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# COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE at work

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## An autoethnographic inquiry into the emergence of new forms and ways of organizing

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### Abstract

This paper employs analytic autoethnography within a previous life in an organization and within social science to explore the emergence of new forms and ways of organizing in a new venture that was launched as a branch in an emerging market by an international non-for-profit organization. It responds to extant scarcity of knowledge about internal organization of entrepreneurial ventures as most of research about internal organization of firms comes from the research on large established organizations. In the early stage of new venture emergence, entrepreneurs shall be aware of the interplay between: understanding the new venture socio-politically and cognitively through unsophisticated uncertainty; timing of acquiring socio-political and cognitive legitimacy through legitimation temporalizing; shared and non-shared understanding of the value (problem) of the new venture through disguised and true value theorizing; dependent and independent organization through diversifying funding sources; and headquarters and branch visions and missions through dominant logic crisis.

### Keywords

Autoethnography, Legitimation, Social entrepreneurship, International new venture, Substantive and dynamic capabilities, Dominant logic, Emerging economy, Moldova

### 1 Introduction

This paper employs analytic autoethnography within a previous life in an organization and within social science (Anderson, 2006; Doloriert & Sambrook, 2010; Lofland, 1995; Sambrook & Herrmann, 2018; Snow et al., 2003) to

explore the emergence of new forms and ways of organizing within new ventures entering emerging, developing markets. It studies critical incidents that shape the emergence of new forms and ways of organizing in a new venture—hereafter known as Bridge-Moldova—that was launched as a branch in an emerging market by an international non-profit organization, hereafter known as Bridge-London. It responds to extant scarcity of knowledge about the internal organization of entrepreneurial ventures as most of research about internal organization of firms comes from large established organizations (Burton et al., 2019).

The paper speaks to young entrepreneurs of new, small, and international ventures. When such ventures enter foreign markets, especially quite early in their life (e.g., right at or immediately after their inception), they face a set of liabilities they ought to mitigate to gain legitimacy, i.e., become accepted, taken-for-granted by key stakeholders or incumbents in that market. These liabilities are: smallness (Aldrich & Auster, 1986), when additional costs a small firm must incur over a large one; newness (Stinchcombe, 1965), when new types of organizations, roles, norms and values are created in an industry dominated by incumbents, and foreignness (Hymer, 1960; Zaheer, 1995), when internationalizing organizations incur additional costs in international markets compared to local firms. To mitigate these liabilities and eventually gain legitimacy, these young international ventures need to develop a set of substantive and dynamic capabilities to support entrepreneurs' efforts to design and manage new and/or adopting existing forms and ways of organizing in a foreign target market.

Without understanding: (i) the extent and the potential impact of these liabilities on the survivability of such (international) new ventures; (ii) how to acquire substantive and dynamic capabilities to design and organize an (international) new venture; and (iii) how to gain legitimacy in a foreign target market, these new ventures face a very high likelihood of failure or market exit. To mitigate such risks and liabilities, the paper underscores a series of practical, managerial implications.

## 2 Literature Review

Having the data situated within the personal experience of the researcher, sensemaking (Atkinson et al., 2003; Gantz, 2000; Levi-Strauss, 1966) and storytelling (Boje, 2018; Polletta et al., 2011), analytic autoethnography allows the researcher to address concurrently several theoretical debates at multiple levels of inquiry (Laslett, 1999), aiming to enhance theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena (Anderson, 2006; Snow et al., 2003). Theoretically, the paper is grounded within dynamic capability and legitimation theories of the firm.

Through the lenses of dynamic capability theory (Teece, 2007; Winter, 2003; Zahra et al., 2006), the paper investigates (1) how substantive capabilities (new venture's ability to solve a problem or produce a desired output), and dynamic capabilities (new venture's ability to change and reconfigure substantive capabilities, were acquired by Bridge-Moldova); and (2) how these capabilities shaped and supported entrepreneurs' efforts to design and manage new and/or adopting existing forms and ways of organizing in a foreign target market. A general consensus emerges that "...the concept of dynamic capabilities is insufficiently underpinned by empirical data" (Easterby-Smith & Prieto, 2008, p. 237) and "much remains to be learned about the underlying mechanisms, processes and intermediate outcomes associated with dynamic capabilities" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2009, p. S3). This paper aims to contribute to this endeavour.

Through the lenses of legitimation theory (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Johnson et al., 2006; Suddaby et al., 2017; Turcan, 2018), the paper explores (1) how Bridge-Moldova acquired cognitive legitimacy (knowledge about the new form of organizing and new activity and what is needed to succeed in a respective sector), and socio-political legitimacy (value placed on the new form of organizing and new activity by its multiple stakeholders); and (2) what legitimation strategies Bridge-Moldova developed and adopted to legitimate its new forms and ways of organizing in the eyes of its multiple stakeholders. Although the research on legitimation of international new ventures is emerging, it has yet to form a central line of inquiry in the context of such entrepreneurial ventures (Cavusgil & Knight, 2015; Turcan & Fraser, 2016). This paper aims to contribute to this development.

Legitimation typology (Figure 1) is employed to explore the role of substantive and dynamic capabilities in the emergence of new ventures, acquisition of legitimacy and adoption of respective legitimation strategies. Bridge-Moldova is positioned within quadrant II. In this quadrant, (international) new ventures' main concern is to 'fit-in' or 'follow-the-rules', bridging diverse stakeholders and theorizing new forms and practices (Delmestri & Wezel, 2011; Everitt & Levinson, 2016; Goldberg et al., 2003; Human & Provan, 2000; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). In their efforts to 'fit-in', new ventures aim to acquire internal and external legitimacy to reach a legitimacy threshold or become more of a taken-for-granted practice. For a new venture or new form or activity to reach a legitimacy threshold, it has to be theorized (Drori et al., 2009; Navis & Glynn, 2010; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Theorizing a new form or way of organizing is about understanding and specifying a problem, framing and justifying it by invoking professional values. It is an act that requires sustained repetition and iteration to elicit a shared understanding of the new form or activity (Greenwood et al., 2002). A number of legitimation strategies may be available to new ventures (Gehman & Soubliere,

2017; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001; Turcan et al., 2012; Zhao et al., 2013, 2017): developing institutional vocabularies; bridging diverse stakeholders; theorization of new practices (framing problems and justifying new practices and political negotiations) and change; and the institutionalization of new practices (by attaching them to preexisting organizational routines and reaffirming their alignment with stakeholder values on an ongoing basis).

