

# **Understanding the emergence of a social enterprise by highly skilled migrants: The case of Honduras Global Europa**

## **Abstract**

### **Purpose**

This paper examines the emergence of a social enterprise by highly skilled members of a Diaspora. While most literature has focused on government intervention for Diaspora engagement and monetary remittance flows from migrants, less attention has been paid to the transfer of social remittances and social enterprises created by Diasporas. Based on the concept of social remittances, social network theory and motivation perspectives, this study unpacks the emergence of a social enterprise by highly skilled migrants of a developing country.

### **Design/Methodology/Approach**

This study examines social enterprise emergence through an autoethnographic approach to describe and systematically analyze personal experience. This approach allows to understand cultural experience around the emergence of a social enterprise created by diverse members of a Diaspora.

### **Findings**

Findings reveal that Diaspora Knowledge Networks can emerge through the activation of a highly skilled Diaspora network structure. Core diaspora members can activate a latent network of highly skilled migrants that wish to fulfil intrinsic motivations. Findings support the extend current understandings of social remittances by highly skilled migrants, who emerge as a transnational community that desires to stay connected to their country-of-origin and can support the emergence of a transnational network structure for development. The findings reveal that place attachment, sense of duty and well-being are key factors for highly skilled migrants to engage in diaspora knowledge networks.

### **Originality/Value**

The paper contributes to literature on networks and migrant-based organizational emergence by examining how and why highly skilled migrants from a developing country engage in the emergence of a DKN. Findings challenge previous views of government intervention and provides evidence on how the transmission of collective social remittances can flow trans-nationally, making highly skilled migrants effective agents of knowledge circulation and DKNs a vehicle for

transmission. More specifically, the study provides evidence of the relevance of transnational features in the context of diaspora networks that lead to organizational emergence. It underscores the influence of interrelated motivations in diaspora engagement studies.

## **Introduction**

There is a growing interest to understand how migrant experiences inform the emergence of new forms of social enterprises. In that regard, there is limited understanding of social enterprises created by highly skilled members of a Diaspora from a developing country. While ‘Diasporas’, which refers broadly to disperse migrant networks connected through sentimental links with a homeland (Safran, 1991), are attracting attention in the entrepreneurship literature (Brzozowski et al., 2017; Elo et al., 2018) they remain under-researched in terms of social enterprise emergence (Brinkerhoff, 2012), and thus merit further attention.

There are several reasons to focus on Diasporas for novel social enterprise emergence. First, whilst contributions of Diasporas to a country-of-origin have gravitated around financial remittances (Lindley, 2009), scholars are called to look beyond monetary contribution and instead focus on ideas, experiences and knowledge within migrant networks (Levitt, 1998, 2001). Second, recent studies reveal the importance of relationships within ethnic and transnational networks for migrants to settle into a host country, suggesting that such networks may also support the emergence of a Diaspora-based organisation (Rodgers et al, 2017; Vershinina et al., 2011), Third, as differences in motivations by migrants to support a country-of-origin have emerged (Nielsen and Riddle, 2009) scholars are called to understand further why migrants may contribute to their homeland scholars through a novel social enterprise (Stephan et al., 2016).

To address the issues abovementioned, this study focuses on a Diaspora Knowledge Network (Meyer, 2011, Meyer and Wattiaux, 2006). A DKN is a transnational association of highly skilled migrants willing to contribute to the development of their country-of-origin (Meyer, 2011). To date, studies suggest that DKNs emerge by deliberate governmental policies targeting scientific members of a Diaspora (Tigau et al., 2007). Such perspective limits our understanding as business, cultural, intellectual Diaspora networks from developing countries exist (Cohen, 2008) with shared and unique motivations to contribute to a country-of-origin (Sheffer, 2014; Brubaker, 2005) that may feed the creation of DKNs.

Following up on the arguments above, this study aims to answer the following questions *how and why do highly skilled members of a Diaspora from a developing country engage in creation of a DKN?* To answer this question this study focuses in Honduras, a developing country where recent studies highlight the growing influence of Diasporas (OECD, 2012). To increase understanding this study relies on autoethnography and an interpretative approach (Ellis et al., 2011; Leitch et al., 2010) to understand the emergence of Honduras Global Europa, a not-for-profit social enterprise. Based on a discussion around network theories, motivations and social remittances, this study relies on the complementarity of perspectives to explain the emergence of a social enterprise by highly skilled Diasporans. Findings refine the idea of collective social remittances in DKNs and advances understanding of social enterprise emergence based on network activation. Findings reveal that highly skilled migrants use networks with fellow compatriots for wider, non-economic motivations.

The paper will continue as follows: First, a literature analysis of Diasporas, social remittances and DKNs are offered followed by the research method and context of study. Findings are then presented followed by a discussion, conclusion, limitations and opportunities for further research.

## **Literature analysis**

### *Diaspora: transnationalism and networks*

In this study, Diaspora relates to individuals and members of networks, associations and communities, who have left their country of origin, but maintain links with their homelands (Kleist, 2008; Safran, 1991). Such conceptualization comprises settled expatriate communities, migrant workers based abroad temporarily, expatriates with the nationality of the host country, dual nationals and second-/third-generation migrants (OECD, 2012; Brubaker, 2005). Dispersion in space and orientation to a 'homeland' characterize Diasporas (Brubaker, 2005). Dispersion can be either forced or voluntary, crossing or within state borders. Orientation to a homeland relates to a source of motivation, identity and loyalty reflected by a collective memory about the homeland and a commitment to its development or restoration (Brubaker, 2005). This study focuses on 'diaspora' to emphasize particular activities carried out by a group of migrants in connection with their sentimental and social links with a country-of-origin (Siar, 2014).

