their culture in various ways. It is important to be aware of several elements when trying to understand how culture may be mobilized by countries to engage with their diaspora and the effects that this could have on migrants' integration. The first part of the paper tackles some issues of culture. The concept of culture is approached from anthropological and sociological perspectives. Questions of culture are also examined with a particular reference to the dynamics occurring in the context of migration. The second part of the paper addresses the question of migrants' socio-cultural integration in receiving countries, in particular the role of countries of origin in this process while they undertake specific actions to cultivate national cultural links and to give opportunities to emigrants and their descendants to maintain or enhance proficiency in the national language. In the third part, we look specifically at the concrete performance of culture – meaning the ways in which migrants put their culture(s) into action through material practices – and also at how countries of origin concretely use culture abroad, with a focus on cultural diaspora policies and on cultural actions developed by state and non-state actors. A section focuses on specific cultural institutions established by some countries of origin in countries of destination. As an example, we take cultural centres abroad as a locus where the national culture is promoted both for emigrants and the mainstream society.

## 2. Issues of culture

Before addressing the main question of this concept note, that is, the possible impact of the culture of origin in migrants' integration paths, it is necessary to clarify what we mean by the notion of culture. In the following paragraphs, we will briefly describe some crucial issues concerning the definition of this concept developed over time, and we will try to highlight those points that are relevant to the research framework within which this paper has been elaborated.

### 2.1 Defining culture

The first anthropological definition of culture dates back to 1871: in his book *Primitive Culture* E. B. Tylor described it as “[...] that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society” (Tylor 1871: 1). This statement was made in an epistemological context during an important shift concerning the concept of culture. In fact, at the end of the XVIII century, thanks to the work of some German philosophers and linguists, the meaning of “culture” as *cultura animi* (in Latin, cultivation of the soul, see Fabietti 2008) was combined with a collective meaning of this notion, which started to refer to something which was connected not only to the individual but also to populations and nations. A distinction was thus made between a “humanistic” and an “elitist idea” of “high culture”, which respectively referred to individuals versus a range of diverse cultural expressions describing groups (see Paschalidis 2009). Both these visions of culture had an influence on Tylor's holistic definition, which is one that has that been questioned throughout time and which has constituted a central concern for several anthropological and sociological schools.<sup>1</sup> What we retain from it is the complexity of culture and the link it establishes between individuals and communities. We assume that culture

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<sup>1</sup> Among numerous relevant anthropological works, we mention just two crucial critical considerations on the concept of culture here: one underlining the role of human motivation in “inventing” cultural aspects (Wagner 1981); the other pointing out the essential hybridism of the supposed homogeneity of each culture (Amselle 1990). We must also mention the influence of the work of A. Gramsci (1975) in several sociological studies showing the actions of social and political power in the definition of cultural belonging.

somehow constitutes a dynamic and integrated pattern (Benedict 1934), a network of meanings (Geertz 1973) to which a collectivity refers, either to comply with its norms or to negotiate them. Throughout history, such patterns were an object of more or less implicit classifications that, influenced by the Darwinian legacy, led to a hierarchization of cultures, which were placed at different stages of a hypothetical line of human progress. The work of scholars – those who were not engaged in supporting the consequential acts of this vision of culture (i.e. colonial ventures trying to impose one cultural pattern upon another) or in ideologically justifying a political domination (Said 1978) – aimed to describe cultures as different but equal ways of being human (Remotti 2000). What is called “cultural relativism” – a perspective that is not free from being questioned on issues of ethical engagement – is here meant as a way of *looking at* cultures, meaning considering habits and values with reference to the complex contexts within which they take shape and acquire meaning. Such contexts are the dynamic sites in which a variety of macro processes intertwine and determine a constant redefinition of cultures themselves. Cultures are internally diverse, since human behaviours and representations vary in relation to situations, social conditions, people’s personal convictions and gender; in addition, cultures transform as a consequence of both individuals’ inner logic and external contacts (Balandier 1971). Rosaldo’s description of culture summarizes the dynamism of this notion, which refers to a “porous array of intersections where distinct processes crisscross from within and beyond its borders” (Rosaldo 1993: 20).

In consequence of this dynamism which is inherent to cultures, we intend “cultural identity” – a notion that can be of help to the INTERACT project’s analysis of the integration processes – to mean a changing dimension of the interaction between individuals and communities. Stuart Hall, for example, firstly defines cultural identity as shared culture, that is, a set of common historical experiences and cultural codes. Secondly, he highlights how identities themselves are “subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power” (Hall 1990: 225). He insists on the situational production of “cultural identity”, which “[...] is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. (...) It is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute Return” (Hall 1990: 226). As we have already written, cultures function as dynamic collective patterns for individuals, whose “[c]ultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning” (*ibid.*). The point at stake here is that it is necessary to analyse this positioning, that is, to study the reciprocal actions between migrants and – among the cultures within which they are moving and which define their ethnoscape (Appadurai 1992) – that culture which is associated with their country of origin. This positioning concerns human beings’ capacity to think about themselves as part of an “imagined community” (Anderson 1983) which takes shape from the identification of some shared cultural elements.

## 2.2 Culture and migration

As a consequence of the above-mentioned cultural hierarchization – which can be encountered mostly in certain past historical periods but whose heritage is still present in many contemporary discourses – we can think about the use of the non-neutral term “civilization” and its adoption to proclaim the clash (Huntington 1996) among different (and differently legitimated) cultural belongings; for instance, migrants’ trip from the South to the North of the world (or from the East to the West) is often seen as a move toward a more progressive and developed culture. The display of technical progress is often central in these discourses, within which the cultural practice of “development” is measured in reference to the spread of (what are considered to be) advanced techniques in the economic and social sphere. This picture, which denies the changes which constantly occur in every culture and reproduces colonial domination in the migration context (resulting in a kind of microcosm of relations of domination inherited from the past), has an impact on migrants’ representation of the culture of their country of origin.. In fact, this concept is often associated with an undistinguished idea of tradition, as if migrants themselves cannot think about the culture of the country that they have left as a dynamic