**Figure 1: Legitimation typology**

		State of industry	
		New	Established
State of venture	New	I  <b>Crossing the Gulf</b>	II  <b>Fitting In</b>
	Established	IV  <b>Building Capacity</b>	III  <b>Maintaining Status Quo</b>

*Legend: Any venture (organization) can be located somewhere in the four-cell grid shown in Figure 1, based on two simple choices: (i) is the venture new or established and (ii) does the venture operate in a new or established industry? Quadrant I is the boiler-house of economic innovation, where new ventures are set up to introduce new industries to the economy. It is characterized by uncertain decision-making settings and a high degree of newness, the major concern being: how does one cross the gulf between no industry and an embryonic industry? In quadrant II, while the new venture or organization itself has to be innovated, the sector or industry in which it operates does not. It is about legitimation of new ventures and new organizational forms and ways of organizing in an environment that is established, and characterized by risk decision-making settings and historicity, the major concern being: how to 'fit-in' or 'follow the rules'. Quadrant III represents established ventures operating in established industries, the major concern being: how to maintain the status-quo that is challenged either by insiders or outsiders? Ventures or organizations herein will defend their legitimacy at all costs when existing norms and values are threatened, when there is a threat of de-institutionalization and/or de-legitimation of dominant forms and practices. Quadrant IV is about institutional entrepreneurship: multinational companies, NGOs, and international development organizations are examples of such actors who may wish to see new industries emerge, the major concern being: how to de-legitimize and de-institutionalize dominant forms and practices. In these efforts, not only new structures and new bodies of knowledge are needed to support a de-institutionalization and/or de-legitimation process, but also new discourses and meanings.*  
 Source: Turcan (2018)

Before a new venture is legitimated, it has to “grow” from ‘no-venture’ to an ‘embryonic venture’. This process leads to two major outcomes. An emergent organizational gestalt that consists of mutually-supportive organizational system elements combined with appropriate resources and behavioural patterns (Covin & Slevin, 1997), and a dominant logic that is the way in which managers conceptualize their business and make critical resource allocation decisions (Pralhad & Bettis, 1996).

Entrepreneurs engage in strategic experimentation that is “...a series of trial and error changes pursued along various dimensions of strategy, over a relatively short period of time, in an effort to identify and establish a viable basis for competing” (Nicholls-Nixon et al., p. 496). Trial-and-error, improvisation and imitation (Zahra et al., 2006; Autio et al., 2010) are examples of methods of strategic experimentation. In their attempt to ‘fit-in’, entrepreneurs continuously experiment to acquire and establish substantive and dynamic capabilities for the first time.

Entrepreneurs experiment at three levels: goal (vision), decision (strategic) and behavioural (tactical) (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). At the goal or vision level, entrepreneurs experiment with the new venture concept or improvise with opportunity selection if the initial opportunity is no longer an option. Here entrepreneurs improvise with various forms or concepts of creating, delivering and capturing the value (see also Andries et al., 2013). At the decision or strategic level, entrepreneurs improvise with opportunity execution, putting the new venture concept to the test. Entrepreneurs’ major concern in this process is to learn through trial and error the most efficient way of organizing so

that developed capabilities help avoid failure traps (Bingham, 2009). At the behavioural or tactical level, entrepreneurs are concerned with timing of acquiring and enacting specific substantive or dynamic capabilities at technology or product, market, operating, locational, alliance or network, and anchoring levels aiming to mitigate liabilities of newness, smallness, and foreignness.

In quadrant II of Figure 1, it is expected that entrepreneurs of new ventures would possess at least substantive capabilities and be able to have or acquire dynamic capabilities. It is pivotal to note that in the process of ‘fitting-in’, legitimation is among the key capabilities that the new venture ought to acquire (see also De Clercq & Voronov, 2009; Garud et al., 2014; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001; Ruebottom, 2013). How to develop legitimation strategies, and implement and change these (legitimation) strategies are capabilities that entrepreneurs ought to attain. The timing of acquiring and enacting the legitimation of substantive and dynamic capabilities is of vital importance to get the new venture to the legitimation threshold.

### 3 Method

To understand the emergence of new forms and ways of organizing in international new ventures, autoethnography as a method of inquiry is employed that “...seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience” (Ellis et al., 2011, p.1). Herein, ‘cultural experience’ is defined as the emergence of new forms and ways of organizing in Bridge-Moldova. ‘Personal experience’ is my involvement with Bridge-Moldova as CEO. I was hired in September 2005 by Bridge-London to start-up, grow and lead its branch in Moldova. The events and incidents occurred between 2005 and 2009.

This research is “autoethnography within “previous/other life” of organizations” (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2010, p. 4; Sambrook & Herrmann, 2018, p. 224). It is social science autoethnography, with citations to other researchers and using academic vocabulary (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Herein, I view myself as the phenomenon, writing evocative and analytic stories (Ellis & Ellingson, 2000) about some aspects of my experience in leading and managing Bridge-Moldova. I employ narrating organization (Czarniawska, 1998) to present, analyze and interpret the data, consisting of data storytelling about an organization using a narrative structure (Polletta et al., 2011). Herewith, I seek to attain theoretical understanding (Bruner, 1986), naturalistic generalization (Stake, 2000), or conjectures grounded in aesthetic, evocative and analytic thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experience (Ellis et al., 2011).

As a process, autoethnography is about writing retrospectively and selectively about epiphanies (Ellis et al., 2011) that are, e.g., remembered moments (Bochner & Ellis, 1992), critical events or incidents (Flanagan, 1954) or turning points (Abbott, 2011) that significantly—positively or negatively—affect personal and/or new venture trajectory. I refer to such epiphanies in the Findings and Discussion section, e.g., being turned down by MPs for my failure to properly theorize the venture; asking an MP to leave an activity for his refusal to sign the Code of Principles; being turned down by businesses for my failure to convince them why they should become paying members; experimenting with legal structure of the venture, having numerous meetings with Minister of Justice; experimenting with funding structure of the venture, having numerous meetings with sister organizations; first enforcements from business and international community; organising and hosting a two-day international conference on Border Management, having high profile national and international speakers; and Bridge-London bankruptcy. These and other types of epiphanies are presented in the Findings and Discussion section that support the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

I collected data using several methods: multiple encounters with key stakeholders and unobtrusive data such as archival data (Webb et al., 2000)— generated over a four-year life-span of Bridge-Moldova— primarily in the form of private records, including company financial and organizational records, annual reports, personal correspondence, sector and institutional records, internal memos and e-mails. The company database that organizes and documents all unobtrusive data has 7,143 files, equivalent to 5.74GB of data. In the Findings and Discussion section, I refer to a number of artefacts or unobtrusive data such as the analysis of a legal structure, a public hearing framework, Code of Principles, Strategy Review Paper and Annual Reports, as well as to a number of stakeholders whose names are disguised. Due to space limitations, these and other related artefacts are not included herein, but are available upon request. I used data storytelling (Boje & Rosile, 2020; Polletta et al., 2011) to describe, narrate these patterns.