The Diaspora concept links to theoretical discussions around transnationalism and networks.

Transnationalism refers broadly to the processes by which migrants create and preserve multiple

economic, cultural and social relationships that link them to their origin and host societies (Vertovec, 2001). Accordingly, the Diaspora discourse reflects “*a sense of being part of an ongoing transnational network that includes dispersed people who retain a sense of their uniqueness and an interest in their homeland*” (Shuval, 2000, p. 44). Thus, Diasporans may feel they are “here” and “there” in multiple national spaces and networks (Waldinger, 2008). Such duality is characterized by a sense of living in one place while simultaneously remembering and/or desiring and yearning for another place (Shuval, 2000). As a result, multiple relationships, connecting Diasporans simultaneously to two or more transnational networks may develop (Schlenker et al., 2017). The multiplicity of such relations occurs not only between diaspora communities and their homeland but also among diaspora members dispersed across nation states (Shuval, 2000).

A Diaspora is perceived as an entity with common aims, interests, solidarity and cohesion, yet, in reality it is composed of diverse networks that may appear fragmented and loosely connected (Kleist, 2008). Such fragmentation is noted around the diverse modes of engagement within host societies (Sheffer, 2003). Sheffer (2003) illustrates that core members of a Diaspora are intensively active in transnational diasporic affairs and enjoy a position that can appeal or leverage for mobilization of the larger diaspora. Latent or passive members are likely to be available for mobilization when the core leadership calls upon them while silent or dormant members are generally uninvolved in diasporic affairs, but may mobilize or engage in times of crisis. Yet, an apparently fragmented network structure may allow diverse forms of engagement when relations within networks are properly leveraged (Jack, 2005). Within host societies, being a member of a diaspora does not necessarily interfere with integration yet members may create and maintain boundaries (Brubaker, 2005) which can be beneficial for migrants of a similar ethnic origin (Vershina et al., 2011) seeking information and support in transnational networks (Rodgers et al., 2017).

Diaspora engagement can take several forms. Individually, diaspora members can contribute financially to a country-of-origin or to Diaspora philanthropic societies without any form of direct involvement or may engage individually in knowledge transfer, either permanently or short-term, virtual or *in situ* (Brinkerhoff, 2012). Whilst Diaspora organisations range from privately-run to government-led (Brinkerhoff, 2012), there is limited understanding about how they emerge. Moreover, until recently, diaspora engagement has mainly focused on monetary remittances, investment and philanthropy (Lindley, 2009) whereas other forms such as skill or knowledge transfer, termed social remittances, have remained understudied (Lacroix et al., 2016).

### ***A collective social remittance perspective***

Levitt (1998, 2001) proposes that in addition to money, migrants can provide social remittances, defined as: “ *the ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from host to sending country communities*” (Levitt, 2001, p. 54). Levitt (1998, 2001) argues that social remittances relate to normative structures (ideas, values and beliefs), systems of practice (actions shaped by normative structures), and social capital (values and norms on which social capital is based, and social capital itself). These remittances are distinct from economic ones because they are conveyed interpersonally between individuals who learn of, adapt, and diffuse ideas and practices from their environment through roles in families, communities, and organizations (Levitt, 2001).

The theoretical roots of social remittances intersect with the transnational and relational nature of Diasporas. Diasporans maintain strong transnational ties over sustained period, often becoming transgenerational (Haas, 2010, p. 247). Such ties facilitate social remittance exchanges when migrants return to live in or visit their communities of origin; when non-migrants visit their migrant friends or family in a host country; or through interchanges of letters, videos, cassettes and telephone calls over time (Levitt, 1998, p. 936), as well as web technologies (Oiarzabal, 2012; Rodgers et al., 2017). Moreover, social remittance exchange is influenced by the level of engagement of Diaspora members in societies (Sheffer, 2003; Levitt, 2001). Migrants who have constant and pro-active interactions on host societies may be in a privileged position to combine and expand cultural ideas, practices and relationships to later engage in social remittance exchange (Levitt, 1998).

Yet, while most studies of social remittances focus on the ideas and practices that individual migrants may transfer to a country-of-origin, Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2011, p. 13) argue that socio-cultural exchanges may influence broader community development through ‘collective social remittances’. Collective social remittances are exchanged by individuals in their role as organisational members and can be used in organisational settings (e.g., educational organizations, business associations, church groups or political parties). Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2011) suggest that this may occur by migrants gathering social and/or financial remittances around particular projects or through the organization of separate organizations. Diverse motivations may accompany social remittance exchange. For example, agreed tangible projects (e.g. building a sports complex) may arise due to the motivation of migrants to enjoy similar host country experiences in future

visits as well as social pressures to maintain family social capital in the country-of-origin (Levitt, 2001).

The concept of social remittances represents a paradigmatic shift in migration scholarship as it calls to move away from theorizing about diaspora contributions based on financial remittances (Lindley, 2009) and rather to focus on intangible remittances (Lacroix et al., 2016). Whilst the importance of some of these exchanges promote migrant entrepreneurship (Rodgers et al., 2017) community development and political integration (Haas, 2007; Lacroix et al., 2016), most literature of social remittances has focused on exchanges between migrants in specific locations within a host country (Boston, USA) and a developing country-of-origin (Miraflores, Dominican Republic). What is less understood is how social remittances are transmitted by several highly skilled migrants from the same country dispersed around the world, and whether a collective social remittance approach influences the emergence of a novel social enterprise.