one; they remain attached to a static image embedded in their body and mind and nourished by macro representations. Tradition is meant as « [...] a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition [...] » (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983: 1). Often, in talking about different cultures, the focus is put on cultural differences and in particular, on different values rather than on common ones. This is highly political in the sense that this differentiation can nourish domination or at least the will to establish a hierarchy between cultures. A consequence could be that migrants themselves refer to distinct and unchangeable values and norms, as well as to the practices that derive from them, as a means to provide a reassuring shelter to the uncertainties and the difficulties lived in the migration context. We can see this while considering, for example, objects related to migrants' lives before leaving, embedded in a certain – even if composite – cultural environment. As Parkin points out: “[...] under the conditions of rapid and sometimes violent flight and dispersal, private mementoes may take the place of interpersonal relations as a depository of sentiment and cultural knowledge” (Parkin 1999: 317). Such “transitional objects” “[...] become the dormant bearers of the recessive culture, transforming it perhaps but at least giving meaning to their own personal survival, and able, if circumstances allow, to tell the tale afterwards” (*ibid.*: 308). The recognition of the fact that cultural changes concern not only diaspora but also the practices left behind, can destabilize migrants who take comfort from this image. The result can be the display of a relocated nationalism, which translates to the use of culture to oppose – and defend oneself from – a dominant otherness. A political mobilization of ethnic belonging through cultural practices can emerge, with the intention to claim the right of being different and put this diversity into action. This result confirms the fact that the dimension of communication plays a central role in every cultural process, since culture corresponds to human beings' capacity to transmit messages, to communicate (Fabiotti 2010: 24) to others. We observe a creative nature of culture, in this case of that which is related to migrants' country of origin, which is practiced through concrete acts. This culture takes the form of a wide set of behaviours and practices, including the use of language and a set of other acts which contribute to the practical definition of a multiplicity of belongings. In the last part of this concept note we will focus on this concrete dimension of culture in order to shed some light on the dynamics that link this notion to the diaspora and to migrants' country of origin. In fact, studying culture today means to study the processes of production, transmission and circulation of cultural meanings within the social space (Matera 2008: 11). We can thus focus on the ways in which the culture(s) that is associated with migrants' country of origin is (or are) concretely produced and transmitted in the urban contexts that the INTERACT project takes in consideration; these contexts become part of a transnational space of life and action (Levitt 2004), in which practices reflect the intersection between various cultural affinities. This intertwinement has to be considered when analysing the main question posed in this note, that is, the role of countries of origin in the cultural dimension of migrants' integration in receiving countries. In the following paragraph we will present a brief overview of the general context within which the concrete actions that we will analyse afterwards take place.

### 3. Culture and integration

In the migration context, a crucial issue is whether maintaining cultural links with the country of origin affects integration and in particular, socio-cultural integration in the receiving country. Furthermore, one could even question the objectives of countries of origin when promoting the national culture in countries with an important diaspora. Would they pursue anti-assimilationist views which could jeopardize the integration objectives of immigrant policies?

#### 3.1 Cultural diversity in Europe

The European Union has created a continent of immigration made of *de facto* multi-cultural societies with diverse ethnic and religious populations. Migration contributed to the diversification of Europe and continues to do so with the arrival and settlement of new migrants (Fargues 2011). But the

diversification of Europe is related not only to migration; other factors contribute to its diversity, in particular, European enlargement. Furthermore, diversity in Europe is not only cultural but also political, socio-economic, regional, etc. (Martiniello 2011). At the political level, cultural diversity is at the core of the European project. The respect for linguistic and cultural diversity is enshrined in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights adopted in 2000. In the preamble of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the Union, we read that “the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union [...]. The Union contributes to the preservation and to the development of these common values while respecting the diversity of the cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe as well as the national identities of the Member States”.<sup>2</sup> One founding principle of the European Union is thus the respect of diversity as evidenced in the phrase, “united in diversity”. The cultural programmes of the European Union also promote linguistic and cultural diversity in a number of ways. Accordingly, the European Union supports multi-lingualism by encouraging European citizens to learn other European languages and by promoting the use of regional or European minority languages to form part of their cultural heritage (European Commission 2004). Several education programmes promoting language and culture learning (Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Lingua, Erasmus) have thus been established. The European institutions themselves have 24 official and working languages. The European Commission maintains the policy that all EU citizens have the right to access all EU documents in the official language(s) of the Commission, and should be able to write to the Commission and receive a response in their own language. The European Community has also signed the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which entered into force in 2007.

Thus on the one hand, cultural diversity is highly promoted at the European level. On the other hand, for several decades, immigrants’ integration in the host culture has been considered fundamental in Europe. Common basic principles on integration have been adopted in 2004 by the EU member states. They insist on the importance of knowledge of the host society’s language, history, and institutions but also on the importance of frequent interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens. “Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens”.<sup>3</sup> Other measures have been undertaken since then in order to promote immigrants’ integration in the EU member states, such as the Handbooks on integration, the European website on Integration and the European Integration Forum. In 2011, the Commission proposed a *European Agenda for the Integration of Non-EU Migrants*. There again, it underlined that successful integration relies on immigrants’ participation, which includes cultural participation (European Commission 2011: 3). Regarding culture, the Commission insists on the importance of respect for migrants’ culture by the receiving society with a reciprocal expectation that migrants respect the rules and values of the receiving society (*ibid.*: 4).

Furthermore, regardless as to whether they have adopted an assimilationist approach on immigrant integration, a more pluralistic one or a hybrid model, the European member states tend to set up integration programmes for newly arrived immigrants (Gsir 2006). These programmes include civic courses entailing presentations about receiving country institutions, the political system, core values of the country, citizens’ rights, etc. Civic courses are not simply symbolic; in some countries, even if the emigrant has shown proficiency in the host country language, attending the civic course is obligatory. However most consist mainly of language courses. The acquisition of the language of the receiving

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<sup>2</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT> [Accessed 6 February 2015].

<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/EU\\_actions\\_integration.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/EU_actions_integration.cfm) [Accessed 6 February 2015].

country is largely considered by politicians, stake-holders and European public opinion as a *sine qua non* condition for integration.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.2 Socio-cultural integration and cultural allegiance

According to Gijsberts and Dagevos (2007), socio-cultural integration depends on the extent to which ethnic minority groups become part of the receiving society or remain distinct. More precisely, scholars have tried to measure and assess socio-cultural integration according to the contacts that migrants have developed with the receiving society, their sense of belonging to this society, their knowledge of the new society language, and also the attitudes of the host society (Ehrkamp 2005; Snel, Engbersen, and Leerkes 2006; Gijsberts and Dagevos 2007; Vancluysen, Van Craen, and Ackaert 2009; etc.). Proficiency in the language of the receiving country is an element put forward by several authors regarding the socio-cultural integration of migrants (Jacobs, Phalet, and Swyngedouw 2004; Chiswick and Miller 2007; etc.). However, Hambye and Romainville (2013) have highlighted the trend of raising language problems as the main challenge of integration while avoiding a focus on integration conditions in the receiving countries and providing immigrants with real opportunities to participate in economic, socio-cultural and political life. Furthermore, the dominant discourse on migrants' own responsibility to learn the language and to integrate is too easy and simplistic given the complexity of immigration (Hambye and Romainville 2014: 22). Thus, even if knowing the language of the host society constitutes a powerful tool for actively communicating and interacting with members of the society, some very basic social interactions may happen without sharing a common language. Socio-cultural integration occurs, not only through immigrants' endeavours to learn a new language and culture, but also through the articulation or interaction with the host society and in relation to opportunities to participate in the socio-cultural activities of the receiving society.

With respect to the learning of language and culture, the interests of the receiving countries and those of the countries of origin seem to contradict each other. Indeed, the former press migrants to learn the official language and comply with the majority culture (values, institutions), and the latter encourage the maintenance of strong cultural ties and even promote the learning of the national language abroad. Moreover, countries of origin may have an interest in nourishing migrants' cultural ties and cultural identification in order to maintain their political loyalty with the regime, but also to benefit from emigrants as informal ambassadors who can defend the main ideas of the country of origin at an international level. Promoting the national culture can serve political interests (foreign policy but also home affairs). Maintaining cultural links on a regular basis is blamed for reducing opportunities for socio-cultural integration in the receiving country. According to the argument, maintaining cultural links means that migrants would spend more time within their culture of reference, more time with co-ethnics and more time speaking the origin language, and would consequently have less time to integrate in the new culture. However, this would happen even if migrants are considerably exposed to the dominant culture in their daily life. This perspective of competition between the culture of the receiving country and the culture of origin presupposes cultural belonging as exclusive. With respect to transnational practices and integration, some consider cultures incompatible and believe that integrating within a society can only be completed by cutting ties with the society of origin. When migrants engage in two different societies, it can raise the question of their loyalty to each culture and more politically, to each nation-state. What is at stake is the possibility of being faithful to more than one nation-state on the one hand, and the question of multiple belongings and cultural identities on the other hand. Multiple identities and multiple cultures are in conflict with an integration model that considers one nation to have a dominant culture and refuses to include cultural diversity in the definition of the nation. Even though European countries have adopted different approaches on integration, the assimilationist rationale seems to gain ground (Martiniello 2011). Integration is thus defined as an "identity issue (becoming 'like us') rather than a legal issue

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<sup>4</sup> Eurobarometer 2011.