Data analysis is informed by methods and techniques of grounded theory (Glaser, 1978) as advocated by Ellis & Bochner (2000). First-order concepts (Van Maanen, 1979) were sampled in an iterative manner around major concerns surrounding the emergence of new forms and ways of organizing during Bridge-Moldova start-up. I employed open and theoretical coding to look for themes, categories, and concepts that emerge from data. Grounded in data, a set of key second-order concepts (Van Maanen, 1979) and lessons for entrepreneurs emerged; these are: unsophisticated uncertainty, value disguising, legitimation temporalizing, diversifying funding source, legitimation threshold, and dominant logic crisis. I structure the Findings and Discussion section based on these theoretical concepts, and present

and discuss them and their emergence following the tenets of storytelling and autoethnography by developing character, scene, and plot (Ellis & Ellingson, 2000), using composites, and collapsing events (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Bruner's (1986) framework guided the process of storytelling, whereby the objective of a narrative method is verisimilitude rather than truth, aiming to endow experience with meaning. As Ellis & Bochner (2000, p. 745) argue, "[s]tories show us that the meanings and significance of the past are incomplete, tentative, and revisable according to contingencies of our present life, circumstances, the present from which we narrate". Bruner further maintains that the researcher's aim—via evocative and analytic stories (Ellis & Ellingson, 2000)—is to achieve theoretical understanding grounded in personal experience by providing an inspiring account of personal and cultural experiences, using association, aesthetics, and intuition. Evocative and analytic stories, according to Ellis & Bochner (2000), activate subjectivity and offer lessons for further conversation rather than undebatable conclusions.

The validity of autoethnography is seen through the lenses of verisimilitude that "...evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible, a feeling that what has been represented could be true" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 10). Questions usually asked by autoethnographers concern the usefulness and relevance of the story (Bochner, 2002; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Reliability is conveyed by the narrator's credibility (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Ellis et al., 2011). As Ellis & Bochner (2000, p. 749) put it: "Is the work honest or dishonest? Does the author take the measure of herself, her limitations, her confusion, ambivalence, mixed feelings? ... Does the story enable you to understand and feel the experience it seeks to convey?" In their work, autoethnographers seek naturalistic generalization (Stake, 2000), whereby an aesthetic and evocative story speaks to the reader by bringing cultural experience from one world to another, allowing "the reader to have vicarious experience of the things told" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 751).

The names of the branch and the parent company are disguised; so are the names of the participants. Following Ellis & Bochner (2000), to further protect the participants, I used composites, changed some identifying information, and collapsed some events, which were "...more truthful in a narrative sense though not in a historical one" (p. 753). To the above ethical concerns, it has to be mentioned that, in 2009, Bridge-London filed for bankruptcy and ceased its activities by the end of 2009, while Bridge-Moldova ceased its activities and cocooned in spring of 2009.

## 4 Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 *The Context: Quadrant II*

Bridge-London is in the business of facilitating a transparent, non-corrupt, non-partisan dialogue between legislators and business leaders. Its key stakeholders are legislators, entrepreneurs, ministers, international development organizations, and embassies. Bridge-London started its activities in 2002 and opened its first international branch in Georgia in 2003. It expanded its activities to Moldova in 2005 and to Armenia in 2006.

When Bridge-London set up its branch in Moldova – Bridge-Moldova - the NGO sector in Moldova was fully institutionalized: the Law on NGOs was adopted in 1997; there were many, including international, cause and sector NGOs. I define cause NGOs as those that provide public services, such as health, education, environment, and human and civil rights; whereas sector NGOs, I define as those that advocate for business needs of private companies located in a sector of an economy. Civil society, businesses, and politicians had necessary knowledge and understanding of what an NGO is and what it needs to succeed (cognitive legitimacy) and were able to appreciate the value an NGO brings or may bring (socio-political legitimacy).

For Bridge-Moldova to 'fit-in' should have been a relatively easy task. Indeed, as per the Law on NGOs, Bridge-Moldova would be registered within 30 days, having all rights and responsibilities for this type of organization. But, Bridge-Moldova brought new forms of organizing and relationships with its key stakeholders and new forms of value creation and delivery compared to existing NGOs. It occurred quite early in the process of Bridge-Moldova's emergence that legitimation efforts would be needed to acquire cognitive and socio-political legitimacy and reach a legitimacy threshold. It also emerged that it should be legitimated also internally: at employee, company, and CEO levels.

The process of emergence—creation and legitimation—of Bridge-Moldova is divided into three distinct periods: start-up in the autumn of 2005; legitimation and incorporation in 2006; and institutionalization and growth in 2007. Bridge-Moldova grew rapidly in 2008; in 2009 (spring), it 'cocooned' due to force-majeure circumstances: the protests in April against the Moldovan parliamentary election turned violent, throwing the country into a political turmoil till 2010. A number of attempts were made to rejuvenate Bridge-Moldova after 2010, but without success. Since then, Bridge-Moldova has been in the state of 'cocooning' (Turcan, 2012). At its peak, it employed 3 full-time and 2 part-time staff.

## 4.2 *Unsophisticated Uncertainty*

In September 2005, I was home in Moldova waiting for my viva. While at my parents', I received a phone call from one of my friends. She asked me to help 'rescue' her by taking on a job she had been selected for. When asked what it was, she stated it was to start up, manage and lead a branch of an international NGO. For details about the job, I was invited to a dinner two days later with two top managers of Bridge-London who were in Chisinau. After submitting my doctoral thesis, I thought I would start looking for a job within at least six months. But I could not refuse a friend; so I went to Chisinau to meet my future employers.

It was a three-course dinner with a good selection of wine. During the dinner we had what one may call a typical business dinner conversation. We introduced each other, presented our backgrounds, experiences, plans, priorities, and worldviews. I described a previous experience I had in starting up a cause NGO that never took off; hence, I had no experience in managing and leading an NGO. It seems this did not bother my future employers or it might be they had no choice but to trust the recommendation of my friend and move on with the launch of the branch, hiring me as CEO. During dessert and coffee, my future employers were explaining what Bridge-London was, its vision, its mission, how it operates, and what activities it develops and implements internationally, providing examples from a recently-opened branch in Georgia and from its sister organizations that had been in operation for decades in Europe and New Zealand. Somewhere in this part of our discussion, I became lost, as I could not understand what they were talking about, what they were trying to explain, or what idea they were trying to 'sell'.