### **Social enterprises and Diaspora knowledge networks**

Social enterprises represent an interesting organizational context to examine the engagement of highly skilled members of a Diaspora. Social enterprise is a concept framed along a continuum of options around organizations (e.g. from not-for-profits, charities, philanthropic societies to private associations, cooperatives and mutual societies) addressing societal issues such as poverty, inequality, and education among others (Galera and Borzaga, 2009), aiming to deliver positive social outcomes for a particular community or group (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2015). In this study, social enterprise emergence is engaged when a group, sharing a specific and well-defined social goal (e.g. providing food, education, and medical services to members of a society in need) succeeds in translating their collective effort into an institutional formal arrangement and manage it an entrepreneurial way (Galera and Borzaga, 2009). To achieve objectives some social enterprises may rely on a not-for-profit model through voluntary action and funding by grants, donations or contracts with public or private organisations (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2015). This study focuses on the emergence of a social enterprise composed by highly skilled migrants called diaspora knowledge network.

A diaspora knowledge network (DKN hereafter) is defined as an “*association of highly skilled expatriates willing to contribute to the development of their origin countries*” (Meyer, 2011, p. 159). DKNs act as mediators between a community of skilled migrants and institutions or groups in

countries of origin (Leclerc and Meyer, 2007; Meyer and Wattiaux, 2006) and based on earlier conceptualizations it represents a basic form of a social enterprise (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2015). To date, DKNs emergence is mostly associated to governmental initiatives and scientific human capital (Tigau et al., 2017). Governments in emerging economies are relying on migrants to shape financial remittance policies and fill voids in scientific knowledge (Gamlen, 2014). For the latter, deliberate action has stimulated the creation of scientific diaspora networks based on human capital (Meyer, 2001).

### *Human Capital*

Human capital, defined as “*the knowledge, skills and competences and other attributes embodied in individuals that are relevant to economic activity*” (OECD, 1998, p. 9), represents an endowment of individual migrants (Meyer, 2007). Sources of human capital come from family, education and experience (Anderson and Miller, 2003) and may include explicit knowledge, formally acquired in educational centers, and implicit (tacit) knowledge acquired through experience (Polanyi, 2013). Economic logic within human capital suggest that the inventory of skills and abilities gained by individual migrants lead to diverse professional or entrepreneurial career choices in host countries. For a scientific diaspora, specialized qualifications (e.g. doctoral degrees), enhanced through research and teaching, (Discua Cruz and Tejada Calvo, 2009) vouch for inclusion in a DKN (Meyer, 2001). Thus, it is not surprising that most DKN research has revolved around Diaspora scientists and their contribution to countries-of-origin (Meyer and Wattiaux, 2006).

Yet, a focus on social remittances based on scientific human capital rationale alone may be insufficient to explain how (whether) diverse members of a diaspora engage in the creation of DKN. Scientific knowledge alone may undermine a wider base of social remittances, restrict membership and cultivate an aura of exclusivity. Siar (2014) underscores that it is important to recognize that migrants carry and transfer different types of social remittances as knowledge comes in different types — scientific, technological, business, economic, cultural and social, to name a few. Thus, a diversity in knowledge and skills may prove beneficial for the emergence of a DKN.

### *Networks and social relationships*

This study acknowledges that a DKN is, at its core, a network. Social relationships are extensively regarded in the study of Diasporas, transnationalism, ethnic communities and migration (Rodgers et al., 2017.; Vershinina et al., 2011). The relevance of social relationships for highly skilled migrants

can be appreciated through a strong and weak tie perspective (Granovetter, 1973). “Strong ties” are represented through strong relationships and closely-knit networks of family, friends, class and ethnicity circles. Intuitively, in Diasporas, close friends and family both in the host and origin country are considered strong ties, which would help out most, and thus facilitate collaboration as migrants know them, trust them and interact frequently. “Weak ties” cut across diverse social network structures outside closely-knit circles and are represented through relationships in business, community and professional associations (e.g. chambers of commerce, Church, Rotary or Lions Club) (Davidsson and Honig, 2003). Weak ties are crucial because they represent bridges to access networks or groups of people (Soetanto, 2017). Yet, in comparison with strong ties the amount of information, support or empathy to be procured through weak ties is uncertain. Strong and weak ties are relevant for this study as the close social ties that migrants have in home countries bind them to these areas, even if they live in another country — which relates to the concept of ‘diaspora’ and how people’s sentimental ties with their home country can be a strong motivation to engage in social remittance exchange (Siar, 2014).

Networks provide a basis for social cohesion because they enable people to cooperate with one another (Soetanto, 2017). Diaspora members may be naturally inclined to collaborate, discuss ideas and engage in projects within familiar or close circles, particularly in ethnic circles (Vershina et al, 2011). Any enterprise form created by migrants may benefit from unique resources from intra-diasporic networks linking co-ethnic communities both internationally (across countries) and locally (within the host country) as well as an inclination, or motivation, to be closely involved in the development of their home countries (Brzozowski et al., 2017). Diverse members of a Diaspora may also create and eventually leverage ties in diverse networks within host societies (Elo et al., 2018). Such bonds within transnational networks may be leveraged to identify and evaluate diverse opportunities in relation with countries-of-origin (Katila and Wahlbeck, 2012). Yet little is known about how (whether) and why diaspora members leverage ties to create a DKN and the motivations behind such engagement. Whilst strong and weak ties can be found in diverse transnational networks (Rodgers et al., 2017), further scrutiny of DKN emergence through the role and nature of ties is needed (Jack, 2005). To increase understanding, this study explores a deviant DKN, that is, one not formed by governmental initiatives, in a developing country.