(having the same rights and duties as a citizen)” (Hambye and Romainville 2014: 27). Migrants are thus expected to share the language and the cultural values and mores of the majority society and integration policies are designed accordingly. At the same time, maintaining their cultural identity and preserving their roots and language are also considered important and paradoxically can be promoted by the receiving country. In other words, the cultural ties that migrants maintain with their country of origin are subject to ambiguous attitudes and policies. Finally, the answer to the question as to whether cultural ties with the country of origin are an obstacle to integration in the receiving countries requires clarification from the country of destination on the concept of integration. If integration means language and cultural identification and requires an unconditional allegiance to the culture of the new country of residence, cultural ties with the country of origin are problematic. If integration means becoming a citizen and respecting the fundamental political principles of the democratic society respecting pluralism, cultural ties with the country of origin may even be an asset. In this case, knowing the language and culture of the receiving country is a crucial tool for migrants; discovering migrants’ culture is also an asset for the receiving society.

Furthermore, if integration is defined as becoming an accepted part of the society (Penninx 2004), this means that the society of destination also has a role to play, accepting new populations even if different culturally. Receiving societies are not necessarily prepared for migration – this is the least we can say for states which do not recognize themselves as immigration countries. Receiving societies may then feel puzzled and worried when they experience at the neighbourhood level, rapid change of population and unexpected increasing multi-culturality. By promoting emigrants’ culture of origin in the country of destination, countries of emigration can help to increase the mainstream society’s knowledge of migrants’ culture of origin and raise interest in it. Even though the initial objective of cultural diaspora policies or external cultural policies is not necessarily to promote the integration of emigrants in the receiving country, they can contribute to this process when they address a broader audience or when they create opportunities for socio-cultural encounters. More concretely, when a cultural event is organized abroad by the country of origin or when a cultural centre is established, as we will see later, it creates opportunities for migrants but also for other members of the receiving society – be they with or without a migrant background – to meet and to interact. This can help the integration of the society as a complex and diversified whole. Cultural actions by the countries of origin may thus have an unintended effect of smoothing integration. Many of the cultural events promoted and supported by Ministries of Culture of both countries of origin and destination create opportunities for intercultural exchanges, better mutual understanding and co-integration. Co-integration is conceived as a process involving all members of the receiving country society, including those who are full members and as well as new members, even if they do not yet necessarily enjoy full rights linked to citizenship (Gsir 2014b).<sup>5</sup> These cultural actions are implemented with the aim of defining nations through their culture(s), thus engendering a macro-competition which is rarely reflected in migrants’ practices but which could instead mislead an assessment of migrants’ cultural integration.

### 3.3 Cultures and nations

We agree with Paschalidis that national cultures, whether from the country of origin or the receiving country, are social and ideological constructs. As a consequence, culture is largely considered exclusive and fixed, with regard to both cultural diaspora policy and integration policy. As Paschalidis has pointed out, through the cultural activities of the cultural centres or institutes spread abroad, a kind of “sanitised” culture is projected and celebrated (2009: 287) by the countries of origin. “The culture projected abroad is above all an uncritical culture, that excludes artworks or artists that question the

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<sup>5</sup> In this regard, it is important to raise the question of access to culture: some cultural events are only attended by some categories of the population, mostly highly educated individuals with a high socio-economic background. This fact entails a process of exclusion and discrimination which can put integration paths at great risk.

dominant national self-image. [...] The projection is of a cohesive community, united by an uncontroversial, shared reality, a distinctive culture and heritage. [...] Projecting national culture abroad is essentially about performing the nation, converting the nation into a performance, and thus, ironically, disclosing its fundamental truth as a cultural construct, as an elaborate artwork” (Paschalidis 2009: 287). On the receiving side, the integration policies developed by the receiving society to address migrants’ presence go in the same direction. In fact, integration policies and integration programmes with civics and language courses pertaining to the mainstream society are still a means to “perform the nation”, in this case the receiving nation-state. As an effect, these policies essentially target migrants and not the broad society. Integration requests a cultural performance from migrants which complies with the local cultural formats and norms, thus proving they can belong – that they can include themselves.

This political perspective is contradicted by practice. Firstly, “all culture is a permanent process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction” (Cuhe 2010: 70). Secondly, identities are multiple and above all not fixed but changing throughout life. Identities escape essentialization and cannot be reduced to culture or religion. Cultural identity is also a part of social identity (Cuhe 2010: 98). Thirdly, socio-cultural interactions are a locus of the formation of cultural identities. A multiplicity of dynamics act in cultural processes dealing with identity issues, and they have to be considered through a comprehensive approach. Levitt (2004) confirms this: “[...] a social field perspective reveals the difference between *ways of being* in a social field and *ways of belonging*. Anthropologist Nina Glick Schiller defines ways of being as the actual social relations and practices that individuals engage in rather than the identities associated with their actions. In contrast, ways of belonging refers to practices that signal or enact identities which demonstrate a conscious connection to a particular group. [...] A transnational lens, then, is both a perspective and a variable. It departs from a different set of assumptions about social organization that are usually employed by social scientists and policymakers. It locates migrants within social fields that combine several national territories rather than expecting them to move back and forth between two impermeable nation-states, and exchange one national identity for another” (Levitt 2004). We can explain this scientific approach by taking a concrete example from migrants’ cultural practices, i.e. food choices. On the national level, different gastronomies are defined in fixed terms, and their adoption by migrants is considered as a matter of identification, loyalty and integration. Thus, if migrants remain attached to the culinary habits of their country of origin, on the one hand they would state an indelible bond with their roots, and on the other hand, they would put their integration in the host country at risk (see for example Bastenier and Dassetto 1993; Scardella *et al.* 2003). Concretely, this polarization is not evident in migrants’ practices, since their culinary (and thus cultural) identity is defined through a combination of various elements coming from strictly defined gastronomies. Furthermore, their choices are not only a matter of cultural positioning, but also of economic and social positioning (see for example Kalcik 1984; Den Hartog 1995; Caplan *et al.* 1998; Harbottle 2004). Adopting a comprehensive approach, as well as a transnational (Levitt 2004) and multi-cultural lens while studying the cultural dynamics taking place in migratory contexts such as these, permits one, in more general terms, to go beyond a strict idea of nationalism: that is, accepting that the univocal correspondence between one nation and one culture does not work, and does not positively impact the integration process. What could be of help is the consideration that cultures are dynamic and that only an active interaction between them could have fruitful effects in the cultural but also social and political encounters between individuals, groups and states. It seems to us that this is what becomes apparent if we analyse migrants’ concrete cultural practices, including those associated with their country of origin, which will be described in the following part of this concept note.