'Facilitating a transparent, non-corrupt, non-partisan dialogue between legislators and business leaders' sounded simple, unsophisticated enough, but I was uncertain as to how this can "work" in real life. That is, socio-politically I was able to comprehend the new venture, but was struggling to grasp the venture cognitively, i.e. not having knowledge about it and not knowing what was needed to succeed. Because of this—*unsophisticated uncertainty*—I was uneasy to ask clarifying questions, being afraid not to get the job, hence failing to help a friend. What I was certain about—especially from having military experience—was my dynamic capabilities to change things and quickly learn new ones. In the end, we shook hands and agreed to meet next day to discuss financial matters. We met next day and agreed, *inter alia*, on my employment contract, rights, and responsibilities, and financing the branch. Specifically, we agreed that Bridge-London would gradually decrease in 2006 and 2007 its funding of the branch, while Bridge-Moldova would identify and secure its own funding sources to become fully self-financed in 2008.

## 4.3 *Value Disguising*

It became apparent that members of the Parliament (MPs), faction leaders, and the leadership of the Parliament were the primary clients of Bridge-Moldova. Without their full support, Bridge-Moldova had no future. Based on my initial understanding of the venture, I had to develop a 'theory' to legitimate it in the eyes of these stakeholders. For a new venture, form, or way of organizing to become taken-for-granted, it has to be theorized, and, to be effective, theorizing has to elicit a continuous *shared understanding* of the problem (Greenwood et al., 2002). During the initial meeting with my future employers, a 'theory' of my venture emerged. They kept emphasizing that Bridge-London, and hence Bridge-Moldova, was an education resource for MPs. Indeed, over the years, this became palpable. I called this *true value theory* of my venture. Through story-telling argumentation, armed with this true value theory, I approached MPs aiming to legitimate Bridge-Moldova. During this process I had several, iterative encounters with the PA of the Speaker of the Parliament, the Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, and Heads of Factions. I hoped to achieve socio-political legitimacy of Bridge-Moldova as I still had troubles understanding it cognitively. Quite soon, it became clear that this true value theory alienated MPs: their egos could not bear the idea of being 'educated'. As Arendt (2006, p. 173) put it: "Education can play no part in politics, because in politics we always have to deal with those who are already educated".

I went back to literature and read widely about legislatures and, equally importantly, about MPs. Constantly comparing various emerging patterns, a core category emerged that explained a significant part of MPs' behaviour, namely *empowering*. Eventually I re-theorized Bridge-Moldova as 'empowering' resource. I called this *disguised value theory* of Bridge-Moldova. Armed with this new theory, I went back to legislators, pitched my new venture to all factions based on disguised value theory. Relatively quickly, I managed to get Bridge-Moldova socio-politically legitimated. This resulted in the formation of the Coordinating Council of Bridge-Moldova, a consultative body, chaired by the Speaker of the Parliament and composed of two legislators from each faction.

To legitimate Bridge-Moldova socio-politically in the eyes of businesses, embassies, and international development organizations, I employed the *true value theory* instead. At this early stage of the venture start up, I had encounters with the ambassadors and heads of missions: United Kingdom (UK), United States (US), European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), World Bank (WB), and US Agency for International Development (USAID). I also met with several entrepreneurs/CEOs from my network to 'sell' the true value theory of the venture. This suggests that these stakeholders perceived legislators and the legislature overall as a

weak institution that was in need for education and professional development. Although the literature states that shared understanding of the problem (Greenwood et al., 2002) is important, this research demonstrates that different stakeholders might have *different, non-shared understandings of a problem or (perceived) non-shared problems*. In such situations, entrepreneurs would need to develop theories about their new ventures tailored to non-shared problems aiming to legitimate these ventures in the eyes of respective stakeholders. Such successful socio-political legitimation based on the true value theory of Bridge-Moldova led to a number of international organizations, such as Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA), International Republican Institute (IRI), National Democratic Institute (NDI), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), joining the Coordinating Council as observers. It led to the official launch of Bridge-Moldova in July 2006, hosted by the UK Embassy in Moldova. In 2007, it facilitated Bridge-Moldova's membership to the board of Global Compact, the UN (United Nations) CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiative.

#### **4.4 Legitimation Temporalizing**

Extant research is silent as to the timing of socio-political and cognitive legitimation. Data herein suggest that, in the absence of familiar cues about new forms and/or ways of organizing, socio-political legitimacy is acquired faster, mediating the process of cognitive legitimation. Indeed, although problematized and theorized differently, it was easy for the key stakeholders to see the value in Bridge-Moldova: legislators getting empowered; businesses and international donor community expecting better informed MPs, hence better laws and regulations. It might be argued that Bridge-Moldova achieved socio-political legitimacy when its Coordinating Council was formed, international development organizations became associate members of the Council, and when Bridge-Moldova was officially launched in July 2006.

However, it took me almost the whole year of 2006 to learn and understand—though I shall admit not yet to a full extent—what Bridge-Moldova was and, more importantly, what was needed to make it a success, and thus achieve cognitive legitimacy. It was an iterative process at institutional and management levels. At the institutional level, it took four months after the official launch to get the Charter approved and legally signed by the Minister of Justice. Due to new forms and ways of organizing not accounted for in the extant Law on NGOs, I was meeting once, sometimes twice per month, with the Minister of Justice to go over the draft of the Charter line by line. Before the meetings with the Minister of Justice, I had numerous encounters with my lawyer and the Ministry civil servants to work on the drafts of the Charter. This was unprecedented, but necessary to make sure the language in the Charter fit the extant legal and regulatory framework.

At this point, before finalizing the Charter, I had to make a decision on legal and revenue structures of Bridge-Moldova. I analysed legal and revenue structures of sister organizations. I had a number of iterative encounters to discuss these issues with and get in-depth insights from the leaders of sister organizations in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Sweden, Spain, New Zealand, Belgium, Georgia and Armenia. I learned they were founded either as an independent legal entity or as an embedded entity operating within a larger organization, such as employers' associations. These legal structures had an impact on the respective revenue structures. An independent legal structure was based on *direct* membership fees paid by companies that were members of a respective sister organization. An embedded entity structure was based on *indirect* membership fees paid by businesses that were members of a business association (sector NGO).

An embedded legal and revenue structure was very attractive from the point of view of ensuring continuous revenue stream. This would have allowed me to make Bridge-Moldova financially sustainable much quicker than agreed with Bridge-London. However, it was a very risky one due to a number of institutional voids (Khanna & Paleru, 1997) in Moldova, such as high level of corruption, highly politicized business and employers' associations, and non-transparent revenue, cost structures, and decision-making processes in these business and employers' associations. As a result, I decided to incorporate Bridge-Moldova as an independent legal entity based on direct membership fee.

Furthermore, I had to experiment with a number of activities to understand what and how to deliver the value 'promised' to my key stakeholders, and what respective substantive and dynamic capabilities were needed. Drawing on the experience from 'sister' companies, Bridge-Moldova facilitated a number of activities that helped achieve the above, such as public hearings and company attachments in pharmaceutical, handicraft, ICT, and private security sectors. All aimed at enhancing legislative, regulative, normative, and competitive climate in respective sectors as well as giving legislators first-hand experience to learn about sector and company problems, issues, and concerns. To facilitate this process and enhance the relationship with our international partners, we hired a professional cartoonist to create a snapshot of key stakeholders' experience, interests and learning (Appendix 1); this gesture was well received.