## **Methodology**

Addressing the “how and why” question in this study demanded understanding the world from the perspective of those studied (Pratt, 2009, p. 856), aiming to provide a more valid explanation of



what is going on (Howorth et al., 2005). To do this, the authors engage in autoethnography to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno) (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 273). Autoethnography allows the generation of *“theoretically relevant descriptions of a group to which one belongs based on a structured analysis of one’s experiences and the experiences of others from one’s group”* (Karra and Phillips, 2008, p. 7). To generate rich data for analysis, a DKN that would be representative of the topic of study was deliberately chosen (Miles et al., 2013) where the authors can reflect on experiences as “insiders”. Insider research is a category of autoethnographic practice where practitioners are academic researchers who study a group they are part of, and use their insider position as a methodological and interpretive tool (Butz and Besio, 2009). By being “insiders” authors had access, knowledge, and freedom of movement which allows to develop particular insight not easily visible to “outsiders” conducting qualitative research in specific contexts (Karra and Phillips, 2008). Studying the emergence of a DKN through autoethnography provides a methodological frame for researchers, who are part of a Diaspora, to manage research and theorize.

### **Data gathering and analysis**

To address the difficulty to attain information, particularly in Latin America (Jones, 2004), data was gathered through informal conversations, interwoven with observation and diverse sources of data (Karra and Phillips, 2008). In analyzing and presenting findings, the authors followed the suggestions of Ellis et al., (2011). First, to retrospectively and selectively write about reflections made possible by being part of a group or culture as well as ways others may experience similar reflections. This approach was accomplished through comparing and contrasting personal experience against existing research and examining available material to discern patterns. Second, the authors sought to produce descriptions of personal, interpersonal experiences and patterns observed (Leitch et al., 2010). Interpretive methods were used to analyze how and why a DKN emerged and operated. Analysis of the data was then reiterative in moving between data and emerging findings (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). Analysis of the data focused on how and why a DKN emerged. This allowed the authors to follow up on emerging themes (Patton, 1990). The analysis was informed by prior theoretical understanding but not constrained by it (Finch, 2002). This was accomplished by relying on field notes and available data materials (printed material, video). Figures and data in tables is used to support key themes emerging from the analysis (Pratt, 2009). In line with recent migrant related studies quotes are used to emphasize themes and patterns

(Rodgers et al., 2017). Reliability referred to the authors credibility as Diaspora members engaging in the experiences described and presenting the experience described as believable and possible.

The authors do not advocate that autoethnography should be the preferred method for DKN emergence research. Instead, the authors argue that an increasing proportion of migrant research benefits from the features of autoethnography (Knijnik, 2015). Karra and Phillips (2008) highlight ease of access, reduced resource requirements, increased ability to establish trust and rapport, and reduced problems with translation as strengths of the approach. Conversely, difficulty maintaining critical distance, ongoing role conflict, and the limits of serendipity are acknowledged as difficulties of conducting autoethnographic research. The use of autoethnography is appropriate for this study as the authors were privileged to participate in the process leading to the foundation of a DKN in a developing country.

### **Contextual setting: Honduras and Honduras Global**

Honduras, a developing country in Central America with an estimated population of 8.7 million inhabitants, has several qualities that make it interesting for a study of the impact of a Diaspora. First, diaspora research in Central America is the least covered, with the bulk of DKN research mainly focused on larger Latin American countries, such as Colombia and Mexico (Meyer, 2007). Second, due to the lack of employment opportunities, increasing social unrest, natural disasters and high personal security risks faced by the population at large (McSweeney, 2005; Ruhl, 2010) many Honduran citizens have migrated to other countries to improve personal and family living conditions (OECD, 2012). Finally, the Honduran Central Bank's balance of payments shows that while in the year 2000, financial remittances represented only 6% of GDP (USD\$ 0.44 billion), in 2015 they represented 16% of GDP (USD\$ 3.65 billion). Such contextual setting is important because recent studies highlight that while migration may reduce affective ties to the country-of-origin, migrants seek to regularly engage in social action across borders (Waldinger, 2008). This may occur as Honduras, as a place, may signify a spatial entity experienced and perceived as meaningful (Gustafson, 2001) based on symbolic long-term experiences (Hernández et al., 2007) which may shape motivations to engage in further support. Thus, whilst financial remittances are important, there is limited understanding on how and why migrants from the Honduran Diaspora may engage in the creation of a formal social enterprise to support their country-of-origin.

### **Honduras Global Europa**

Honduras Global, founded in 2010, is a DKN created by highly skilled members of the Honduran Diaspora, international agencies and governmental agencies (see Seddig and Cerrato, 2014 for details). Its emergence is associated to Sir Salvador Moncada, the most cited British scientist and one of the most cited scientist in the world (The Royal Society, 2018). Nowadays, with more than 70 members, Honduras Global is perceived as a select group of highly skilled Hondurans. As members as dispersed around the world, both in situ meetings and web technologies (e.g. [www.hondurasglobal.org](http://www.hondurasglobal.org)) are used by members to meet, discuss and decide on new projects geared for knowledge transfer. In addition to thematic seminars, a flagship event, labelled “Academic Week”, started in 2011 as a yearly forum where members share their ideas, experiences and knowledge around selected topics to students from different universities and professionals from diverse sectors in Honduras. These events represent key mechanisms to transmit collective social remittances to wider audiences in Honduras.