## 4. Maintaining “national” culture abroad

Maintaining or expanding national culture abroad is an issue which goes beyond the questions of immigration and integration. Each migrant abroad is potentially a cultural representative of the culture(s) of the country of origin through his/her daily behaviour and cultural consumptions. Furthermore, countries of origin also pursue cultural goals abroad through various policies that will be addressed in this chapter: external cultural policy and cultural diaspora policy. Interestingly, culture performed by migrants and culture promoted by the country of origin do not necessarily coincide. They may be interlinked or even opposed within power dynamics, for example when some cultural aspects performed by migrants are not exactly the same as those which countries of origin want to show or promote, since they are more the result of combinations and negotiations than of an unquestioned adoption. In this section, we will analyse some of the actions implemented by migrants and by their countries of origin in order to perform their cultural capital abroad. Actions are multiple, diverse and can be deployed at different levels. Nevertheless, the section does not pretend to be exhaustive but rather explores some paths on the question of maintaining national culture abroad.

### 4.1 Performing culture

Culture is manifested through the behaviours of individuals, one of which is the use of the language. This cultural dimension is often thought of as a conflictual site, where the primary way of individuals' expression, which was learnt almost subconsciously, is questioned to make way for a new language, whose learning is instead the result of an intentional and more difficult process, involving motivation, access, skills and costs issues (Filion 2013). This process is presented and encouraged as inevitable by the integration policies of receiving countries. Nevertheless, migrants still use the language – or the languages<sup>6</sup> – of their country of origin in daily life, in particular at home within family interactions. While in the majority context other languages are mostly used and therefore characterize public interactions, the country of origin language is often associated with the domestic sphere of existence. This can also be the case for second or third generation migrants, for whom using the language of the country where their parents or grandparents were born, and which they know thanks to some holiday periods spent there, becomes a way to affirm one of their multiple belongings (Buitelaar 2007). Without being an obstacle to integration, mastering (or at least being familiar with) this language in addition to that of the country where they live, lets young second generation migrants dispose of a plurality of repertoires of shared practices (Julien 2010) that can be mobilized when useful for interpersonal exchanges. Furthermore, cultures can be multiple in the very same country of origin, where belongings can be defined at the national level but also at the regional one (for example in Morocco, the official languages are both Arabic and Tamazigh, corresponding to cultures that take various shape in different regional contexts). Countries of origin may be multi-cultural due to the existence of ethnic minorities; these countries are sites where internal migration occurs and they also constitute the destinations of international flows. Keeping in mind these dynamics, what we want to state here is that the use of one of the languages of the country of origin by migrants or their descendants, is not neutral in interactions; when it occurs it reaffirms closeness (even if not exclusively) to a given culture. Mostly in the case of first generation migrants, these exchanges can also appear outside the domestic walls: at the workplace (in particular when migrants work in the import/export domain or in diplomatic missions); in other kinds of public places, such as shops, leisure places, religious institutions, or in schools (particularly in areas or neighbourhoods with an important concentration of co-ethnics. This happens when migrants find themselves interacting with people who share the same origin for personal, work or residence reasons;<sup>7</sup> mastering the language of their country

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<sup>6</sup> We also mean dialects, since we take into consideration the linguistic codes of expression used by individuals, leaving aside the hierarchical official positioning of these codes.

<sup>7</sup> For example in segregated areas, where the language of their country of origin has become the most used by migrants, both in the private and public space.

of origin can constitute an asset to the development of their professional status or to taking an active position within a community that shares a common cultural belonging. This fact can rehabilitate certain foreign languages in migration contexts, challenging the hierarchy implicitly established among them, i.e. a social hierarchy structure (Filion 2013) which depends less on the number of speakers than on the original context of elocution and on the “space made for immigrants in each host country” (*ibid.*: 17). Not all bilingualism is considered as a resource, however, since the languages of some countries of origin are better regarded and are considered more profitable than others.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, we find that the possibility of undertaking verbal exchanges inside and outside the domestic walls in a plurality of languages inevitably has to be considered a positive condition of migrants, by which they extend their social encounters and thus assume an active role in the context in which they live.

A second type of behaviour that we can take into consideration is migrants’ consumption and use of cultural products and commodities associated with their country of origin; food, clothes, various objects used on an everyday basis (dishes, carpets, cleaning items, bedding, napery, body products etc.), and also artistic products (music, movies, books, newspapers) contribute to defining their specific image and to displaying it, an identity which is designed both for the self and for others. The body plays a central role in this definition, since it constitutes the means through which these cultural products can be assimilated and become part of the self (which will be then shown to others). This kind of consumption, which states a belonging, can be also be read as a response to a sort of “fear of contamination” (Fischler 1979), in particular in the case of food. In spite of being omnivores, human beings do not eat everything which could potentially be comestible; instead they make choices complying with certain cultural norms. We can extend this reasoning to the “consumption” of other cultural products mentioned earlier in this paragraph, in order to highlight the fact that these behaviours are not neutral, they communicate a positioning which is both individual and collective. This is also the case in the production of cultural products in the country of destination, some of which mostly target the diaspora by referring to the culture of migrants’ country of origin. Within the migration context, this production proves a subaltern activism, often combining and negotiating different cultural codes and thus constituting, even in this case, possible ways for migrants to participate in the public sphere. Cultures interact between them thanks to migrants’ actions and they translate into practices which are situational, and are necessarily connected to the context in which they are produced. For example migrants can develop some entrepreneurial activities on the basis of commodities circulation, such as the import and distribution of products coming from their country of origin. Under the category of “ethnic” shops, a variety of businesses are established, targeting the diaspora – but not exclusively; a growing segment of the mainstream population resorts to these shops (or restaurants) in search of some kind of exotic experience (Regnier 2005; Hassoun and Raulin 1995).

While considering these examples and following Sayad, who spoke of an “immigrant culture” that is perceived through clothes, language, gesture, body hexis, food practices, religious practices, social system relations of migrants (Sayad 2014: 101), we reaffirm that migrants’ cultures are also related to “the condition of immigrant”, often a deprived condition in which the manifestation of the culture of the country of origin was not necessarily valued and was even regarded with hostility because it was misunderstood (*ibid.*: 104). The culture of migrants’ country of origin often acts as a dominated culture toward a dominating culture, due to historical heritage as well as the consequent contemporary discourses mentioned above, but also because the country of origin occupies a “minority” position in relation to a “majority” one. Furthermore, the cultures of migrants’ country of origin also seek to take relational positions to each other, competing as migrants try to secure a proper status within society. By occupying a position that is globally recognized (valued or not) as they are spread worldwide through individuals’ mobility, such cultures can become the instrument of an active positioning of

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<sup>8</sup> We must point out that English in Europe is a foreign language which, as the mother tongue of some migrants – those coming from the North or the West – constitutes a more recognized asset than, for example, Arabic or other languages.