Successful implementation of above activities contributed to the acquisition of cognitive legitimacy, leading to a fine-grained segmentation of the 'market', development of new and gradual enhancement of existing internal operating procedures, and identification of critical success factors. Four fine-grained segments were identified at the legislature level: individual legislator; committee; ad-hoc 'committee' (an ad-hoc committee formed around a legislative issue,



interest, or concern); and leadership. Observing how public hearings were facilitated, we developed an internal operating procedure, a framework aimed at enhancing the efficiency (participation, feedback, outcome, and implementation) of public hearings. The framework consisted of four preparatory steps entrepreneurs had to fulfil before attending a public hearing. After a number of iterations, the framework was enhanced and used in preparations and facilitations of subsequent public hearings.

All participants in Bridge-Moldova activities had to adhere and sign a Code of Principles before the start of an activity. I had instances when I had to ask Members of the Parliament to leave public hearings as they would not agree to sign the Code of Principles or to change their behaviour and rhetoric during public hearings as they were in violation of the good spirit of the Code of Principles. This Code was designed by Bridge-London and implemented by all its branches. It consisted of nine bullet points. Observing the implementation of public hearings and company attachments, especially the behaviour of legislators, it became clear that these bullet points were not enough in the context of an emerging economy such as Moldova where a large number of institutional voids was present. To remedy the situation, I drafted a set of eight footnote explanations and interpretations of the main bullet points, which were approved by Bridge-London at the 2007 Annual Meeting.

#### **4.5 Diversifying Funding Sources**

Before the Charter was signed, I invited a number of entrepreneurs from my network to become members and pay annual participation fees. I met with more than 30 entrepreneurs/CEOs from my network for this purpose. I had success in ‘selling’ the venture using the true value theory. Entrepreneurs could see the value in what we were proposing to do, and of their involvement and inputs, by committing their time, into a transparent and open dialogue with legislators. However, I could not satisfactorily explain why they should pay the membership fee, what benefits they would get in return. Using familiar cues, such as cases of successful membership in sister organizations, I was sincere with them in admitting I was still learning. As one entrepreneur reacted, “*Ok, I will pay this time the fee, but next year if and when you come for the next payment, you better have a good answer as to my benefits... why I should pay*”. Eventually trust and sincerity helped: seven entrepreneurs agreed to become members and pay the membership fee in 2006.

This experience as well as the experience from facilitating public inquiries and company attachments for legislators, jointly implemented with international donor organizations, helped me identify and evaluate alternative funding sources. Overall, I identified four main funding sources: ad-hoc funding; project-based funding; company membership funding; and Bridge-London funding (Appendix 2). Having analysed the strengths and weaknesses of each source, I was able to derive the substantive and dynamic capabilities we had to gain, develop, and sustain to ensure continuous, robust funding of the venture. After a series of experimentations and trials and errors, we ended up employing only two sources of funding, *ad-hoc* and *company membership* funding, and focused on developing their respective capabilities. By the summer of 2008, building on accumulated knowledge and understanding of cognitive and socio-political legitimacy, we developed the Bridge-Moldova Partnership Philosophy (Appendix 3; the word ‘philosophy’ appears in the original policy document). This is the first time when we managed to eloquently formulate and present who we are, what we do, what we offer and what our expectations are. This allowed by the end of 2008 to attract fourteen businesses that were paying annual membership fees, a sum that was close to our break-even.

#### **4.6 Legitimation Threshold**

By the end of 2006, Bridge-Moldova acquired socio-political legitimacy (and, to an extent, cognitive legitimacy); as one of the participants to our activities noted: “*I have a feeling that [Bridge-Moldova] has been already operating in Moldova for several years*”. I presented 2006 annual report in the Parliament in front of legislators and invited leaders from civil society and entrepreneurs. This event was another indicator legitimacy threshold. After the presentation of 2006 annual report, one of the civil society leaders approached me saying that she witnesses for the first time such transparent presentation of an annual report by an NGO that included the company financial and accounting statements. Subsequent annual reports (2007 and 2008) were also presented in the Parliament.

In 2007, Bridge-Moldova not only reached its legitimacy threshold, but, I may say, was institutionalized; in 2008, it became evident that in 2007 we indeed passed the legitimacy threshold. In Appendixes 4, 5 and 6, testimonials from our stakeholders are presented that support successful acquisition of legitimacy and legitimacy threshold.

Acknowledging the findings that emerged from inquiry committees or public hearings facilitated by Bridge-Moldova and that were translated into legislation, more and more legislators were approaching us asking to facilitate a legislative inquiry, public hearing, or company attachment. International development and donor organizations and embassies were asking us to organize and facilitate various inquiries, e.g., into unfair competition or border management. Private companies were calling our office asking us to facilitate public hearings on private security or advertising. More companies became paying members. Key stakeholders were endorsing Bridge-Moldova by providing positive feedback and testimonials.

#### 4.7 Dominant Logic Crisis

While trying to legitimate Bridge-Moldova cognitively and socio-politically, I observed there was a disconnect between dominant logic of Bridge-London and its newly-established branches, including Bridge-Moldova. Based on my personal experience in leading and managing Bridge-Moldova, and number of meetings, discussions, and correspondence with directors of sister organizations and newly-established branches, I drafted a Strategy Review Paper. I discussed issues related to corporate and branch mission statements, cooperation between branches and the HQ, branch organization, funding sources, new activities portfolio, policies and operating procedures, funding sources, and needed substantive and dynamic capabilities. Here is an excerpt from the Paper:

*“This paper builds on recent experience of Bridge-London in establishing the business and parliament mechanisms in Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova, and addresses the challenges it has faced during this process. Given the fact that Bridge-London had no previous experience in operating in emerging democracies, the process of internationalizing the business and parliament concept in these countries has been one of trial and error, and was being altered as the learning curve was improving. Several key challenges could be singled out, namely the need to: (i) clarify and understand the mission of Bridge-London and its branches; (ii) draw on the experience of founding members of Bridge-London and enhance the cooperation between Bridge-London and its branches; and (iii) design an appropriate organization for a branch to achieve its mission.”*

I observed a lack of sufficient coordination of efforts between Bridge-London, its branches and sister organizations. This led to the need to clarify the corporate mission: why Bridge-London exists. Why was it established; for what purpose? When I posed these questions at meetings and in discussions with colleagues, the answers varied from person to person and only through probing questions was it possible to see an emerging pattern.