Due to the growing number of members residing in Europe, on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013, Sir Salvador Moncada and 9 highly skilled Hondurans (including the authors), working in different sectors (science, medicine, arts, law, business), created Honduras Global Europa (HGE hereafter) in Brussels, Belgium (registration number BE 535.547.985, a not-for-profit organisation). The mission of HGE was set to identify and connect highly skilled Hondurans in Europe and around the world to promote knowledge transfer and stimulate innovation, scientific, technological and entrepreneurial development in Honduras. The authors have participated on its board (secretary, membership committee) and participated in situ and online meetings since its foundation. The emergence of HGE coincided with increasing governmental interest to link successful Hondurans overseas with a national identity project called “Marca Pais” (El Heraldo, 2015), and was promoted as a novel DKN at the 2013 IOM conference by one of the authors (IOM, 2013). Table 1 shows a summary of data sources and Table 2 displays events and knowledge exchanges that HGE members have engaged into.

Insert table 1 about here

Insert Table 2 about here

## **Findings**

Reflections and data analysis brought to light that HGE members expressed a sense of consciously engaging in the emergence of a group that spanned several settings and that engaged in the

transmission of social remittances motivated by shared feelings and unique reasons. Members engaged in the emergence of HGE attesting to this based on the strength of ties.

*How do highly skilled members of a Diaspora engage in the emergence of a DKN?*

Reflections and analysis of the evidence suggest that HGE emergence related to the activation of ties in transnational networks. The data analysed (video, newspaper articles, reports e.g. Honduras Global 2011 a, b) as well as experiences and observations by the authors underscore the relevance of a core diaspora member activating a network of transnational ties to forward collective social remittances. Tie activation comprised key actors within the country-of-origin and latent members of a high skilled Honduran Diaspora network. In the case of HGE, Sir Salvador's position, drive, renowned profile and worldwide reputation, provided weight to a call to Hondurans overseas in diverse sectors and encouraged both national and international institutional actors to support the formal establishment of the organisation. Figure 1 provides a graphical illustration about the experience and pattern identified.

Insert figure 1 about here

Figure 1 shows that a core member of a highly skilled diaspora (e.g. Sir Salvador) can leverage strong ties with others to reach latent members (e.g. Hondurans across European states) in transnational networks and at the same time procure resources from institutional actors (e.g. government, international cooperation agencies). Strong ties were leveraged to disseminate and procure information, resources and support for organizational emergence (Seddig and Cerrato, 2014). Strong ties, at origin and host countries, reacted either by becoming members or acted as replicators, providing information, and/or access to other highly skilled diaspora members (weak ties) across Europe. The transnational patterns activated experienced by the authors and the composition dynamics that unfolded (Figure 1) suggest that latent members in European countries were also searching to join an organization such as HGE through ties in diverse networks. As one member, a UN analyst in Switzerland expressed “ *my dream has always been to really contribute to the development of my country, for many years I have been overseas studying and working... to become part [of HG] was an answer to address that need*”, The patterns observed by the authors suggest that both strong and weak ties in transnational networks facilitated reaching out and procuring support for the emergence of HGE.

One path of tie activation suggested in Figure 1 shows core members acting as attractors in

transnational networks of highly skilled Diasporans. Experience by the authors suggest that the emergence of HGE was best served by leveraging ties with individuals with whom members share strong bonds and knowledge of their motivations. This was experienced by members who share academic or professional credentials from the same country-of-origin institutions. One of the authors, secretary of HGE (2013-2017) activated an existing Honduran alumni network in Europe to promote the emergence of HGE and encouraged individuals who would become members in 2017. Another path shows that latent Diasporans may be reached through weak ties or through strong ties with others in the country-of-origin. Informal conversations by the authors with HGE members suggest that strong ties in Honduras (e.g. family and friends) provided information and encouraged engagement based on TV, newspaper or Radio clips about the organization and Sir Salvador (e.g. La Prensa, 2015). Potential members contacted a HGE founding member they knew either directly (strong ties) or through others (weak ties) who had mentioned the emergence of the organization. Strong ties within transnational networks (e.g. friends, family) also provided contact information about other highly skilled members across Europe who could be interested to join.

Ultimately, the process leading to HGE emergence was sparked by a core Diaspora member which activated a transnational network composed of Hondurans who have gained or are gradually gaining legitimacy, influential social positions, status and recognition in host and/or country-of-origin and who were motivated to engage in the emergence of a social enterprise., Sir Salvador was perceived as the central node of a network that served as an attractor for other highly skilled Diaspora members. These members acted as replicators of the potential collective social remittances that HGE could deploy in Honduras (Honduras Global, 2011). As a result, a whole structure was activated through strong and weak ties in transnational networks. The result was the emergence of a DKN with broader based of migrants with unique skills and knowledge (e.g. Legal, cultural, business).

*Why do highly skilled members of a Diaspora engage in the emergence of a DKN?*

Experiences of the authors and evidence examined suggests that place attachment, a sense of duty and well-being were important motivations for HGE emergence.