migrants toward each other and within the mainstream society. Culture can also be the stake of struggles (Sayad 2014: 105): multiple diverging interests (*ibid.*, see note 62) can be reaffirmed through cultural practices, sometimes through an additional essentialization of some aspects, that are then valued in order to put forward the dominating one (*ibid.*: 107) in order to state a difference that can be functional to participation. When migrants occupy the lowest position in society (low-paid and dirty and dangerous jobs) it is often the case that their culture is associated with a low culture. The link between class belonging and culture consumption has been underlined (Bourdieu 1979) and this leads us to consider that class also has an influence on cultural productions. The social downgrading that migrants in many cases experience living in the receiving country may have an impact on the links they keep with the country of origin and in particular, on those directly concerning culture. As we have mentioned above, maintaining, mobilizing and displaying a strong cultural identity helps migrants to face the destabilization caused by migration, which is also related to a process of class repositioning. This fact could be of even more use if destination countries recognize that practices of cultural diversity have a certain value, even a folkloric and quite superficial one. In fact such valorisation could constitute the pretext for some interactions between migrants and non-migrants to take place, thus exchanging deeper meanings that those which may have originally engendered these encounters. This dynamic takes on a greater importance if we think about the fact that access to culture, meant as *cultura animi* and including the consumption of various art products made by the mainstream society, is often not equally granted to individuals belonging to all social classes. The problem of access to the majority culture can be linked to a lack of language knowledge but also to a lack of resources (lack of information and knowledge, lack of education, and lack of social networks) and to high costs. The collective culture attributed to the “diversity” is often made more accessible not only through migrants’ daily performance of the practices linked to their country of origin (language, dress codes, food preparation, religious practices etc.), but also through the promotion of certain cultural activities (related to art products such as songs, theatre plays, music works, paintings etc.) whose access is often simpler and more affordable compared to the events of the mainstream society. This process, which takes place in globalized contexts, where the cultural flows are part of everyday life, sees the country of origin exploiting a window of opportunity to provide its own cultural productions (in particular through the media and television) which migrants then resort to.

## 4.2 Cultural diaspora policies

The private or public performance of the culture of migrants’ country of origin takes place within a framework of policies which necessarily influence both the perception and the use of such a culture. Gamlen (2008) identified two mechanisms in diaspora policies: “diaspora building” and “diaspora integration”. The first one is a process of recognition by sending countries of the diaspora that has been put in place, which goes along with cultivating the diaspora’s identity. Thus, in order to build their diaspora, countries of origin celebrate national holidays abroad, honor emigrants with awards, provide national language and history education, etc.; in order to recognize the diaspora, they commission studies, expand their consular network, maintain a diaspora program, etc. (Gamlen 2006; 2008). A set of policies guaranteeing migrants’ visibility and participation in the country where they live is often accompanied by the official identification of specific belongings. As we have already seen above, culture constitutes an important tool within these processes: “Maintaining national culture abroad is one way of cultivating diasporic identity” (Gamlen 2008: 843). Indeed, in order to cultivate the diaspora identity, countries of origin may deploy different types of actions which develop in the cultural domain. For example, a crucial concern is the diffusion of knowledge concerning countries of origin, which can be realized by providing national language and history education in the receiving contexts through the actions of institutions or associations. In addition, the implication of migrants in the celebration of national, religious or other kinds of culturally significant events, can constitute a means of making migrants part of a transnational community extending beyond state borders. This implication is also possible today thanks to the extension of media coverage, a fact which lets migrants’ groups rely on common cultural backgrounds in spite of local reinterpretations which

inevitably occur. This is the case with television which, as Abu-Lughod points out, permits one to witness the interaction between globalism and localism in cultural processes: “What is critical is that television’s meanings are produced somewhere – for most viewers, somewhere else – and consumed locally in a variety of localities. Even if it ultimately helps create something of a ‘national habitus’, or hints of a transnational habitus, television is most interesting because of the way it provides material which is then inserted into, interpreted with, and mixed up with local but themselves socially differentiated knowledges, discourses, and meaning systems” (Abu-Lughod 1997: 122-123) For example, the *China Radio International* (since 1941) broadcasts in sixty-one languages and four Chinese dialects including Mandarin, Cantonese and five other Chinese minority languages including Uighur (Liu and Du 2014). In some cases, the state television and radio of the countries of origin cooperate with partners abroad (e.g. cooperation between Belarus State television and radio with partners from twenty-three countries). Since the end of the 1960s, Turkish newspapers such as *Hürriyet* started publishing in Europe for the Turkish diaspora (Karci Korfali 2014). There are private, public and community-based media available for emigrants abroad. Private Turkish TV channels have established European channels such as *Show Turk*, *Turkmax* or *ATV Europe*. They broadcast abroad in the Turkish language. *Globo*, the largest private media conglomerate in Brazil, has an international version of its TV network available in several countries (Moulin Aguiar 2014). Through these media, emigrants have access to information in the language of their country of origin and in some cases, in many others; *All India Radio* broadcasts in Arabic, Baluchi, Burmese, Chinese, Dari, French, Indonesian, Persian, Pashtu, Russian, Sinhala, Swahili, Thai, Tibetan and English (Thapan 2014: 10). Emigrants have access to a wide range of information related to their home country, and thus experience the feeling of participating in its story.

The development of media coverage is part of nation-building policies which acquire a symbolic dimension (Gamlen 2006), given that they contribute to the creation of the “imagined communities” mentioned above. The second mechanism identified by Gamlen (2008) is diaspora integration that consists of integrating migrants into homeland politics by extending their rights abroad and in the origin country, such as the right to retain citizenship or to obtain pre-departure services. States of origin attempt to extract obligations from migrants such as facilitating remittances, taxing expatriates, etc. (*ibid.*: 846). Moreover, these policies have a pragmatic value; they impact migrants’ lives in their country of destination, which leads to a third mechanism: “diaspora empowerment” (Gsir 2014a: 12). This expression describes a process that can help migrants assume an active position in their country of destination through the mobilization of cultural specificities. Empowering migrants can help them to fully participate in their new country of residence and become an active and recognized part of the society. Cultivating diaspora identities is important within this empowerment process because it witnesses a potential reorganization of the political positions of cultures. The question of rediscovering identity in post-colonial societies has been pointed out as crucial (Hall 1990) not only with respect to the definition of migrants’ selves – they and their descendants may be keen to recreate cultural links with the country of origin or discover their cultural roots for the reasons seen above – but also in order to recognize diversity. Multi-cultural contexts are governed by diverse instruments – often criticised both by the “majority” and “minority” communities – that are the response to a claim to recognize differences. If we agree that such instruments can often be the means of perpetuating the exclusion of migrants from the social and political life of the receiving countries (Grillo and Pratt 2002; Salih 2003), we also recognize that in contemporary urban spaces, these instruments can be the starting point of a real participation of migrants. By cultivating diaspora identity, countries of origin exploit the over-determined spaces left by receiving countries for migrants’ expression and participation – those spaces which are defined according to a specifically cultural character – in which they let diversity be visible and constitute the pretext for becoming active actors. Diaspora policies aim to strengthen this identity, sometimes by overcoming internal differences; for example in the case of Morocco, activities and messages targeting Moroccan migrants mainly refer to an undistinguished national belonging instead of regional or linguistic affinities. In other cases, on the contrary, this internal diversification inhibits a precise definition of a national identity and thus prevents governments from putting cultural diaspora policies in place. This is the case in Cameroon, a state

described in the INTERACT country report as a “[...] patch-work of 250 different ethnic groups – the Muslim North and Christian South, *Anglophones* and *Francophones*, with 7 or 8 main tribal groups that shape the 10 regions of the country. Each tribal group is again fragmented into semi-autonomous tribes, each with its own distinct culture, such as a dialect for communication. As such, there is no major or dominant culture which is typically recognized as ‘Cameroonian’, that can serve as a rallying point, or as an umbrella organization and a canopy for the diaspora” (Che Suh 2014).