Two distinct patterns/purposes emerged. One related to internationalization of ‘the business and parliament concept’; the other related to the assurance of the integrity of newly-established branches. Based on this, I proposed an enhanced mission statement of Bridge-London: ‘to internationalize the business and parliament concept and ensure its integrity’. I argued that this mission statement provided a clear purpose and signal to newly-established branches and their stakeholders. It would help develop a mission for each branch that would be aligned to the corporate mission; a branch mission would be ‘to introduce the business and parliament concept and ensure its integrity’.

The proposed mission statements were meant to contribute to a discussion we had at our annual meetings on the need for and how to foster cooperation between sister organizations and newly-established branches. In hindsight, during Bridge-Moldova start-up, it became evident that rich experience from and close cooperation with sister organizations were needed, not just with and via Bridge-London, but directly with respective directors. I put forward in the Strategy Review Paper two specific proposals to foster cooperation between all members. One related to the cooperation of sister organizations and branches on joint international fundraising projects. The other proposal suggested new ‘products’: offers for legislators and business members, such as company or parliamentary attachment programs between branches and sister organizations.

I presented the Strategy Review Paper at the 2008 annual meeting in an attempt to harmonize the relationship between Bridge-London, its newly-established branches, and sister organizations. But it was too late. A crisis surfaced at one of Bridge-London’s branches that brought the organization down. In 2009 due to this crisis, Bridge-London filed for bankruptcy and ceased to exist. Since Bridge-Moldova was incorporated as an independent legal entity, it survived the shock. As a result of these unfortunate events, amplified by the parliament and government crisis in Moldova that was unfolding in 2009, I took the decision to ‘cocoon’ (Turcan, 2012) Bridge-Moldova, waiting for better times to come and to rejuvenate the venture.

### 5 Contribution for Theory and Practice

This paper employed analytic autoethnography (Anderson, 2006; Doloriert & Sambrook, 2010; Lofland, 1995; Sambrook & Herrmann, 2018; Snow et al., 2003) to explore the emergence of new forms and way of organizing in entrepreneurial ventures. Analytic autoethnography allowed the researcher to delve simultaneously into several theoretical debates at multiple levels of inquiry (Laslett, 1999). One, an assertion that knowledge about internal organization of entrepreneurial ventures is scarce (Burton et al., 2017). Two, a consensus that substantive and dynamic capabilities research lacks empirical data and respective knowledge about processes, mechanisms and outcomes associated with substantive and dynamic capabilities is scarce (Easterby-Smith & Prieto, 2008; Easterby-Smith et al., 2009). Three, an observation that little is known how entrepreneurial ventures acquire legitimacy during their emergence from ‘no-venture’ to an ‘embryonic’ venture (Turcan & Fraser, 2016).

A number of theoretical and practical insights emerged as a result of the analysis of new forms and ways of organizing at personal, venture, and industry levels through the lenses of legitimation and capability theories. The paper introduces the concept of unsophisticated uncertainty. It describes the state an entrepreneur may find herself in when, on

the one hand, she has a socio-political understanding of the venture, but on the other, she is struggling to grasp the cognitive legitimacy of the venture. When new forms and ways of organizing are introduced to new or existing markets (Figure 1, quadrants I and II), new venture's key stakeholders will find themselves under unsophisticated uncertainty: they will be able to see the value the new venture is offering, but fail to comprehend how the new value is created, delivered, and captured and what it takes to succeed in these new efforts. To mitigate such unsophisticated uncertainty, entrepreneurs will need to acquire and nurture dynamic capabilities that will allow them to spot novel ways of identifying, bringing, assembling and deploying resources as well as experiment with the new venture, forms and ways of organizing at all levels, eventually acquiring substantive capabilities and finally gaining cognitive legitimacy for the venture.

As to substantive and dynamic capabilities, the data suggests these materialize alongside legitimation efforts through experimentation and trial and error. Moreover, from data, it might be conjectured that substantive and dynamic capabilities, more specifically, the acquisition of appropriate substantive and dynamic capabilities, are indicators of legitimation threshold. To pass the legitimacy threshold, it is not enough for a stakeholder just to see and understand the value a new venture brings. During the process of legitimation, key stakeholders co-create the ways and forms of value offering. They provide—directly or indirectly, formally or informally—feedback to entrepreneurs about their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with new forms and ways of organizing offered by the new venture. This allows entrepreneurs to learn, develop, and shape their and their venture substantive and dynamic capabilities accordingly.

Another concept emerged from the data to explain the emergence from 'no-venture' to an 'embryonic' venture, namely legitimation temporaling that is the time lag between and within legitimation strategies. It is expected that the new venture will be legitimated in the eyes of its key stakeholders first socio-politically than cognitively. Having intimate knowledge about the value their new ventures expect to create, entrepreneurs will require less time (and efforts) to legitimate their new ventures socio-politically across various key stakeholders. However, to achieve cognitive legitimacy, data points to a significant cognitive legitimation temporaling: entrepreneurs will need substantially more time and efforts to develop multiple, targeted cognitive legitimation strategies aimed at the new venture's key stakeholders.

To mitigate the effects of legitimation temporaling, data suggests that during the transition from 'no-venture' to an 'embryonic' venture, entrepreneurs may disguise the true value of their ventures and develop different legitimation theories of their ventures—true value theory and disguised value theory—targeting different stakeholders. These theories are developed through a number of iterative trials and errors entrepreneurs experience during the legitimation process. As prior research suggests, when there is a shared understanding of a problem (Greenwood et al., 2002), it is unlikely entrepreneurs will attempt disguised theorizing. However, grounded in the data, this research conjectures that when there is a non-shared understanding of a problem or (perceived) non-shared problems that new ventures are trying to solve, it is expected that entrepreneurs will engage in disguised theorizing to successfully legitimate their new ventures in the eyes of multiple stakeholders.

The data finally contributes to our understanding of the relationship between headquarters of new ventures and their branches. When new ventures internationalize, they, to various degrees, impose their own dominant logic on newly established branches. As data points out, the dominant logic of a newly established branch is established at or immediately after crossing its legitimation threshold. However, as also emerges from the data, there might be dominant logic crisis when there is disconnect between the HQ dominant logic and branch dominant logic. In such situations it is important for both parties to listen to each other and analyse respective similarities and differences and decide which ones are applicable only to the branch, and which ones have or might have a critical impact on the whole organization and its subsequent internationalization efforts.