First, HGE Members expressed sentiment for their homeland as a key motivation for engagement (Table 3). This was experienced and noted in aspects such as family links, memories, nostalgia and length of absence. Honduras, as a place, is perceived as meaningful, revolving around affective, but also cognitive and behavioral, bonds between members and Honduras as a place (Low and Altman,

1992). Most of HGE members have been, on average, more than 15 years working overseas, most have married host country citizens and have dual or more nationalities. Yet, long established dual or multiple identities have not weakened place attachment feelings nor undermine the desire to keep connected to the country-of-origin. As an executive of a multinational corporation expressed, the motivation to support *“does not disappear regardless of how long you have been away or how far you are now from your homeland”*. Diaspora members were motivated to be engaged in HGE to address sentiments of melancholy and nostalgia and an ongoing or re-awakened attachment and loyalty to culture and specifically to the homeland which they feel they have left (Shuval, 2008). As another member suggested, HGE allows Hondurans living abroad the opportunity *“to give something back to Honduras....to the land they miss and waits for them”*. Informal talks with members support the notion that HGE provides a conduit to strengthen the bonds between Diasporans across Europe and their homeland through collective social remittances. Sentimental links towards a homeland were a primary motivating factor for highly skilled members of a diaspora to engage in the emergence of HGE.

-Insert table 3 about here-

Second, a sense of duty supported HGE emergence. Table 3 shows that diverse members feel a strong social sense of “duty” to support their homeland. Addressing such sense of duty was catered by the intention to “send back” more than financial remittances and expressed as being privileged migrants, desire to contribute and share knowledge. The emotional bond that Diasporans had with their country-of-origin evoked a sense of responsibility to contribute to its development. This is evident in the motivation of members to be part of HGE (Table 3). A renowned Honduran artist expressed *“..those of us [Hondurans] who left and have now privileged positions, we were helped by others and we need to help back”*. Table 3 shows that HGE provides a vehicle to address a sense of duty around transmitting ideas and knowledge for the Honduran society to become better equipped in science, equality of opportunities and entrepreneurship among other aspects (Table 3). An international translator expressed *“ the goal is appealing because it allows a group of professionals, scientists and so on that want to share knowledge and experiences to the new generations in the country who need the support”* Whilst some of the members are simultaneously supporters or members of philanthropic organizations that provide tangible aid to Honduras (e.g. Rotary, International Aid projects) informal interviews revealed that HGE fulfills a sense of duty through provision of collective social remittances (Levitt, 1998) shared with other highly skilled Diaspora members.

Finally, experience by the authors and data analysis uncovered that well-being, long associated with optimal psychological experience and functioning (Deci and Ryan, 2008), was an important motivational factor for HE emergence. The conceptualization of well-being around migration is complex (Nowok et al., 2013), mostly examined around financial remittances for countries-of-origin (Boccagni, 2015). Table 3 shows that well-being for HGE members is experienced through feeling as a role model or agent of change, pride, legitimacy and social interactions with other highly skilled migrants in a similar position or status to help their homeland. By transmitting social remittances to wider audiences ((e.g. students, artists, scientists, government officials, and business practitioners), and not just a specific group or community, then feelings of self-legitimacy associated with a cause that transcends individual philanthropy were acknowledged. As a business owner expressed *“Our work, I feel, is to help others to see that we can change the way things are done”*. Well-being involved a sense of meaning derived from pursuing goals in the service of something of wider significance (e.g. community, society, homeland) (Segrin and Taylor, 2007). Another member, a project leader in the United Nations expressed *“this is a platform for us that work abroad, to create a more just society in Honduras and collaborate on its development”*. Table 3 shows that being engaged collectively in the transmission of social remittances provides a feeling of well-being and adds to the motivation for a DKN emergence. Involvement in transmitting social remittances to diverse audiences (Table 2, 3) was associated to well-being and a motivation for continued engagement.

## **Discussion**

In terms of how highly skilled migrants engage in the emergence of a DKN, findings suggest that both strong and weak ties can be more effective in disseminating information in diverse networks about the organization to gain information and support. The experience and patterns observed around the emergence of HGE reveal the value of links to others within several networks (Jack, 2005). Findings illustrate that the way highly skilled members of a Diaspora activated links within the network was important. In line with Jack (2005), strong ties act as a mechanism to activate a latent network, procuring information and resources for organizational emergence. Highly skilled diaspora members can activate ties in diverse transnational networks (e.g. artists, professionals, business owners), often spanning more than one country, and act as replicators in networks across countries (Cohen, 2008). Strong and weak ties provide access to a wider transnational social context and serve as a mechanism to activate other weak ties (e.g. ‘friends of friends’) in diverse networks. The activation of strong and weak ties, prominent in the entrepreneurial literature (Jack, 2005),

helps explain how highly skilled migrants engage in the emergence of a DKN. A contribution of this study is that the transnational features of network activation in this study provides an interesting extension to Jack (2005) work about the role of ties in the emergence of a transnational social enterprise.

In terms of a social remittance perspective, this study shows that collective social remittances can comprise Diaspora members dispersed across countries and impact wider audiences in a country-of-origin. Thus, this study expands previous findings that focused on social remittance transmission from a single city in a host country to a specific community in a country-of-origin (Levitt, 2001). In terms of DKN literature, findings suggest that when membership is not exclusive to scientists then diverse cultural knowledge, creative arts and others could expand the reach and impact of collective social remittances for a developing country. Latent members of a highly skilled diaspora could be dismissed (Sheffer, 2003) if membership revolves around specific and homogenous human capital. Based on a wider membership base, findings expand the views of Meyer (2001) about the impact of DKNs for developing economies. In line with Siar (2014), a discussion of DKN emergence by highly skilled migrants would be incomplete if diverse types of knowledge, embedded in collective social remittances (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011), is neglected.