In general terms we can state that countries of origin are keen to promote their culture abroad. They organize national or religious celebrations, cultural events or encounters including exhibitions, various artistic performances, seminars and discussion (e.g. in 2013, the Germany China Tibetan Culture Week was a cultural event co-organized by Germany and China in Berlin and Munich). Cultural actions can directly target the diaspora and be named cultural diaspora policies. They can also be oriented to a wider audience and consist of external cultural policy, also called cultural diplomacy. “Cultural Diplomacy may best be described as a course of actions, which are based on and utilize the exchange of ideas, values, traditions and other aspects of culture or identity, whether to strengthen relationships, enhance socio-cultural cooperation or promote national interests; Cultural diplomacy can be practiced by either the public sector, private sector or civil society”<sup>9</sup>. *Colcultura*, the official Colombian Cultural agency, is in charge of promoting Colombian culture. “*Colcultura* [...] has traditionally sponsored high-culture events in New York (for example, concerts, national classic and folkloric ballet performances, and art exhibitions by acclaimed Colombian artists), but very few in Los Angeles. These cultural events are aimed at improving the national image abroad and, thus, are explicitly directed at a US audience” (Guarnizo, Sanchez, and Roach 1999).

These cultural actions may overlap and in both cases contribute to the cultivation of cultural identity in the diaspora. As we will see below in the case of cultural centres spread abroad by some countries of origin, the objectives can vary and be multiple, thus combining cultural diaspora policy and cultural diplomacy aims. Gamlen (2008) identified specific instruments used by countries of origin in their cultural diaspora policies or in their attempts to defend emigrants’ cultural rights. They consist of establishing schools, cultural centres abroad, distributing or broadcasting national television abroad, printing newspapers abroad, developing “state-sponsored web portals for expatriates,” and also creating migrant associations (Gamlen 2008: 843). Most migrants’ associations initiated or merely supported by their country of origin, generally offer a cultural agenda, even though such organizations are very diverse (ethnic, cultural, regional, social, professional, religious, charitable and sports organizations) (Brettell 2005). In any case, they constitute a place for gathering and creating links with migrants coming from the same country of origin and promoting the culture and language of the home country either 1) in a direct way, by organizing cultural events or language classes; or 2) indirectly through other kinds of activities which engage various cultural practices (food preparation, for example) in an encounter with the mainstream society. Migrants’ organizations are an important place for affirming attachment to their country of origin (Brettell 2005) in public space.

In the countries of origin, the ministries in charge of culture are usually those promoting the national culture abroad (e.g. the Bolivian Ministry of Culture; the Ghanaian Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts). This can be also the task of the ministry in charge of education; the Thai Ministry of Education, for example, has to insure the right of every Thai to learn throughout his life (Boonyopakorn 2014: 12); the Iranian Ministry of Education provides education to around 100 Iranian schools abroad (Moghadam 2014: 3). The Indian system of central government schools which depend on the Ministry of Human Resource Development has two Indian schools in Nepal and Russia (Thapan 2014: 10). These ministries of culture and education may participate actively in cultural diaspora policy. Furthermore, diaspora policies are generally handled by the ministries of foreign affairs within a specific department, such as the Division for Overseas Koreans, which may also support actions related to culture. The Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organizes diplomatic

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/index.php?en\\_culturaldiplomacy](http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/index.php?en_culturaldiplomacy) [Accessed 19 January 2015].

missions to provide “assistance in fostering the diaspora’s national and cultural identity, education and information in Serbian” and tries to intensify contacts and promote economic and cultural ties (Petronisević 2014: 10). The Ministry of Habbous and Islamic Affairs in Morocco is in charge of training and sending imams abroad (Ait Madani 2014). However, countries of origin have also set up specific institutions in charge of diaspora policies (Desiderio 2014). This is the case of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, which aims to develop the guidelines of the Overseas Chinese Affairs policy in areas such as exposing Chinese emigrants to Chinese heritage and culture (Liu and Du 2014: 10). Some of the main tasks are thus “the celebration of Chinese tradition and culture; putting effort into establishing a friendly image and reputation; and the vigorous promotion of Chinese language education” (*ibid.*). Cultural diaspora policies may be also developed and implemented through the collaboration of several authorities. In China, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance implement a measure to allow children from the Chinese diaspora to access the national education system in China (*ibid.*). The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities focuses on helping students abroad to continue their education in Turkey and to foster ties with Turkey even after the completion of their studies (Yurtnaç 2012: 9).

Other institutions also serve to promote the cultural interests of the country of origin, such as schools established abroad which provide the national curriculum, the media as explained above, associations and NGOs. In India, several religious and cultural organizations such as the *International Sikh Youth Federation*, the *International Society for Krishna Consciousness* and the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* are engaged in reaching out to the Indian diaspora and seeking to promote cultural values (Thapan 2014: 11). Whether organizations have specific cultural objectives, such as language-based organizations (e.g. *World Tamil Conference*), or do not, such as the *Europe India Chamber of Commerce*, they “offer socio-cultural avenues of interacting and associating with the country of origin” (*ibid.*). The actors involved in cultural promotion abroad are not all state-actors; they can be semi-governmental and also private trusts and foundations. The *Hassan II Foundation for Moroccans Residing Abroad* is in charge of the programme *The Teaching of Arabic Language and Moroccan Culture*, which provides Arabic classes in several European countries, France in particular.<sup>10</sup> The Overseas Koreans Foundation Network, established by the *Overseas Korean Committee* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in 1997, favours visits to Korea and promotes Korean culture and language for Overseas Koreans and their descendants (Hong 2014: 11). The *Global Indian Foundation* has established schools with the Indian national curriculum outside of India, for example in Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, etc. (Thapan 2014: 10).

As mentioned above, through these institutions, countries of origin develop different kinds of actions to promote their cultures toward emigrants in the receiving countries. The box below highlights some examples of these cultural actions abroad.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.fh2mre.ma/promotion-culturelle/enseignement/presentation.html> [Accessed 4 February 2015].

### Cultural actions of countries of origin

**Argentina:** Programme to favour scientific exchanges between Argentine scholars abroad and Argentine scholars in Argentina (García 2014).

**Belarus:** State Programme for cooperation with Belarusians living abroad for 2013-2015: some assistance with national and culture issues such as the provision of Belarusian literature, school textbooks, newspapers and magazines, organizing lectures with Belarusian scientists and cultural events abroad (Yeliseyeu 2014).

**Bolivia:** Distance senior education programs promoted by the Plurinational Alternative Education Center (Ministry of Education) (Hinojos Gordonava and de la Torre Ávila 2014).

**Ghana:** The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts organize the Emancipation Day celebration (Awumbila and Teye 2014).

**India:** The Indian Council for Cultural Relations sponsors visits by Indian artists to other countries (e.g. France) and facilitates the exchange of students in the field of culture and art.