## 6 Conclusion

In this study, the researcher does not claim to have answered all and fully the theoretical challenges identified at the beginning of the paper. Grounded in his personal experience, sensemaking (Atkinson et al., 2003; Gantz, 2000; Levi-Strauss, 1966) and storytelling (Boje, 2018; Polletta et al., 2011), the researcher arrived at naturalistic generalization (Stake, 2000) by offering the reader a vicarious experience (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) of the emergence of an entrepreneurial venture from 'no-venture' to an 'embryonic' venture and lessons or conjectures about new forms of organizing, legitimation and dynamic capabilities for further conversation rather than undebatable conclusions (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

A number of pointers for future research can be singled out. Researchers may explore the relationship between and timing of the acquisition of socio-political and cognitive legitimacy and substantive and dynamic capabilities in new ventures. Alternatively, to explore the how, why, what, when and where of the adoption of shared and non-shared understanding of the value of the new venture through disguised and true value theorizing about the new venture. The

research is also scarce on how international new ventures set their branches and how and what types of relationship and interaction exist between headquarters and their branches.

Although autoethnography continues to emerge (Wall, 2008) as well as its definition, evaluation criteria, representation and legitimation (Collinson & Hockey, 2005; Doloriert & Sambrook, 2011; Duncan, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2006; Ellis et al., 2011; Holt, 2003; Sambrook & Herrmann, 2018), it has to be encouraged and supported at all levels. In addition to works of solo authors, given today's strong cooperation between universities and private and public sectors, researchers may, for example, conduct collaborative autoethnographic research (Ngunjiri et al., 2010) where the researcher and the entrepreneur or public servant co-construct the narrative (Bochner & Ellis, 1992). As one of the theory-building methodologies, autoethnography will allow researchers gain fine-grained understanding of and further advance our knowledge about organizational design, capabilities, and legitimation in entrepreneurial international new ventures.

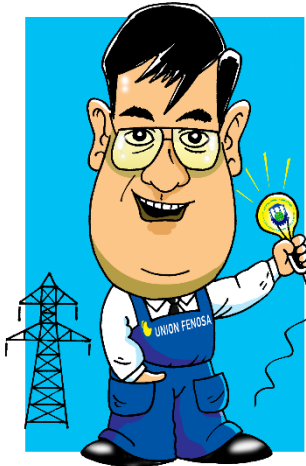
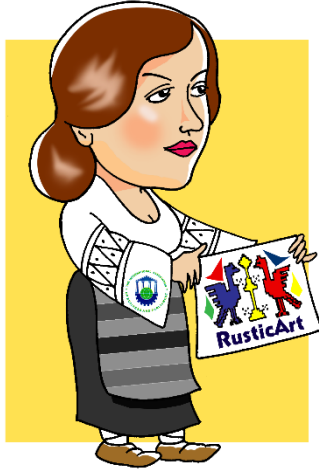
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## Appendix 1: Cartoonist snapshot of stakeholders' experience, interest and learning



## Appendix 2: Diversifying funding sources

### Evaluation of funding sources

*Ad-hoc funding*: this type of funding may come from various donor organizations and private companies and aims to cover current specific activities costs in full or partly (be this core or project activities). The major drawback of this type of funding is that it cannot be used to cover operational costs.

*Project-based funding*: this type of funding requires going through a generally-accepted open application process, hence a lot of up-front investment of time and effort. It can be achieved through a joint cooperation between sister organizations and the branch. The payback though is that it allows covering part of operational costs involved in that specific project.

*Company membership funding*: this concept of funding is brand new to newly-established branches and requires a gradual and careful building approach. This revenue stream is important as it contributes to both operational and activity costs.

*Bridge-London based funding*: Bridge-London applies for funding to donor organizations with the view to support the activities of its branches. The long-term goal is to match this funding with funding from the above-mentioned sources.

### Capabilities needed to be nurtured

*Ad-hoc funding*: the ability to build relationships and negotiate with potential donors and sponsor companies; the ability to deliver short-term success stories with (in)-tangible results.

*Project-based funding*: the ability to write and apply for projects; ability to successfully implement them per the terms and conditions of the donor; the ability to coordinate the relationships between the founding and the branch.

*Membership funding*: the ability to retain members for a long period of time by providing extra value for their money; the ability to acquire new members.

*Bridge-London based funding*: the ability to write and apply for projects; the ability to successfully implement them per terms and conditions of the donor.

## Appendix 3: The Partnership Philosophy

### RAISON D'ÊTRE

The only constant dimension in today's world economy is change. The complexity it brings along is amplified by its rate of emergence. To generate better informed regulation and legislation under these circumstances, MPs ought to gain multiple views on studied phenomena. Entrepreneurs who on a daily basis are affected by and effect the change are able to provide MPs with necessary data and information drawn upon their firsthand experience.

Bridge-Moldova Business Network aims to become a rich source of information for MPs with a reputation for integrity, credibility, and professionalism. We invite entrepreneurs who operate in Moldova to become a member of the Network thus creating a pool of enterprises representative of the national economy. The Network will provide mutual benefit for MPs and entrepreneurs by creating much needed synergy for harmonizing the legal framework and ultimately enhancing the growth of the economy.

### PARTNERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

The partnership is open to any enterprise, be this micro, small, medium, or multinational. There is a sectoral limitation as all sectors need to be represented in the partnership, so that it is fully representative of the national economy and no one sector dominates. Hence, it is expected that from a sector there will be up to two or three enterprises per each segment of the value chain.

It is a partnership of forward thinking enterprises, which are exemplars of good governance, which have the confidence to open their enterprises to skilled parliamentary enquiries, which demonstrably care about the development of the national economy and society. The applicants will adhere to the Code of Principles and will agree to give time to Bridge-Moldova programmes.

### WHY BECOME A MEMBER?

The Business Network partnership creates a mechanism for engaging the economic operators in the Parliamentary decision-making process, thus allowing entrepreneurs to: contribute directly to ensuring their national economy is better regulated; ensure that MPs realize business people are not just tax payers but wealth creators; become part of an international network which is actively promoting Moldova and linkages between business practitioners and parliamentary practitioners, for the benefit of Moldova's economy through investment, business partnerships and increased knowledge of markets; publicly show their commitment to non-corrupt practice and their commitment to the improvement of the country; be part of a prestigious, internationally recognized business network of Bridge-London.



Member enterprises will be invited to: host MP company attachments; participate in pre-legislative review inquiries on major policy issues with MPs and Government; develop Bridge-Moldova as a practical forum for three way discussion between Government, business and Parliamentarians; share experience with business people and parliamentarians in the European network of the Bridge-London; help ensure practical outcomes from Bridge-Moldova; participate in the annual meetings of the coordinating council of Bridge-Moldova; participate, on a rotating basis, to the Speaker's annual diners; participate in a company attachment programme at one of the business members from Bridge-London.

#### **FUNDING**

Funding requirements are based on an annual budget prepared by Bridge-Moldova and approved by the Board. The essence of the partnership is an exchange of experience between MPs and practitioners who are giving their time freely. As there are no consultant or similar fees the actual costs of running the Bridge-Moldova Business Network are modest. These are the costs related to the office rent, communication, equipment, and staff, as well as to programmes.