Findings support the view that a sense of homeland duty is often related to the social motivations of migrant entrepreneurs to invest back into countries-of-origin (Nielsen and Riddle, 2009) beyond financial remittances. A sense of duty applies to diaspora communities as they tend to be associational and desire to maintain a relationship with their homeland, which motivates seeking out others who share similar transnational psychological affiliation (Sheffer, 2003) and transmit their ideas and knowledge (social remittances) as a transnational entity. Yet, while intrinsic motivations are perceived to be influential for individual entrepreneurs to create socially orientated enterprises (Gruber and MacMillan, 2017), findings in this study suggest that diverse members of a Diaspora (e.g. artists, entrepreneurs, executives, scientists) experience the same feelings through interaction with others in pursuing a common goal to address societal concerns, highlighting the overlooked social features of wellbeing in migrants (Mähönen et al., 2013) that can be addressed through DKNs. The Diasporic features of the motivations presented in this study challenge the view that DKNs can only emerge based on governmental initiatives (Tigau et al., 2017).

## **Conclusion**



This study reveals that a DKN can emerge through the activation of a highly skilled Diaspora network structure. The theoretical contributions of this study lie in the transnational features of strong and weak ties for organizational emergence (Jack, 2005). A core diaspora member may activate a latent network of highly skilled migrants that desire to fulfill intrinsic motivations. While previous literature suggests that a Diaspora may be a loosely connected and fragmented network, our study suggest that highly skilled migrants represent a transnational community that desires to stay connected to their country-of-origin and can support the emergence of a transnational network structure for development. The empirical contributions of this study lie in understanding how and why highly skilled migrants from a developing country engage in the emergence of a DKN. Whilst DKNs emergence was previously promoted as an outcome of government-led action, this study contrasts such view by uncovering microfoundations of DKN emergence by migrants. Findings support the view that the transmission of collective social remittances can flow transnationally (Levitt, 1998), making highly skilled migrants effective agents of knowledge circulation (Kleist, 2008) and DKN appropriate vehicles for such endeavours (Meyer, 2007).

Findings are particularly relevant for developing countries seeking to harness social remittances. DKNs with a wider membership base may serve a crucial role in brokering down knowledge between dissimilar scientific, professional and entrepreneurial cultures compared to an individual or specific-domain approach. Moreover, this study suggests that the “brain drain” effect often attributed to migration of skilled professionals (Haas, 2010) may not be detrimental to home countries as their human capital can be useful when formally organized around collective social remittances (Lacroix et al., 2016). Highly skilled diasporas may represent one of greatest resources for homeland development yet much of what they contribute occurs often goes unnoticed. Policy makers in developing economies may take our findings as a message related to support inclusive DKNs. A DKN such as HGE that has been created around diverse skills and knowledge of Diasporas may have greater sustainable impact than DKNs deliberately created by governmental initiatives around specific domains. If discussions between governmental, educational and policy institutions do not align with intrinsic motivations or diverse expertise in DKNs the impact of collective social remittances for development may be limited. As this study suggests, DKNs cannot operate on isolation from governments and thus policy makers may ensure greater contributions by supporting financially and institutionally the social ethos and legitimacy of a DKN in the country-of-origin to motivate engagement (Nielsen and Riddle, 2009; Mähönen et al., 2013).

## **8. Limitations and further research**

This study has a few caveats, and so, findings must be interpreted with caution. First, the advantages and limitations of relying on a single, albeit in-depth and longitudinal, case study (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Stake, 2008) as well as issues related to autoethnographic approaches, such as talking to the right individuals and/or attending relevant meetings or events are acknowledged (Karra & Philips, 2008). The utility of autoethnography was enhanced by theoretical sensitivity, which prevented being overwhelmed by data volume and highlighted the experience of the authors. Second, the study was conducted around a DKN focusing on one developing country, Honduras, and therefore it may be difficult to infer similar results of DKNs in other developing countries. Yet our findings around the nature of social enterprises created by highly skilled members of a diaspora may have wider applicability in developing and developed countries. A study on Latin American diaspora in the US suggest that the most educated or skilled migrants are most prone to retain ties with their country-of-origin and be interested in contributing back to alleviate societal concerns (Guarnizo et al., 2003). Thus, further ethnographic studies of organisations created by highly skilled migrants from other Latin American countries are worth pursuing because of their positive role in socio-economical transformations (OECD, 2015; Stephan et al., 2016). Further studies on how highly skilled migrants adapt specific ideas developed in institutions (e.g. universities, art galleries, corporations, international institutions) and include them as social remittances is needed.

Moreover, insight into the contextual challenges that DKNs face remains scarce. As contextual dynamics change in developing countries (e.g. government support), future studies may concentrate on the barriers for Diaspora engagement (Sheffer, 2003; Brinkerhoff, 2012). If highly skilled members are either actively discouraged or censored from participating in the transmission of social remittances, support for country development may remain minimal and subdued around financial remittances. Moreover, studies into how web technologies, can support governmental, international agencies and DKN to engage in the virtual transmission of social remittances is warranted (Oiarzabal, 2012). Multiple case studies across DKNs in developing economies may support, challenge or expand the findings in this study. Additional studies around the dynamics and challenges of social enterprises created by highly skilled migrants will expand our understanding of the influence of migration in society.