**Thailand:** Cooperation between Thai associations and the Thai embassy in big cities like Berlin, London or Paris to organize important events such as the Nation Day ceremony/ King's Birthday (5 December), and Thai New Year (Songkran Festival, 13 April). Other ceremonies for important Buddhist holy days are held at Thai pagodas or Buddhist centres (Boonyopakorn 2014).

**Tunisia:** Arabic classes abroad funded by Tunisian government funds and schools with Tunisian curriculum but only in Gulf countries such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia (Pouessel 2014).

In order to sustain and maintain cultural activities abroad, the countries of origin establish specific institutions which do not always solely target the diaspora. These institutions are often called cultural centres or institutes and are presented in the next section.

### 4.3 Cultural centres abroad

Until the 2000s, cultural centres abroad have been established by former colonial countries or important Western countries (Paschalidis 2009: 285). The historical perspective of Paschalidis on cultural institutions spread abroad mainly by France, Britain, Germany and Italy offers insight to better understand the various interests that some states have in promoting their culture abroad and fostering interactions with their diaspora. Paschalidis delineated four different phases in the history of this external cultural policy: “cultural nationalism”, “cultural propaganda”, “cultural diplomacy” and “cultural capitalism”.

The first phase extends from the 1870s until the beginning of World War I (Paschalidis 2009). When European countries established cultural institutions such as the Goethe Institutes or Dante Alighieri institutes, they aimed to target Germans and Italians abroad (Paschalidis 2009: 277). “By providing support to schools, libraries and students, the aim of these organisations was to preserve the language and cultural identity of ethnic Germans and Italians who lived outside the borders of their respective nation states. Far from being the cultural tools of European expansionism aiming to solidify colonial empires, these organisations were instead the manifestations and instruments of that expansive imaginary community which Meinecke, in 1907, called ‘the cultural nation’ (*Kulturnation*): a collectivity whose outreach extended beyond the borders of the political nation (*Staatsnation*)” (Paschalidis 2009: 278). Therefore, other cultural centres such as French Institutes/Alliance Française and Mission Laïque, Oeuvre des Ecoles de l’Orient, aimed to propagate the French language and culture in the colonies and beyond (Paschalidis 2009: 278). The development of these institutions was thus linked to “nationalists’ aspirations and geopolitical rivalries” (*ibid.*: 279). In the second phase, lasting until the end of World War II, European countries such as France target a broader public, and in particular foreign populations such as Americans to rally them to their cause. Actions are also undertaken to promote and export French art (*ibid.*: 280). Countries such Germany and Italy “subsumed most of [their] cultural communication abroad to the interests of political propaganda”

(*ibid.*: 281). The third phase consists of “cultural diplomacy” from 1945 until 1989. In this Cold War period, the politicisation of culture raised both US and USSR rival camps, which both developed a number of cultural centres abroad (*ibid.*: 282). This was also a period characterized by the independence of European colonies; former-colonial countries, however, tried to preserve their economic and cultural ties (*ibid.*). Furthermore another “cultural imperialism” emerged from the US toward Europe with the spread of the English language and American popular culture (*ibid.*). Finally, the phase beginning after the Cold War period onwards is qualified as “cultural capitalism” with the commercialization of all kinds of cultural productions and experiences (Rifkin 2000 quoted by Paschalidis 2009: 285). The situation is more complex than before with the emergence of new cultural institutes from countries like China, with the Confucius institutes contributing to the learning of Chinese language since 2004 (see below). It foreshadows “a new system of international and intercultural relations” (Paschalidis 2009: 283).

Finally, countries of origin when establishing cultural institutes or centres abroad may pursue various and heterogeneous goals: expanding the use of their language (British Council, Goethe Institute, French Institute, Instituto Cervantes by Spain or Instituto Camoes by Portugal), promoting their international image (India, China, Japan), renewing ties with their ex-dominions (Austria and Portugal), defending their economic and political agenda (Turkey, Iran, Israel), cultivating regional interest (Visegrad countries) and last but not least, retaining links with their diasporas (Mexico and Poland) (Paschalidis 2009: 285).

The countries of origin considered within the INTERACT project have established cultural centres abroad and in particular in the countries of destination mainly reached by their emigrants.<sup>11</sup> Cultural centres can be considered a locus abroad of the cultures of the country of origin. In contrast with embassies and consulates, they are more accessible on a regular basis. On the one hand, they generally offer language classes. Even though these classes are open to a public larger than the diaspora, they can contribute to maintaining links with migrants’ country of origin by offering them the opportunity, particularly for migrants’ descendants, to learn the language of the country of origin of their parents. On the other hand, the cultural centres are spaces of cultural encounters. They may offer a cultural programme such as exhibitions, performances and lectures that give migrants the opportunity – even though a wider public is targeted – to be in contact with cultural products and expressions developed in their country of origin. Furthermore, the cultural centres can be considered special places for intercultural encounters because, as said above, the public can be mixed. Migrants as representatives (or at least as holders of the culture at stake) and members of the mainstream society (of the majority culture or of other cultures) meet in a context in which the cultural relations of domination may be inverted.

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<sup>11</sup> The INTERACT Project focuses on migrants from the 55 third-countries of origin which have each more than 100,000 emigrants in the EU -28: Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, India, Albania, Ukraine, Russia, China, Pakistan, Ecuador, United States, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tunisia, Brazil, Colombia, Philippines, Iraq, Bangladesh, Peru, Vietnam, Argentina, South Africa, Nigeria, Serbia, Iran, Sri Lanka, Moldova, Senegal, Bolivia, Suriname, Egypt, Ghana, Venezuela, Somalia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Thailand, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Canada, Australia, Angola, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, DR Congo, Kenya, Belarus, Zimbabwe, Lebanon, Chile, Cuba, Japan, Madagascar, Syria, South Korea, Cameroon.



### Cultural Centres set abroad by countries of origin

Since 2004, the Chinese government has been setting up **Confucius Institutes** overseas in order to promote Chinese language and culture. By 2012, there were 400 Confucius Institutes and over 500 Confucius classrooms (primary and secondary schools) established across 108 countries. In Europe, there are 149 Confucius Institutes and 153 Confucius classrooms. They are supported by the Office of Chinese Language Council international/Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban), established under the Ministry of Education (Liu and Du 2014).

The **King Sejong Institutes** (under the South-Korean Ministry of Sport and Tourism) promote the teaching of Korean and Korean culture abroad. Twenty-three Korean institutes are present in Europe. They provide general services that address all foreign nationals abroad and do not specifically target Koreans abroad (Hong, 2014).

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations has established 38 **Indian Cultural Centres** in different parts of the world (in Europe: the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom) in order to establish, revive and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries. The Indian Cultural Centres organize and support different kinds of cultural activities.<sup>12</sup>

**Brazilian Cultural Centres** are set up in over 50 countries and run continued courses of Portuguese and cultural activities such as readerships and exhibitions. They are members of the Brazilian Network of Teaching Abroad – REBex (*Rede Brasileira de Ensino no Exterior*). This network, managed by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also includes individuals at the Ministry of Education who are usually professors at foreign universities and who are knowledgeable in Portuguese and Brazilian literature and culture (Moulin Aguiar 2014).