#### **ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

Bridge-Moldova Business Network should not be beholden to any major funder, whether Parliament, company or Government. On occasion, it may have to decline contributions or support. All in all: the contributions should be kept as low as possible, and spread as widely as possible; this underlines that no 'big' money is buying favours and that all participants are contributing something however small to maintain the operation of the Network; contributions can be in cash and in kind; the Parliament can also make a contribution; each category of member can only make their annual contribution according to the regulated contribution; they can not add more to buy a favour; members, individual or organizational, can contribute through giving help in kind, or providing a service.

#### **TRANSPARENCY**

The partnership process will be arranged in a way that demonstrates to the public transparently that the Business Network is not liable to be compromised in any way by the financial contributions. Hence: all forms of funding which sustain Bridge-Moldova Business Network will be transparent and freely available to the public through Bridge-Moldova's web site; the financial report will be included in the IABP-Moldova annual report that in turn will be presented to the annual meeting of the Coordinating Council of Bridge-Moldova and later be uploaded on Bridge-Moldova website.

#### **HOW TO APPLY**

Please feel in and send the application form to the address indicated above. As soon as we receive it, we will contact you to finalize the application process.

### **Appendix 4: Stakeholders' testimonials, 2006**

"The parliamentary committee I chair was the first to respond to Bridge-Moldova's challenge to organize a committee of inquiry in [the] industry. We had a non-partisan and highly professional discussion. The conclusions we jointly reached were translated into a bill initiative that was already approved by the Government and now is in the Parliament."

*Member of the Parliament 1*

"We welcome Bridge-Moldova's initiative to propel the development of [the] industry through a direct dialog with MPs and industry representatives. Sharing of our opinions and experiences allowed us to make first steps towards harmonization of the current legislation which would spur the growth of [the] industry."

*President, [Industry] Alliance*

"We highly appreciated the sincere and open dialogue we had with MPs and Governmental officials during the committee of inquiry on [the] industry facilitated by Bridge-Moldova. For us Bridge-Moldova approach is a novel and indispensable interface between MPs and business community that was not there until now."

*Executive Director, [Private Industry] Group*

"Bridge-Moldova continues to productively assist in developing relationships between the private sector in Moldova and MPs. This is a relationship that must flourish as Moldova builds a wealth-creating environment that creates meaningful employment. [The] international organization's program in Moldova is proud to work closely with Bridge-Moldova as we collectively build Moldova's governance capability and help Moldova realize its objective of full European integration."

*Country Director, International Development Organization 1*

“Being actively involved in the process of fulfilling our commitments assumed in front of the European Council, we ought to realize a lot of legislative actions, bulk of which are stipulated in the EU-Moldova Action Plan. I believe Bridge-Moldova will have a visible role to play to the process of fulfilling these important tasks.”

*Deputy-Speaker 1*

“The cooperation between the Parliament and business community is necessary to avoid corruption and to enhance the transparency of decisions made by the Parliament and its public image. Bridge-Moldova will enormously contribute to the development of a continuous transparent dialogue with local entrepreneurs and will ensure a high quality cooperation process.”

*Speaker of the Parliament*

## **Appendix 5: Stakeholders’ testimonials, 2007**

“A remarkable success was achieved in 2007 by building productive relationships between Bridge-Moldova and Parliament leadership. Continuous development of Bridge-Moldova presents our MPs with a unique opportunity to acquire rich knowledge on international parliamentary matters and apply them in their day-to-day activities.”

*Speaker of the Parliament*

“The company attachment I went on allowed me to get an in-depth understanding of key issues [the] sector is currently facing. By bringing to the discussion table multiple views on the issues of concern, these attachments, from MPs point of view, are efficient tools in that they reduce the time eventually needed for follow-up deliberations.”

*Member of the Parliament 2*

“Bridge-Moldova effectively institutionalized the dialogue between Parliament and business community; this form of collaboration makes the objectives of both parties converge. Bridge-Moldova has become indispensable for direct and transparent promotion of an efficient, competitive and responsible business environment.”

*CEO*

“The programs of Bridge-Moldova create opportunities for a long-term cooperation between the state authorities and the business community. The international experience they bring in is pivotal for building an effective mechanism of cooperation between the two.”

*Member of the Government 3*

“[The international donor organization] welcomes and highly appreciates Bridge-Moldova activities in Moldova. Bridge-Moldova is providing an invaluable platform to enhance the dialogue, knowledge sharing and collaboration between the legislature and the private sector. I am particularly encouraged by the partnership Bridge-Moldova has established between Moldovan and UK parliamentarians.”

*Country Director, International Development Organization 2*

“The Conference on Integrated Border Management organized by Bridge-Moldova enabled us to gain a better understanding of the positive role to be played by Bridge-Moldova as a neutral forum where business and Parliamentary leaders can jointly address actions needed to upgrade the image and quality of Moldovan high value products as a basis for expanding exports of these products to European Union countries.”

*Country Director, International Development Organization 3*

## **Appendix 6: Stakeholders’ testimonials, 2008**

“Most of the findings from the enquiry I initiated on the ICT sector have been considered in the new ICT law. I appreciate very much the follow-up neutral discussions I had with entrepreneurs after the enquiry, as well as the attachments I had at two ICT companies. I learned a lot, and as a result was able to contribute to the betterment of the industry.”

*Member of the Parliament 4*

“I appreciate Bridge-Moldova’s efforts to implement a project aimed at engaging young entrepreneurs from rural areas in the legislative decision making process. The [SME Promotion Organization] will actively facilitate this activity through its large network of SMEs, inviting young entrepreneurs to host company attachments for MPs and engage in a constructive dialogue with MPs about best business practices, as well as realities of rural economies.”

*Director, SME Promotion Organization*

“During the company attachment at [a textile company], personally I acquired a lot of first-hand information about the company and the sector as a whole. I will take the issues raised to the Government in an attempt to enhance the competitiveness of the sector. It was my first company attachment and look forward to take part in many more.”

*Member of the Parliament 5*

“Bridge-Moldova assists us in the process of solving many issues that inhibits the growth of our companies, thus contributing to the development of the national economy. This kind of a dialogue between MPs and entrepreneurs is very efficient in supporting a healthy legal framework in the advantage of the national economy.”

*CEO/Owner, Production Company*

“We welcome Bridge-Moldova’s three year cooperation plan to assist our [Devolved] National Assembly in developing a code of conduct for our legislators, a mechanism to measure the effectiveness of legislature and legislators and members’ handbook. Thanks to Bridge-Moldova that facilitated a visit of legislators from the Welsh Assembly, we signed a memorandum of understanding with the Welsh Assembly and look forward to this cooperation.”

*Speaker, [Devolved] National Assembly.*