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**Table 1.** Data source/access information about HGE

## Members of Honduras Global Europa

Code	Location	Sector	Role in HE
HGE1	UK	Medicine	Founding Member/Board
HGE2	Germany	Business	Founding Member
HGE3	Luxemburg	Business/Legal	Founding Member
HGE4	Switzerland	Science/Academia	Founding Member
HGE5	Germany	Business	Founding Member
HGE6	UK	Science/Academia	Founding Member
HGE7	France	Business	Founding Member
HGE8	Spain	Medicine	Founding Member
HGE9	Germany	Medicine	Founding Member
HGE10	Netherlands	Arts/Culture	Member
HGE11	Belgium	Science/Academia	Founding Member/Board
HGE12	Italy	Communication/Media	Member
HGE13	Spain	Communication/Media	Member
HGE14	Spain	Science/Academia	Member
HGE15	Spain	Science/Academia	Member
HGE16	Spain	Science/Academia	Member
HGE17	Italy	Science/Academia	Member
HGE18	Belgium	Multinational Organization	Founding Member/Board
HGE19	Switzerland	Business	Founding Member/Board
HGE20	Switzerland	Multinational Organization	Member
HGE21	Germany	Science/Academia	Member
Secondary data	National and international news about the organisation and organisational members (e.g. La Prensa, El Heraldo, 2015); HGE meetings in Brussels and Paris, as well as online meetings (Skype). Printed reports: Seddig and Cerrato, 2014; Cerrato and Discua Cruz, 2018. Online sources: Honduras Global main website: <a href="http://www.hondurasglobal.org">www.hondurasglobal.org</a> ;		

Videos: Honduras Global (2011 a, b) and <https://www.youtube.com/user/hondurasglobal/videos>

**Table 2.** List of activities engaged by Honduras Global Europe members 2016-2017. Source: Honduras Global

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Country of Residence of Speakers</b>
Cultural Management Workshop	Arts/Culture	40	Spain
Scientific talk: Small town urban development	Urban Development	50	Spain
Panel Discussion: New market opportunities	Business	40	France, USA
Forum: Arts and Culture for Development	Arts/Culture	50	Spain, USA
Academic Week	Science, Economy, Business, Development	70	UK, USA, Spain, Switzerland
Virtual Motivational Talks with High School Students	Personal Development	240	Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland
Summer School	Leadership, Personal Development	25	France, USA
Start-up Workshop	Business	35	Germany
Global Week	Science, Economy, Business, Development	256	UK, USA
Motivational Talk: Expression through Art	Arts/Culture	150	Netherlands
Training: Microsoft Project	Informatics	80	USA
Motivational Speech: Work opportunities for the urban marginalized sector	Development	600	USA

**Table 3.** Motivations associated to the emergence of HGE by members. Source: Table 1.

<b>Excerpt</b>	<b>Coding</b>	<b>Theme</b>
"I was born in the northern area of Honduras; there has always been that attachment to the place I was born, because of my attachment of my grandmother..." (HGE12)	Attachment to place and family links	Place attachment

"... that intention [to contribute to the benefit of Honduras] does not disappear regardless of how long you have been away or how far you are now from your homeland" (HGE19)	Length of absence	
"You will always feel attached to the place where you grew up and where your memories were created" (HGE6)	Hometown memories	
"HG allows the Hondurans living abroad to give something back to Honduras, ....to the land they miss and waits for them" (GIZ representative)	Nostalgia	
"[Honduras Global] is for the Honduran that has been privileged, that has a know-how which Honduras can benefit from..." (HGE7)	Privileged migrant	Sense of duty
"Every [Honduran] citizen [abroad] needs to be a volunteer to advance the society of their country. It can be socially, environmentally, education or in different areas. " (HGE15)	Desire to contribute from host country	
"I travel a lot with development projects to improve the standards of living, through education, sustainable agriculture which have a direct impact, I have used this approach in Latin America, India, Africa, but never had the chance to do it in Honduras until I got involved in Honduras Global." (HGE4)	Opportunity to share knowledge	
"HG is an initiative to connect people, to encourage knowledge transfer at the scientific and commercial level. It is innovative because it addresses development..." (SEPLAN, Government representative)	Engagement in development	
"Being part of HG means a lot to me because we can show that our successes can be replicated and that my dream is to bridge that gap between those that are overseas and the new generations in Honduras..." (HGE21)	Support for community of origin	
"We can be ambassadors of Honduras through HG, but to be ambassadors we have to be good examples of how Hondurans are.. I think my experiences can be a motivational example..." (HGE15)	Becoming a role model	Wellbeing
"..this organization is interesting because for me this is a platform for us that work abroad, to create a more just society in Honduras and collaborate on its development," (HGE20)	Shared ideals	
" HGE allows us, Hondurans abroad, to establish a formal link with diverse organizations and institutions in Honduras that we can work with and provide a solid contribution." (HGE4)	Legitimacy in country of origin	
"The aim is to make agents of change, to develop business ideas, to create markets, new research, and improve education systems..." (GIZ representative, International cooperation agency)	Becoming agents of change	

... It was created for people who have a lot of knowledge, contacts and networks around the world who are proud to help back [Honduras] (ANDI representative, private sector)

Feelings of pride

**Figure 1.** Network activation pattern for DKN emergence