The Russian Collaboration (*Rossotrudnichestvo*) which is the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation established 52 **Russian Centres for Science and Culture** in 46 countries, including the EU. They aim to promote Russian language and culture abroad (Tkach 2014).

Aside from their cultural objectives which have already been explained above, the cultural centres may also pursue some different political goals. Paschalidis (2009) has already underlined the broad political objectives pursued by external cultural policies, in particular (but not only) in the context of international relations. During the 1960s and beyond, emigration countries such Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia set up specific organisations in the European immigration countries to target emigrants. Even though they were linked to the consulates, these organizations were presented as having non-political and socio-cultural goals. The so-called *Amicales* organized cultural activities for emigrants but in reality aimed to control emigrants and to frame their political activities, including their political mobilization in the receiving countries (Escafré-Dublet 2012). Here, the question mainly concerns the ways in which cultural actions related to the diaspora can have a political impact, since the promoted cultures are the national ones and are related to a unified image of the nation-state. Celebrating socio-cultural important days abroad but also providing cultural productions to the diaspora may encourage emigrants to identify at the cultural level but also at the national and political level. For instance, in the 1960s, through the *Amicales* network in France, the Algerian government circulated cultural products (such as songs) valorising emigration and coming together to support the nationalist project (Escafré-Dublet 2012: 147). Furthermore, cultural actions then engage a political dimension, because in some ways they give an opportunity to the governments of migrants' countries of origin to manifest in the receiving countries and to establish a dialogue with local institutions by means other than macro policies: for example, through bilateral agreements. Through the activities of cultural centres, some claims can be made concerning the recognition of migrants' role in the receiving society, in order to guarantee them the possibility of continuing to perform some of the cultural aspects linked to their country of origin, thereby giving it the opportunity to be visible. As an example, we can think about

<sup>12</sup> <http://iccr.gov.in/> [Accessed 6 February 2015].

the “Islamic Cultural Centres” spread throughout Europe and often economically supported by sending countries. The right to practice Muslim religious belonging is assured thanks to some associations which define (or are obliged to define) themselves as cultural and which promote various activities falling within this domain. Cultural actions can also have a political effect on the diaspora, reinforcing the cultural and national identity.

## 5. Conclusion

The contemporary world is characterized by the hypermobility (Sassen 2002) of cultures through migration and the virtual or material circulation of culturally different networks of meanings (Appadurai 1986) which no longer univocally refer to a defined territorial space. The de-territorialisation of cultures goes along with their re-territorialisation (Inda and Rosaldo 2001); this means that cultures travel the globe – again proving an inherent and interrelated dynamism – and thus lead to a relocation of cultural practices in different spatial contexts. The most evident way in which this process occurs is through migration: migrants are the central protagonists of cultural dynamics (Bhabha 1994). Today’s urban contexts are characterized by the performance of a plurality of cultural belongings. This is the framework in which the INTERACT research project developed as well. However, while studying the cultural behaviours of individuals living in these contexts and declaring – or attributing them to – a different belonging, we have to keep in mind that multi-cultural societies are not exempt from inequalities, or at least different social positionings of “cultures”. Some cultures hold the power of naming other cultures, which in their turn only have the role of being nominated (Amselle 1990). This is a crucial aspect to consider in the analysis of the link between migrants and the culture associated with their country of origin – in particular with respect to actions undertaken to perform or promote the latter. This positioning has to be articulated to others such as a socio-economic one. Migrants may occupy a weak or deprived socio-economic position in the new society of residence. On top of this, they may experience a social downgrade in comparison to the social position they had in the society of origin. Moreover, migrants do not constitute a homogeneous social group. Some migrants in Europe come from Western parts of the world and see their culture of origin valorised in the receiving country.

In this paper we have tried to describe the concrete “use” of the culture of origin through some examples, from international diaspora policies to the actions of cultural centres and the habits of individuals. We have observed a variety of cultural institutions and actions promoted by the countries of origin. In some cases, cultural actions oriented to the diaspora and external cultural policies implemented in cultural centres may overlap. They can also contribute indirectly to socio-cultural integration by creating opportunities for encounters and interactions between emigrants and the majority society in spaces where migrants are empowered. As a result of this analysis, we are able to state that the culture of origin constitutes a means of participating in the social life of the migration context, taking an active position and being visible.

This participation occurs in contexts characterized by what Martiniello defines as a “light multi-culturalism”, that is to say, that « [...] tension between the willingness to respect or encourage cultural diversity and the desire to control it so that it does not harm social and political cohesion [...] » (Martiniello 2003: 132). This approach goes with a kind of superficial management of diversity, in the sense that cultural diversity is accepted without political implication. Light multi-culturalism and the promotion of cultural diversity can therefore co-exist with integration policies with assimilationist logic, which are designed to put high pressure on migrants to take responsibility for learning the national language and complying with mainstream cultural norms. When undeclared but rather strong assimilationist trend is considered, one can fear a lack of cultural allegiance by migrants whose culture is actively and cultivated by the countries of origin.

Multi-cultural urban spaces are the setting for such contradictions, which can take, for example, the form of the commercialisation of the cultural products of the “diversity”. These products offer a

shelter to migrants, as we have already showed, but they also respond to “[...] a quest for the ‘exotic’ for an urban population who has difficulty waiting for vacation time to travel” (*ibid.*: 129-130). As Gupta and Ferguson (1992) point out, “‘multi-culturalism’ is both a feeble acknowledgment of the fact that cultures have lost their moorings in definite places and an attempt to subsume this plurality of cultures within the framework of a national identity” (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 7). Migrants act in this environment and find spaces to affirm proper belonging through cultural practices.

We questioned the idea of cultural identity by showing the dynamism which characterizes cultures and also the imaginative character of communities. Nevertheless, as we noted in the introduction of this paper, the pragmatic scope of cultural belonging can be witnessed while studying migrants’ practices and the national and political frameworks within which they perform. For this reason, we find it interesting to resort to the notion of “ethnicity” to actually overcome this contradiction between the epistemological fading of culture on the one hand and its concrete relevance in human life on the other.<sup>13</sup> Aware of the risks engendered by the use of this concept, we essentially mean here that any supposed cultural identity not only has to be considered in dynamic terms but also, and in particular, in its interaction with others (Poutignat and Streiff- Fenart 2005). The notion of ethnicity respects this consideration; it is employed here to describe the definition of collective belonging which arises from certain power relations between groups that share mostly common interests (Fabietti 1995: 16). What Fabietti describes as an “ethnic phenomenology” (*ibid.*) takes into consideration the ways in which a certain ethnicity shapes in front of others. Ethnicity has a constructed nature (see Amselle 1987), since it takes shape through an intentional emphasis on certain characteristics which permit one to declare a certain belonging. This process reveals the political role of ethnicity (see Comaroff and Comaroff 2009) performing at various levels: the micro level of individuals’ everyday lives, the meso level of groups’ activities, and the macro level of national and international policies. The promotion of the culture of migrants’ country of origin, exerted through concrete actions by individuals, groups and associations, or nations, consists of a mobilization of ethnicity with social and political aims (Blommaert and Martiniello 1996). This guarantees migrants participation within the local social space of receiving countries, thus proving an active role for the culture of their country of origin (through the different practices and policies put in place) in the integration process which concerns them.

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<sup>13</sup> In this regard, see Petit and Rubbers (2013).

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